



Phase II and Phase III Archaeological Database and Inventory

Site Number: 18PR7

Site Name: Piscataway

Prehistoric

Other name(s)

Historic

Brief Description:

Late Archaic camp, Early, Middle, & Late Woodland village

Unknown

Site Location and Environmental Data:

Maryland Archaeological Research Unit No. 11

SCS soil & sediment code Ot

Latitude 38.6947

Longitude -77.0041

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

Spring

Freshwater

Stream/river

Swamp

Lake or pond

Spring

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

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 prehistoric 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?

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

N

Flotation samples taken N

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"/>	
Hardaway-Dalton	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Palmer	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Kirk (notch)	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Kirk (stem)	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Le Croy	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Morrow Mntn	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Guilford	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Brewerton	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Otter Creek	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Koens-Crispin	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Perkiomen	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Susquehana	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Vernon	<input type="checkbox"/>	48
Piscataway	<input type="checkbox"/>	45
Calvert	<input type="checkbox"/>	28
Selby Bay	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Jacks Rf (notch)	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Jacks Rf (pent)	<input type="checkbox"/>	15
Madison/Potomac	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Levanna	<input type="checkbox"/>	

Prehistoric Sherd Types

Marcey Creek	<input type="checkbox"/>	15	Popes Creek	<input type="checkbox"/>	1180	Shepard	<input type="checkbox"/>	Keyser	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Dames Qtr	<input type="checkbox"/>		Coulbourn	<input type="checkbox"/>		Townsend	<input type="checkbox"/>	6438	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"/>	2912	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"/>	841		
						Potomac Crk	<input type="checkbox"/>	12		

Historic Sherd Types

Earthenware	Ironstone	<input type="checkbox"/>	Staffordshire	<input type="checkbox"/>	Stoneware	English Brown	<input type="checkbox"/>
Astbury	Jackfield	<input type="checkbox"/>	Tin Glazed	<input type="checkbox"/>	Eng Dry-bodied	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Borderware	Mn Mottled	<input type="checkbox"/>	Whiteware	<input type="checkbox"/>	Nottingham	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Buckley	North Devon	<input type="checkbox"/>	Porcelain	<input type="checkbox"/>	Rhenish	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Creamware	Pearlware	<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"/>	1578
Ground stone	<input type="checkbox"/>	11
Stone bowls	<input type="checkbox"/>	7
Fire-cracked rock	<input type="checkbox"/>	50
Other lithics (all)	<input type="checkbox"/>	12
Ceramics (all)	<input type="checkbox"/>	11446
Rimsherds	<input type="checkbox"/>	399
Other fired clay	<input type="checkbox"/>	15
Human remain(s)	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Modified faunal	<input type="checkbox"/>	30
Unmod faunal	<input type="checkbox"/>	2257
Oyster shell	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Floral material	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Uncommon Obj.	<input type="checkbox"/>	1
Other	<input type="checkbox"/>	

Prehistoric Features

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

Lithic Material

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

Dated features present at site

Charcoal and shell from an oval pit feature located somewhere at the site; containing Early and Mid Woodland sherds & points

Historic Artifacts		
Pottery (all)	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Glass (all)	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Architectural	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Furniture	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Arms	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Clothing	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Personal items	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Tobacco related	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Activity item(s)	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Human remain(s)	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Faunal material	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Misc. kitchen	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Floral material	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Misc.	<input type="checkbox"/>	
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: 1750 +/- 90 years BP Reliability Mod Sample 2: 2460 +/- 100 years BP Reliability Low Sample 3: +/- years BP Reliability

SI-449: Charcoal from oval pit feat located somewhere at site (map shows no feat at locale described in text); contained E & M Woodland sherds & pts.

SI-450: Shell from oval pit feat located somewhere at site (map shows no feat at locale described in text); contained E & M Woodland sherds & pts.

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 MD Historical Society has a collection from the general

Additional raw data may be available online

Summary Description:

The Piscataway Site (18PR7) is the apparent remains of a Late Archaic camp and Early, Middle, & Late Woodland village site near Fort Washington in Prince George's County, Maryland. The site is situated on a small terrace on the south shore of the embayed Piscataway Creek. Higher terraces are located about 12 meters to the south. A small, tributary stream is located just to the east of the site; a possible anadromous fish run. Freshwater shellfish are also present in the near vicinity of the site. In addition to the abundant marine resources that are present in such an environment, upland game is only a short distance away. At the time of the first serious archeological examinations (the 1960s) the site was covered in mature hardwoods (locust, hickory, and oak). Soils at the site area Othello silt loams.

The site is only a short distance away from the well known Accokeek Creek site (18PR8 – see associated synopsis report), and for this reason it drew the attention of the Archeological Society of Maryland (ASM) when the Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission (WSSC) decided to build a new sewage treatment plant on the south shore of Piscataway Bay in 1964. Knowing that 18PR8 was so closely situated to the proposed location of the sewage treatment plant ASM members were concerned about the potential impact to unidentified archeological sites, sought and obtained permission to survey the area for archeological resources.

ASM members conducted walkover surveys and some uncontrolled test pitting in late 1964, and also interviewed a previous landowner (a Mr. Blandshard) who had a private collection from the area. It was on the second weekend visit to the proposed sewage treatment locale that ASM members discovered a heavy concentration of dark midden soil containing fragments of shell and other artifacts. The midden was exposed because a bulldozer had recently scraped away the upper layers of soil and exposed a shallow trench through the site to the shoreline. An unknown number of test pits (probably STPs) were excavated across the site to determine its extent and depth of the deposits. The site was determined to be roughly semi-circular in shape and over an acre in extent. The midden deposits went to a depth of at least 61 cm (2 ft). Subsequent to the initial discovery of 18PR7, the WSSC granted permission for ASM to undertake controlled excavation of the site. Members of the ASM would spend time during the next 4 years excavating the site.

Fieldwork entailed the excavation of 106 formal test units, situated in large blocks and linear trenches. Each excavation unit measured 1.524 X 1.524 m (5 X 5 ft) in size and was excavated in 7.62 cm (3 in) arbitrary levels, with the exception of features, which were excavated as single units when encountered. Some areas in the center of the midden were not excavated due to the presence of trees. In addition, there was an area of roughly 2.5 m² in the northeast corner of the site that was looted by vandals during the period of excavations. No controlled excavations could be conducted in this particular area. The general stratigraphy of the site consisted of up to 30.5 cm (12 in) of dark, greasy black midden humus (Stratum 1), followed by dark brown leached humus mixed with midden debris (Stratum 2) to an additional 30.5 cm, followed by a thin 7.62 cm stratum of gravelly or sandy yellow soil (Stratum 3) that contained flakes, animal bone, shell fragments, fire-cracked rock, and other artifacts like Strata 1 and 2. These three layers were underlain by barren, gravelly subsoil. Freshwater mussel shells were found scattered throughout the site area.

Numerous features were encountered during the course of the excavations. Numerous concentrations of fire-cracked rock (probable hearths) were encountered throughout the site. A total of 16 hearths were encountered and the ASM excavators noted that the hearths tended to be encountered in the lower levels of the site, where Accokeek sherds predominated. Twelve postmolds were encountered at the site, situated predominantly in the northeast portion of the site. By far, the most abundant features were shell lenses, some of which were actually densely packed pits of mussel shell and pottery sherds. Nineteen of these lenses were encountered and 13 of the dense "pits" of shell were examined. The shell pits ranged in size from 38.1 cm (15 in) to 127 cm (50 in) in diameter and extended as deep as 116.84 cm (46 in). They typically had very straight sides, with rounded bottoms and contained (in addition to the shell) an abundance of Townsend sherds (although some pits contained a majority of sherds associated with other periods).

Charcoal and shell from the site was submitted for radiocarbon dating. Both samples were obtained from the same oval pit feature, which was roughly 30 X 20 cm in size and 23 cm deep. It contained pottery sherds and projectile points that the full site report states are characteristic of the Early and Middle Woodland period, but does not describe by name. The uncalibrated dates yielded were 1750±90 years before present for the charcoal sample, and 2460±100 radiocarbon years before present for the mussel shell. When calibrated these dates correspond to the periods AD 72-441 and 803-388 BC respectively. It should be noted that mollusk shells are notoriously difficult to obtain reliable C-14 dates from.

Artifacts encountered during the course of the ASM excavations at 18PR7 include at least 1,608 prehistoric lithics, 11,446 ceramic sherds, 15 prehistoric tobacco pipe fragments, 30 bone and antler tools, and a minimum of 1,257 other faunal remains. The lithic assemblage is likely heavily biased towards formal tools and easily recognizable artifacts, with a less representative sample of debitage and flaking shatter. In addition, no tallies are provided in the full site report for mollusk shell, but the ASM reported enormous quantities of mussel shell throughout the site. The lithic assemblage included 880 projectile points and point fragments, 6 drills, 56 bifaces/biface fragments, 25 unifaces, 18 cobble tools, 492 flakes, 101 other flaked lithics, 7 steatite vessel fragments, 1 pop-eyed birdstone fragment, a slate pendant, 4 gorget fragments, 4 axes/celts, a piece of ground rhyolite (a possible gorget preform), 10 hammerstones, a grooved pebble, and an abrader. Identifiable projectile points were 235 Bare Island points, 28 large Bare Island-like points, 12 Rossville points, 21 large Rossville-like points, 35 Fox Creek stemmed points, 15 Jack's Reef Pentagonal points, 45 Piscataway points, 48 Clagett points, 6 Clagett-like points, 28 Calvert Points, 76 Vernon points, 16 unidentified eared points, and 12 triangular points. Quartzite appears to be the most favored lithic material with quartz and rhyolite items also making up a sizeable portion of the assemblage. Chert and argillite were also used, but infrequently. Fire-cracked rock was not collected, but was noted as being present in the hearths.

The ceramic sherds include 15 Marcey Creek, 2,912 Accokeek (68 rims), 27 Albemarle (3 rims), 1,180 Pope's Creek (23 rims), 12 Potomac Creek, 841 Moyaone (56 rims), 6,438 Townsend (245 rims), and 21 unidentified sherds (4 rims). The ceramic pipe assemblage included 1 complete example and 1 fragment with a rouletted bowl decoration, in addition to numerous undecorated bowl and stem pieces. Items made of faunal materials include a drilled antler, a drilled carapace, 13 bone or antler awls, 11 worked/cut antler fragments, and 4 blunt bone tools. Un-altered faunal remains include 611 deer bone/antler fragments, 2 elk bones, 2 canis (dog/wolf) bones, 6 beaver bone fragments, 6 groundhog bones, 7 muskrat bones, 25 raccoon bones, a skunk bone, at least 1 squirrel bone, 8 turkey bones, 554 terrapin bone/carapace fragments, 1 box turtle bone, 33 sturgeon bones, at least 2 other fish bones, and copious quantities of mussel shell.

The evidence would tend to suggest that Site 18PR7 functioned as a Late Archaic base camp, as well as an Early, Middle, and Late Woodland hamlet, if not a settled village. The presence of numerous features and postmolds, as well as an abundance of ceramic sherds and steatite vessel fragments argues for some



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Unknown

degree of sedentism. Much of the site was likely destroyed during the construction of the WSSC sewage treatment facility. Aerial photography suggests that retention ponds are situated nearly exactly in the area excavated by the ASM. Thus, the salvage operations were carried out in precisely the right place. It is not known if intact deposits may be present in areas closer to the Piscataway Bay shoreline, where ASM did not excavate.

The site has not been the subject of any additional archeological work, although the locale was visited during the course of a Phase I survey by personnel from the Maryland Geological Survey in October of 1973. At that time the sewage treatment plant was expanding the facilities and the survey was conducted to comply with Section 106 requirements. No artifacts were encountered during the walkover survey due to heavy vegetative cover, but the site location was confirmed by the visible evidence of previous excavation evidently still extant. If evidence of excavation pits was still recognizable in 1973 (after the sewage treatment plant had been constructed) it is likely portions of the site remained preserved on the periphery of the retention pond. The site, while on WSSC property was not within the construction zone for the 1973 work and not subjected to further archeological analysis.

It is difficult to gauge whether or not the site has any additional research potential when so little is known about the current state of the site and whether or not intact deposits remain present. The "core" of the site has likely been excavated or eroded, but the locale is worth at least a site visit to determine the likelihood of encountering deposits capable of addressing ongoing research questions related to Maryland prehistory.

External Reference Codes (Library ID Numbers):

00006604, 00006561