



Phase II and Phase III Archaeological Database and Inventory

Site Number: 18CH155

Site Name: W-T, CH-J1

Prehistoric

Other name(s) Guntower

Historic

Brief Description:

Late Archaic, Early, Middle, & possibly Late Woodland shell midden/pit

Unknown

Site Location and Environmental Data:

Maryland Archaeological Research Unit No. 11

SCS soil & sediment code Ek

Latitude 38.4266

Longitude -77.1126

Physiographic province Western Shore Coastal

Terrestrial site

Underwater site

Elevation 3 m

Site slope 0

Ethnobotany profile available

Maritime site

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

Ownership

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

Nearest Surface Water

Name (if any) Nanjemoy Creek

- | Saltwater | | Freshwater | |
|--|---|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Ocean <input type="checkbox"/> | Estuary/tidal river <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Stream/river <input type="checkbox"/> | Swamp <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Tidewater/marsh <input type="checkbox"/> | | Lake or pond <input type="checkbox"/> | Spring <input type="checkbox"/> |

Minimum distance to water is 0 m

Temporal & Ethnic Contextual Data:

Paleoindian site

Woodland site

Contact period site ca. 1820 - 1860

Archaic site

MD Adena

ca. 1630 - 1675 ca. 1860 - 1900

Early archaic

Early woodland

ca. 1675 - 1720 ca. 1900 - 1930

Middle archaic

Mid. woodland

ca. 1720 - 1780 Post 1930

Late archaic

Late woodland

ca. 1780 - 1820

Unknown historic context

Unknown prehistoric 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?

Domestic

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

Industrial

- Mining-related
- Quarry-related
- Mill
- Black/metalsmith
- Furnace/forge
- Other

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

Religious

- Church/mtg house
- Ch support bldg

Burial area

- Cemetery
- Sepulchre

Bldg or foundation

- Isolated burial
- 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

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



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Diagnostic Artifact Data:

Projectile Point Types			
Clovis	<input type="checkbox"/>	Koens-Crispin	<input type="checkbox"/>
Hardaway-Dalton	<input type="checkbox"/>	Perkiomen	<input type="checkbox"/>
Palmer	<input type="checkbox"/>	Susquehana	<input type="checkbox"/>
Kirk (notch)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Vernon	<input type="checkbox"/>
Kirk (stem)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Piscataway	<input type="checkbox"/>
Le Croy	<input type="checkbox"/>	Calvert	<input type="checkbox"/>
Morrow Mntn	<input type="checkbox"/>	Selby Bay	<input type="checkbox"/>
Guilford	<input type="checkbox"/>	Jacks Rf (notch)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Brewerton	<input type="checkbox"/>	Jacks Rf (pent)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Otter Creek	<input type="checkbox"/>	Madison/Potomac	<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"/> 1	Mockley	<input type="checkbox"/> 3
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					
Earthenware	Ironstone	<input type="checkbox"/>	Staffordshire	<input type="checkbox"/>	
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"/>
Buckley	<input type="checkbox"/>	North Devon	<input type="checkbox"/>	Porcelain	<input type="checkbox"/>
Creamware	<input type="checkbox"/>	Pearlware	<input type="checkbox"/>	Stoneware	<input type="checkbox"/>
				English Brown	<input type="checkbox"/>
				Eng Dry-bodied	<input type="checkbox"/>
				Nottingham	<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			
Flaked stone	<input type="checkbox"/> 10	Other fired clay	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ground stone	<input type="checkbox"/>	Human remain(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Stone bowls	<input type="checkbox"/>	Modified faunal	<input type="checkbox"/>
Fire-cracked rock	<input type="checkbox"/> 23	Unmod faunal	<input type="checkbox"/> 40
Other lithics (all)	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	Oyster shell	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Ceramics (all)	<input type="checkbox"/> 10	Floral material	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Rimsherds	<input type="checkbox"/>	Uncommon Obj.	<input type="checkbox"/> 1
		Other <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> charcoal	

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

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

Dated features present at site

Shell midden - charcoal assoc. w/ 1 Mockley body sherd

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

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

All quantities exact or estimated minimal counts

Radiocarbon Data:

Sample 1: 3260 +/- 75 years BP	Reliability	Sample 2: 3085 +/- 70 years BP	Reliability	Sample 3: 1860 +/- 40 years BP	Reliability
SI-4554: shell collected from 20 cmbs from eroding side of shell midden	Low	SI-4555: shell collected from 60 cmbs from eroding side of shell midden	Low	B-140958: small charcoal sample from test unit excavated w/in shell midden, submitted for AMS, assoc. w/ 1 Mockley body sherd	40
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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Late Archaic, Early, Middle, & possibly Late Woodland shell midden/pit

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External Samples/Data:

Collection curated at MAC

Additional raw data may be available online

Summary Description:

The Guntower Site (18CH155 or W-T, CH-J1) is an apparent shell midden site with possible Late Archaic, Early, & Middle Woodland occupations present. It is located on the Blossom Point Field Test Facility (BPFTF) on the east bank of Nanjemoy Creek in Charles County, Maryland. The site is situated on a dry flat surrounded by beach and wetlands. Soils at the site are of the Elkton series. The upper levels of the soil consist of between 5 and 50% oyster shells and fragments. The site is also situated within the boundaries of Site 18CH227, and may actually be a distinct component of this larger site.

This site was originally mapped by an amateur archeologist in the 1930s, but no report of excavations is known. In 1977 and 1980, some preliminary reconnaissance survey work re-identified the site, but no excavations were conducted within the site boundaries. During the 1980 study, 1 quartz & 2 quartzite flakes and 2 shell- and 4 sand-tempered potsherds were observed on the beach below the midden. Also as part of the 1980 study, samples of shell were obtained from the basal and sub-plow line portions of the eroding shell midden for radiocarbon dating. These yielded dates of 3260±75 radiocarbon years before present at 20 cm below the surface and 3085±70 radiocarbon years before present at 60 cm below the surface, placing the site in the Terminal Archaic or Early Woodland periods. The stratigraphic date reversal is problematic.

The first serious excavation work at the site was conducted in 1993 as part of a Phase I survey throughout the BPFTF. Limited subsurface testing (shovel test pit excavation) of the site was conducted. The site fell within survey area 9, just one of several survey areas examined throughout the BPFTF, where a total of 127 shovel test pits (STPs) were placed at 30 meter grid intervals. Only two of these STPs fell within the boundaries of 18CH155, and only one of these contained possible artifacts. The single STP produced a small quantity of shell in the surface soil horizon and a single piece of fire-cracked rock. The site was recommended as potentially eligible for listing on the NRHP, based on the idea that it may contain remnants of perishable food resources, which could contribute to a better understanding of aboriginal subsistence strategies. This recommendation necessitated Phase II testing as part of the BPFTF cultural resource management plan.

Phase II work was undertaken at Site 18CH155 from 1999 to 2001 as part of a multi-site Phase II effort. A visual inspection of the site from the bluff suggested that, compared to a photographic documentation from the 1980s, substantial erosion and midden loss had occurred. Through trial and error, an area clear of metal debris (the BPFTF is an unexploded ordnance area) was delineated above the midden deposit on the bluff. A 1 meter by 2 meter test unit was excavated in this area, with the primary goal of salvaging information that would otherwise be lost through shore erosion. This unit was oriented perpendicular to the bluff line. The unit was excavated in 10 cm arbitrary levels within natural stratigraphy to a depth of 10 cm into sterile subsoil. All soils were removed using hand methods (shovels and trowels) and screened through hardware cloth. In addition to the artifacts recovered, burnt wood samples were retained for radiocarbon dating, and two 10-liter soil samples were taken for paleobotanical analysis. For more details regarding the paleobotanical samples, see the linked ethnobotany profile.

The Phase II artifact recovery was generally scant, but included ceramics, stone tools, debitage, fire-cracked rock and hematite, burnt wood, and bone. The complete assemblage included 2 flaked stone tools (an argillite or slate drill and a small heat-treated quartz point tip reworked into an end scraper), 5 pieces of debitage, 4 ceramic sherds (1 Accokeek, 3 Mockley), 22 pieces of fire-cracked rock, 2 pieces of hematite, 5 floral remains, 14 pieces of animal bone (likely deer), 1 human incisor, and numerous shell fragments (clam and oyster).

Based on the Phase II research, Site 18CH155 appears to be a refuse pit/midden associated primarily with Native American oyster procurement and processing, and is likely a feature related to the larger, surrounding, multicomponent site 18CH227 (see the synopsis report for that site). Whole oyster shell valves composed 10 to 50 percent of the feature fill. Other faunal remains include numerous small bone fragments, some of which may be white-tailed deer. Paleobotanical analysis indicates the use of locally available forest resources (maple, hickory, and oak). One non-local wood fragment of interest was recovered (counted as a single uncommon object above); Osage Orange. Osage Orange is native to the interior portion of North America, including Texas and Oklahoma, although the oldest known Osage Orange tree is located in Virginia, and dates to the mid-17th century. It was a wood preferred for tool-making by Native Americans because of its elasticity and strength. It was used historically in the US to create barbed hedges before the invention of barbed wire (hence the colloquial name "hedge apple"). While the ethnobotanical remains include a range of wild plant resources (see ethnobotany profile), no cultivated plant remains were encountered. Temporally, the feature is associated with the Early to Middle Woodland Periods, based on the results of radiocarbon dating and diagnostics recovered. Environmental conditions present at Blossom Point during the Woodland Period would have supported diverse floral and faunal species, including but not limited to the estuarine resources shellfish, fish, and waterfowl. The site, as limited as the excavations were, appears to support the theory that the resource yields from hunting and gathering in coastal zones were so high that horticultural and/or agricultural activities were not necessarily advantageous.

Most of the feature appears to have been lost through erosion, as the deep pit-like portion of it was only observed in the extreme western portion of the unit, immediately adjacent to the bank. In addition, Phase II work has basically exhausted the research potential of the site. The 2001 excavations examined and recovered data on site functions, date, and prehistoric subsistence strategies. Additional work at the midden is unlikely to yield otherwise unobtainable additional data important to prehistory.

External Reference Codes (Library ID Numbers):

00005793, 97002182