



# Phase II and Phase III Archaeological Database and Inventory

Site Number: 18CV414

Site Name: Upper St. Leonards Creek Wrecks

Prehistoric

Other name(s): Jeffersonian Gunboat Number 138, Vessel D1 & D2

Historic

Unknown

Brief Description: 18th century military vessel shipwreck, War of 1812

## Site Location and Environmental Data:

Latitude 38.4399 Longitude -76.4890  
Elevation m Site slope

Maryland Archaeological Research Unit No. 9

SCS soil & sediment code

Physiographic province: Western Shore Coastal

Terrestrial site

Underwater 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
- Underwater

### Ownership

- Private
- Federal
- State of MD
- Regional/county/city
- Unknown

### Nearest Surface Water

Name (if any): St. Leonard's Creek

#### Saltwater

Ocean

Estuary/tidal river

Tidewater/marsh

Minimum distance to water is 0 m

#### Freshwater

Stream/river

Swamp

Lake or pond

Spring

## Temporal & Ethnic Contextual Data:

- Paleoindian site
- 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
- ca. 1820 - 1860
- ca. 1860 - 1900
- ca. 1900 - 1930
- Post 1930
- Y

### 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?
  - 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
  - shipwreck

## Interpretive Sampling Data:

Prehistoric context samples: Soil samples taken   
 Flotation samples taken  Other samples taken

Historic context samples: Soil samples taken Y   
 Flotation samples taken N  Other samples taken wood & metal samples



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

Historic Sherd Types		Ironstone		Staffordshire		Stoneware	
<b>Earthenware</b>		Jackfield	<input type="checkbox"/>	Tin Glazed	<input type="checkbox"/>	English Brown	<input type="checkbox"/>
Astbury	<input type="checkbox"/>	Mn Mottled	<input type="checkbox"/>	Whiteware	<input type="checkbox"/>	Eng Dry-bodied	<input type="checkbox"/>
Borderware	<input type="checkbox"/>	North Devon	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Porcelain</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Nottingham	<input type="checkbox"/>
Buckley	<input type="checkbox"/>	Pearlware	<input type="checkbox"/>			Rhenish	<input type="checkbox"/>
Creamware	<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"/>
Midden	<input type="checkbox"/>
Shell midden	<input type="checkbox"/>
Postholes/molds	<input type="checkbox"/>
House pattern(s)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Palisade(s)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Hearth(s)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Lithic reduc area	<input type="checkbox"/>
Storage/trash pit	<input type="checkbox"/>
Burial(s)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ossuary	<input type="checkbox"/>
Unknown	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other	<input type="checkbox"/>

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

Dated features present at site

Two Jeffersonian gunboats sunk in June of 1814

Historic Artifacts		Tobacco related	
Pottery (all)	2	Activity item(s)	7
Glass (all)	11	Human remain(s)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Architectural	490	Faunal material	<input type="checkbox"/>
Furniture	<input type="checkbox"/>	Misc. kitchen	<input type="checkbox"/>
Arms	13	Floral material	<input type="checkbox"/>
Clothing	6	Misc.	158
Personal items	1	Other	<input type="checkbox"/>

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

Brief

Description:

18th century military vessel shipwreck, War of 1812

Unknown

## External Samples/Data:

Collection curated at MAC

Additional raw data may be available online

## Summary Description:

The Upper St. Leonards Creek Wrecks, 18CV414 Vessels D1 and D2, are the remains of two Jeffersonian gunboats that served in the United States Chesapeake Flotilla, a fleet of US Navy vessels lost as a result of military action in the Patuxent River, during the War of 1812. The vessels are located in the headwaters of St. Leonard's Creek and were discovered as part of the Chesapeake Flotilla Project undertaken in the mid-1990s and funded by the Maryland Historical Trust and other agencies.

Almost from the outset of the War of 1812, the Royal British Navy successfully blockaded the Chesapeake Bay. All of the major vessels of the US Navy were forced to take shelter near Baltimore and Newport News, leaving the residents of the Tidewater region to largely fend for themselves against British raiding parties. During 1813 and the early part of 1814, Commodore Joshua Barney and Secretary of the Navy William Jones works to construct a flotilla of gunboats, armed barges, and other ships with shallow draft that could attack the British raiders, protect the countryside and generally harass the blockaders in the shoal waters of the Tidewater.

In May of 1814, Barney and his select crew set sail for Tangier Sound, where the British had established a supply depot. Barney's Chesapeake Flotilla consisted of his flagship, the block-sloop The Scorpion, two gunboats (Gunboats 137 and 138), 13 large armed barges, a row galley, and a lookout boat. Barney's flotilla first engaged the enemy on June 1st. Barney and his crew harassed the British, using St. Leonard Creek and the relative safety of the shallows to avoid capture. However, with Barney blockaded in the creek, the British were able to sack several villages upriver.

During June Barney received reinforcements with contingents from two US Infantry regiments and 100 US Marines. At dawn on June 26th, Barney and his flotilla attacked the British blockade at the mouth of St. Leonard's Creek, with support from a battery that had been established on the bluffs above by Colonel Decius Wadsworth and some of the soldiers at Barney's disposal. The role of the battery was to pin down and sink the heavy British vessels so that the flotilla could sail out into the Patuxent. Unfortunately, the artillery battery on the bluff above the creek was poorly engineered and the cannon rolled backwards down the bluff after firing only a few rounds. Barney, again had to retreat up the creek.

Several of the British boats were damaged and required repairs. These sailed away to Point Patience on the Patuxent, allowing Barney an opportunity to escape. Barney's Scorpion and the armed barges were able to row out into the Patuxent and eventually head North up the River. The British chose not to pursue them. However, before leaving St. Leonard's creek, Barney was forced to scuttle the two gunboats, which were unwieldy and would have slowed down the escape. When the British returned to St. Leonard's, they reportedly burned what was left of the gunboats to thwart the attempts by locals to salvage materials from them. Barney would eventually scuttle the entire flotilla and sink the Scorpion north of Pig Point on the Patuxent in August of 1814, before taking the marines and sailors under his command overland to fight in the Battle of Bladensburg.

As early as 1977, systematic surveys of the Patuxent River and its tributaries began to be undertaken in an attempt to locate any remains of Barney's Chesapeake Flotilla. The early work of the 1970s and 1980s would eventually locate the wreck of the USS Scorpion (18PR226). A new survey attempt was begun in 1995, with a focus on locating the gunboats scuttled in St. Leonard's Creek as a major goal. This "Chesapeake Flotilla Project" was funded largely by the Maryland Historical Trust and was carried out in 1996 and 1997.

The magnetometer survey conducted in April of 1996 as part of the project identified 18 anomalies, which were further investigated by divers. An anomaly at Grover's Creek Cove was deemed one of the most likely candidates to be a 19th century gunboat as 'ground truthing' by the dive team had identified what might be two vessels. Side scanning sonar was then used in November to get a more detailed look at the anomaly. The results exhibited two sonar signatures, reinforcing the idea that two gunboats might be present.

The following summer, a Phase II underwater investigation was carried out on the Grover's Creek Cove shipwreck(s). That investigation revealed that only one vessel was present and that it was the remnants of a late 19th century schooner workboat. The "second vessel" turned out to be a sonar "reflection" upon closer inspection. Historical research and informant interviews revealed that the wrecked schooner (see synopsis report for 18CV416) was the Chesapeake Bay workboat The Widgeon.

In an effort to locate the Jeffersonian-era gunboats, further reconnaissance (a hydroprobe and diver search) was carried out in the area of St. Leonard's Town peninsula. In an area of the eastern tip of the peninsula, a potential shipwreck site was encountered on July 17th, 1997. Timber planking and framing, melted lead fasteners, treenails, copper sheathing nails, and charcoal were recorded and a series of survey stakes were laid out to delineate the probable wreck (named Vessel D) and an associated debris field. The types of fasteners recovered suggested a vessel from the early 19th century, as did other details of the construction. The presence of charcoal and melted lead suggested a ship that had burned.

Based on these findings, a Phase II investigation was recommended for Vessel D (18CV414) and carried out during the summer of 1998. Excavation began with the installation of a containment boom and apron barrier around the entire site to reduce silt flow. The keelson was exposed through dredging and measurements proceeded from a baseline along the keelson. Roughly 17 cubic meters of mud and clay was dredged and mechanically screened to expose the timber construction fully. No timbers or loose artifacts were encountered in this overburden, not until a shell and wood ash layer, just above the vessel was encountered. Hand screening in front of the dredge was then used to remove this final layer of sediment. All dredged material was screened through hardware cloth as well. Where necessary, additional dredging occurred beyond the extent of the ship to ensure total recovery.

Perhaps the most exciting discovery made during the Phase II operations at 18CV414, was the discovery of a second wreck adjacent to Vessel D. Initial investigation suggested it was quite similar in many respects and may have been the second gunboat of the Chesapeake Flotilla. Vessel D, was subsequently renamed Vessel D-1 and the new shipwreck was designated Vessel D-2. Examination of Vessel D-2 would have to wait until the 1999 season.

The details of construction mapped out on Vessel D-1 in 1998, suggest that it was indeed one of the Jeffersonian-era gunboats scuttled by Joshua Barney's men during the War of 1812. Known designs from the period suggest 50-60 ft vessels with shallow draft, full bow, and blunt end and Vessel D-1 fits the bill. Other details of construction and comparison to known military and commercial vessel designs from the late 18th and throughout the 19th century suggest that the best match is a vessel from the Jeffersonian-era gunboat program. Furthermore, excavation revealed that the vessel was clearly burned and that the entire vessel was likely sheathed on its inside hull with copper (based on the large number and extent of copper fasteners). Archival evidence reveals that



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Brief Description:

18th century military vessel shipwreck, War of 1812

Unknown

Barney's Gunboat No. 137 was consigned to carry bread and supplies upon its first trial cruise in 1814. This copper sheathing would likely have been necessary to keep such cargo dry. Furthermore, several artifacts encountered point to military uses. A brass button recovered from the starboard bilge area is of a design that pre-dates 1820.

Artifacts (aside from the timbers that constituted the vessel) recovered during the 1998 Phase II work included 7 activity items, 318 architectural artifacts, 3 clothing items, a personal object, 4 arms items, and 32 miscellaneous historic items. The activity items were a rope fragment, 2 block and sheave components, a wood brush, a rosin fragment, a whistle stop, and a wooden tool handle. Architectural remains consisted of 149 iron fasteners, 106 copper nails, 8 pieces of sheet lead, 54 fragments of melted lead, and a piece of copper alloy edging. The clothing remains were the pre-1820 brass button and 2 leather fragments. The personal item was part of a wooden canteen. Arms objects were two .69 caliber musketballs, an impacted musketball attached to an iron concretion, and a possible quoin handle. Miscellaneous objects include a piece of flint, 2 bricks, a stone fragment, 4 pieces of glass, 3 brass foil fragments, several bones (estimated at 10), several seeds (estimated at 10), and an organic "vine-like" object.

Researchers returned to the site in 1999 to conduct Phase II operations on Vessel D-2. The excavation procedures were similar to those followed in 1998. The main axis of the vessel was to be dredged and key areas of the structure excavated to correspond to the areas exposed on Vessel D-1 for comparative purposes. Excavation proved more difficult because Vessel D-2 was more disarticulated. However, parallel trenches enabled the researchers to expose large sections of the bow and stern and proceed from there. Fewer intact hull remains were recovered and the thick mud and clay layer dredged from atop Vessel D-1 remains was found to be filled with disarticulated hull remnants, making excavation more difficult. Ultimately Vessel D-2 was exposed in three parallel trenches; one at the bow, one at the stern and one amidship.

The construction of Vessel D-2 was sufficiently similar to that of Vessel D-1 to suggest that it is the second scuttled Jeffersonian gunboat. Not all construction features were identical, but enough were the same or similar to suggest that they were built around the same time and with similar purposes in mind. Furthermore, it is highly likely that Vessel D-2 is Barney's Gunboat No. 138. In contrast to Vessel D-1, copper sheathing tacks were found only in the stern area, suggesting that it is not the gunboat that served as a bread and supply ship (Gunboat No. 137).

Artifacts recovered from Vessel D-2 (Gunboat No. 138) included 172 architectural artifacts, 3 pieces of clothing, 2 ceramic sherds, 9 arms objects, and 126 miscellaneous items. The architectural artifacts were 18 iron nails, 6 iron driftpins or dirftpin fragments, 72 copper sheathing nails, a bronze spike, a flattened copper tack head, 74 fragments of melted lead, an iron fishplate, 4 treenails, and 8 wooden dowels. The clothing remains were a small copper buckle, 2 brass buttons, a copper button, and 2 leather fragments. The ceramic sherds were both lead-glazed redwares. Arms items include two .69 caliber musketballs, 6 lead 'swan shot' pieces, a piece of iron ordnance, a modern shotgun slug, and a modern .30 caliber bullet. The miscellaneous objects were 18 flat iron fragments, 7 pieces of glass, 31 stone/brick fragments, 24 pieces of bone, a carved wooden stick, 12 unidentified wood pieces, 31 seeds, and 2 organic objects.

The underwater archeology program at 18CV414 revealed the presence of two Jeffersonian gunboats that were part of the Chesapeake Flotilla during the War of 1812. They are a rare and important piece of American and Maryland history. Phase III-level examination of the remains is warranted. Very little is known about the Jeffersonian gunboats and comparative analyses of these two and other known examples could be vitally important. The shipwreck site should be considered a significant maritime archeological resource, capable of addressing research question related to Maryland and American history.

## External Reference Codes (Library ID Numbers):

00000284, CHESFLOT, 97000521, 97000495, 97000362