



Phase II and Phase III Archaeological Database and Inventory

Site Number: 18PR40

Site Name: Clagett

Prehistoric

Other name(s) Piscataway Village or Fort

Historic

Brief Description:

Archaic camp and Late Woodland/Contact village or fort and ossuary

Unknown

Site Location and Environmental Data:

Maryland Archaeological Research Unit No. 11

SCS soil & sediment code MmA

Latitude 38.6971

Longitude -77.0010

Physiographic province Western Shore Coastal

Terrestrial site

Underwater site

Elevation 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) Intermittent stream

- | Saltwater | Freshwater |
|--|--|
| Ocean <input type="checkbox"/> | Stream/river <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Estuary/tidal river <input 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 0 m

Temporal & Ethnic Contextual Data:

Paleoindian site

Woodland site

Archaic site

MD Adena

Early archaic

Early woodland

Middle archaic

Mid. woodland

Late archaic

Late woodland

Contact period site P ca. 1820 - 1860

ca. 1630 - 1675

ca. 1675 - 1720

ca. 1720 - 1780

ca. 1780 - 1820

Unknown historic context

Unknown prehistoric context

Unknown context

Ethnic Associations (historic only)

- | | |
|---|---|
| Native American <input type="checkbox"/> | Asian American <input type="checkbox"/> |
| African American <input type="checkbox"/> | Unknown <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Anglo-American <input type="checkbox"/> | Other <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Hispanic <input type="checkbox"/> | |

Y=Confirmed, P=Possible

Site Function Contextual Data:

Prehistoric

- | | |
|---|--|
| Multi-component <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Misc. ceremonial <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Village <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Rock art <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Hamlet <input type="checkbox"/> | Shell midden <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Base camp <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | STU/lithic scatter <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Rockshelter/cave <input type="checkbox"/> | Quarry/extraction <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Earthen mound <input type="checkbox"/> | Fish weir <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Cairn <input type="checkbox"/> | Production area <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Burial area <input type="checkbox"/> | Unknown <input type="checkbox"/> |

Other context

ossuary

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 U

Flotation samples taken U

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"/>
Dames Qtr	<input type="checkbox"/>	Coulbourn	<input type="checkbox"/>
Selden Island	<input type="checkbox"/>	Watson	<input type="checkbox"/>
Accokeek	<input type="checkbox"/>	Mockley	<input type="checkbox"/>
Wolfe Neck	<input type="checkbox"/>	Clemson Island	<input type="checkbox"/>
Vinette	<input type="checkbox"/>	Page	<input type="checkbox"/>
Shepard	<input type="checkbox"/>	Townsend	<input type="checkbox"/>
Minguannan	<input type="checkbox"/>	Sullivan Cove	<input type="checkbox"/>
Shenks Ferry	<input type="checkbox"/>	Moyaone	<input type="checkbox"/>
Potomac Crk	<input type="checkbox"/>	12	<input type="checkbox"/>
Keyser	<input type="checkbox"/>	Yeocomico	<input type="checkbox"/>
Monongahela	<input type="checkbox"/>	Susquehannock	<input type="checkbox"/>

Historic Sherd Types					
Earthenware	Ironstone	<input type="checkbox"/>	Staffordshire	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Astbury	<input type="checkbox"/>	Jackfield	<input type="checkbox"/>	Tin Glazed	<input type="checkbox"/>
Borderware	<input type="checkbox"/>	Mn Mottled	<input type="checkbox"/>	Whiteware	<input type="checkbox"/>
Buckley	<input type="checkbox"/>	North Devon	<input type="checkbox"/>	Porcelain	<input type="checkbox"/>
Creamware	<input type="checkbox"/>	Pearlware	<input type="checkbox"/>	Stoneware	<input type="checkbox"/>
				English Brown	<input type="checkbox"/>
				Eng Dry-bodied	<input type="checkbox"/>
				Nottingham	<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	13	Other fired clay	30
Ground stone	2	Human remain(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Stone bowls	<input type="checkbox"/>	Modified faunal	135
Fire-cracked rock	<input type="checkbox"/>	Unmod faunal	32
Other lithics (all)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Oyster shell	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ceramics (all)	47	Floral material	<input type="checkbox"/>
Rimsherds	7	Uncommon Obj.	2
		Other <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	copper beads

Prehistoric Features	
Mound(s)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Midden	<input type="checkbox"/>
Shell midden	<input type="checkbox"/>
Postholes/molds	<input type="checkbox"/>
House pattern(s)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Palisade(s)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Hearth(s)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Lithic reduc area	<input type="checkbox"/>
Storage/trash pit	<input type="checkbox"/>
Burial(s)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ossuary	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Unknown	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other	<input type="checkbox"/>

Lithic Material			
Jasper	<input type="checkbox"/>	Fer quartzite	<input type="checkbox"/>
Chert	<input type="checkbox"/>	Sil sandstone	<input type="checkbox"/>
Rhyolite	<input type="checkbox"/>	Chalcedony	<input type="checkbox"/>
Quartz	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Ironstone	<input type="checkbox"/>
Quartzite	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Basalt	<input type="checkbox"/>
		Argilite	<input type="checkbox"/>
		Unknown	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
		Steatite	<input type="checkbox"/>
		Other	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
		Sandstone	<input type="checkbox"/>
		obsidian	<input type="checkbox"/>

Dated features present at site

Protohistoric or Contact era ossuary dated by the inclusion of diagnostic artifacts

Historic Artifacts			
Pottery (all)	10	Tobacco related	311
Glass (all)	10	Activity item(s)	1
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	24
Clothing	<input type="checkbox"/>	Floral material	<input type="checkbox"/>
Personal items	1262	Misc.	<input type="checkbox"/>
		Other <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Historic Features			
Const feature	<input type="checkbox"/>	Privy/outhouse	<input type="checkbox"/>
Foundation	<input type="checkbox"/>	Well/cistern	<input type="checkbox"/>
Cellar hole/cellar	<input type="checkbox"/>	Trash pit/dump	<input type="checkbox"/>
Hearth/chimney	<input type="checkbox"/>	Sheet midden	<input type="checkbox"/>
Postholes/molds	<input type="checkbox"/>	Planting feature	<input type="checkbox"/>
Paling ditch/fence	<input type="checkbox"/>	Road/walkway	<input type="checkbox"/>
		Depression/mound	<input type="checkbox"/>
		Burial(s)	<input type="checkbox"/>
		Railroad bed	<input type="checkbox"/>
		Earthworks	<input type="checkbox"/>
		Mill raceway	<input type="checkbox"/>
		Wheel pit	<input type="checkbox"/>
		Unknown	<input type="checkbox"/>
		Other	<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:

The Clagett Site, 18PR40, is a contact period archeological site near Piscataway Park in south-western Prince George's County, Maryland. The site is believed to be the remains of, or in close proximity to the remains of the principal town of the Piscataway Indians from ca. 1630 to 1680. It was known historically as simply "The Piscataway Fort" or "Kittamaquund". It is situated near the head of the embayed portion of Piscataway Creek, on the south shore. Soils at the site are primarily Grosstown gravelly silt loams.

The Piscataway Creek region has long been known to local collectors and residents as an excellent spot to search for American Indian artifacts. The first documented archeological find occurred in 1859 when a local farmer found a small burial site on his property. Over the latter part of the 19th century and into the early 20th century, artifact collection occurred in the area in a disorganized, and largely destructive manner until the purchase of what was then known as the "Hard Bargain" farm in 1923 by Henry and Alice Ferguson. The actions of several local collectors on Mrs. Ferguson's property (sometimes without her permission) prompted her to contact members of the professional archeological community in an effort to protect what she was certain was a significant archeological site. Alice Ferguson's efforts met with little success, so she took it upon herself to undertake controlled excavation of the archeological deposits at "Hard Bargain" to the best of her ability. Ultimately, her work would take her onto adjoining properties such as the farm of John Clagett, from whom the site takes its name.

A site as important as 18PR40 must be placed in its proper historical context. The first recorded European contact with the Algonquian speaking Piscataway (or Conoy) Indians was in AD 1608. Captain John Smith, while exploring the Potomac River, visited several villages within Piscataway territory including a principal village called Moyaone (thought by some to be located at nearby 18PR248). Contacts between the Piscataway and Europeans were sporadic at first. Once whites entered the fur-trade, Indian-White interaction increased markedly. By 1622, the European fur trade had spread as far north as the village of Nacotchtank on the Anacostia River. Sometime between 1623 and 1630 the Piscataway moved their principal village from Moyaone to a new settlement referred to as Piscataway or Kittamaquund (likely 18PR40). A permanent European foothold was established in Piscataway territory in 1634 with the founding of the Colony of Maryland at St. Mary's City. Governor Leonard Calvert visited the site in that year to request permission from the Tayac (principal chief) of the Piscataways to build the St. Mary's settlement. A Jesuit mission was also present at the Piscataway village from 1639 to 1642: ministered by Father Andrew White.

During the 1640s and 50s, the intensity of intertribal warfare over control of the fur trade increased. Raiding on the Piscataways by the Senecas (of the Iroquois Confederacy) and the Susquehannocks was particularly acute. For ten years, beginning in 1642, the Maryland settlers and Piscataway Indians fought the Susquehannocks. After 1652, Seneca raiding on Susquehannock villages led to a respite from the attacks on Maryland settlers. Essentially, the Susquehannock and Piscataways were then serving as a buffer against attack from the Senecas. Formal treaties between colonial Maryland and the Piscataway chiefdom were signed in 1666 (renewed in 1670), 1692, and 1700. Ostensibly, these treaties placed the Piscataway under the "protection" of the colonial government of Maryland. This included guarantees for lands to be set aside for the chiefdom, and hunting and fishing rights for its members. In return for this protection, the Piscataway were to pay an annual tribute, return fugitive servants and slaves, and have their chiefs confirmed by the royal governor.

Seneca and Susquehannock pressure on the Piscataway continued to be unrelenting, and in 1680 the Piscataway sought protection at Zekia Swamp in Charles County, Maryland. There, they built a European-style fort which was under fairly regular attack by the Seneca and Susquehannocks. At one point, 17 Piscataway were taken prisoner. Continued threats from the Seneca forced the main body of the Piscataway, numbering about 300, to leave southern Maryland in 1697. First, they went to the Bull Run Mountains of Northern Virginia and then, around the year 1700, the Piscataway relocated further up the Potomac to Heater's Island (18FR72), where an epidemic drastically reduced their population in 1704. Although the Piscataway were still living on Heater's Island in 1712, sometime not long thereafter the majority of the Piscataway moved north into southern Pennsylvania. Some remained behind and by the 1880s were identifying themselves as 'Wesorts'. In modern times at least three such groups claim descent from the Piscataway, none of which have been officially recognized by the federal government or State of Maryland.

In the late 1930s, after 3½ years spent excavating the Accokeek Creek site to the west of 18PR40, Alice Ferguson began searching for the location of the Piscataway Fort of ca. 1630 to 1680. The search for the site entailed both archival research in the local land records and historic documents relating to the "Calvert Manor" tract, as well as field reconnaissance on walks and rides through the countryside. Eventually, Ferguson became convinced that the village had been located on the property of John Clagett based on the location of an old deeply cut road, and a description of the Calvert Manor tract from a 17th century land dispute that made reference to the location of the Piscataway Fort. As the Clagett farm was for sale at the time, and Ferguson rightly suspected that the land would be subdivided and developed, Ferguson sought and received Mr. Clagett's permission to excavate at the site.

After only a half-day's digging (and Mrs. Ferguson does not detail her methods well) an ossuary and 3 pit features had been exposed. After a few weeks of on-and-off digging, a new discovery was made at 18PR8 which forced Mrs. Ferguson to abandon work at 18PR40. Ferguson does state that the soils at the site were hard-baked clay full of gravel and quite difficult to dig. The nature of the soils precluded stripping of the topsoil over large areas to expose postmolds and other features which would provide clues about the site layout. Most of the excavation had to be done with picks and mattocks.

Regardless of how excavation was undertaken, the excavations in late 1930s/early 1940 led to the exposure of a system of trenches (at least 4) across the site, 3 hearths, 3 large refuse pits, 1 burial pit containing at least 3 individuals, and an ossuary with the remains of at least 207 individuals within it.

The trenches were 61 cm (2 ft) across and roughly 76.2 cm (2.5 ft) deep. One was filled with refuse such as faunal remains, large sherds, Indian-made and trade pipes, ash, and charcoal. The trenches are of particular interest because the testimony of a deponent in the aforementioned land dispute of the late 17th century states, "that the trenches belonging to the said fort were very fresh and visible in his time and memory...".

The three small hearths contained charcoal, ash, and potsherds.

The large refuse pits include two which were roughly 4.27 meters (14 ft) by 4.57 meters (15 ft) in area and 1.13 meters (3.7 ft) deep, and a third which was 4.57 meters by 3.35 meters (11 ft). The two larger pits contained primarily items of native manufacture, particularly red clay pipes and part of a steatite pipe. The smaller pit was primarily refuse of European manufacture, including an iron hoe, 301 European-made clay pipe fragments, broken knives, a reworked iron spoon, a pewter spoon, glass bottle bottoms, and glazed pottery. Native-made remains included potsherds and pipe fragments. Faunal remains in this smaller



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pit included both domesticates (some pig and cow bones) and large quantities of deer.

The ossuary was roughly 6.1 meters (20 ft) X 4.88 meters (16 ft) in area and contained the bodies of at least 207 individuals. Ferguson stated that 254 skulls were removed from the ossuary, but these were in fragmentary condition and difficult to remove intact due to the soil conditions. A count of the temporal bones by later researchers revealed the minimum number of individuals to be 207. Large quantities of trade goods (especially glass beads and copper) were encountered in the ossuary. The ossuary has been assigned its own unique site number, 18PR42. This is because subsequent researchers examining the former Clagett property have been unable to locate the ossuary excavated by Ferguson (or other features for that matter), so the precise location is unknown. However, a second ossuary was identified in the 1970s and so it is thought that Ferguson's ossuary must be located nearby. A detailed description of the Ferguson Ossuary and associated artifacts is available in the synopsis report for 18PR42. But because the collection from the ossuary was originally considered part of the Claggett site collection, the artifact tally from the synopsis report for 18PR42 is recorded in the table above rather than in the table for that synopsis report. In addition to the artifacts described generally above and detailed in the synopsis report for 18PR42, at least 10 Potomac Creek sherds (including 7 rims) and 13 bifaces are documented photographically as coming from 18PR40. The bifaces suggest the presence of an Archaic component at the site.

Additional excavation was conducted at 18PR40 in 1970 and 1971. The project was undertaken by researchers at the University of Maryland at College Park who hoped to confirm the location of the Piscataway Fort. The project also appears to have been something of a salvage operation as at least one new house was soon to be constructed at the site. While researchers did manage to locate another ossuary, no additional features or artifacts were encountered which would confirm the presence of the village.

No full report of the 1970-1971 excavations has ever been produced, but aerial photos of the site under excavation reveal that a series of formal test units (at least 7) were excavated at dispersed locations across the site area. Whether the ossuary was identified as part of that process, by controlled surface collection or shovel test pitting, or by some other means is not known. What is known is that excavation of the ossuary proceeded with trenching on all four sides to expose the extent of the feature (estimated at about 2.1 X 2.5 meters, with a 60 cm thick bone layer). Unfortunately, this method precluded proper documentation of any soil profiles that might correspond to bone levels. Record keeping during the 1970 season was poor and most of the material obtained from the ossuary in that season is un-provenienced.

The following year, a new Principal Investigator took over and the lower half of the ossuary was excavated in a more controlled way. The mass of bones was divided into quadrants and excavation proceeded in arbitrary levels with each bone removed being recorded and numbered sequentially. The ossuary was excavated completely and a house now rests in its former location.

The remains of at least 281 individuals were encountered in the ossuary and two re-deposited cremations were also excavated in the lower portion of the feature. One of the cremation deposits was surrounded by a rectangle made of long bones. As in the 18PR42/Ferguson Ossuary (see associated synopsis report) skulls were frequently filled with smaller bones and/or beads of copper/brass. Typically, an individual's long bones were oriented parallel and stacked atop one-another with the skull at the top. It is not known whether these "collections" were bundles burials or loose, but orderly bones at the time of interment. At the bottom of the ossuary were two articulated (either fully or partially) skeletons atop a dog burial near the center of the mass. Artifacts from the ossuary include Potomac Creek sherds, 4 bone awls, 2 copper/brass pendants, shell disc beads, and tubular copper/brass beads. The cupric artifacts may date to around 1550, but no formal analysis has been made (or at least reported).

The evidence from both Ferguson's excavations at the site as well as the 1970s work does not conclusively prove that the site of the Piscataway Fort of 1630 to 1680, but the results are suggestive. The site location is probably close to the fort. A subdivision of small homes now sits atop much of the site and the probable location of Ferguson's ossuary. It is thought that this post-WWII type housing was actually rather low-impact. House footprints are small and many may be raised on block foundations. Intact deposits may remain in the yards on the sub-divided lots. Thus, the research potential of 18PR40 is not currently known. A promising avenue for research is detailed examination of the land records from the 1940s and 50s as well as examination of aerial photographs to determine if there are likely spots where intact deposits may remain preserved.

External Reference Codes (Library ID Numbers):

00006617, 4thMACConf, 97000769, 00006605, 00006607, 00007502