



# Phase II and Phase III Archaeological Database and Inventory

Site Number: 18CE319

Site Name: Frenchtown Wreck #1

Prehistoric

Other name(s)

Historic

Unknown

Brief Description:

early 19th century, War of 1812 shipwreck, sailing vessel

## Site Location and Environmental Data:

Maryland Archaeological Research Unit No. 6

SCS soil & sediment code

Latitude 39.5811

Longitude -75.8332

Physiographic province Eastern Shore Coastal P

Terrestrial site

Underwater site

Elevation m Site slope

Ethnobotany profile available  Maritime site

### Nearest Surface Water

Name (if any) Elk River

#### Saltwater

Ocean

Estuary/tidal river

Tidewater/marsh

Minimum distance to water is 0 m

#### Freshwater

Stream/river

Swamp

Lake or pond

Spring

Site setting

-Site Setting restricted

-Lat/Long accurate to within 1 sq. mile, user may need to make slight adjustments in mapping to account for sites near state/county lines or streams

### Topography

- Floodplain
- Hilltop/bluff
- Interior flat
- Upland flat
- Ridgetop
- Terrace
- Low terrace
- High terrace
- Rockshelter/cave
- Hillslope
- Unknown
- Other
- Submerged

### Ownership

- Private
- Federal
- State of MD
- Regional/county/city
- Unknown

## Temporal & Ethnic Contextual Data:

Paleoindian site

Woodland site

Archaic site

MD Adena

Early archaic

Early woodland

Middle archaic

Mid. woodland

Late archaic

Late woodland

Unknown prehistoric context

Contact period site  ca. 1820 - 1860

ca. 1630 - 1675  ca. 1860 - 1900

ca. 1675 - 1720  ca. 1900 - 1930

ca. 1720 - 1780  Post 1930

ca. 1780 - 1820

Unknown historic context

Unknown context

### Ethnic Associations (historic only)

Native American  Asian American

African American  Unknown

Anglo-American  Other

Hispanic

Y=Confirmed, P=Possible

## Site Function Contextual Data:

### Prehistoric

- Multi-component
- Village
- Hamlet
- Base camp
- Rockshelter/cave
- Earthen mound
- Cairn
- Burial area
- Misc. ceremonial
- Rock art
- Shell midden
- STU/lithic scatter
- Quarry/extraction
- Fish weir
- Production area
- Unknown
- Other context

### Historic

Urban/Rural? Rural

#### Domestic

- Homestead
- Farmstead
- Mansion
- Plantation
- Row/townhome
- Cellar
- Privy

#### Industrial

- Mining-related
- Quarry-related
- Mill
- Black/metalsmith

Furnace/forge

Other

#### Transportation

- Canal-related
- Road/railroad
- Wharf/landing
- Maritime-related
- Bridge
- Ford

#### Educational

#### Commercial

- Trading post
- Store
- Tavern/inn

#### Military

Battlefield

Fortification

Encampment

#### Townsite

Church/mtg house

Ch support bldg

#### Burial area

Cemetery

Sepulchre

Isolated burial

#### Bldg or foundation

Possible Structure

Post-in-ground

Frame-built

Masonry

Other structure

Slave related

Non-domestic agri

Recreational

Midden/dump

Artifact scatter

Spring or well

Unknown

Other context

shipwreck

## Interpretive Sampling Data:

### Prehistoric context samples

Soil samples taken

Flotation samples taken

Other samples taken

### Historic context samples

Soil samples taken

Flotation samples taken

Other samples taken  wood,metal



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## Diagnostic Artifact Data:

Projectile Point Types		Koens-Crispin	
Clovis	<input type="checkbox"/>	Perkiomen	<input type="checkbox"/>
Hardaway-Dalton	<input type="checkbox"/>	Susquehana	<input type="checkbox"/>
Palmer	<input type="checkbox"/>	Vernon	<input type="checkbox"/>
Kirk (notch)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Piscataway	<input type="checkbox"/>
Kirk (stem)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Calvert	<input type="checkbox"/>
Le Croy	<input type="checkbox"/>	Selby Bay	<input type="checkbox"/>
Morrow Mntn	<input type="checkbox"/>	Jacks Rf (notch)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Guilford	<input type="checkbox"/>	Jacks Rf (pent)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Brewerton	<input type="checkbox"/>	Madison/Potomac	<input type="checkbox"/>
Otter Creek	<input type="checkbox"/>	Levanna	<input type="checkbox"/>

Prehistoric Sherd Types			
Marcey Creek	<input type="checkbox"/>	Popes Creek	<input type="checkbox"/>
Dames Qtr	<input type="checkbox"/>	Coulbourn	<input type="checkbox"/>
Selden Island	<input type="checkbox"/>	Watson	<input type="checkbox"/>
Accokeek	<input type="checkbox"/>	Mockley	<input type="checkbox"/>
Wolfe Neck	<input type="checkbox"/>	Clemson Island	<input type="checkbox"/>
Vinette	<input type="checkbox"/>	Page	<input type="checkbox"/>
Shepard	<input type="checkbox"/>	Townsend	<input type="checkbox"/>
Keyser	<input type="checkbox"/>	Minguannan	<input type="checkbox"/>
Yeocomico	<input type="checkbox"/>	Sullivan Cove	<input type="checkbox"/>
Monongahela	<input type="checkbox"/>	Shenks Ferry	<input type="checkbox"/>
Susquehannock	<input type="checkbox"/>	Moyaone	<input type="checkbox"/>
		Potomac Crk	<input type="checkbox"/>

Historic Sherd Types		Ironstone		Staffordshire		Stoneware	
<b>Earthenware</b>		Astbury	<input type="checkbox"/>	Jackfield	<input type="checkbox"/>	Tin Glazed	<input type="checkbox"/>
Borderware	<input type="checkbox"/>	Mn Mottled	<input type="checkbox"/>	Whiteware	<input type="checkbox"/>	Eng Dry-bodied	<input type="checkbox"/>
Buckley	<input type="checkbox"/>	North Devon	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Porcelain</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Nottingham	<input type="checkbox"/>
Creamware	<input type="checkbox"/>	Pearlware	<input type="checkbox"/>			Rhenish	<input type="checkbox"/>
						Wt Salt-glazed	<input type="checkbox"/>

All quantities exact or estimated minimal counts

## Other Artifact & Feature Types:

Prehistoric Artifacts		Other fired clay	
Flaked stone	<input type="checkbox"/>	Human remain(s)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ground stone	<input type="checkbox"/>	Modified faunal	<input type="checkbox"/>
Stone bowls	<input type="checkbox"/>	Unmod faunal	<input type="checkbox"/>
Fire-cracked rock	<input type="checkbox"/>	Oyster shell	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other lithics (all)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Floral material	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ceramics (all)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Uncommon Obj.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Rimsherds	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other	<input type="checkbox"/>

Prehistoric Features	
Mound(s)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Midden	<input type="checkbox"/>
Shell midden	<input type="checkbox"/>
Postholes/molds	<input type="checkbox"/>
House pattern(s)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Palisade(s)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Hearth(s)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Lithic reduc area	<input type="checkbox"/>
Storage/trash pit	<input type="checkbox"/>
Burial(s)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ossuary	<input type="checkbox"/>
Unknown	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other	<input type="checkbox"/>

Lithic Material		Fer quartzite		Sil sandstone	
Jasper	<input type="checkbox"/>	Chalcedony	<input type="checkbox"/>	European flint	<input type="checkbox"/>
Chert	<input type="checkbox"/>	Ironstone	<input type="checkbox"/>	Basalt	<input type="checkbox"/>
Rhyolite	<input type="checkbox"/>	Argilite	<input type="checkbox"/>	Unknown	<input type="checkbox"/>
Quartz	<input type="checkbox"/>	Steatite	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other	<input type="checkbox"/>
Quartzite	<input type="checkbox"/>	Sandstone	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>

Dated features present at site

Historic Artifacts		Tobacco related	
Pottery (all)	20	Activity item(s)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Glass (all)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Human remain(s)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Architectural	307	Faunal material	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Furniture	<input type="checkbox"/>	Misc. kitchen	<input type="checkbox"/>
Arms	<input type="checkbox"/>	Floral material	<input type="checkbox"/>
Clothing	1	Misc.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Personal items	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

wooden structural members

Historic Features		Privy/outhouse		Depression/mound		Unknown	
Const feature	<input type="checkbox"/>	Well/cistern	<input type="checkbox"/>	Burial(s)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Foundation	<input type="checkbox"/>	Trash pit/dump	<input type="checkbox"/>	Railroad bed	<input type="checkbox"/>	shipwreck, vessel	
Cellar hole/cellar	<input type="checkbox"/>	Sheet midden	<input type="checkbox"/>	Earthworks	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Hearth/chimney	<input type="checkbox"/>	Planting feature	<input type="checkbox"/>	Mill raceway	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Postholes/molds	<input type="checkbox"/>	Road/walkway	<input type="checkbox"/>	Wheel pit	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Paling ditch/fence	<input type="checkbox"/>						

All quantities exact or estimated minimal counts

## Radiocarbon Data:

Sample 1:  +/-  years BP Reliability **Sample 2:**  +/-  years BP Reliability **Sample 3:**  +/-  years BP Reliability

Sample 4:  +/-  years BP Reliability **Sample 5:**  +/-  years BP Reliability **Sample 6:**  +/-  years BP Reliability

Sample 7:  +/-  years BP Reliability **Sample 8:**  +/-  years BP Reliability **Sample 9:**  +/-  years BP Reliability

Additional radiocarbon results available



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Description:

early 19th century, War of 1812 shipwreck, sailing vessel

Unknown

## External Samples/Data:

Collection curated at MAC Lab

Additional raw data may be available online

## Summary Description:

The Frenchtown Wreck #1 Site (18CE319) represents the remains of an American-built early 19th century sailing vessel. It is located in the Elk River near Frenchtown in the waters of Cecil County. The wreck was located during a remote sensing survey of the Elk River in October 1999. The Maryland Maritime Archeology Program (MMAP), part of the Maryland Historical Trust, was conducting the Upper River Survey in this area of Elk River. A team from East Carolina University's Program in Marine Studies, the Maryland Historical Trust, and volunteers, conducted a side scan sonar and magnetometer study. The survey was undertaken in light of proposed channel dredging in the river. A cartographic review indicated that the river reached depths of between 3.65-5.79 m (12'-15') in the historic past but today, only in a few natural and maintained narrow channels are the depths between 3.048-3.65 m (10'-12'), the majority of the river bottom being very shallow. The primary goal of the survey was to locate and identify all cultural resources inland, near shore and submerged in the upper Elk River. The researchers were particularly interested in investigating the waters for remains of an 1813 British attack. During the War of 1812, American vessels were destroyed in the Elk, Sassafras and Susquehanna Rivers. When the British attacked Frenchtown on April 29, 1813 they destroyed up to five nearby vessels along with several waterfront buildings. Historical records report that two vessels were packets (commercial vessels) that sailed between Baltimore and Frenchtown, one inshore and the second at anchor.

The 1999 survey located one historically significant vessel, designated as 18CE319. The account of an eyewitness who saw the British attack in 1813 placed a wreck's location almost exactly where the vessel found in 1999 was located; unfortunately, the eyewitness did not describe the vessel. Diver ground-truthing identified the wreck as an 18.29 m (60') long, burnt wooden vessel held together with iron fasteners and ballasted with stone. Two trenches measuring 1.524 m x 1.524 m x 15.24 cm (5'x5'x6") and 1 trench measuring 0.914 m x 5.48 m x 15.24 cm (3'x18'x6") were excavated at the bow, stern, and amidships near the bow area of the wreck respectively. The vessel appeared to be similar to historic descriptions of a 19th century packet sloop. The wooden vessel was constructed of paired frames fastened together by iron through bolts. Ceiling planking, outer hull planking, and the frames were all visible in part. Both the stem and the sternposts were located, with the sternposts visible 0.609-0.9144 m (2'-3') above the sediment. No evidence of propulsion machinery suggested that the vessel was sail power propelled.

The team returned in March 2000 to evaluate the site using high-resolution imaging with a MST Splash Proof side scan sonar as well as a newly developed 600 and a 1,200-kHz sensor. Although tree stumps, log and debris jams, and other obstructions interfered with survey work, the site was relocated. The sonar captured the vessel's general shape. The starboard side appeared to have broken away and was lying flat on the river bottom. The starboard hull, while more intact, disappeared in the sediment before reaching the stern. The sternpost appeared to be angled to the right instead of being vertical. Stones probably representing the vessel's ballast, and individual planking and frames located to the right of the stones, were also visible. Divers also probed the river bottom in the immediate area around the wreck in order to locate additional site components. None were found. Aided by diving lights, divers searched the visible portions of the structure for signs of burning. Nearly all of the upper hull surfaces as well as the bow and stern assemblies exhibited signs of burning.

In June 2000, the crew returned to the site for a Phase II archaeological survey. Goals of the Phase II study were to determine site integrity, construction features, and possibly the age of vessel. The excavation consisted of selective testing on targeted sections to identify diagnostic features. A baseline was established that extended from the bow to the stern. Four test excavations were done: two 1.524 m<sup>2</sup> unit were excavated, 1 at the bow and 1 at the stern, a 1.524 m x 1.82 m unit was excavated amidships, and a 0.3048 m x 16.15 m unit was excavated along the keelson. Excavation of the bow and the stern involved removing sediment with a water-induction dredge followed by mapping. Once mapping was complete, the area was reburied. Excavation of the keelson involved removing ballast stone in order to expose the keelson's sided surface, mapping the keelson, and then replacing the ballast stone. As artifacts were encountered they were mapped in situ and collected. Additional artifacts were recovered as they passed through the dredger and were collected in a floating sifting screen. A fairly precise location was recorded for artifacts found in the screen. This was possible because dredging is a slow process and the dredge would not have moved far from the original artifact location before the item was collected.

Excavation at the bow revealed a stempost, a stempost shoe or gripe, one frame, and the keelson. The gripe was fastened to the stempost by several iron square nails. The keelson was found to be complete and intact and measured 13.78 m (45.2') in length. The amidships trench uncovered the keelson, 3 sistered frame sets, a garboard strake, outer hull and ceiling planking, and a limber board. Excavation at the stern revealed sternposts, the end of the keel, a gudgeon, the last frame set, some planking, but no rudder.

Ten wood samples were collected in order to determine the wood type and possibly where the vessel was built. Samples from the rider, sternpost, gripe, outer hull and ceiling planking, keelson, and the stempost were all white oak (*Quercus alba*). The frame sample was composed of long leaf pine (*Pinus palustris*). White oak is common on the North American east coast and was, and is, extensively used in shipbuilding. Long leaf pine is found more commonly in southeastern North America and was often used for longitudinal framework.

Numerous artifacts were recovered from the test excavations at 18CE319. Architectural items (n=307) included 3 square rosehead spikes/nails, 2 square clinch nails, 2 possible rudder nails, and about 300 small lead fragments weighing approximately 0.95 kg (2.1 lbs). The lead fragments were included with the architectural materials because lead was used in areas exposed to water, such as scuppers or hawse pipes, and it was used as sheathing to protect the ship's hull. Kitchen items (n=20) included 10 red earthenware sherds and 10 blue-glazed, shell-edged pearlware sherds (minimum estimates). The single clothing item found was a brass button displaying a crown on top of fouled anchor on a horizontal lined field and border by a plain band inside of a rope. The crown was not added to the design until March 1812. This button design was common after that date and was produced for European and American militaries until the 1830s. In addition the items collected, over 20 drift bolts were also noted during the excavations.

The Frenchtown Wreck #1 Site (18CE319) represents the remains of a vessel whose construction, location, significant evidence of burning, wood analysis, and artifacts strongly suggested an American-built early 19th century sailing vessel. The ca. 18.29 m x 6.4 m (60'x21') vessel was constructed of wood frames, longitudinal timbers, planking and other structural scantlings secured together with iron fasteners. The bow exhibited typical construction features of a wooden vessel. The stern did not show any characteristics associated with propeller shafts. The vessel's light construction precludes it being a military vessel. A lack of armament also supports this conclusion. All the evidence strongly supports the hypothesis that 18CE319 was a packet ship burned by the British in 1813 during the War of 1812. However, the possibility that the vessel represents a merchantman of the same era which burned in an incident unrelated to the 1813 attack remains to be determined. Beyond clarifying the vessels destruction by the British in 1813, continued work at the wreck site was highly recommended for several reasons: it is easily accessible in shallow waters, it faces increased degradation by human and natural processes, and it represents a part of Cecil County's history and can contribute to the understanding of 19th century links with other Chesapeake and east coast cities.

MARYLAND  
HISTORICAL



TRUST

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Site Number:

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Prehistoric

Other name(s)

Historic

Brief

Description:

Unknown

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External Reference Codes (Library ID Numbers):