MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST

Phase II and Phase III Archaeological Database and Inventory

Site Number: 18PR142

Site Name: Site 1, Stream B

Other name(s):

Prehistoric ☑

Historic ☐

Unknown ☐

Brief Description: Late Archaic, and Late Woodland short-term camps, Early & Middle Woodland base camp

Site Location and Environmental Data:

Maryland Archaeological Research Unit No. 11

SCS soil & sediment code Bo

Latitude 38.7012

Longitude -76.9958

Physiographic province Western Shore Coastal

Terrestrial site ☑

Underwater site ☐

Elevation 0 m

Site slope 0-5%

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) Unnamed tributary of Pisca

Saltwater

- Ocean ☐
- Estuary/tidal river ☐
- Tidewater/marsh ☐

Freshwater

- Stream/river ☑
- Swamp ☐
- Lake or pond ☐
- Spring ☐

Minimum distance to water is 0 m

Temporal & Ethnic Contextual Data:

Paleoindian site

Archaic site

Early archaic

MIddle archaic

Late archaic Y

Woodland site

MD Adena

Early woodland Y

Mid. woodland Y

Late woodland Y

Unknown prehistoric context

Contact period site

ca. 1630 - 1675

ca. 1675 - 1720

ca. 1720 - 1780

ca. 1780 - 1820

ca. 1820 - 1860

ca. 1860 - 1900

ca. 1900 - 1930

Post 1930

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 ☐

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 Y

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		Perkiomen	3
Hardaway-Dalton		Susquehana	1
Palmer		Vernon	
Kirk (notch)		Piscataway	16
Kirk (stem)		Calvert	
Le Croy		Selby Bay	
Morrow Mntn		Jacks Rf (notch)	
Guilford		Jacks Rf (pent)	
Brewerton		Madison/Potomac	1
Otter Creek		Levanna	

All quantities exact or estimated minimal counts

Prehistoric Sherd Types

				Shepard		Keyser	
Marcey Creek	4	Popes Creek	374	Townsend		Yeocomico	
Dames Qtr		Coulbourn		Minguannan		Monongahela	
Selden Island		Watson		Sullivan Cove		Susquehannock	
Accokeek	2475	Mockley	2	Shenks Ferry			
Wolfe Neck		Clemson Island		Moyaone			
Vinette		Page		Potomac Crk	2		

Historic Sherd Types

Earthenware		Ironstone		Staffordshire		**Stoneware**	
Astbury		Jackfield		Tin Glazed		English Brown	
Borderware		Mn Mottled		Whiteware		Eng Dry-bodied	
Buckley		North Devon		**Porcelain**		Nottingham	
Creamware		Pearlware				Rhenish	
						Wt Salt-glazed	

Other Artifact & Feature Types:

Prehistoric Artifacts

		Other fired clay	
Flaked stone	21729	Human remain(s)	☐
Ground stone	1	Modified faunal	
Stone bowls	2	Unmod faunal	
Fire-cracked rock	21228	Oyster shell	☐
Other lithics (all)	21	Floral material	☐
Ceramics (all)	2960	Uncommon Obj.	
Rimsherds	3	Other ☐	

Prehistoric Features

Mound(s)		Storage/trash pit	☐
Midden	☐	Burial(s)	☐
Shell midden	☐	Ossuary	☐
Postholes/molds	☐	Unknown	☐
House pattern(s)	☐	Other	☐
Palisade(s)	☐		
Hearth(s)	☑		
Lithic reduc area	☐		

Lithic Material

		Fer quartzite	☐	Sil sandstone	☐
Jasper	☑	Chalcedony	☐	European flint	☐
Chert	☑	Ironstone	☐	Basalt	☐
Rhyolite	☑	Argilite	☐	Unknown	☐
Quartz	☑	Steatite	☐	Other	☐
Quartzite	☑	Sandstone	☐		

☐ **Dated features present at site**

Historic Artifacts

		Tobacco related	
Pottery (all)		Activity item(s)	
Glass (all)		Human remain(s)	☐
Architectural		Faunal material	☐
Furniture		Misc. kitchen	
Arms		Floral material	☐
Clothing		Misc.	
Personal items		Other ☐	

Historic Features

		Privy/outhouse	☐	Depression/mound	☐	Unknown	☐
Const feature	☐	Well/cistern	☐	Burial(s)	☐	Other	☐
Foundation	☐	Trash pit/dump	☐	Railroad bed	☐		
Cellar hole/cellar	☐	Sheet midden	☐	Earthworks	☐		
Hearth/chimney	☐	Planting feature	☐	Mill raceway	☐		
Postholes/molds	☐	Road/walkway	☐	Wheel pit	☐		
Paling ditch/fence	☐						

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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Other name(s) Historic ☐

Brief Description: Late Archaic, and Late Woodland short-term camps, Early & Middle Woodland base camp Unknown ☐

External Samples/Data: Collection curated at Catholic University

☑ Additional raw data may be available online

Summary Description:

Site 18PR142 (Site 1, Stream B) is a multi-component site in southern Prince George's County with evidence of Late Archaic, and Late Woodland short-term camps, as well as Early and Middle Woodland base camps. The site is located at the confluence of a small, unnamed stream and Piscataway Creek. It is situated on a slight rise (about 91 cm above high tide level) amidst an otherwise very swampy tidal basin landscape. The stream bank vegetation contains the typical hydrophytic vegetation of the Middle Atlantic region. On the drier elevations of the site, the vegetation is primarily deciduous. Soils at the site are primarily Transquaking soils of the Mispillion series.

The site was first identified by Dr. William Gardner and a number of undergraduate and graduate students from the Catholic University of America. In early 1976, Gardner and his students were conducting survey work along two secondary streams draining toward Piscataway Creek in the vicinity of planned sewer-line improvements by the Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission (WSSC). Reconnaissance methods included sub-surface sampling with 61 X 61 cm (2 X 2 ft) square test unit excavations and screw augers, map study, archival and laboratory study, and examination of exposed surfaces, eroded slopes, and stream bank cuts. Four areas of prehistoric cultural habitation were found, one of which was 18PR142.

A site map provided in the full site report for the 1976 project reveals that the site was investigated with a series of six 61 cm X 61 cm square test units and 2 auger holes. The artifacts encountered during the survey work in 1976 include a contracting stem rhyolite point fragment, a quartz ovate biface, 2 quartz biface fragments, 1 quartzite biface, 5 quartz cores, 1 rhyolite flake, 1 chert flake, 6 jasper flakes, 86 quartz flakes, 28 quartzite flakes, 2 sandstone flakes, 3 chert cobble fragments, 3 quartzite cobble fragments, 1 jasper pebble fragment, 1 quartzite abrader, 56 pieces of fire-cracked rock, 5 Accokeek sherds, 2 possible Popes Creek sherds (or may be Accokeek again), 1 crushed rock-tempered sherd, and 1 unidentified ceramic sherd.

Based on this data, the site was initially interpreted as a multiple activity base camp of the Early Woodland Period. It is possible that an earlier Late Archaic component is also present as manifested in the contracting stem rhyolite point. The researchers determined that the site was potentially eligible to the NRHP and pursued a more rigorous testing regime the following summer.

In May, June, and July of 1976, Site 18PR142 was investigated with the excavation of sixteen 3.05 m X 3.05 m (10 ft X 10 ft) excavations units, and four 1.524 m X 3.05 m (5 ft X 10 ft) units. Standard excavation procedures during this work included digging in 7.62 cm (3 in) arbitrary levels. All excavations with this method employed only small hand tools such as trowels, dental picks, and spoons. Most soil was screened through 3/8 inch mesh hardware cloth. Selected samples from floors and all soils from features such as hearths were floated through window screen in an effort to recover charcoal, bone, small artifacts, etc. Only very tiny pressure flakes were recovered using this method. Efforts were made to leave all artifacts encountered in situ until an entire level had been excavated. This method insured that any patterning of the artifacts was noted, aided in interpretation, and served to guide the ongoing excavations. After each level was excavated, the floors were photographed and mapped (where warranted) with artifacts being numbered and keyed to the map prior to removal. After artifact removal, the floor of each level was scraped in an effort to discern soil stains denoting pits, postmolds, etc. Vertical excavation in the squares continued until artifact free levels were encountered. Within some of the 3.05 m squares, 1.52 meter (5 ft) square units were carried down to the underlying basal gravels to check for the possibility of any earlier cultural occupation and to assist the project geologist and pedologist.

Due to time constraints, excavation methods had to be altered on one of the 1.524 m X 3.05 m units and 8 of the 3.05 m squares. Instead of leaving artifact in situ until levels were completed, each unit was sub-divided into 30.5 cm (1 ft) squares to speed up excavation but retain some information to help determine horizontal patterning. In the very final days of fieldwork, excavation methods were altered yet again and the other three 1.524 m X 3.05 m units were excavated by simply shoveling half of each unit (subdivided into two 1.524 X 1.524 m squares) in the same arbitrary levels and screening.

Placement of excavations at the site was dictated by the location of the WSSC construction center line and right-of-way (ROW). Other factors entering into excavation strategy included the desire to sample a wide area within the ROW and to locate various types of activity areas. Test units from the earlier study by Catholic University outside of the ROW show that extensive portions of the site extend along the east bank of Stream B (especially in the northern half). A snow fence was put up to protect this area from subsequent construction activity areas.

Research reveals that the intensity of human habitation decreases from north to south along the grid center line. There was also a decrease in activity to the west. No marked decreases were noted to the east, except in the southern third of the site. The most intense area of human activity was in the northern excavation squares. The only cultural features encountered at 18PR142 were hearths. The horizontal and vertical distribution of fire-cracked rocks was almost like a blanket across the northern one-half of the site, however individual hearth clusters were recognizable in some areas. Features 1 and 3 are relatively small hearths, with compact clusters of fire-cracked rocks in the center and more scattered between the hearth components as they radiate outward. Both contain mixtures of Accokeek and Popes Creek pottery. Feature 2 is a large hearth associated with steatite vessel fragments and sherds of Marcey Creek, Accokeek, and Popes Creek.

The dominant pottery type throughout the site is Accokeek. Popes Creek represents a strong minority type which becomes increasingly well represented in the middle portions of the site. Other types, which are represented at 18PR142, but comprise no more than 5% of the total sample, are Marcey Creek, Mockley, and Potomac Creek wares. The projectile point/stemmed knife categories cover the range from Late Archaic to Late Woodland spectrum. The earlier points are also concentrated at the northern end of the site. Diagnostic points include quartzite variants of the Perkiomen-Susquehanna Broadspear, Orient Fishtail variants of quartz and quartzite, Holmes points, Piscataway points, Steubenvilles, Fox Creek points, and a single triangular point.

Looking at the artifact categories of ceramics and projectile points it is safe to say that 18PR142 was occupied from the Late Archaic to Late Woodland. It is also safe to say that intense occupation occurred during the later phases of the Late Archaic and increases in intensity during the Early and Middle Woodland, with a rapid reduction during the later parts of the Middle Woodland; with only sporadic occupation during the Late Woodland.

Artifacts encountered during the testing at 18PR142 in the summer of 1976 included 85 projectile points, 207 other bifaces, 46 cores, 2 drills, a silicified sandstone chisel, 22 scrapers, 61 utilized flakes, 8 retouched flakes, 20,727 other flakes, 428 broken or worked cobbles, 1 chipped-stone adze, 1 hematite chunk, 80 hammerstones, 3 abraders, 333 unspecified lithic tools, 21,172 pieces of fire-cracked rock, 23 fragments of steatite (including at least 2 vessel fragments and 1 carved steatite linesinker), 2,470 Accokeek sherds (at least 3 rims among them), 372 Popes Creek sherds, and 109 other ceramic sherds (including at least 4 Marcey Creek sherds and some Mockley and Potomac Creek wares). Exact quantities of diagnostic projectile points are not provided in

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Brief Description: Late Archaic, and Late Woodland short-term camps, Early & Middle Woodland base camp

the full site report (although the types represented are listed above), however photographs in the report include images of at least 1 Susquehanna Broadspear, 3 Perkiomens, 10 Steubenvilles, 16 Piscataway points, and 1 Madison. Quantities or quartz (1,916) and quartzite (1,929) far outnumbered other lithic raw materials, followed by silicified sandstone (233), chert (55), rhyolite (33), jasper (16), and sandstone (9). Lithic activities in evidence at the site appear to be primarily middle and late stage biface reduction.

The extent of deposits and the variety of objects suggests that the site served as a base camp from the Terminal Archaic through the first part of the Middle Woodland, with more sporadic occupation in later times. This base camp may have been associated with fishing activities. The initial habitation of the site can be correlated with a rise in sea level and corresponding changes in the fluvial and estuarine environment that led to alterations in the territorial behavior of certain water-adapted biota. With increasing salinity, anadromous fish (primarily shad) moved further up the Potomac seeking spawning ground. One such locale appears to have been the upper reaches of the Piscataway and the mouth of the tributary stream that flows past the site. The site may have served as a gathering place for local populations to procure and process fish. This would also explain the decline in importance of the site during the latter Middle and Late Woodland periods, as the advent of agriculture shifted attention elsewhere.

The only direct evidence of fish procurement and processing at the site was a probable steatite linesinker. Additional work at the site could bolster (or refute) this interpretation of the site’s function. Modern techniques such as flotation may be able to recover tiny objects such as fish bones or even scales and other evidence for fish processing. Analysis of any residues on recovered artifacts may be able to shed lot on the site’s function as well. Given the site’s multi-component nature, the presence of diagnostic artifacts and intact features, and potential research questions waiting to be answered, Site 18PR142 should be considered a significant resource with strong research potential.

External Reference Codes (Library ID Numbers):

00006566, 00006567