**Site Name:** Flat Rock Shelter  
**Site Number:** 18MO173  
**Prehistoric** ✔  
**Historic** ✔  
**Other name(s)**  
**Brief Description:** Middle Archaic & Middle Woodland Rockshelter

### Site Location and Environmental Data:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Latitude</th>
<th>39.1461</th>
<th>Longitude</th>
<th>-76.9708</th>
<th>Elevation</th>
<th>104 m</th>
<th>Site slope</th>
<th>0</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

- **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:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Floodplain</th>
<th>High terrace</th>
<th>Hilltop/bluff</th>
<th>Rockshelter/ cave</th>
<th>Interior flat</th>
<th>Hillslope</th>
<th>Upland flat</th>
<th>Ridgetop</th>
<th>Terrace</th>
<th>Low terrace</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

### Ownership:

- Private
- Federal
- State of MD
- Regional/city
- Unknown

### Nearest Surface Water:

- **Name (if any):** Patuxent River  
- **Saltwater:** Freshwater
- **Ocean:** Stream/river
- **Estuary/tidal river:** Swamp
- **Tidewater/marsh:** Lake or pond
- **Swamp:** Spring
- **Minimum distance to water is:** 27 m

### Temporal & Ethnic Contextual Data:

- **Paleoindian site**
- **Woodland site**
- **Contact period site**
- **ca. 1820 - 1860**
- **ca. 1630 - 1675**
- **ca. 1680 - 1900**
- **Archaic site**
- **MD Adena**
- **ca. 1675 - 1720**
- **ca. 1900 - 1930**
- **Early archaic**
- **Early woodland**
- **ca. 1720 - 1780**
- **Post 1930**
- **Middle archaic**
- **Mid. woodland**
- **ca. 1780 - 1820**
- **Late archaic**
- **Late woodland**
- **Unknown prehistoric context**

### Ethnic Associations (historic only):

- Native American
- African American
- Anglo-American
- Hispanic
- Asian American

### Site Function Contextual Data:

#### Prehistoric

- Multi-component ✔  
- Village  
- Hamlet  
- Base camp  
- Rockshelter/cave ✔  
- Earthen mound  
- Cairn  
- Burial area  
- Other context

#### Historic

- Domestic
  - Homestead  
  - Farmstead  
  - Mansion  
  - Plantation  
  - Row/townhome  
  - Cellar  
  - Privy  
- Industrial
  - Mining-related  
  - Quarry-related  
  - Mill  
- Other context

#### Urban/Rural?

- Other

#### Transportation

- Canal-related  
- Road/railroad  
- Wharf/landing  
- Maritime-related  
- Bridge  
- Ford  

#### Educational

- Church/mtg house  
- Ch support bldg  
- Cemetery  
- Sepulchre  
- Isolated burial  
- Other context

#### Burial area

- Other context

#### Military

- Battlefield  
- Fortification  
- Encampment  
- Encampment  

#### Townsite

- Religious  
- Church/mtg house  
- Ch support bldg  
- Cemetery  
- Sepulchre  
- Isolated burial  

#### Other context

- Post-in-ground  
- Frame-built  
- Masonry  
- Other structure  
- Slave related  
- Non-domestic agri  
- Recreational  
- Mediterranean  
- Artfact scatter  
- Spring or well  
- Unknown  
- Other context

### Interpretive Sampling Data:

#### Prehistoric context samples

- Soil samples taken  
- Flotation samples taken ✔  

#### Historic context samples

- Soil samples taken  
- Flotation samples taken  

#### Other samples taken

- Other samples taken  
- Flotation samples taken ✔
**Site Name:** Flat Rock Shelter  
**Site Number:** 18MO173  
**Description:** Middle Archaic & Middle Woodland Rockshelter

### Diagnostic Artifact Data:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Projectile Point Types</th>
<th>Prehistoric Sherd Types</th>
<th>Historic Sherd Types</th>
<th>Earthware</th>
<th>Prehistoric Features</th>
<th>Lithic Material</th>
<th>Radiocarbon Data:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Clovis</td>
<td>Koens-Crispin</td>
<td>Shepard</td>
<td>Ironstone</td>
<td>Mound(s)</td>
<td>Jasper</td>
<td>Sample 1: +/- years BP Reliability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hardaway-Dalton</td>
<td>Perkiomen</td>
<td>Keyser</td>
<td>Astbury</td>
<td>Storage/trash pit</td>
<td>Chalcedony</td>
<td>Sample 2: +/- years BP Reliability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Palmer</td>
<td>Vernon</td>
<td>Townsend</td>
<td>Jackfield</td>
<td>Midden</td>
<td>Chert</td>
<td>Sample 3: +/- years BP Reliability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kirk (notch)</td>
<td>Piscataway</td>
<td>Yeocomico</td>
<td>Mn Mottled</td>
<td>Burial(s)</td>
<td>Ironstone</td>
<td>Sample 4: +/- years BP Reliability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kirk (stem)</td>
<td>Calvert</td>
<td>Monongahela</td>
<td>North Devon</td>
<td>Shell midden</td>
<td>Basalt</td>
<td>Sample 5: +/- years BP Reliability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Le Croi</td>
<td>Selby Bay</td>
<td>Susquehannock</td>
<td>Staffordhire</td>
<td>Postholes/molds</td>
<td>Rhyolite</td>
<td>Sample 6: +/- years BP Reliability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morrow Mtnn</td>
<td>Jacks Ri (notch)</td>
<td>Moyaone</td>
<td>Tin Glazed</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>Argilite</td>
<td>Sample 7: +/- years BP Reliability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guilford</td>
<td>Jacks Ri (pent)</td>
<td>Poconol</td>
<td>Whiteware</td>
<td>House pattern(s)</td>
<td>Quartz</td>
<td>Sample 8: +/- years BP Reliability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brewerton</td>
<td>Madison/Potomac</td>
<td>Porcelain</td>
<td>Porcelain</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Quartzite</td>
<td>Sample 9: +/- years BP Reliability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Otter Creek</td>
<td>Levanna</td>
<td>Porcelain</td>
<td>Porcelain</td>
<td>Lithic reduc area</td>
<td>Sandstone</td>
<td>Additional radiocarbon results available</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**All quantities exact or estimated minimal counts**

### Other Artifact & Feature Types:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Prehistoric Artifacts</th>
<th>Historic Artifacts</th>
<th>Tobacco related</th>
<th>Postholes/molds</th>
<th>Privacy/outhouse</th>
<th>Depression/mound</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Other fired clay</td>
<td>Pottery (all)</td>
<td>Activity item(s)</td>
<td>Misc. kitchen</td>
<td>Burial(s)</td>
<td>Other</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>91</td>
<td>Glass (all)</td>
<td>Human remain(s)</td>
<td>Misc.</td>
<td>Well/cistern</td>
<td>Burial(s)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flaked stone</td>
<td>Architectural</td>
<td>Human remain(s)</td>
<td>Misc.</td>
<td>Railroad bed</td>
<td>Other</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>91</td>
<td>Furniture</td>
<td>Faunal material</td>
<td>Misc.</td>
<td>Earthworks</td>
<td>Other</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ground stone</td>
<td>Arms</td>
<td>Modified faunal</td>
<td>Misc.</td>
<td>Mill raceway</td>
<td>Other</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stone bowls</td>
<td>Clothing</td>
<td>Unmod faunal</td>
<td>Misc.</td>
<td>Wheel pit</td>
<td>Other</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fire-cracked rock</td>
<td>Personal items</td>
<td>Oyster shell</td>
<td>Misc.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other lithics (all)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Oyster shell</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td>Oyster shell</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
<td>Oyster shell</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Oyster shell</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ceramics (all)</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Oyster shell</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Oyster shell</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**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**
Flat Rock Shelter (18MO173) is a Middle Archaic and Middle Woodland rockshelter located on a hillslope overlooking what is today the Rocky Gorge Reservoir in Montgomery County. The site is situated near the top of a steep slope which descends down to the edge of the reservoir. It is a relatively large shelter with a high ceiling and a large rock fall along the east edge of its floor. Foot paths leading up to and away from the shelter are present. Prior to construction of the T. Howard Duckett dam in 1952, the site would have overlooked a much narrower Patuxent River channel than the wide reservoir of today. The forest cover is generally an open deciduous growth. A large red oak lies near both the shelter’s north and south ends, and a smaller hickory and red maple lie along its perimeter. Steatite outcrops occur just below the shelter, which are known to have been quarried prehistorically. Soils at the site are silty loams and sands of unknown series.

The site was first identified in October of 1980 when personnel from the Maryland Historical Trust (MHT) were exploring the Rocky Gorge Reservoir area. No artifacts were noted at that time, other than evidence indicating day use by hikers in the area. However, the extent of the overhang and the shelter it would provide warranted completion of an MHT site form.

In 2003, the Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission (WSSC), which owns the land surrounding the reservoir and MHT entered into a memorandum of agreement to conduct a joint investigation of the archeological resources contained within the Rocky Gorge and Triadelphia reservoirs, to consist of Phase I survey of the properties and Phase II testing at two rockshelter sites, one of which was 18MO173. Phase II-level test excavations were carried out during April and May of that year. The work was funded by WSSC in partnership with MHT.

Phase II excavation began with the establishment of a 1 X 1 m grid oriented to the trend of the rear rockshelter wall. Excavation units were placed within the shelter to assess the site’s potential. One unit was placed within the center of the rock shelter. A contiguous block of 5 units was set along the north end of the shelter. Within the block, two units lay inside the drip line. All of the units, except for one, were one meter square. The smaller unit measured only 70 cm north south due to a large boulder along its south side.

After each test unit was laid out, an elevation control corner was selected (typically the highest corner). A line level string was attached to this corner. Relative line level string depths to the remaining three corners and the center of the units were then recorded. The soils within the units were excavated by trowel. Larger rocks and those which appeared to be associated with features were left in place. The other miscellaneous rock fragments were either manually removed or extracted through the use of a hammer and chisel. The tools were collected and placed in a container. The residual materials within the screen were examined for artifacts and, then, were placed in colanders and washed with water. The cleaned residuals were placed on trays and were sorted for any artifacts which may have been missed during the dry screening process. This additional cleaning procedure was undertaken due to the nature of the surrounding matrix, which tended to conceal artifacts. All artifacts, except modern objects, were retained. Selected in situ artifacts were provenienced within each test unit by triangulation and by line level string depth readings.

Soils were excavated by natural stratigraphy, unless strata were more than 10 cm thick. These thicker strata were subdivided into 10 cm levels. Five-point surface elevations (4 corners and the center) were recorded at the start of each new level. Soil texture, color, soil inclusions, and observed artifacts were recorded on standardized forms using standard methods and nomenclature. Measured floor plans and soil profiles were also drawn and photographed. In addition, the general excavation activities were recorded using color slide, black and white print, and color print photography.

Archeological features were treated as singular components. Their matrices were excavated and processed separately. Surface elevations were taken by line level string. Surface and, as appropriate, intermediate plan views were recorded. The features, according to their shape, size, and apparent depth were excavated either in whole, in quadrants, or in halves. Cross sections were prepared accordingly.

Two types of samples were collected: wood charcoal from non-modern hearths and representative samples from soil profiles. Both sample types were retrieved with clean trowels. The wood charcoal along with any associated matrix materials were placed in sealed aluminum foil packets which, in turn, were placed in labeled paper bags. All of the charcoal present was collected. The soil samples were placed in labeled, sealed plastic bags. The soil samples were approximately a half liter in volume.

One small circular pit of undetermined function (Feature 1), one natural soil discoloration (Feature 2), and two modern hearths (Features 3 and 4) were recorded during the 2003 excavations. The circular pit was about 30 cm in diameter and 10 cm in maximum depth. Its matrix consisted of a slightly silty fine sand which was black in color. No artifacts were found in the feature itself. A possible buried soil horizon was encountered in the central portion of the rock shelter. This slightly darker soil did not produce artifacts, but chemical analysis of these soils revealed noticeably higher magnesium (Mg), phosphorus (P), potassium (K), and calcium (Ca) readings than the other soils. The high phosphorous levels, in particular, suggest a former living surface.

A total of 104 prehistoric artifacts was recovered during testing at 18MO173. This assemblage included 4 projectile points or point fragments, 1 biface, 1 graver/perforator, a diabase quarry pick, 17 decortication flakes, 68 other flakes, 4 pieces of fire-cracked rock, and 8 shell-tempered sherds. Identifiable projectile points included a rhyolite Guilford point and quartz side-notched variant of Selby Bay. These points suggest occupations in the Middle Archaic and Middle Woodland periods. All 8 ceramic sherds are identifiable as Mockley net-impressed wares, again, pointing towards a Middle Woodland occupation.

Evidence of historic use of the site appears limited to the period from the mid 20th century to the present.

The 2003 archeological investigation at 18MO173 indicate, at least, two periods of relatively light occupation during prehistoric times. The first occurred during the Middle Archaic as indicated by the presence of a rhyolite Guilford point (ca. 4000 BC). The second occurred during the Middle Woodland as indicated by the recovery of Mockley net-impressed pottery (ca. AD 10 to AD 900). Earlier occupations are suggested by an apparent buried soil horizon which lies beneath the central portion of the rockshelter. The site may have some research potential, if the buried soil horizon noted in the central portion of the site is, indeed, a former living surface and remains intact. Such has yet to be proven.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Site Number:</th>
<th>18MO173</th>
<th>Site Name:</th>
<th>Flat Rock Shelter</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Other name(s):</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Brief Description:</td>
<td></td>
<td>Middle Archaic &amp; Middle Woodland Rockshelter</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Site Name: Flat Rock Shelter

Site Number: 18MO173

Brief Description: Middle Archaic & Middle Woodland Rockshelter

Prehistoric: Yes

Historic: No

Unknown: No