



Phase II and Phase III Archaeological Database and Inventory

Site Number: 18PR934

Site Name: Ryon

Prehistoric ☐

Other name(s) Washington Post; MIHP # PG:75A-5

Historic ☒

Unknown ☐

Brief Description:

19th-20th century farmstead ruin

Site Location and Environmental Data:

Latitude 38.8437 Longitude -76.8720

Elevation m Site slope 0-20%

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

Maryland Archaeological Research Unit No. 8

SCS soil & sediment code AvE,SgC2

Physiographic province Western Shore Coastal

Terrestrial site ☒ Underwater site ☐

Ethnobotany profile available ☐ Maritime site ☐

Topography

Floodplain ☐ High terrace ☐
Hilltop/bluff ☒ Rockshelter/cave ☐
Interior flat ☐ Hillslope ☐
Upland flat ☐ Unknown ☐
Ridgetop ☐ Other ☐
Terrace ☒
Low terrace ☐

Ownership

Private ☒
Federal ☐
State of MD ☐
Regional/county/city ☐
Unknown ☐

Nearest Surface Water

Name (if any) Unnamed tributary of Hens

Saltwater **Freshwater**
Ocean ☐ Stream/river ☒
Estuary/tidal river ☐ Swamp ☐
Tidewater/marsh ☐ Lake or pond ☐
Spring ☐

Minimum distance to water is 10 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 ☐

Unknown prehistoric context ☐

Contact period site ☐ ca. 1820 - 1860 Y

ca. 1630 - 1675 ☐ ca. 1860 - 1900 Y

ca. 1675 - 1720 ☐ ca. 1900 - 1930 Y

ca. 1720 - 1780 ☐ Post 1930 Y

ca. 1780 - 1820 ☐

Unknown historic context ☐

Unknown context ☐

Ethnic Associations (historic only)

Native American ☐ Asian American ☐
African American ☐ Unknown ☐
Anglo-American Y 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			
Clovis	0	Koens-Crispin	0
Hardaway-Dalton	0	Perkiomen	0
Palmer	0	Susquehana	0
Kirk (notch)	0	Vernon	0
Kirk (stem)	0	Piscataway	0
Le Croy	0	Calvert	0
Morrow Mntn	0	Selby Bay	0
Guilford	0	Jacks Rf (notch)	0
Brewerton	0	Jacks Rf (pent)	0
Otter Creek	0	Madison/Potomac	0
		Levanna	0

Prehistoric Sherd Types

Marcey Creek	0	Popes Creek	0	Shepard	0	Keyser	0
Dames Qtr	0	Coulbourn	0	Townsend	0	Yeocomico	0
Selden Island	0	Watson	0	Minguannan	0	Monongahela	0
Accokeek	0	Mockley	0	Sullivan Cove	0	Susquehannock	0
Wolfe Neck	0	Clemson Island	0	Shenks Ferry	0		
Vinette	0	Page	0	Moyaone	0		
				Potomac Crk	0		

Historic Sherd Types

Earthenware		Ironstone	57	Staffordshire	0	Stoneware	
Astbury	0	Jackfield	0	Tin Glazed	0	English Brown	26
Borderware	0	Mn Mottled	0	Whiteware	539	Eng Dry-bodied	0
Buckley	0	North Devon	0	Porcelain	51	Nottingham	0
Creamware	17	Pearlware	254			Rhenish	0
						Wt Salt-glazed	0

All quantities exact or estimated minimal counts

Other Artifact & Feature Types:

Prehistoric Artifacts			
Flaked stone	0	Other fired clay	0
Ground stone	0	Human remain(s)	0
Stone bowls	0	Modified faunal	0
Fire-cracked rock	1	Unmod faunal	0
Other lithics (all)	0	Oyster shell	0
Ceramics (all)	0	Floral material	0
Rimsherds	0	Uncommon Obj.	0
		Other	0

Prehistoric Features

Mound(s)	0	Storage/trash pit	0
Midden	0	Burial(s)	0
Shell midden	0	Ossuary	0
Postholes/molds	0	Unknown	0
House pattern(s)	0	Other	0
Palisade(s)	0		
Hearth(s)	☒		
Lithic reduc area	0		

Lithic Material

Fer quartzite	☐	Sil sandstone	☐
Jasper	☐	Chalcedony	☐
Chert	☐	European flint	☐
Rhyolite	☐	Ironstone	☐
Quartz	☒	Basalt	☐
Quartzite	☒	Argilite	☐
		Unknown	☐
		Steatite	☐
		Other	☐
		Sandstone	0

☒ Dated features present at site

Feature 106 (after 1840), Feature 109 (ca 1825)

Historic Artifacts			
Pottery (all)	660	Tobacco related	7
Glass (all)	183	Activity item(s)	28
Architectural	1306	Human remain(s)	0
Furniture	0	Faunal material	☒
Arms	0	Misc. kitchen	1432
Clothing	11	Floral material	☒
Personal items	1	Misc.	125
		Other	☒ coal, slag

Historic Features

Const feature	☒	Privy/outhouse	☐	Depression/mound	☐	Unknown	☐
Foundation	☒	Well/cistern	☐	Burial(s)	☐	Other	☒
Cellar hole/cellar	☒	Trash pit/dump	☐	Railroad bed	☐	pipe trench, drainage feature	
Hearth/chimney	☐	Sheet midden	☐	Earthworks	☐		
Postholes/molds	☒	Planting feature	☐	Mill raceway	☐		
Paling ditch/fence	0	Road/walkway	☒	Wheel pit	☐		

All quantities exact or estimated minimal counts

Radiocarbon Data:

Sample 1:	0 +/- 0 years BP	Reliability	Sample 2:	0 +/- 0 years BP	Reliability	Sample 3:	0 +/- 0 years BP	Reliability
Sample 4:	0 +/- 0 years BP	Reliability	Sample 5:	0 +/- 0 years BP	Reliability	Sample 6:	0 +/- 0 years BP	Reliability
Sample 7:	0 +/- 0 years BP	Reliability	Sample 8:	0 +/- 0 years BP	Reliability	Sample 9:	0 +/- 0 years BP	Reliability

☐ Additional radiocarbon results available



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External Samples/Data:

Collection curated at MAC Lab 2021.004.002

☐ Additional raw data may be available online

Summary Description:

Site 18PR934, also known as the Ryon Site, is located in Forestville within the Atlantic Coastal Plain Western Shore physiographic province, a region characterized by gently rolling hills moderately dissected by broad, shallow valleys. It is situated in a forested area that slightly slopes to the south, with the southern boundary of the Study Area being lower in elevation than the northern boundary. The nearest water source is Henson Creek about 750 m (2500 ft) to the south of the Study Area's southern boundary. Seven distinct soils or soil complexes occur at the site. The western half of the Study Area comprises sections of Beltsville-Urban land complex with 0 to 5% slope, Beltsville silt loam with 0 to 2% slope, moderately eroded Beltsville silt loam with 2 to 5% slope, and moderately eroded Sassafras gravelly sandy loam with 5 to 10% slope. Portions of land in the southwest corner of the Study Area consist of Aura and Croom gravelly loam with 20 to 50% slope. The eastern half of the property is mainly composed of moderately eroded Mattapex silt loam with 2 to 5% slope and severely eroded Croom gravelly loam with 8 to 15% slope, along with pockets of the Beltsville silt loams seen in the western half of the Study Area.

The site is located on a parcel known historically as "Covert," patented by William Offutt in 1716. The parcel passed to his son, Nathaniel, who sold half of the parcel to Benonie Price. Price split the parcel into two and sold portion containing Site 18PR934 to Nathaniel Magruder in 1756. None of the property's owners up to this point are believed to have resided on the property. When Magruder bequeathed the "Covert" parcel to his son John Smith Magruder in 1786, the will noted the possibility that a man named John Brown may have been living there as a tenant. Unfortunately, the wording of the will is unclear on this point. A tenant occupation on the property in the late eighteenth century was noted as fitting with some of the cultural material recovered during the Phase II investigation.

In 1787, one year after his inheritance, John Smith Magruder sold the property to his sister, Sarah Shanley, and her husband, Bernard. The Shanleys are recorded as living on the property very soon after coming into its possession. Bernard used the property as collateral for a loan he obtained from Frank Leake in 1789, but he presumably defaulted within two years and was sued by Leake's widow in 1791. The chancery court found in favor of Anne Leake and the property was sold to Zachariah Berry, a wealthy planter. Bernard died prior to 1796, and it is unclear whether Sarah Shanley moved off the property after its sale to Berry or if she continued to rent from him. Her brother, the above John Smith Magruder, would later purchase the property and transfer it back to Sarah Shanley. Sarah Shanley died in 1810 and was buried in the nearby family cemetery at the Magruder's Dunblane/Westphalia plantation and the property was sold to Nathaniel Brady. Little could be found regarding Brady and it is not clear whether he ever resided on the property.

Dr. Spencer Cochrane Mitchell (also spelled Mitchel) purchased the "Covert" property from Brady in 1817. A former surgeon in the Royal Navy, Mitchell moved to Maryland from Ayrshire, Scotland in 1800. He first married Mary Waring in 1803 and then later married Lucy Peach in 1812. Family tradition held that Dr. Mitchell practiced medicine in Old Long Fields (now Forestville) while maintaining his farm and giving up a sizable inheritance, wishing to make his own fortune in the United States. A mortgage from Mitchell to Zachariah Berry, Sr. describes the "Covert" parcel as his place of residence. Mitchell is believed to have been a devout Methodist with a serious attitude to his faith that often earned him the disapproval of his friends. In 1820 Mitchell manumitted three of his slaves: Nace (23), Patience (21) and James (7 months). The following year Mitchell promised the manumission of four other slaves: Rachel (18), John (13), Ellen (20) and Isaac (3). However, their freedom was granted on a staggered basis with the manumission taking effect in 1825, 1831, 1828 and 1845 respectively. It is presumed that the seven were living on "Covert" farm with Mitchell at the time of their manumission and, given the size of the parcel, were likely housed near to the main farmstead. Mitchell sold the property to John and Priscilla Gray in 1838 and moved to Washington, D.C., where he spent the remainder of his life.

Mitchell's ownership of the property roughly coincides with the date Ryon family tradition gives for the original construction phase of the Ryon Farmhouse. Documentation of the farmhouse's construction has not been located, giving three possibilities for the house's original builder. Mitchell is known to have re-secured his loan with Zachariah Berry, Sr. in 1831, and this may indicate that Mitchell constructed the house at this stage of his occupancy. Alternatively, when Mitchell sold the farm to the Grays in 1838, they may have constructed the house prior to selling the farm to Fielder Ryon in 1840. Finally, Fielder Ryon himself may have constructed the new farmhouse at the time of his purchase. Since these three individuals owned the property within a relatively short time, it is impossible to say from the material culture which of them was responsible for the original construction of the house. One thing that seems evident, however, is that Spencer Mitchell originally occupied an earlier structure somewhere on the property.

Thomas Ryon, of Jerry, purchased the property in 1857. Fielder Ryon appears to have died during the late 1840s and the farm passed through a number of hands after his death, diminishing in size from 100 acres to 65 acres, prior to Thomas Ryon's purchase. Thomas Ryon is recorded as having owned 18 slaves, all with the last name of "Dockett" in 1864, and it is presumed that they also lived on or near the Study Area. Thomas Ryon appears in census records between 1850 and 1880, with the value of his estate dropping steadily over the decades from \$3,750 in 1850 (Bureau of the Census 1850) to \$1,600 in 1870 (Bureau of the Census 1870). The remnants of "Covert" farm stayed in the possession of Thomas Ryon's descendants until the 1980s, when it was sold by Thomas Ryon's great-grandson, William R. Entwisle. All of the Ryon family are believed to have lived in the Ryon farmhouse, first in a smaller structure and after it was expanded around 1912.

Site 18PR934 initially was identified in February 2008 during a Phase I survey of the Washington Post Property for the Douglas Development Corporation. Due to the large size of the property, the survey area was separated into three areas (Areas A, B, and C), each divided by either streams or graveled drives. The Phase I investigation incorporated background research and a shovel test pit (STP) survey at 15-m intervals. The Ryon Site was identified in the southeast corner of Area C, near the center of the property where the remnants of the nineteenth century Ryon Farmhouse and a concrete outbuilding foundation were located. Forty-six (46) STPs located near the house foundation were positive for historic material, including late eighteenth- and nineteenth-century ceramics, as well as a kaolin pipe stem fragment and a shard of free-blown bottle glass. The Phase I concluded that the Ryon Site represents an eighteenth through twentieth-century domestic occupation and recommended additional Phase II archaeological investigations based on the presence of early eighteenth-century artifacts and the potential for structural remains at the site.

In March 2008 a Phase II investigation was conducted by AAHA at Site 18PR934 in order to determine the integrity and significance of the site (Ward et al. 2010). The Phase II investigation incorporated eight 1-x-1-m test units and one 1-x-0.2 m test unit. Four features were identified, including a builder's trench associated with the Ryon Farmhouse foundation, a utility trench holding a terra cotta pipe near the house foundation, a possible posthole, and a concrete pad. In total, 485 artifacts were recovered during the Phase II excavation units. The Phase II artifact assemblage included 57.5% Architectural Group artifacts and 34.8% Kitchen Group artifacts and a mean ceramic date of roughly 1817. Considering the Ryon Farmhouse was reportedly built in the 1830s, the presence of a large quantity of earlier artifacts led investigators to suggest the site was occupied prior to the construction of the Ryon dwelling and perhaps as early as the



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Description:

19th-20th century farmstead ruin

Unknown ☐

late eighteenth century. AAHA ultimately concluded that, because no evidence of this earlier occupation was encountered, the Phase II findings were inconclusive to address the possible eligibility of the site for listing in the NRHP.

A supplemental Phase II investigation was conducted at Site 18PR934 by AAHA in November 2014. The field survey consisted of 182 close interval STPs, eleven 1-x-1 m units, and one 2-x-1 m unit. The field effort yielded 2,797 artifacts, including 57 precontact lithic artifacts. All of the precontact artifacts were recovered from a singular context that later, during post-processing, was interpreted as representing a hearth feature. Additionally, three historic features were identified: Feature 10, a cellar hole that had been filled in the early nineteenth century; Feature 11, a structural support located against the outside wall of the older portion of the Ryon farmhouse; and Feature 3/12, a trench feature located in the southern portion of the site. In addition to the potential precontact component, two historic occupations were identified during the investigation including a late eighteenth- to early nineteenth-century occupation associated with Dr. Mitchell's ownership of the property and a mid-nineteenth- to late twentieth century occupation associated with the Ryon family's ownership. Due to the significant amount of disturbance documented during the investigation, the majority of the site was determined ineligible for listing in the NRHP. However, the area surrounding Feature 10 and the area associated with the prehistoric cache of artifacts did exhibit integrity and were recommended eligible for listing in the NRHP under Criterion D.

The Phase III data recovery at Site 18PR934 resulted in the excavation of 30 TUs (TU 101-130), totaling an area of 26.5 m². To aid in analysis, these 30 TUs were combined into five Excavation Units (EUs) (EU1-5), with four EUs measuring 2-4 m² and one EU measuring 18.5 m². In addition, five square exploratory STPs (STP J1-J3) measuring 50 by 50 cm (1.64 by 1.64 ft) were excavated to delineate a particularly large feature uncovered in the TUs. This investigation resulted in the identification of 13 features including the re-identification and excavation of Feature 10 from the Phase IIB assessment.

EU1 included an area of 18.5 m² in Area B placed to investigate Feature 10, a possible cellar feature identified during the Phase IIB investigations. The primary goals of this EU were to expose and excavate as much of Feature 10 as possible and to investigate the surrounding area for structural features that may relate to the feature. EU1 was further subdivided into five sub-areas (EU1A to EU1E) based on the position, stratigraphy, and presence/absence of important features within contiguous TUs. Eleven (11) features were identified in EU1. Feature 10/106 was identified in multiple units within EU1C. Feature 101, Feature 102, Feature 103, Feature 108, Feature 110, and Feature 111 were identified within EU1D. Feature 109 was identified in the southeasternmost corner of EU1D and excavated more fully in EU1E. Two additional features were identified along the edges of EU1C, occupying a small portion of EU1C and EU1D.

EU2 is a 2x2m excavation block consisting of two TUs (TU114 and TU115) in Area B. It was excavated to explore the area north of Feature 10, as well as to investigate nearby artifact concentrations identified in the Phase IIB STPs. TU 115 was placed 3.5 m north and 1 m west of TU N 5055.5 E 6934.5 and TU 114 extended the original excavation 1 m² to the west. EU2 contained two strata and extended to a total depth of 54-55 cmbd (1.7-1.8 ftd). No features were identified within this EU.

EU3 is a 4x4m excavation block consisting of four TUs (TU125, TU126, TU127, and TU128) in Area B. It was excavated to explore an artifact concentration identified in the Phase IIB STPs northeast of Feature 10. TU126 was placed 2.5 m east and 1.5 m north of TU N5055.5 E6934.5 and TU125 extended the original excavation 1 m² to the north. TU127 and TU128 were then placed to extend the excavation 2x2m to the east, where a possible buried surface was identified. EU3 contained four strata and extended to a total depth of 43-50 cmbd (1.4-1.6 ftd). Feature 112 was identified in TU127.

EU4 is a 2x2 m excavation block consisting of two TUs (TU116 and TU117) in Area B. It was excavated to explore an artifact concentration identified in the Phase IIB STPs east of Feature 10. TU116 was placed 2.5 m east and 0.5 m south of TU102 and TU117 extended the original excavation 1 m² to the north. EU4 contained three strata and extended to a total depth of 53 cmbd (1.7 ftd) in TU116 and 58 cmbd (1.9 ftd) in TU117. No features were identified within this EU.

EU5 is a 2x2 m excavation block consisting of two TUs (TU101 and 104) in Area A behind the former site of the Ryon Farm House. It was excavated to explore a potential precontact lithic cache identified in the southwest corner of TU N 5031.6 E 6925.3 during the Phase IIB investigation. The cache consisted of 26 heat-treated tested cobbles but it was unclear whether these cobbles were from primary precontact deposits or historic fill.

In total, 2,910 historic artifacts were recovered from 18PR934 during the Phase III fieldwork. Architectural, activity, domestic, personal, clothing, miscellaneous, faunal, and floral groups were present. Activity group artifacts include two toys (a marble and doll arm), two gardening tool fragments (a grub hoe and garden shear), terra cotta flower pot fragments, a triangular file fragment, and white clay tobacco pipe fragments with bore diameters ranging from 4/64-inch to 6/64-inch. Domestic group artifacts consist predominantly of two artifact types: ceramics and bottle glass. Other artifact types in this group include table glass, glass lamp chimney fragments, canning jar and canning lid liner fragments, and metal utensils. Ceramic wares are predominately table wares, however utilitarian domestic stoneware vessels such as bottles, jars, and crocks are also present. In addition, a number of red earthenware sherds are present and presumably would have also served a utilitarian purpose, although vessels forms have not been identified. Utilitarian creamware forms consisting of chamber pot sherds and jar or cup are also present in the assemblage. Other serving vessel forms identified include cups, saucers, bowls, platters, and plates. Eighty-nine percent of identified vessel forms at 18PR934 were tablewares and the remaining 11% were either utilitarian wares or could not be definitively identified. Fragments of large plates and saucers were most common in the assemblage.

Faunal group artifacts include primarily oyster shell and unidentifiable bone fragments. However, one complete bovine metacarpal and tooth fragment was identified. One tibiotarsus from a large bird, such as goose or turkey, was also recovered. While additional species were not identified, other mammal elements could be and include a large mammal scapula with evidence of carnivore gnawing, and three large mammal rib fragments, two of which had deep cut marks from butchering. Floral group artifacts consist of charcoal fragments and one finished wood fragment with a hole and copper alloy staining.

Clothing group artifacts were primarily buttons and one leather shoe sole fragment with copper alloy pins. Button material was most often animal bone, however, there is one black glass button. Two of the bone buttons have the same design, but came from separate features. Personal group artifacts consist of a lined writing slate fragment, a bisque porcelain figurine base with brick embossing, and a possible copper alloy coin. Miscellaneous group artifacts (n=125, w=4293.56g) consist mainly of unidentified iron fragments. Copper alloy objects, coal, plastic, and slag fragments are also present in the site assemblage. The artifact assemblage from the 18PR934 Phase III excavations consists of artifact types consistent with a domestic occupation. Artifacts are a mixture of household artifacts, architectural material, and include objects which could be associated with gardening or small scale agricultural activities. Ceramic dates, especially those from the features, overlap most from roughly 1800 to 1840, mainly coinciding with the Mitchell occupation of the property.



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Comparative analysis revealed that Site 18PR934 is typical of small family farms in Prince George's County that persisted into the twentieth century. In contrast to the Vallario Site 2 (18PR781) which was a higher status domestic site, Site 18PR934 reflects a more modest socioeconomic occupation dating to the late eighteenth- or early nineteenth-century when the focus of occupation shifted from the vicinity of Feature 109 to the former location of the Ryon farmhouse in the 1820s or 1830s. The decline of the farm's value through the nineteenth century and its concurrent fragmentation represents trends begun in Prince George's County after the Civil War and continuing into the twentieth century as the eastern suburbs of Washington developed.

The research questions outlined for the Phase III excavations are answered as follows:

1) What structural features are represented in association with Feature 10? In what way was the structure aligned? How does the cellar hole relate to the structure above? Are there any stylistic attributes discernible? How large was the overlying house?

Feature 10 does not appear to reflect the location of a residential structure, as was posited during the Phase IIB, and instead appears to be part of a free-standing root cellar. The lack of architectural materials in the underlying fill suggests that the root cellar may have been covered by a simple A-frame or a cellar door made of boards. The deeper part of the root cellar (Feature 106) was cut from the base of a larger excavation (Feature 10) and appears to have been use in the mid- to late nineteenth century. The root cellar and larger excavation appear to have been filled at approximately the same time in two stages, possibly with fill soils sourced from another site.

2) When was the site occupied? Does it appear to have served a different function later in its life?

The earliest diagnostic artifacts from the Phase III excavations date to the late eighteenth century, but most manufacture date ranges for the ceramics fall within the nineteenth century. Similarly, no wrought nails were recovered during the Phase III investigation, suggesting the structures at the site do not predate the nineteenth century. The presence of ironstone ceramics in Feature 106 suggests that this feature was in use beyond 1840. Feature 109 and EU3 Stratum III, on the other hand, have ceramic assemblages that skew slightly earlier to ca. 1825, suggesting that these contexts were filled earlier than Feature 10/106. Outside of these two contexts, the largest part of the assemblage appears to postdate the reported ca. 1830 construction of the Ryon farmhouse.

3) Who is likely to have lived here?

While many of these artifacts date to the Ryon occupation, the earlier nineteenth-century material likely relates to Dr. Spencer Cochrane Mitchell's occupation. Based on the identified features and diagnostic artifacts, it seems clear that Mitchell occupied an earlier, probably post-in-ground residence on the property that was likely demolished in the 1820s or 1830s. Since no in-situ features related to the construction of this structure could be identified, it is unknown when this structure would have been built, but it is possible that eighteenth-century tenants or the Shanleys may have also occupied it.

4) What were the material circumstances (patterns of consumption of manufactured goods, diet, etc.) of the residents? and how do these compare to other sites from this time period? Have they changed over time?

The occupants of the site appear to have been a fairly average Prince George's County family living on a small farm. Material culture shows large numbers of decorated serving wares, likely reflecting the primary residence of the property prior to the 1830s. Most decorated serving wares identified during the Phase III investigation date to the second and third quarters of the nineteenth century, suggesting that the residents reached the peak of their affluence around this time. This would coincide with the end of Dr. Spencer Cochrane Mitchell's ownership and the beginning of the Ryon family's ownership. This decline in affluence beginning in the mid-nineteenth century fits census data, which shows the value of resident Thomas Ryon's estate steadily decreasing between 1860 and 1880.

5) In what ways, if at all, can the actions/behaviors of servants or slaves be distinguished from those of the plantation owners/tenants?

Nothing from the Phase III investigation could be demonstrably linked to servants or slaves. The high occurrence of decorated serving wares in the artifact-rich contexts identified during the Phase III excavations indicates they reflect remnants of a primary residence rather than a servant or slave quarter. Documentary evidence places 18 enslaved individuals likely living on the property when slavery was abolished in Maryland in 1864, but the location of their quarters on the property is still unknown.

6) How does the Ryon Site compare with similar sites in Prince George's County?

Site 18PR934 appears typical of small family farms in Prince George's County that persisted into the twentieth century. Like most farms of that period, it consisted of a main house and a complex of outbuildings surrounded by agricultural fields. The complex stratigraphy of Feature 109 is comparable to the larger features uncovered at Site 18PR705, the core of an eighteenth-century plantation that was abandoned in favor of a newer house much like the structure overlying Feature 109 was abandoned when the Ryon farmhouse was built. Feature 10/106 appears to be typical of local root cellar features, exemplified by the root cellar feature at Site 18PR781. Overall, Site 18PR934 appears to reflect a middle-class late eighteenth- or early nineteenth-century residence where the focus of occupation shifted from the vicinity of Feature 109 to the former location of the Ryon farmhouse in the 1820s or 1830s. The decline of the farm's value through the nineteenth century and its concurrent fragmentation, documented in the land records consulted for the Phase II, represent trends begun in Prince George's County after the Civil War and continuing into the twentieth century as the eastern suburbs of Washington developed.

In summation, the site represents the core of a late-eighteenth to nineteenth century domestic occupation and activity work areas within a larger farmstead primarily related to the Mitchell and Ryon families, and possibly also reflecting the occupation of the Shanleys. The Shanley, Mitchell, and Ryon families led a modest subsistence lifestyle on a small, family-owned farmstead. Investigations revealed important information about the lifeways, construction techniques, and subsistence patterns of these families which were typical of early nineteenth century Prince Georges County residents. As such, Site 18PR934 has provided significant information that could not be obtained in any other fashion about the Antebellum period in Prince Georges County and how these residents interacted with their environments. The findings and conclusions of this Phase III Data Recovery fully address and satisfy the requirements outlined in the April 30, 2015 letter from Dr. Jennifer Stabler to AAHA.

External Reference Codes (Library ID Numbers):



Phase II and Phase III Archaeological Database and Inventory

Site Number:	18PR934	Site Name:	Ryon	Prehistoric	☐
		Other name(s)	Washington Post; MIHP # PG:75A-5	Historic	☒
Brief Description:	19th-20th century farmstead ruin			Unknown	☐

95002687, 95002583, 95006029, SF 18PR934