



Phase II and Phase III Archaeological Database and Inventory

Site Number: 18CH699

Site Name: Dobson Property

Prehistoric

Other name(s) MIHP # CH-228

Historic

Unknown

Brief Description: late 18th-early 19th century house ruin

Site Location and Environmental Data:

Maryland Archaeological Research Unit No. 10

SCS soil & sediment code

Latitude 38.5860 Longitude -76.8923

Physiographic province Western Shore Coastal

Terrestrial site

Underwater site

Elevation 56 m Site slope

Ethnobotany profile available Maritime site

Nearest Surface Water

Name (if any) Piney Branch

Saltwater

Ocean

Estuary/tidal river

Tidewater/marsh

Minimum distance to water is 350 m

Freshwater

Stream/river

Swamp

Lake or pond

Spring

Site setting

-Site Setting restricted

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

Topography

Floodplain High terrace

Hilltop/bluff Rockshelter/cave

Interior flat Hillslope

Upland flat Unknown

Ridgetop Other

Terrace knoll

Low terrace

Ownership

Private

Federal

State of MD

Regional/county/city

Unknown

Temporal & Ethnic Contextual Data:

Paleoindian site Woodland site

Archaic site MD Adena

Early archaic Early woodland

Middle archaic Mid. woodland

Late archaic Late woodland

Unknown prehistoric context

Contact period site ca. 1820 - 1860

ca. 1630 - 1675 ca. 1860 - 1900

ca. 1675 - 1720 ca. 1900 - 1930

ca. 1720 - 1780 Post 1930

ca. 1780 - 1820

Unknown historic context

Unknown context

Ethnic Associations (historic only)

Native American Asian American

African American Unknown

Anglo-American Other

Hispanic

Y=Confirmed, P=Possible

Site Function Contextual Data:

Prehistoric

Multi-component Misc. ceremonial

Village Rock art

Hamlet Shell midden

Base camp STU/lithic scatter

Rockshelter/cave Quarry/extraction

Earthen mound Fish weir

Cairn Production area

Burial 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

Post-in-ground

Battlefield Frame-built

Fortification Masonry

Encampment Other structure

Townsite Slave related

Religious Non-domestic agri

Church/mtg house Recreational

Ch support bldg Midden/dump

Burial area Artifact scatter

Cemetery Spring or well

Sepulchre Unknown

Isolated burial

Bldg or foundation Other context

Possible Structure

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

Earthenware		Ironstone		Staffordshire		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	13	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	4			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	1	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"/>

Dated features present at site

Historic Artifacts		Tobacco related	
Pottery (all)	354	Activity item(s)	51
Glass (all)	341	Human remain(s)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Architectural	601	Faunal material	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Furniture	3	Misc. kitchen	33
Arms	2	Floral material	<input type="checkbox"/>
Clothing	3	Misc.	53
Personal items	2	Other	<input type="checkbox"/>

Historic Features

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

All quantities exact or estimated minimal counts

Radiocarbon Data:

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

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

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

Additional radiocarbon results available



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External Samples/Data:

Collection curated at

Additional raw data may be available online

Summary Description:

The Dobson Property or 18CH699 is what remains of a late 18th-early 19th century house site known as the Lemuel Wilmer House (CH-228). The site is located near Waldorf in Charles County, Maryland. The house which once stood at the site was recorded in 1978 during a county-wide architectural survey. At the time of recordation, it was in ruins, but retained sufficient integrity to permit some description of the structure. The former house site sits on a small knoll near a tributary of Piney Branch that drains towards Zekaiah Swamp. Though most of the site area was heavily overgrown with secondary revegetation, decorative shrubs among the undergrowth as well as rows of cedars reflect the earlier existence of the site as a residence from which the area was farmed. Soils at the site are Galestown sandy loams.

According to MHT files, the Lemuel Wilmer House was a single storey structure with a catslide roof, which was raised to create a second storey room. This portion of the house had an end chimney and a full cellar. The later addition (ca. 1820) was described as two stories with a pedimented entrance vestibule. It is believed to have been the home of Reverend Lemuel Wilmer, a rector at the St. Paul's Episcopal Church located across a road that abuts the site. By at least 1996, this structure was no longer extant.

The site was first examined archeologically in 2001 as part of a Phase I survey conducted prior to the creation of a proposed surface mining and reclamation area. The research was required as one of the terms of a special exception to Charles County zoning ordinances, before a state mining permit would be issued. Background research conducted prior to the onset of fieldwork indicated that the structural ruin CH-228 was in the vicinity of the proposed mine. Information on the structure was scanty, but did indicate a possible construction date of ca. 1790, with remodeling ca. 1820 based on architectural details. Thus, researchers undertook a program of shovel testing and pedestrian survey in the vicinity of the previously documented structure.

A total of 194 shovel test pits (STPs) was excavated within the mining project area. A baseline and 15 meter grid were established, and transects were traversed in an east-west direction. Shovel tests were excavated at 15 m intervals, unless conditions prevented this. All shovel tests measured a minimum of 30 cm in diameter, and were excavated in natural stratigraphic levels to a depth of at least 40 cm, or 10 cm into sterile subsoil. All excavated soils were screened through hardware cloth. Spatial clustering of 63 positive STPs (the vast majority) resulted in the identification of 18CH699. Of these, 38 produced historic artifacts. Based on the results of this testing, and on the locations of identified features, the site area was determined to measure approximately 120 X 150 m.

Features identified during the Phase I survey include a cellar and chimney fall (Feature 3), the possible remains of 3 outbuildings (Features 1, 4, and 6), and a depression that may be a collapsed well or cistern (Feature 2). A fifth feature was identified outside the site area and may be unrelated to the occupation at 18CH699.

Artifacts recovered during the shovel testing, or noted on the surface, included ceramics that ranged in date from the first decades of the 19th century to the middle of the 20th century. The Phase I historic artifact assemblage from 18CH699 included 3 activity items (pieces of barbed wire), 56 architectural objects (24 pieces of window glass, 8 fragments of brick, 2 pieces of mortar, 5 cut nails, 1 wire nails, 14 unidentified nails, and 2 pieces of construction marble), 1 clothing item (a porcelain button), 69 kitchen-related artifacts (13 whiteware sherds, 4 pearlware sherds, 1 domestic brown stoneware sherd, 2 domestic gray stoneware sherds, 1 unidentified white-bodied sherd, 9 milk glass lid-liner fragments, 14 machine-made bottle fragments, 4 mold-blown bottle fragments, 4 pieces of table glass, 11 unidentified bottle glass fragments, and 2 pieces of shell), and 22 miscellaneous objects (18 melted glass fragments, 1 unidentifiable glass fragment, 2 unidentified iron/steel objects, and 1 piece of coal). In addition to the historic items, 1 prehistoric artifact was encountered; a non-diagnostic quartzite flake.

The presence of an historic assemblage from the 19th and early 20th centuries that includes domestic debris and architectural refuse supports the interpretation of Site 18CH699 as the archeological expression of former MHT structure CH-228. The identification of features at the surface and the presence of yard plantings highlighted for researchers the potential integrity and research potential of this historic site. Consequently Phase II testing was conducted in 2005, as a prerequisite for receipt of a US Army Corps of Engineers wetlands permit to finally develop the property for mining.

As a part of this Phase II project, extensive archival and historical background research was conducted. This research reveals that the site lies in a portion of Charles Lord Baltimore's Zakaiah Manor of 1667. The area containing the site was patented in 1802 by Edward Owen as Widow's Pleasure, confirming his widowed mother's original purchase of the property in 1781. Owen sold the property in 1818 to a Henry A. More, and it was then bequeathed to Elizabeth M. Spaulding and Henry Moore. In 1828 the property was sold to Reverend Lemuel Wilmer, who was rector for Port Tobacco Parish.

Reverend Lemuel Wilmer was associated with St. Paul's Episcopal Church, located immediately across a road adjacent to the site. Reverend Wilmer occupied the property until his death in 1869. After his death, the property was owned and occupied by his two unmarried daughters, Rebecca F. and Mary J. Wilmer. The farm under the Wilmers served primarily as a residence, with production being geared towards meeting domestic needs. The daughters of Rev. Wilmer remained on the property until Mary's death, in 1899, and Rebecca's in 1902. After their deaths the property went through a series of absentee owners, until 1985, when the Charles County Sand and Gravel company acquired it. If it was farmed at all during this period, it was farmed by tenants, and either way it was allowed to fall into disrepair. Based on the architectural information available from the examination by MHT in the 1970s (when the structure was still extant), the original construction would have been made by Edward Owen or his mother at the end of the 18th century. The substantial reconstruction of the building around 1820 must have been done by Reverend Lemuel Wilmer, who served local churches, and used this as his residence.

Field investigation began with a field survey to relocate and map the features identified at the Phase I level. During the Phase II mapping, an additional outbuilding (called Structure 6) was discovered, which was not encountered in 2001. One remaining intact wall of the cellar was also identified. Twenty-eight additional STPs were put in a grid oriented to magnetic north on the main part of the site to test the area around the house at a closer interval, as well as to confirm correspondence with the Phase I findings. A baseline was measured along the former road, running east-west on the south edge of the site. From there, five transects of STPs were excavated at 12.19 m (40 ft) intervals from one another. These transects ran northward across the knoll. One additional STP was judgmentally placed as a radial into the grid to determine whether the remains of Feature 6 (see above) were in their original place. The STPs averaged 40 cm in diameter and were excavated according to natural soil stratigraphy.

In addition to the surface mapping and STP work, five 1 X 1 m test units were placed in areas of interest based on careful review of the STP results (both



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Phase I and II). Since CH-288 had been recorded and photographed by MHT, no test units were placed on the foundations of this structure. Test Unit 1 was placed on Feature 6 (a possible outbuilding). Test Unit 2 was placed next to an STP that had to be terminated due to a large brick feature at approximately 50 cm below the surface. Test Unit 4 was placed on the edge of Feature 1 (the cellar and chimney fall). The remaining two test units, Test Units 3 and 5, were placed in areas of high artifact concentrations in the hopes of encountering midden.

The soils from both STPs and test units were screened through hardware mesh, and all cultural material, with the exception of brick and mortar, was collected and bagged according to its vertical and horizontal provenience. Brick and mortar was generally sampled. Occasionally brick and mortar were noted and discarded without sampling. The soil profiles were recorded for each STP, as well as for every test unit. Test units profiles were also photographed. Features in the test units were drawn as well as photographed.

Analysis of the artifacts resulted in an early 19th century through early 20th century occupation range for the property. There were also artifacts from the late 18th century and modern debris. The artifacts indicate a century-long occupation of the site, with intermittent usage after the property was abandoned. This is exactly congruent with the historical picture of occupation by Rev. Wilmer and his two daughters. No prehistoric deposits were encountered during Phase II work. Historic artifacts encountered during Phase II work in 2005 included 48 activity items, 545 architectural objects, 2 clothing items, 3 furniture remains, 490 kitchen-related artifacts, 2 personal items, 3 tobacco-related objects, 2 arms items, and 31 miscellaneous objects. Activity items were a porcelain doll face, 10 pieces of iron wire, 18 pieces of iron hardware, a rip saw blade, 4 metal container fragments, a horseshoe, 12 pieces of barbed wire, and a sparkplug. Architectural artifacts were 40 brick fragments, 7 pieces of mortar, 1 piece of shingle, 130 window glass fragments, 336 nails (203 square, 17 cut, 14 wire, 100 modern, 2 unidentified), and 31 hardware fragments. The 2 clothing remains were a glass button and a leather shoe sole. The furniture assemblage consists of a possible clock gear and 2 possible stove parts. The kitchen assemblage consists of 333 ceramic sherds (3 Jackfield, 9 coarse earthenware, 42 pearlware, 1 hard-paste porcelain, 5 soft-paste porcelain, 11 bone china porcelain, 4 Chinese porcelain, 1 other porcelain, 1 ironstone, 1 graniteware, 215 whiteware, 17 yellowware, & 22 miscellaneous stoneware), a metal jar lid, 126 kitchen glass fragments (4 jar pieces, 112 bottle fragments, 10 pieces of table glass), part of a tin can, 5 tin beer can fragments, a knife blade, 13 animal bones, and 10 pieces of oyster shell. Personal items were a plastic barrette and a tin object. The tobacco-related objects were kaolin pipe fragments and the arms were shotgun shells. Miscellaneous objects include 6 unidentified metal objects, 4 wood fragments, 3 pieces of slate, 2 fragments of plastic, 1 piece of rubber, 2 pieces of coal, and 13 pieces of charcoal.

The archeological remains encountered at the site support the results of archival research. The upper layers include a mixture of modern material including shotgun shells and modern beer bottles. Below this are layers of pearlware, whiteware, stoneware, and coarse glazed and unglazed earthenwares that reflect occupancy from the second third of the 18th century through the beginning of the 20th century. Outbuildings from use as a farm reflect its relatively unintensive production, with one earlier log structure (Feature 6), and two later structures; Feature 1 (a collapsed outbuilding) with modern lumber and Structure 6 (a chicken coop) with modern lumber and chicken wire.

The archeological remains are mixed. The relatively small amount sampled shows evidence of possible remains of earlier construction, or of removal of bricks from the structure after it fell into disuse. There are some areas of considerable disturbance, but parts of the deposits around the building appear to be relatively intact. A feature encountered in Test Unit 3 appears to represent a possible porch structure.

Rev. Lemuel Wilmer was not a major figure even in county history, nor were his two daughters. The house was not of any great significance, nor is there any reason to think it was the work of a master, or representative of an architectural type. Important processes were taking place in the county during the occupancy of this house. These include the shift from tobacco to other crops, including production for the Washington market. However, this farm appears to have been involved in minimal production, primarily for use by the occupants of the house, producing milk, corn, vegetables, and animals for the use of the family. When Rev. Wilmer died, his daughters continued a minimal agricultural operation with their nephew, again producing at a subsistence level. This site was not in any way an important example of agricultural history in Charles County or in Maryland. Thus, though the site does contain deposits with apparent integrity, there are no important questions to which this site would contribute information archeologically.

External Reference Codes (Library ID Numbers):

97001484, 97002320