

# Hickory (18HA167)

The Hickory Site (18HA167) is a multicomponent site with a moderately dense Late Archaic/Early Woodland base camp occupation, and a late 18th- to early 19th-century historic artifact scatter intermixed with debris from a nearby early 20th-century canning factory and a recreation area. The site is in central Harford County, Maryland.

The town of Hickory developed during the last quarter of the 18th century and first appeared on a map in 1795. Between 1822 and 1839, George Rider assembled a 135-acre property at Hickory. Of that, 70 acres known as “Johnson’s Range” was probably in the location of Site 18HA167. Prior to Rider’s acquisition, Johnson’s Range was previously purchased in 1811 by Samuel James from Thomas Johnson, for whom the land was originally surveyed in the 18th century. Rider was listed in the 1850 census as a hotel keeper and by 1858 he operated the Hickory Tavern. Hickory had a post office at least by 1831, and by 1858 Hickory had a church, a store, 11 residences, an inn, and a tavern. On the 1858 map, Rider’s residence/tavern/inn was located north of the site, on the north side of Conowingo Road. Rider’s son apparently farmed the acreage south of Conowingo Road, close to the site location, but did not live on that property.

Site 18HA167 was first identified in 1987 during a Phase I archaeological survey of the proposed Hickory Bypass. The project area was divided into 13 parcels on the basis of topography, vegetation cover, and patterns of residential or commercial development. Site 18HA167 was encountered in Parcel 6, with 37 shovel test pits were excavated.

A total of 86 prehistoric artifacts were recovered from the site. Three steatite bowl fragments (2 rims and 1 body sherd) were recovered from the low terraces along Northwest Branch in the southernmost portion of the site. Their presence suggested a Late Archaic/Early Woodland base camp occupation. All of the lithic materials identified at the site were locally available with the exception of rhyolite, which can be found elsewhere in Maryland. The character of the assemblage indicated that tool maintenance and limited manufacture were activities conducted at the site. Two historic features may have been constructed for picnics in recent times. Feature 1 was a mortared stone hearth and Feature 2 was a circular alignment of bricks. Traces of a possible farm road were also reportedly on the site. The historic artifact assemblage contained 101 artifacts. These appeared to be primarily associated with the nearby canning factory refuse pond, the gravel access roads, or a modern hearth/picnic area, but the redware and cut nail suggested 19th-century refuse.

Phase II archaeological testing was undertaken in 1995. In addition to the prehistoric component, it was determined that the historic component had the potential to address specific research questions. Specific research related to the historic component of the site included collecting data on the late 18th- and early 19th-century owners of the site, assessing the historic use of the site area and identifying specific activity loci.

Field methods involved the excavation of 259 STPs and 18 test units. As a result of the shovel tests, 2 prehistoric loci were identified at the site. Locus A, focused in the southern half of the site, consisted of a lithic debitage scatter. Following excavation, a steatite concentration on the

crest of the ridge was determined to be natural in origin. It appeared that the steatite formation had been impacted by historic plowing and surface weathering, which gave it the appearance of waste material from vessel manufacture. A total of 1,471 pieces of steatite were collected from the site but ultimately not retained.

A historic artifact scatter (Locus B) was encountered in the central portion of the site near a gravel access road. The low density scatter of domestic and architectural materials was generally confined to an area that measured 90 x 100 m. Two 1x1 m test units and one 4 m<sup>2</sup> were excavated in Locus B.

A total of 790 prehistoric artifacts were recovered during the Phase II investigations at Site 18HA167. Based on the assemblage, lithic activities at the site appeared to have focused on tool maintenance and limited expedient tool production. A total of 1,326 historic artifacts were recovered from Site 18HA167 during the Phase II investigations. The artifacts dated primarily from the late 18th through the middle 19th centuries with a mean ceramic date of ca. 1819. It was postulated that the artifacts within the scatter were representative of a single deposit episode or limited multiple depositions that occurred over a short period of time, probably in the early stages of the agricultural development of the land.

The Hickory Site (18HA167) is a multicomponent site with a moderately dense Late Archaic/Early Woodland base camp occupation, and a late 18th- to early 19th-century historic artifact scatter associated with an early farm road and agricultural activities, intermixed with 20th- century debris associated with recreational activities and a nearby early 20th-century canning factory.