

APPENDIX IV: GLOSSARY

Aboriginal - Prehistoric peoples in North America.

Abrader - A rock that shows evidence of being used for the shaping of wood and bone implements.

Adze - An axe-like tool with a blade at right angles to the handle.

Aeolian - Carried by the wind.

Alluvium - Deposits of gravel, sand, and soil which are transported by flowing water.

Archaeology - The study of the people of the past through the recovery and analysis of the artifacts they left behind and their context.

Artifact - Any object shaped or modified by man, or as a result of human activity.

Assemblage - The array of contemporary objects and associations found at an archaeological site.

Atlatl - A throwing board or spearthrower, used in both the Old and New Worlds. The atlatl functions like an extension of the arm, providing more thrusting leverage.

Base camp - A prehistoric dwelling site for hunter-gatherers from which resource procurement forays are made.

Battering Tool - A stone tool used for flint knapping such as a hammerstone, or for food processing.

Bay/Basin Feature - Also known as whale wallows, these shallow ponds, thought to have been formed during the end of the Pleistocene, represent a favored prehistoric settlement location.

Biface - A stone tool that has been flaked on both sides.

Boreal - The forest areas and tundras of the North Temperate Zone and Arctic region.

B. P. - Years before present, which has been standardized at A.D. 1950.

Cache - A collection of artifacts and/or ecofacts which have been deliberately stored for future use.

Catchment - The area surrounding a habitation site from which resources are obtained.

Celt - A prehistoric axlike tool.

Cobble - Frequent lithic tool resource for prehistoric peoples.

Colluvium - A loose deposit of rock debris accumulated at the base of a cliff or slope.

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Contracting Stem Point - A point that has a stem with sides which come inward; opposite of flared point.

Core - A piece of stone from which other pieces of stone are flaked off to make artifacts.

Cortex - Weathered exterior of a piece of lithic material, may be either vein or water-worn cortex.

Coulbourn Ware - A Woodland I (400 B.C. - 100 B.C.) conoidal shaped ceramic of coiled construction tempered almost entirely with clay nodules or clay fragments whose exterior may be cord marked or net impressed.

Cretaceous Geologic Period - The third period of the Mesozoic era characterized by the development of flowering plants and the disappearance of dinosaurs.

Cryptocrystalline - Indistinctly crystalline; having an indistinguishable crystalline structure (i.e. - chert and jasper).

Culture - The nonbiological mechanism of human adaptation.

Curated Technology - When artifacts are reused and transported so often that they are rarely deposited in contexts which reflect their actual manufacture and use.

Dames Quarter Black Stone Tempered - A Woodland I (1200 B.C. - 700 B.C.) modeled and possibly coiled ceramic characterized by flat bottoms and tempered with crushed black hornblende or gneiss. Surfaces are usually smooth and occasionally the flat bases are mat impressed.

Datum - A fixed point from which all levels are measured. A datum line is a line of fixed elevation secured by nails in the baulk of a square to help in making a scaled drawing of the baulk face.

Debitage - Waste material from the manufacture of stone tools.

Deciduous - Leaf bearing trees that shed in autumn.

Detritus - Particles of rock or other material worn or broken away from a mass, as by the action of water or glacial ice; any disintegrated material; debris.

Diachronic - Referring to two or more reference points in time.

Diagnostic - Artifact with identifying traits that categorize the item to a specific time period.

Direct Percussion - Part of the lithic reduction process, a percussor is directly applied to the worked material with a sharp blow.

Discards - Stone tools which have been heavily resharpened and modified to be further utilized as tools.

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Distal End - Reference to the pointed end of a projectile point.

Early Stage Biface Discard - A biface which was used as a tool early in its manufacturing/reduction stage, and then later discarded, usually due to extensive damage.

Early Stage Biface Reject - A biface that never passed beyond the initial steps of stone tool production due to either flaws in the raw material or manufacturing error.

Ecofact - The nonartifactual remains found in archaeological sites such as seeds, bones, and plant pollen.

Ecotone - An ecological community of mixed vegetation formed by the overlapping of adjoining communities.

Edaphic Factors - The factors in an environment which are due to the physical, chemical, and biological characteristics of the soil.

Estuary - The part of the wide lower course of a river where its current is met by the tides.

Extant - Still in existence.

Facie - A stratigraphic body distinguished from others by appearance or composition.

Fall Line - A transition zone from the Piedmont Uplands to the flatter Coastal Plain.

Feature - Any soil disturbance or discoloration that reflects human activity or an artifact that, being too large to remove from a site, normally is recorded only; for example, house, storage pits, etc. can also be a very dense collection of artifacts: for example, a lithic chipping feature.

Feldspar - Silicates of aluminum, containing sodium, potassium, calcium, or barium or combinations of these elements. Clay is the chief substance formed when weathering decomposes feldspars.

Fire-cracked Rock - A rock that has fractured and/or discolored due to exposure to fire.

Flake - A piece of waste material from the manufacture of stone tools, caused by percussion or pressure applied to the object by an external agent (e.g. hammerstone, antler pressure flaker); flake itself may be further utilized as a tool (see "Debitage").

Flotation - The use of fluid suspension to recover tiny plant and bone fragments from archaeological sites.

Fluvial - Produced by the action of flowing water.

Geomorphology - The geologic study of the configuration and evolution of land forms.

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Gorget - A perforated thin ground stone tool.

Graver - A lithic tool with a protruding edge or point.

Ground Stone Tool - A tool that has been produced by grinding or pecking.

Hammerstone - A rounded stone to be used as a hammer and which is sometimes grooved for hafting to a handle. Usually ungrooved, however, it has a variety of forms ranging from a crudely shaped sphere to a finely ground ovoid with a battered end.

Hell Island Ware - A Woodland I (A.D. 600 - A.D. 1000) conoidal shaped ceramic tempered with finely crushed quartz and mica inclusions, whose exterior surface may be fabric impressed or cord impressed.

Historic - The time period after the appearance of written records. In the New World, this generally refers to the time period after the beginning of European settlement at approximately A.D. 1600.

Holocene - The latest division of the Quaternary period, which commenced around 12,000 B.P.

Hydrology - The scientific study of the properties, distribution, and effects of water on the earth's surface, in the soil and underlying rocks, and in the atmosphere.

Hydrophyte - A plant that grows in and is adapted to an aquatic or very wet environment.

Illuviation - The deposition in an underlying soil layer of colloids, soluble salts, and mineral particles leached out of an overlying soil layer.

Indirect Percussion - In the lithic reduction process, a punch is held against the worked material and the punch is struck a sharp blow with a percussor.

In Situ - In the original place.

Interface - A surface regarded as the common boundary of two bodies or spaces.

Ironstone - One of several kinds of iron ore with admixtures of silica and clay.

Laminae - A thin layer of sediment that is typically 0.05 to 1.0 mm thick.

Late Stage Biface Reject - A biface which was either broken during the later stages of manufacture, or which had been reduced improperly, so that further reduction would not produce a usable tool.

Lithic - Pertaining to or consisting of stone.

Loam - A loose soil composed of roughly equal parts of silt, clay and sand, especially a kind containing organic matter and of great fertility.

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Locus - A defined archaeological site or testing location.

Macro-band Base Camp - For a hunter-gatherer society, an archaeological site one hectare or larger in area characterized by a wide variety of tool types, abundant ceramics, semi-subterranean house structures, storage pit features, and abundant debitage from tool manufacture and reduction.

Marl - Soft and unconsolidated calcium carbonate, usually mixed with varying amounts of clay or other impurities.

Marcey Creek Plain - A Woodland I (1200 B.C. - 900 B.C.) ceramic tempered with crushed steatite characterized by flat-bottomed vessels made by modeling with lug handles sometimes used. This ceramic type is the first true ceramics of Delaware.

Mean Ceramic Date - A date obtained from the study of historic ceramics recovered from a site that approximates the median occupation date of the site.

Mega Fauna - A number of species of presently extinct mammals including mammoths and mastodons.

Mesic Forest - A vegetation pattern characterized by relatively wet-adapted plant species, such as oak and hemlock forests.

Micro-band - A component of macro-band, perhaps one or two extended families, which periodically operates independently of the macro-band group.

Microenvironment - A characteristic biotic assemblage, often exploited by a distinctive ecological niche.

Midden - Refuse deposits resulting from human activities, generally consisting of soil, food remains such as animal bone and shell, and discarded artifacts.

Minguannan Ware - A Woodland II (A.D. 1000 - A.D. 1600) ceramic tempered with sand, grit, and crushed quartz whose surface treatment includes smoothed surfaces, corded surfaces, and smoothed-over-corded surfaces. Decorations include incising, cord-wrapped-stick, and direct cord impressions.

Mockley Ware - A Woodland I (A.D. 110 - A.D. 1000) conoidal shaped ceramic tempered with oyster shell or ribbed mussel whose exterior surface may be smoothed, cord marked, or net impressed.

Neritic - The waters and deposits of a shoreline.

Notched Point - Areas cut into a point which were used to bind the point to a shaft.

Palynology - The scientific study of spores and pollen.

Pedestrian Survey - The walking and collecting of an archaeological site without the excavation of subsurface units.

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Pedogenic - Referring to the development of soils in place.

Physiographic Zone - Regions or areas that are characterized by a particular geography, geology, and topography.

Piedmont Region - An area of gently rolling to hilly land lying between the Appalachian Mountains and the Atlantic Coastal Plain. The division between the Piedmont Region and the Coastal Plain is marked by the Fall Line.

Pleistocene - A division of the geologic Quaternary Period, which began around 2.3 to 3 million years ago and is associated with rapid hominid evolution from Australopithecinae to Homo sapiens sapiens.

Plow Zone - In a plowed field, the upper layer of organic soil which is continually reworked by the plow. In the Middle Atlantic region this layer is about 8-12 inches thick.

Post Hole - A hole dug in the ground into which a post is placed.

Post Mold - The organic stain in the ground which is left by a decayed wooden post. A postmold stain may occur inside of a posthole stain on an archaeological site.

Prehistoric - The time period before the appearance of written records. In the New World this time period generally refers to indigenous, pre-Contact societies.

Primary Lithic Resource - Outcrops of workable stone that are found within the matrix of their original formation.

Procurement Site - A place that is visited because there is a particular item to acquire; i.e., lithic outcrops.

Projectile Point - Strictly speaking, a biface attached to the head of an airborne item of weaponry, like an arrow or a thrown dart; frequently used indiscriminately when referring to any biface.

Pseudo-cord - Method of impressing designs in ceramics by use of a cord-wrapped stick.

Quarry Site - A site located at either a primary or secondary outcrop of high-quality lithic material used in the manufacture of stone tools.

Quarry Reduction Station - A place where material obtained from a quarry site such as large flakes, cores and very early stage bifaces were taken for further reduction into smaller primary-thinned bifaces.

Ranked Society - A society in which there is unequal access to the higher status categories; many people who are qualified for high status positions are unable to achieve them.

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Rejects - Stone tools which have been thrown away due to manufacturing or material flaws.

Secondary Lithic Resource - Cobbles and boulders of variable size that have been removed from the matrix of their original formation, transported by alluvial or glacial agents, and redeposited at a new location which may be quite distant from their original source.

Selden Island Ware - A Woodland I (1000 B.C. - 700 B.C.) ceramic of modeled or coiled construction with round or flat bases. The flat bases are associated with modeled vessels and the round bases are associated with coiled vessels. Cord impressed exteriors are common and the temper is steatite.

Sherd - A piece of broken pottery.

Site - A space of ground containing evidence of human occupation that archaeologists select for their dig.

Soapstone - Steatite, a soft material that was carved with stone tools to produce stone bowls etc.

Soil Horizon - Soils are divided in 3 horizons, which reflect different kinds of chemical and physical processes that have resulted from changing climatic conditions.

Spokeshave - A stone tool with a semicircular concavity used for smoothing spears or arrowshafts.

Staging Site - A temporary camp where preparations are made for another operation such as a hunting foray.

Stemmed Point - A point that has an obvious area which was used to bind or haft a point to a shaft.

Stratigraphy - The examination of the soil layering on an archaeological site; the characteristics of each individual stratum and its relationship to others in the sequence is critical to understanding the temporal and spatial characteristics of the site.

Strata - The various layers of human or geological origin which comprise archaeological sites.

Subsoil - Sterile, naturally occurring soils not changed by human occupation.

Surface Collection - Act of walking along a surface such as an open field or plowed field, and collecting artifacts seen on the surface of the ground.

Susquehannock Indians - Iroquoian people living along the lower reaches of the Susquehanna River.

Synchronic - Referring to a single period in time.

Temper - The foreign material introduced into clay to keep pottery from cracking when fired; also known as "grog".

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