



Phase II and Phase III Archaeological Database and Inventory

Site Number: 18FR575

Site Name: Birely Tannery

Prehistoric

Other name(s) W. & W. Poultry Market, Inc., City Site # 10

Historic

Brief Description:

Early 19th-Mid 20th cen. leather tanning complex & leather retail business; Mid-20th cen. poultry processing

Unknown

Site Location and Environmental Data:

Maryland Archaeological Research Unit No. 17

SCS soil & sediment code UrC,LsA

Latitude 39.4108 Longitude -77.4023

Physiographic province Lancaster/Frederick Lowl

Terrestrial site Underwater site

Elevation m Site slope 0-15%

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 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

Nearest Surface Water

Name (if any) Carroll Creek

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

Minimum distance to water is 0 m

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 Y

ca. 1630 - 1675 ca. 1860 - 1900 Y

ca. 1675 - 1720 ca. 1900 - 1930 Y

ca. 1720 - 1780 Post 1930 Y

ca. 1780 - 1820 Y

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? Urban

Domestic

Homestead

Farmstead

Mansion

Plantation

Row/townhome

Cellar

Privy

Industrial

Mining-related

Quarry-related

Mill

Black/metalsmith

Furnace/forge

Other tannery com

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

Flotation samples taken

Other samples taken

Historic context samples

Soil samples taken

Flotation samples taken

Other samples taken Floral, Faunal



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Diagnostic Artifact Data:

Projectile Point Types			
Clovis	<input type="checkbox"/>	Koens-Crispin	<input type="checkbox"/>
Hardaway-Dalton	<input type="checkbox"/>	Perkiomen	<input type="checkbox"/>
Palmer	<input type="checkbox"/>	Susquehana	<input type="checkbox"/>
Kirk (notch)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Vernon	<input type="checkbox"/>
Kirk (stem)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Piscataway	<input type="checkbox"/>
Le Croy	<input type="checkbox"/>	Calvert	<input type="checkbox"/>
Morrow Mntn	<input type="checkbox"/>	Selby Bay	<input type="checkbox"/>
Guilford	<input type="checkbox"/>	Jacks Rf (notch)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Brewerton	<input type="checkbox"/>	Jacks Rf (pent)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Otter Creek	<input type="checkbox"/>	Madison/Potomac	<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	1	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	1		

Historic Sherd Types

Earthenware						Stoneware	
Astbury	<input type="checkbox"/>	Ironstone	<input type="checkbox"/>	Staffordshire	<input type="checkbox"/>	English Brown	<input type="checkbox"/>
Borderware	<input type="checkbox"/>	Jackfield	5	Tin Glazed	5	Eng Dry-bodied	<input type="checkbox"/>
Buckley	3	Mn Mottled	<input type="checkbox"/>	Whiteware	11	Nottingham	<input type="checkbox"/>
Creamware	41	North Devon	<input type="checkbox"/>	Porcelain	7	Rhenish	<input type="checkbox"/>
		Pearlware	46			Wt Salt-glazed	12

All quantities exact or estimated minimal counts

Other Artifact & Feature Types:

Prehistoric Artifacts			
Flaked stone	1	Other fired clay	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ground stone	<input type="checkbox"/>	Human remain(s)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Stone bowls	<input type="checkbox"/>	Modified faunal	<input type="checkbox"/>
Fire-cracked rock	<input type="checkbox"/>	Unmod faunal	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other lithics (all)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Oyster shell	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ceramics (all)	2	Floral material	<input type="checkbox"/>
Rimsherds	<input type="checkbox"/>	Uncommon Obj.	<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

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

Dated features present at site

Numerous features related to the tannery operations w/ diagnostic historic artifacts in association.

Historic Artifacts			
Pottery (all)	816	Tobacco related	9
Glass (all)	491	Activity item(s)	1422
Architectural	548	Human remain(s)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Furniture	1	Faunal material	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Arms	1	Misc. kitchen	427
Clothing	41	Floral material	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Personal items	21	Misc.	135
		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 checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Well/cistern	<input type="checkbox"/>	Burial(s)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Cellar hole/cellar	<input type="checkbox"/>	Trash pit/dump	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Railroad bed	<input type="checkbox"/>	tanning vats, drains, brick floor, piers	
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 checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Wheel pit	<input type="checkbox"/>		

All quantities exact or estimated minimal counts

Radiocarbon Data:

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

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

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

Additional radiocarbon results available



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External Samples/Data:

Collection curated at MAC, City of Frederick?

Additional raw data may be available online

Summary Description:

The Birely Tannery (18FR575) is situated on the left descending bank of Carroll Creek in Frederick, MD. The specific soils present within the project area are Linside Silt Loam and Hagerstown Loam. The area is used as a driveway, a parking lot and a yard. Excavations at the site document late 18th, 19th, and post-tannery 20th century filling episodes associated with the construction and operation of a tannery. These depositional episodes form a 1.524 to 2.1336 meter (5 to 7 ft) deep blanket over the original land surface, within which are contained many of the tannery facilities and remains.

Prior to the installation of a flood control conduit along a stretch of the Carroll Creek floodplain, a program of archeological testing was implemented by Professional Service Industries in the impact area. A linear urban park was also planned for either side of the stream on top of the conduit. This initial Phase II work was performed in 1983 and began with archival research. The tannery occupied property extended over three lots, but was initially limited to one. The lot on which the initial tannery was established was purchased by Elizabeth Birely from Peter Fout in 1819, and operations were at least underway by 1822 when local business records begin documenting the purchase of leather from the tannery. However, Elizabeth's tannery operations may have begun much earlier at the site if she rented the property. Indeed, Peter Fout appears in a 1798 assessment as the owner of one lot on which was located a "Tan Yard". It is not clear how many or which lots Fout owned at this point and so the attribution of this lot to the Birely Tannery is speculative. Elizabeth Birely's interests were varied and extensive. When she died in 1828, she left her brick dwelling on Patrick Street in Frederick, residential rental property adjacent to it, stock in a shop on Cheapside in Baltimore, and "all my stock in trade at the tannery in Frederick embracing leather, hides, bark, tools" etc. to her son Valentine together with two "negro men". Other documents indicate that slaves may have performed many of the daily operations at the tannery (see full reports for a description of these activities). The archival documents attest to construction dates between the period 1819-1822, and the function of this property as an industrial site well into the 20th century. Following two fires in the early 20th century it decreased to a part-time operation until the tannery closed its doors in the 1960s. Part of the original structure has been used as a poultry processing plant in modern times.

The investigations in 1983 involved five backhoe trenches, three auger tests, and four shovel tests excavated in an attempt to locate architectural features and trash deposits. Three features associated with the functioning of the tannery were identified; a stone foundation with associated paving stones, an early 20th century lye vat with rubber shoe heels within, and a leather discard pile. Additionally, lime deposits were located in an area where Sanborn maps indicated a lime house stood. Trench A was an east-west trench measuring 3.9 meters (12.8 ft) long and 0.9144 meters (3 feet) wide. It was placed in an area to locate the "Beam House" which was used for hide cleaning and finishing. Trench B was opened in the hopes of encountering structural evidence of the lime house. The trench was oriented north-south and measured 2.92608 meter (9.6 ft) and was 0.9144 meters (3 feet) wide. No direct evidence for a structure was located, however, a wood lined pit was partially exposed in the eastern side of the cut. Two auger tests were placed in the trench, one outside of the feature and one within the feature. Trenches C, D, and E were located in areas where there was a possibility of locating earlier structures or features associated with the tan yard. Trench C was 5.1816 X 1.2192 meters (17 X 4 feet) and located a leather and hide scrap pile. The eastern half of the trench was excavated to the water table. A sample of the leather and hide was taken, but the remainder was not collected. Trench D measured 0.6096 X 2.1336 meters (2 X 7 feet) and located no features or cultural materials due to a breach of the water table which interrupted excavations. Trench E measured 0.6096 X 2.4384 meters (2 X 8 feet) and was situated on the western portion of the site. A circular pit with a radius of approximately 0.6096 meters (2 feet) was encountered and contained architectural debris consisting of brick and yellow sandy mortar. No diagnostic artifacts were observed or collected from the trench.

Artifact recovered during the 1983 Phase II testing included 16 activity items, 111 architectural objects, 32 pieces of clothing, 76 kitchen-related items, 1 personal item, and 82 miscellaneous objects. The activity items were a piece of lamp glass, a piece of wire, a link of chain, a fragment of rubber hose, a chunk of lye, 8 leather/hide scraps, a scrap of burned rubber, and 2 pieces of burned wood. The architectural remains (aside from brick and mortar) included 31 fragments of plate window glass, 76 nails (5 cut, 65 wire, 6 unidentified), a spike, 1 piece of miscellaneous hardware, and 2 electrical parts. There were 32 clothing-related items encountered. Several of these, however, may be leather items in various stages of production and may fit more accurately into the "activities" category. These object include a milk glass button, 10 leather shoe fragments, a metal ladies shoe heel, and 20 rubber "Cat's Paw" shoe parts. The kitchen-related items are mostly ceramics; 2 cream-colored wares, 2 creamware sherds, a tin-glazed sherd, a porcelain sherd, a whiteware sherd, and 5 redware sherds. The remaining kitchen items are 2 glass jar fragments, 27 bottle pieces, a tin/metal can, and 34 animal bones. The only personal item recovered was a fragment of mirror glass. Miscellaneous objects included 8 metal pieces, 73 wood fragments, and a piece of slag.

In 1988 MAAR Associates, Inc. of Newark, Delaware was contracted by the City of Frederick, Maryland to conduct Phase III data recovery at 18FR575 after it was determined that a large portion of the site would be destroyed as a result of the construction of new flood control infrastructure. A site grid was established by measuring north/south and east/west baselines using a transit and tapes. In order to obtain a more detailed understanding of the subsurface deposits, a program of shovel testing at grid intervals was undertaken. The grid interval was 7.62 meters (25 feet). Elevations were taken at each of the grid points. East/west and north/south transects of shovel tests were then excavated to determine the depth and nature of fill deposits.

After it was determined that recent fill mantled the tannery remains, machinery was brought in and used to remove the fill down to the level of the 1909 fire (see above). The grid was then reestablished and elevations were again taken at what was found to be the top of the 19th century grade. The entire project area was then flat shoveled and trowelled clean. All features were recorded on maps and photographically. A total of 33 distinct features and components were fully or partially excavated. These include structural foundations, vats, a cobble road, post molds, a paling fence and a leather/hair dump. The minimum sample taken from structural features was arbitrarily set at 50%. Larger samples were, however, taken in the field as feature complexity was further defined by partial excavation. Vat features were grouped based on size, shape, material composition, and location within the site. At least one vat was investigated from each of the defined groups. All excavated soil matrices were dry or wet screened and recovered artifacts were provenienced as to feature and appropriate level. Large features were excavated using 1.524 X 1.524 meter (5 X 5 foot) units as a control. Upon the completion of hand-excavated samples, a backhoe was used to remove the remaining feature fills and to expose and record interior architectural elements. By the conclusion of data recovery, over 40 features and associated midden areas has been revealed, including the remains of four tannery structures (a bark mill, a hide house, a lime house, and a beam house), 24 tanning vats, a cobble road, a section of paling fence, a large leather/hair dump, and both modern and early midden deposits.

Artifacts recovered during the data recovery phase include 187 activity items. Among these are 4 toys (a kaolin marble, a glass marble, a sherd from a toy tea set, and a porcelain doll part), a buckle part, 6 metal hooks, 8 metal straps, a piece of turning steel, a bundle of copper wire, a chain link, 7 metal rings, 2 metal spouts, 3 nuts, 3 bolts, a spring, a piece of wire with a celluloid disk, 4 brackets, 7 barrel hoop fragments, a speaking tube, 20 assorted tools (a stove scoop, 3 burnishing tools, a hand-forged axe head, 7 grinding stones, 3 hand-forged fish hook pieces, 3 files/rasps, a pair of metal dividers, and a metal roller), 20 pieces of tack (a snaffle bit, 13 ox shoes, & 6 horseshoes), 11 tanning objects (3 beaming knife parts, a wooden knife handle, 2 currying tools, 2 draw knives, a cleaver, & 2 fleshing knives), and 85 leather/rubber/shoe scraps. Of the shoe parts, one piece that stands out is a stitched down "slave's shoe". In addition to these, 1212 animal bones were excavated. Due to the fact that most are the bones left attached to animal hides (metacarpals, hoofs, horns,



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etc.), it is likely that they are related to the hide processing and tanning activities at the site rather than meal remains. Nonetheless, some may represent food remains. There were 460 cow bones, 60 sheep/goat bones, 37 pig, 27 horse, 95 dog bones, 36 cat, 2 rabbits, 13 small artiodactyl, 273 large ungulates, 23 rodent bones, 26 undetermined mammal bones, 28 chicken, 2 goose, 8 turkey, 21 unidentified bird bones, 4 fish bones, and 97 undetermined bones. Architectural items from the site include 380 objects; a brass doorknob, 4 lock parts, 5 pieces of door hardware, a piece of copper flashing, 185 copper flashing pieces, 163 nails (5 wrought, 16 rosehead, 3 T-head, 18 cut, 21 wire, 2 clinch nails, and 98 unidentified), 2 tacks, 10 spikes, 3 electrical parts, 2 plugs (probably for vat drains), 2 conical drain parts, and 2 linoleum fragments. The five clothing objects excavated were 3 buttons (bone, brass shank, plastic), a rubber "Cats Paw" and metal shoe parts. The two shoe parts could alternatively be categorized as activity-related items. A total of 1267 kitchen-related objects were encountered. The kitchen ceramics include 17 refined earthenware sherds, 5 Jackfield, 3 Buckley, 4 tin-glazed sherds, a Gray-bodied earthenware sherd, 3 buff-bodied sherds, 39 creamware sherds, 46 pearlware sherds, 6 porcelain sherds, 4 Mochaware, 2 salt-glazed stoneware, 10 gray-bodied stoneware sherds, 5 brown stoneware sherds, 3 scratch blue sherds, 9 other white salt-glazed stoneware sherds, 2 buff-bodied stoneware sherds, 10 whiteware, 622 redware, and 1 other ceramic sherd. Other kitchen items include 10 fragments of table glass, 140 bottle fragments, an 18th c. two-tined pewter fork, 5 knife parts (possibly tanning activity-related), 3 eggshells, 2 fish scales/bones, 131 oyster shells, 7 clam shells, 17 walnuts, 4 bitternuts, 6 hazelnuts, 31 butternuts, 3 unidentified nuts, a cherry pit, 5 plum pits, and 108 peach pits. Sixteen personal objects were encountered during the excavations, including a key, 2 coins (a large cent piece and an 1887 Indianhead Penny, a bone toothbrush handle, a stoneware chamberpot fragment and a redware chamberpot fragment, 8 jewelry items (5 gold tack/pins, 2 gold cufflinks, & a piece of gold wire), part of an ointment jar, and a probably Sheffield dagger. The nine tobacco-related items from the site were 7 kaolin pipe stem fragments, a kaolin pipe bowl, and a ceramic elbow pipe. The only arms-related item recovered was a lead slug. And three prehistoric objects were excavated; an Accokeek sherd, a Potomac Creek Sherd, and a Quartzite flake.

In 2016, Kerns CRM Consultants was contracted by Kann Partners to conduct Phase I/II investigations of the entire property containing 18FR575 after it was determined that the site would be destroyed as a result of redevelopment as part of a hotel complex. The 2016 testing area encompassed an approximately 180 feet by 180 feet (34,400 square feet) section of the property. Archaeological testing locations were chosen based on historic records and scaled maps to determine the location and condition of any archaeological features related to the tannery occupation. The planned testing method of traditional, close-interval Phase I systemic shovel testing and Phase II sampling and data collection with stratigraphically excavated archaeological test units was abandoned due to site conditions related to deep fill deposits of gravel overlying mechanically compacted clay fill and demolition rubble. These conditions made traditional excavation with hand tools impossible to execute. In order to access the buried surface related to the tannery occupation the gravel fill, clay fill and demolition debris was removed with a "bobcat." Due to the compact and altered surface and to be able to access subsoil at depths of more than 6 feet below grade, mechanical trenching with a backhoe was necessary and employed using a two-foot-wide bucket to place test trench in areas where historic maps and plans showed the location of structures. Thirteen trenches were machine excavated. Once excavated, hand tools (flat spades and trowels) were used to clear soil from features and to define stratigraphy. Due to the site conditions, measurements were taken from below grade after the removal of the gravel fill that covers the site (ranging from 1.25 to 2.0 feet in thick).

Thirteen archaeological features related to the tannery period of occupation and later were located during this testing. They consisted of four tanning vats, one waste pit, two sections of stone paving, three stone foundation walls from three different structures, a small articulated section of brick, and a section of brick foundation. When the locations of the test trenches and features are overlaid on a Sanborn map, most of the features can be identify by their location and associated labels such as the tanning vats

The majority of the artifacts recovered during testing came from the west side of the site associated with the tanning vats. This section of the property was apparently used for refuse disposal before the 1955 redevelopment. The artifacts recovered from the interior of tanning vats were modern. The vats on the site appear to contain a mixture of abandoned tanning materials topped with a layer of trash. Substantial demolition, grading, and the introduction of fill soils was documented across the site. The disturbed state of the site brings the provenance of the artifacts into question.

The artifacts recovered during the 2016 testing did not provide temporal context or data to aid in interpretation of the 18FR575. Since brick and mortar rubble and coal slag where part of the soil matrix encountered across the site, only samples were retained. The artifacts collected from feature soils included the following functional artifact groups: Activity (n=7), Architecture (n=71), Clothing (n=4), Furniture (n=1), Kitchen (n=155), Personal (n=4), and Miscellaneous (n=37).

Activity artifacts included shreds of terracotta flower pots, lamp glass, and toy fragments. Artifacts in the architecture category included bricks, mortar, window glass, miscellaneous hardware and metal, and nails. Nail varieties included cut nails (n=18), Wire nails (n=11), and Indeterminate nails (n=1). Clothing group items included a leather footwear sole (n=1), a rubber footwear sole (n=1), a rubber swim cap (n=1), and a plastic button (n=1). The furniture group item was a small brass door knob. Kitchen items included floral and faunal remains, kitchen glass (n=76), and ceramics including creamware (n=1), whiteware (n=3), porcelain (n=2), and other ceramics (n=4). The artifacts belonging to the personal group included mirror fragments (n=2) and cold cream jar fragments (n=2). The miscellaneous artifact group included unidentifiable metal fragments, wood fragments, plastic, coal, and slag.

Due to the unique deposits of tanning materials discovered in the extant vats, samples were analyzed by an archeobotanist to determine the specific botanical elements of the soil matrix. The goal was to determine the type of wood employed in the vats used in the tanning process at the Birely Tannery. Identified botanical remains include deciduous bark and wood fibers, weed seeds and organic conglomerate. Wood was the most common material type recovered, and a random subsample of 20 fragments selected for identification revealed the presence of oak. This documents the claims made by the Birelys in advertisements and marketing materials that they employed oak bark for their tanning process. Moreover, as the vats appear to have been abandoned after their last use in the treatments of hides, the post tanning deposit dates to the first quarter of the 20th century showing continuity of the traditional craft tanning processed employed at the tannery.

The 2016 survey determined that archaeological features related to the tannery were extant at 18FR575, though the features have been significantly damaged by demolition and grading and the context of features has been disturbed and in some cases destroyed. Very little new archaeological information was recovered in the 2016 Phase I/II that has provided data that alters past interpretations of the site

Based on 2016 survey, the extant section of the Birely Tannery (18FR575) was determined to be potentially eligible for listing on the NRHP however, the site was found to lack integrity of preservation. Therefore, it was suggested that additional excavations were unlikely to provide new data that would alter the interpretation of the site. Accordingly, it was recommended that the redevelopment project take additional actions to mitigate the loss of the resource due to the planned undertaking including the preparation of robust public outreach such as, production of a pamphlet or similar item on the history of tanneries in Frederick for distribution at historic sites and tourist locations in Frederick.



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Archeological investigations conducted at the Birely Tannery have for the first time, at least in the Middle Atlantic, given us a comprehensive look at an industry which throughout the 18th century and through much of the 19th century was second only to agriculture in its importance. The investigations conducted at this relatively small tannery have helped to shed some light on a number of topics which include: (1) the types of archeological features and remains which can be expected at tanneries, (2) the layout of tanneries in terms of the process of leather production and economic efficiency in terms of the process of leather production and economic efficiency in terms of time and motion, (3) the introduction of new technologies due to innovations and research in the fields of mechanical engineering and in organic chemistry, and (4) something of the historic traditions associated with the craft.

External Reference Codes (Library ID Numbers):

00005992, 00006012, 95002753