

THE RAVEN SITE (18HO252): AN EARLY 18TH CENTURY PLANTATION IN HOWARD COUNTY

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Abstract

Recent repairs to the Triadelphia dam on the border of Howard and Montgomery Counties produced low lake water levels that had not been seen since the dam's creation in 1948. This resulted in both opportunities and threats to the archeological sites that had been so long submerged. Access to these cultural resources was provided to both professional archeologists and potential looters. This paper presents the result of an effort to salvage data from one such site—the Raven site (18HO252)—which currently represents the oldest known historic archeological site in Howard County.

Introduction

This report presents the results of an archeological salvage investigation conducted at the Raven site, in the Triadelphia Reservoir, Brighton, Howard County, Maryland (Figure 1). The investigation was conducted by the Anne Arundel County Trust for Preservation, Inc. in partnership with Anne Arundel County's *Lost Towns Project*, on behalf of the Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission. These investigations consisted of a controlled surface collection and a non-ferrous metal detector survey of the site conducted in June and July of 2006.

The salvage investigation was undertaken due to unusual circumstances. Repairs to the dam had resulted in historically low water levels, which exposed numerous artifacts on the surface of the site, which is normally submerged. This presented not only an opportunity to investigate a resource that is usually inaccessible—at least to terrestrial archeologists—but also provided an immediate threat of artifact removal by collectors and looters. As such, this survey was initiated to salvage cultural data during this unusual low-water interval.

The investigation was successful in that over 1100 artifacts were recovered and curated, and the location of a primary residence dating from ca. 1732 - 1768 was identified with some specificity. Although diffuse prehistoric artifacts, as well as historic artifacts from the late 17th century to the present were recovered, the mid-18th century plantation represents the most significant cultural resource present within the study area.

Raven Site Discovery

The Raven site is currently the earliest known historic archeological site in Howard County, perhaps dating to the late 17th century, with a firm occupation by 1732. Maryland archeologist Wayne Clark first discovered and reported the site in 2002 during a survey of the Triadelphia Reservoir conducted during low lake levels (Clark and Inashima 2003). The Raven site is located near the eastern shore of the Piedmont Patuxent River, in the Triadelphia Reservoir (Figure 2). At normal lake levels, the site is completely submerged (Figure 3). After Brighton Dam was built and Triadelphia Reservoir created in 1948, portions of the site have been exposed approximately six times. The site lies on a small ridge that projects towards the relict river course about 1500 feet northeast of the Brighton Dam.

It is now known that the primary manifestation at the Raven site is an 18th century plantation, although historic artifacts ranging from the late 17th to 20th centuries were recovered. Prehistoric artifacts were also recovered which indicate occupations during the Woodland period dating roughly from A.D. 200 to 1250.

The core of the site is approximately 200 x 200 feet, though there is light artifact scatter over most of the exposed peninsula. Soils at the site have been deflated almost to the C-horizon—the sterile subsoil—and an aver

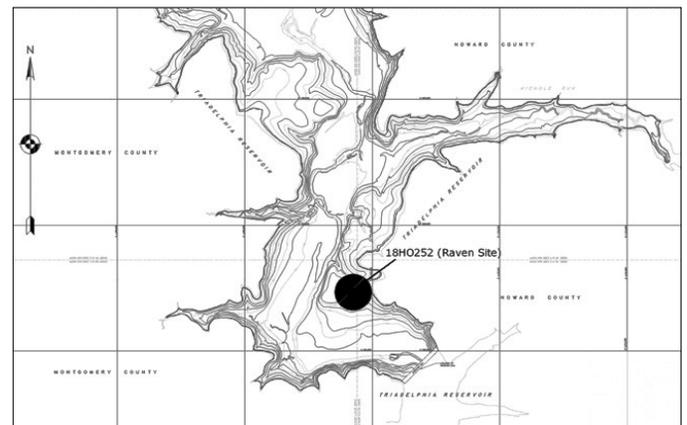


FIGURE 1. Location of the Raven site (18HO252) in the Triadelphia Reservoir.



FIGURE 2. View from the site towards the eastern shore-line of the Patuxent River, with the Brighton Dam to the southeast. (Photo by Wayne Clark)

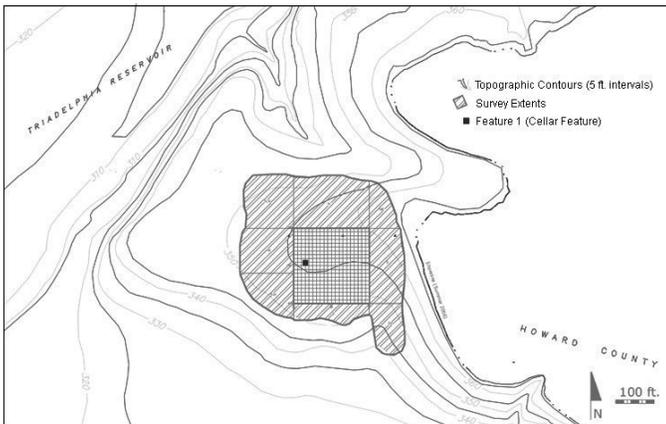


FIGURE 3. Detail of site location and bathymetric contours at the Triadelphia Reservoir.

age of about three inches of cultural deposits in silt remains on top of the subsoil. The artifacts are also highly deflated, but are apparently in good relative position. The Raven site was at risk of looting when exposed, and important diagnostic artifacts noted by Wayne Clark and Dr. Al Luckenbach, County Archaeologist for Anne Arundel County, during surface survey (including a Jack's Reef Corner-notched projectile point, a Bellarmine jug mask, and a small sherd of North Devon sgraffito pottery) were not found during the later formal surface collection. Whether the loss of the artifacts is due to looting, the floodwaters that filled the lake between surface survey and surface collection, or human error, is impossible to determine. However, the fact that these diagnostic artifacts were noted at one point and later were not collected during a controlled and methodical surface survey underlined the necessity of conducting a major collection of the remaining artifacts visible at the site.

Local Regional History

The region of Howard County in which the Raven site is located was historically referred to as a "barrens" (Marye 1955a, 1955b, 1955c), which was a term applied to lands without timber (Marye 1955b:139). The barrens are believed to have been created by fires set by Native Americans to clear underbrush and attract game. At the end of the 17th century (while still part of Anne Arundel County), the lands along the upper Patuxent River, where the Raven site lies, are described as "remote and not likely to be seated in some time" (Marye 1921:128 cited from Patents, Liber D.D., No. 5, f. 711). The area was considered a wilderness, though people such as Adam Shipley and Richard Snowden were beginning to settle it by the late 17th-century. In order to ensure the safety of the area, Thomas Brown, "the Patuxent Ranger," was commissioned in 1699 by Richard Snowden (Stabler 1948:109) to range "from Mr. Snowden's plantation [east of Laurel] to the farthest limits of the Patuxent," and he traveled as far west as Clarksville (Holland 1987:xxxii, quoting Dorsey 1968), only a few miles from the Raven site.

One of the most significant developments during the historic period was the construction of a bridge during the first half of the 18th century. Green's Bridge was first mentioned in the *Maryland Gazette* on December 6, 1749 (see Clark and Inashima 2003). The bridge was located about a quarter mile from the Raven site, and was on the principal market road between Frederick and Annapolis (Archives of Maryland 1947:394).

The Raven Site

The earliest record of colonial settlement on the tract of land where 18HO252 is located is a patent of land deeded to Thomas Hutchcraft, planter, by the Province of Maryland. The patent, dating to 1732, was for 175 acres. The tract was named Hutchcraft's Fortune, and was situated next to Snowden's Plantation (Anne Arundel County Office of Land Patents 1732). There is a second patent, dating to 1748, for vacant lands surrounding "Fortune" (Anne Arundel County Office of Land Patents 1748). This newly acquired land, consisting of 302 acres, was titled "Victory" (Figure 4). In a deed dating to 1750, Hutchcraft sold 60 acres of land on his Victory to Robert Wright for ten pounds sterling (Anne Arundel Land Deeds 1750).

The next document relating to this tract of land is a deed between Thomas Hutchcraft and Phillip Hammond in 1756. Hutchcraft sold some acreage in Victory "being four hundred and fifteen acres lying clear of Sixty acres another part of the said Tract belonging to a certain Robert Right" and three slaves: "One Negro Man named Harry one Negro Woman named Jenny one Negro Lad named Ned" (Anne Arundel County Land Deeds 1756). Hutch-

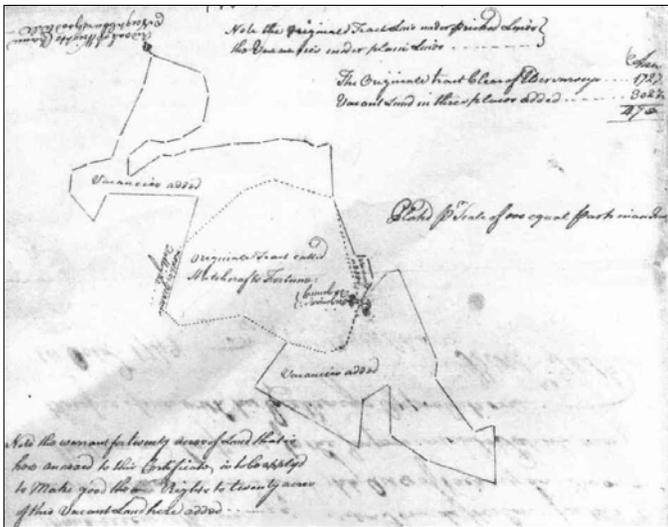


FIGURE 4. 1748 land plat for Hutchcraft’s “Fortune” and “Victory,” patent certificate 1629.

craft received 80 pounds sterling for the entire transaction.

In 1764 Thomas Hutchcraft sold 54 acres of his “Fortune” to William Ray Junior for 18 pounds eighteen shillings sterling (Anne Arundel County Land Deeds 1764). In 1766, Thomas Hutchcraft sold the rest of Victory, consisting of 361 acres, to Benjamin Purnell for 106 pounds sterling (Anne Arundel County Land Deeds 1766).

Finally, in 1768, Thomas Hutchcraft sold what was assumedly the last of his property, described in the deed as the tract originally titled Fortune, but after resurveying was named Victory. He sold the land consisting again of 361 acres, “together with the premises and appurtenances thereto,” to Benjamin Purnell. Again, the price was set for 106 pounds sterling and this tract of land contained his house site, presumably the “appurtenances” mentioned in the deed (Anne Arundel County Land Deeds 1768). This is the last time Thomas Hutchcraft is mentioned in any documentary record.

As will be seen, the Hutchcraft occupation date range from 1732 to 1768 fits well with the diagnostic artifacts recovered from the primary occupation at the Raven site.

Methodology

The crew of the *Lost Towns Project*, with the aid of Wayne Clark, Jim Benton, and several college interns, conducted a controlled surface collection on June 26, 2006 and July 18 & 20, 2006. The area of the site with the highest density of artifacts was determined based on the preliminary surveys of Wayne Clark and Al Luckenbach,

and this area was laid out in 400 10-foot square units (200 feet square). The grid was placed using a transit, stadia rod and tape, and the 10-foot intervals were marked with pin flags, each labeled with the coordinate data. Each unit was scanned from both north-to-south and east-to-west, and all artifacts observed were collected and bagged by unit (Figure 5). The bags were labeled with the respective coordinate data. The areas of lighter surface scatter, outside of the controlled grid, were also surveyed. Seven additional, irregularly sized collection units, consisting of approximately 1000 square feet, were added on the outside of the primary gridded area. These units—to the north, northwest, west, southwest, southeast, and northeast of the gridded area—extended over the rest of the exposed peninsula to what was at that time the water’s edge (Figure 6). Surface collection was conducted on these outlying areas, so that the surface collection covered the entire exposed peninsula. Visibility at the site was high overall, though approximately half of the units contained grasses that decreased visibility to 50-90% depending upon the unit.



FIGURE 5. Staff and interns conduct surface collection at the site. (Photo by Lauren Schiszik)

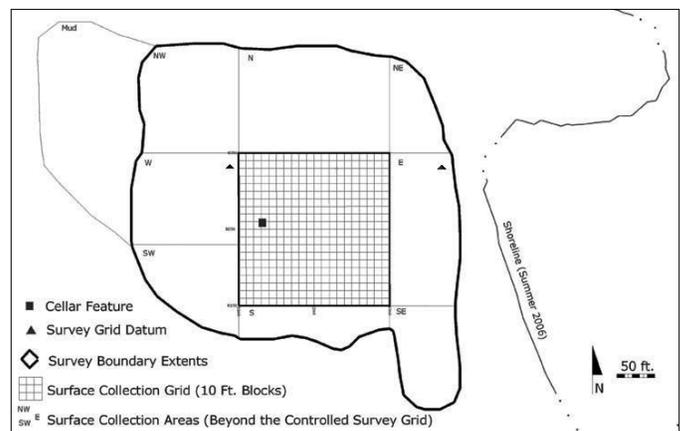


FIGURE 6. Detail of the areas of surface collection.

A non-ferrous metal detector survey across the site greatly enhanced the amount and quality of data collected at the site. The use of the metal detector helped determine that the site had been greatly deflated. Only two to three inches of soil remained over native, sterile clay. These soils appeared to be mainly re-deposited silt. The metal detector also greatly aided the recovery of diagnostic artifacts, particularly coins, button, buckles and spoon parts. In addition, the detector located a feature at N260E190. Hand coring determined that this feature was approximately 5 feet by 6 feet. It had a depth of 1.5 feet, and contained (near the top, as the feature was not excavated) a number of artifacts including a hoe, a few shards of colonial ceramics, a wrought nail, a buckle, mammal bone, a hinge, and green glass. This feature has been interpreted as a sub-floor storage cellar, presumably marking the location of the principle 1732 Hutchcraft structure that once stood at the Raven site.

Artifacts

A total of 1,120 artifacts were recovered during this investigation. These include everything from 3000 B.C. Native American projectile points to modern brown glass from Budweiser beer bottles.

Diagnostic artifacts—those that can be used to date a site—are, obviously, of central importance to any such study. Thus the recording of Selby Bay stemmed and Jack's Reef corner-notched (Figure 7) projectile points



FIGURE 7. Jack's Reef corner-notched projectile point.

from the Raven site allows the confirmation of Native American activity between roughly A.D. 200 and 1250.

For the historic period, archeologists frequently rely on a series of diagnostic ceramics to determine the approximate date of occupations (Table 1). As a general rule of thumb, tin-glazed earthenwares were the dominant high-end tablewares before roughly 1720, white salt-glazed stoneware dominated the period from 1720-1760, creamware 1760-1780, pearlware 1780-1820, and whiteware after 1820. By this generalized, shorthand convention one can see that while white salt-glazed (n=10) and pearlware (n=11) are both present, the 64 sherds of creamware clearly indicate a predominant occupation of the Raven site in the third quarter of the 18th century. This conclusion is supported by the large amount (n=137) of English brown stoneware (1690-1775), and Staffordshire slipware (n=23; 1670-1795). As will be seen, the significant amount of whiteware likely came from the 19th century house site which once stood on the peninsula immediately to the north of the Raven site.

TABLE 1. Raven site ceramics (dates from Noël Hume 1969).

CERAMIC TYPE	DATE RANGE	MEDIAN DATE	QTY.
Stoneware			228
Rhenish brown	1634-1700	1667	8
Rhenish blue and gray	1650-1725	1668	21
English brown	1690-1775	1733	137
Refined white salt-glazed	1740-1775	1758	10
Domestic	1800-1900	1850	10
Unidentified	~	~	42
Earthenware			325
<i>Coarse</i>			186
North Devon gravel-tempered	1650-1775	1713	2
North Devon gravel-free	~	~	10
North Devon indeterminate	~	~	1
Staffordshire slipware	1670-1795	1733	23
Tin-Glazed	1600-1802	1700	5
Buff paste	~	~	4
Redware	~	~	135
Unidentified	~	~	6
<i>Refined</i>			139
Creamware	1765-1820	1793	64
"Jackfield" ware	1740-1760	1750	2
Pearlware	1780-1830	1805	11
Whiteware	1820-1900	1860	26
Unidentified	~	~	36
Porcelain			2
Pipes			26
Ceramics Total			581

Other historic period diagnostic artifacts recovered included coins—almost all half pennies—dating from the reigns of the English monarchs William III (1694-1702; Figure 8) and George II (1727-1760; Figure 9). While this generally confirms the hypothesized main occupation of the Raven site, it should be noted that coins are notorious for surviving long after their initial mint date. A piece of an English stoneware tankard stamped with a crown and a faint “WR” (for William III Rex), was also found at the site. This stamp does not limit the artifact to the eight-year-long reign of William III, as it was used on tankards up to 1792 (Noël Hume 1969:113). Nonetheless, this artifact also appears to confirm the hypothesized main occupation of the site.

Artifacts that were obviously modern—such as tin cans and glass bottles dating to post-1950—often were not collected. Those that were catalogued were not generally taken into account for this portion of the study, as they appear to be predominantly related to recreational activities at the modern reservoir.



FIGURE 8. William III half penny, 1694-1702.



FIGURE 9. George II half penny, 1727-1760.

Distributional Analysis

There were two major goals of the Raven site investigation. One was simply the retrieval of artifacts to prevent their loss to looters; the other was to analyze the distribution of artifacts across the site in an attempt to localize temporal components and activity areas. Given that the extremely low water levels existing during this investigation are historically rare, the opportunity to retrieve data from the Raven site also presented an unusual opportunity. Since significant soil deflation has occurred at the site, controlled surface collection and distributional analyses also represent the best method of studying this specific cultural resource.

The Raven site was of particular interest because it probably represents the earliest historical site currently known in Howard County. Initial reports indicated the presence of early Rhenish stonewares (including a Bellarmine mask [1620-1700]) along with objects like horseshoes, which seemed to suggest the possibility that the site actually represented a 17th century component related to the

presence of an Anne Arundel County ranger station in the general area. Although data was collected on human occupation at the Raven site over thousands of years, the isolation of the predominant 17th or 18th century occupation was the primary goal.

Two mapping methods were utilized to analyze the distribution patterns of the artifacts. Contour maps were used for artifacts groups with large numbers of artifacts, and piece plot maps were used for artifacts groups that only had a few examples. The distributions for agricultural artifacts, tools, glass, and various ceramic types are mapped by piece plotting. Piece plot maps are often more informative when working with small numbers of artifacts, while artifact classes with higher counts, such as architectural artifacts, domestic 17th and 18th century artifacts (Figure 10), faunal remains, personal items and prehistoric lithic distributions are better shown with contour maps.

The discovery of a sub-floor cellar feature by metal detector (first indicated by a tobacco hoe found at the unusual depth of 10 inches) provides an initial hypothesis that can readily be tested through distributional analyses. Figure 11 shows the location of architectural artifacts in relation to this feature. The pattern reveals conclusive evidence that a structure did exist at this location. Note also that the larger regional blocks around the central grid produced only a negligible amount of architectural remains. In order to further explore this contention, Figure 11 also presents a hypothetical building location, which can be useful in analyzing the distribution of other artifact types.

Figure 12 shows the distribution of creamware ceramics, which generally dominate household wares during the period of roughly 1760-1780. This figure clearly

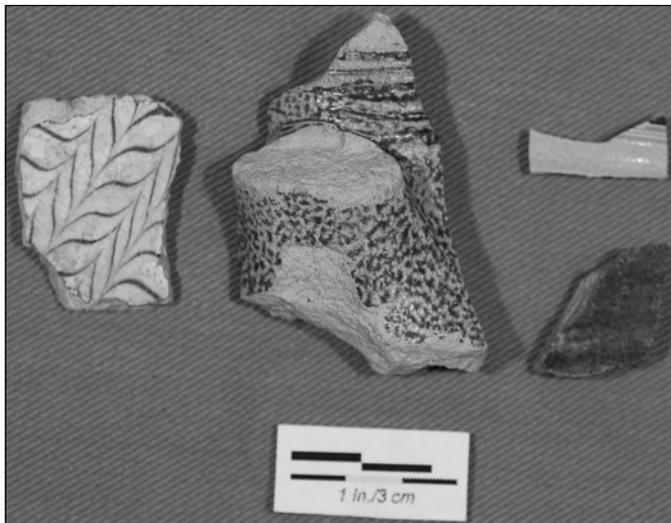


FIGURE 10. Examples of 17th and 18th century artifacts from the site. *Left to right*: Lead-glazed slipware, Rhenish brown stoneware, (top) Rhenish blue and gray stoneware, (bottom) olive bottle glass.

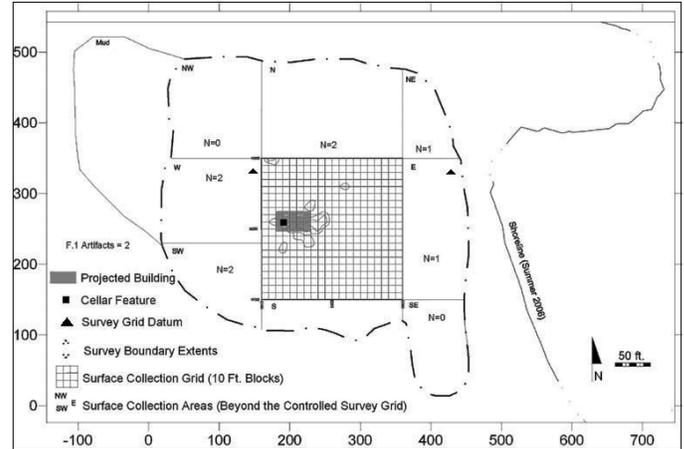


FIGURE 11. 18HO252 architectural artifact (bricks, nails, hinges, windowglass) distribution with projected building.

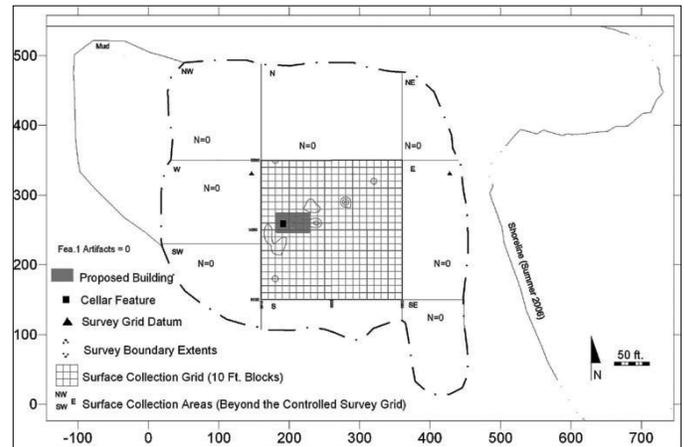


FIGURE 12. 18HO252 creamware distribution.

shows how these ceramics are oriented towards the hypothetical structure—implying that it was occupied during these dates. In Figure 13, a variety of 17th and 18th century historic artifacts are lumped into a large category, which can also be seen as centering on the proposed building site. Other concentrations in this category, especially to the north, west, and southeast might be indication of the existence of activity areas, or plantation outbuildings associated with the main structure. Further confirmation of the principal house site can be seen in the distribution of personal items seen in Figure 14. These include a relatively large number of buckles, buttons, and coins recovered during the metal detector survey.

The distributions of faunal remains (Figure 15) demonstrate a more anomalous pattern. While some orientation can be seen around the hypothetical house site, a much more notable pattern is in evidence to the southeast. This clearly indicates the existence of either an activity area (butchering or food processing) or, more likely, the presence of a food-related outbuilding.

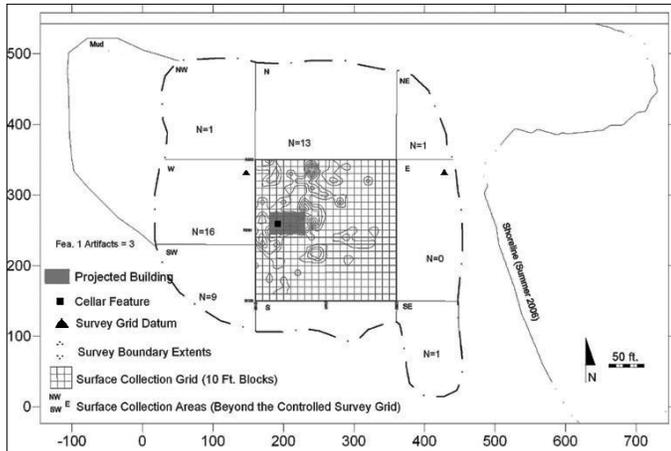


FIGURE 13. 18HO252 17th and 18th century domestic artifact distribution. Artifacts include Rhenish blue and gray stoneware, Rhenish gray stoneware, English brown stoneware, Rhenish brown stoneware, English white salt-glazed stoneware, tin-glazed earthenware, North Devon gravel-tempered, Staffordshire slipware, Jackfield, creamware, olive glass, metal curtain ring, kettle, table implements, leaded glass, bottle glass.

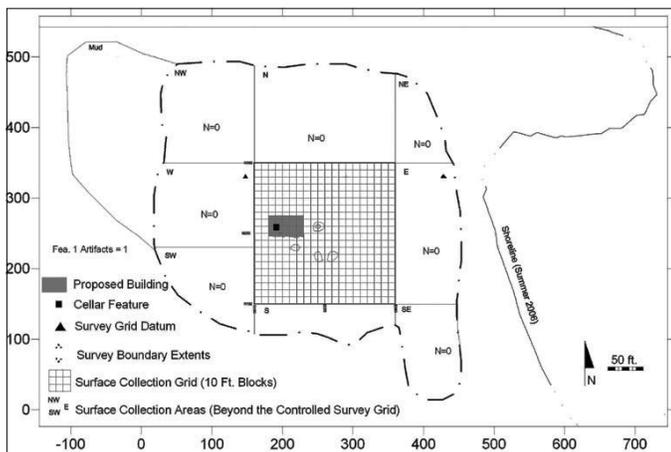


FIGURE 14. 18HO252 personal items (tobacco pipes, coins, buckles, buttons, scribbled-on slate) distribution.

As might be expected, another anomalous pattern is evidenced by the distribution of prehistoric lithics (Figure 16). These are primarily lithic reduction flakes from tool making and are clearly clustered in the west/northwest section of the study area. The recovery of a Selby Bay projectile point and the prior recording of a Jack's Reef corner-notched point at the Raven site, suggest that these lithics are the result of prehistoric occupation during the Middle and Late Woodland periods, from A.D. 200 to 1250. Obviously, the projectile points are indicative of hunting activities at the site, while a single nutting stone (used to process acorns and the like) is indicative of plant resource exploitation.

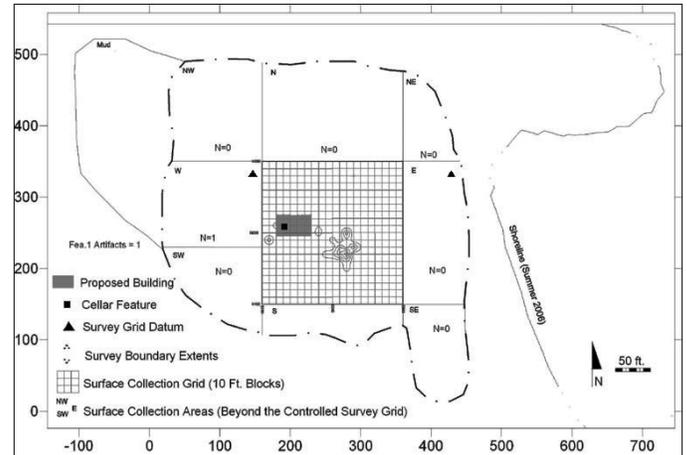


FIGURE 15. 18HO252 faunal distribution.

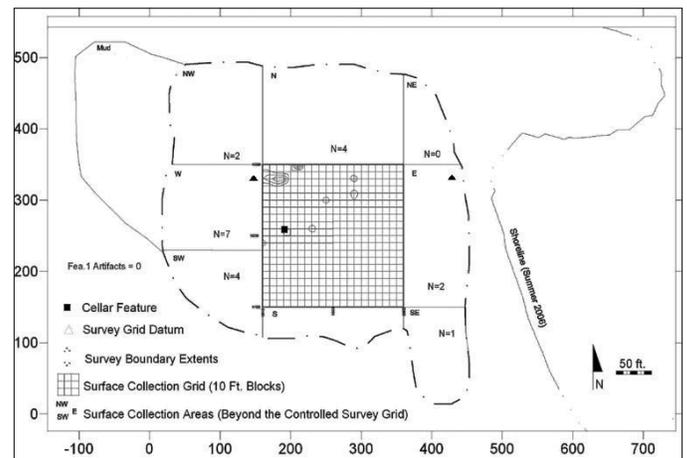


FIGURE 16. 18HO252 prehistoric lithics distribution.

Although distribution maps for all artifact types were produced, not all proved to be as informative as those discussed so far. Examples of several other patterns are shown in Figures 17 and 18 (agricultural artifacts, tools and weaponry), which all show clear orientation to the hypothetical plantation house, while, in contrast, pearlware (ca. 1780) and whiteware (ca. 1820) (Figures 19 and 20) show little reference to the proposed building. The latter two figures suggest that the building was no longer occupied during the main periods of popularity for these ceramic types. In fact, the heavy concentration of whiteware in the northern portion of the study area strongly suggests that these ceramics are originating with the known 19th century site located on the next peninsula to the north.

Finally, Figure 21 demonstrates that 19th and 20th century colored glass artifacts are clearly not oriented to the proposed structure, while aqua-colored glass (Figure 22) is relatively evenly distributed across the peninsula.

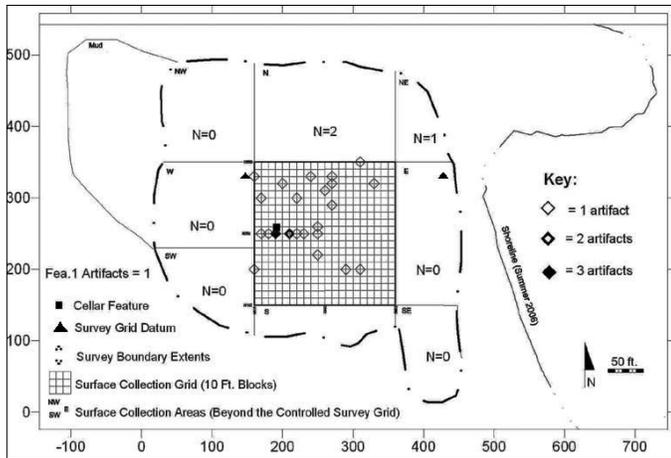


FIGURE 17. 18HO252 agricultural artifact (hoes, horse furniture, hardware) distribution.

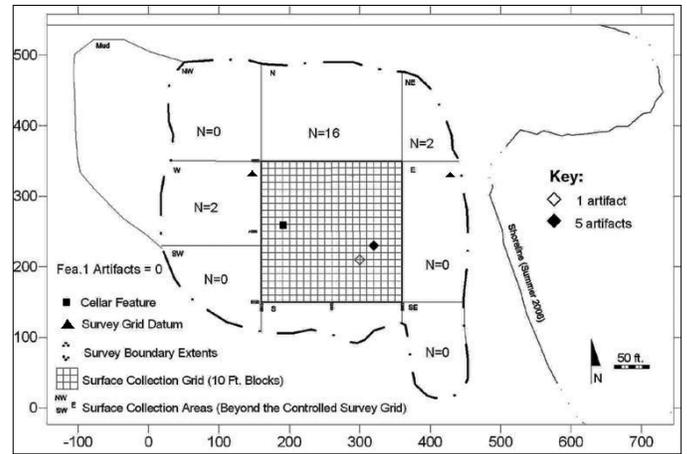


FIGURE 20. 18HO252 whiteware distribution.

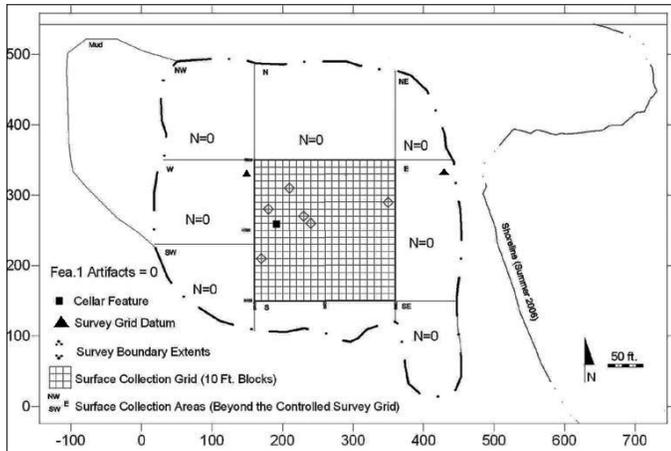


FIGURE 18. 18HO252 tool (gun flint, lead shot, draw knife, hatchet) distribution.

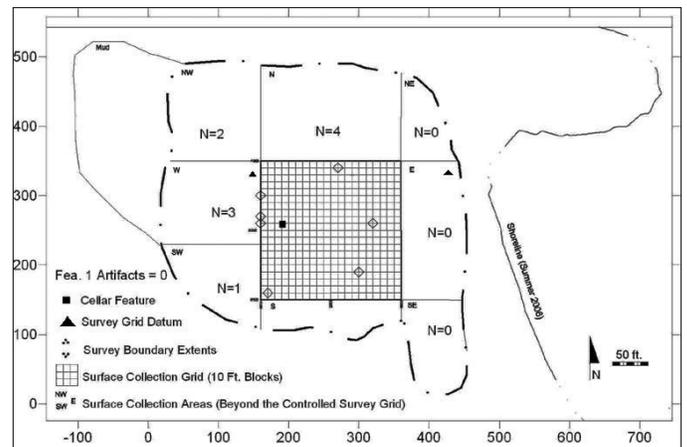


FIGURE 21. 18HO252 non-aqua (manganese [violet], Noxema [dark blue], amber, brown, clear, and green) ves-sel glass distribution.

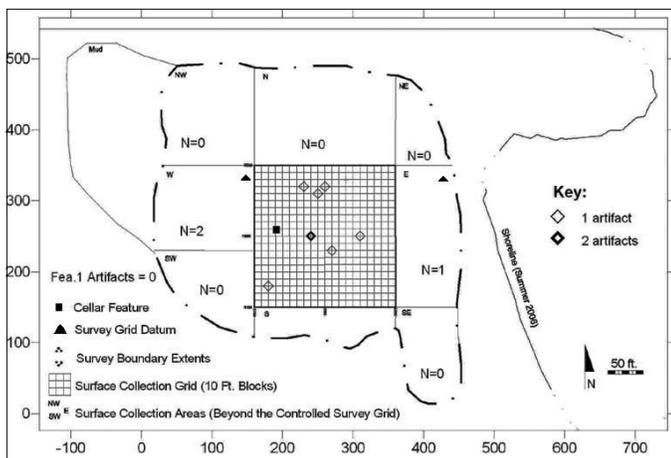


FIGURE 19. 18HO252 pearlware distribution.

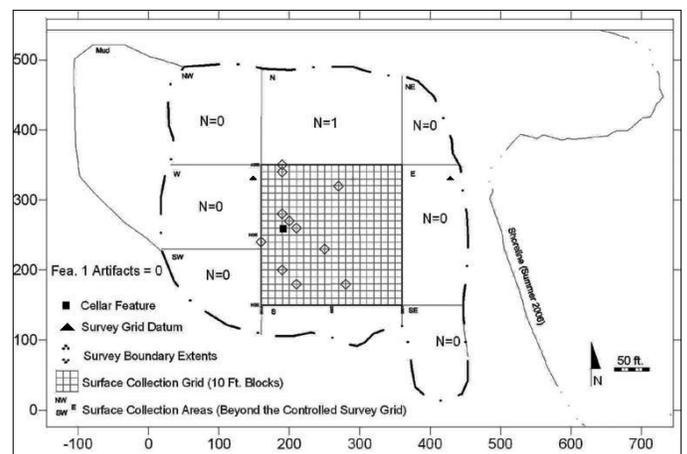


FIGURE 22. 18HO252 aqua vessl glass distribution.

Conclusions

The distribution patterns of the 17th and 18th century domestic artifacts, personal items, agricultural artifacts, architectural artifacts and tools suggest that these artifact groups are temporally related. Diagnostic artifacts in these categories date primarily to the 18th century, and therefore support the archival evidence that Thomas Hutchcraft inhabited this site during the period 1732-1768. The artifacts found correlate with the fact that Hutchcraft was a planter—hoes, along with other agricultural artifacts were found—and that he presumably lived on the property. Hutchcraft was well-to-do, as evidenced by the material culture found during the surface collection. His house had windowpanes, he owned pewter table implements, and even had a bed with curtains (as evidenced by a curtain ring). As shown in the 1756 land deed, he owned a few slaves, presumably to farm his tobacco fields. He was one of the earliest settlers and planters now known to have inhabited early Howard County.

There is no clear evidence that there was any historic habitation prior to Hutchcraft although the presence (noted in earlier surveys) of both a Rhenish “Bellarmine” mask and North Devon sgraffito-decorated earthenware might suggest some human occupation during the earlier, late 17th century, Anne Arundel County “ranger” period. Horseshoes and weaponry artifacts might also belong to this hypothetical occupation.

A variety of chert, quartz, quartzite, and rhyolite lithics located in the northwestern part of the area are evidence of prehistoric habitation. One point was identified as a Selby Bay stemmed point, which dates to A.D. 200 to 800, during the Middle Woodland period. Another projectile point documented during an earlier survey of the site proved to be a Jack’s Reef corner-notched—a type which is associated with the late Middle Woodland to early Late Woodland period, dating to around A.D. 800 to 1250. This date range is indicative of an occupation possibly spanning at least several centuries.

The presence of whiteware and various types of glass, points to some activity on the site during the 19th century, though most of these artifacts were found in the northern outlier blocks and seem to be related to the known 19th century site on the next peninsula to the north.

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