



# Phase II and Phase III Archaeological Database and Inventory

Site Number: 18MO173

Site Name: Flat Rock Shelter

Prehistoric

Other name(s)

Historic

Unknown

Brief Description:

Middle Archaic & Middle Woodland Rockshelter

## Site Location and Environmental Data:

Maryland Archaeological Research Unit No. 13

SCS soil & sediment code

Latitude 39.1461

Longitude -76.9708

Physiographic province Eastern Piedmont

Terrestrial site

Underwater site

Elevation 104 m

Site slope 0

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                                |  | 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 27 m

## Temporal & Ethnic Contextual Data:

Paleoindian site

Woodland site

Contact period site

ca. 1820 - 1860

Archaic site

MD Adena

ca. 1630 - 1675

ca. 1860 - 1900

Early archaic

Early woodland

ca. 1675 - 1720

ca. 1900 - 1930

Middle archaic

Mid. woodland

ca. 1720 - 1780

Post 1930

Late archaic

Late woodland

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
- 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

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

### Bldg or foundation

Isolated burial

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"/>	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"/> 1
Guilford	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	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	<input type="checkbox"/>	Mockley	<input type="checkbox"/> 8	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

<b>Earthenware</b>		Ironstone	<input type="checkbox"/>	Staffordshire	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Stoneware</b>	
Astbury	<input type="checkbox"/>	Jackfield	<input type="checkbox"/>	Tin Glazed	<input type="checkbox"/>	English Brown	<input type="checkbox"/>
Borderware	<input type="checkbox"/>	Mn Mottled	<input type="checkbox"/>	Whiteware	<input type="checkbox"/>	Eng Dry-bodied	<input type="checkbox"/>
Buckley	<input type="checkbox"/>	North Devon	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Porcelain</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Nottingham	<input type="checkbox"/>
Creamware	<input type="checkbox"/>	Pearlware	<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"/> 91	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"/> 4	Unmod faunal	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other lithics (all)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Oyster shell	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ceramics (all)	<input type="checkbox"/> 8	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

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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Historic

Brief

Description:

Middle Archaic & Middle Woodland Rockshelter

Unknown

## External Samples/Data:

Collection curated at

Additional raw data may be available online

## Summary Description:

Flat Rock Shelter (18MO173) is a Middle Archaic and Middle Woodland rockshelter located on a hillslope overlooking what is today the Rocky Gorge Reservoir in Montgomery County. The site is situated near the top of a steep slope which descends down to the edge of the reservoir. It is a relatively large shelter with a high ceiling and a large rock fall along the east edge of its floor. Foot paths leading up to and away from the shelter are present. Prior to construction of the T. Howard Duckett dam in 1952, the site would have overlooked a much narrower Patuxent River channel than the wide reservoir of today. The forest cover is generally an open deciduous growth. A large red oak lies near both the shelter's north and south ends, and a smaller hickory and red maple lie along its perimeter. Steatite outcrops occur just below the shelter, which are known to have been quarried prehistorically. Soils at the site are silty loams and sands of unknown series.

The site was first identified in October of 1980 when personnel from the Maryland Historical Trust (MHT) were exploring the Rocky Gorge Reservoir area. No artifacts were noted at that time, other than evidence indicating day use by hikers in the area. However, the extent of the overhang and the shelter it would provide warranted completion of an MHT site form.

In 2003, the Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission (WSSC), which owns the land surrounding the reservoir 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 18MO173. 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. Excavation units were placed within the shelter to assess the site's potential. One unit was placed within the center of the rock shelter. A contiguous block of 5 units was set along the north end of the shelter. Within the block, two units lay inside the drip line. All of the units, except for one, were one meter square. The smaller unit measured only 70 cm north south due to a large boulder along its south side.

After each 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 soil 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.

One small circular pit of undetermined function (Feature 1), one natural soil discoloration (Feature 2), and two modern hearths (Features 3 and 4) were recorded during the 2003 excavations. The circular pit was about 30 cm in diameter and 10 cm in maximum depth. Its matrix consisted of a slightly silty fine sand which was black in color. No artifacts were found in the feature itself. A possible buried soil horizon was encountered in the central portion of the rock shelter. This slightly darker soil did not produce artifacts, but chemical analysis of these soils revealed noticeably higher magnesium (Mg), phosphorus (P), potassium (K), and calcium (Ca) readings than the other soils. The high phosphorous levels, in particular, suggest a former living surface.

A total of 104 prehistoric artifacts was recovered during testing at 18MO173. This assemblage included 4 projectile points or point fragments, 1 biface, 1 graver/perforator, a diabase quarry pick, 17 decortication flakes, 68 other flakes, 4 pieces of fire-cracked rock, and 8 shell-tempered sherds. Identifiable projectile points included a rhyolite Guilford point and quartz side-notched variant of Selby Bay. These points suggest occupations in the Middle Archaic and Middle Woodland periods. All 8 ceramic sherds are identifiable as Mockley Net-impressed wares, again, pointing towards a Middle Woodland occupation.

Evidence of historic use of the site appears limited to the period from the mid 20th century to the present.

The 2003 archeological investigation at 18MO173 indicate, at least, two periods of relatively light occupation during prehistoric times. The first occurred during the Middle Archaic as indicated by the presence of a rhyolite Guilford point (ca. 4000 BC). The second occurred during the Middle Woodland as indicated by the recovery of Mockley net-impressed pottery (ca. AD 10 to AD 900). Earlier occupations are suggested by an apparent buried soil horizon which lies beneath the central portion of the rockshelter. The site may have some research potential, if the buried soil horizon noted in the central portion of the site is, indeed, a former living surface and remains intact. Such has yet to be proven.

## External Reference Codes (Library ID Numbers):



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Prehistoric

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Historic

**Brief  
Description:**

Unknown