



Phase II and Phase III Archaeological Database and Inventory

Site Number: 18MO33

Site Name: Muncaster Mill

Prehistoric

Other name(s): Milton's Mill

Historic

Unknown

Brief Description: 18th - early 20th century mill complex

Site Location and Environmental Data:

Maryland Archaeological Research Unit No. 12

SCS soil & sediment code

Latitude 39.1181

Longitude -77.1057

Physiographic province Eastern Piedmont

Terrestrial site

Underwater site

Elevation m Site slope 0

Ethnobotany profile available Maritime site

Nearest Surface Water

Name (if any) Rock Creek

Saltwater

Ocean

Estuary/tidal river

Tidewater/marsh

Minimum distance to water is 0 m

Freshwater

Stream/river

Swamp

Lake or pond

Spring

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 High terrace

Hilltop/bluff Rockshelter/cave

Interior flat Hillslope

Upland flat Unknown

Ridgetop Other

Terrace

Low terrace

Ownership

Private

Federal

State of MD

Regional/county/city

Unknown

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

complex

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			
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

Earthenware		Ironstone	<input type="checkbox"/>	Staffordshire	<input type="checkbox"/>	Stoneware	
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"/>	Porcelain	<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)	4
Architectural	25	Human remain(s)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Furniture	<input type="checkbox"/>	Faunal material	<input type="checkbox"/>
Arms	<input type="checkbox"/>	Misc. kitchen	2
Clothing	<input type="checkbox"/>	Floral material	<input type="checkbox"/>
Personal items	<input type="checkbox"/>	Misc.	3
		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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Brief

Description:

18th - early 20th century mill complex

Unknown

External Samples/Data:

Collection curated at Walt Whitman High School?

Additional raw data may be available online

Summary Description:

The Muncaster Mill Site, 18MO33, is a rural milling complex that operated from at least 1820 into the early 20th century. The mill is located on Rock Creek, west of the village of Norbeck in Montgomery County, Maryland. Both a gristmill and a sawmill operated alongside one another at the site until 1925. Ten years after the mill closed, the structures burned to their foundations. No professional archeological work has ever been conducted at the site. However, an uncontrolled excavation was conducted in 1969 by students at the Walt Whitman High School in Bethesda, Maryland. A brief report details some of the archival research, informant interviews, and archeological findings of this investigation.

The mill remains that are present at 18MO33 were evidently not built until 1820. However, there is some historical evidence that an earlier mill may have existed on site prior to this date. Joseph Elgar, Sr., a millwright by trade, bought the property that now encompasses 18MO33 in the mid 18th century and established an estate there which he named "Milton" (i.e. "mill town"). It was his son, Joseph Jr., who built the existing mill and several other mills on this property. Joseph Elgar Jr. sold the property to George Robertson, the grandfather of William E. Muncaster, who was the owner by 1878. Even though he leant the mill his name, he was not a miller and leased out the mill and other properties to various people. The mill was leased to George E. White, who was the miller from 1892 to 1920. The next miller to lease from Muncaster was a Mr. Dove and his son William who operated it from 1920 to 1925 when the mill closed down. The younger Mr. Dove was available for interview and the students recorded his recollections regarding the mill.

Mr. Dove's father also owned and worked a farm nearby. The Muncaster gristmill could be operated by only one person. While running a log through the adjacent sawmill, work could be done at the gristmill. The Doves lived at their farm house, but sometimes would spend the night at a nearby house or camp out if they were operating the mills at night. The mills operated year round, two or three days each week and served between 30 and 50 families in Olney, Rockville, Gaithersburg, Redland, and Norbeck. The cornmeal and flour was packaged in 5 lb. bags and sold in these towns. The corn could be ground while waiting, but most people came 5 to 10 miles (a long trip at the time) and would leave grain one week to pick it up ground and leave more the next. These people usually paid immediately in cash, but sometimes Mr. Dove accepted 2 bushels out of every 10 ground instead of cash. Also, if customers neglected payments, his son William would collect when the bill reached \$15 to \$20. Grain was ground at 60¢ per bushel. It cost the Doves about \$300 per year (\$1 per day) to operate the mills, which included repairs and maintenance of races, boards, chiseling grooves in the mill stones, etc. Therefore, they could make a good profit.

The gristmill had a 4.57 meter (15 ft) over-shot wheel with a 1.83 meter (6 ft) wide face. A large dam was approximately ½ mile upstream. There were three millstones and corn shelling apparatus. One stone ground unshelled corn for livestock. The second ground wheat, barley, and oats in a coarse grind. And the third ground buckwheat and wheat for refined flour. The sawmill had an oscillating saw operated by a water turbine (later replaced with a circular saw). Oak, walnut, and cherry were some of the woods cut and could be seasoned for four years. Some of the specialized orders made at the mill included several varieties of wagon tongue, couplings, angle blocks, furniture pieces, and truck bodies for the manufactured chassis.

The mill went out of business in 1925 as a result of technological innovations. At this point in time, the economy underwent great changes due to advances in motor vehicles and machinery. A nearby highway was improved at around this time and the mill's customers soon found it more convenient and economical to purchase their flour and meal from more highly organized and mechanized companies or distributors. Trains made commuting and freight hauling easier, and so Mr. William Dove went to work in the city when his father decided to retire. Muncaster Mill was the last mill on Rock Creek to close. Some of the mill's timbers were used to construct a stable after it closed. In 1935, what remained was burned down leaving only the stone foundations. During the Great Depression, a squatter made part of the foundation into a shack by knocking down one wall and adding a tar paper roof and a chimney. Some of the stones from the knocked down wall were used to construct a storage pit nearby. The squatter was never evicted by Mr. Muncaster.

When the high school students first arrived at Muncaster Mill, it was completely over-grown with only parts of the foundation of the gristmill and saw mill standing. The remains of the squatter's shack were also still present. The tar paper roof had collapsed, but a door, window, and chimney were still present. Three walls were standing and had been plastered on the interior and whitewashed on the exterior. After viewing historic photos of the site, it was evident that the shack had been built out of the gristmill foundation as opposed to the sawmill foundation. Excavation at the site was, for the most part, conducted in an uncontrolled fashion. The group excavated several trenches and were able to identify a possible headrace, an un-mortared arched stone tunnel that led from the gristmill to the presumed tail race, a solid stone wall of uncertain function, the possible tailrace of the sawmill, the projected bed of an old road, a possible head near the road, and purposefully laid stones of uncertain function.

Artifact mentioned in the report from the gristmill at 18MO33 include discarded beer cans (kitchen-related), 2 mill stone fragments (activity items), a presumed water wheel shaft band (activity items), 2 masonry anchors (architectural), several handmade iron nails (architectural), three deer bones (miscellaneous), and several chunks of mortar (architectural). In the vicinity of the sawmill at 18MO33 were 3 iron braces (architectural) and a long iron rod with a flat, bell-shaped attachment at one end (activity item).

The research potential at Site 18MO33 is entirely unknown, given the lack of professional research conducted at the site. If deposits do remain intact, the site could provide significant information regarding not only 19th century milling technologies, but possible 18th century practices if deposits from the earlier mill(s) built by Joseph Elgar, Sr. are present. Attempts should be made to examine the site should future development threaten the site.

External Reference Codes (Library ID Numbers):

00006226