



# Phase II and Phase III Archaeological Database and Inventory

Site Number: 18MO266

Site Name: Poor Farm Cemetery

Prehistoric

Other name(s)

Historic

Unknown

Brief Description:

Late 18th-20th century pauper's cemetery

## Site Location and Environmental Data:

Maryland Archaeological Research Unit No. 12

SCS soil & sediment code 2B

Latitude 39.0631

Longitude -77.1493

Physiographic province Eastern Piedmont

Terrestrial site

Underwater site

Elevation m

Site slope 3-8%

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) Cabin John Creek

- | 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 294 m

## Temporal & Ethnic Contextual Data:

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

- Contact period site
- ca. 1820 - 1860
- ca. 1630 - 1675
- ca. 1675 - 1720
- ca. 1720 - 1780
- ca. 1780 - 1820
- Unknown historic context
- Unknown context

### 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

- |   |   |   |   |   |  |   |  |                   |   |  |   |  |                       |  |  |  |  |   |  |                    |                   |  |   |   |                      |  |  |                 |  |   |                  |   |  |  |                           |   |                      |  |  |                          |                     |   |                    |   |  |                |  |
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| <b>Historic</b>   | Furnace/forge <input type="checkbox"/>  | <b>Military</b>   | Post-in-ground <input type="checkbox"/>   |   |  |   |  |                   |   |  |   |  |                       |  |  |  |  |   |  |                    |                   |  |   |   |                      |  |  |                 |  |   |                  |   |  |  |                           |   |                      |  |  |                          |                     |   |                    |   |  |                |  |
| <b>Urban/Rural?</b> Rural <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Other <input type="checkbox"/>  | Battlefield <input type="checkbox"/>  | Frame-built <input type="checkbox"/>  |   |  |   |  |                   |   |  |   |  |                       |  |  |  |  |   |  |                    |                   |  |   |   |                      |  |  |                 |  |   |                  |   |  |  |                           |   |                      |  |  |                          |                     |   |                    |   |  |                |  |
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## 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



# Phase II and Phase III Archaeological Database and Inventory

Site Number: 18MO266

Site Name: Poor Farm Cemetery

Prehistoric

Other name(s)

Historic

Unknown

Brief Description:

Late 18th-20th century pauper's cemetery

## 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"/>
		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

<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"/>	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"/>	Unmod faunal	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other lithics (all)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Oyster shell	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ceramics (all)	<input type="checkbox"/>	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)	60
Architectural	<input type="checkbox"/>	Human remain(s)	<input checked="" 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/>
		Coffin hardware	<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 checked="" 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



# Phase II and Phase III Archaeological Database and Inventory

Site Number: 18MO266

Site Name: Poor Farm Cemetery

Prehistoric

Other name(s)

Historic

Brief

Description:

Late 18th-20th century pauper's cemetery

Unknown

## External Samples/Data:

Collection curated at George Mason University

Additional raw data may be available online

## Summary Description:

Site 18MO266 is an apparent late 18th century to modern cemetery located in Rockville to serve the poor and indigent of Montgomery County, Maryland. The site is situated on overgrown wooded land once belonging to the County Almshouse. Much of the ground surface was used in modern times to dispose of trash and other debris. Soils in the area belong to the Glenelg-Manor-Chester association.

The site was first identified during a Phase I survey by the Maryland Geological Survey, Office of Archeology in 1983. This survey was conducted to identify and document archeological sites that might be impacted by the extension of the Ritchie Parkway near Rockville. The extended road was designed to link two major routes in Montgomery County. At that time, the cemetery was still being utilized for burial of Montgomery County's indigent population. Since the Almshouse and Poor Farm had been in continuous operation since the late 1700's, archeological excavation of this pauper's cemetery offered a marvelous opportunity to study a poorly documented segment of population through time and data recovery was recommended since the site could not be avoided.

Descriptions of the data recovery conducted at 18MO266 are scanty at best. It appears that most of the burials encountered were of a more recent age and, thus, information about the site comes primarily from the archival record. The Montgomery County, Maryland, Almshouse was built in 1789 to provide for the County's indigent. Management of the facility was vested in a corporation known as the "Trustees of the Poor". The Almshouse was built on about 200 acres of land originally part of the land patent known as "Resurvey on Part of Exchange and New Exchange". The scanty historical documentation suggests that for at least part of the lifetime of the Poor Farm, the largest portion of the land was in cultivation. Between 5 and 10 acres was reserved for the Almshouse and the nearby outbuildings. It appears that another 5 acres was occupied by a wooded, stony hilltop where, traditionally, paupers were buried in unmarked graves. Over the 170 years of its existence, land was acquired and sold, but the basic operations of the Almshouse, later known as the County Home or the Poor Farm, changed remarkably little. The cleared lands were cultivated to supply food for the inmates and farm employees, to provide feed for livestock, and to produce surplus crops such as corn, wheat, and hay for sale. Supplementary funds for food, medical care, and clothing, as well as the overseer's salary, were provided by the County.

In the mid-1800s, laws were passed providing for appointment of the Trustees of the Poor by the County Commissioners. In 1922, the County Commissioners assumed control of and responsibility for the Poor Farm, and the corporate entity known as the Trustees of the Poor was abolished. The Almshouse never housed a large number of people. Over the years, the maximum number of residents appeared to range between 20 and 30. Occasionally, the Almshouse sheltered migrants, hitchhikers, or others in need of short-term temporary quarters. While the residents of the Poor Farm were indigents, they varied in age, sex, and race. Some were elderly, lacking either the family or the means to support themselves. Others were crippled or otherwise physically handicapped, and the mentally handicapped were also placed at the home. Census records suggest that the population of the farm was composed of fairly equal numbers of black and white inhabitants. In 1959, the Almshouse, no longer needed to provide for the county's poor, was torn down. Very few records remain to describe the operations of the Almshouse, the farm, or the cemetery. It is assumed that the cemetery was used for burials of the indigent, both from the Almshouse and the surrounding county. Some of these paupers were apparently brought from other areas, such as Washington DC. We do know that, over the years, numerous burials were made somewhere on the property. The exact number is unknown. However, County Commissioners' records for the period from 1898 to 1920 document that the County may have been burying as many as 60 individuals per year, or 1200 burials over this single 20-year period. According to state highway records, an unknown number of burials were removed and reburied elsewhere when the highway now known as I-270 was extended through a portion of the property.

Prior to the excavation stage of the data recovery project, a ground penetrating radar survey was conducted across the area thought to encompass the historic period burials. The survey located nine different areas containing subsurface anomalies, three of which were described on the anomaly map as likely being caused by geologic strata or outcrops. Radar Echo Cluster A, at the north end of the site was designated as the most likely location for containing graves. The radar survey was conducted in April and May of 1986. Actual ground-truthing excavation work was conducted in 1987. Twenty-one backhoe trenches, totaling approximately 400.5 meters (1,314 ft) in length, and averaging 61 cm (2 ft) wide and from 1.22 to 1.83 meters (4-6 ft) deep, were excavated at a 45 degree angle off the north-south axis of the site. This was done to increase the odds of intersecting multiple burials, which were typically on an east-west axis in historic times. Most of the fifteen burials excavated archeologically were intact, or nearly so. It appears that there were two distinct periods of burial represented by the findings. Burials in trench 2N appear to be slightly older, and in poorer condition than those in trench 3N. However, based upon tentative field identification of fragments of clothing, dental work, and nail and screw types, it is likely that both sets of excavated burials post-date 1890. Additional burials were encountered in the north area of the site (in Echo Cluster A), but these were found to be very recent (likely post-dating WWII) and were reburied to await removal by an undertaker. Similar recent graves were found scattered in other areas of the site and were flagged for the undertakers. Far more grave goods and differential burial patterns were encountered than was expected (but are not described in the full report). Such data should provide a better picture of the individuals interred in the pauper's cemetery if it is ever analyzed and described.

The moderately poor condition of the less than 100-year old wood coffin pieces and bone from trench 2N suggests that older burials may be in such poor condition that locating the burials would be very difficult and the deteriorated condition of associated remains such that their analytical value would be minimal. Analysis of the soil pH at the site suggests a fairly acidic soil which would contribute to deterioration of bone and other organic materials. However, because so many factors (slope, freeze-thaw cycles, etc.) play into preservation, it cannot be said with certainty that all burials would be so deteriorated. Furthermore, a backhoe was only made available to researchers for a period of two weeks due to funding constraints. There is a possibility that the majority of historic graves were removed long ago when I-270 was built, or simply were not encountered during the limited time available for Phase III research. In fact, several additional graves were encountered in the year 2000. According to a Bethesda Gazette article in the Maryland State Site Files dated Wednesday, May 3rd, 2000, thirty-eight additional graves were encountered after the sale of the property by the county to a local developer. These remains were removed at the county's expense and reinterred at a local cemetery, but no report is extant.

It is assumed, that the major portion of the Poor Farm Cemetery (18MO266) site has been destroyed by modern road construction and development activities. Thus, it is not thought to retain any significant research potential. However, based on prior experience with significant numbers of unexpected burials being discovered throughout the site, archeologists should be aware of the possibility that a historically significant burial population might remain hidden at the site.

## External Reference Codes (Library ID Numbers):

00006163, 00006227, 00006189

MARYLAND  
HISTORICAL



TRUST

# Phase II and Phase III Archaeological Database and Inventory

Site Number:

Site Name:

Prehistoric

Other name(s)

Historic

Brief  
Description:

Late 18th-20th century pauper's cemetery

Unknown