



# Phase II and Phase III Archaeological Database and Inventory

Site Number: 18WA481

Site Name: Williamsport Power Station

Prehistoric

Other name(s)

Historic

Unknown

Brief Description:

Late 19th century standing brick and stone power generating station, early-mid-20th century storage & garages

## Site Location and Environmental Data:

Maryland Archaeological Research Unit No. 19

SCS soil & sediment code Pn

Latitude 39.6068

Longitude -77.8280

Physiographic province Great Valley

Terrestrial site

Underwater site

Elevation m

Site slope 14%

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) Conococheague Creek

#### Saltwater

Ocean

Estuary/tidal river

Tidewater/marsh

#### Freshwater

Stream/river

Swamp

Lake or pond

Spring

Minimum distance to water is 13 m

## Temporal & Ethnic Contextual Data:

Paleoindian site

Woodland site

Contact period site

ca. 1820 - 1860

ca. 1630 - 1675

ca. 1860 - 1900

ca. 1675 - 1720

ca. 1900 - 1930

ca. 1720 - 1780

Post 1930

ca. 1780 - 1820

Unknown historic context

Unknown prehistoric context

Unknown context

### Ethnic Associations (historic only)

Native American

Asian American

African American

Unknown

Anglo-American

Other

Hispanic

Y=Confirmed, P=Possible

## Site Function Contextual Data:

### Prehistoric

- Multi-component
- 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? Urban

#### Domestic

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

#### Industrial

- Mining-related
- Quarry-related
- Mill
- Black/metalsmith
- Furnace/forge
- Other  power station
- 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		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"/>	Shepard	<input type="checkbox"/>	Keyser	<input type="checkbox"/>
Dames Qtr	<input type="checkbox"/>	Coulbourn	<input type="checkbox"/>	Townsend	<input type="checkbox"/>	Yeocomico	<input type="checkbox"/>
Selden Island	<input type="checkbox"/>	Watson	<input type="checkbox"/>	Minguannan	<input type="checkbox"/>	Monongahela	<input type="checkbox"/>
Accokeek	<input type="checkbox"/>	Mockley	<input type="checkbox"/>	Sullivan Cove	<input type="checkbox"/>	Susquehannock	<input type="checkbox"/>
Wolfe Neck	<input type="checkbox"/>	Clemson Island	<input type="checkbox"/>	Shenks Ferry	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Vinette	<input type="checkbox"/>	Page	<input type="checkbox"/>	Moyaone	<input type="checkbox"/>		
				Potomac Crk	<input type="checkbox"/>		

### Historic Sherd Types

<b>Earthenware</b>		Ironstone	<input type="checkbox"/>	Staffordshire	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Stoneware</b>	
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	7	Eng Dry-bodied	<input type="checkbox"/>
Buckley	<input type="checkbox"/>	North Devon	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Porcelain</b>	2	Nottingham	<input type="checkbox"/>
Creamware	1	Pearlware	1			Rhenish	<input type="checkbox"/>
						Wt Salt-glazed	<input type="checkbox"/>

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

### Lithic Material

Fer quartzite	<input type="checkbox"/>	Sil sandstone	<input type="checkbox"/>
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

Historic Artifacts		Tobacco related	
Pottery (all)	13	Activity item(s)	128
Glass (all)	2408	Human remain(s)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Architectural	2685	Faunal material	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Furniture	1	Misc. kitchen	128
Arms	1	Floral material	<input type="checkbox"/>
Clothing	7	Misc.	224
Personal items	3	Other	<input type="checkbox"/>

### Historic Features

Privy/outhouse	<input type="checkbox"/>	Depression/mound	<input type="checkbox"/>	Unknown	<input type="checkbox"/>
Const feature	<input type="checkbox"/>	Well/cistern	<input type="checkbox"/>	Burial(s)	<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 checked="" 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 NPS? - C & O Canal Park

Additional raw data may be available online

## Summary Description:

Site 18WA481, the Williamsport Power Station, is situated in the town of Williamsport, MD along a turning basin of the C & O canal and is part of the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal National Historical Park. The site was subjected to Phase II testing in preparation for the development of the Williamsport area of the park and in compliance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966. Testing was undertaken to both locate and assess the cultural resources in and around the power station and to gather information that would aid in interpretation and planned restoration.

Historical research revealed that the standing power station north of Cushwa's Warehouse first generated power for a trolley system in Hagerstown, MD. Besides supplying power to the trolleys, electricity from the power station was also sold to local consumers, thus ushering in the Washington County electric utilities industry. In 1896, Victor Cushwa, owner of a Williamsport coal, plaster, and cement company donated a portion of land to the newly formed Hagerstown Railway Company for the power station. It was an ideal site due to the ready availability of water that could be drawn from Conococheague Creek, and coal which could be supplied by barges travelling down the C & O Canal. Before the year was out, the power station was constructed and by August 7th, 1896 the first electric trolley was travelling the six miles from Williamsport to Hagerstown with a throng of enthusiastic townspeople looking on. However, a short time later it was determined that the power station did not meet rapidly expanding demand for power and by 1911 it was being sold back to Victor Cushwa. Larger power plants were constructed elsewhere and Cushwa used the building for storage until bought by the National Park Service in 1974.

Excavation at Williamsport included not only the powerhouse, but also Cushwa's warehouse and its environs. The power station's exterior and interior were gridded off into squares 1.524 meters (5 feet) on a side. Squares were excavated stratigraphically. Arbitrary levels within discrete strata were set at 0.0762 meters (0.25 feet). All soil was either screened through ¼ inch mesh or thoroughly examined and removed with trowel and dust pan. A total of 24 test square units were excavated.

The foundation of the power station is resting on Motevello series gray shale. The structure's foundation was built of shaped and laid limestone anchored to this shale bedrock by a concrete bond. The grade of the bedrock varied considerably indicating the imprecision of its excavation in preparation for construction. Occupational strata varied around the power station with the north side being quite shallow (i.e. little post-construction activity took place here). Twenty-two features (mostly related to the building construction and/or architecture) were encountered along with activity areas that were interpreted to be related to the power generating equipment found in the power station during its years of operation, such as the boiler, condenser, engine and generator. Other areas were related to storage, refuse disposal, and other activities.

The artifact assemblage consisted of somewhere between 4,237 and 4,246 artifacts. Based on the Artifact Class Frequencies table provided in the full report, 4,237 artifacts are reported from all artifact classes. However, when one adds up the class "group" totals throughout the table, the total attained is 4,239 and when one adds up the individual class counts the total attained is 4,246 objects. A total of 128 activity items were recovered including 2 construction items, 44 pieces of miscellaneous hardware, 33 rubber and plastic objects, 2 red taillights, and 47 unidentified activity items. In addition, a great abundance of coal and clinkers were found throughout the site (due to its function), but only a representative sample of these was retained. The architectural assemblage included 2,685 items, most of which was plate window glass (1,353 pieces). Some 450 nails, 10 spikes, 4 pieces of construction hardware, and 868 miscellaneous architectural items were also encountered. Seven fragments of clothing were recovered. One is a shell button and the other 6 are fragments of cloth, however, one of these cloth pieces may be part of a rug. The site yielded only 1 furniture item, a piece of furniture hardware. The kitchen assemblage includes a total of 1,196 objects. Thirteen of them are ceramic sherds including 1 creamware fragment, 1 pearlware sherd, 1 is redware, 1 is yellowware, 7 are whiteware or ironstone, and 2 are porcelain sherds. The other kitchen-related objects were 1,055 fragments of container glass (mostly bottles), 112 pot and pan (kitchenware) pieces, and 16 animal bones. Fifteen of the bones are of either cow, sheep, or other medium-sized mammals and the 16th is an unidentified tooth. Half bear evidence of sawing. Three personal items were encountered; two Lincoln-head pennies (dated 1917 & 1974) and a piece of pencil lead. One small fragment of a kaolin pipe is the only tobacco-related item found. The only arms-related object encountered was a .22-caliber long rifle rim-fire cartridge casing. In addition to the groups above, 224 miscellaneous items were recovered, all unidentified iron fragments.

The Phase II archeological excavations at the Williamsport Power Station revealed a relatively short period of operation (this is supported by historical research) followed by a period of abandonment during which equipment was removed from the power station and the structure was vandalized. In 1911, Victor Cushwa bought the structure for \$500.49. During the years from 1911-1974 the power station served as a storage space for bulk sand, ceramic sewer pipe, and other building materials. The lower level of the building served as a garage for Cushwa's coal trucks until recent years. Artifacts recovered from this period indicate that the building was used as a retreat of sorts, either for employees at Cushwa's nearby warehouse or for local townsfolk. Numerous container glass fragments were recovered, and most of those identifiable were either beer or liquor bottles. It also seems that the power station's popularity as a "local haunt" steadily increased during this reoccupation period.

The historic power station at Williamsport should be viewed as an important cultural asset. While the Phase II work revealed many details about the construction and operation of the power plant, the nature of the engine and generator drive system is not well understood. Because direct-connected systems are easily distinguishable from belt-driven systems by their foundation shape, future research should focus on exposure and recordation of the engine/generator and boiler foundations. Until then, these foundations should be protected and archeologists should also be contacted anytime activity will impact the building interior where numerous major features are located.

## External Reference Codes (Library ID Numbers):

00006341