



Phase II and Phase III Archaeological Database and Inventory

Site Number: 18HA258

Site Name: Smithson Island Branch

Prehistoric

Other name(s) Smithson-Island Branch

Historic

Brief Description:

Early, Middle?, and Late Archaic lithic scatter, Mid-19th to early 20th century log house site

Unknown

Site Location and Environmental Data:

Maryland Archaeological Research Unit No. 16

SCS soil & sediment code MdE,Cu

Latitude 39.6780

Longitude -76.4797

Physiographic province Eastern Piedmont

Terrestrial site

Underwater site

Elevation m

Site slope 25-45%

Ethnobotany profile available Maritime site

Nearest Surface Water

Name (if any) Deer Creek

Saltwater

Ocean

Estuary/tidal river

Tidewater/marsh

Minimum distance to water is 0 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
- 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

Temporal & Ethnic Contextual Data:

Paleoindian site

Woodland site

Archaic site

MD Adena

Early archaic

Early woodland

Middle archaic

Mid. woodland

Late archaic

Late woodland

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 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

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

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

Flotation samples taken N

Other samples taken

Historic context samples

Soil samples taken N

Flotation samples taken N

Other samples taken



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Diagnostic Artifact Data:

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

Prehistoric Sherd Types			
Marcey Creek	<input type="checkbox"/>	Popes Creek	<input type="checkbox"/>
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"/>
Keyser	<input type="checkbox"/>	Minguannan	<input type="checkbox"/>
Yeocomico	<input type="checkbox"/>	Sullivan Cove	<input type="checkbox"/>
Monongahela	<input type="checkbox"/>	Shenks Ferry	<input type="checkbox"/>
Susquehannock	<input type="checkbox"/>	Moyaone	<input type="checkbox"/>
		Potomac Crk	<input type="checkbox"/>

Historic Sherd Types		Ironstone		Staffordshire		Stoneware	
Earthenware		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"/>	Porcelain	<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	67	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)	88	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 checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Chalcedony	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	European flint	<input type="checkbox"/>
Chert	<input type="checkbox"/>	Ironstone	<input type="checkbox"/>	Basalt	<input type="checkbox"/>
Rhyolite	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Argilite	<input type="checkbox"/>	Unknown	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Quartz	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Steatite	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other	<input type="checkbox"/>
Quartzite	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Sandstone	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>

Dated features present at site

Historic Artifacts		Tobacco related	
Pottery (all)	12	Activity item(s)	13
Glass (all)	123	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	1	Floral material	<input type="checkbox"/>
Clothing	<input type="checkbox"/>	Misc.	40
Personal items	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> plastic, styrofoam

Historic Features		Privy/outhouse		Depression/mound		Unknown	
Const feature	<input type="checkbox"/>	Well/cistern	<input type="checkbox"/>	Burial(s)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other	<input type="checkbox"/>
Foundation	<input type="checkbox"/>	Trash pit/dump	<input type="checkbox"/>	Railroad bed	<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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External Samples/Data:

Collection curated at N/A

Additional raw data may be available online

Summary Description:

Site 18HA258, also known as the Smithson Island Branch Site, is a multi-component site that includes an early- to late-Archaic lithic scatter, and a mid-19th to early 20th century log house site. Soils on site are part of the Manor Channery Loam (McD3) associations, and are severely eroded with 15 to 20% slopes. Just prior to the American Revolution, in 1773, the boundaries of Harford County as a separate political unit were established with the county seat placed at Harford Town on the Bush River. At the time of the American Revolution, the region's population numbered about 13,000. During this time, the county was important in supplying agricultural products to the Continental Army. After the war ended, Bel Air, formerly called Scotts Old Field, became the county seat. Bel Air had been established in 1780.

The economy continued to grow in the late 18th and early 19th century with agricultural pursuits now focused on a more diverse array of products including wheat and other grain crops. Industrial enterprises such as grist mills and sawmills were also established during the late 18th and early 19th century, including several Smithson sawmills in the Pylesville and White Hall reaches of Deer Creek, the Fife Sawmill on Fife Sawmill Road east of Telegraph Road, a sawmill at Telegraph Road at Carea Road and the Amos Sawmill Mill on Island Branch, and other mills located on the upper reaches of Deer Creek.

Road networks, the railroad and the Susquehanna and Tidewater Canal created avenues for improvements in commerce through the mid-19th century, though the canal faltered in the late 19th century. Other industrial enterprises which arose in the early 19th century were furnaces and forges, some of which were utilized to exploit iron resources. Milling, like sawmills continued to be major industries for the county well into the 19th century along with agriculture, some lumbering and commerce in the tidewater region of the county. The county's population steadily increased during this period. By the end of the 19th century diversification in local industries seemed to keep pace with regional needs and the county continued to prosper. Excellent access to markets via road networks and the railroads served as a boost to agriculture including dairy farming well into the 20th century.

A review of historic maps shows the Fife Sawmill and Amos Sawmill adjacent to the Smithson Property study area, and J. Fletcher log cabin on the (Jennings and Herrick) 1858 Map of Harford County. The J. Fletcher log cabin is located on the Jennings and Herrick 1858 map in the southwestern corner of the Smithson floodplain parcel on the south side of Telegraph Road and on the downstream side of Island Branch. Pylesville, a rural village north of Deer Creek was settled in 1813 by Nathan Pyle who constructed a mill on Broad Creek. Pylesville later became a farming community. Based on the review of the cartographic data, the Smithson floodplain parcel was used principally as a rural residence and for agricultural activities, from earliest times to the present. A collector, Wes Herrmann, collected Indian artifacts from the surface from 1998 to 2005, while the Smithson field was still actively cultivated. Collecting the surface Indian artifacts ended in 2006, when the Maryland SHA built a new highway bridge over the Island Branch tributary and raised the height of Telegraph Road leading to and from the new bridge. In addition, Herrmann collected over 300 19th-century historic ceramics, glass, and iron artifacts near the southwest corner of the six-acre cultivated field. These surface finds were reported to the Maryland Historical Trust in 1999. The MHT assigned the site number (18HA258) on September 14, 1999. Another collector, Stony Troyer, also collected near an area located on the Telegraph Road ridge top immediately to the east and from Troyer Road cultivated fields to the west in the White Hall area.

The Central Maryland Chapter in cooperation with the Northern Chesapeake Archeology Society, both chapters of the Archeological Society of Maryland, conducted a preliminary archaeological reconnaissance in June, July, and September 2013 to reevaluate the Smithson Floodplain Property on Deer Creek for its archaeological potential and significance in the upper reaches of the Deer Creek, located immediately downstream of Madonna, Telegraph and Carea Road intersection in Harford County, Maryland. The investigation was undertaken to obtain additional site information on Wes Herrmann's (1998-2005) Native American stone tool surface finds on the 6-acre narrow floodplain parcel. In addition, Wes Herrmann identified a concentration of 19th-century ceramic, glass, and iron artifacts in the southwest corner of the field.

The field reconnaissance began with auger probes in June, along with three hand-dug test trenches in July 2013, in the middle of the low terrace. In September, a fourth test trench was placed at the foot of ridge slope and edge of the floodplain. Additionally, the Wes Herrmann and Stony Troyer artifact collections from Upper Deer Creek were examined for comparative purposes. The purpose of this reconnaissance report is to present a preliminary overview of the known archaeological resources in the Smithson/Island Branch site setting.

Scattered historic artifacts were recovered from the first stratum of Test Trenches 1, 2, 3 and 4. In addition, two glass fragments were recovered from Strata 4 and 5 in Test Trench No. 3. In September, testing on the perimeter of the floodplain terrace was undertaken for identifying the existence or absence of a stable bench terrace for exploring the presence of buried A-Horizons, containing archaeological remains buried under the modern Deer Creek flooding event deposits. Test Trench No. 1 was abandoned after Stratum 1 was finished and the focus was moved to nearby Test Trenches Nos. 2 and 3. Profiles on Test Trench Nos. 2 and 3 in the center of the floodplain drawn and the two test trenches were backfilled. In June and July 2014, two additional 2 x 1 meter test trenches (Test Trenches 5 and 6) were hand excavated to increase coverage of the floodplain site and to expand our stratigraphic profile and artifact recovery. The Smithson/Island Branch Floodplain Tract archaeological reconnaissance identified a multicomponent site at 18HA258. Three archaeological cultural traditions are presented and discussed in this End of Season Preliminary Report. First, Wes Herrmann's 1998 to 2005 surface finds made up of a scattering of Native American biface tools and uniface scrapers made from quartz, chalcedony and jasper, and quartz chunks with worked edges. As surface finds, these bifaces were void of any recognizable cultural pattern. The surface collection includes contracting and straight stem points and two bifurcate projectile point fragments.

Second, Wes Herrmann also collected historic ceramics, glass and iron artifacts that are concentrated in the southwest corner of the six-acre floodplain where a 19th-century log house stood; as well as scattered historic artifacts along the terrace abutting an old wagon road and the modern paved Telegraph Road. The reconnaissance suggests the Native American quartz tools found on the surface are the result of modern flood deposit residues from eroded archaeological sites washed down from upstream reaches of the Deer Creek Watershed; rather than originally in situ at the Smithson/Island Branch floodplain tract. Researchers recognize there is a disconnect in this interpretation. Possibly, the surface and plowzone soil horizons are mixed with flood deposits and an onsite artifact site midden. These impressions may remain unresolved until further research at the Smithson/Island Branch Tract is undertaken.

Third, a buried A-Soil Horizon was discovered at the base of the ridge slope and contiguous to Telegraph Road. The buried A-Soil Horizon, Lens 5, is a thin dark silt and clay lens located 70 to 75 cm deep lying on top of stream cobbles. Lens 5 in the north half of Test Trench No. 4 contained 2 thick and 2 thin quartz cobble reduction flakes, 1 glossy quartz chunk with fractured sides, 1 quartz cobble with two split ends, 1 large quartz cobble prepared core, 2 quartz cobble blocky chunks, and 14 quartz cobble shatter.

Additional field testing was recommended to expand the meager existing cultural database on the stone artifacts found in Lens 5. Further field work is proposed for the recovery of diagnostic artifacts associated with Native American recognized cultural periods.

The 2014 field session (June 21, 22, 28, and 29, 2014) placed Test Trenches Nos 5 and 6 three to four 4 meters closer to the edge of the floodplain and Telegraph Road. Like Test Trench No. 4, Test Trenches Nos. 5 and 6 upper soil strata contained historic artifacts and the lower levels contained natural quartz shatter and chunks and cobbles at the base of the test trenches. A single brown jasper chunk (worked?) was recovered from Test Trench 5, level 5 between 70 and 77 cm deep. No definitive cultural material was recovered from the lower strata of Test Trench 6.

The conclusions in 2014 match the 2013 findings. There is insufficient information in both 2013 and 2014 to justify further exploration of the scant cultural material recovered in 2013 and 2014 field seasons. Whereas additional test trenching possibly brings a larger and clearer picture of the pre-contact Archaic



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culture's use of the Deer Creek during the Holocene Period.

Modern improvements to Telegraph Road at the base of the ridge may have impacted the former quartz debitage assemblage site cluster and human activity associated with the Smithson Track quartz debitage cluster. Was there a small quartz cobble tool reduction industry, procurement, or processing station at this Telegraph Road location? Researchers are still looking for this potential archaeological resource, which is now buried under 70 cm of floodplain deposits and modern cultivation lenses.

The debate over Wes Herrmann's pre-contact lithic tool cluster surface finds is ongoing. Do Wes Herrmann's 1998 to 2005 surface finds represent pristine intact cultural deposits from the Native American past or are these lithic deposits the result from strong stream flows and flooding events from intact pre-contact sites further upstream now eroded?

In conclusion, the Smithson/Island Branch buried blocky quartz debitage, chunks by themselves, remains unidentified and a mystery. The finding of blocky quartz, knapped from quartz cobbles and a single jasper chunk, appear to be isolated finds. Future investigations can lead to future research to better define the archaeological site context, if present, in the Upper Deer Creek Watershed at Telegraph Road vicinity, in combination with exploring Deer Creek's hydrological conditions and the effects of weather upon the Upper Deer Creek narrow floodplain physiographic setting. Future tests might be placed at the downstream end of the Smithson floodplain tract, the furthest distance from Telegraph Road.

External Reference Codes (Library ID Numbers):

95008464, 18HA258 SF