

2010 Watson Surface Collection



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Abstract

In 2010 ten members of the Charles County Archaeological Society of Maryland, Inc. and/or the Archaeological Society of Maryland, Inc. spent one day surface collecting on a farm near the Zekiah Swamp. One prehistoric site was identified as well as another field containing significant lithic scatter. The artifacts included a large number of fire-cracked rocks and quartz flakes as well as other artifacts related to tool making.

Introduction

In 2010 Joe Gleason approached James Gibb and the Charles County Archeological Society of Maryland, Inc. (CCASM) about Archaic artifacts he had found on a farm near the Zekiah Swamp in Charles County. Joe made arrangements for CCASM to spend one day surface collecting on the farm. On November 6, 2010, Joe Gleason along with ten members of CCASM and/or ASM (Archeological Society of Maryland, Inc.) walked two fields planted with alfalfa. Six of the participants were in ASM's Certified Archeological Technician Program. Although the farm covered over 40 acres, the area available for walking was fairly limited. Most of the fields had already been planted in winter wheat, and the rows were too narrow to be walked. For the fields that were surface collected, maps at the Maryland Historic Trust indicated one area with a possible site but it had not been assigned a site number. Figure 4 shows a map of the terrain in this area.

Background

The Zekiah Swamp is a twenty-one mile tributary of the Wicomico River that flows into the Potomac River. Artifacts found in the Zekiah Swamp drainage indicate Native Americans have been there for thousands of years. The sites recorded include a Paleoindian Period site as much as 10,000 years old.¹

A large number of sites found in the Zekiah Swamp drainage are from the Archaic Period. Figure 1 shows a sample of the stemmed and notched projectile points and groundstone tools that had been collected in the area being surface collected by one individual during his lifetime.

At initial English Contact in the seventeenth century Native American territory extended inland up the Wicomico River to the Zekiah Swamp. Around the end of that century the Piscataway tribe took refuge in the Zekiah Swamp.²

Early colonists also came to the Zekiah Swamp area. Notably, Charles Calvert built his summer home called "His Lordship's Manor of Zachay" there³. Figure 2 includes some historic artifacts that had also been collected in the area.



**Figure 1: Examples of Zekiah
Archaic Artifacts**



**Figure 2: Zekiah Artifacts Including
Historic Artifacts**

Method

Participants walked a given field with each person covering a strip of ground approximately eight feet wide. A flag was placed at the location of each suspected artifact. On completion of walking a field the location of each artifact was determined using a Total Station provided by Jim Gibb, and the readings were recorded in a logbook. In the second field an area with a large number of artifacts was identified. Rather than map each artifact in this area, only the artifacts around the perimeter were mapped. Since time and experience were limited, the artifacts at a given location were bagged, and the bags were numbered to synchronize with the location readings. Later the artifacts were reviewed and catalogued. If the landowner does not want the artifacts, the Maryland Archaeological Conservation Laboratory will be contacted about possible storage.



Figure 3: Flagging Artifacts in Field 1



Figure 4: Terrain Map of Area Collected

Artifact Assemblage

The artifacts found in the different areas are shown in Table 1. The vast majority of artifacts recovered in all three areas were fire-cracked rocks (FCR) and flakes, mainly quartz. A map showing the location of the artifacts collected is shown in Figure 5.

Table 1: Artifacts Found

Type	Field			Total
	1	2S	2-Locus 1	
FCR	37	4	66	107
Flake	35	9	58	102
Core	7	2	9	18
Biface	2	1	8	11
Point	2	0	0	2
Scraper	0	1	2	3
Uniface	0	0	1	1
Hammerstone	1	0	2	3
Mano	0	0	2	2
Metate	0	0	1	1
Possible Tool	0	0	2	2
Stone	0	1	0	1
Shell	1	0	0	1
Brick	2	1	0	3
Bottle	0	0	1	1
Total	87	19	152	258

Table 2: Worked Lithic Materials

Material	Field			Total
	1	2S	2-Locus 1	
Worked Quartz	39	12	65	116
Worked Quartzite	6	0	15	21
Worked Stone	0	1	0	1
Total	45	13	80	138

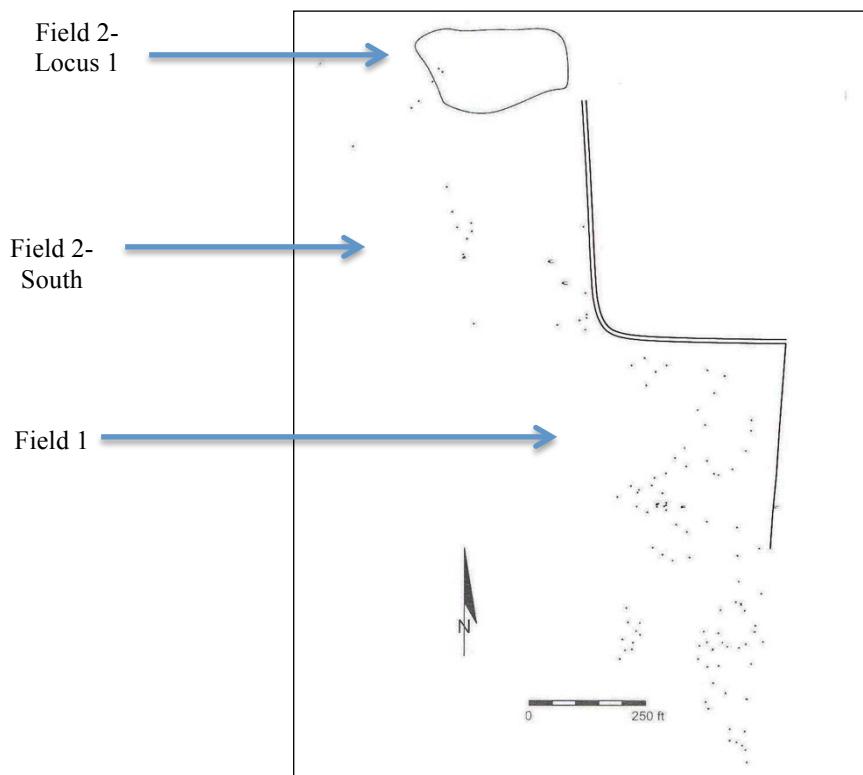


Figure 5: Map of Artifacts Collected

Field 1

The eighty-seven artifacts found in Field 1 were scattered across the field without any large concentrated areas. The area covered by artifacts was 334 feet by 882 feet. One quartz side-notched projectile point (Figure 6) and the base of another projectile point (Figure 7) were found. The point type of the complete point is probably Halifax that is associated with the Middle to Late

Archaic Periods. The base is either associated with a thick triangular point or is the expanding stem of a larger point.



Figure 6: Point (#A13)



Figure 7: Point Base (#14)

Field 1 also contained a few fragments of possible tools. There were two biface fragments, one 3.2 cm and the other 4.4 cm in length.

Artifacts related to tool making included four quartzite cores and three quartz bipolar cores. There were 35 flakes. Some of these could have been used as possible tools. The flakes ranged from 1.12 cm to 6.0 cm in length with an average of 3.1 cm. One possible hammerstone also was found.

Quartz comprises 87% of the worked lithics found in Field 1. The rest were quartzite.

Field 1 also contained 37 fire-cracked rocks that ranged from 2.1 cm to 12.2 cm in length with an average of 6.0 cm.

The historic artifacts from Field 1 consisted of two brick fragments, the largest being 8.3 cm in length. One fragment was found in the southern part of the field and the other was found closer to the road.

Field 2 (Southern Part)

The artifacts found in the southern part of Field 2 were localized in predominately three different areas. They were dispersed without any obvious pattern in each of these areas. The total area covered was approximately 503 feet by 570 feet. Although the area covered was almost as large as that covered in Field 1, only 19 artifacts were recovered. Mainly quartz flakes were collected. The flakes ranged in size from 1 cm to 5.3 cm in length with an average of 3.1 cm. Some of these could have been used as tools.

One tool, a quartz end scraper (Figure 8), was found in Field 2. Artifacts related to tool making included two quartz bipolar cores.

All of the worked lithics found in Field 2 were quartz.



Figure 8: End Scraper- side view (#B14)

Field 2 also contained five fire-cracked rocks that ranged from 3.0 cm to 9.0 cm in length with an average of 5.8 cm. The stone in Table 1 refers to a large flat stone that is battered on one end.

The only historic artifact from Field 2 was half of a brick.

Field 2 (Locus 1)

On a small rise next to the road and near the center of Field 2 a large concentration of artifacts was found, and this area was designated as Locus 1. Due to time constraints and also to the large number of artifacts, only the perimeter of the locus was measured. The artifacts covered an area of approximately 343 feet by 203 feet.

Of 152 artifacts recovered, 65 were fire-cracked rocks that ranged from 3.1 cm to 8.2 cm in length. A few of these were quartz. The rest were quartzite.

Possible tools found included eight biface fragments (Figure 9) that ranged from 2.8 cm to 8.5 cm in length and one 3.7 cm uniface fragment. One of the bifaces is probably a point stem fragment. Of particular interest was a 3.5 cm long quartz end scraper (Figure 10). There was also a uniface tool, probably a scraper (Figure 11), found on the perimeter of the locus.



Figure 9: Bifaces (#L2)



Figure 10: End Scraper (#L5)



Figure 11: Uniface (#B24)

In addition three fragments with abrasion suggestive of use were found. These are possibly two mano fragments (Figure 12) and one metate fragment (Figure 13). Two pitted stones that might be tools were also recovered.

Artifacts related to tool making included three quartzite cores and five quartz bipolar cores (Figure 14). There were 54 flakes. 36 of these could have been used as possible tools. The flakes ranged from 1.2 cm to 8.6 cm in length. Two hammerstone fragments were recovered with the largest fragment being 7.0 cm long.

Over 80% of the lithicdebitage was quartz with the remainder being quartzite.

The only historic artifact recovered was part of the neck and finish of a cobalt blue glass bottle.



Figure 12: Possible Manos



Figure 13: Possible Metate (#L14)



Figure 14: Cores (#L9)

Discussion

People have been surface collecting these fields for years. One gentleman who has lived on the farm for over sixty years has thousands of projectile points as well as ground stone tools and some historic artifacts (Figures 1 and 2). In the past plowing of the fields increased the likelihood of finding points and other artifacts. The probability of finding similar artifacts was low especially since the fields had not been plowed recently. Only one field and part of another field could be covered in the time available.

The total historic material found was minimal and consisted of three brick fragments, one oyster shell, and one bottle fragment. The 253 artifacts recovered indicated a prehistoric presence.

In Field 1 artifacts were scattered fairly evenly throughout the filed, although there were some areas with no artifacts. One projectile point and the base of another point were found. They were found 284 feet apart. The complete point could be a Halifax point that dates from the Middle to Late Archaic Periods. The base is either associated with a thick triangular point or is the expanding stem of a larger point. Triangular points are associated with the Late Woodland Period. Evidence of tool making is indicated by the seven cores, the hammerstone, and the large number of flakes. Quartz was the predominant material used. Fire-cracked rock comprises 43% of the recovered material. It is associated with cooking and also with fish and plant food processing.

Field 2 produced one area referred to as Locus 1 with a high concentration of artifacts, 59% of all artifacts found on this day. In Field 2 south of Locus 1 two extended areas with eight to nine artifacts each were found. Also four artifacts were found to the west and southwest of Locus 1. These four artifacts may also be associated with Locus 1. Unlike Field 1 and Locus 1 where over 40% of the artifacts were fire-cracked rocks, only about 20% of the artifacts from this southern area were fire-cracked rocks. Also, despite the low number of artifacts (nineteen), there were two cores and one scraper. The two cores were 54 feet apart in the same general area. The northernmost core was 374 feet south of Locus 1. The quartz end scraper was found in the second extended area and was 261 feet south of Locus 1.

The area of greatest interest was Locus 1 that had 152 artifacts in a concentrated area. There were no diagnostic points like those found in Field 1. Evidence of tool making is indicated by the nine cores, two hammerstones, eight biface fragments, three uniface fragments including one end scraper, and the large number of flakes and possible tools. 44% of the artifacts were fire-cracked rocks. The site is approximately 343 feet by 203 feet and is on a small rise to the east of a run that flows into the Zekiah Swamp. Most of the areas to the south and east had few artifacts. There was not time to cover the area north of the locus.

Conclusions

The high concentration of artifacts surface collected at Locus 1 indicates this is a prehistoric site or part of a prehistoric site. The lack of diagnostic artifacts prevents any further narrowing of the time frame. Additional surface collection is needed to determine the northern extent of the site. As with many activities, some of the more interesting finds come at the end.

As for Field 1 there is evidently a prehistoric presence there, but nothing further can be gathered by surface collecting. At this time no further activity is recommended for this area.

References

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3. Julia King, *Pathways to History, Charles County Maryland, 1658-2008* (Mount Victoria, MD: Smallwood Foundation, Inc., 2008), 19-21.
3. Julia King, *Pathways to History, Charles County Maryland, 1658-2008* (Mount Victoria, MD: Smallwood Foundation, Inc., 2008), 42.

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