



# Phase II and Phase III Archaeological Database and Inventory

Site Number: 18CH344

Site Name: Wills Family Cemetery

Prehistoric

Other name(s)

Historic

Unknown

Brief Description:

mid-19th to early 20th century family cemetery, moved

## Site Location and Environmental Data:

Maryland Archaeological Research Unit No. 11

SCS soil & sediment code

Latitude 38.4823

Longitude -76.9728

Physiographic province Western Shore Coastal

Terrestrial site

Underwater site

Elevation 50 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) Unnamed tributary of Wills

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

Minimum distance to water is 300 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  Y
- ca. 1630 - 1675  Y
- ca. 1675 - 1720  Y
- ca. 1720 - 1780
- ca. 1780 - 1820
- Unknown historic context
- Unknown context

### Ethnic Associations (historic only)

- Native American
- African American
- Anglo-American  Y
- 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

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

gravestones

## 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		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

<b>Earthenware</b>		Ironstone	<input type="checkbox"/>	Staffordshire	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Stoneware</b>	
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"/>	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"/>	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 type="checkbox"/>
Chert	<input type="checkbox"/>	Ironstone	<input type="checkbox"/>
Rhyolite	<input type="checkbox"/>	Argilite	<input type="checkbox"/>
Quartz	<input type="checkbox"/>	Steatite	<input type="checkbox"/>
Quartzite	<input type="checkbox"/>	Sandstone	<input type="checkbox"/>
		European flint	<input type="checkbox"/>
		Basalt	<input type="checkbox"/>
		Unknown	<input type="checkbox"/>
		Other	<input type="checkbox"/>

Dated features present at site

Dated grave markers.

Historic Artifacts		Tobacco related	
Pottery (all)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Activity item(s)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Glass (all)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Human remain(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Architectural	80	Faunal material	<input type="checkbox"/>
Furniture	35	Misc. kitchen	<input type="checkbox"/>
Arms	<input type="checkbox"/>	Floral material	<input type="checkbox"/>
Clothing	12	Misc.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Personal items	4	Other	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
		gravestones	<input type="checkbox"/>

### Historic Features

Privy/outhouse	<input type="checkbox"/>	Depression/mound	<input type="checkbox"/>	Unknown	<input type="checkbox"/>
Const feature	<input type="checkbox"/>	Burial(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Other	<input type="checkbox"/>
Foundation	<input type="checkbox"/>	Well/cistern	<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:  +/-  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:

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Unknown

## External Samples/Data:

Collection curated at

Additional raw data may be available online

## Summary Description:

The Wills Family Cemetery (18CH344) is a small 19th and early 20th century cemetery located near Bel Alton in Charles County, Maryland. The cemetery included 8 graves and 7 monuments, 2 of the graves having been marked by 1 stone. All of the monuments represent a high degree of artistic merit; the designs of 6 of the monuments are thought to be unique in this locality. Four of the graves were marked by ledgers set on marble bases and 2 by a combination of vertical monuments and ledgers, also of marble. The remaining graves were marked by a rough-cut granite monument and simple, granite footstones. Very little else is known about the cemetery due to the circumstances of archeological recovery in 1990, when the graves were moved to a nearby second family cemetery. Most of what is known about the site comes from archival work conducted as background to the removal and re-interment. The site is situated on land that was once part of a tract known as "Preference".

Preference (CH-73) was the dwelling plantation of Dr. Francis R. Wills, the son of John B. Wills, Jr. and his first wife, Ann Floyd. The Preference estate bordered another family estate, Johnstontown, on the west. Dr. Wills, a graduate of the School of Medicine of the University of Maryland, lived in the town of Port Tobacco until moving to Preference in the early 1840s. His first wife, Catherine Fowke (1810-1842), was buried at her ancestral home, Gunston (CH-28), several miles southwest of Port Tobacco. Two of their children, William (1836-1839), and Augusta (1840-1842), were also buried at Gunston. Several years after his wife's death, Dr. Wills married Theresa Olivia Hughes of Bryantown.

John Baptist Wills III (1831-1859), the eldest son of Dr. Francis Wills, was the first member of the Wills family to be interred at Preference. It was about that same time that Dr. Wills moved the remains of his mother, Ann Floyd Wills, from a then-abandoned cemetery at Mt. Carmel, to Preference. Subsequent burials at Preference included C. Ellen Wills (1861-1862), John Baptist Wills IV (1861-1883), Dr. Francis R. Wills (1803-1872), T. Olivia Wills (1828-1881), Martha (Wills) Burch (d. 1909), and Mary Wills (d. 1912).

Following the death of Dr. Francis Wills, Preference passed in ownership to his widow, and after her death to their sons, Thomas and James. The farm was afterwards sold, and in the conveyance no provision was made regarding the family cemetery. By the 1930s the headstone marking the grave of John B. Wills IV had toppled forward, shattering the ledger fronting it and the urns that ornamented the headstone and footstone. In the 1940s or 1950s the cemetery was cleared of undergrowth, the stones righted, and concrete footings provided for all of the monuments. The site was then enclosed by a fence fashioned from galvanized pipe.

About 1975, that part of the Preference farm encompassing the cemetery was subdivided for residential development. Again, no provision was made for access or maintenance of the cemetery. Eventually, a home was built immediately adjacent to the site. In early 1990, in response to increasing pressure by the owner of the lot on which the cemetery was located, as well as from neighboring property owners, the decision was made by the Wills family to relocate the graves and monuments. It was determined that the most suitable location for the remains was at the site of another family cemetery associated with the Wills family on the old Johnstontown tract. Fortunately, the owner of this tract was amenable and the Maryland Historical Trust (MHT) held a historic preservation easement on the cemetery in question.

Preparation of a measured site plan of the cemetery, scaled plans and elevations of the monuments, as well as photodocumentation of the site, was completed prior to the removal of the monuments and burials. Plans were also made for archeological monitoring of the exhumation of the graves and removal of the monuments by contractors. Unfortunately, MHT staff were not notified by the contractors of the date for the exhumations and the owner of the nearby Johnstontown cemetery was only notified hours prior. Fortunately, this owner, who had prepared the aforementioned site plans and documentation, was able to get to the site just before removal and document to some degree the exhumation of human remains. Correspondence between this individual and MHT staff describes a scene in which an agitated property owner is pushing contractors to conduct exhumations as quickly as possible, despite the lack of archeological oversight, while a visibly distraught member of the Wills family looks on and the owner of the Johnstontown property tries to document what he can.

Grave No. 1 was that of C. Ellen Wills. Ellen was the twin sister of John B. Wills IV. Her body had been placed in a wooden, 6-sided coffin. The grave had been dug to a depth of 1.27 meters (4 ft 2 in) below grade, and a bed of mortar laid at the bottom. After the coffin was lowered a wooden framework was laid over the coffin to support an arched brick cover. A layer of mortar was applied over the brick cover, and the area between it and grade level filled in with smooth stones of assorted sizes. The grave opening measured approximately 1.27 meters in length and 56 cm (1 ft 10 in) in width. The skeletal remains were remarkably complete considering Ellen's age at death. Other than fragments of the coffin and the wooden lid that supported the masonry covering, and the skeleton, no other artifacts were revealed.

Grave No. 2 was that of John B. Wills. Although a considerable amount of loose brick and mortar was revealed when the grave was opened, no skeletal remains or related artifacts were found. The grave was excavated to a depth of about 1.52 meters (5 ft) below grade, at which point the ground had clearly not been previously disturbed. The strata of the sides of the opening showed a well-defined layer of a chalky, lime-like substance. The fact that this was the only grave that did not yield skeletal remains was of concern and interest, however, according to the cemeteries contractor this was not unusual. Archival evidence suggests that this grave was originally constructed in a manner similar to Grave No. 1.

Grave No. 3 was that of Ann C. Wills. Ann's remains were moved from Mt. Carmel, where she had been interred in 1811, to 18CH344 about 1859. The remains retrieved from the original burial site were placed in a small wooden coffin and interred in precisely the same manner as Grave No. 1, with a mortar-laid, arched, brick cover over the coffin, and stones above. The skeletal remains included the skull and the larger leg, arm, and pelvic bones. Other than small fragments of the coffin, no associated artifacts were found.

Grave No. 4 was that of John B. Wills III. In addition to having the largest and most sophisticated monument, this grave was of considerable interest for the fact that the coffin was enclosed within a brick vault overlaid with 5 courses of evenly laid brick. The masonry work was skillfully done and far superior to that of the 3 other graves (1, 3, and 7) where vault-like enclosures were found. Here, the bottom of the grave was paved with brick and the 2 side walls built up with brick to the level of the top of the 6-sided wooden coffin. On the interior of the crypt the walls were built inward to follow the configuration of the coffin. After the coffin was placed it was covered by a wooden lid over which an arched roof was built. The two ends of the crypt were sealed with brick as well. The top of the crypt was about 41 cm (1 ft 4 in) below grade. The exterior dimensions of the crypt itself were approximately 2.5 meters (8 ft 2 in) in length and 1 meter (3 ft 4 in) in width. The crypt yielded a significant amount of skeletal remains, fragments of the coffin and overlying wooden cover, 6 pieces of ornate



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brass coffin handles, 2 lock mechanisms, a fragment of a brass belt buckle, and several small shirt buttons.

Grave No. 5 was that of Martha Burch. In this instance the body was interred in a grave dug to a depth just slightly under 1.82 meters (6 ft). The body was contained in a rectangular, wooden casket with wooden bar-like handles fastened to each side of the casket by silver plated mounts. After lowering the casket in the grave, it was covered over with a layer of cement and then backfilled with dirt. The grave yielded skeletal remains, casket hardware, scraps of clothing and casket lining, and tortoise shell hair combs.

Grave No. 6 was that of Mary E. Wills. The only significant difference between this grave and Grave No. 5, was the absence of mortar or brick over the casket. Objects encountered were skeletal remains, casket hardware similar to that found in Grave No. 5, fragments of clothing, and tortoise shell hair combs.

Grave No. 7 is the grave of Dr. Francis R. Wills. Dr. Wills was interred in a six-sided wooden coffin laid in a vaulted crypt similar to, but not as skillfully built as that of Grave No. 4. Also, there was no brick or stone used to fill the grave above the crypt as found in Graves 1, 3, and 4. The skeletal remains were nearly complete, the size of the bones suggesting that Dr. Wills stood well over 6 feet tall. The lower jaw was deeply worn, suggesting that he had lost his teeth many years previous to his death. In addition to the skeletal remains, ornate coffin handles, fragments of clothing and coffin lining, and large, leather buckle straps that possibly ornamented the coffin were retrieved.

Grave No. 8 was the grave of T. Olivia Wills. Excavation of this grave revealed that the body had been interred in a wooden coffin or casket at a depth of about 1.98 meters (6 ft 6 in) below grade, and that the coffin had been covered by brick, possibly in a manner similar to that found in Graves 1 and 3. This had apparently collapsed as the coffin disintegrated. Skeletal remains and several coffin handles were recovered.

Following the exhumation of the graves, the openings were back-filled and the site graded and seeded. The four corners of the pipe fence that enclosed the cemetery were marked with steel pegs. An agreement reached between the property owner and the Wills family provided for a permanent marker to be placed on the site recording the names of those who were interred at 18CH344 and stating that the graves and monuments were moved to Johnsontown. On September 4th, 1990 a concrete container into which the skeletal remains and other artifacts recovered from 18CH344 were placed was buried at Johnsontown. Excavation of the burial site was done by hand and by mechanical means in a location previously disturbed by trenching for a water line no longer in use. No artifacts or evidence of a potential archeological site was revealed during the excavation of this area. New foundations were provided for the monuments and each was re-erected in precisely the same order and configuration as they existed at 18CH344.

Site 18CH344 retains no significant research potential.

## External Reference Codes (Library ID Numbers):

18CH344 SF