



Phase II and Phase III Archaeological Database and Inventory

Site Number: 18FR25

Site Name: Claggett Retreat

Prehistoric

Other name(s)

Historic

Brief Description:

Archaic unknown, Late Woodland hamlet

Unknown

Site Location and Environmental Data:

Maryland Archaeological Research Unit No. 17

SCS soil & sediment code WhB

Latitude 39.3126

Longitude -77.4261

Physiographic province Lancaster/Frederick Lowl

Terrestrial site

Underwater site

Elevation m

Site slope 0-8%

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 Mono

Saltwater

Ocean

Estuary/tidal river

Tidewater/marsh

Freshwater

Stream/river

Swamp

Lake or pond

Spring

Minimum distance to water is 50 m

Temporal & Ethnic Contextual Data:

Paleoindian site

Woodland site

Contact period site

ca. 1820 - 1860

Archaic site

MD Adena

ca. 1630 - 1675

ca. 1860 - 1900

Early archaic

Early woodland

ca. 1675 - 1720

ca. 1900 - 1930

Middle archaic

Mid. woodland

ca. 1720 - 1780

Post 1930

Late archaic

Late woodland

ca. 1780 - 1820

Unknown historic context

Unknown prehistoric 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
- 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

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

Interpretive Sampling Data:

Prehistoric context samples

Soil samples taken N

N

Flotation samples taken Y

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	2
Otter Creek	<input type="checkbox"/>	Levanna	2

Prehistoric Sherd Types

Marcey Creek	<input type="checkbox"/>	Popes Creek	<input type="checkbox"/>	Shepard	7	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	1		
Vinette	<input type="checkbox"/>	Page	123	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	<input type="checkbox"/>	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	<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	194	Human remain(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Ground stone	1	Modified faunal	80
Stone bowls	<input type="checkbox"/>	Unmod faunal	838
Fire-cracked rock	3	Oyster shell	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other lithics (all)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Floral material	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Ceramics (all)	721	Uncommon Obj.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Rimsherds	278	Other	<input type="checkbox"/>

Prehistoric Features

Mound(s)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Storage/trash pit	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Midden	<input type="checkbox"/>	Burial(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Shell midden	<input type="checkbox"/>	Ossuary	<input type="checkbox"/>
Postholes/molds	<input checked="" 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

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

Dated features present at site

Mason Island pit features, hearths and burials, Also Feat. 34 (shallow pit) radiocarbon dated

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

Historic Features

Const feature	<input type="checkbox"/>	Privy/outhouse	<input type="checkbox"/>	Depression/mound	<input type="checkbox"/>	Unknown	<input type="checkbox"/>
Foundation	<input type="checkbox"/>	Well/cistern	<input type="checkbox"/>	Burial(s)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other	<input 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: 780 +/- 40 years BP

Reliability

Sample 2: 400 +/- 40 years BP

Reliability

Sample 3: +/- years BP

Reliability

B-242477: charcoal from hearth or shallow pit (feat. 34), assoc. w/ Page pottery, lithics, bone, turtle shell, and fire-cracked rock

High

B-275419: carbonized maize cupule from hearth or shallow pit (feat. 34), assoc. w/ Page pottery, lithics, bone, turtle shell, and fire-cracked rock

Mod

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 MAC, American University, Smithsonian Institution

Additional raw data may be available online

Summary Description:

Claggett Retreat (18FR25) is a multi-component archeological site near Buckeystown in rural Frederick County. The site is primarily a Late Woodland Page (Mason Island) hamlet. Archaic components are also present. The site is situated in an agricultural field, on the first terrace above the Monocacy River floodplain. The Monocacy is a tributary of the Potomac River. Small hills flank the site to the north and east, both of which are approximately 500,000 years old and likely elevated by gravel point bar deposits from an ancestral Monocacy River. Soils at the site are primarily Walkersville and Wheeling gravelly loams.

The site was first identified in 1964 when local Buckeystown resident, Calvin Swomley, located the site and began collecting there. Mr. Swomley is known to have excavated a substantial number of subterranean features with the aid of a probe and a shovel. Mr. Swomley mapped the locations of his excavations and kept notebooks of what he recovered from each of his "pits". During the 1970s, the site was officially recorded by the State Office of Archeology and Mr. Swomley's collection and map were recorded by the state. Archeologists are known to have visited the site in 1978 and 1982 as part of the Monocacy River Regional Survey, but at that time they were not able to gain access to Mr. Swomley, his collection or notes.

The site was the subject of the 2007 and 2008 Annual Field Session in Archeology sponsored by the Archeological Society of Maryland and the Maryland Historical Trust, in cooperation with the Potomac River Archaeology Survey (PRAS) at American University. By 2007, the exact location of Mr. Swomley's original excavations was uncertain. When professional archeologists and ASM volunteers first began controlled excavations at the site, they initially located test units to the west of the site. Two days after the 2007 session began, a couple of the ASM excavators decided to take it upon themselves to make inquiries as to Mr. Swomley's possible whereabouts in Buckeystown during their lunch break one day. Asking around, they were eventually given directions to his house and appeared at his front door. After explaining that the ASM was undertaking excavations at Claggett Retreat, they convinced Mr. Swomley to return to the site with them that afternoon. The project PI and fieldcrew was surprised when they received a phonecall from the two aforementioned ASM volunteers from the top of the hill that overlooks the site stating that they had, "...found Mr. Swomley and he says you are digging in the wrong spot". Locating Mr. Swomley not only led to the re-discovery of Claggett Retreat, but he was gracious enough to allow researchers to examine his collection and ultimately donated the collection to the state. In addition, he provided details of his excavation methods and the site layout not previously known.

In total, Mr. Swomley excavated 28 features and 3 postmolds at 18FR25. He plotted these excavations on a piece of brown wrapping paper and kept notes on each feature in a small gray pocket notebook. Many of these features were located based on dense concentrations of surface artifacts. Typically, once any such "hot spot" was identified, Mr. Swomley would then excavate a series of what one might call "shovel test pits" until he was satisfied that he had located a subterranean pit or other feature of interest. He would then open up the area around it, leading to the definition of the feature and often associated smaller features such as postmolds. Using Mr. Swomley's map and his recollection of previous landscape features, the 2007-2008 field crew was able to plot the approximate location of the 28 features.

Mr. Swomley's excavations encountered 3 postmolds, 21 refuse pits (usually round or oval in shape), 2 hearths, 2 other pits, 1 infant burial, and 2 features of uncertain function. He recovered a collection of at least 515 ceramic sherds (278 rims) and 194 flaked lithic objects (only 34 flakes were retained). Many of the retained lithics are small triangular Potomac and Levanna (at least 2) points. Lithic raw materials were primarily rhyolite and quartz, with far lesser amounts of chert, jasper, quartzite, siltstone, and sandstone. The ceramic assemblage included at least 123 Page sherds, 7 Shepard sherds, and 1 Shenks Ferry sherd. In addition, Mr. Swomley's notes indicate that at least 206 additional sherds, 1 broken pendant (counted as groundstone), 3 pieces of fire cracked rock, 1 shell bead, 79 bone tools, 7 pieces of turtle shell, 3 pieces of deer antler, and at least 828 other animal bones were also recovered.

Excavation work in 2007 entailed the excavation of fifteen 2 X 2 test units and two long 1 m wide trenches at the site. Four of those units were situated west of the site area as defined by Mr. Swomley. While these units did not reveal features, they did produce numerous Late Woodland artifacts, including diagnostic projectile points and pottery sherds. These units were not completed, and were backfilled shortly after being opened, shortly after the Claggett Retreat site location had been revealed. The relationship of these artifacts to the site is uncertain.

Eleven test units and the two trenches (1 X 10 m and 1 X 20 m) were situated within the boundaries of 18FR25 as defined by Calvin Swomley's excavation work. All units and trenches were excavated by shovel and/or trowel. The matrix of all 2 X 2 m units was screened through hardware cloth. The Matrix of trenches was removed by shovel and not screened to more quickly expose a large area in the search for features. This soil was instead replaced directly back into each of the two trenches after the conclusion of the excavations.

Four 2 X 2 m units were situated along an east-west line in the southwest portion of the site. Although significant numbers of artifacts were recovered from these units, it was soon discovered that a builder's trench containing a substantial terra cotta pipe cut through all four units, greatly disturbing the archeological deposits. This roughly 1 m wide builder's trench contained what appeared to be portions of an abandoned irrigation system. Interviews revealed that water from the nearby Monocacy River was delivered to the system of pipes via pumps located in a structure to the east (now just a foundation remnant). The system was installed at some point in the 20th century to water crops of asparagus and other garden crops. Six historic postmolds were also encountered in these units.

Three additional units in the southwest portion of the site were less disturbed. Two of these units yielded evidence of features. Upon further inspection, one of these features was heavily disturbed, one turned out to be a rodent disturbance, and one, thought to be a postmold, could not be verified as such. However, one shallow depression (Feature 30) did contain pottery, bone, and stone artifacts.

In search of a palisade, the 2007 field crew hand-excavated a 1 X 10 m trench just to the west of the aforementioned four units. No palisade was identified. Instead, researchers encountered a substantial circular concrete pad, another apparent component of the irrigation system. In general, the southern portion of the site appeared to be quite disturbed.

A line of four contiguous 2 X 2 units was excavated in the west-central portion of the site, north of the aforementioned units. In addition, a second trench (this one 1 X 20 m) was excavated in this area in search of a palisade. No palisade was encountered in the trench, but what appeared to be a circular feature was partially exposed. This feature (Feature 33) extended out from the south wall of the trench and exhibited charcoal within its matrix. A large pottery sherd rested on its surface. Feature 33 was about 70 cm in diameter. The feature was not excavated since it was not fully exposed in plan view.



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The four contiguous units were the most productive of the 2007 season. All 4 yielded significant quantities of artifacts and encountered a prehistoric feature (Feature 34). Since the feature was only partially uncovered, a small extension was excavated to the north of the units to fully expose Feature 34. That extension was 90 cm X 175 cm in dimension. Feature 34 was a substantial, yet generally shallow basin-shaped depression. It was roughly circular in plan view, about 1.6 m in diameter. At its greatest depth it was about 16 cm deep. The compacted matrix of Feature 34 yielded significant amounts of pottery, lithics, bone, turtle shell, and fire-cracked rock. Substantial amounts of charcoal were also recovered. In addition to Feature 34, a number of postmolds were preliminarily identified within the four contiguous units. However, only one of these could be verified as a true postmold with cross-sectioning. This postmold was just to the southwest of Feature 34.

A sample of the charcoal from Feature 34 was submitted for radiocarbon assay using the AMS technique. The resulting uncalibrated date was reported at 780± 40 radiocarbon years before present. When calibrated, this corresponds to a calendrical date (2 sigma) of AD 1170-1284. This date is well within expectations for the Mason Island complex. Following flotation of a soil sample from Feature 34 (see below) a carbonized maize cupule sample was submitted for AMS dating. It produced an uncalibrated date of 400±40 radiocarbon years before present. When calibrated, this corresponds to a calendrical date of AD 1432-1632. Though later than the other date from the feature, this still falls within the range for Late Woodland Page ceramics.

The ASM returned to Claggett Retreat for their 2008 Field Session. Excavation in 2008 was undertaken with the assistance of a tracked Bobcat loader. The overburden was removed in a thin series of horizontal cuts to expose the level at which Features were being exposed in the preceding season. The mechanical excavations concentrated on three areas of the site, predetermined by feature concentrations noted through Swomley's earlier excavations. The Bobcat was used to create three long trenches a little wider than the width of its bucket. Test units (again 2 X 2 m) were then laid out within each trench. For the most part, with one exception, units within each trench were contiguous.

The first long excavation trench trended north-south and was situated in the western portion of the site just north of the 2007 units. A small ring of features had been excavated here by Swomley. Seven contiguous 2 X 2 units were placed within the trench and an 8th unit was placed 14 m to the south of the southernmost contiguous 2 X 2.

The contiguous line of test units yielded significant quantities of the typical range of Mason Island artifacts: pottery, stone flakes and tools, bone, turtle shell, and fire-cracked rock. Feature 36 was also exposed in two of its units. The top of this feature had the appearance of sheet refuse that gradually defined more clearly as a shallow, semi-circular depression. Its main axis was about 1.9 m in diameter, the feature yielding pottery, lithics, bone, turtle shell, fire-cracked rock, and abundant charcoal. Unfortunately, a wire nail was recovered near its bottom, indicating that some sort of disturbance took place.

The isolate unit was placed to explore a gap in a circular arrangement of pits approximately 21 m in diameter identified during earlier excavations (both Swomley and ASM). This unit yielded the standard range of artifacts as well as a small circular feature (Feature 38). This feature was about 27 cm in diameter, and a darkened charcoal flecked matrix defined it. The feature fit nicely with the arc of other pits defined by previous excavation, suggesting that it was a prehistoric pit feature like the others. Unfortunately, torrential rain at the end of the 2008 Field Session prohibited any further investigation of Feature 38.

The second mechanically excavated trench was placed in the central portion of the site and contained ten contiguous 2 X 2 m units. This central trench was situated to investigate the eastern edge of the aforementioned arc of pits.

As before, this new row of units yielded significant quantities of typical Mason Island artifacts. Feature 35 was also encountered within the trench. In order to completely expose the feature's horizontal surface, a 1 X 2 m extension was added to the west wall of the unit, revealing Feature 35 in plan view. The feature, oval in outline, was 114 cm wide at its N/S axis and 88 cm wide E/W. It was relatively shallow, about 16 cm deep. Associated artifacts included pottery, quartz flakes, turtle shell, bone (including deer and bird), and flecks of charcoal. This feature also fit nicely into the arc of pits. A postmold was also identified several meters north of Feature 35, in the vicinity of two of Swomley's pit features and one of his mapped postmolds. The postmold was fairly substantial at 7 cm in diameter and 9 cm deep. Its size coupled with the proximity to other features might indicate the presence of a structure in the area. It should also be noted that remnants of 3 of Calvin Swomley's features were identified in the central trench, suggesting that the re-mapping of the site done after locating Mr. Swomley in 2007 was fairly accurate.

The third mechanically excavated trench was situated on what was believed to be the eastern edge of the site. This was an area of the site where a number of pits had been excavated by Swomley and just south of another concentration of his features. Five units were placed within the trench. As before, significant quantities of the typical range of Mason Island artifacts were recovered in non-feature contexts: pottery (including one lugged rimsherd), lithic flakes and tools, bone, and fire-cracked rock. One feature was discovered (Feature 37), which proved to be a shallow oval-shaped depression. It had been disturbed by plowing. It was approximately 60.8 cm by 106.7 cm in extent and only about 8.5 cm deep.

Flotation samples were collected from several of the exposed features during the 2007 and 2008 study. These samples produced a total of 7,347 pieces of wood charcoal. Identifiable tree species included hickory (71), white oak (42), red oak (12), maple (2), American chestnut (2), and other deciduous species (12). Flotation also yielded 191 carbonized nut fragments, 17 carbonized seeds, 1,223 examples of cultigens, and 29 miscellaneous carbonized plant remains. Among the carbonized nut fragments were 186 hickory shells, 12 black walnut shells, and 1 acorn shell. Identifiable seeds were 1 Chenopodium specimen, 1 knotweed seed, 1 grass seed, 13 sumac seeds and seed fragments, and a grape seed. Cultigens from the site included 1,222 maize specimens (mostly cupules and kernels) and a single sunflower seed. The miscellaneous plant remains were 21 fungal fructifications and 8 amorphous carbon fragments. For more information about the paleoethnobotanical remains, see the linked ethnobotany profile.

Excavation work in 2007 and 2008 at 18FR25 largely confirmed what was known about the site's character. It consists largely of a Late Woodland Mason Island hamlet. Unfortunately, the major finding appears to be that the site has been heavily disturbed by agricultural activities. A combination of deep plowing and the installation of irrigation pipes has destroyed many of the postmolds and features that were undoubtedly once present. The best hope for obtaining additional information about Site 18FR25 may be to conduct geophysical survey of the locale. Such work would help to identify the layout of the irrigation system and potentially any remaining intact features that were not impacted by the plow or collecting activities.

External Reference Codes (Library ID Numbers):

95001239, Site Files