

AA-81  
Beck Northeast Site  
Patuxent River Road  
Davidsonville  
County

4000 BC-900 AD  
(Late Archaic-Middle Woodland)

This site was discovered by Thomas Mayr in the 1930s when land clearing operations revealed a buried midden level of the Middle Woodland period Selby Bay phase. Following the subsequent decades of cultivation and surface collection by Henry Beck, the Maryland Historical Trust conducted test excavations in 1981. These included the excavations of seven test squares and the completion of a comprehensive controlled surface collection of the site. The test excavations revealed at least 1.7 meters of stratified deposits spanning the period from 4000 B.C. to 900 A.D. The deposits included a midden layer dating to the Middle Woodland period Selby Bay phase (A.D. 200-800) as well as hearths, pits, and artifact deposits dating to the Early Woodland period Accokeek phase (750 B.C. to 400 B.C.), the Late Archaic period Broadspear tradition (c. 1900 B.C. to 1500 B.C.), and the early Late Archaic period (4000 B.C. to 1900 B.C.).

The Beck Northeast site contains stratified archeological deposits of importance to understanding the evolution of American Indian society in the Middle Atlantic region. Investigations of the site over the past 50 years have revealed artifacts dating from the Late Archaic period through the Middle Woodland period, Selby Bay phase. The stratified deposits extend to a depth of at least 1.7 meters below the surface and contain rare preserved carbonized plant remains of value in reconstructing the diet of and vegetation associated with the Indians who occupied the site. The deposits also document changes in the type of lithic material used by the Indians through time, data of value in interpreting the surface sites which predominate in the Coastal Plain province. The in situ Selby Bay phase midden is of regional research value as similar deposits at the adjacent Ruf site served as the type collection for the definition of the Selby Bay phase.