



Phase II and Phase III Archaeological Database and Inventory

Site Number: 18CH302

Site Name: Laurel Branch

Prehistoric

Other name(s)

Historic

Brief Description:

late 18th-mid 20th century house site, prehistoric lithic scatter

Unknown

Site Location and Environmental Data:

Maryland Archaeological Research Unit No. 11

SCS soil & sediment code BgB,RsB

Latitude 38.6396

Longitude -77.0196

Physiographic province Western Shore Coastal

Terrestrial site

Underwater site

Elevation m

Site slope 0-5%

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) Unnamed tributary of Matta

- | Saltwater | | Freshwater | |
|---|--|--|--------------------------------|
| Ocean <input type="checkbox"/> | Estuary/tidal river <input type="checkbox"/> | Stream/river <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Swamp <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Tidewater/marsh <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Lake or pond <input type="checkbox"/> | Spring <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | |
| Minimum distance to water is 28 m | | | |

Temporal & Ethnic Contextual Data:

- Paleoindian site
- Archaic site
- Early archaic
- Middle archaic
- Late archaic
- Woodland site
- MD Adena
- Early woodland
- Mid. woodland
- Late woodland
- Unknown prehistoric context

- Contact period site
- ca. 1820 - 1860
- ca. 1630 - 1675
- ca. 1675 - 1720
- ca. 1720 - 1780
- ca. 1780 - 1820
- Unknown historic context
- Unknown context

Ethnic Associations (historic only)

- Native American
- African American
- Anglo-American
- Hispanic
- Asian American
- Unknown
- Other

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
 - Religious
 - 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
 - house site

Interpretive Sampling Data:

Prehistoric context samples Soil samples taken N

Flotation samples taken N Other samples taken

Historic context samples Soil samples taken N

Flotation samples taken N Other samples taken



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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"/>	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"/>	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"/>		

Historic Sherd Types

Earthenware		Ironstone	1	Staffordshire	<input type="checkbox"/>	Stoneware	
Astbury	<input type="checkbox"/>	Jackfield	<input type="checkbox"/>	Tin Glazed	2	English Brown	<input type="checkbox"/>
Borderware	<input type="checkbox"/>	Mn Mottled	<input type="checkbox"/>	Whiteware	79	Eng Dry-bodied	<input type="checkbox"/>
Buckley	<input type="checkbox"/>	North Devon	<input type="checkbox"/>	Porcelain		Nottingham	<input type="checkbox"/>
Creamware	5	Pearlware	15		4	Rhenish	1
						Wt Salt-glazed	19

All quantities exact or estimated minimal counts

Other Artifact & Feature Types:

Prehistoric Artifacts		Other fired clay	
Flaked stone	50	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	7	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"/>	Storage/trash pit	<input type="checkbox"/>
Midden	<input type="checkbox"/>	Burial(s)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Shell midden	<input 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

Fer quartzite	<input type="checkbox"/>	Sil sandstone	<input type="checkbox"/>
Jasper	<input type="checkbox"/>	Chalcedony	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Chert	<input type="checkbox"/>	Ironstone	<input type="checkbox"/>
Rhyolite	<input type="checkbox"/>	Argilite	<input type="checkbox"/>
Quartz	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Steatite	<input type="checkbox"/>
Quartzite	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Sandstone	<input type="checkbox"/>
		slate	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Dated features present at site

Numerous features containing diagnostic historic artifacts

Historic Artifacts		Tobacco related	
Pottery (all)	161	Activity item(s)	100
Glass (all)	953	Human remain(s)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Architectural	1538	Faunal material	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Furniture	5	Misc. kitchen	165
Arms	6	Floral material	<input type="checkbox"/>
Clothing	34	Misc.	459
Personal items	22	Other	<input type="checkbox"/>

Historic Features

Const feature	<input checked="" 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Cellar hole/cellar	<input type="checkbox"/>	Trash pit/dump	<input type="checkbox"/>	Railroad bed	<input type="checkbox"/>	piers	<input type="checkbox"/>
Hearth/chimney	<input type="checkbox"/>	Sheet midden	<input type="checkbox"/>	Earthworks	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Postholes/molds	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Planting feature	<input type="checkbox"/>	Mill raceway	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Paling ditch/fence	<input type="checkbox"/>	Road/walkway	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Wheel pit	<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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External Samples/Data:

Collection curated at

Additional raw data may be available online

Summary Description:

The Laurel Branch Site (18CH302) is principally the archeological remnants of a late 18th-mid 20th century dwelling site in the northwestern corner of Charles County, Maryland, not far from the border with Prince George's County. A lithic scatter of unknown prehistoric affiliation is also present at the site. The Laurel Branch site is situated just south of the U.S. Naval Reservation and occupies the western crest of a broad upland terrace. It is situated on sandy clay loam belonging to the Bourne series of soils. A house structure of the late 18th century (MIHP Number CH-370) stood on-site until the 1980s, when it was relocated to the National Colonial Farm in Accokeek, MD. The original building at Laurel Branch consisted of a 1½ storey frame structure with an exterior chimney on the west gable end flanked by sheds (pents). The house was divided laterally with the two rooms back to back in a pattern distinctively associated with southern Maryland. An addition constructed on the east side of the Laurel Branch house in the first half of the 19th century nearly doubled the building's size. Extensive repairs and renovations in the early 20th century obscured many details of the original structure prior to the archeological investigations described below.

A particularly important feature of the Laurel Branch house is a partially preserved riven oak clapboard attached to riven studs by hand-wrought nails found on the interior wall of the attic in the original structure. From remnants preserved elsewhere and nail patterns it was believed that the entire upstairs, ceiling, and walls, was originally covered in riven clapboard. Only one other example of this interior treatment is known from Maryland, at Marshall Hall (also in Charles County).

It was the impending removal of the Laurel Branch house to the National Colonial Farm, for use as a living history exhibit that led to the first professional archeological work at the site in 1987. Prior to removal of the structure, the National Park Service (NPS) and the Maryland Historical Trust (MHT) requested that a Historical American Building Survey report be completed because of its rare character. Several questions elucidated by the building survey were found to require archeological investigation. Thus, a testing program was initiated to locate the remnants of the original 18th century chimney and companion pents, a chimney on the 19th century addition, and to investigate architectural detail at the front and back entrances of the original building. It was also hoped that information concerning the location and type of associated outbuildings could be provided. During the 18 days of archeological fieldwork in the spring of 1987, a series of 93 shovel test pits, two 1.524 X 1.524 meter (5 X 5 ft) controlled excavation units, and several exploratory trenches were excavated in order to address these questions. In addition, extensive archival research was conducted as background for the archeological work.

Archival research reveals that the first documented reference to "Laurel Branch" is a patent of 1,000 acres granted to a Daniel Jenifer in 1671. Jenifer and his son (and heir) probably never lived on the tract, as they both had homes elsewhere among their vast land holdings in Maryland and Virginia. In 1696 Daniel's son sold Laurel Branch to William Dent of Charles County for 5,000 pounds of tobacco and 15 pounds sterling "money of England". Also a wealthy landowner and well-known in colonial society and politics, Colonel Dent (ca. 1660-1705) and his family actually resided at "Guyther", his plantation at Nanjemoy. In his 1702 will, probated in 1705, Col. Dent divided the Laurel Branch property into two 500 acre parcels. The southern tract, which includes 18CH302, was devised to his youngest child "little Elizabeth".

Around 1720, Elizabeth Dent married a Richard Tarvin. Elizabeth had inherited another property from relatives situated nearer Port Tobacco. Since Richard Tarvin held several local offices, including Justice of the Charles County Court in 1731, the Tarvins probably did not reside at Laurel Branch during the first decade or so of their marriage. By 1742, according to Richard Tarvin's will, the couple was living somewhere on the Laurel Branch tract. During the next 16 years the Laurel Branch plantation dwindled from 500 acres to 200 acres as Elizabeth Dent Tarvin struggled to support her remaining 5 children by selling parcels of land and taking out additional mortgages. In her will of 1759, probated in 1760, she bequeathed all of her land to her 3 unmarried daughters. In 1772, Basil Beale began paying the property taxes on Laurel Branch. Beale had recently married Elizabeth Tarvin (one of the three daughters of Elizabeth Dent Tarvin) and had joined the household. The 1783 tax assessment describes the house at Laurel Branch as a "middling good dwelling" with "2 indifferent outhouses". No Tarvins or Basil Beales are listed for Charles County in the First Federal Census of 1790 and it is believed the family moved to Prince George's County at around this time and possibly as early as 1785. In 1785, Basil Beale cleared the Laurel Branch property title by finally paying off the monies Elizabeth Dent Tarvin had borrowed against the property from her son George. Basil Beale paid George Tarvin of Hampshire, VA "...son and surviving heir of George Tarvin late of Chas. Co. MD dec..." 55 pounds for "...pt of Laurell Branch with all buildings".

Ann Tarvin of Prince George's County, the remaining unmarried sister and daughter of Elizabeth Dent Tarvin, is recorded as having sold the Laurel Branch property to a Thomas Martin, of Charles County, in 1794. In this deed Ann reserved an area of land for a "...burying ground (of her) mother and sister Elizabeth Beale...". When Thomas died in 1816, the property was inherited by his son Michael. This Michael Martin, who resided at Laurel Branch until 1844 may be the one responsible for doubling the size of the house with the 19th century additions. Members of the Martin family continued to occupy Laurel Branch until ca. 1874 when the property was signed over to a Caroline Jones who held a mortgage on the farm. From this time on, it appears that Laurel Branch was occupied by tenant farmers rather than the various owners of the property.

When fieldwork commenced at Laurel Branch, dismantling of the house had been initiated several months prior and piles of debris were scattered about the grounds. An open well was located in the backyard, immediately north of the structure, and was full of bricks from the demolition of the interior stove chimneys. Large tire ruts were prominent in the yard on the east and west sides of the house. Also, the yard area dropping away from the building towards the southwest had suffered considerably from erosion. This area was deemed to be too disturbed to warrant subsurface testing, but after most of the demolition trash and brush had been removed, the areas immediately around the structure were accessible.

A grid was established on a north/south axis, 20 degrees west of north, running parallel to the west wall of the house and the area around the (then) standing structure was topographically mapped. Two series of shovel test pits (STPs) were excavated. The first group consisted of 40 STPs placed 46 cm (1.5 ft) from the structure at 91 cm (3 ft) intervals and wrapping around all four sides of the building. The second series of shovel test pits were placed on grid in the yard areas at 3.05 meter (10 ft) intervals. Four additional shovel tests were excavated at 1.524 meter intervals on the N300 line of the grid. This increased coverage had been planned for the entire study area but the data recovered did not warrant the time expended. Another 2 STPs, 1.524 meters apart, were excavated below the floor in the east front room of the structure in order to investigate an area that was probably yard in the late 18th and early 19th centuries. In total, 93 STPs were excavated. These holes were on the average 25-30 cm in diameter and 23-30 cm deep. All soil matrix was screened through hardware cloth, the stratigraphy recorded, and all artifacts were retained for analysis.

Two 1.524 X 1.524 m test squares were excavated by natural stratigraphic layers. These test units were placed at specific locations in order to investigate the



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potential for remains of the 18th century chimney and flanking pents, and to attempt to date the construction of the original two cell structure. In addition, six exploratory test cuts/trenches of varying dimensions were excavated at select locations immediately adjacent to the exterior of the structure in order to expose anticipated features in specific horizontal locations at subsoil. The overlying soil matrix, ranging from 15-30 cm was removed with a flat shovel down to subsoil. Any diagnostic artifacts observed during this process were collected. The soil matrix from the exploratory trenches on the west side of the house at the north corner was screened through hardware cloth and all artifacts were retained since this area appeared to contain the greatest concentration of 18th century material. Due to the disturbed nature of the soil stratigraphy, all provenience information was suspect unless the artifacts were within features that extended into subsoil. Fourteen features were encountered during excavation of the 1.524 m test squares and the exploratory trenches. Initially, one half of each feature was excavated and the matrix screened through hardware cloth, and the profile was recorded. The smaller features were completely excavated in order to recover a larger artifact sample.

Under the direction of the project architectural historian, the floor boards of the house were partially removed from the two west rooms and the southeast room on the ground floor. The floorboards in the western half of the structure were narrow and circular sawn and their removal facilitated the investigation of the floor joists by the historic architect and of the interior west wall and center corner hearth locations by the archeologists. Floor boards in the southeast room were thought to be original to the structure (no circular sawn) and only a few were judiciously removed so that the archeologist could sample in the area that would have been yard between the time of the Phase I construction and the Phase II addition. Archeological investigations in the interior of the structure consisted of removing large areas of 20th century fill along the west wall and the 2 STPs in the southeast room. Diagnostic artifacts were collected when possible from the fill along the west wall.

Features encountered during the 1987 study at 18CH302 include postholes and postmolds for the 19th/20th century entranceway at the west-end front door, construction trench remnants along the west wall of the structure, postmolds for the north pent, a posthole and postmold for a 20th century wraparound porch, a construction trench along the interior of the south wall at the southwest corner of the structure, a possible pier support of unknown function, the northeast postmold for the south pent, and a construction trench along the front of the structure. The interpretation of these features is discussed below.

Historic artifacts recovered during the 1987 fieldwork at Laurel Branch include 87 activity items, 1,501 architectural artifacts, 33 clothing remains, 5 furniture objects, 598 kitchen-related artifacts, 21 personal items, 3 tobacco-related objects, 6 arms items, and 453 miscellaneous objects. The activity items include 6 toy parts (3 glass marbles, 2 clay marbles, a bisque doll part, & a piece of phonographic record), 29 pieces of lamp glass, 23 pieces of miscellaneous hardware (2 metal nuts, a metal rivet, a metal spring, a metal bolt fragment, a metal strap fragment, 3 metal washers, 2 corroded chain fragments, 1 iron handle fragment, 4 screws, and 7 pieces of rubber gasket), 7 tools (3 fragments of a folding wood rule, 2 possible iron farm tools, a corroded cultivator fragment, & a lead fishing weight), 2 stable items (a possible bridle/saddle buckle, and a horseshoe), 18 auto-related objects (a plastic light fragment & 17 pieces of auto glass), and a piece of pencil lead. The architectural assemblage consisted of 1 piece of handmade brick, 495 pieces of other brick, 352 mortar fragments, 15 pieces of plaster, 286 window glass fragments (4 are colonial), 305 nails (7 handwrought, 34 cut, 121 wire, & 143 unidentified), 1 spike, 3 staples, a screen door hook, 2 possible hinge fragments, 5 electrical objects (1 piece of copper wire, 2 pieces of rubber insulated wire, a piece of porcelain insulator, & a glass fuse), 9 linoleum fragments, 3 wood molding pieces, 19 wood post fragments, a piece of painted fiberboard, and 3 asbestos fragments. Among the 33 clothing items were 18 buttons (1 iron, 3 glass, 9 shell, 1 mother of pearl, 1 wooden, 2 plastic, & 1 possible Bakelite), a fragment of string, a brass rivet, a strap buckle, 9 leather fragments, 2 complete men's shoes, and a small pair of scissors. The furniture items were 2 cupric curtain rings, 2 possible clock gears, and a bed spring. Kitchen-related artifacts include 151 ceramic sherds, 286 pieces of kitchen glass (part of a Colonial tumbler, 25 pieces of table glass, 10 Colonial wine bottle fragments, 18 blown bottle glass fragments, 12 blown-in-mold bottle glass fragments, 12 machine-made bottle glass fragments, 5 jar fragments, 198 miscellaneous container glass shards, & 5 milk glass lid liners), 13 metal canning jar lid fragments, a rubber canning jar seal, 15 bottle caps, 36 tin can fragments, a corroded iron knife blade, a corroded iron spoon bowl, a stainless steel knife blade, a bottle opener fragment, an aluminum foil fragment, 2 sardine can keys, 43 animal bones, 1 gastropod shell, 27 oyster shells, 5 eggshells, 10 persimmon seeds, a cherry pit, a watermelon seed, and a corncob fragment. Among the ceramic sherds are 2 pieces of refined earthenware, 2 tin-glazed earthenware sherds, 1 piece of agateware, 5 creamware, 13 pearlware, 1 piece of Chinese porcelain, 3 pieces of porcelain, 73 fragments of whiteware, 15 pieces of redware, 1 sherd of yellowware, 1 sherd of ironstone, 19 white salt-glazed stoneware sherds (17 scratch blue), 1 Rhenish stoneware sherd, 11 pieces of miscellaneous stoneware, and 3 unidentified ceramic sherds. The 21 personal artifacts recovered include 1 porcelain figurine, a milk glass figurine or vase fragment, 3 jewelry items (an oval terra cotta bead, a brown glass bead, and a French religious medal), 4 comb fragments (2 plastic, a Bakelite, & 1 bone), a plastic hair curler fragment, a broken eyeglass lens, 3 mirror fragments, 6 coins (a corroded dime, a Buffalo Nickel, 3 corroded US pennies, & an Indian head penny), and a door key fragment. Tobacco-related artifacts include 2 white ball clay pipe bowl pieces, and a plastic pipe stem. All 6 arms objects were .22 caliber shell casings. The miscellaneous objects encountered during the 1987 excavations were 314 unidentified glass fragments, 44 unidentified metal pieces, 1 piece of chrome, 4 pieces of stone, an unidentified piece of black rubber, 22 pieces of plastic, 4 charcoal fragments, a piece of Styrofoam, 27 coal pieces, 9 fragments of turtle shell, and 26 hardened chunks of tar.

In addition to the historic artifacts, 4 prehistoric artifacts were encountered. These include a quartz biface fragment, 2 quartz flakes, and 1 quartzite flake. These artifacts offer little information in themselves concerning prehistoric occupations at 18CH302.

The house at Laurel Branch was determined to be a significant historical resource and eligible for listing on the NRHP. The archeological excavations aided in this determination by finding evidence to support the date of construction of the original house in the 3rd quarter of the 18th century. The creamware and several pieces of "debased" scratch blue stoneware ceramics both date to this time period. No direct evidence was uncovered for the 18th century chimney postulated to have stood at the west gable end of the house. Three features were encountered at subsoil that may represent posts for flanking frame pents attached to the exterior chimney. These pents were found to be 1.22 meters (4 ft) deep and their locations indicate that the chimney base would have been 3.66 meters (12 ft) wide. The chimney foundation had apparently been totally robbed out by later renovation activities. No evidence was found for either outer edge of the pents, thus they could have been 91 cm (3 ft) to 1.83 m (6 ft) wide.

The foundation along the front of the house is believed to date to the early/mid-19th century. At this time nearly all the floor joists in the original structure had to be replaced and a continuous hewn sill was placed along the entire front foundation tying the two structures together. The east floor sill of the original structure was the only one left in place and it was nearly rotted away. It could be suggested that if all the original sills and joists had been laid on the ground when the house was first constructed, that they could all have been in bad shape by the time of the 19th century changes to the structure.

No evidence was found for a 19th century exterior chimney on the west side of Laurel Branch. The hearth is obvious from the interior, but nothing was encountered during archeological excavations. Excavations on the interior of the structure at the location of two cater-cornered hearths that shared the exterior 18th century chimney found that the hearths had probably been removed in the early 1940's. The west foundation wall in this area was completely rebuilt at the same time. Two small entranceway porches or covers were found at doorways of the house. These small porches were apparently only around 91 cm



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square and possibly date to the application of "Eastlake" trim dating to ca. 1900. They were removed when a wraparound porch was constructed in the 1940s.

The findings from the 1987 fieldwork at Laurel Branch aided in interpretive efforts for the National Colonial Farm, and the house itself was removed to its new home in Accokeek, Maryland. However, the former location of the house continued to be designated as historic site 18CH302.

The site was the subject of some archeological attention as a part of two Phase I surveys, one in 1997 and the other in 2005. In 1997 archeological investigations and evaluations were conducted prior to the construction of the Philip's Meadow subdivision. The project area, which included 18CH302, was to be impacted by the removal of selected areas of woodland, and by the construction of residential structures, roads, sewer lines, and other associated improvements. In addition, wetland areas would be impacted, which necessitated the issuance of a wetland permit by the US Army Corps of Engineers. Applications for this permit automatically triggered compliance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 as well as state laws related to historic/prehistoric resources and a Phase I survey was undertaken.

The Laurel Branch site fell within the central portion of the subdivision project area, in a location designated as "Area C". A baseline was laid out across the site on a bearing of 298° and a series of eleven transects were extended south at 15 m intervals from the baseline at bearings of 208°. A total of 60 shovel tests were excavated at 15 m intervals along these transects. Thirteen planned STPs were not excavated due to excessive slope, within standing structures, or obvious surface disturbances. Shovel tests measured 35 cm in diameter and were excavated to a minimum depth of 40 cm below surface or 10 cm into culturally sterile subsoil. In areas in which buried cultural deposits were suspected, STPs were excavated to a minimum depth of 60 cmbs or 20 cm into culturally sterile subsoil.

Cultural materials were recovered from 24 of the 60 STPs excavated. Prehistoric artifacts were found in 8 shovel tests, historic artifacts in 3, and both prehistoric and historic artifacts in 13 shovel tests. No surface or subsurface features associated with the site were identified during shovel testing. A total of 50 prehistoric artifacts and 125 historic artifacts were found during the 1997 study.

The historic assemblage collected during the 1997 Phase I work includes 13 activity items, 37 architectural objects, 1 clothing artifact, 66 kitchen-related artifacts, 1 personal item, 1 tobacco-related artifact, and 6 miscellaneous objects. The activity items include 9 pieces of lamp glass, 1 toy (a marble), 1 metal washer, a phonographic record piece, and a horseshoe. The architectural remains were 14 pieces of window glass, a bolt/bracket piece, a machine cut nail, 18 wire nails, 2 unidentified nails, and a synthetic construction object. The singular clothing item is a shell button. Kitchen-related items are 2 pieces of salt-glazed stoneware (brown and gray), 2 pieces of pearlware, 6 sherds of whiteware, 2 pieces of table glass, 2 blown-in-mold bottle fragments, 46 machine-made bottle glass fragments, 1 other container glass fragment and a piece of melted kitchen glass, a utensil handle, 1 animal bone, and 2 oyster shells. The personal object is a ceramic figurine and the tobacco-related artifact is a reed-stem pipe bowl. The miscellaneous objects are 5 unidentified iron/steel objects and 1 piece of coal.

The mean date of occupation suggested by the dates of manufacture of the diagnostic materials, excluding whiteware, was 1825, with an occupation range of 1781-1870. However, the predominance of post-1890 artifacts suggested that occupation continued through the early or middle 20th century. These results corresponded with the findings of the 1987 data recovery project. The historic artifacts tended to be concentrated in the former location of the house and near an extant garage. A diffuse scatter of materials also was noted west of the former house location. Only 6 historic artifacts were recovered from a sub-plowzone context. The presence of artifacts beneath the modern plowzone, the ambiguity of the soil profile, and the documented presence of a second plowzone in the central portion of the site suggest that sub-surface disturbances are quite extensive.

Prehistoric artifacts encountered in 1997 included 1 multi-directional core, 42 fragments of debitage, and 7 fragments of fire-cracked rock. Chalcedony, slate, quartz, and quartzite were the lithic raw material types represented in the assemblage. Debitage included 11 secondary flakes, 18 non-cortical flakes, and 13 pieces of shatter. The prehistoric artifacts were distributed evenly across most of the survey area, with slight concentrations of materials noted along the drainage in the eastern portion of the survey area. Three prehistoric artifacts were recovered from intact stratigraphic contexts beneath the plowzone.

The second Phase I survey to deal with Laurel Branch was conducted in 2005 prior to the construction of the Deer Park Estates Development in Charles County, Maryland. The project was to involve grading of the landscape, clearing of portions of woodlot, and the construction of infrastructure and of 53 house lots. These activities would, again, impact wetlands; requiring the issuance of a US Army Corps of Engineers 404 permit. Thus, a Phase I survey was instituted. The site, as previously defined, was not within the parcel to be impacted by the development, but was situated on the adjoining subdivision, constructed in the interim between 1997 and 2005.

A shovel testing program was initiated as part of the 2005 Phase I survey. Three shovel tests excavated near the southeastern corner of the project area yielded cultural material that was thought to represent an extension of the Laurel Branch site beyond its previously identified boundaries. Two shovel tests yielded prehistoric lithic artifacts, which the third STP yielded prehistoric lithic and historic artifacts. Artifacts recovered were consistent with artifacts recovered during the previous Phase I survey conducted in 1997. The artifacts consisted of 3 unmodified quartz secondary flakes and a fragment of an aqua-colored bottle glass. The horizontal spread of the artifacts was quite diffuse and all were recovered from the plowzone.

Archeological research at Laurel Branch, Site 18CH302, revealed intact features and deposits in the immediate vicinity of the original standing structure. These features and artifacts were useful for interpretation, but any remaining intact deposits would have been largely altered by removal of the structure to the National Colonial Farm. Such intact deposits were not encountered throughout the surrounding grounds within the rest of the site. These deposits were found to be largely plow-disturbed and contained a mix of both prehistoric and historic artifacts. As such, Site 18CH302 should no longer be considered capable of addressing ongoing research questions related to Maryland prehistory or history.

External Reference Codes (Library ID Numbers):

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