



Phase II and Phase III Archeological Database and Inventory

Site Number: 18AG168

Site Name: Dorsey VI

Prehistoric

Other name(s)

Historic

Unknown

Brief

Description:

multi-component Late Archaic - Late Woodland occupation

Site Location and Environmental Data:

Latitude 39.5906 Longitude -78.7313

Elevation 183 m Site slope 6-10%

Site setting

The site is located within a wide meander bend of the Potomac River floodplain, adjacent to the C&O Canal. 50% of the site is expected to be destroyed by construction of the federal prison complex, the remainder will be protected within the C&O Canal buffer zone.

Maryland Archeological Research Unit No. 22

SCS soil & sediment code AhB2

Physiographic province Ridge and Valley

Terrestrial site Underwater site

Ethnobotany profile available Maritime site

Nearest Surface Water

Name (if any) N. Branch Potomac

Saltwater

Ocean Stream/river

Estuary/tidal river Swamp

Tidewater/marsh Lake or pond

Spring

Minimum distance to water is 575 m

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

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

ca. 1630 - 1675 ca. 1860 - 1900

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=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?

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

Post-in-ground

Battlefield Frame-built

Fortification Masonry

Encampment Other structure

Townsite Non-domestic agri

Religious Recreational

Church/mtg house Midden/dump

Ch support bldg Artifact scatter

Burial area Spring or well

Cemetery Unknown

Sepulchre Other context

Isolated burial

Bldg or foundation

Possible Structure

Interpretive Sampling Data:

Prehistoric context samples

Soil samples taken

Flotation samples taken

Other samples taken blood residue,botanical

Historic context samples

Soil samples taken

Flotation samples taken

Other samples taken



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Diagnostic Artifact Data:

Projectile Point Types

Clovis
Hardaway-Dalton
Palmer
Kirk (notch)
Kirk (stem) 9
Le Croy
Morrow Mntn
Guilford
Brewerton 17
Otter Creek

Koens-Crispin
Perkiomen
Susquehana 3
Vernon 1
Piscataway
Calvert
Selby Bay
Jacks Rf (notch)
Jacks Rf (pent)
Madison/Potomac
Levanna

Prehistoric Sherd Types

Marcey Creek
Dames Qtr
Selden Island
Accokeek 3
Wolfe Neck
Vinette
Popes Creek
Coulbourn
Watson 2
Mockley
Clemson Island
Page 2

Shepard
Townsend
Minguannan
Sullivan Cove
Shenks Ferry
Moyaone
Potomac Crk
Keyser
Yeocomico
Monongahela
Susquehannock

Historic Sherd Types

Earthenware

Astbury
Borderware
Buckley
Creamware

Jackfield
Mn Mottled
North Devon
Staffordshire
Tin Glazed

Porcelain

Stoneware

English Brown
Eng Dry-bodie
Nottingham

Rhenish
Wt Salt-glazed

All quantities exact or estimated minimal counts

Other Artifact & Feature Types:

Prehistoric Artifacts

Flaked stone (all) 13710
Ground stone 6
Stone bowls 1
Fire-cracked rock 100
Other lithics (all) 7
Ceramics (all) 235
Rimsherds 10

Other fired clay
Human remain(s)
Modified faunal
Unworked faunal
Oyster shell
Floral material
Exotics
Other

Prehistoric Features

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

Lithic Material

Fer quartzite
Jasper
Chert
Rhyolite
Quartz
Quartzite
Sil sandstone
Chalcedony
Ironstone
Argillite
Steatite
Sandstone
European flint
Basalt
Unknown
Other

Dated features present at site

Feat. 27 - pit stain yielding 1 C-14 date; Feat. 6 - hearth w/ Middle Woodland sherd nearby, Feat. 22 - hearth w/ sherds & triangular pt.

Historic Artifacts

Pottery (all)
Glass (all) 8
Architectural 6
Furniture
Arms
Clothing
Personal items

Tobacco pipe(s)
Activity item(s) 1
Human remain(s)
Faunal material
Misc kitchen item
Floral material
Misc.
Other

Historic Features

Const feature
Foundation
Cellar hole/cellar
Hearth/chimney
Postholes/molds
Paling ditch/fence
Privy/outhouse
Well/cistern
Trash pit/dump
Sheet midden
Planting feature
Road/walkway

Depression/mound
Burial(s)
Railroad bed
Earthworks
Mill raceway
Wheel pit
Unknown
Other

All quantities exact or estimated minimal counts

Radiocarbon Data:

Sample 1: 1460 +/- 50 years BP Reliability Mod Sample 2: 4810 +/- 110 years BP Reliability High Sample 3: +/- years BP Reliability

B-42756: charcoal from Feature 27 (a pit). A Middle Woodland occupation at this site is well represented.

B-42757: charcoal from Stratum B/2 (Unit 3A), well within the Brewerton occupation at the site.

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?

Synopsis URL

Raw data available online

Datalink 1

Datalink 2

Datalink 3

Summary Description:

The Dorsey VI site was examined as part of both Phase II testing and Phase III data recovery at Mexico Farms in Allegany County. The site would be impacted by the construction of new facilities at a federal prison complex in the area. The site is situated just over 12 meters above the North Branch of the Potomac River on a broad upper terrace. Soils at the site include an Allegheny fine sandy loam and a few areas of poorly drained Tyler silt loam. Dorsey VI lies just to the northwest of 18AG167 and into the C & O Canal buffer zone.

Phase II testing was first carried out in 1988, followed by supplemental Phase II testing & Phase III data recovery in 1990, when it was determined that site avoidance was not practical. Initial Phase II shovel test pits were placed at 30.48 m (100 foot) intervals. Additional shovel tests were dug at 15.24 m (25 foot) intervals, in the four cardinal compass directions, around shovel tests yielding artifactual material. In addition to the shovel test pits, fifteen 1 X 1 m test units were subjectively placed throughout the site. Placement of test units was designed, in part, to gain an understanding of the distribution of artifacts, both in kind and quantity, throughout the site area. In addition, three possible prehistoric stone cairns were visited and investigated during Phase II testing. A shovel test pit was placed in the center of one of these and initially, little aboriginal material was recovered. However, this assessment was deemed insufficient and exploration of the cairns became the main focus of supplemental Phase II work undertaken two years later.

The supplemental Phase II investigation at 18AG168 involved the selective excavation of twelve 1.524 m X 1.524 m (5 ft X 5 ft) test units (including areas within the C & O Canal buffer zone) and excavation of 3 out of the 4 stone cairns. Test units were dug in 9 cm arbitrary levels. Only samples of unit fill from the plowzone were screened, while all fill below the plowzone was screened. Cairns were excavated by removing the rocks from one-half of the pile to expose the ground surface beneath the rock concentration. Two features were encountered during the supplemental Phase II work, both appear to be small (possibly storage) pits associated with the Woodland occupation which were subsequently filled with refuse (chert flakes and fire-cracked rock).

Phase III work involved large block excavations (no smaller than 1.524 m X 1.524 m), first by natural stratigraphic horizons and then by 10 cm arbitrary levels for any natural layer exceeding 9cm in depth. Previous investigations had defined areas of artifact concentrations which were expected to be focal points of aboriginal activity such as hearths, structures, and tool-production areas. Block excavations were placed within these areas as well as in marginal locations. These blocks were expanded depending on the results of the initial block. 28 features were encountered during the Phase III investigations, most of which turned out to be root or rodent disturbances. Feature 6 is an obvious hearth which appears to date to the Middle Woodland occupation of the site, based on a nearby ceramic find. Debitage was encountered in and around the feature in a fairly tight cluster. Feature 27, a root disturbed pit, produced a Middle Woodland C-14 date from charcoal that may have come from a nearby hearth. Feature 5 is centrally located within the block and appears to be a hearth. Feature 11 is most likely the result of a shallow hearth, which left behind burned soil and fire-cracked rock. Features 4, 7-10, and 24 are probably related to the Woodland occupation and are likely anomalies in the ground surface which became filled with organic debris and refuse. Feature 22 is a shallow hearth and is associated with several sherds and a nearby triangular point. Features 23 and 30 are burned areas.

There are considerable discrepancies between the artifact totals reported in various sections of the 1990 site report (the supplemental Phase II and Phase III work). To confound matters even more, the report does not make clear when totals from the Phase II supplemental work are being included and when only the Phase III objects are being counted. All artifact totals below were taken from 1) the initial Phase II report done in 1988, or 2) Appendix 1E in concert with the Phase III block excavation discussion. The totals reported in the "Artifact Analysis" section of the 1990 report were largely avoided (as they were often higher or lower than the totals in the other two sections of that report). Thus, all quantities are approximate.

Both Phase II excavations combined yielded 11 ceramic sherds and Phase III work recovered 224. Most are small body sherds and their condition is generally quite poor. Ten rimsherds in total were found. At least 2 sherds (and possibly more) may be Page ware, but most of these are heavily eroded and it is difficult to say with any degree of certainty. There are also 3 possible Accokeek sherds, and at least 2 Watson (or possibly McGraw) sherds. Of all the ceramic sherds recovered, 45 are sand-tempered, 57 are grit-tempered, 44 are rock-tempered, 9 are of mixed temper types, and 80 have unknown tempering agents.

Both Phase II excavations combined recovered 1947 lithic artifacts, most of which were unmodified flakes and debitage. Three identifiable projectile points were recovered; a Vernon point and two Brewerton points. Nine unidentifiable points or point fragments and 30 bifaces were also recovered. Other flaked tools reported during Phase II testing were 3 scrapers, 3 unifaces, 13 retouched or utilized flakes, and 3 cores. Four "other" lithic objects were also recovered; 1 unidentifiable lithic fragment, 1 schist fragment, and two pieces of quartz. Phase III work uncovered a total of 11777 lithic artifacts. The flaked tool assemblage consisted of a minimum of 126 bifaces, at least 51 points, at least 1 drill, 2 scrapers, 11 unifaces, 31 retouched or utilized flakes, 32 cores, and 11513 pieces of debitage. The identifiable projectile points include 15 Brewerton points, a Buck Creek point, at least 3 Buffalo stemmed points, 6 fishtail points, 5 Chesser notched points, at least 2 Rossville points, 9 Kirk points (at least 7 are stemmed), 1 Lamoka point, at least 3 Susquehanna Broadspers, and 3 triangular points. There are seven objects in the ground stone assemblage. One fragment of a ground stone gorget with a hole drilled through it (similar to those found on Lewis Creek Mound culture sites) was recovered near one of the stone cairns. The lip of a steatite bowl was also recovered. Three pestle fragments and two probable celt fragments complete the list of ground stone objects. Two manos (quartzite & sandstone) and an anvil or hammerstone are the remaining lithic objects.

Faunal remains are conspicuously absent at the site, probably due to the pH value of the soil.

Flotation samples were taken, but only yielded oak and hickory nuts and small bits of charcoal. Other burned wood, nut fragments and some small seeds were recovered in screening.

Historic artifacts recovered from the site included 4 metal chunks (possibly barbed wire), 2 cut nails, 8 bottle fragments, and a horseshoe.



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Unknown

This site is a multi-component prehistoric site in a shallow context. The Early Archaic is represented by Kirk projectile points and their associated debitage. The Late Archaic is represented by a substantial Brewerton component. The Middle Woodland is substantial and well represented. It is hearth focused with some evidence of food preparation, cooking, and lithic workshop activities performed around the hearths. The Late Woodland is only marginally represented.

External Reference Codes (Library ID Numbers):

00000079, 00000088