

Listed On:  
VLR 09/16/1982  
NRHP 12/13/1985

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Form No. 10-308 (Rev. 10-74)

VLR - 9/16/82 NRHP - 12/13/85

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM**

FOR FEDERAL PROPERTIES

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DATE ENTERED

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS  
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

**1 NAME**

HISTORIC **MD-172 Robertson Mountain Site**

AND/OR COMMON

**2 LOCATION**

STREET & NUMBER **SHENANDOAH NATIONAL PARK**

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN **LURAY** CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

STATE **VIRGINIA** VICINITY OF **[REDACTED]** COUNTY **MADISON** CODE **07**

STATE **VIRGINIA** CODE **51** COUNTY **MADISON** CODE **113**

**3 CLASSIFICATION**

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SITE	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC ACQUISITION	<input type="checkbox"/> ACCESSIBLE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL
			<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY
			<input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
			<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
			<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
			<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
			<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:

**4 AGENCY**

REGIONAL HEADQUARTERS: (If applicable) **NATIONAL PARK SERVICE**

STREET & NUMBER **143 SOUTH THIRD STREET**

CITY, TOWN **PHILADELPHIA** VICINITY OF **PENNSYLVANIA** STATE

**5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. **N.A.**

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN STATE

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE **N.A.**

DATE **N.A.** FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN STATE

## 7 DESCRIPTION

### CONDITION

EXCELLENT  
 GOOD  
 FAIR

DETERIORATED  
 RUINS  
 UNEXPOSED

### CHECK ONE

UNALTERED  
 ALTERED

### CHECK ONE

ORIGINAL SITE  
 MOVED DATE \_\_\_\_\_

### DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

#### Context:

MD-172 was located by a two stage process of intensive survey and testing in the Spring of 1978, in our North Central Areal Transect of the Shenandoah National Park (Foss 1979: 68-71). Its location, testing and evaluation were part of an extensive, systematic, park-wide cultural resources study funded by the Mid-Atlantic Region of the NPS. The survey process involved an initial "walk through survey" in which no surface collections were made but "potentially habitable areas" checked for indications of prehistoric activity without disturbing the ground surface. Diagnostic pieces, if noted during this stage, were generally recorded and marked by monuments but usually not collected until the next stage of survey if they were abundant. The second stage of investigations involved a series of shovel transects to define the extent of the site, pinpoint areas of horizontal clustering of artifacts and define basic stratigraphy. At this time, a one meter test square was dug in arbitrary ten centimeter levels.

The second stage process proved so productive that more extensive test excavations were carried out in September, 1978, to increase our sample size and the results of these tests are currently under analysis by Foss.

The three test squares excavated at MD-172 yielded a total of 17 projectile points, ranging from Early Archaic (Kirk-like and St. Albans) through Middle Archaic (Morrow Mountain), Late Archaic (Halifax and Savannah River) and into Early Woodland (represented by several small, side & corner notched specimens). Thus, prehistoric occupation at MD-172 is attested between about 6000 B.C. and as late as 800 A.D.

Significantly, there is evidence for vertical stratification at MD-172. Late Archaic points were found in the upper 18 cm. and on the surface; the Middle Archaic Morrow Mountain point came from the 10-20 cm. level of the one meter test square and the Early Archaic points were found in the bottom level of the same test square.

#### Environment:

\_\_\_\_\_ A series of springs erupting along the geological interface lie approximately 200 meters down the gentle \_\_\_\_\_ slope.

\_\_\_\_\_ Historical research indicates that this spot was probably never timbered or plowed. The fact that today MD-172 is covered by large oak trees and even larger stumps of chestnut trees killed in the blight of 1917 is more direct proof of the antiquity of forest cover at this site. The area is rich in springs and abundant game is present. It seems certain that minimal although critical soil accumulation has occurred uninterrupted since prehistoric times in this saddle.

# 8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES Early Archaic - Early Woodland BUILDER/ARCHITECT

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

[REDACTED]

The fact that it was occupied for the entire span of the Archaic makes it a valuable witness to major cultural and environmental changes. Its high elevation renders it all the more interesting and perhaps comparable to Big Meadows in terms of the effect of greater rainfall-snowfall and temperature variation on the timing of seasonal food procurement activities. The possibility that phytoliths might be analyzed stratigraphically within stratigraphic contexts offers a slim hope for inferring the vegetational cycle over most of the Holocene.

The site of MD-172 also may provide needed carbon 14 dates to control the relative point chronology used in the Blue Ridge. Viewed from the other end of the chronological spectrum, the association of MD-172 [REDACTED] has recently been able to trace European settlement to the early 18th century A.D. suggests that it might be possible to link the prehistoric and protohistoric chronologies eventually to that employed by historians in this little documented area. From a historical viewpoint, MD-172 is interesting for the apparent fact that it was never timbered and reserved for a special type of economic exploitation (the use of tan bark and chestnuts). The result of this special care has been the preservation of something vaguely resembling original eastern forest (though almost certainly "virgin" forest) in this region of the Park. In addition to the significance of this occurrence for prehistory and history, we cannot overlook the interpretive value of MD-172 sitting in one of the most botanical unaltered sections of the Shenandoah National Park, it is possible to use the site as a striking visual reminder of the habitat in which the first inhabitants of the mountains flourished for thousands of years. The site is an object lesson in the relationship between the management of natural and cultural resources and the value of conservation.

**9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES**

Foss, Robert W.  
1979 A Geographical Perspective on Blue Ridge Prehistory: The Prehistoric Survey. in Patterns in Time, by M.A. Hoffman (ed.). Mid-Atlantic Region, NPS, Philadelphia, Pa.

**10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA**

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 3,000 square meters

UTM REFERENCES

A	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING	B	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C				D			

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

[REDACTED]

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

**11 FORM PREPARED BY**

NAME / TITLE

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ORGANIZATION

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STREET & NUMBER

201 TILLMAN HALL

TELEPHONE

(309) 298-1188

CITY OR TOWN

MACOMB

STATE

ILLINOIS 61455

**12 CERTIFICATION OF NOMINATION**

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER RECOMMENDATION

YES \_\_\_\_\_ NO \_\_\_\_\_ NONE \_\_\_\_\_

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

In compliance with Executive Order 11593, I hereby nominate this property to the National Register, certifying that the State Historic Preservation Officer has been allowed 90 days in which to present the nomination to the State Review Board and to evaluate its significance. The evaluated level of significance is \_\_\_\_\_ National \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Local.

FEDERAL REPRESENTATIVE SIGNATURE

TITLE

DATE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

ATTEST:

DATE

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 7 PAGE 1

Archaeological Investigations:

MD-172 has, ultimately, been subjected to a three part process of investigation, involving initial discovery, first stage testing and a second stage testing during the Summer of 1978. In all, three test squares were excavated. During the second stage of survey/testing, a one meter square (#1) was located in an area where shovel transects indicated a concentration of material (see map). The shovel transects were spaced 5 m. apart and in each spot tested, five shovels full of dirt were sieved through  $\frac{1}{4}$  inch mesh. The same mesh size was used to sift all squares. The September, 1978, tests, conducted by a crew of volunteers, opened two two meter squares (#'s 2 and 3).

Although study of the September, 1978, excavations is still underway, 441 artifacts from the earlier test excavations and all the projectile points have been analyzed (see appended table). Generally speaking, artifact density is high and hunting and stone tool manufacture well attested. MD-172 seems to be one of the larger sites discovered in our explorations (ca. 3,000 square meters) and is the only upland, open air site with evidence of a stratigraphic record spanning six millennia. It was probably a staging area for a number of activities and occupied for as many as one or two months at a time. Although our excavations did not answer the question, there seems a good possibility that features are preserved at MD-172.

Intrusions and Data Limitations:

The topographic situation of MD-172 in a saddle with some internal drainage plus the preservation of mature forest on the site probably since aboriginal times has minimized disturbance of the site. In fact, MD-172 is the least disturbed upland site in the Shenandoah National Park. There is evidence of vertical stratigraphy, at least in the center of the site where soil buildup is greatest, and a possibility that features are present. Erosion is and has been minimal due to the preservation of mature forest cover.

ITEM 9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES:

- Hoffman, Michael A. and Robert W. Foss  
1980 "Blue Ridge Prehistory: A General Perspective," Quarterly Bulletin,  
Archeological Society of Virginia, Vol. 34: 185-210.