



Phase II and Phase III Archaeological Database and Inventory

Site Number: 18HO36

Site Name: Wessel

Prehistoric

Other name(s): Wesson

Historic

Unknown

Brief Description:

Late Archaic & Early & Late Woodland short-term resource procurement camps or base camp

Site Location and Environmental Data:

Maryland Archaeological Research Unit No. 13

SCS soil & sediment code: GID2

Latitude: 39.1584

Longitude: -76.9123

Physiographic province: Eastern Piedmont

Terrestrial site

Underwater site

Elevation: 122 m

Site slope: 15-25%

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): Hammond Branch

- | 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
- Archaic site
- Early archaic
- Middle archaic
- Late archaic
- Unknown prehistoric context
- Woodland site
- MD Adena
- Early woodland
- Mid. woodland
- Late woodland
- Unknown historic context
- Unknown context

- Contact period site
- ca. 1820 - 1860
- ca. 1630 - 1675
- ca. 1675 - 1720
- ca. 1720 - 1780
- ca. 1780 - 1820
- ca. 1820 - 1860
- ca. 1860 - 1900
- ca. 1900 - 1930
- Post 1930

Ethnic Associations (historic only)

- Native American
- African American
- Anglo-American
- Hispanic
- Asian American
- Unknown
- Other

Y=Confirmed, P=Possible

Site Function Contextual Data:

- ### Prehistoric
- Multi-component
 - Village
 - Hamlet
 - Base camp
 - Rockshelter/cave
 - Earthen mound
 - Cairn
 - Burial area
 - Misc. ceremonial
 - Rock art
 - Shell midden
 - STU/lithic scatter
 - Quarry/extraction
 - Fish weir
 - Production area
 - Unknown
 - Other context

- ### Historic
- Urban/Rural?
 - Domestic
 - Homestead
 - Farmstead
 - Mansion
 - Plantation
 - Row/townhome
 - Cellar
 - Privy
 - Industrial
 - Mining-related
 - Quarry-related
 - Mill
 - Black/metalsmith
 - Furnace/forge
 - Other
 - 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 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"/>	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"/> 1
		Levanna	<input type="checkbox"/> 1

Prehistoric Sherd Types

Marcey Creek	<input type="checkbox"/>	Popes Creek	<input type="checkbox"/>	Shepard	<input type="checkbox"/>	Keyser	<input type="checkbox"/> 2
Dames Qtr	<input type="checkbox"/>	Coulbourn	<input type="checkbox"/>	Townsend	<input type="checkbox"/> 11	Yeocomico	<input type="checkbox"/>
Selden Island	<input type="checkbox"/>	Watson	<input type="checkbox"/>	Minguannan	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	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"/> 7		

Historic Sherd Types

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

All quantities exact or estimated minimal counts

Other Artifact & Feature Types:

Prehistoric Artifacts			
Flaked stone	<input type="checkbox"/> 852	Other fired clay	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ground stone	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	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"/> 2	Oyster shell	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ceramics (all)	<input type="checkbox"/> 240	Floral material	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Rimsherds	<input type="checkbox"/> 11	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"/>	base of truncated feature	<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 checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Chalcedony	<input type="checkbox"/>	European flint	<input type="checkbox"/>
Rhyolite	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Ironstone	<input type="checkbox"/>	Basalt	<input type="checkbox"/>
Quartz	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Argilite	<input type="checkbox"/>	Unknown	<input type="checkbox"/>
Quartzite	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Steatite	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other	<input type="checkbox"/>
		Sandstone	<input type="checkbox"/>		

Dated features present at site

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

Additional raw data may be available online

Summary Description:

The Wessel site (18HO36), or Wesson site, is primarily a Late Woodland short-term resource procurement camp near Fulton in Howard County. The site is situated along a low bench or terrace overlooking Hammond Branch, a tributary of the Little Patuxent River. The natural vegetation of the site, prior to colonization, would have been a hardwood forest dominated by oak varieties. Chestnuts, poplars, hickories, beech and maples would also have been present while conifers would have been uncommon. During the past three centuries, most of this original forest was cleared to create agricultural fields. In the 20th century, the site area was used for agricultural purposes, alternating between pasture and planted field. Recently, the landscape has become much more developed. Soils at the site are Glenville silt loams and Glenelg loams. These are deep, well-drained soils that are well suited to farming.

The site was first recorded in 1971 by two University of Maryland students, who identified it based on the artifact collections of the landowning family. The site was originally recorded as the "Wesson" site, a misspelling of these landowners' name that led to some confusion about the correct name of the site. The landowning family at that time was the "Wessel" family. A ¾ grooved greenstone axe is the only object definitively associated with the site from the recorded Wessel family collection.

In 1991, 18HO36 was relocated during a Phase I survey prior to construction of the (then) proposed Potomac Electric Power Company (PEPCO) 500 kilovolt (kV) transmission line. The new power line would run from the Brighton Substation in Montgomery County to the High Ridge Substation in Howard County. Under Section 54A of the Public Service Commission Law (MD Annotated Code, Article 78 section 54D) historic sites must be considered in issuing a Certificate of Convenience and Necessity for construction of a transmission line.

A total of 16 shovel test pits (STPs) were excavated at 20 m intervals throughout the site. Prehistoric artifacts were found in 11 of these STPs, including a triangular quartz projectile point, 3 shell-tempered ceramic sherds, and debitage (at least 7 pieces). The surface indications of the site as well as shovel test profiles suggest that the stratigraphy had not been disturbed except by plowing. It was suggested that buried cultural deposits might be present beneath alluvial deposition (which was noted). The site was interpreted as representing a Late Woodland occupation such as a hamlet. Based on these findings, MHT requested that Phase II testing be carried out prior to the issuing of the Certificate of Convenience and Necessity.

Phase II work at 18HO36 was carried out later in 1991 for the 500 kV transmission line project. Site investigation was limited to the right-of-way (ROW) for the transmission line. During the Phase II work, 38 STPs were excavated at 20 and 10 m intervals (depending on the area). STPs were 35-40 cm in diameter and were excavated into sterile subsoil, 40 to cm in depth. All excavated soil was screened through hardware cloth and any artifacts found were retained for identification. Measured drawings were made of all STP profiles and soils in these profiles were described using standard terminology for texture and color.

Ten 1 X 1 m test units were then excavated to determine the stratigraphic integrity of the site, and to obtain a sample of artifacts and features from the activity(ies) represented at the site. The first 5 test units were placed to test the variability within site stratigraphy as suggested from the Phase I and II STP data. These units and the STPs revealed that the areas where transmission line infrastructure would necessitate grading and excavation (a much smaller area than the overall project ROW) were highly disturbed and would not be NRHP eligible. The final five 1 X 1 m units were specifically placed within this impact area to confirm that all of this area had in-fact been disturbed.

Test units were excavated by recognizable soil strata, with 10 cm arbitrary horizontal levels used in soil strata thicker than 10 cm. Excavation of test units continued to at least 20 cm below the lowest level containing artifacts. After completion of each test unit, at least one wall of the unit was trowelled clean and photographed in both black and white and color slide film. Measured drawings with soil descriptions were done of at least one wall in each test unit and soils in these profiles were described using standard terminology for textures and colors. All excavated soil was screened through hardware mesh and any artifacts found were retained for identification. All feature matrix was collected for flotation, in order to recover floral and faunal remains that can allow the definition of subsistence patterns and the local environmental setting.

One feature was encountered during Phase II excavations in 1991. The feature appears to represent the bottom of a refuse pit. The upper portion of the feature has been truncated by the plowzone. Only part of Feature 1 was uncovered. At least three quarters of Feature 1 remained unexcavated at the conclusion of the Phase II work. The portion that was excavated yielded 1.6 liters of matrix for flotation processing. Flotation yielded 1.9 grams of wood charcoal, no other ethnobotanical remains, no faunal remains, and no artifacts.

The Phase II artifact assemblage included 3 projectile points, 9 biface fragments, 5 cores, 8 retouched flakes, 15 utilized flakes, 804 pieces of debitage, 2 hammerstones, and 237 ceramic sherds (11 rims). Quartz is by far the most prevalent lithic raw material. Diagnostic artifacts all point to a Late Woodland date for the site and include 1 Madison/Potomac point, 1 Levanna point, and 1 elongate triangular point, within the lithic assemblage and 7 Potomac Creek-like sherds (1 rim), 2 Keyser-like sherds (1 rim), and 11 Townsend-like ceramic sherds. Several other sherds may be Minguannan ware or a local variant of Minguannan.

Site 18HO36 was probably occupied repeatedly during the Late Woodland, as evidenced by the diversity of diagnostic points and ceramics. The high number of artifacts, as well as the presence of both ceramics and a pit feature, suggest that the site represents an occupation where a range of activities were carried. As the ceramics have been deteriorated by decades of plowing, it is not possible to describe the range of vessel forms present on this site. Such an analysis could provide information on the permanence of occupations. The absence of fire-cracked rock suggests short-term occupations. At the least, this indicates that stone-boiling activities did not take place at 18HO36. The site may represent a regularly reoccupied outlying dispersed occupation site or campsite.

That 18HO36 may have functioned as a stopping point or meeting place along a travel route is suggested by the location of the site approximately equidistant from known Late Woodland population clusters in the Potomac and Monocacy riverine zones and the Chesapeake estuarine zone. This assumes the transient use of 18HO36 by visiting groups from various home bases. The possibility that the site was inhabited by people living within this interior area should also be considered due to the fact that many of the diagnostic ceramic sherds appear to be local variants of an identifiable prehistoric ware.

Additional research at Site 18HO36 could contribute to our knowledge of the prehistory of the Patuxent Piedmont and specifically, the Late Woodland. It might yield information on prehistoric subsistence, settlement, technology, and environmental adaptation. This site might also represent a type of outlying settlement or occupation that represents an important aspect of Late Woodland adaptation complementary to the better known large settlements adjacent to large rivers



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like the Monocacy and Potomac. While portions of the site that would be directly impacted by grading and construction within the transmission line ROW were found to be already disturbed, other portions of the site within the ROW were found to contain intact (albeit truncated) cultural features and other parts of the site outside the ROW were not assessed. The site should still be considered a significant archeological resource, potentially capable of answering research questions related to Maryland prehistory.

External Reference Codes (Library ID Numbers):

97001127, Site Files