



Phase II and Phase III Archaeological Database and Inventory

Site Number: 18ST644

Site Name: Ragged Point Shipwreck

Prehistoric

Other name(s): USS Tulip

Historic

Unknown

Brief Description: 19th century shipwreck

Site Location and Environmental Data:

Maryland Archaeological Research Unit No. 10

SCS soil & sediment code

Latitude 38.1577

Longitude -76.5907

Physiographic province Western Shore Coastal

Terrestrial site

Underwater site

Elevation -15 m

Site slope

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
- Channel flats

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

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

ca. 1720 - 1780

Post 1930

ca. 1780 - 1820

Unknown historic context

Unknown context

Ethnic Associations (historic only)

Native American

Asian American

African American

Unknown

Anglo-American

Other

Hispanic

Y

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

shipwreck

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		Koens-Crispin	
Clovis	<input type="checkbox"/>	Perkiomen	<input type="checkbox"/>
Hardaway-Dalton	<input type="checkbox"/>	Susquehana	<input type="checkbox"/>
Palmer	<input type="checkbox"/>	Vernon	<input type="checkbox"/>
Kirk (notch)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Piscataway	<input type="checkbox"/>
Kirk (stem)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Calvert	<input type="checkbox"/>
Le Croy	<input type="checkbox"/>	Selby Bay	<input type="checkbox"/>
Morrow Mntn	<input type="checkbox"/>	Jacks Rf (notch)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Guilford	<input type="checkbox"/>	Jacks Rf (pent)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Brewerton	<input type="checkbox"/>	Madison/Potomac	<input type="checkbox"/>
Otter Creek	<input type="checkbox"/>	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"/>	Keyser	<input type="checkbox"/>
Yeocomico	<input type="checkbox"/>	Monongahela	<input type="checkbox"/>
Susquehannock	<input type="checkbox"/>		

Historic Sherd Types		Ironstone	Staffordshire	Stoneware	
Earthenware		13			
Astbury	<input type="checkbox"/>	Jackfield	<input type="checkbox"/>	English Brown	<input type="checkbox"/>
Borderware	<input type="checkbox"/>	Mn Mottled	<input type="checkbox"/>	Eng Dry-bodied	<input type="checkbox"/>
Buckley	<input type="checkbox"/>	North Devon	<input type="checkbox"/>	Nottingham	<input type="checkbox"/>
Creamware	<input type="checkbox"/>	Pearlware	<input type="checkbox"/>	Rhenish	<input type="checkbox"/>
			Porcelain	Wt Salt-glazed	<input type="checkbox"/>
			6		

All quantities exact or estimated minimal counts

Other Artifact & Feature Types:

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

Prehistoric Features	
Mound(s)	<input type="checkbox"/>
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 type="checkbox"/>
Unknown	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other	<input type="checkbox"/>

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

Dated features present at site

19th naval steamship

Historic Artifacts		Tobacco related	
Pottery (all)	19	Activity item(s)	57
Glass (all)	17	Human remain(s)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Architectural	9	Faunal material	<input type="checkbox"/>
Furniture	5	Misc. kitchen	10
Arms	1401	Floral material	<input type="checkbox"/>
Clothing	70	Misc.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Personal items	2	Other	<input type="checkbox"/>

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

All quantities exact or estimated minimal counts

Radiocarbon Data:

Sample 1: +/- years BP Reliability Sample 2: +/- years BP Reliability Sample 3: +/- years BP Reliability

Sample 4: +/- years BP Reliability Sample 5: +/- years BP Reliability Sample 6: +/- years BP Reliability

Sample 7: +/- years BP Reliability Sample 8: +/- years BP Reliability Sample 9: +/- years BP Reliability

Additional radiocarbon results available



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External Samples/Data:

Collection curated at

Additional raw data may be available online

Summary Description:

The Ragged Point Shipwreck (18ST644) is the submerged archeological remains of Civil War-era gunboat lying off Ragged Point, VA, but situated in the Potomac River in the waters of St. Mary's County, Maryland. The wreck is believed to be the remains of the USS Tulip, a screw steam gunboat that was part of the federal government's Potomac Flotilla based out of St. Inigoes Creek. The wreck site lies in 14.6 m (48 ft) of water within the wide channel of the Potomac. Average salinity of the waters in this portion of the river range from 8 ppt to 15 ppt and water quality is considered good to excellent with most contaminants registered well upriver. The wreck is embedded in soft muds along the channel flats off Ragged Point.

The USS Tulip began its life as the Chi Kiang, a steamship originally constructed for China's military by New York shipbuilder James C. Jewett and registered in that city on December 24th, 1862. The registry records a 101 foot, four inch long vessel, 22 foot 10 inch breadth, weighing 240 tons, "...being of two decks with two masts and having a round stern and tuck, with eagle's head figurehead". Its boilers were tubular with a horizontal return and its engine was a single horizontal direct-acting engine. Due to legislative acts by the federal government following the outbreak of hostilities with the south, the exportation of arms and other war resources was banned and the contract with the Chinese government could not be completed. The vessel, along with several others, was purchased by the Union Navy in June of 1863 and renamed the USS Tulip. Eighteen days before the purchase date, an obligation of the sale required that the vessel be reconfigured and cabin be placed on deck. Additional alterations were presumably made at the Union Navy Yard in Washington, most importantly the installation of rifles and howitzer armaments.

The Tulip and its sister ship, the USS Fuchsia would remain in the Navy Yard until at least August of 1863, when they received commissions to the Potomac Flotilla. The flotilla's mission was to thwart the Confederate war effort in the Potomac and its tributaries by attenuating the rebel supply lines and by maintaining control over the strategic river systems (i.e. blockading them). The USS Fuchsia would remain attached to the Potomac Flotilla throughout the war, until September 1865 when the boat was sold for \$11,000. During the war it had served on the Potomac, Rappahannock, Piankatank, Tappahannock, Curritoman and St. Mary's Rivers. The USS Tulip began duty with the Potomac Flotilla in August of 1863 and served until lost on November 11, 1864. Both vessels were classified as fourth rate screw-steamer gunboats and although not glamorous they were invaluable in the Union efforts to patrol the eastern seaboard river systems.

During the period of the Tulip's service, several reports point to problems with the reliability with the machinery (especially the boilers) onboard the ship. Exacerbating this problem, it appears that the Tulip was due back to the Navy Yards on the Anacostia in late March of 1864, but was pressed to stay in service instead.

At 1400 hours on November 11, 1864, William H. Smith, acting master of the USS Tulip sailed out of St. Inigoes Creek (the base of the Potomac Flotilla operations) finally bound for the Washington Navy Yard. Weather conditions were moderately calm with a front moving in slowly. Tulip's starboard boiler was considered beyond use for the trip and Captain Smith was ordered to use the No. 1, port boiler only. On one boiler, it took Smith a frustratingly long, one hour to get to the mouth of the St. Mary's river. Ignoring orders, Captain Smith had the Acting Ensign, Richard Wagstaff, fire up the starboard boiler and proceed up the Potomac with both boilers in operation.

At 1820 hours the starboard boiler blew, throwing officers, men, iron machinery and wooden structure in all directions. The sound of the explosion was said to have carried all the way to the Point Lookout prison. Eight survivors were pulled from the cold waters and brought aboard the Army of the Potomac tug called the Hudson. It appears that two of these men died shortly thereafter. Of the ship's compliment of 57, only 6 survived. Searches up and down the river recovered no additional crew and no bodies were found during the immediate search. Eight unidentified bodies were eventually found, wrapped in burlap and reburied along the lower bank of St. Inigoes Creek. On December 13th, 1864, Captain Smith's body was found on St. George's Island, but the final disposition of his remains is not known. In addition, a number of bodies reportedly washed ashore near a location referred to locally thereafter as "Stinkin Point" due to the presence of decomposing bodies that had washed ashore.

The site was first identified archeologically in April of 1994 by the Maryland Maritime Archeology Program (MMAP) staff and volunteers, while conducting a remote sensing survey of the lower Potomac River and St. Mary's River. The site was one of five EG&G analog side-scan sonar anomalies: two of which turned out to be oyster shell middens, while the other three displayed the characteristics of shipwrecks. Follow-up side-scan sonar runs across the north-south and east-west axis of the wreck recorded the site's precise position in May of 1994. In mid-June, MMAP took the opportunity to make two preliminary dives on the site. Results from the dives were minimal, but the effort allowed the first close examination of the site. It was noted that the framing and stern decking appeared solid, although the "smoke stack" noted on the side-scan sonar image amidships was not located.

In 1995 and 1996, additional research at 18ST644 was funded by a Department of Defense Legacy Resource Management Program Grant to MMAP. The wreck of a Union gunboat would be legally considered property of the US Department of Defense. The aforementioned grant was provided to MMAP to conduct investigations into past salvage activities on the site, recover artifacts which were removed during those operations, determine the extent of damage to the shipwreck, nominate the site to the National Register of Historic Places, and develop a management plan for the site's protection.

The DoD grant resulted in over 4000 artifacts being returned to the Navy via salvors who had removed them from the wreck in the 1960s. In addition, interviews with the salvors revealed that human remains were observed in-situ in the 1960s below the stern quarter deck, on the port side and amidships. Some of these remains were reportedly removed at that time but there whereabouts are unknown. Diving and recordation at the site revealed that the wreck and debris field are 304.8 m long and 213.36 m wide. Artifacts recovered included a wooden grease paddle and a small flat piece of graphite. Sketch maps made by divers depict a possible windlass near the bow, frames and a hatch near the stern, an upright stack near the center towards the port side, and a blown-out section on the starboard side of the vessel.

The full assemblage from 18ST644 (both through the recovery of salvor collections and MMAP dives) consisted of 57 activity items (3 heart-shaped padlocks, a tourniquet fastener, a stringed instrument tuning key, 5 ink wells, parts of a wooden inkwell holder, 8 lighting objects, 9 machinery room tools and parts, 18 miscellaneous hardware items, and 11 navigational tools), 9 architectural items (3 door locks, 2 cable anchors, 3 sail rigging objects, and a porthole), 70 clothing items (a naval officer's belt buckle, 6 buckles or clasps, and 63 uniform buttons), 5 furniture items (a chair cresting rail and furniture hardware), 46 kitchen-related items (12 ironstone tableware items, an ironstone jar, 3 porcelain tableware items, 2 stoneware jars, 1 stoneware ale bottle, 17 glass bottles, 3 crystal tableware items, 6 utensils, and a metal condiment caster), 9 personal items (2 chess pieces, a hair oil bottle, 2 US Navy rubber combs, a wooden



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hairbrush or mirror handle, a porcelain chamberpot, a porcelain water pitcher and wash basin), 2 tobacco pipe stems, and 1,401 arms objects (12 Navy Enfield rifles, a Navy six-shot revolver, a holster part, 7 lead Minié balls, 5 round balls, 956 cylindrical percussion caps, 2 grapeshot canisters, 16 Schenkl shells, a bronze ramrod, 7 wooden sabots, 316 pieces of iron shot, 70 friction primers, 2 nearly complete ammunition boxes for Dahlgren shells, a possible ordnance fuse, a gun barrel plug, a Dahlgren bayonet, a wooden cutlass handle, and parts from an officer's scabbard).

Although detrimentally affected by salvage activities in the past, the ship's structural remains appear to have survived the hardships of its present environment. Exposed framing timbers and decking planks remain solid to the touch, and, much of the hull (below the upper deck) is buried beneath the sediments, which offers an anaerobic protection for organic remains. A very high percentage of the vessel's remains appear to be extant at the site. Some of the large exposed iron objects, such as the port boiler and deck bollards, are suffering severe deterioration and will eventually be completely oxidized. Debris field anomalies buried in the sediments next to and outside the hull remains have yet to be identified.

A review of salvors' interviews, underwater video and artifacts recovered indicates that more artifacts and skeletal material are still likely to be deposited in and around the wreck site. Certainly, the debris field appears to have been avoided by the salvors, so, much more archeological information remains there. Artifacts such as the propeller shaft, propeller, anchors, cannons, engines and miscellaneous machinery parts might one day be located within the site area. It should be noted that the potential for unexploded ordnance being on-site is high.

Based on the work conducted to date at 18ST644, the site appears to be a significant cultural resource. The site bears information relevant to Maryland and American history and is one of a relatively rare site class: Civil War Period wreck sites. The site should be preserved and monitored to facilitate any future need for data recovery.

External Reference Codes (Library ID Numbers):

97000728