



# Phase II and Phase III Archaeological Database and Inventory

Site Number: 18ST686 Site Name: St. Clement's Island Midden

Prehistoric

Other name(s) West Area I

Historic

Brief Description: Early & Late Woodland and Contact Period camp & shell midden; Early 17th-19th century house and lighthouse

Unknown

## Site Location and Environmental Data:

Maryland Archaeological Research Unit No. 10 SCS soil & sediment code MnB2, MuaB, Latitude 38.2095 Longitude -76.7436 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  High terrace   
Hilltop/bluff  Rockshelter/cave   
Interior flat  Hillslope   
Upland flat  Unknown   
Ridgetop  Other   
Terrace  Island   
Low terrace

### Ownership

Private   
Federal   
State of MD   
Regional/county/city   
Unknown

### Nearest Surface Water

Name (if any) Potomac River  
**Saltwater** Ocean   
**Freshwater** Stream/river   
Estuary/tidal river  Swamp   
Tidewater/marsh  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 prehistoric context  Unknown historic 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? 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

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  Microdebitage

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	6
Dames Qtr	<input type="checkbox"/>	Coulbourn	<input type="checkbox"/>
Selden Island	<input type="checkbox"/>	Watson	<input type="checkbox"/>
Accokeek	<input type="checkbox"/>	Mockley	5
Wolfe Neck	<input type="checkbox"/>	Clemson Island	<input type="checkbox"/>
Vinette	<input type="checkbox"/>	Page	<input type="checkbox"/>
Shepard	<input type="checkbox"/>	Townsend	1
Keyser	<input type="checkbox"/>	Yeocomico	6
Minguannan	<input type="checkbox"/>	Monongahela	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sullivan Cove	<input type="checkbox"/>	Susquehannock	<input type="checkbox"/>
Shenks Ferry	<input type="checkbox"/>	Moyaone	<input type="checkbox"/>
Potomac Crk	<input type="checkbox"/>		

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

All quantities exact or estimated minimal counts

## Other Artifact & Feature Types:

Prehistoric Artifacts		Other fired clay	
Flaked stone	226	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 checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Other lithics (all)	9	Floral material	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ceramics (all)	56	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 checked="" 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Chalcedony	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	European flint	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Chert	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Ironstone	<input type="checkbox"/>	Basalt	<input type="checkbox"/>
Rhyolite	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Argilite	<input type="checkbox"/>	Unknown	<input type="checkbox"/>
Quartz	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Steatite	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Quartzite	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Sandstone	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	greenstone,schi	<input type="checkbox"/>

Dated features present at site

Historic Artifacts		Tobacco related	
Pottery (all)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Activity item(s)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Glass (all)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Human remain(s)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Architectural	<input type="checkbox"/>	Faunal material	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Furniture	<input type="checkbox"/>	Misc. kitchen	<input type="checkbox"/>
Arms	<input type="checkbox"/>	Floral material	<input type="checkbox"/>
Clothing	<input type="checkbox"/>	Misc.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Personal items	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other	<input type="checkbox"/>

Historic Features		Privy/outhouse		Depression/mound		Unknown	
Const feature	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Well/cistern	<input type="checkbox"/>	Burial(s)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other	<input type="checkbox"/>
Foundation	<input checked="" 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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Brief

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Unknown

## External Samples/Data:

Collection curated at

Additional raw data may be available online

## Summary Description:

St. Clement's Island Midden (18ST686), also called West Area 1, is a Middle and Late Woodland and Contact period shell midden/shellfish procurement and processing site. The site is located on St. Clement's Island in St. Mary's County. St. Clement's Island lies 0.08 km (0.5 miles) off shore from Colton Point in the Potomac River, near the entrance to St. Clement's and Breton Bays. Soils in the site vicinity include Othello-Mattapex, Elkton-Keyport, and Matapeake-Mattapex-Sassafras. All associations occur on terraces. Erosion has reduced the island to 40-acres, one tenth the acreage Europeans would have encountered when they landed there in 1634.

Shell midden sites are among the most common prehistoric sites known for the lower Potomac Valley. Classifications of St. Mary's County soils include "Kitchen Middens," meaning prehistoric shell middens that have altered the makeup of the original soils to a great extent. Shell middens predominate by a wide margin among sites within a 2-mile radius of St. Clement's Island. It has been suggested that oysters did not become a major focus of the subsistence base until the last part of the Late Archaic period and shell middens commonly occurred during the Woodland period in the lower Potomac Valley. In general, site density increased into the 17th century, and decreased at the end of the 17th century, coinciding with an increase in European settlement in the region. Agriculture and oyster harvesting were at various times the focus of activity on the island throughout most of the 18th, 19th, and the early 20th centuries. The United States Navy took possession of St. Clement's Island in 1919. They used the Potomac River for testing heavy artillery, often hitting the island. In 1934, a concrete cross was erected on the island to commemorate the beginnings of religious freedom in Maryland. The island was returned to Maryland in the 1960's.

In September 1997, a Phase II archeological evaluation was undertaken at site 18ST686. The site had been previously identified by the Maryland Historical Trust as a potentially significant archeological site; therefore a Phase I survey was not required. The Maryland Department of Natural Resources was developing plans to build a revetment to retard erosion on St. Clement's Island. Site 18ST686 was the proposed location for a source of fill for the planned revetment. The primary goals of the project were to determine whether the midden area was eligible for listing in the Maryland Register of Historic Properties, to determine the extent to which construction of the proposed revetment would affect significant resources, and to recommend management options that would permit completion of the construction without further damage to significant archeological remains.

The project area covered an approximately 404.7 square meter portion of West Area 1 that was to be impacted by the proposed construction. Testing occurred within an area bound on the north by the margins of an existing tidal pond and on the south by a point roughly 17 m from an existing stone revetment. The impact zone extended for about 50 m along the shoreline, and inland about 10 m toward a secondary growth forest. Prior to subsurface testing, archeologists surveyed exposed ground surfaces, especially along the beach, and the exposed shoreline profile. Observed artifact concentrations and distributions, and variation in midden thickness and shell density, informed the placement of shovel tests and test units. A total of 12 shovel test pits (STPs) and 3 test units (EU1-EU3) were excavated. STPs were dug at 10 m intervals along two transects that were placed 10 m apart and parallel to the shoreline. STPs were excavated through shell-bearing soil horizons into sterile subsoil. All artifacts were retained, including a sample of bog iron and revetment rock, except for shell fragments larger than 1/4", which were weighed in the field and discarded.

EU1 was a 1x2 m block situated within the densest portion of the shell concentration. The area appeared to retain integrity and demonstrated little evidence of leaching of soil nutrients. EU2 was a 1x1 m square located near the eastern boundary of the project area and beyond the northern boundary of very dark brown soils observed in the STP survey. EU3 was also a 1x1 m square. It was located immediately adjacent to the eroding shoreline in order to expose in plan view a large cluster of charcoal, designated Feature 3, first identified in the shoreline erosional face. Feature 3 was later determined to be the remains of a burnt tree or tree roots. All EUs were excavated below the midden soils until sterile strata were encountered to depths between 45 and 55 cm below datum. Five-gallon soil samples were collected from selected strata of each unit for flotation and water screening.

EU1, Stratum A contained only Yeocomico and Camden pottery types, Stratum B produced a Townsend sherd, and Stratum C contained only Pope's Creek pottery. This presented a strong likelihood that the central portion of West Area 1 maintains stratigraphic integrity. The surface artifact distribution and shoreline profile observations supported that conclusion. The southern and northeastern portions of the site, however, contained disturbed and mixed soils. Thus the stratigraphic integrity of those areas of the site was comprised, possibly as a result of alluvial processes and/or agricultural activity. Features encountered in EU1 and EU3 were excavated but were determined to be natural, rather than cultural, in origin. No cultural features besides the midden itself were identified. It was not possible to delineate the site boundaries of the shell midden because it extends beyond the Phase II project area as defined by the Scope of Work. The distribution of positive STPs indicated that the shell midden extended beyond the limits of West Area 1, and that intrasite and intersite variation may exist further inland.

In all, 326 prehistoric artifacts were collected from the surface, STP, and test unit investigations. Artifact counts were taken from Appendix C: Artifact Catalog in the original report. A total of 127 pieces of debitage and 85 broken cobbles were recovered along with 3 fragments of revetment rock. There was a single quartz bifacial tool, 7 modified flakes, 1 unifacial tool, and 2 utilized greenstone fragments. Other lithic items included 8 hammerstones, a few of which possibly served a dual abrader function, and 1 pitted stone. A total of 35 fire-cracked rocks were retained. The lithic remains indicated predominantly expedient tool production and use. The bulk of the lithic assemblage was composed of quartz (56%) followed by quartzite (24%), sandstone (12%), chert (4%), jasper (2%) and greenstone (5%). Ceramic artifacts (n=56) included 6 Popes Creek and 5 Mockley (1 net-impressed, 4 plain) sherds, 1 Townsend sherd, 2 possible Camden sherds, 6 Yeocomico ceramic sherds (1 incised, most brushed or plain, 1 cord-marked), and 36 unidentified sherds. The association between Camden and Yeocomico pottery at West Area 1 suggested a late 17th century date for the latter type. Conversely, the predominance of Yeocomico pottery and the abandonment of the area by many Native Americans at the end of the 17th century suggested an early-to-mid-17th century date for those deposits.

Measurements of oyster shells taken in the field were used to determine the characteristics of the oyster bed from which they derived. The maximum dimension of the shell from the valve to the aperture (height) was divided by the measurement perpendicular to the height (length) in order to provide a length-height ratio. The majority of the oyster shell had a ratio less than 2.0 which indicated that the oysters were harvested from a setting close to shore, where the water was shallow and the bottom consisted of a mixture of mud and sand. The early colonists probably harvested oysters from shallow waters but by the end of the 17th century, over-exploitation led to deep water harvests. That information led the archeologists to the conclusion that the height-length ratio calculations for West Area 1 supported an occupation date earlier than AD 1700. Although it was indicated in the original report that some oyster shell was collected and some shell was weighed and discarded in the field, no total weights or counts were provided. Weights from most of the strata within the 3 EUs



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was provided (337.8 kg) but not from the STPs. Additionally, a few historic period artifacts were encountered in the field (glass was mentioned) but were not cataloged.

West Area 1 of the St. Clement's Island shell midden (18T686) preserves the remnants of short-term occupations by small groups of Native Americans during the Middle and Late Woodland/ Contact periods. This shellfish procurement and processing site has the potential to provide important information on regional prehistoric ceramic chronology, settlement patterns, and task specialization. For these reasons, it was determined that the St. Clement's Island Shell Midden (West Area I) was eligible for the Maryland Register of Historic Properties under Criterion D. Three treatment plans were presented for management of the site: preservation in place, an extended Phase I survey inland, and a Phase III data recovery (recent aerial images show what appears to be revetment in the general location of the site).

**External Reference Codes (Library ID Numbers):**

00006548