



Phase II and Phase III Archaeological Database and Inventory

Site Number: 18PR393

Site Name: Montpelier

Prehistoric

Other name(s)

Historic

Brief Description:

18th-early 19th century plantation house

Unknown

Site Location and Environmental Data:

Maryland Archaeological Research Unit No. 8

SCS soil & sediment code

Latitude 39.0579

Longitude -76.8516

Physiographic province Western Shore Coastal

Terrestrial site

Underwater site

Elevation 61 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) Unnamed stream

Saltwater

Ocean

Estuary/tidal river

Tidewater/marsh

Spring

Minimum distance to water is 120 m

Freshwater

Stream/river

Swamp

Lake or pond

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

Interpretive Sampling Data:

Prehistoric context samples

Soil samples taken N

Flotation samples taken N

Other samples taken

Historic context samples

Soil samples taken N

Flotation samples taken N

Other samples taken



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Diagnostic Artifact Data:

Projectile Point Types		Koens-Crispin	
Clovis	<input type="checkbox"/>	Perkiomen	<input type="checkbox"/>
Hardaway-Dalton	<input type="checkbox"/>	Susquehana	<input type="checkbox"/> 1
Palmer	<input type="checkbox"/>	Vernon	<input type="checkbox"/>
Kirk (notch)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Piscataway	<input type="checkbox"/>
Kirk (stem)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Calvert	<input type="checkbox"/>
Le Croy	<input type="checkbox"/>	Selby Bay	<input type="checkbox"/>
Morrow Mntn	<input type="checkbox"/>	Jacks Rf (notch)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Guilford	<input type="checkbox"/>	Jacks Rf (pent)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Brewerton	<input type="checkbox"/>	Madison/Potomac	<input type="checkbox"/>
Otter Creek	<input type="checkbox"/>	Levana	<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"/> 30	Staffordshire	<input type="checkbox"/>	Stoneware	
Astbury	<input type="checkbox"/>	Jackfield	<input type="checkbox"/>	Tin Glazed	<input type="checkbox"/>	English Brown	<input type="checkbox"/> 14
Borderware	<input type="checkbox"/>	Mn Mottled	<input type="checkbox"/>	Whiteware	<input type="checkbox"/> 289	Eng Dry-bodied	<input type="checkbox"/>
Buckley	<input type="checkbox"/>	North Devon	<input type="checkbox"/>	Porcelain	<input type="checkbox"/> 139	Nottingham	<input type="checkbox"/> 1
Creamware	<input type="checkbox"/> 297	Pearlware	<input type="checkbox"/> 325			Rhenish	<input type="checkbox"/>
						Wt Salt-glazed	<input type="checkbox"/> 8

All quantities exact or estimated minimal counts

Other Artifact & Feature Types:

Prehistoric Artifacts		Other fired clay	
Flaked stone	<input type="checkbox"/> 121	Human remain(s)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ground stone	<input type="checkbox"/>	Modified faunal	<input type="checkbox"/>
Stone bowls	<input type="checkbox"/>	Unmod faunal	<input type="checkbox"/>
Fire-cracked rock	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	Oyster shell	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other lithics (all)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Floral material	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ceramics (all)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Uncommon Obj.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Rimsherds	<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

Fer quartzite	<input type="checkbox"/>	Sil sandstone	<input type="checkbox"/>
Jasper	<input type="checkbox"/>	Chalcedony	<input type="checkbox"/>
Chert	<input type="checkbox"/>	Ironstone	<input type="checkbox"/>
Rhyolite	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Argilite	<input type="checkbox"/>
Quartz	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Steatite	<input type="checkbox"/>
Quartzite	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Sandstone	<input type="checkbox"/>

Dated features present at site

Historic Artifacts		Tobacco related	
Pottery (all)	<input type="checkbox"/> 1325	Activity item(s)	<input type="checkbox"/> 608
Glass (all)	<input type="checkbox"/> 1245	Human remain(s)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Architectural	<input type="checkbox"/> 2275	Faunal material	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Furniture	<input type="checkbox"/>	Misc. kitchen	<input type="checkbox"/> 1826
Arms	<input type="checkbox"/>	Floral material	<input type="checkbox"/>
Clothing	<input type="checkbox"/> 6	Misc.	<input type="checkbox"/> 894
Personal items	<input type="checkbox"/> 12	Other	<input type="checkbox"/>

Historic Features

Privy/outhouse	<input type="checkbox"/>	Depression/mound	<input type="checkbox"/>	Unknown	<input type="checkbox"/>
Const feature	<input type="checkbox"/>	Burial(s)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Foundation	<input type="checkbox"/>	Trash pit/dump	<input type="checkbox"/>	possible structures, midden, p athway	
Cellar hole/cellar	<input type="checkbox"/>	Sheet midden	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Hearth/chimney	<input type="checkbox"/>	Planting feature	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Postholes/molds	<input type="checkbox"/>	Road/walkway	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Paling ditch/fence	<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:

Montpelier Mansion (18PR393) is located on a hilltop southwest of the Patuxent River in South Laurel, Prince George's County. A small tributary of the Patuxent flows just north of the site, and two other intermittent tributaries drain the area. The soil in the vicinity of the site is part of the Christiana-Sunnyside-Beltsville association. Prehistorically the site would have been oak-hickory forest and upland, floodplain, and marshland resources would have been available within a short distance of the site. The site was cultivated in historic times.

Currently owned by the Maryland National Capital Park and Planning Commission (MNCPPC), the mansion was probably constructed by Major Thomas Snowden II in 1783. The house is typically Georgian in its balanced, symmetrical plan with a central portion flanked by hyphens and semi-octagonal wings. An addition to the south wing was built in the 20th century. Included on the grounds are boxwood gardens, a garage, another small brick building, and a gazebo.

In 1988, a Phase II archeological testing program was carried out at 18PR393 that involved the excavation of shovel tests, augering, formal test units, and a test trench. The excavation yielded a small number of prehistoric artifacts as well as evidence of significant 18th and 19th century occupation. Plans for the development of the lawn and grounds at the Montpelier Mansion called for improvements which might impact significant archeological deposits. An archeological investigation conducted in 1980 (no details of this study are available at MHT) indicated these areas could potentially be useful for interpretation and were likely to contain significant intact resources. Thus, a Phase II testing program was implemented on this publically owned land. Another significant aspect of the Phase II work was a thorough archival investigation to place the Montpelier Mansion in its proper historical context.

Archival research reveals that Montpelier Mansion was probably built in 1783 by one Major Thomas Snowden, and was occupied by various members of the Snowden family until it was sold in 1888. The Snowdens were a wealthy, upper-class, slave-owning family. However, they were something of an anomaly since they were not, principally, planters but were wealthy because of their industrial and manufacturing activities, especially ironworking.

Major Thomas Snowden's great great grandfather, Richard Snowden (1640-1711), was born in Wales and after serving in Oliver Cromwell's army, immigrated to Maryland in 1658. His son, also named Richard, founded the ironworks (the first in the colony) that became the basis of the family's wealth. Major Snowden took part in the American Revolution serving in the 25th Battalion of Militia from Prince George's County, Maryland. He presided over military court martials and produced gun carriages at his ironworks for the Continental Army. It was probably shortly after the Revolution that Montpelier was constructed (probably on inherited lands), although one of the puzzling aspects about the history of the mansion is the persistence of a tradition that it was built sometime between 1740 and 1770 by Major Snowden's father, Thomas Snowden. This is thought to be the result of a 19th Century genealogist's error, which was re-packaged by later historians. No primary records are ever cited in the assertions of a 1740-1770 construction date. Architectural histories of the site mention iron firebacks at Montpelier inscribed with the date 1783 and this is likely the correct date. Locating evidence for the construction date became one of the major goals of the archeological testing.

Major Snowden continued the tradition of ironworking and used slave labor in the Snowden's Patuxent Ironworks. Many of these slaves would have been skilled laborers. The Montpelier Mansion itself (along with residences owned by other members of the Snowden family) was situated on the major thoroughfare between Baltimore and Washington. Because of its location, Montpelier was a popular resting spot for travelers and several historic records attest to the hospitality of Major Snowden and his wife, Ann (Nancy).

Among two of the most important visitors to Montpelier were George and Martha Washington. George Washington, who traded with Major Snowden for iron, noted in his diary that he lodged at Montpelier twice in 1787 while traveling to and from the Continental Congress in Philadelphia. Other records indicate that Washington received a wood and iron patent plow from Major Snowden and that he wished to purchase additional plows of the same make. In 1789, Martha Washington and her nephew stopped overnight at Montpelier on their way to the first inaugural in New York. Mrs. Washington's nephew describes Mrs. Snowden as a "kind hostess" in his journal. Abigail Adams also lodged with the Snowdens on her way to Washington and writes of the hospitality of Thomas and Nancy.

Major Snowden died in his home at 53 years of age on 27 October, 1803. Obituaries in local newspapers extolled his character, benevolence, sincerity, patriotism, gentle deportment, and inflexible integrity. But most of all, they mentioned his exceptional hospitality. Major Snowden left Montpelier and 504 acres surrounding it to his wife. Ann Snowden died on 9 April, 1824 and left Montpelier to her son Nicholas. Nicholas Snowden had founded the City of Laurel where he built a stone mansion for his family in 1811. His grist mill, erected the same year, was the first industrial structure on the Patuxent River. In 1824, the same year his mother died, Nicholas leased his mill to a Mr. Johnson who converted it to a factory for spinning cotton yarn. The leasing of the mill in that year suggests that 1824 was when he moved his family from Laurel to Montpelier.

As stated previously, the mansion was passed down through the Snowden family until 1888, after which it passed through a number of hands until it was sold to Emanuel Havenith in January 1916. Havenith was named Resident Minister to the United States from Belgium by royal decree in 1911. His tour in the United States was prolonged by the outbreak of WWI. Though he only owned the mansion for a short time, he was responsible for the construction of the kitchen and service wings and installed a bathroom with running water and marble top fixtures. Havenith also ordered the library and dining room plaster work redone at a cost of \$10,000. The next owner of Montpelier was Eleanor Fitzgibbon who bought the house to go with her 18th Century furniture. Ms. Fitzgibbons made several improvements including barns and outbuildings which helped turn the property into a working farm again. Eventually the property would be sold to MNCPPC in 1961.

Phase II fieldwork at Montpelier was conducted in November of 1988. The Montpelier grounds were divided into 6 areas. Each area was then systematically surveyed by shovel test pit (STPs) and auger testing. In areas that were felt to have high archeological potential, the STPs were placed at intervals of 7.62 meters (25 ft). Other areas were tested at 15.24 m (50 ft) or even 30.48 m (100 ft) intervals. The test pits were laid out according to a grid that was oriented in the same direction as Montpelier Mansion. In addition, several STPs were dug in areas of particular interest to MNCPPC either because of suspected archeological potential or because of imminent disturbance. A total of 247 STPs and 35 auger tests were excavated.

Areas expected to contain significant archeological resources (based on the preliminary STP and augering survey) were investigated through the placement of 91 X 91 cm (3 X 3 ft) hand excavated test units. Sixteen of these units were excavated during Phase II operations. One area of particular interest was the purported location of the Snowden family cemetery. This was initially investigated with several STPs, but when those were unsuccessful in exposing burials, a



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large 61 cm X 3.05 m (2 ft X 10 ft) trench was opened up in the area. A possible grave was indeed uncovered in the trench.

All excavation was conducted by natural stratigraphy, until sterile subsoil was reached. The bottom of each test unit was augured in order to ensure that subsoil had been reached. A soil sample was taken from every stratum that was felt to be intact and each layer was screened through hardware mesh. Only a sample was saved of some material recovered; brick, mortar, window glass, coal, clinker, and slag. A profile drawing was made for each STP, test unit, and trench, and all units and features were photographed. A non-systematic surface collection was also made in all areas of the site.

Because of its high archeological potential, a portion of Area 1 (southeast of the mansion and between it and an early 20th century carriage house) was also subjected to analysis through ground-penetrating radar and other remote sensing devices. The goals of this work were to supplement the excavation data and to attempt to identify locations of other modern disturbances or archeological features.

The Phase II work confirmed the presence of both prehistoric and late 18th to early 19th century remains on the grounds of the Montpelier Mansion (18PR393). The main archeologically sensitive areas are Areas 1 and 3 to the south and west of the house, respectively, and Area 5, in the southwest corner of the archeological survey area. The potential for the recovery of significant archeological resources in other areas is believed to be quite low.

While the prehistoric component was not extensive, there was some clustering evident when the STPs yielding prehistoric items were mapped. However, these all came from disturbed or historical contexts. A diagnostic point from the site does indicate Late Archaic use of the area. The prehistoric assemblage consisted of 1 Susquehanna Broadspear, 1 unidentifiable point, 2 bifaces, 3 cores, 1 uniface, 62 flakes, 51 pieces of shatter, and 4 pieces of fire-cracked rock.

Clusters of historic artifacts revealed several possible activity areas on the site, thereby indicating that the site has retained some horizontal integrity. A possible outbuilding was identified in a part of Area 1 south of the 1913 kitchen wing. High densities of architectural, domestic, and faunal material were identified here, as were several features (a utility trench, a posthole and postmold, a soil stain, and a trench with possible brick impressions on the bottom of it). In addition, an area between an Osage orange tree and the kitchen wing and south wing yielded archeological materials that may indicate the presence of an 18th and 19th century kitchen disposal area (i.e. midden). Large amounts of faunal and domestic debris were found here. High densities of historic artifacts were also noted along the south edge of a garden terrace and along the west edge of a line of boxwoods, as well as in Area 3. A small concentration of architectural and domestic debris exists north of Area 5. A probable grave was exposed in the test trench excavated through Area 5 in the attempt to locate the Snowden family cemetery.

Some vertical integrity may also exist in scattered areas throughout the property. Evidence of surviving historical levels was recorded from test units placed in Area 3 and on the edge of the terrace. Further excavation would be required to shed light on the nature of the archeological remains in this area. One contested aspect of Montpelier's history revolves around the date of the mansion's construction. Two test units were placed adjacent to the house and had the potential to clarify this issue, particularly if builder's trenches could be discerned. Unfortunately, these units revealed only fill overlying the natural subsoil. The artifact analysis does shed some light on this question. The majority of the diagnostic artifacts date from no earlier than the late 18th century and tend to confirm this time as the date of the earliest historic occupation of the property.

The geophysical survey of Area 1 was completed after the results of the Phase II excavations were available. The use of this archeological data allowed for refinement of the geophysical interpretations. The location of a possible path was identified, and its presence was later verified on a 1937 aerial photograph. It is not known, however, the length of time that this path was in use. In addition, a concentration of ferrous material, and three possible locations of concentrations of cultural debris were identified during the remote sensing operation. A test unit had already been placed in one of these areas during the archeological work. Analysis suggested that the unit was contained within a large feature, perhaps a kitchen midden. In addition, the geophysical survey identified the locations of numerous buried utility lines within Area 1. Some of these were already noted as a result of the archeological investigations. Excavation in the vicinity of these utility trenches had revealed that some historical contexts may have remained intact (like postmolds), despite the nearby modern disturbances. In some cases, the excavation revealed that the utility trenches were cut into the historical levels.

The historic artifact assemblage from 18PR393 included some 7,573 objects including 608 activity items, 2,275 architectural artifacts, 6 clothing items, 3,771 kitchen-related artifacts, 12 personal items, 7 tobacco-related artifacts, and 894 miscellaneous objects. The activity items were 24 flowerpot sherds, 1 slate pencil, a lead seal, and 582 vitreous green slag fragments (likely related to the Snowden Ironworking endeavors). The architectural artifacts were 608 fragments of brick, 224 fragments of shell mortar, 45 fragments of late mortar, 57 pieces of shell plaster, 49 slate fragments, 618 window glass fragments, 47 handwrought nails, 89 cut nails, 130 wire nails, 352 unidentified nails, a ceramic tile fragment, an iron hinge, and 54 other architectural objects (drainpipe, tile, asbestos, etc.). The 6 clothing items were all buttons (2 shell, 2 porcelain, 1 copper alloy, & 1 lead). The kitchen assemblage consisted of 1,318 ceramic sherds (297 creamware, 325 pearlware, 289 whiteware, 30 ironstone, 102 Chinese porcelain, 17 European porcelain, 20 unidentified porcelain, 51 unidentified earthenware, 116 redware, 9 yellowware, 2 Rockingham, 8 white salt-glazed stoneware, 1 Shaw stoneware, 1 Nottingham stoneware, 14 English Brown stoneware, 10 American stoneware, 1 other Stoneware, and 25 other stoneware), 627 pieces of kitchen glass (152 table glass, 4 free-blown bottle, 71 mold-blown, 15 auto machine-made, and 385 unidentified bottle), 2 bottle tops, 8 pieces of cutlery, 2 bone handles, 6 pieces of plastic cutlery, and 1,808 faunal remains (1,366 oyster shell, 2 cockle shell, 3 clam shell, 7 fish scales, 2 turtle shell, 52 cow bones, 32 pig bones, 29 bird bones, and 315 mammal bones). The personal items were 7 chamberpot fragments, part of a jewelry piece, and 4 other objects. The 7 tobacco-related artifacts were 7 kaolin pipe fragments (including 4 stems). And finally, the miscellaneous items were 719 coal, clinker, charcoal and other byproducts as well as 175 unidentified objects.

The archeological resources present on the grounds of the Montpelier Mansion are highly significant. As the residence of the Snowden family, the site has great potential to yield valuable information on the lifeways of a family whose wealth was based on manufacturing and industrial enterprises, which was unusual in the predominantly agrarian society of this region at that time. Further investigation of some of the identified areas of high artifact density may help to shed light on the late 18th and early 19th century activities on the property. For instance, the function of a possible outbuilding could be investigated. Other outbuildings or functions could be identified in the other areas with high artifact concentrations. This information could serve as a basis for comparison with other late 18th century occupations. For example, a blacksmith shop was recently excavated at Mt. Vernon, which provided insight into the technology of the period as well as into the workings of George Washington's plantation.

If slave quarters could be identified on the site, they would serve as a particularly valuable archeological resource. Data concerning the daily life of slaves is scarce in the historical record, and archeology is often the only means available to recover this important information. Similarly, documentary evidence relating to other servants and workers is not abundant, and archeological research could provide insights into the activities and lifestyles of these groups, if their presence can be identified on the property.



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While no deep pit features such as privies, wells, or cisterns, were discerned during this investigation, they may still exist on the property. If they are present, and have been filled, these features represent a particularly valuable archeological resource, for they serve as time capsules which provide insight into various aspects of early historic life. For example, the types of artifacts present in these contexts could reveal important information about the social status of the occupants of various areas of the site.

The potential for the recovery of highly significant archeological resources on the grounds of Montpelier Mansion is high. Mitigation work should precede any future work that might result in subsurface disturbances in Areas 1, 3, and 5, especially those areas with high artifact densities and in those parts of Area 1 identified as potentially significant as a result of the ground-penetrating radar survey.

External Reference Codes (Library ID Numbers):