



Phase II and Phase III Archaeological Database and Inventory

Site Number: 18PR8

Site Name: Accokeek Creek

Prehistoric

Other name(s) Moyaone

Historic

Unknown

Brief Description:

Late Archaic camp; Early, Middle, & Late Woodland village; Late 17th through 19th century artifact scatter

Site Location and Environmental Data:

Maryland Archaeological Research Unit No. 11

SCS soil & sediment code ShA,Tm

Latitude 38.6954

Longitude -77.0511

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) Potomac River

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

Woodland site

Contact period site

ca. 1820 - 1860

Archaic site

MD Adena

ca. 1630 - 1675

ca. 1860 - 1900

Early archaic

Early woodland

ca. 1675 - 1720

ca. 1900 - 1930

Middle archaic

Mid. woodland

ca. 1720 - 1780

Post 1930

Late archaic

Late woodland

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
- 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? Rural

Domestic

- Homestead
- Farmstead
- Mansion
- Plantation
- Row/townhome
- Cellar
- Privy

Industrial

- Mining-related
- Quarry-related
- Mill
- Black/metalsmith
- Furnace/forge
- Other

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

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	423
Kirk (stem)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Piscataway	301
Le Croy	<input type="checkbox"/>	Calvert	538
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	536
		Levanna	71

Prehistoric Sherd Types

Marcey Creek	277	Popes Creek	2431	Shepard	<input type="checkbox"/>	Keyser	698
Dames Qtr	<input type="checkbox"/>	Coulbourn	<input type="checkbox"/>	Townsend	329	Yeocomico	<input type="checkbox"/>
Selden Island	<input type="checkbox"/>	Watson	<input type="checkbox"/>	Minguannan	<input type="checkbox"/>	Monongahela	<input type="checkbox"/>
Accokeek	9775	Mockley	7979	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	1109		
				Potomac Crk	34965		

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	6076	Other fired clay	420
Ground stone	197	Human remain(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Stone bowls	316	Modified faunal	5033
Fire-cracked rock	<input type="checkbox"/>	Unmod faunal	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other lithics (all)	242	Oyster shell	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ceramics (all)	58305	Floral material	<input type="checkbox"/>
Rimsherds	7593	Uncommon Obj.	4306
		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 checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Shell midden	<input type="checkbox"/>	Ossuary	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Postholes/molds	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Unknown	<input type="checkbox"/>
House pattern(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Other	<input type="checkbox"/>
Palisade(s)	<input checked="" 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 checked="" 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Steatite	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Other	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
		Sandstone	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Greenstone, sla	<input type="checkbox"/>

Dated features present at site

Numerous features containing diagnostic prehistoric artifacts

Historic Artifacts			
Pottery (all)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Tobacco related	<input type="checkbox"/>
Glass (all)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Activity item(s)	<input type="checkbox"/>
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	<input type="checkbox"/>
Clothing	<input type="checkbox"/>	Floral material	<input type="checkbox"/>
Personal items	<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:	<input type="text"/> +/- <input type="text"/> years BP	Reliability	Sample 2:	<input type="text"/> +/- <input type="text"/> years BP	Reliability	Sample 3:	<input type="text"/> +/- <input type="text"/> years BP	Reliability
Sample 4:	<input type="text"/> +/- <input type="text"/> years BP	Reliability	Sample 5:	<input type="text"/> +/- <input type="text"/> years BP	Reliability	Sample 6:	<input type="text"/> +/- <input type="text"/> years BP	Reliability
Sample 7:	<input type="text"/> +/- <input type="text"/> years BP	Reliability	Sample 8:	<input type="text"/> +/- <input type="text"/> years BP	Reliability	Sample 9:	<input type="text"/> +/- <input type="text"/> years BP	Reliability

Additional radiocarbon results available



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External Samples/Data:

Collection curated at MAC

Additional raw data may be available online

Summary Description:

The Accokeek Creek Site, 18PR8, is the apparent remains of a Late Woodland village (or more accurately, villages) at Piscataway Park owned by the National Park Service and managed by the Accokeek Foundation in south-western Prince George's County, Maryland. The site is located on the southwestern shore of Mockley Point and consists of a series of overlapping palisaded village components, generally circular in shape, and containing at least three prehistoric ossuaries. Another palisaded village area is located slightly to the southeast of the main cluster of overlapping village occupations, but is considered a part of the same site along with a nearby 4th ossuary. Some evidence of Late Archaic occupation is also present at the site. The site is situated between the Potomac River on the west and the low terrace of southern Mockley Point on the east. The tidal marshes at the mouth of Accokeek Creek are to the south. Soils at the site are primarily of the Hoghole-Grosstown complex.

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 at 18PR8 and surrounding sites 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.

In 1935, Mrs. Ferguson began excavating at 18PR8 and would not complete her explorations until 1939. Initially, excavation work was rather small scale, but increasingly took on greater intensity, employing the Hard Bargain farm hands and local schoolboys. Gradually, Ferguson came to believe that she had identified the site of the historic "Moyaone" village inhabited by the Piscataway Indians and visited by Captain John Smith in 1608. Most archeologists today disagree with this interpretation, but there is no doubt that this is one of many significant archeological sites documented by Alice Ferguson on Hard Bargain and adjoining properties (now Piscataway Park). Synopsis reports have been prepared for all sites at Piscataway Park where test units were excavated during Ferguson's tenure and in subsequent salvage operations. These sites were re-inventoried during the course of several compliance surveys throughout the park and in this respect are appropriate material for the archeological synthesis project. Poorly documented sites, such as those documented in the late 19th century and prior to Ferguson's work, are not considered. Nor are sites where test units have not been excavated (i.e. only surface survey or STPs have been excavated).

Sites as important as those encountered at Piscataway Park must be placed in their proper historical context. That context will be described here as many of the other major sites (18PR240, 18PR241) were once considered to be part of 18PR8. Much of the historic record surrounding 18PR8 deals with European dealings with two Middle Atlantic tribes; the Piscataway and the Susquehannocks. 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 lead 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.

In 1674, the Senecas decisively defeated the Susquehannocks and the surviving Susquehannocks moved south into Piscataway territory in early 1675. Originally told to settle at the Falls of the Potomac, the Susquehannocks ignored Maryland's order and took up residence along the south shore of Piscataway Creek. They built a bastioned, stockaded fort about two miles west of the Piscataway Indian fort and village. The remnants of the Susquehannock Fort are believed to be represented by Site 18PR241. In the summer of 1675, the Susquehannocks were wrongfully blamed for Indian depredations along the Maryland and Virginia frontiers, which were most likely perpetrated by the Seneca and/or Doegs. Primarily at the insistence of prominent Virginia settlers, the Virginia and Maryland militias were called up in retaliation and besieged the Susquehannock Fort on Piscataway Creek for about 6 weeks.

During the siege, there were multiple instances of Indians being killed after leaving the fort to engage the militiamen in negotiations and to attempt to prove the innocence of the Susquehannocks. Maryland and Virginia militia leaders would eventually stand trial for some of these offenses, but the murder of some of the principal Susquehannock warriors and chiefs ended all possibility for a peaceful surrender by the Indians. The Susquehannocks made a number of attacks from the fort which allowed them to replenish their supplies and kill numerous colonial militiamen. The Susquehannock eventually managed to escape in the dead of night and cross the Potomac to the Virginia side. There, they took out their revenge on Virginia's northern settlements, touching off what would come to be known as Bacon's Rebellion. The Susquehannock survivors eventually made their way north to the Seneca (their traditional enemies) and were adopted into the tribe. According to Seneca tradition, the Susquehannock refugees were remembered as ruthless warriors against the English and Piscataway, who never forgave the murder of their principal men.

The Seneca and the Susquehannock refugees put increasing pressure on the Piscataway, who sought protection in Zekia Swamp (Charles County) in 1680. There, they built a European-style fort which was under fairly regular attack by the Seneca/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



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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.

Alice Ferguson's work at 18PR8 began with the establishment of a 15.24 meter (50 ft) grid across an area of darkened soil that was obvious at the surface due to years of European plowing. The disturbed topsoil in this gridded area was then stripped away to reveal areas where cultural concentrations extended to a greater depth. When areas of interest were located, the 15.24 meter square would be sub-divided into 1.524 meter (5 ft) test units and examined in detail. Ultimately, the entire area within the overlapping stockade lines would be exposed, one area at a time. Randomly placed shovel test pits (STPs) were attempted outside the palisaded area, but were not deemed effective and were abandoned and replaced with a series of trenches. The trenches were 61-91 cm (2-3 ft) wide and STPs were placed every 3.05 meters (10 ft) along the bottom of each trench to check for deeply buried cultural deposits.

Numerous pits, postmolds, hearths, ossuaries, and other features were encountered over the multiple years of excavation. Such features were cross-sectioned (with the exception of some of the postmolds) and drawn in profile, and many were further documented with photographs. Artifacts recovered from features were catalogued separately from artifacts in the stripped topsoil. Features uncovered during the Ferguson excavations of the 1930s include 16,453 postmolds, 19 often-overlapping palisade lines (not included in the postmold count), 77 refuse pits, 22 "storage" pits, 30 miscellaneous pits, 148 hearths, 42 stone piles, 4 ossuaries (3 inside the major palisade cluster and 1 outside to the southeast), 62 burial pits, and 18 dog burials. These features indicate the presence of a Late Woodland village at 18PR8. Sixteen of the palisade lines overlap one another suggesting several re-building episodes for the stockade that surrounded the community. Two overlapping palisade lines are located to the southeast of the main cluster of 16. These were interpreted by Ferguson to be a horse coral, but are more likely evidence of additional rebuilding episodes for the same village (albeit at a slightly altered location). No European artifacts were encountered by Ferguson and analysis of the artifacts suggests that the site dates to the 16th, not the 17th century. Thus, the site is probably not the remains of the 17th century village of Moyaone, but of an earlier village inhabited by the Piscataway and their ancestors. Evidence of earlier occupation and use of 18PR8 was also encountered at the site dating to the Late Archaic - Middle Woodland periods.

The ossuaries encountered at 18PR8 varied considerably in size and content. Ossuary 1 was located within the innermost palisade of the main village cluster. It was roughly 3.05 X 4.88 meters (10 X 16 ft) in size and is believed to have contained some 288 individuals. Both cremations and bundle burials (typically near the bottom of the ossuary) were encountered along with triangular points, prehistoric clay pipes, and 241 pottery sherds. Most of the sherds were Mockley. Other burial preparations may have been used, but the circumstances of recovery and recordation make it difficult to tell what patterns were used with certainty. Ossuary 2 was also located within the innermost palisade of the main village cluster. It was reportedly 7.32 X 3.05 meters (24 X 10 ft) in size and contained around 250 individuals (based on 155 skulls recovered). It is difficult to determine the number precisely, as many were cremation burials. Fourteen native copper beads were recovered, along with shell beads, 3 triangular points, and 125 pottery sherds. Ossuary 2 was not completely excavated and in 1979, Turkey Tayac, reputed to be a Piscataway chief, was buried here. He had apparently worked alongside Ferguson during the excavations of the 1930s. Ossuary 3 was located in the same area, was 5.43 X 2.44 meters (17.8 X 8 ft) in size, and contained some 252 individuals (many cremated). Grave goods include a triangular projectile point, 30 pottery sherds and 2 prehistoric clay pipes. Ossuary 4 was located to the southeast of the main village cluster, just outside the small cluster of 2 overlapping palisades. This ossuary was by far the largest at 9.75 X 6.4 meters (32 X 21 ft) and containing approximately 648 individuals. Many of these individuals were cremated. Grave goods include shell beads and pottery.

The collection from 18PR8 is so extensive that the full assemblage has never been analyzed. A large sample was examined in the 1950s by researchers affiliated with the University of Michigan and found to include 58,301 ceramic vessel sherds, 420 ceramic pipe fragments, 2,849 flaked stone objects, 513 ground stone objects, 242 use-modified or other lithics, 5,033 modified faunal objects, and 14 native copper beads.

The ceramic vessel sherds include 277 Marcey Creek (39 rimsherds), 2,431 Pope's Creek (189 rimsherds), 9,775 Accokeek (1,101 rimsherds), 738 Albermarle (39 rimsherds), 7,979 Mockley (818 rimsherds), 329 Townsend (93 rimsherds), 34,965 Potomac Creek (4,885 rimsherds), 1,109 Mayoane (311 rimsherds), and 698 Keyser (118 rimsherds).

The flaked stone assemblage consisted of 4,138 projectile points and point fragments, 73 perforators (drills/awls), 244 bifaces, 684 cores, 664 scrapers, 238 utilized flakes, 6 choppers, and 26 netsinkers. Projectile points that are identifiable to type include 28 Steubenville lanceolate points, 88 Steubenville stemmed points, 236 Claggett points, 269 Bare Island points, 29 Rossvilles, 538 Calverts, 423 Vernons, 301 Piscataway points, 536 Potomac points, 71 Levannas, and 27 other triangular points.

Non-flaked lithics include 316 steatite vessel pieces, 197 other groundstone objects (four ¾ grooved axes, 15 full grooved axes, 2 mauls, 20 celts, 17 pestles, 30 manos, 7 stone pipe fragments, 53 groundstone pendants, 1 bannerstone, 7 boatstones, 5 groundstone discs, 1 groundstone disc bead, 7 tubular groundstone beads, 20 groundstone tubular "blanks", 1 stone sphere, and 7 abraders), and 242 other lithics (48 hammerstones, 41 pitted stones, 6 grinding slabs, 68 hematite fragments, 40 limonite fragments, and 39 miscellaneous objects).

Modified faunal objects in the artifacts sample from 18PR8 include 986 mussel shell beads, 304 other modified mussel shell fragments, 1,305 conch beads, 1,365 olivella shell beads, 368 pearl beads, 8 other pieces of worked shell, 15 antler projectile points, 39 antler flakers, 4 antler handles, 4 antler cylinders, 14 antler beads, 87 cut antler pieces, 35 other worked pieces of antler, 343 bone awls, 6 bone flakers, 18 bone bodkins, 11 worked/polished bacula, 18 ground gar jaws, 9 bone beamers, 23 bone pins, 4 bone beads, 1 worked spatulate bone, 29 ornamental carapace fragments, and 37 miscellaneous modified bone fragments.

Some additional testing was conducted at the Accokeek Creek Site in the 1970s. In 1971 a crew from the University of Maryland began a two-year project to attempt to locate some of the postmolds that were exposed in the 1930s, but were never sectioned, in an attempt to determine if house patterns could be defined. In the summer of 1971, an area 100 meters long (including 15 meters of balks), with a width of 3 meters in the center of the main village area was stripped of topsoil. Between the 50 and 63 meter lines the trench was opened to a width of 9 meters. The excavation procedure was to remove the plowzone to near the base of the plow scars. Next, the floors of square test units (no size provided in the full site report) were trowelled to the base of the plow scars and every discoloration was marked in the soil and mapped. Each discoloration was cross-sectioned and a scale drawing made, whether a postmold or a natural disturbance. When all discolorations had been cross-sectioned in a square the undisturbed soil was removed to the level of the deepest discoloration by shovel cuts perpendicular to the floor. When this soil was removed, maps of the walls of the test square were made. Each square was excavated to a depth of about 50 cm. No full site report has ever been produced to describe the work conducted in 1971 and 1972, but the University of Maryland crew apparently did



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uncover a number of house outlines. Generally, postmolds were found to be lacking in the central portion of the village where they were excavating.

Additional work was conducted in the mid 1970s by George Washington University researchers to mitigate the impact of shoreline erosion control installations at the north end of the site. At that time, the National Park Service was seeking to stabilize the bank by installing gabions into the bank with a 2:1 slope. A survey of the area that would be impacted by gabion construction conducted in 1975 revealed an area of approximately 84 meters with in situ archeological materials that would be graded during construction. This area was located outside the palisaded area northeast of the main village. It was estimated to be between 5 and 10% of the undisturbed portion of the site.

The area attracted the attention of archeologists because of a two pit features that were eroding into the stream. These were located about 30 meters northeast of the main village cluster as defined by Ferguson in the 1930s. Aerial photos from the 1930s reveal that these pits were clearly outside the area excavated by Ferguson. Pit 1 extended 85 cm below the surface, was symmetrical in profile, and contained numerous shell fragments. Pit 2 was a sharply sloping symmetrical depression of dark brown soil extending to a maximum depth of 75 cm. A mixed sandy lens flecked with charcoal underlay the pit floor and contained several large rocks. Cultural material was found surrounding the pits, in situ. One sherd was found poking out of the bank at 48 cm below the surface adjacent to pit 1. Another was found in an odd-shaped dark stain with charcoal flecks in it. Isolated artifacts were found elsewhere, including a Late Woodland projectile point, 2 sherds, and 2 quartz flakes.

These preliminary recoveries prompted archeologists to conduct some test excavations in the area between the two pits, where one of the gabions was planned. Twenty 1 X 1 meter test units were laid out in two adjacent rows between the two eroding prehistoric pits. Three of these were excavated to subsoil to expose features (postmolds) at the bottom. Two others were only partially excavated, while the remainder went unexcavated. In the test units, the excavators encountered a 20 cm thick plowzone atop a heavily mottled layer of variable thickness containing artifacts of mixed age and the outlines of superimposed rubbish pits. Below this was a sandy layer (subsoil) that preserved postmolds used in Late Woodland construction. The density of artifacts in both the topsoil and the mottled zone was over 200 objects per 1 X 1 m unit. The postmold patterns were suggestive of dwellings, drying racks, or other small constructions. No description of the artifacts recovered is available. Data recovery-level excavation was recommended based on these findings, but no subsequent report has been produced. It appears that the shoreline erosion measures may have been altered in this particular area to preserve the intact deposits.

Site 18PR8 is clearly an extremely important site. The Accokeek Creek site served as the basis for understanding ceramic chronology in the Middle Atlantic region. This chronology established the Early Woodland Marcey Creek/Accokeek/Popes Creek – Middle Woodland Mockley – Late Woodland Potomac Creek continuum. The village excavated at 18PR8 represents the largest and last-occupied Piscataway village inhabited before the arrival of Europeans. Based on the exposure of still intact features and deposits in the 1970s, and the ongoing preservation of the site as a National Park, 18PR8 likely retains significant research potential. It should be considered a significant prehistoric archeological resource.

External Reference Codes (Library ID Numbers):

00006618, 00006605, 00006607, 00006614, 00006709, 00007502, Site Files