AA-78 100-600 (Middle Woodland period)
Rose Haven Shell Midden Site
(Old Colony Cove Site)
Friendship Road (MD 261)
Old Colony Cove
Private

A continuous shell midden, the Rose Haven Shell Midden site is 2,000 feet long by 300 feet wide with cultural debris extending up to 700 feet inland from the tidal marsh. The site is the southernmost and last known undeveloped extensive shell midden of the Selby Bay phase, c. A.D. 100-600. Analysis of surface collections revealed that of 180 diagnostic sherds, 83% are Mockley Net Impressed, while 4% are Mockley Cord Marked. The remaining 13% of sherds are composed of steatite bowl fragments, Popes Creek and Accokeek Net-Impressed grit-tempered sherds (quartz and igneous rock), and shell-tempered wares of the tidewater phases of the Late Woodland period. The ceramic collections suggest that the major accumulation of shell occurred during the Middle Woodland period, Selby Bay phase. With the exception of an occasional soft-shell clam, oyster shells predominate. Shell density varies over the site's surface. While osteological analysis is incomplete, deer remains have been identified.

The Rose Haven site is the last known of a number of extensive Selby Bay phase shell middens which has escaped destruction. The extensive deposit of shell extending over a 2,000 foot area, was accumulated primarily during the Selby Bay phase, c. A.D. 100-600, although other occupational debris indicates less intense utilization from B.C. 1700 to A.D. 1500. The Selby Bay phase is of particular significance to Middle Atlantic prehistory because the extensive trade networks established in the region by earlier cultures, including trade connections west of the Allegany Front, appear with decreasing regularity during the early part of the Selby Bay phase. The clay subsoil revealed by the 1974 excavations combined with the presence of faunal remains on the surface indicates excellent preservation of ecological data which is usually absent from other known Selby Bay phase sites because they are typically situated in sandy soils where organic remains are rarely preserved.