



Phase II and Phase III Archaeological Database and Inventory

Site Number: 18CH156

Site Name: W-T, CH-J2

Prehistoric

Other name(s)

Historic

Unknown

Brief Description:

Late Archaic and Middle & Late Woodland shell midden & possible village or hamlet

Site Location and Environmental Data:

Maryland Archaeological Research Unit No. 11

SCS soil & sediment code MtB2

Latitude 38.4179

Longitude -77.0941

Physiographic province Western Shore Coastal

Terrestrial site

Underwater site

Elevation 5 m

Site slope 2-5%

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

Ocean

Estuary/tidal river

Tidewater/marsh

Minimum distance to water is 0 m

Freshwater

Stream/river

Swamp

Lake or pond

Spring

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

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

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"/> 1

Prehistoric Sherd Types

Marcey Creek	<input type="checkbox"/>	Popes Creek	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	Shepard	<input type="checkbox"/>	Keyser	<input type="checkbox"/>
Dames Qtr	<input type="checkbox"/>	Coulbourn	<input type="checkbox"/>	Townsend	<input type="checkbox"/>	Yeocomico	<input type="checkbox"/>
Selden Island	<input type="checkbox"/>	Watson	<input type="checkbox"/>	Minguannan	<input type="checkbox"/>	Monongahela	<input type="checkbox"/>
Accokeek	<input type="checkbox"/>	Mockley	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	Sullivan Cove	<input type="checkbox"/>	Susquehannock	<input type="checkbox"/>
Wolfe Neck	<input type="checkbox"/>	Clemson Island	<input type="checkbox"/>	Shenks Ferry	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Vinette	<input type="checkbox"/>	Page	<input type="checkbox"/>	Moyaone	<input type="checkbox"/>		
				Potomac Crk	<input type="checkbox"/> 120		

Historic Sherd Types

Earthenware		Ironstone	<input type="checkbox"/>	Staffordshire	<input type="checkbox"/>	Stoneware	
Astbury	<input type="checkbox"/>	Jackfield	<input type="checkbox"/>	Tin Glazed	<input type="checkbox"/>	English Brown	<input type="checkbox"/>
Borderware	<input type="checkbox"/>	Mn Mottled	<input type="checkbox"/>	Whiteware	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	Eng Dry-bodied	<input type="checkbox"/>
Buckley	<input type="checkbox"/>	North Devon	<input type="checkbox"/>	Porcelain	<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			
Flaked stone	<input type="checkbox"/> 695	Other fired clay	<input type="checkbox"/> 1
Ground stone	<input type="checkbox"/>	Human remain(s)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Stone bowls	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	Modified faunal	<input type="checkbox"/> 1
Fire-cracked rock	<input type="checkbox"/> 255	Unmod faunal	<input type="checkbox"/> 22
Other lithics (all)	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	Oyster shell	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Ceramics (all)	<input type="checkbox"/> 164	Floral material	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Rimsherds	<input type="checkbox"/> 6	Uncommon Obj.	<input type="checkbox"/> 15
		Other	<input type="checkbox"/>

Prehistoric Features

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

Lithic Material

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

Dated features present at site

Sec. C, Feat. 2 – pit hearth w/ debitage & FCR; Sec. C, Feat. 1 (postmold), 4 (hearth), & 5 (pit) in units w/ diagnostic artifacts (see text below)

Historic Artifacts			
Pottery (all)	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	Tobacco related	<input type="checkbox"/>
Glass (all)	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	Activity item(s)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Architectural	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	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"/> 3
		Other	<input type="checkbox"/>

Historic Features

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

All quantities exact or estimated minimal counts

Radiocarbon Data:

Sample 1: 640 +/- 60 years BP Reliability Sample 2: +/- years BP Reliability Sample 3: +/- years BP Reliability

B-140959: charcoal collected from shallow basin-shaped pit hearth extending to 49 cmbd, feature contained debitage & FCR also

High

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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External Samples/Data:

Collection curated at MAC

Additional raw data may be available online

Summary Description:

The W-T, CH-J2 Site (18CH156) is an apparent Late Archaic through Late Woodland shell midden site, possibly part of a small village or hamlet. It is located on the Blossom Point Field Test Facility (BPFTF) in southern Charles County, Maryland. It is situated on a north-south oriented shoreline bluff, overlooking Nanjemoy Creek to the west. The site area is wooded and has been cleared and plowed in the past. Site soils are moderately eroded Mattapex fine sandy loams.

The site was originally recorded in the 1970s, as a plowed shell scatter with a few lithic artifacts (a flake and some fire-cracked rock). Additional work was conducted at the site 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 7, just one of several survey areas examined throughout the BPFTF, where a total of 66 shovel test pits (STPs) were placed at 30 meter grid intervals. Ten of these STPs fell within the boundaries of 18CH156, and four of these contained 11 prehistoric artifacts. The assemblage from the 1993 Phase I survey included 1 quartz flake, 2 quartzite flakes, 3 quartz pieces of shatter, 1 quartzite piece of shatter, 3 fragments of fire-cracked rock, and a hammerstone. In addition, a number of other prehistoric remains were encountered in STPs along the shore-line bluff outside the 18CH156 site area as it had previously been defined. This led to the re-definition of the site area to encompass a linear area along the bluff roughly 615 meters by 60 meters in size. The site was recommended as potentially eligible for listing on the NRHP based on the idea that the middens might contain perishable floral and faunal remains of high research value. This recommendation necessitated Phase II testing as part of the BPFTF cultural resource management plan.

Phase II work was undertaken at Site 18CH156 between to spring of 1999 and the summer of 2000 as part of a multi-site Phase II effort. This investigation consisted of background research, shovel test pit (STP) and unit excavations, and laboratory analysis. Laboratory work included artifact analysis, flotation and paleobotanical analysis, and radiocarbon dating. Fieldwork began with the establishment of a site datum and laying out of a southerly baseline roughly parallel to the bluff edge. Transects were then established perpendicular to the baseline to the east and west at 10 m intervals for the excavation of STPs. Shovel test pits were excavated along transects at regular 10 m intervals, except in areas that were obviously disturbed, fell on slopes, or in drainages. Testing continued along transects until STPs were void of cultural material. The data from these 248 STPs were then used to place 20 larger formal units (seventeen 1 X 2 m, and three 1 X 1 m). Soils were removed stratigraphically from excavations, albeit with more control in the larger units than in the STPs. Arbitrary 10 cm levels were excavated within natural stratigraphy in the large excavation units. All matrix was dry screened through hardware cloth. Cultural materials (excepting shell, which was noted but not retained) recovered were collected and bagged according to provenience.

Excavations led to the recovery of 1,752 artifacts and the identification of several features. Based on laboratory work completed, Site 18CH156 has components ranging in date from the Late Archaic Period through the Late Woodland Period. Most of the materials found are associated with the Late Archaic and Late Woodland Periods. Most importantly, it was realized that Site 18CH156 really consists of three spatially discrete artifact concentrations, the boundaries of which have been determined in part by the landform. These areas were designated Sections A, B, and C.

Section A is located in the northern portion of the site and is roughly 155 meters long and 45 meters wide. Excavation of this area consisted of 92 STPs and five 1 X 2 meter test units. Forty-four positive STPs and all of the formal excavation units combined to produce 393 prehistoric and 2 historic to modern artifacts. Excavations also led to the identification of dense shell deposits across the southern portion of Section A. Cultural material was scattered lightly across the site area, with one exception. Over half of the artifacts recovered during the investigation (215 objects) were found in Test Unit 2, a unit placed to explore a dense shell deposit noted during shovel testing. Materials recovered from Test Unit 2 excavations include Late Woodland Potomac Creek pottery sherds, lithic debitage and tool fragments, fire-cracked rock, oyster shell, and burnt bone. This area was determined to contain a midden in the classic sense of the term; a feature containing refuse from a variety of activities.

The prehistoric artifact assemblage from Section A included 51 ceramic sherds, 1 piece of daub or a clay squeeze, 4 projectile point fragments, 3 biface fragments, 84 piece of debitage (including 4 cores/tested cobbles), 1 possible quartzite hammerstone, 1 piece of a steatite stone bowl, 238 pieces of fire-cracked rock, 6 pieces of hematite, 3 pieces of possible burnt nutshell, and a piece of burnt animal bone (probably deer). The ceramic assemblage consisted of 34 Potomac Creek sherds, 3 pieces of possible Pope's Creek pottery, and 14 unidentifiable sherds. Two of the pottery fragments appear to be rimsherds. Diagnostic projectile points in the lithic assemblage include a small quartz Lamoka point and a Savannah River/Holmes variant point. Points of these types are affiliated with the Late Archaic period. The hematite recovered from the site may have been used as a base for paint. The historic artifacts were a piece of glass and a whiteware sherd. Based on these findings, it seems that Section A is primarily a Late Woodland short-term campsite oriented primarily around seasonal oyster harvesting and processing. There is ephemeral indication of Late Archaic and Early Woodland occupation as well. Although none were identified during the Phase II investigation, it seems very likely that the site area contains additional prehistoric features (such as postmolds). These features are most likely to be encountered in the southern portion of Section A. It also seems likely, based on the results of shovel testing, that portions of this site have been lost through erosion. Two of the three STPs producing greater than three artifacts apiece were excavated immediately adjacent to the bluff overlooking the creek.

Section B is located to the south of Section A and is separated from it by a small low-lying area and a series of negative STPs. Phase II work in Section B was limited to the excavation of 31 STPs. Twenty-six artifacts were recovered from 12 positive STPs. These include 1 small and badly-eroded ceramic sherd, 11 fragments of lithic debitage, and 14 pieces of fire-cracked rock. No prehistoric diagnostic tools were found, nor were any historic artifacts. Thus, the data are inadequate for further interpretation.

Section C is located in the southern-most portion of the site and is separated from Section B by a low-lying area, a disturbed area, and a series of sterile STPs. Excavations in Section C consisted of 124 STPs and 27 square meters of formal test units (twelve 1 X 2 m and three 1 X 1 m). Seventy positive STPs and all of the formal excavation units combined to produce 1,325 prehistoric and 6 historic to modern artifacts. Excavations also led to the identification of dense shell deposits in the southern portion of Section C and several other features in the central portion. Cultural material was scattered across an area measuring roughly 180 m by 45 m, with four areas of high artifact density noted within.

The ten features encountered during the excavation of Section C were a possible prehistoric postmold (Feature 1), two possible prehistoric hearths (Features 2 and 4), a probable historic postmold (Feature 3), a small prehistoric pit feature (Feature 5), a dense shell midden concentration (Feature 6), and 4 natural tree root stains. Radiocarbon and flotation samples were taken from Feature 2 and flotation sample were taken from Features 5 and 6. Feature 2 was a



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shallow basin-shaped feature, measuring 50 cm X 55 cm in plan (oval) and extending to a depth of 49 cm below datum. Cultural material recovered from this feature included debitage, fire-cracked rock, and substantial quantities of wood charcoal. Dating of the charcoal yielded an uncalibrated radiocarbon date of 640 ± 60 years before present. When calibrated, this places the sample in the Late Woodland period with a calendrical date between AD 1272 and 1413. Flotation of a 10 liter soil sample from this feature led to the recovery of 7.06 grams of red oak charcoal and non-carbonized (i.e. recent) seed remains. Feature 5 is a small pit feature measuring roughly 30 cm in diameter and extending to a below surface depth of 49 cm. Feature fill included burnt wood and bone. No other artifacts were found in the pit, but materials recovered elsewhere in the same excavation unit included fire-cracked rock, debitage and stone tools, and Late Woodland pottery fragments. Materials recovered from flotation of a 10 liter soil sample included wood charcoal (hickory and indeterminate ring porous, and deciduous taxa), and non-carbonized seed remains. Feature 6 is a dense shell concentration containing 2 pieces of debitage. Materials recovered from a 10 liter flotation sample include 0.28 grams of wood charcoal (hickory, black walnut, and indeterminate); a black walnut shell fragment, and non-carbonized seed remains. A more detailed description of the paleobotanical assemblage is available in the linked ethnobotany profile.

The prehistoric artifact assemblage from Section C included 112 ceramic sherds, 6 projectile points, 3 bifaces, an axe-like flaked cobble tool, 576 fragments of debitage (including 12 cores/tested cobbles), 580 pieces of fire-cracked rock, 2 hammerstones, 9 pieces of hematite, 13 carbonized wood fragments, 1 burnt nutshell fragment, and 22 oyster shell pieces. The ceramic assemblage consisted of 86 Late Woodland Potomac Creek sherds, and 1 Pope's Creek sherd, and 3 Mockley sherds associated with the Middle Woodland. Other potsherds recovered were too small or fragmentary for further classification. Four of the sherds in the assemblage are rimsherds. Six diagnostic points or point fragments were found during the Phase II investigation of Section C. Five of the six are Late Archaic Savannah River (Holmes) points made from quartzite. A Late Woodland Levanna point was also recovered. Historic and modern materials from Section C are limited to 6 items including 2 pieces of coal, a brick fragment, 1 piece of window glass, 1 redware sherd, and a whiteware sherd. These items were distributed widely across the site area, and do not suggest the presence of a significant component.

Diagnostic materials and radiocarbon dating conducted suggest that Site 18CH156 Section C contains prehistoric components dating to the Late Archaic, Middle Woodland, and Late Woodland Periods. Very high debitage counts were found in association with four of these points and the Late Archaic component seems to be centered around the middle of Section C. Late Woodland materials recovered include numerous sherds of Potomac Creek pottery, a Levanna point, and several features (the pit hearth was C-14 dated and other features were encountered in units containing Late Woodland pottery). These materials tend to be concentrated to the northeast of, and overlapping with, the Late Archaic component. Middle Woodland materials were found in the extreme southern portion of Section C and are limited to a few potsherds. Based on the Phase II testing, it seems that Site 18CH156 Section C consists of a Late Archaic campsite and lithic workshop, and a Late Woodland Period campsite. Undiscovered features associated with both the Late Archaic and Late Woodland periods undoubtedly exist in the area. The dense shell deposits noted via shovel testing are separated from both the Late Archaic and Late Woodland occupation areas by a distance exceeding 75 meters. As such, it is unclear what association, if any, the midden has with either occupation. It is possible that the midden area is affiliated with another, separate occupation located to the west and consequently lost through shoreline erosion. The same may hold true for the ephemeral Middle Woodland presence detected at the site.

Based on the Phase II work conducted throughout 18CH156, it appears that Sections A and C of the site have significant ongoing research potential. With additional research, these sections of the site may provide information on the timing, subsistence strategies, settlement patterns, and technologies of, primarily, the Late Archaic and Late Woodland Periods. Subsistence and seasonality studies could be undertaken for the spatially distinct components. Careful large-scale block excavations may produce data useful in determining the date range, length, and intensity of occupations and may also permit an examination of settlement and population size. Intersite settlement patterns could also be examined as could cultural chronologies. Data obtained could aid in better understanding the timing of the change from generalized to focused subsistence strategies apparent during the Late Archaic and Early Woodland Periods. Cultural change is linked to environmental change, and additional testing at Site 18CH156 could lead to a better understanding of the environmental history of the Potomac River.

External Reference Codes (Library ID Numbers):

00005793, 97002182