



Phase II and Phase III Archaeological Database and Inventory

Site Number: 18HO244

Site Name: Reservoir Rockshelter

Prehistoric

Other name(s)

Historic

Unknown

Brief Description:

Late Archaic and Middle & Late Woodland rockshelter

Site Location and Environmental Data:

Maryland Archaeological Research Unit No. 13

SCS soil & sediment code

Latitude 39.1422

Longitude -76.9587

Physiographic province Eastern Piedmont

Terrestrial site

Underwater site

Elevation 88 m

Site slope 80%

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) Patuxent River

Saltwater

Ocean

Estuary/tidal river

Tidewater/marsh

Spring

Freshwater

Stream/river

Swamp

Lake or pond

Spring

Minimum distance to water is 10 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

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?

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

Flotation samples taken

Other samples taken



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Diagnostic Artifact Data:

Projectile Point Types		
Clovis	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Hardaway-Dalton	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Palmer	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Kirk (notch)	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Kirk (stem)	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Le Croy	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Morrow Mntn	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Guilford	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Brewerton	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Otter Creek	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Koens-Crispin	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Perkiomen	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Susquehana	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Vernon	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Piscataway	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Calvert	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Selby Bay	<input type="checkbox"/>	1
Jacks Rf (notch)	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Jacks Rf (pent)	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Madison/Potomac	<input type="checkbox"/>	1
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	<input type="checkbox"/>	Mockley	<input type="checkbox"/>	Sullivan Cove	<input type="checkbox"/>	Susquehannock	<input type="checkbox"/>
Wolfe Neck	<input type="checkbox"/>	Clemson Island	<input type="checkbox"/>	Shenks Ferry	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Vinette	<input type="checkbox"/>	Page	<input type="checkbox"/>	Moyaone	<input type="checkbox"/>	120	
				Potomac Crk	<input type="checkbox"/>	40	

Historic Sherd Types

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

All quantities exact or estimated minimal counts

Other Artifact & Feature Types:

Prehistoric Artifacts		
Flaked stone	<input type="checkbox"/>	941
Ground stone	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Stone bowls	<input type="checkbox"/>	1
Fire-cracked rock	<input type="checkbox"/>	54
Other lithics (all)	<input type="checkbox"/>	7
Ceramics (all)	<input type="checkbox"/>	194
Rimsherds	<input type="checkbox"/>	3
Other fired clay	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Human remain(s)	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Modified faunal	<input type="checkbox"/>	14
Unmod faunal	<input type="checkbox"/>	1
Oyster shell	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Floral material	<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 checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Palisade(s)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Late Woodland fire pit	<input type="checkbox"/>
Hearth(s)	<input checked="" 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Argilite	<input type="checkbox"/>	Unknown	<input type="checkbox"/>
Quartzite	<input type="checkbox"/>	Steatite	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Other	<input type="checkbox"/>
		Sandstone	<input type="checkbox"/>		

Dated features present at site

2 prehistoric hearths (Features 4 and 7)

Historic Artifacts		
Pottery (all)	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Glass (all)	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Architectural	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Furniture	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Arms	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Clothing	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Personal items	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Tobacco related	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Activity item(s)	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Human remain(s)	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Faunal material	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Misc. kitchen	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Floral material	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Misc.	<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: 360 +/- 60 years BP Reliability High Sample 2: +/- years BP Reliability Sample 3: +/- years BP Reliability

B-180833: charcoal from shallow hearth (feat. 4), assoc w/ Potomac Creek & Moyaone sherds, and 2 triangular points

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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Description:

Late Archaic and Middle & Late Woodland rockshelter

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External Samples/Data:

Collection curated at

Additional raw data may be available online

Summary Description:

The Reservoir Rock Shelter (18HO244) is a Middle and Late Woodland rockshelter located on a hillslope overlooking what is today the Rocky Gorge Reservoir in Howard County. A Middle Archaic component may be present as well based on diagnostic materials found near the rockshelter. The site is situated at the tip of a projection which forms part of the southern side of a broad cove or inlet along the southeastern bank of the now-widened channel of the Patuxent River. Prior to creation of the reservoir in 1952, the site would have overlooked a much narrower Patuxent River channel. The forest cover is a mixture of oaks and mountain laurel. Two unnamed drainages intersect at the aforementioned cove, forming an expansive delta which is exposed during times of low water level. The shelter itself is rather large (about 37.5 sq. meters) and has a relatively tall ceiling. The west side is protected by bedrock outcrops along the elevated slope in that direction. The floor of the shelter slopes downward towards the cove. A large rock fall is present at the lower eastern end of the floor. Soils at the site are Manor very stony loams.

The site was first identified in January of 2002 when personnel from the Maryland Historical Trust (MHT) were exploring the Rocky Gorge Reservoir area. MHT personnel noted quartz debitage, a quartz core, fire-cracked rock, sherds of Potomac Creek pottery, and two recent "pot hunting pits". There was also evidence of modern use. On a subsequent visit in August of 2002, accompanied by personnel from the Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission (WSSC), which owns the property, the basal section of a quartz Orient Fishtail point, a steatite vessel fragment, and sherds of Potomac Creek pottery were noted on the shoreline beneath the shelter. While most of the artifacts were left in place during both visits, one sherd each of Potomac Creek Plain and Potomac Creek Cord-marked were retrieved during the first visit. Three sherds of Potomac Creek Cord-marked and the Orient Fishtail point fragment were retained from the shoreline during the second visit.

In 2003, the WSSC and MHT entered into a memorandum of agreement to conduct a joint investigation of the archeological resources contained within the Rocky Gorge and Triadelphia reservoirs, to consist of Phase I survey of the properties and Phase II testing at two rockshelter sites, one of which was 18HO244. Phase II-level test excavations were carried out during April and May of that year. The work was funded by WSSC in partnership with MHT.

Phase II excavation began with the establishment of a 1 X 1 m grid oriented to the trend of the rear rockshelter wall. Due to the presence of prehistoric artifacts exposed on the ground surface, the shelter floor of the site was surface collected under controlled conditions. First, the shelter floor was examined from west to east, and any artifacts which were observed were marked. Then the artifacts were collected and bagged by their 1 m grid squares. Excavation units were placed within the shelter to assess the impact of unauthorized excavations at two spots within the floor of the rockshelter.

After each 1 m square test unit was laid out, an elevation control corner was selected (typically the highest corner). A line level string was attached to this corner. Relative line level string depths to the remaining three corners and the center of the units were then recorded. The soils within the units were excavated by trowel. Larger rocks and those which appeared to be associated with features were left in place. The other miscellaneous rock fragments were either manually removed or were left for removal along with the troweled soils. The troweled soils were collected and sifted through hardware cloth. The residual materials within the screen were examined for artifacts and, then, were placed in colanders and washed with water. The cleaned residuals were placed on trays and were sorted for any artifacts which may have been missed during the dry screening process. This additional cleaning procedure was undertaken due to the nature of the surrounding matrix, which tended to conceal artifacts. All artifacts, except modern objects, were retained. Selected in situ artifacts were provenienced within each test unit by triangulation and by line level string depth readings.

Soils were excavated by natural stratigraphy, unless strata were more than 10 cm thick. These thicker strata were subdivided into 10 cm levels. Five-point surface elevations (4 corners and the center) were recorded at the start of each new level. Soil texture, color, soil inclusions, and observed artifacts were recorded on standardized forms using standard methods and nomenclature. Measured floor plans and soil profiles were also drawn and photographed. In addition, the general excavation activities were recorded using color slide, black and white print, and color print photography.

Archeological features were treated as singular components. Their matrices were excavated and processed separately. Surface elevations were taken by line level string. Surface and, as appropriate, intermediate plan views were recorded. The features, according to their shape, size, and apparent depth were excavated either in whole, in quadrants, or in halves. Cross sections were prepared accordingly.

Two types of samples were collected: wood charcoal from non-modern hearths and representative samples from soil profiles. Both sample types were retrieved with clean trowels. The wood charcoal along with any associated matrix materials were placed in sealed aluminum foil packets which, in turn, were placed in labeled paper bags. All of the charcoal present was collected. The soil samples were placed in labeled, sealed plastic bags. The soil samples were approximately a half liter in volume.

A total of four 1 X 1m test units were excavated at 18HO244 in 2003. The units were placed around the two locations which had been noted previously to have been subject to unauthorized excavations. The intent of this placement was twofold. First, it was to assess the extent of the damage caused by the earlier digging. Second, it was to salvage any archeological evidence which might remain. A block of three 1 X 1 units was required to examine the earlier digging within the central section of the rockshelter. One test unit was needed to assess the earlier digging along the east side of the shelter. In each instance, the loose soils which marked the earlier digging were removed as a single disturbed context before controlled stratigraphic excavations were begun.

Seven archeological features were identified during the 2003 test excavations at 18HO244. At least 6 of these features appeared to be hearths: 2 modern and at least 2 prehistoric. The other hearths are of uncertain date, either due to a lack of artifact data or a mixture of prehistoric and historic remains. The 7th feature was a dark soil stain roughly 30 cm east-west and 18 cm north-south in extent. It had a depth of approximately 7 cm, but no artifacts were found in association with the feature. Its function is uncertain.

The two prehistoric hearths both produced data relevant to the dating of these features. Feature 4 was a shallow prehistoric fire pit consisting of an area of darker soils and wood charcoal with Schist rock outlining it. The soils around it yielded sherds of Potomac Creek and Moyaone ware, a small triangular quartz point, and an unfinished quartz triangular point. Charcoal from the basal levels of the feature were submitted for radiocarbon analysis, producing an uncalibrated date of 360±60 radiocarbon years before present. When calibrated, this corresponds to a calendrical date (2 sigma) of AD 1443-1645, squarely in-line with the accepted date range of both Potomac Creek and Moyaone wares, as well as Late Woodland triangular projectile points. Feature 7 was an area of dark soils containing wood charcoal. Its matrix yielded cord-impressed, incised, and plain ceramic sherds, a rhyolite Selby Bay side-notched point, a triangular



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quartz point, quartz and rhyolite debitage, and calcined bone. Taken together, these materials suggest a Middle to Late Woodland date for the Feature 7 hearth.

The prehistoric component of the artifact assemblage included 1,206 artifacts. Of these, 1,183 were recovered from the four test units and 23 were collected from the rockshelter's ground surface. The assemblage includes 1,002 lithic items, 189 pieces of pottery (3 rims), 15 bone fragments (10 calcined, 4 burnt and calcined), and samples of wood charcoal. Within the lithic assemblage there were 13 projectile points, 8 miscellaneous bifaces, 4 unifaces, 5 graver/perforators, 1 core, 1 utilized flake, 138 decortication flakes, 696 other flakes, 50 pieces of shatter, 24 other flaked stone objects, 1 pebble, 54 pieces of fire-cracked rock, 1 steatite vessel fragment, and 6 amorphous steatite fragments. Identifiable projectile point forms include a Madison/Potomac point, 3 other triangular points, and a Selby Bay side-notched point. The ceramic assemblage consisted of 4 Potomac Creek plain sherds, 31 Potomac Creek cord-impressed sherds (1 rim), 109 Moyaone plain sherds, 11 Moyaone incised sherds (1 rim), and 1 rimsherd of possible Colonoware.

The non-prehistoric artifacts are limited to items of relatively recent vintage. These items include fragments of brown and green bottle glass, crown caps, and melted plastic utensils. These artifacts attest to the occasional recreational use of the shelter during modern times. At least one concentration of historic artifacts was associated with a fire pit. These items are not included in the tally of artifacts above.

Two periods of occupation are indicated by the test excavations: the Middle Woodland and the Late Woodland. The former time period is indicated by the recovery of a rhyolite Selby Bay side-notched point. The latter is indicated by the retrieval of small quartz triangular points and of Moyaone and Potomac Creek pottery sherds. The latter period of occupation is, further, documented by the radiocarbon assay from Feature 4. Finally, although a single steatite vessel fragment was recovered, it is uncertain given its context whether it indicates an earlier occupation within the rockshelter.

Examination of the debitage from 18HO244 indicates that the production of small triangular projectile points was one of the activities that took place at the site. At least two techniques, one based on bifacial core reduction and the other based on bifacial flake reduction occurred. The relative size of the debitage suggests that the primary source material was either pebbles or small cobbles, and that both were collected locally.

The presence of substantial quantities of pottery suggests that family oriented groups rather than male only hunting parties frequented the rockshelter during the Late Woodland. The occurrence of pottery, also, suggests that the stay at the rockshelter was part of a seasonal movement rather than a brief hunting and gathering foray from another more permanent encampment.

Based on these findings, Site 18HO244 primarily represents a Middle and Late Woodland shelter used as a camp location during the seasonal round of aboriginal peoples. Testing at the site clearly revealed the presence of intact features and artifact bearing soils. Diagnostic artifacts and dateable carbon were also recovered. Large portions of the site remain unexcavated. It should be considered a significant archeological resource.

External Reference Codes (Library ID Numbers):

97001922