



Phase II and Phase III Archaeological Database and Inventory

Site Number: 18CH808

Site Name: Windy Knoll

Prehistoric

Other name(s) Windy Knoll I; Besche; Zekiah Fort

Historic

Brief Description:

Late 17th century Piscataway Indian fortified settlement; Mid-19th century domestic occupation

Unknown

Site Location and Environmental Data:

Maryland Archaeological Research Unit No. 10

SCS soil & sediment code BaB,MnC,GmD

Latitude 38.5644 Longitude -76.8755

Physiographic province Western Shore Coastal

Terrestrial site Underwater site

Elevation m Site slope 2-20%

Ethnobotany profile available Maritime site

Nearest Surface Water

Name (if any) Unnamed tributary of Piney

Saltwater

Ocean

Estuary/tidal river

Tidewater/marsh

Spring

Minimum distance to water is 30 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

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

Battlefield Post-in-ground

Fortification Frame-built

Encampment Masonry

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 N

Flotation samples taken N

Other samples taken

Historic context samples

Soil samples taken Y

Flotation samples taken N

Other samples taken



Phase II and Phase III Archaeological Database and Inventory

Site Number: 18CH808

Site Name: Windy Knoll

Prehistoric

Other name(s) Windy Knoll I; Besche; Zekiah Fort

Historic

Unknown

Brief Description:

Late 17th century Piscataway Indian fortified settlement; Mid-19th century domestic occupation

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	1
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	3	Yeocomico	11
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	74		
				Potomac Crk	295		

Historic Sherd Types

Earthenware		Ironstone	<input type="checkbox"/>	Staffordshire	<input type="checkbox"/>	Stoneware	
Astbury	<input type="checkbox"/>	Jackfield	<input type="checkbox"/>	Tin Glazed	10	English Brown	16
Borderware	1	Mn Mottled	<input type="checkbox"/>	Whiteware	<input type="checkbox"/>	Eng Dry-bodied	<input type="checkbox"/>
Buckley	<input type="checkbox"/>	North Devon	2	Porcelain	<input type="checkbox"/>	Nottingham	<input type="checkbox"/>
Creamware	<input type="checkbox"/>	Pearlware	<input type="checkbox"/>			Rhenish	1
						Wt Salt-glazed	<input type="checkbox"/>

All quantities exact or estimated minimal counts

Other Artifact & Feature Types:

Prehistoric Artifacts		Other fired clay	
Flaked stone	718	Human remain(s)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ground stone	1	Modified faunal	<input type="checkbox"/>
Stone bowls	<input type="checkbox"/>	Unmod faunal	14
Fire-cracked rock	143	Oyster shell	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other lithics (all)	3	Floral material	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ceramics (all)	21	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 checked="" 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Chalcedony	<input type="checkbox"/>
Chert	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	European flint	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Rhyolite	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Ironstone	<input type="checkbox"/>
Quartz	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Basalt	<input type="checkbox"/>
Quartzite	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Argilite	<input type="checkbox"/>
		Unknown	<input type="checkbox"/>
		Other	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
		Sandstone	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
		slate	<input type="checkbox"/>

Dated features present at site

Historic Artifacts		Tobacco related	
Pottery (all)	166	Activity item(s)	54
Glass (all)	277	Human remain(s)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Architectural	603	Faunal material	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Furniture	5	Misc. kitchen	8272
Arms	461	Floral material	<input type="checkbox"/>
Clothing	3	Misc.	815
Personal items	300	Other	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
		glass beads	<input type="checkbox"/>

Historic Features

Privy/outhouse	<input type="checkbox"/>	Depression/mound	<input type="checkbox"/>	Unknown	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Const feature	<input type="checkbox"/>	Burial(s)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Foundation	<input type="checkbox"/>	Trash pit/dump	<input type="checkbox"/>	Plow scars	<input type="checkbox"/>
Cellar hole/cellar	<input type="checkbox"/>	Sheet midden	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Hearth/chimney	<input type="checkbox"/>	Planting feature	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Postholes/molds	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Road/walkway	<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: 0 +/- years BP Reliability Sample 8: +/- years BP Reliability Sample 9: +/- years BP Reliability

Additional radiocarbon results available



Phase II and Phase III Archaeological Database and Inventory

Site Number: 18CH808

Site Name: Windy Knoll

Prehistoric

Other name(s) Windy Knoll I; Besche; Zekiah Fort

Historic

Brief Description:

Late 17th century Piscataway Indian fortified settlement; Mid-19th century domestic occupation

Unknown

External Samples/Data:

Collection curated at St. Mary's College of Maryland

Additional raw data may be available online

Summary Description:

Site 18CH808 (also known as Windy Knolls I or the Zekiah Fort site) appears to be the archeological remnants of a late 17th century residential site and Native American fort/settlement southeast of Waldorf in rural Charles County. The Zekiah Fort site consists of three and possibly four concentrations of late 17th century artifacts associated with a relatively steep and defensible knoll. The knoll is located on an unnamed spring-fed stream that flows to a tributary of Zekiah Swamp Run and just to the west of Zekiah Swamp. The landscape in the vicinity of the site is relatively flat, low-lying land punctuated by two steep, eroded knolls. The location of the site, on the southern-most knoll, provides both natural topographic defenses and a perennial water source. Historically, much of the surrounding landscape was plowed, but much of it has reverted to woodlands in the last century. Soils at the site are highly productive Beltsville silt loams.

In 1675, a series of events taking place along the northern and southern shores of the Potomac River precipitated what became known as "Bacon's Rebellion" in Virginia. Starting out on the Virginia side of the river, members of the Doeg Indian nation took and Englishman's hogs to settle an unpaid debt. That event escalated into a series of violent retaliations, each more deadly than the last. The deaths of a number of English settlers and local Natives along with the involvement of the local militia from both colonies ultimately culminated in the siege of a Susquehannock Indian fort on the Maryland side of the Potomac (along Piscataway Creek). Colonel John Washington of Virginia (Great-grandfather of George Washington) and Thomas Truman of Maryland led the siege, which lasted for weeks. At one point, Washington and Truman invited the Susquehannock leaders outside the fort to parley. The Susquehannock accepted their invitation but, once outside the fort, the two English leaders along with Major Isaac Allerton without provocation opened fire on the Indian leaders. When the remaining (and enraged) Susquehannock escaped the fort six weeks later, they began a series of raids along the Virginia frontier. A perceived lack of government responsiveness to these raids would ultimately lead to Bacon's Rebellion.

The Piscataway and Mattawoman Indians, both living on the north side of the Potomac, had been squarely allied with the English forces besieging the Susquehannock fort. Their participation was obligated according to the "articles of peace and amity" that a number of Indian nations (including the Piscataway and Mattawoman) had concluded with the English in 1666. Moreover, the Piscataway had a long-standing grudge against the Susquehannock, whose members had been raiding Piscataway settlements since before contact with Europeans. But what may have seemed like a reasonable idea at the time turned out to have devastating consequences. For much of the rest of the decade, "northern" and "foreign" Indians (mostly Susquehannock and Seneca) waged merciless war on the Piscataway and the Mattawoman, killing the men and taking the women and children as captives in retaliation for the two nations' assistance to the English.

The aforementioned Article of Peace and Amity also required that, "in case of danger, the Governor shall appoynte a place to which the Indians of the aforesaid nacons shall bring their wives and children to be secured from danger of any forreign Indians". By early 1680, it was clear that Charles Calvert, the third Lord Baltimore, governor, and proprietor, had to hold up his end of the bargain. After some discussion and negotiation with the affected nations, Baltimore directed the Piscataway to Zekiah Manor, one of two proprietary manors in Charles County. The Piscataway abandoned their capital at Moyaone on Piscataway Creek, along with their corn crop already in the ground and moved to Zekiah, where they built a fort and stayed for an estimated 12 to 15 years.

Relocating to the Zekiah fort was a complicated move for the Piscataway. Although the area around the Zekiah had long been a part of Piscataway territory, when the group moved there in 1680 en masse and in the middle of the growing season, they were forced into restructuring their relationship with the territory. On the one hand, refuge in the Zekiah swamps provided better protection from raiding "foreign" Indians and it placed the Piscataway in closer proximity to potential trading partners (English households and merchants). The move may have enhanced the Piscataway tayac, or leader's, position who continued to control Piscataway wealth and access to firearms with the help of the Maryland government. On the other hand, the vacated lands around Piscataway Creek were quickly taken up by Englishmen eager to dispossess the Native population of good agricultural land. When the Piscataway returned to the area around Moyaone ca. 1692-1695 (after a sojourn on the Virginia side of the Potomac), they discovered just how Anglicized the area had become and just how unwelcome they were, even among supposed allies.

Constant accusations of Indian harassment and attacks on colonists would lead to the diaspora of the Piscataway people. Many of the Piscataway chose abandonment of their traditional lands for areas where they were less likely to come into conflict with the English colonists. Others chose acculturation or the formation of closed communities. Over the next few decades, communities of Piscataway are documented in Pennsylvania, New York, and even Canada. In 1793, Piscataway representatives were part of a Northwest Indian council held at the Rapids of the Miami River in Ohio, at the conclusion of which they signed a document to the US government with the sign of a turkey. Following this occurrence, the Piscataway, as a distinct people, largely disappear from the historical record.

Although interest in locating the site of the Zekiah Fort dates back to the 1930s, it would not be until the 21st century that success would be achieved. From early 2008 through July 2011, a survey and testing project was carried out, principally on four parcels in Charles County in a search for the site of the 17th century Zekiah Fort. The investigations were undertaken with staff and other research support from MHT, but were principally carried out by fieldschool students with St. Mary's College of Maryland. A large group of volunteer archeological consultants, local historians and historical enthusiasts, and representatives of Piscataway Indian Nation and Piscataway-Conoy Tribe of Southern Maryland also assisted in the search for the fort. Much of the work was generously funded by Michael Sullivan, a local developer with an interest in southern Maryland history.

Much of the research effort was directed towards archival sources which might provide clues to the location of the fort. Within a short matter of time, researchers came to the conclusion that the fort was within close proximity to Charles Calvert's Zekiah Manor house. Again, it was Charles Calvert, as the Third Lord Baltimore who was responsible for finding a safe location for the Piscataway according to the terms of a 1666 agreement. In 1673, Calvert built his summer house on Zekiah Manor, his large proprietary estate in Charles County. Although it does not appear that Calvert made much personal use of this dwelling after 1675, the building appears to have remained habitable at least through 1681, when a Colonel Henry Coursey and a Colonel William Stevens hosted negotiations there in August with a group of "northern Indians" who had been harassing the Piscataway. While staying at "Zekiah House", Captain Randolph Brandt reported hearing "guns shot in the night" at Zekiah Fort after which the northern Indians abruptly broke off negotiations and left the area. This would seem to suggest that Zekiah House was in relatively close proximity to the fort of the Piscataways.

Eventually, four properties were determined to be likely candidates for the location of the fort, based on a combination of archival evidence, information from local collectors, and data recorded in Maryland Historical Trust site files data. During the Summer of 2009, the fieldwork portion of the search for Zekiah Fort



Phase II and Phase III Archaeological Database and Inventory

Site Number: 18CH808

Site Name: Windy Knoll

Prehistoric

Other name(s) Windy Knoll I; Besche; Zekiah Fort

Historic

Brief Description:

Late 17th century Piscataway Indian fortified settlement; Mid-19th century domestic occupation

Unknown

was initiated. Shovel test pit (STP) excavation was carried out on the four properties (known as Windy Knolls, Seffans, Hogue, and St. Peter's Church) at 15.24 m (50 ft) and 7.62 m (25 ft) intervals. The larger intervals were utilized at 3 of the 4 sites initially and when Indian ceramics (in particular Late Woodland Potomac Creek sherds) or other potentially diagnostic artifacts were encountered, the interval was reduced to 7.62 meters. At the St. Peter's Church property, where a number of Potomac Creek ceramics had previously been recovered, the smaller testing interval was used from the start. STPs were 30.5 cm in diameter and varied in depth between 45.7 to 61 cm (1.5-2 ft) in depth and soils were screened through hardware cloth.

While excavation at the other three properties did lead to some information helpful in reconstructing the colonial landscape in this part of Charles County, the shovel testing at the Windy Knolls property quickly solidified that property as the most likely candidate for the site of the Zekiah Fort. On the very first day of fieldwork at Windy Knolls (February 2011), researchers recovered fragments of Potomac Creek pottery, white clay tobacco pipe stems, and two glass beads. Ultimately, work at the site would progress to a Phase II level of testing and the definition of Site 18CH808.

A total of 1,362 shovel test pits and forty-six 1.524 X 1.524 (5 X 5 ft) test units were excavated at Windy Knolls, revealing the presence of two archeological sites named Windy Knolls I and Windy Knolls II. Windy Knolls I includes a late 17th century settlement approximately 18 acres in size that was identified as the Zekiah Fort (18CH808). A very low density ca. 1830 domestic occupation (probably associated with an enslaved household) was also located within the site boundaries of the fortified settlement. The second site, Windy Knolls II, includes a single-component late 18th century domestic occupation. In addition, two early to mid 20th century abandoned tobacco barns were situated on the property, but were not documented.

Shovel testing at Windy Knolls I produced 489 artifacts within the boundaries of what was designated 18CH808. Nine hundred and forty-two shovel tests of the 1,362 total STPs defined an area roughly 274 m (900 ft) square that was a locus of late 17th century activity. A later domestic occupation dating ca. 1830 was considerably smaller and concentrated near the base of a knoll. Artifact counts ranged from 0 to 33 objects per STP with a mean recovery rate of approximately 2 artifacts per shovel test. Fully 75%, or 711, of the STPs produced no artifacts.

The Phase I assemblage from 18CH808 included 3 bifaces, 48 flakes, 8 pieces of shatter, 15 pieces of fire-cracked rock, 21 Indian-made ceramics (18 Potomac Creek and 1 possible Colonoware), 8 animal bones, 6 pieces of oyster shell, 65 pieces of brick, 1 concrete fragment, 10 wrought nails, 20 square nails, 8 unidentified nails, 7 pieces of flat glass, 5 European coarse earthenware sherds, 25 refined earthenware sherds, 3 stoneware sherds, 12 colonial bottle glass fragments, 84 other bottle glass fragments, 7 glass beads (2 Cornaline d'Aleppo), 24 white clay tobacco pipe fragments, 4 terra cotta tobacco pipe fragments, 2 European gunflints, 16 European flint debitage fragments, 1 piece of lead shot, 2 unidentified lead fragments, 11 iron concretions, 39 miscellaneous or unidentified pieces of iron, 1 fossil rock, 25 pieces of bog iron, 1 piece of slag, and 7 modern objects.

A dense concentration of the 17th century materials was noted near the top of the knoll at 18CH808. This concentration measured approximately 45.72 X 45.72 m (150 X 150 ft) in extent, a size which conforms well with other documented examples of Native American fortifications of the era. Using the historically-supported model of a square fortification (possibly with corner bastions) of roughly this size as a guide, it was determined that a testing regime should be carried out involving a trench comprised of 1.524 X 1.524 m (5 X 5 ft) units alternating on either side of a baseline through the center of the purported fort location. The goal of this Phase II testing was to locate any remaining evidence of fortification-like features.

Forty-two 1.524 X 1.524 m units were placed across the top of the hill at 18CH808, forming the aforementioned trench that would hopefully encounter evidence of fortification. Two additional test units were placed along the knoll's northwest slope and two units were placed at the northeast base of the knoll. A single unit was offset to the east of the trench on the other side of a large shipping container that was stored on the property. Each unit was excavated using shovels and trowels. Soils were screened through hardware cloth and all cultural materials were retained. Column samples of 28.3 liters (1 cubic foot) in volume were collected from the northeast corner of each unit, separately screened through hardware cloth and then water-screened through 1/32 in fine screen. Units were subsequently photographed and plan drawings were prepared as appropriate. Additional information about each unit was recorded on provenience cards, survey logs, and stratum registers. All 47 test units were backfilled at the completion of the project.

In order to examine the preservation of bone and similar organic material on the site, soil samples from each excavated context were collected in the field and the acidity of the soil was tested using a Spectrum Technologies FieldScout SoilStik pH meter, producing measurement to the nearest hundredth. The acidity of soils has been shown to correlate significantly with the preservation of bone on archeological sites. The results showed variability between the various test units in Soil pHs between 4.03 to 7.03. As expected, the units with the least acidic soils tended to have better bone preservation and a considerable faunal assemblage (8,269 specimens) was recovered.

The artifacts assemblage recovered from the 18CH808 test units (both dry screened and water screened samples) included 1 Late Woodland triangular point, 8 flaked stone tools, 173 flakes, a groundstone object, 3 other lithics, 128 pieces of fire-cracked rock, 477 native-made ceramic sherds (277 Potomac Creek, 74 Moyaone, 11 Yeocomico, 3 Camden, 3 Townsend, 3 Colonoware, and 106 other native-made wares), 54 activity items (copper alloy objects and scrap), 492 architectural objects (205 brick and 287 iron nails), 3 clothing items (2 glass buttons and a copper alloy button), 5 furniture items (copper alloy tacks), 8,579 kitchen-related objects (60 Merida micaceous II sherds, 10 tin-glazed earthenware sherds, 2 North Devon gravel-tempered sherds, 1 Borderware, 26 miscellaneous earthenware sherds, a Rhenish Brown stoneware sherd, 16 English Brown stoneware, 17 unidentified ceramic sherds, 148 colonial bottle glass shards, 26 modern bottle glass shards, 2 iron knife parts, 7,991 animal bones, 278 oyster shell fragments, and a shark tooth), 293 personal items (2 pieces of ochre, 289 glass beads, a copper alloy tinkling cone, and a lead cross part), 588 tobacco pipe fragments (160 terracotta, 428 white clay), 442 arms objects (386 European flint debitage fragments, 19 gunflints, 4 copper alloy projectile points, 31 pieces of lead shot, a silver scabbard part, and an iron frizzen), and 729 miscellaneous objects (31 lead pewter objects, 339 pieces of iron, 335 stone objects, 23 modern materials, and 1 modern copper object). An analysis of the faunal materials recovered from 18CH808 identified 3 cow specimens, 4 pig, 2 dog, 2 gray fox, 1 red fox, 1 eastern cottontail, 1 eastern mole, 1 squirrel, 66 deer, 54 turtle, 1 longnose gar specimen, 1 minnow specimen, 8 hoofed mammal specimens, 423 unidentified mammal specimens, 6 snail shells, and 301 oyster shell fragments.

The artifacts recovered from 18CH808 clearly indicate a fourth quarter of the 17th century occupation. English Brown stoneware, first available in the region no earlier than 1690, formed 13% of the European-made ceramic assemblage, or 16 sherds out of 123. Only one sherd of "possible" Rhenish brown stoneware was recovered from the site. Rhenish brown stoneware is commonly found on 17th century sites in Maryland, but its presence drops off by the end of the century. Tobacco pipes recovered from the site also point to a late 17th century occupation. The distribution of pipe stem bore diameters generally align with a 1680-1710 date and, when compared with the distribution of pipe stem bore diameters from other settlements in the Zekiah Run and Wicomico River drainages, a ca. 1680 initial date of occupation appears reasonable. The colonial bottle glass, including those fragments which can be identified by form, consist primarily of round wine bottle glass. Only five fragments could derive from case bottle glass (flat-walled, square-sided vessels often found on English sites dating to the 17th century), but this is not certain given the small size of the fragments.



Phase II and Phase III Archaeological Database and Inventory

Site Number: 18CH808

Site Name: Windy Knoll

Prehistoric

Other name(s) Windy Knoll I; Besche; Zekiah Fort

Historic

Brief Description:

Late 17th century Piscataway Indian fortified settlement; Mid-19th century domestic occupation

Unknown

The site's landscape reveals a settlement in a defensive position. Located less than a half-mile from the historic road/path that led back to Moyaone, Site 18CH808 is nonetheless not easily accessible. The settlement sits at the top and the base of a fairly steep knoll, averaging 7.62 m (25 ft) in height and surrounded on three sides by streams and creeks. Indeed, one of the reasons the site has survived despite its rich underlying gravel deposits is the difficulty vehicles would have crossing wetlands and valleys to access the gravel. Adding to the argument that the settlement's occupants selected the site for its defensive position are the many gun-related artifacts recovered from the excavations, including 21 gunflints, dozens of fragments of flint debitage, a gun trigger, and 31 pieces of lead shot. These materials are high by any standard, including when compared with other sites of the period. Only the armory at Mattapany (18ST390) has generated more gun-related materials, primarily lead shot. Finally, the site is also located on and adjacent to areas with soils good for agricultural purposes and could have supported a sizable settlement.

Despite the excavation of 42 test units in the area that was predicted to contain remains of the fort, researchers found little to indicate the presence of a palisade or other type of fortification during the 2009-2011 field project at 18CH808. Very few features were found that could conclusively be identified as 17th century in date. Archival records appear to be clear that literal fortifications were present at Zekiah, where people could gather and take a defensive position in times of trouble. By 1682, there are virtually no reports of attacks or other depredations at the settlement. Nonetheless, at least some of the Piscataway remained in this area into the 1690s. But, while the material culture on the knoll top contains large numbers of prestige goods (brass, glass beads, bone from animal meat, and gun-related artifacts), the sheer numbers of artifacts are relatively small when compared with slightly earlier native settlements that have been examined archeologically. For these reasons, researchers interpreted the portion of the site investigated from 2009-2011 as the probable fortified residence of the Piscataway tayac and his household. Families living nearby could come to the fort n times of alarm and if circumstances warranted.

Since 2011, additional work at 18CH808 has been carried out with generous funding through state appropriations. While formal reporting on this work is forthcoming, researchers with St. Mary's College have uncovered some features which may be indicative of fortifications. These include a probable trench and several very large, widely spaced postmolds which may have served as supports for walls of horizontally-laid cut logs. Such a fortification was built in the early 18th century at Fort Hunter on the Mohawk River in New York.

Based on the artifacts recovered to date from the Windy Knolls I site (18CH808), the site is without question of significance to early Maryland and Middle Atlantic history. More importantly, the site appears to be the principal settlement and refuge of the Piscataway following their abandonment of their traditional capital of Moyaone in 1680. The artifacts, landscape, and other material features of the site have the potential to expand our understanding of indigenous life in this important period. It should be considered a significant archeological resource.

External Reference Codes (Library ID Numbers):

95002143