

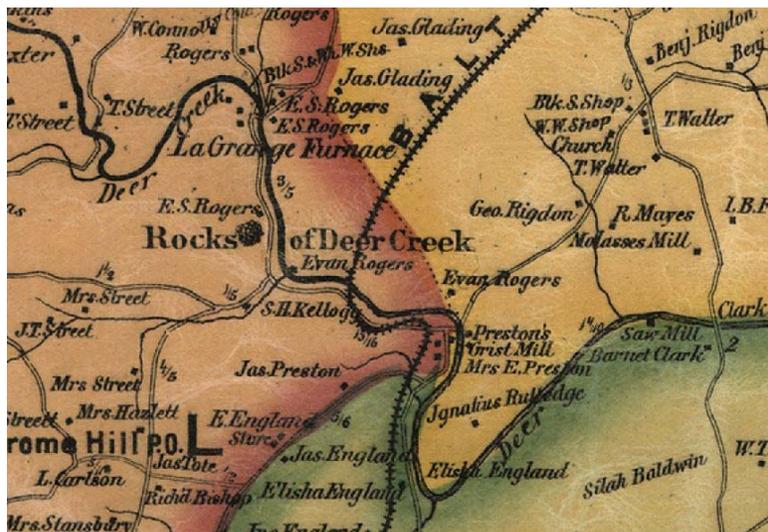
# Archeological Investigations Conducted by the Maryland State Highway Administration Along MD 24 through Rocks State Park

## Preliminary Research

The Maryland State Highway Administration (SHA) first evaluated the potential for archeological sites within the MD 24 corridor in 2005. The area studied extended from the St. Clair Bridge over Deer Creek, southward through Rocks State Park, to south of Stirrup Run just outside the park. Based on record checks, field visits, historic maps and photographs, publications, interviews, and other environmental and historical research, SHA concluded that, although no archeological sites had been recorded, the corridor likely contained archeological resources. We also noted that the King and Queen Seat adjacent to MD 24 corridor could have potential significance to modern Indians as a “traditional cultural property.” A traditional cultural property is a place that is closely associated with historical cultural practices or beliefs that are important to maintaining the identity of a community.

Based on our research, we expected to find evidence of pre-Contact American Indian sites; early mills along Deer Creek; remnants of the soapstone, chrome, and iron mining industries; stone quarrying; resources related to the La Grange Iron Works; former house sites; and resources related to the abandoned Maryland and Pennsylvania (Ma & Pa) Railroad.

One of the historic maps that we examined was the 1878 Map of Harford County created by Simon J. Martenet. This map shows the early road system including ancestral MD 24, Deer Creek, structure locations and their owners, and the “Rocks of Deer Creek” that were already a tourist attraction by that time. Although the railroad is also shown, this was a proposed route and differs from what was actually built in the early 1880’s.



*The project vicinity in 1878.*

Historic photographs on file at SHA documented conditions in 1934, when the 1907 bridge over Deer Creek was still in place, and the existing bridge was under construction. These photographs also provide clues about former structure locations, one of which can be seen in the background of the photograph below. The 1907 Deer Creek bridge at MD 24 and St. Clair Road was moved, and is still in use further south in the MD 24 corridor, providing access over Deer Creek to private property.



*This 1934 photograph of the 1907 St. Clair Bridge, taken while the current bridge was under construction, shows a former structure location in the background, and the King and Queen Seat along the tree line to the left.*

## **King and Queen Seats**

Although the King and Queen Seats will not be impacted by SHA's project, SHA investigated possible former or current use by Indian tribes. Local tradition (and signs in the Park) holds that the geological formation known as the King and Queen Seats, was culturally significant to the Susquehannock Indians. An 1879 popular history of the *Rocks of Deer Creek* by Thomas Wysong stated that in 1680 a Susquehannock village was once in the Rocks vicinity. Wysong narrated legends concerning Indian use of the King and Queen Seats and the Rocks area, but confessed to "intermingling fact and fancy." Virtually all subsequent published information about the Susquehannock use of the King and Queen Seats is based on Wysong's account.

SHA archeologists closely examined historical and archeological literature and contacted experts on the now extinct Susquehannock Indian tribe, but were not able to substantiate any associations of the Susquehannock Indians with the King and Queen Seats. The Susquehannock once had major villages in the lower Susquehanna River valley in Pennsylvania and also occupied sites in Southern and Western Maryland (Kent 1984). This tribe acted as middlemen and controlled much of the early colonial Indian/European trade. The remnants of the Susquehannock Tribe, by then known as the Conestoga Indians, were massacred by a gang known as the Paxton Boys in 1763 in Lancaster, Pennsylvania (Eshelman 1908).

SHA consulted with nine federally recognized tribes in New York and the Midwest with whom the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and SHA have a relationship: the Oneida Indian Nation, the Onondaga Nation, the Tuscarora Nation, the St. Regis Mohawk, the Delaware Indian Nation, the Delaware Indian Tribe, the Shawnee Tribe, the Eastern Shawnee Tribe of Oklahoma, and the Absentee-Shawnee Tribe of Oklahoma. We also contacted the Seneca. These contacts revealed no evidence that the King and Queen Seats represents a "traditional cultural property." SHA was unable to verify that Indians from New York used The Rocks in recent decades.

Information was also solicited from the Maryland Commission on Indian Affairs. No associations with Maryland Indian groups were reported. The Piscataway Indians in Maryland owned land north of Rocks Creek Park in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century, but this land was outside their traditional territory in Southern

Maryland. None of the three Piscataway communities indicated a relationship with the King and Queen Seats.

## Archeological Survey

In 2008, SHA hired a consultant to conduct an archeological survey of the MD 24 project corridor. Because future impacts to the full corridor are not yet known, the area surveyed extended 30 meters (98 ft) beyond the road edge on both sides of MD 24, as well as the Deer Creek streambed, from the St Clair Bridge to south of Stirrup Run. The archeological survey included additional detailed background research, walkovers of the project area, and small test excavations to locate and document archeological sites. In addition, the consultant recorded the above-ground remains of the La Grange Furnace site south of St. Clair Bridge Road. The remnants of the Ma & Pa Railroad bed on the west side of Deer Creek, both inside and immediately adjacent to the project area, were mapped and photographed.

Following the redesign of Section A of the MD 24 project, additional areas were surveyed in 2012 and 2013 by a second consultant. This survey examined a utility relocation corridor on the east side of Deer Creek, and narrow strips adjoining Deer Creek in the Wilson Picnic Area and the Hills Grove Picnic Area to be used for reforestation.

Seven archeological sites were identified during the archeological surveys and were assigned state site numbers. These include the Rogers House/Ramsay Store site (18HA308), two domestic sites with ruins (18HA309 and 310), the La Grange Furnace site (18HA311), the Preston Ford (18HA314), the Rocks Station (18HA322), and the Ramsay Hotel and Store (18HA323). During the archeological surveys, information was collected on the physical remains of the Ma & Pa Railroad bed, sections of abandoned roadbed, drill marks on rock faces, historic graffiti, and retaining walls along MD 24.



*Archeological survey of the Deer Creek streambed.*

The importance of archeological resources is evaluated using the four criteria of significance for listing in the National Register of Historic Places (National Register), in combination with the physical integrity of the specific archeological site (<http://www.nps.gov/history/nr/publications/bulletins/nrb15/>). Because archeological sites are already in a largely buried state, their potential significance is usually evaluated under Criterion D, relating to the ability of a site to yield important information about history or prehistory. Most archeological sites that meet this criterion have undisturbed soil deposits, a significant artifact assemblage from good context, and/or features like pits, cellars and foundations. Deposits that have been disturbed by construction or grading, or that have mixed artifacts from several time periods, often have lost their ability to be interpreted accurately and therefore would not be considered eligible for listing in the National Register. By law, projects using state or federal money must consider their impacts

to sites eligible for listing in the National Register. If sites are ineligible for National Register listing, further consideration is not required.

### Recorded Archeological Sites

The *Rogers House/Ramsay Store site (18HA308)* was one of many dwellings owned by Evans Stanley Rogers whose father, Isaac, established the La Grange Furnace at the location of an earlier forge. Evans Stanley Rogers lived at the still-extant La Grange House on the north side of Deer Creek, but owned multiple dwellings spread out throughout his extensive acreage. Ironworkers may have inhabited the house at site 18HA308, as it was one of the closest dwellings located to the furnace. By the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, the residence was converted into a general store, but it was later torn down and replaced by a concession building for Rocks State Park. A 1930s photograph of this property shows what the site looked like when it operated as a general store. Archeological investigations found some early artifacts dating to the nineteenth-century occupation, but only in heavily disturbed contexts. The overlapping 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century occupations have resulted in the mixture of artifacts and soils from different periods and meaningful information can no longer be obtained. The site was recommended as ineligible for listing in the National Register.



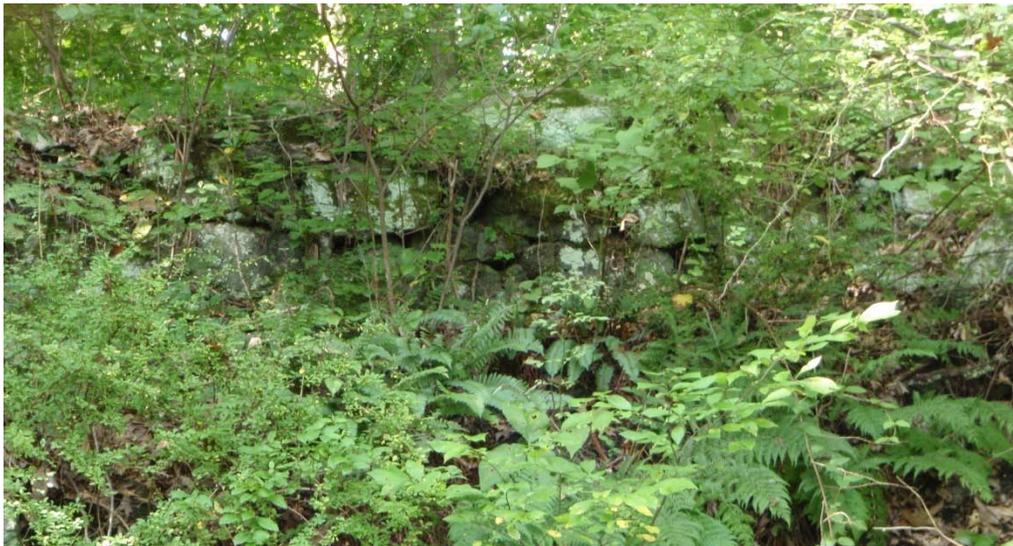
*The Ramsay Store in the 1930s. Note the gas pumps next to the porch.*

*Site 18HA309* consists of concrete and cinderblock structural ruins, and a possible cold cellar location that date to the early to mid 20<sup>th</sup> century. This site reflects the occupation of John Ayers, who purchased the property in 1902. The property was later incorporated into the Park. Artifacts were found on the surface or in shallow soils. Because of the lack of archeological deposits containing artifacts in good context and its relatively recent age, this site can yield little new information about early 20<sup>th</sup> century lifestyles. This site has been recommended to be ineligible for listing in the National Register.

*Site 18HA310* is also a residential site with structural ruins, possibly affiliated with the Rogers holdings. The site includes a fieldstone foundation, a former outbuilding location, and a well shaft. A State Roads Commission plat shows the property was owned by Miss Ellen V. Rodenmeyer in 1932. A historic photograph from 1934 shows a two-story frame building on the foundation; this structure is absent from the 1948 topographic map of the area. Artifacts recovered generally date from the mid to late

19<sup>th</sup> through mid-20<sup>th</sup> century. This site is characterized by thin soils, many of which have been disturbed by grading and prior road construction. The shallow, mixed, archeological deposits and narrow site area limit the research value of this site, and it has been recommended as ineligible for listing in the National Register.

The ***La Grange Furnace site (18HA311)*** includes furnace ruins, road traces, and a collier pit (charcoal-making feature) that lie immediately adjacent to the northern end of the project area near St. Clair Bridge Road. The furnace site is marked by an interpretive sign on a Park trail. The furnace site is considered potentially eligible for listing in the National Register, but no further archeological work by SHA is planned because no impacts to the furnace site are proposed. Should future impacts be planned, SHA would conduct additional archeological investigations to evaluate its significance for individual listing in the National Register. The furnace site contributes to the Rocks State Park MIHP resource which is considered not eligible for National Register listing. It lies outside the boundaries of the La Grange Warehouse and Store (HA-30) and the La Grange House and Outbuildings (HA-31/32) which are recommended as eligible for National Register listing. Other unrecorded archeological sites associated with the LaGrange iron industry complex probably exist in the Park, but are currently outside SHA's potential impact area. One of these features is the raceway that powered the furnace and forge that is evident as a linear depression in the Wilson Picnic Area.



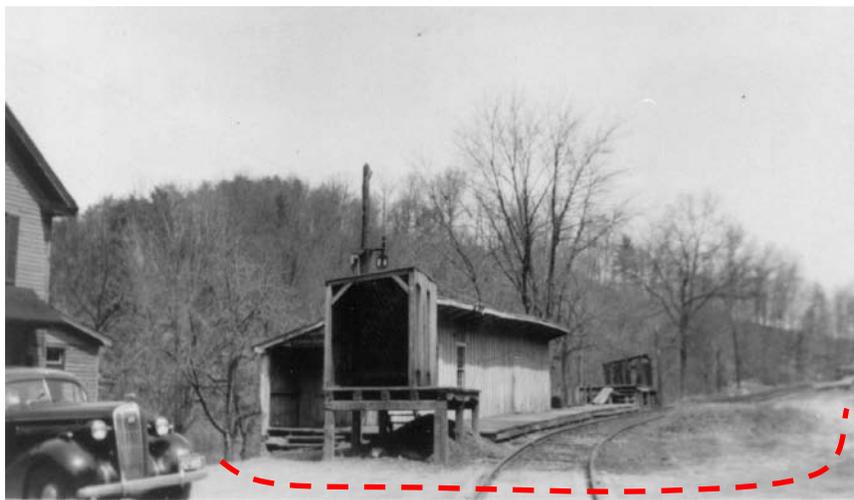
*Surviving stonework at the La Grange Furnace site.*

The ***Preston Ford (18HA314)*** is located in the Deer Creek streambed, close to the former location of the Preston Mill. The ford is shown at slightly different locations on two 19<sup>th</sup> century historic maps. The earlier 1858 ford may be marked by a concentration of rocks in the stream; alternatively, this feature could be a fish dam. Timber cribbing embedded in the streambed matches the location of a former ford crossing Deer Creek mapped in 1878. The current project does not impact this feature and its individual National Register significance has not been evaluated. The Preston Ford site contributes to the Rocks State Park MIHP resource (HA-2047) which is recommended as not eligible for National Register listing.

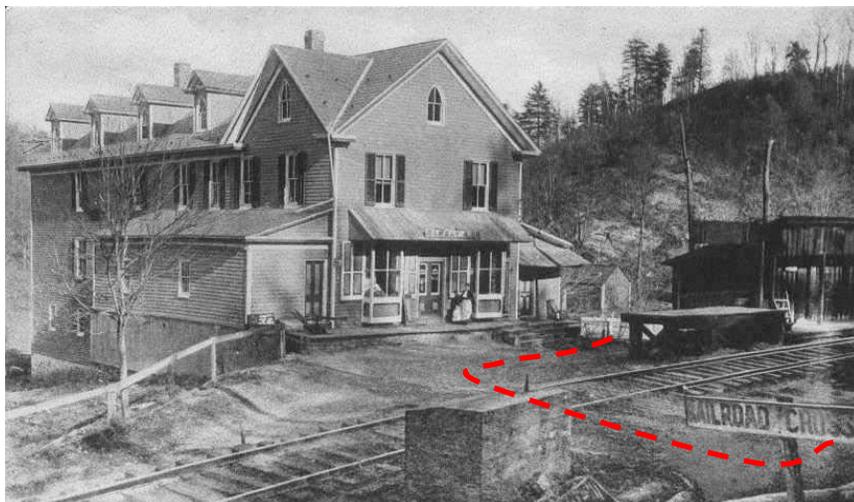
The archeological sites of ***Rocks Station (18HA322)*** and the ***Ramsay Hotel and Store (18HA323)*** are located on the east side of Deer Creek, at the point where the Ma & Pa Railroad tracks exited the Deer Creek gorge and turned to the northeast, paralleling the north flank of Rock Ridge. The station was located at the top of the rise on the sharp curve of Rocks Station Road where it crossed the railroad bed. A dark stain can still be seen in the soil along the road edge where the tracks were once laid, and the foundation of an associated garage survives below the railroad berm. Railroad related artifacts that were recovered included a 1928 date nail, a Pennsylvania Railroad lead boxcar seal, and a lantern lens

fragment. Large and meaningful artifact assemblages are unlikely to be associated with sites of this type, and this site was recommended to be ineligible for National Register listing.

The Ramsay Hotel and Store was located immediately across the narrow road, with its second story fronting on the railroad bed. The station and hotel/store were intimately related, with John Ramsay running the hotel and serving as storekeeper, postmaster, and railroad ticketing agent. Service on the railroad ended in 1954. The abandoned hotel burned in 1958, the same year the railroad was dismantled. Archeological investigations identified sections of intact stone foundations of the hotel/store and burn layers. The artifact assemblage reflects the known period of the building's existence. Because the hotel/store was relatively recent, was abandoned when it burned, and was subject to further disturbance when its ruins were demolished, its research value is limited. Both the Rocks Station and Ramsay Hotel and Store archeological sites are considered to be contributing to the Ma and Pa Railroad Corridor (HA-29) and the Rocks State Park (HA-2047) MIHP resources, both of which are recommended as not eligible for National Register listing.



*Rocks Station with milk platform, facing northeast. Dashed lines show Rocks Station Road.*



*Ramsay Hotel and Store, with Rocks Station on the extreme right. Rocks Station Road (dashed lines) ascended the western slope of the railroad bed, passed between the hotel/store and Rocks Station, and then crossed the railroad tracks before bending sharply to the northeast.*

## Other Resources Documented During Archeological Survey

The *Ma & Pa Railroad* paralleled MD 24 and Deer Creek on the west side in the southern half of the MD 24 project corridor, before crossing Deer Creek, passing through Rock Ridge gorge, and extending northeastward out of the Park. The portion of the railroad in the Park had its origins in 1878 when the Baltimore and Delta Railway was chartered (Hilton 1999). A narrow gauge line was completed from Bel Air, Maryland to Delta, Pennsylvania, through the Rocks area in late 1883 and went into service in early 1884. The railroad route shown on Martenet's 1878 county map above was a proposed route and differs from the actual route that is shown on Martenet's later 1885 Map of Maryland. The rail line later became part of the Baltimore and Lehigh Railroad, and was converted to standard gauge in 1901. That year it became part of Maryland and Pennsylvania Railroad, known as the Ma & Pa (Sansonetti 1997). Rocks Station was located on the east side of Deer Creek, just north of the gorge cut by Deer Creek through Rock Ridge. Slightly less than a mile to the south, a smaller flag station was located at Ferncliff, on the west side of Deer Creek, just outside the project limits. The Maryland District of the Ma & Pa Railroad was abandoned in 1958. The photographs below show the Copper Rock Trestle #335 formerly located in the south end of the project corridor. Although the trestle is gone, the stone retaining wall and railroad cut still remain. Another former trestle in the project corridor, the Wysong's Road Trestle, was located at the current Sharon Road intersection with MD 24. Large concrete blocks in a tributary paralleling Sharon Road within the project corridor are the remains of the trestle piers. These remains were considered as part of the Ma and Pa Railroad Corridor (HA-29) which is recommended as not eligible for National Register listing.



*Copper Rock Trestle and stone retaining wall adjacent to MD 24, circa 1950.*

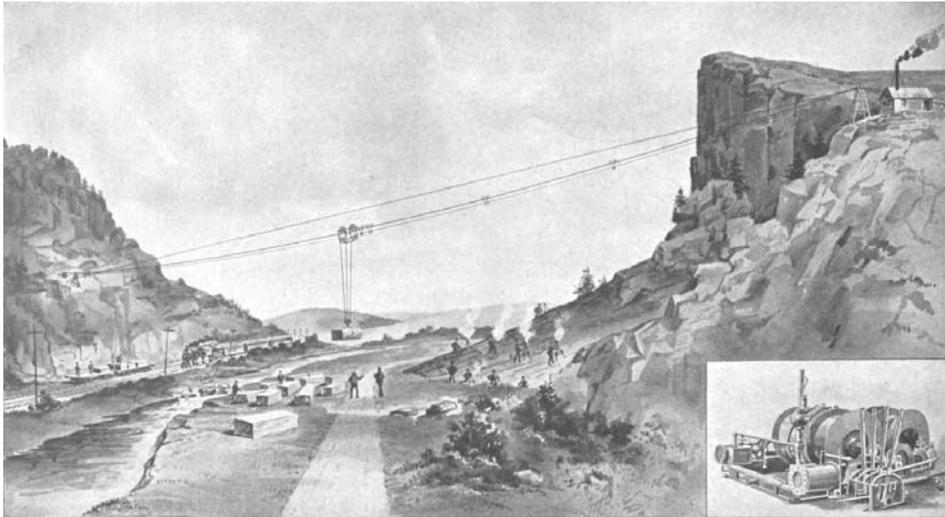


*Stone retaining wall adjoining the Cooper Rock Trestle in 2009.*



*Railroad cut adjoining the former Copper Rock Trestle in 2009.*

The *Maryland Granite Company* briefly operated quarries for building stone on Rock Ridge in the early 1890s. In order to convey stone quarried from The Rocks well above the east side of Deer Creek, to the Ma & Pa Railroad cars on the west side of the gorge, a cable car system manufactured by the John A. Roebling's Sons Company was put in place. A winch from this system was identified during the 2009 survey. Other remains related to quarrying are reportedly present elsewhere in the Park and east of Deer Creek, outside the limits of this project. These remains contribute to the Rocks State Park MIHP resource (HA-2047) which is recommended as not eligible for National Register listing.



*Illustration of the cable car system at "The Rocks" from the 1903 Roebling catalog. Remnant of winch system in the Park*

The historic period use of the *King and Queens Seats*, including its 19<sup>th</sup> century graffiti, was partly documented during the archeological survey; however, this feature was not recorded as an archeological site. Instead, the King and Queen Seats were evaluated as part of the Rocks of Deer Creek (HA-469) MIHP resource which is recommended eligible for National Register listing.



*19<sup>th</sup> century graffiti near the King and Queen Seats*

## Site Protection

This summary of results is being provided so that the public and concerned citizens will have an overview of the results of archeological investigations conducted for the MD 24 project. State and federal law protects archeological site locations to prevent vandalism and looting of these fragile, non-renewable, resources. The locations of archeological sites referenced in this summary have not been disclosed for

this reason. The Maryland Department of Natural Resources and Rocks State Park regulations forbid artifact collection or any other disturbance by the general public.

SHA follows both state and federal law (*State Finance and Procurement Article 5A-325 and 326 of the Annotated Code of Maryland* and *Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act*) in evaluating project impacts to these resources. The Maryland Historical Trust has not yet commented on SHA's archeological report and recommendations on the eligibility of specific archeological sites and MIHP resources for listing in the National Register.

## References

Eshleman, H. Frank

1908 *Annals of the Susquehannock and Other Indian Tribes of Pennsylvania: 1500 – 1763*. Re-Printed 2000 by Wennawoods Publishing, Lewisburg.

Hilton, George W.

1999 *A History of the Maryland and Pennsylvania Railroad*, 2<sup>nd</sup> revised edition. The Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore.

John A. Roebling Son's Company

1903 *Price List*. Trenton, New Jersey. Google Books.

Kent, Barry C.

1984 *Susquehanna's Indians*. Anthropological Series No. 6, Pennsylvania Historical and Museum commission, Harrisburg.

Sansonetti, Craig

1997 "A History of the Maryland and Pennsylvania Railroad." Electronic document available at <http://www.maandparailroad.com/mapahistory.html>