



# Phase II and Phase III Archaeological Database and Inventory

Site Number: 18HO280

Site Name: Blandair Mansion

Prehistoric

Other name(s) MHP # HO-33 Blandair

Historic

Unknown

Brief Description:

Late 18th century standing brick mansion and related farm outbuildings

## Site Location and Environmental Data:

Maryland Archaeological Research Unit No. 14

SCS soil & sediment code GgB,GnB

Latitude 39.2162

Longitude -76.8283

Physiographic province Eastern Piedmont

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) Little Patuxent River

#### Saltwater

Ocean

Estuary/tidal river

Tidewater/marsh

Spring

#### Freshwater

Stream/river

Swamp

Lake or pond

Spring

Minimum distance to water is 353 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

ca. 1630 - 1675

ca. 1860 - 1900

ca. 1675 - 1720

ca. 1900 - 1930

ca. 1720 - 1780

Post 1930

ca. 1780 - 1820

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? 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

Flotation samples taken

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	<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"/>	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"/>		
				Potomac Crk	<input type="checkbox"/>		

### Historic Sherd Types

Earthenware		Ironstone	Staffordshire	Stoneware	
Astbury	<input type="checkbox"/>	Jackfield	<input type="checkbox"/>	Tin Glazed	1
Borderware	<input type="checkbox"/>	Mn Mottled	<input type="checkbox"/>	Whiteware	161
Buckley	<input type="checkbox"/>	North Devon	1	<b>Porcelain</b>	61
Creamware	40	Pearlware	26	Rhenish	1
				Wt Salt-glazed	2

All quantities exact or estimated minimal counts

## Other Artifact & Feature Types:

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

### Prehistoric Features

Mound(s)	<input type="checkbox"/>	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

Historic Artifacts		Tobacco related	
Pottery (all)	349	Activity item(s)	83
Glass (all)	1615	Human remain(s)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Architectural	1607	Faunal material	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Furniture	1	Misc. kitchen	101
Arms	9	Floral material	<input type="checkbox"/>
Clothing	6	Misc.	99
Personal items	12	Other	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
		plastic, coal, charcoal	

### 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Burial(s)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Cellar hole/cellar	<input type="checkbox"/>	Trash pit/dump	<input type="checkbox"/>	Railroad bed	<input type="checkbox"/>	brick entrance foundation; paved floor	
Hearth/chimney	<input type="checkbox"/>	Sheet midden	<input checked="" 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:  +/-  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 Howard County Department of Recreation and Parks

Additional raw data may be available online

## Summary Description:

The Blandair Mansion (18HO280) is a 19th century plantation home built on the site of an earlier late 18th century plantation. It is located approximately 400 meters west of the Little Patuxent River near Columbia in Howard County, Maryland. The topography of the area could best be described as gently rolling hills separated by shallow drainages. The standing main house at Blandair occupies one of these gentle hilltops and is surrounded by various later period outbuildings. The main house at Blandair was built by the heirs of a prominent Maryland family during the mid-19th century. It is not only of interest as an example of fine antebellum architecture, but the land it is on is a fine example of a farm complex contributing to Maryland's extensive and rich agricultural history. Prior to undergoing major renovation in the early 20th century, the house underwent minor alterations and updates. The house is listed on the Maryland Historical Trust Inventories of Historic Properties as HO-33.

The earliest records of the 297 acre parcel surrounding the current main house at Blandair can be traced to a larger 1,087 acre tract that was granted to John and Elizabeth Talbott on August 30th, 1714. In 1719, portions of this tract were combined with others which has obscured the identification of the exact parcel on which the current house sits. Suffice it to say that in 1747, the Talbott family sold 200 acres to Edward Dorsey. This 200 acre tract is the majority of the Blandair Farm tract and probably the lands on which the current main house is located. Additions to the 200 acre tract were made in 1747 and 1768 and eventually Dorsey sold a 359 acre tract comprised of three smaller parcels to a Dr. Ephraim Howard. Dr. Howard owned the 359 acre tract until he died in 1788. Due to the complex nature of the earlier sale and the transfer of property within Dr. Howard's holdings it took ten years to settle the estate. The 1798 Direct Tax Record for the county lists 1 brick dwelling house, 1 old stone house, an old stone kitchen, a brick smoke house, and a dairy on the property. In 1804, John Crompton Weems purchased the now 362 acre property from Ephraim Howard. Weems was born into a prominent Calvert County family. He rose to prominence when he was elected to fill the Congressional seat vacated by John Kent, the newly elected Governor of Maryland, in February of 1826. Weems was subsequently re-elected to the House of Representatives, serving in Washington until 1829. John Crompton Weems re-named his property "La Grange". Once again, further property was added to the estate until it totaled 400 acres. Upon leaving the State Legislature, Weems retired and sold "La Grange" to his daughter-in-law, Martha P. Weems in 1833. The son, John W. Weems did not prosper well at "La Grange". After repeated crop failure and operating under a bad economy he hastened to sell the property in lieu of foreclosure on a mortgage taken on the land. In 1844, John W. Weems entered into a contract of sale with Theodrick Bland who owned the property by January 15th, 1845.

Theodorick Bland was another of the prominent residents of the property and the progenitor of its current name "Blandair". During his lifetime, Bland served as a State Legislator, Associate Judge of the Sixth Judicial District, Consul to Brazil, and Chancellor of Maryland. Bland purchased the estate in 1845 and resigned his position as Chancellor shortly thereafter. But rather than enjoying a lengthy retirement, he died in 1846. Bland bequeathed the property to his daughter Sarah and her husband Isaac Mayo. In 1850, when at the height of his career, Isaac Mayo was appointed Commander-in-Chief of the United States West African Squadron. Mayo's mission while commanding the USS Constitution, was to cruise the coast of Africa in search of slave traders en route to the Americas. During Mayo's tenure at Blandair, the property increased in size yet again to a total of 513 1/4 acres. In September 1857 Isaac and Sarah Mayo gave their daughter, Sophia the Blandair estate for "love, affection, and one dollar." Sophia Mayo and her husband, Henry Gaither, a son from the neighboring estate, managed the construction of the current main house at Blandair in the late 1850s. By 1867, the couple had sold off most of their property, with the main house and some property going to a Charles Burwell. Burwell initially leased and eventually sold the property to Frederick Brosenne in the 1870s. Brosenne also owned the nearby Waverly Estate and operated both farms simultaneously while raising nine children. In 1903, Blandair once again changed hands after the death of Frederick Brosenne. He died intestate and the property was reconfigured as it was divided up amongst heirs and resold. Eventually the tract of land with the dwelling house and outbuildings was whittled down to 342 acres and was sold to Henry Jr. and Arthur Brosenne (Frederick's grandsons). Blandair became a working dairy farm under the supervision of Henry Jr. and his wife Emma Stern Brosenne. The property was later sold several times, with installation of modern conveniences in the 1940s.

Blandair was much sought after by developers through the latter part of the 20th century as open land became scarce in Howard County. When the daughter of the last private purchasers of the property (the Smith Family) died intestate in 1966, the property transferred to her two surviving and non-local relatives, both of whom chose to sell Blandair. The most recent transfer of the property was to Howard County, Maryland, purchasing the property from the estate heirs.

In 2007, the Howard County Department of Recreation and Parks, the organization responsible for the management of the property, began planning the restoration of the house in conjunction with the National Park Service's Historic Preservation Training Center. Plans included restoring and repairing the house foundation, installing a new subsurface drainage system, delivering utilities to the house, replacing the roof and possibly reconstructing architectural features. A Phase II archeological project was devised to evaluate the effects of the proposed restoration project on the site's archeological resources and was conducted from December 2005 through February 2006. Major tasks included the identification and evaluation of archeological features in terms of chronology, function, and integrity.

It was determined that an appropriate strategy for conducting the investigation would first consist of the excavation of a minimum of three 1.524 X 1.524 m (5 X 5 ft) excavation units adjacent to the house foundation. With regard to excavation unit size, 1.524 X 1.524 m was felt to be the minimum size needed to reach the depth of the proposed drainage and restoration work as well as to fully expose any features in these areas. The second step included excavating a series of shovel test pits at 4.572-7.62 meter (15-25 ft) intervals following the drainage away from the main house. The Shovel Test Pits (STPs) were excavated either to a reasonable depth to allow for proposed trenching near the foundations or into culturally sterile subsoil. The STP sampling interval was felt to be sufficient to detect features and/or sites that could range in size from a small artifact scatter to large domestic workspaces or outbuildings. Finally, archeologists agreed to monitor all mechanical trench work. Machine excavated trenches were necessary to complete the restoration work on the structure's foundation. All machine excavations were closely monitored for diagnostic artifacts. When features were revealed, machine excavation was halted, and the features were then identified and recorded. All excavations except for the machine excavations followed cultural and natural strata, except for strata thicker than 15.24 cm, which were subdivided into arbitrary levels. Soils were screened through hardware cloth.

The placement of the excavation units was dictated by the preservation work being performed on the house. Excavation Unit 1 and Trenches 1 and 2 were excavated on the south side of the standing house. Excavation Unit 2, Trench 3, Trench 5 and eleven STPs were excavated on the west side of the house. Excavation Unit 3 and Trenches 4 and 6 were excavated on the north side of the house. All of the excavation units initially measured 1.524 X 1.524 meters, but Excavation Unit 1 was expanded to 1.524 X 2.1336 Meters (5 X 7 ft) to facilitate excavation and data recovery. Trenches were situated directly against the foundations of the main house, except for 2 narrow 30.48 meter (100 ft) long transects (trenches 5 and 6) off the southwest and northeast corners of the house.



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Late 18th century standing brick mansion and related farm outbuildings

Unknown

The examination of three excavation units, eleven STPs, and six trenches served as a means to examine and evaluate a portion of the archeological component at Blandair Farm. These investigations resulted in the recovery of artifacts that span a date range from the early 18th century to the present. The majority of artifacts recovered date from the mid-19th century to the present. The artifact types were functionally diverse and, except for a slightly higher percentage of architectural materials, evenly mixed. Most of the artifacts recovered came from soil horizons that exhibit characteristics of repeated disturbance. The investigations also revealed the presence of substantial subsurface architectural features. Features identified include a large brick support structure on the south entrance of the house and the possible remnants of a structure constructed in the mid to late 18th century, associated with the former resident Theodorick Bland.

Artifacts encountered during the Phase II work include 83 activity items, 1,607 architectural artifacts, 6 clothing objects, 1 furniture item, 753 kitchen-related items, 12 personal artifacts, 3 tobacco-related objects, 9 arms objects, and 99 miscellaneous items. Among the activity assemblage are 53 lighting objects (51 probable pieces of lamp glass, 2 light bulb pieces), a whetstone, 7 pieces of hardware (1 iron rod, 4 hardware straps, 1 copper ring, a copper clasp), 2 plastic containers, 15 redware flower pot sherds, 2 writing objects (a probable writing slate, 1 slate pencil), and 3 stable objects (a probable wagon hook, and 2 horseshoe pieces). Among the 1,607 architectural objects, 1,280 items are pieces of window glass. The rest are a piece of roofing slate, 36 bricks, 31 pieces of mortar (some w/ plaster attached), 9 pieces of wood planking, 207 nails (22 handwrought, 125 cut, 6 wire, 2 L-head, 52 unidentified), 13 screws, a tack, 8 spikes, a piece of transom hardware, 4 hinge pieces, 4 fence staples, 2 snow guards, a shutter pull, a nut/bolt, 2 lead washers, 1 piece of miscellaneous hardware, a porcelain doorknob, 3 electrical items (2 insulators and a piece of wire), and a piece of sewer pipe. Clothing artifacts include 3 brass/copper buttons, a hook and eye, and 2 snap fasteners. The lone furniture item was an escutcheon/lock assembly from a jewelry box or small piece of furniture. Kitchen-related artifacts include 349 ceramic sherds (1 North Devon, 1 tin-glazed earthenware, 26 pearlware, 40 creamware, 24 Chinese Export porcelain, 37 other porcelain, 10 buff-paste stoneware, 13 gray-paste stoneware, 1 Rockingham, 2 white salt-glazed stoneware, 1 Rhennish, 1 English Brown stoneware, 153 whiteware, 3 yellowware, 33 redware, and 3 unidentified), 303 glass objects (3 jar lid liners, 20 pieces of table glass, 204 unidentified container glasses, 16 free-blown containers/bottles, 59 machine made containers, and a glass stopper), 1 crown cap, 1 pewter spoon, 1 cupric metal spoon, and 98 faunal objects (2 polished bone utensil handles, 81 other animal bones, and 15 oyster shell pieces). The 12 personal objects include 8 whiteware chamberpot fragments, a penny, a pet tag, and 2 lipstick container fragments. Tobacco-related artifacts include a kaolin pipe stem and 2 bowls. The arms-related artifacts were 3 fired and 1 unfired pistol cartridges, 3 rimfire cartridges, and two 12-gauge shotgun shells. And finally, miscellaneous artifacts consisted of 32 unidentifiable pieces of glass, 33 unidentified metal objects, 2 plastic objects, 10 pieces of mica, 19 pieces of coal, and 3 fragments of charcoal. The only prehistoric object encountered was a possible quartz flake.

While some broad interpretations of the site may be drawn from the excavations and artifact assemblage, the testing of specific hypotheses dependent upon unaltered contexts and provenience cannot be accomplished. Another factor that limited the interpretive value of the 2007 archeological study was the small portion of the property that was investigated. A broader archeological investigation of the entire Blandair Farm property would afford the opportunity to evaluate the earlier occupations of the property more thoroughly. Eighteenth century deposits are present, but it remains to be seen how intact these deposits are since Phase II work was limited primarily to the area adjacent to the footprint of the 19th century structure. More work is needed on the grounds of the Blandair property.

## External Reference Codes (Library ID Numbers):

97003231