Charles County
Historic Preservation Plan

JULY 2004

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Executive Summary

The Historic Preservation Plan was developed to guide the future of the preservation program in Charles County by reviewing, updating, and expanding upon the broad goals and strategies identified in the Historic and Cultural Preservation chapter of the 1997 Charles County Comprehensive Plan. Composed of five chapters, the plan begins with a description of the County's history and the various resources associated with that history that might be worthy of preservation. Chapter II is a summary of past preservation efforts in Charles County that began in the early 20th century. Documenting this preservation history will serve to explain existing conditions and past policy. Understanding the history of preservation in a community is a necessary first step toward making meaningful strides in the future. This section deals with private as well as public approaches to preservation and attempts to address the range of heritage resources that have been considered which includes architecture, archaeology, and landscapes as well as history museums/collections and living traditions. Chapter III provides a discussion of known threats to heritage resources to assist in developing future goals and policies, found in Chapter IV. Finally, Chapter V gives a description of key Federal, State and Local Preservation Partners. All of the agencies, organizations and programs listed have an interest in heritage preservation and are vital to leveraging the necessary support and resources for a successful local preservation program. The most important part of the document is Chapter IV which identifies the goals and strategies for protecting and conserving heritages in the future. These goals include:

- Utilizing a broad range of preservation tools including a historic preservation ordinance, design guidelines and easement programs to permanently protect historic assets
- Developing public education programs
- Ensuring the historic preservation program has adequate human and financial resources
- Promoting tax credits and other incentives
- Continuing the survey and evaluation of heritage resources
- Promoting heritage tourism
- Continuing to develop and implement preservation planning and review

The plan also contains several appendices that will be helpful references in future preservation planning including a current listing for the Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties, National Register of Historic Places, Easement Properties, Historic Cemeteries and Burial Sites as well as Museums and Interpretive Centers. It is important to note that these lists are not definitive and are intended to be used only as a tool to aid in the identification and evaluation of resources. The appendix also includes a copy of the Maryland Code, Article 66B, 8.01-8.17. This enabling legislation sets the legal parameters of preservation and incentive programs throughout Maryland.

This plan was developed by the Charles County Historic Preservation Advisory Council, a 10 member committee appointed by the Charles County Commissioners because of their diverse interests and expertise in preservation, architecture, land development, heritage tourism, historic home ownership and rural conservation. Council members worked diligently at monthly meetings from June 2002 until May 2003 digesting preservation issues ranging from tax incentives to documenting cultural

landscapes. By far, the most controversial issue considered by the group was that of a historic preservation ordinance. For this reason a separate issue paper was drafted that specifically outlines the committee discussions and eventual recommendations. This issue paper is also included in the appendix.

Aside from the work of the Advisory Council a number of organizations and individuals have provided assistance. Above all, this could not have been completed without the support of the Maryland Historical Trust (MHT). Specifically, two MHT grants assisted in this endeavor. The Non-Capital Grant Fund continued the Charles County Historic Sites Survey that has provided the basic data regarding historic contexts, past preservation efforts and known threats. Preservation Incentives for Local Governments (PILG) was a pilot program developed by MHT in 2001 to assist local governments in developing effective preservation programs. Funding from PILG led to, among other things, the development of the Historic Preservation Advisory Council. Scott Whipple from the Office of Heritage Preservation and Outreach, served as the able and enthusiastic PILG program coordinator who provided technical assistance and support to both Staff and the HPAC. Also at MHT, Marcia Miller and Tom Reinhart, of the Office of Research Survey and Registration, provided guidance for the Historic Sites Survey that forms the groundwork for this plan. Closer to home, several staff members provided guidance and technical assistance to the project. Cathy Hardy, Historic Preservation Planner for Charles County Government, staffed the HPAC and developed the text for much of the document using data from the Charles County Historic Sites Survey which she began in August of 2000. Ms. Lacey Oliver provided administrative support to the HPAC, assembled data for the draft plan, and undertook the enormous task of converting the Charles County Inventory of Historic Properties into a useable database, now included in the appendix. Karen Wiggen reviewed the draft for clarity. Also deserving of acknowledgment is Kathryn Smith who began the Historic Sites Survey in Charles County in 1999. Her initial work provided a strong point of departure for the existing historic contexts found in the first section of this plan.

This plan's form and content is derived from several sources. Most significantly, Bradford J. White and Richard J. Roddewig's work entitled Preparing a Historic Preservation Plan provided insight into the appropriate content for such a work and offered specific case studies for various approaches to preservation planning throughout the nation. The Frederick County, Maryland Preservation Plan, and more importantly the recent St. Mary's County Preservation Plan drafted by Kirk Ranzetta in March 2000, addressed issues facing Maryland counties. The Charles County Comprehensive Plan, The Preservation 2000, The Maryland Plan, Article 66B of the Maryland State Annotated Code, and the Secretary of Interior's Standards for Preservation Planning, also provided guidance. This plan is also influenced by the premise that local preservation programs should be both interdisciplinary and comprehensive in nature, addressing not just standing structures but rather the full range of heritage resources. While architectural and archaeological resources have long been part of comprehensive preservation planning, often the remaining resources, including folklife and living traditions, history museum and interpretive centers, and cultural landscapes have not been as well integrated into planning and policy considerations at the local level. Therefore, this plan hopes to take a small step forward in that respect.

I. Charles County's Unique Heritage: An Overview

Currently, Charles County has over 3,000 dwellings built before 1950. This number does not include commercial buildings, churches, or agricultural buildings for which we do not have data. Recognizing the significance of any individual historic property demands an understanding of the historical setting and its relationship to other similar properties. In a historic context, information is organized based on a cultural theme and its geographical and chronological limits. These contexts identify the broad patterns of development in an area that may be represented by historic properties. The process of developing historic contexts allows resources to be evaluated for their importance, integrity and rarity. Preservation Vision 2000, The Maryland Plan identifies Statewide Historic Contexts from which the Charles County contexts had been initially developed. Historic contexts always evolve as fieldwork and archival research advances, therefore, the information below should not be considered comprehensive but rather, documents major themes and resource types identified to date.

Colonial Charles County 1634-1790

Time Periods: Contact and Settlement Period, 1570-1750; Rural Agrarian Intensification, 1680-1815
Themes: Agriculture, Architecture, Economic, Government/Law, Religion, Social/Education/Cultural Transportation
Property Types: Farm complexes, Agricultural outbuilding, Rural vernacular, Taverns, Mills, Courthouses, Churches, Schools, Roads/Wharves
Classes: Archaeological Sites, Standing Structures, Landscape Features, Town Plans, Objects, Intangibles (Folklife)

Black Friars near Mt. Victoria, circa 1750 (far right) is an example of a regionally distinctive end-hall plan.

Prior to the arrival of Europeans, what became known as Southern Maryland was once home to a number of American Indian groups sharing a common Algonquian language. According to an early trader at the beginning of the 17th century, the group included approximately 5,000 people living along both sides of the lower Potomac River. Some of the most extensive early accounts of native peoples came from explorer Captain John Smith who in 1608, noted the existence of a substantial Indian village known as "Potopaco" near present-day Port Tobacco on the eastern shore of the Port Tobacco River. Other related tribes in the area included the Doages who lived in the vicinity of Maryland Point, and the Pomonkey Indians living near the headwaters of Mattawoman Creek. Archaeological evidence suggests that the region was occupied earlier by paleo-Indian populations between 13,000-7500 B.C.

At the time of European contact the native population lived in loose villages along the coastal plains or on inland tidal creeks and rivers. They subsisted on a variety of food staples including seafood, limited cultivated crops, and game. With an indigenous trade network already established at the time of European contact, native peoples quickly began trading food stuffs and furs with Europeans in exchange for both utilitarian and decorative items.

Maryland was first settled by Europeans in 1634 when Cecilius Calvert, a Catholic, arrived at the site of a former Native American village which came to be known as St. Mary's City. Situated on the St. Mary's River, near the mouth of the Potomac River, St. Mary's City became Maryland's first capital as well as a refuge of religious freedom in Maryland. The earliest European settlement in Charles County took place as Maryland colonists radiated out from the initial settlement at St. Mary's City. The areas of initial settlement in Charles County first took place along the shores of the Wicomico and Potomac Rivers, and then along the tributaries of the Port Tobacco River, Nanjemoy Creek, and Mattawoman Creek. In 1638, the first land grant in what would become Charles County was recorded. Issued to Thomas Copley, a Jesuit priest, the grant was located on the eastern shore of the Port Tobacco River. Intent on bringing Christianity to the Natives, in 1642 the first Jesuit mission in the colonies was established by Father Andrew White S.J. at the Indian town of Potopaco. That same year, Charles County's second land grant was awarded to James Neale, also a Catholic seeking religious freedom. Neale patented "Wollaston Manor," a 2,000 acre tract on the west side of the Wicomico River, generally known today as Cobb Neck.[1]

Tobacco quickly became the staple crop throughout the region. As a cash crop in great demand in England since its introduction in the early 17th century, tobacco promised to yield impressive profits that lured many adventurers to the Chesapeake Bay. In 1660, Charles County had an estimated population of 900. Within five short years, the number of residents had increased to approximately 1,500.[2] Ten years later, the county contained 11.9 percent of the Maryland colony's total population with approximately 1,884 residents.[3] Population grew steadily between the 1640s and 1660s and by 1657, five "hundreds," functioning as local administrative units, had been established in the future Charles County.

Built in the late 18th century, the tobacco barn at the Exchange near La Plata is Charles County's oldest surviving tobacco barn.

[1] Margaret Brown Klapthor and Paul Dennis Brown, *The History of Charles County, Maryland* (La Plata, MD: Charles County Tercentenary, Inc., 1958): p. 8.

[2] Jack D. Brown, et al. *Charles County, Maryland: A History* (Charles County Bicentennial Committee, 1976): p. 321.

[3] Dennis J. Pogue and Michael A. Smolek, *An Archaeological Resource Management Plan For the Southern Maryland Region* (Annapolis, MD: Division of Historical and Cultural Programs, December 1985): p. 52.

As colonists moved north and west away from the initial settlement, it became increasingly difficult for these frontiersmen to commute to the courthouse at St. Mary's City in order to transact business. Therefore, on April 13, 1658, the Governor's Council established Charles County to serve the growing number of settlers. Initially, the county had an expandable northern border extending into present-day Prince George's County. However, in 1695, Prince George's County was officially established, After a half century of boundary disputes in the vicinity of Mattawoman Creek, the Charles County line was solidified in 1748. Charles County's first courthouse, known as Moore's Lodge was built on a site approximately one mile south of present day La Plata. It remained the center of government until 1729.

Throughout the 17th and 18th centuries, settlement in Charles County remained scattered. At first, settlers established their dwellings near the coast or along streams and rivers. These locations were advantageous, since water travel was the main means of transportation throughout the early settlement period. Tobacco could be easily shipped directly from private wharves to the mother country or to established port towns. Early plantations were highly self-sufficient and consisted of a dwelling and numerous ancillary agricultural outbuildings. Beginning in the mid-18th century, the improvement of inland routes allowed for the settlement of the interior. Numerous large plantations were founded inland, and tobacco crops were transported to wharves for shipment via "rolling" roads.

Early transportation in Charles County revolved around the region's abundant waterways, including the Potomac, Port Tobacco, Wicomico, and Patuxent Rivers. Large trans-Atlantic ships transported tobacco and English wares along the Potomac stopping at private wharves and public warehouses. An array of smaller vessels moved passengers and goods throughout the settlement. Above all, ferries were essential to the transportation network. In 1658, one of the first acts of the Charles County Court was to establish a ferry crossing the Wicomico River between Metompkin Point and Trews March (marsh) that led to the colonial capital at St. Mary's City. Early overland routes were fairly crude paths blazed by notches made in trees. For a largely illiterate population, the number of notches identified the road as leading to various important destinations including a ferry or courthouse.[4] "Rolling roads" along which large barrels of tobacco, known as hogsheads, were rolled from curing barns to river landings where they were shipped across the Atlantic were very common.

The first county ordinance concerning roads was passed in 1666 and by 1704 an act was passed designating that roads be cleared a width of twenty feet throughout Charles County. These roads established the framework for the modern road system.[5] A 1794 map delineates the county's main highways which radiated out from Port Tobacco, running southeast to St. Mary's City, north to the site of Washington, DC, and west and south to Maryland Point.[6] Many of these roads accessed warehouses and landings along the Potomac, Wicomico, and Patuxent Rivers.

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[4] Klapthor, et al., p. 25-31.

[5] Jack D. Brown, et al. *Charles County, Maryland: A History* (Charles County Bicentennial Committee, 1976): p. 13-15.

[6] Dennis Griffith, *Map of the State of Maryland.* 1794.

During the 18th century, small crossroads communities grew up at the intersections of these major routes and usually consisted of little more than a tavern, stable and several houses. Sometimes they included a blacksmith shop, general store, or grist mill.

Slavery was introduced into Charles County during the Colonial period as a solution to the labor shortage.[7] The first slaves brought to Charles County were reputedly shipped to Francis Pope's plantation on the Potomac River early in the 17th century.[8] By 1712, there were 724 slaves residing in Charles County, making up 18 percent of the county's total population. This percentage rose to 48 percent by 1782, indicating a complete reliance on slave labor by this time.[9] While the majority of the slaves were owned by a few large landowners, the advent of slavery established a conspicuous class of landed-gentry. The availability of an inexhaustible labor supply allowed landowners to cultivate larger tracts of land at considerable profits. The ensuing prosperity led to the development of a relatively stable society structured around this small number of elite landowners.[10] Throughout the first three quarters of the 18th century, Charles County's economy and social structure solidified on the tobacco monoculture. Tobacco was cultivated, almost to the exclusion of other crops, using slave labor. The social hierarchy was based on three main classes: the wealthy large landowners; a significant group of poor tenants renting land from the large landowners; and the slaves. Almost all surviving examples of 18th century architecture in Charles County reflect the highest strata of this social hierarchy.

Freindship, relocated to the College of Southern Maryland, is a good example of a hall and parlor plan common in the Chesapeake Bay during the Colonial era.

Like other Southern Maryland counties, the exclusive cultivation of tobacco governed the physical development of the county throughout the 18th and early 19th centuries. Unlike corn and wheat, tobacco cultivation did not encourage the development of significant urban centers for the shipping and processing of the crop.[11] Instead, the county's landowners remained isolated on individual farmsteads that comprised small "villages" made up of the main dwelling house, several slave quarters, and ancillary domestic and agricultural outbuildings. Individual wharves served as shipping points for crops.

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[7] Pogue and Smolek, p. 57-58.

[8] Klapthor, et al., p. 43.

[9] Although a portion of the non-white population was free, the majority were most likely slaves.

[10] Pogue and Smolek, p. 57-58.

[11] Pogue and Smolek, p. 60.

Charles County's architectural heritage began with the construction of small one or two room impermanent structures, regardless of social standing. Despite the fact that many later structures have been attributed to the 1600's, advances in historical and scientific research over the last thirty years have refined our knowledge of colonial architecture in the Chesapeake. Throughout the Chesapeake region, buildings were often constructed with wooden posts set directly in the ground. For this reason, fewer than half a dozen 17th century structures survive in Maryland, Virginia and the Carolinas.

Although building became gradually more substantial over time, under fifty 18th century dwellings have survived in Charles County. Fewer than a dozen date from the first half of that century. These include Prior's Cleve (CH-225), Marshall Hall (CH-54 NR)and Stagg Hall (CH-13 NR). The oldest documented structure in Charles County is Sarum (CH-15 NR) near Newport. Built in 1717, the dwelling began as a 18'x32' timber framed structure with a typical two-room hall and parlor plan. Sarum was the ancestral home of the Piles, a prominent Catholic family. Reverend Henry Pile, S.J. was the pastor at Newport and Cobb Neck from 1784 until his death in 1813. The 1 ½ story hall and parlor plan, often called the Virginia house because of its presence throughout the Chesapeake, was extremely common in southern Maryland during the 18th century and continued to be built well into the early 19th century.

By 1727, the courthouse at Moore's Lodge had become dilapidated, in addition to being poorly located. Therefore, the County Assembly directed that a new courthouse and prison be erected on "the East side of Port Tobacco Creek at a place called Chandler's Town."[12] While Chandler's Town, commonly known as Port Tobacco, was already an established port of trade, the Assembly authorized the establishment of the county seat there on a sixty-acre town site. Although the Assembly officially renamed the town Charles Town, the name Port Tobacco remained the common designation. After the courthouse was moved to Port Tobacco, the town became the center of the civic, social, and commercial life of the county. By the mid-18th century, the town boasted several inns and hotels along with a few dozen houses. By 1784, an estimated forty to fifty houses occupied the town site.[13]

Beginning in 1755, the siltation of the Port Tobacco River caused by the clear cutting of trees for tobacco cultivation, had begun to limit the size of ships that could use the port. Still, Port Tobacco remained the center of commerce well into the 19th century. It served as one of the major stops on the Potomac River ferry route, bringing in manufactured goods and shipping off hogsheads of tobacco.

Habre de Venture, the home of Thomas Stone, signer of the Declaration of Independence, is now a National Historic Landmark.

[12] *Klapthor, et al., p. 46.*

[13] *Klapthor, et al., p. 46-47.*

The early adventurers who had made their fortunes from tobacco during the colonies' first two centuries had sons that reached national and even international prominence by the time of the American Revolution. An impressive handful of men from Charles County became leading figures in the fight for independence and the new democracy. In 1774, a number of prominent Charles Countians attended a meeting of provincial representatives in Annapolis, and representatives to the Continental Congress were elected at a county meeting held in November 1774.[14] In preparation for war, Charles County began to raise funds and to organize a local militia for the defense of the colony. The Maryland province was divided into military districts, with the first district comprised of St. Mary's, Charles, Calvert, and Prince George's Counties. John Dent of Charles County was appointed Brigadier General of the district. At the Maryland Convention of January 1776, officers in command of the Maryland Line, including William Smallwood, Francis Ware, and John Hoskins Stone of Charles County were elected. During the Revolution, many Charles County men served in the Maryland Line under General Smallwood, fighting in battles from Brooklyn to Yorktown.[15] Other notable Revolutionary War figures from Charles County include Thomas Stone, signer of the Declaration of Independence, George Mason, author of the Virginia Bill of Rights, and John Hanson who was elected the first "President of the United States in Congress Assembled" in November 1781. As "President," Hanson served as presiding officer of the Congress of the United States during the period following the war. As chief officer of the newly independent government, Hanson received General Washington after the surrender at Yorktown, and issued a proclamation establishing the Thanksgiving holiday.[16]

Exceptional houses were built by several prominent Charles Countians including Rose Hill (CH-1 NR), built by Dr. Gustavus Brown a friend and associate of George Washington, James Craik and George Mason. Rose Hill stands alone as Charles County's most architecturally distinguished 18th century residence. More typical of the relatively prosperous planter-merchant class were the 1 ½ story dwellings such as Mt. Eagle (CH-82) built in 1796, and Wicomico Fields (CH-206) built around 1750. The end-hall plan was a regionally distinctive house plan found in the southernmost Maryland counties and eastern Virginia. Examples include the Exchange (CH-299 NR Easement), built in 1778, Black Friars (CH-42), Dearbought (CH-334), and Laurel Branch. Dwellings were surrounded by a number of accessory buildings usually constructed of wood but occasionally built of brick. These included kitchens, meat houses, corn houses, and hen houses, cabins for servants and slaves, and tobacco houses. Many of the earliest structures were log.

Charles County has a significant religious heritage that first emerged in the Colonial period. Founded as a refuge for religious tolerance, the Southern Maryland counties drew the nation's earliest Catholics as well as Anglicans, Baptists and Quakers. In 1790, the Sisters of the Order of the Blessed Virgin Mary of Mount Carmel arrived at Port Tobacco to establish the first Carmelite monastery in this country. Several Anglican churches were also constructed during this period including Trinity Church (CH-123) in 1756, William and Mary Parish (CH-18), and Durham Church (CH-63). The first Baptist congregation was established in 1790 near Nanjemoy where Nanjemoy Baptist Church (CH-355) was

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[14] *Klapthor, et al., p. 50-53.*

[15] *Klapthor, et al., p. 56.*

[16] *Klapthor, et al., p. 64-65.*

later erected. Several early cemeteries and individual graves have survived from the era including several stones at Durham Parish. Sharing many characteristics of headstones, the Greenweigh Boundary Stone is a rare example of a carved property marker in Charles County.

Following the Revolutionary War, Charles County experienced a period of economic retrenchment. The tobacco culture that flourished throughout the Chesapeake relied on an elaborate system of planter debt that required a high degree of cooperation between England and the colonies. After the war many British creditors sued for these debts causing a spate of bankruptcies. In 1786, a single creditor threatened to imprison 100 debtors at once in the County prison.[17] Additionally, the decline in soil quality affected by the intensive cultivation of tobacco left many planters short on arable land. In general, it was the most well-established wealthy landowners who weathered this period, reestablishing their economic and social dominance.

The Greeweigh boundary marker has been in place since 1735.

[17] *Klapthor, et al., p. 65-66.*

Wartime and Prosperity: The Plantation Era, 1790-1865

Time Period: Rural Agrarian Intensification, 1680-1815, Agricultural-Industrial Transition, 1815-1870
Themes: Agriculture, Architecture, Economic, Government/Law, Religion, Social/Education/Cultural Transportation, Military
Property Types: Farm complexes, Agricultural outbuilding, Rural vernacular, Taverns, Mills, Courthouses, Churches, Schools, Roads/Wharves, Civil War camps
Classes: Archaeological Sites, Standing Structures, Landscape Features, Town Plans, Objects, Intangibles (Folklife)

Maxwell Hall, circa 1775.

During the short period of stability that followed the Revolutionary War, Charles County was integrated into the state and national government. In 1799, the county was divided into four election districts. In 1807, a geographical text authored by Joseph Scott included a description of Charles County. Included among the list of towns were Port Tobacco, Allenfresh[sic], Nanjemoy, Hilltop, Bennedict[sic], and Newport. Port Tobacco was by far the largest of these towns with fifty houses, an Episcopal Church, a tobacco warehouse, a courthouse and a jail.

The period of stability was shattered with the onset of the War of 1812. During this conflict, the British navy maintained fleets of warships in the Chesapeake Bay, the Patuxent River, and the Potomac River. Charles, St. Mary's, and Calvert Counties became the focus of frequent and destructive raids by Admiral Cockburn and his fleet. Throughout 1813 and 1814, Cockburn cruised the Potomac and Patuxent Rivers, ravaging indefensible villages and farms. In June 1814, British troops landed at Benedict. Over two days, the British destroyed the arms left behind by the local militia and burned or confiscated tobacco and private property. Typically, the raids on individual farms involved the confiscation of valuables, the destruction of personal property, and often, the burning of dwellings. On the 19th and 20th of August, 1814, 4,000 British troops disembarked at Benedict on the Patuxent River. From there they proceeded to Washington, DC where they captured and burned the city. After completing their mission, the British troops returned to Benedict, unobstructed, and re-embarked.[19]

As a result of the constant unpredictable attacks of Admiral Cockburn, Charles Countians suffered from lack of food, farms were neglected, slaves ran off to join the enemy, and unsanitary living conditions caused illness. Between 1813 and 1815, significant numbers of county residents abandoned their homes and moved to new frontier areas opening up in Kentucky and elsewhere in the west.[20] This decline in the county's population is reflected in the census figures of 1810 and 1820. In 1810, the

[19] *Klapthor, et al., p. 101-104. Margaret Brown Klapthor, "Southern Maryland During the War of 1812," The Record (April 1965): p. 1-5.*

county's total population was 20,245 persons. By 1820, that number had declined to 16,500. Interestingly, 76 percent of the decline is attributable to the non-white population, indicating that the loss of slaves during the war was considerable.[21]

Following the War of 1812, Charles County experienced a period of economic stability. Although competition from other tobacco-growing regions intensified during the first half of the 19th century, the large-scale planters seem to have maintained their economic stability. By 1820, most of the out migration caused by the depredations of war and the inability of small tenant farmers to prosper had ceased. Tobacco prices became unstable, and remained so throughout the early 19th century. However, the wealthiest of the landowners in the county remained prosperous. Many diversified their interests, investing in corn or wheat cultivation or in commercial industries, such as milling, fishing, and commerce.

Transportation improvements, including the invention of the steamboat significantly altered the physical and economic structure of Charles County. In 1815, Captain George Weems established the Weems Line that serviced a route between Baltimore and the numerous landings on Maryland's Western Shore, especially along the Patuxent River. Weems maintained an office and terminal at Benedict. In 1827, the Washington, Alexandria, and Georgetown Steam Packet Company was formed providing regular service to several wharves along the Maryland side of the Potomac River, including Marshall Hall, Liverpool Point, Glymont, and Rock Point in Charles County. Steamboats often stopped at private wharves where farm goods were loaded for shipment to Baltimore and Washington. By the post Civil-War era, steamboats were serving over twenty five landings in Charles County.[22] Landings, usually selected for their deep water, became hubs of social and economic activity. Taverns, stores and hotels were located at the landings which were laden with goods being shipped to and from the cities of Baltimore and Washington.

In addition to the steam packets that transported goods and people, several "pleasure cruise" lines appeared on the Potomac prior to the Civil War. A number of popular resort destinations were located in Charles County. These included Marshall Hall, Glymont, and Chapel Point.[23] Bustling resort towns grew up at these sites. As late as the 1930s, Chapel Point (also known as Warehouse Landing) boasted a hotel, a beach, bath houses, and a roller skating rink. The excursion boats would make weekly trips to these destinations, often returning the same day. Travelers came to escape the city, to picnic and to amuse themselves.

While passenger and commercial freight occupied the majority of the steamboat business, many of the Potomac and Patuxent steamers carried mail for many years to the isolated rural counties of southern Maryland. Prior to the advent of the steamboat, mail traveled over land along treacherous roads by stagecoach. The first regular postal route in Charles County was established in 1695 from Port

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[21] *Fifth Census of the United States, 1810, "Charles County, Maryland;" Sixth Census of the United States, 1820, "Charles County, Maryland."*

[22] *Brown, et al., p. 37-40.*

[23] *Frederick Tilp, This Was Potomac River (Frederick Tilp, 1978): p. 60-62.*

Tobacco through Upper Marlboro to Annapolis and on to Philadelphia.[24] In 1764, a post route servicing southern Maryland was established from Annapolis to Port Tobacco. The first steamboat mail service from Washington began in 1839. The boat stopped at Piscataway, Pleasant Hill, Port Tobacco, Allen's Fresh, Newport, and then on into St. Mary's County. The first mention of daily mail service in the county appeared in the *Port Tobacco Times* in 1855.[25]

The Potomac herring and shad industry reached its peak during the years prior to the Civil War when in 1832 there were 150 fisheries on the river employing 6,500 laborers. Four hundred fifty vessels were manned by 1,350 men. The season lasted only eight weeks, yielding 22.5 million shad and 750 million herring. 995 thousand barrels of salt were used for curing, and sold locally for consumption or to local packers. Fisheries were located at Maryland Point, Stump Neck, Goose Bay, Sandy Point, Budd's Ferry and Chapman's Point. The Civil War temporarily devastated the local fishing industry. Fearing that these fisherman might aid in the Confederate cause, oaths of loyalty to the United States were required for all those intending to catch, or cure fish. Strict penalties were established for transporting passengers or goods on fishing vessels. For violating these terms, fisherman could face financial penalties and the seizure of their property.[26]

Coinciding with increased traffic along the Potomac, emerging concerns over safety led to the establishment of day buoys and floating lights along the river. In 1821, the first two lightships, or floating lights were erected. Within the next two decades, additional buoys were placed at Port Tobacco Shoals and Upper Cedar Point. Four were also spanned on the south side of Nanjemoy Reach and one was placed at Lower Cedar Point. During the 1840s lighthouses and lightships became the responsibility of the Department of the Treasury under whose tenure five new lighthouses in the Potomac River were approved for construction. Two were built off the shores of Charles County – one at Cobb Bar and the other at Maryland Point.

It was also during the early 19th century that another revolutionary change took place in Charles County. Since the early period of colonial settlement, education in Maryland had been a private matter. Children were taught by private tutors at home or sent abroad for their education. On occasion, a single landowner would invite children from surrounding farmsteads to attend "class" with these traveling tutors, however, there were no organized schools until the late 18th century. Although the county government attempted to establish several free public schools in the 1720s using specially levied taxes to fund them, the organization of education in the county did not come to fruition until late in the 18th century. Until that time, ministers of the Church of England played a pivotal role in the education of the county's youth. Between 1753 and 1784, Reverend Isaac Campbell, rector of Trinity Parish, ran a private school in his residence. Until the third quarter of the 18th century, few public schools were established in the county. In 1774, funds set aside for free schools in

[24] *Klapthor, et al., p. 25.*

[25] *Klapthor, et al., p. 116-117.*

[26] *Tilp, p. 16, Beitzell, p. 90.*

St. Mary's, Charles and Prince George's Counties were combined to establish Charlotte Hall School near the Charles-St. Mary's County border. Due to the intervention of the Revolutionary War, the school at Charlotte Hall did not begin operations until 1796.[27]

Shortly after the turn of the 19th century, Charles County began establishing free schools across the county. These early public schools were operated in either privately-owned buildings, or later, in purpose-built one-room schoolhouses. In 1846, a meeting was held to establish standards for primary schools throughout the county. They set a school term of 220 days of six hours each. By 1860, the county had thirty-two schools with one teacher per school. All were located in one-room schoolhouses, five of which had been newly built that year. Eight hundred and sixty-six students attended the schools and tax revenues amounted to $7,500 annually.[28] In addition to these public schools, numerous private educational institutions began operation in Charles County during the first half of the 19th century. Several notices advertising these private schools appeared in the *Port Tobacco Times* during the 1840s and 1850s. Three of these were Cottage Hall Seminary for girls, St. Mary's Female Institute at Bryantown, and St. Thomas Parish School.

From the late 18th to mid-19th century Charles County generally thrived on its agricultural and growing commercial trade. Despite this stability, domestic architecture remained conservative. By far the most common house form from this period is the 2 ½ story frame side-passage double-parlor plan. While, the floorplan remained the same, interior details reflected popular decorative styles. One of the earliest and finest examples of Federal-style architecture in Charles County is Mt. Republican near Newburg. Eutah (CH-79) is a good example of Greek Revival architecture which replaced the Federal style locally after the first quarter of the 19th century.

Agricultural buildings did not change a great deal from their Colonial predecessors. The granary at Hadlow (CH-118), Loch Leven cornhouse (CH-684) Plank Bridge Farm crib and barn (CH-174), and Plenty Smokehouse (CH-77) are notable examples. Two rare log outbuildings, a kitchen and meathouse, have survived at Greenland (CH-603). A few tobacco barns from the period include the Johnsontown Tobacco Barn No. 2 (CH-742) that retains original horizontal board siding and wood louvered vents in the gables. In addition, the eave walls include vertical studs used as nailers for horizontal siding throughout. Other examples include Simpson's Supply Tobacco Barn (CH-720), Maiden Point Tobacco Barn (CH-725), Hadlow Tobacco Barn No. 1. (CH-711).

The granary at Hadlow, dating from the mid-19th century.

The relative calm of county life was disrupted by the initial rumblings of dispute that would lead to the Civil War. Charles County was located between the

[27] *Klapthor, et al., p. 44-46.*

[28] *Klapthor, et al., p. 109-110.*

northern or Unionist states and the southern, secessionist states. As a tobacco-dependent county, most landholders resented the pressure brought by abolitionists to free the slave population. In addition, unrest among the slaves prompted the Justice of the Peace to commence nightly patrols of the county in 1856. With the election of the Republican candidate for President, Abraham Lincoln, in 1860, the county became alarmed. A meeting was held at Middletown in December 1860, and the group resolved to censure those citizens who had voted for Lincoln. Although, as a state, Maryland voted to support the Union, Charles County maintained its Confederate sympathies throughout the war.

Because of its southern sympathies, Charles County was treated like occupied territory. On June 20th, 1861, one hundred Federal troops landed at Chapel Point and proceeded to the residence of Captain Samuel Cox at Rich Hill (CH-199 NR) where there was a stash of state-owned munitions. The troops demanded the surrender of the arms. The house was again thrown into the spotlight when evidence surfaced that Cox provided assistance to Lincoln's assassin as he escaped through Southern Maryland.

Ten to twelve thousand troops were sent to the county to prevent the crossing of Confederate troops into Maryland over the Potomac River. In addition, the Fifth Regiment of General Sickles' Brigade came to Charles County, encamping at Mulberry Grove. The majority of these troops were stationed in the western section of the county between Mattawoman and Budd's Ferry. Batteries were built near the mouth of Chicamuxen Creek.

African Americans played a pivotal role in Charles County's Civil War heritage. Camp Stanton, located near Benedict on the west side of the Patuxent River, was established in October 1863 for the purpose of recruiting and training African American men for the Union Army. At this site, strategically located in the heart of Maryland's slaveholding region, free blacks as well as formerly enslaved men were enlisted to form the 7th, 9th, 19th and 30th Colored Infantries as part of the United States Colored Troops (USCT). The camp was in use until it was abandoned and destroyed in March 1864.

Dr. Samuel Mudd House. Mudd set the leg of Lincoln's assassin John Wilkes Booth during his escape through southern Md.

A large number of the county's men traveled to Richmond and joined the Confederate armies at the outset of the war. These included Captain William Fendley Dement of Eutah (CH-79) of the First Maryland Confederate Artillery. Several individual citizens aided the Confederate cause by ferrying people, supplies, and munitions across the Potomac River to Virginia.

After the close of the armed conflict, Charles County remained in the spotlight as several citizens were convicted of conspiring to aid John Wilkes Booth in his flight from Washington, DC after the assassination of President Lincoln. Thomas A. Jones of Popes Creek was chief agent of the Confederate Secret Service and assisted the Lincoln assassins during their escape through Charles County. At the time, Jones lived at Huckleberry(CH-19). Following the assassination, Charles County was once again occupied by several thousand Federal troops who attempted to locate and arrest any local conspirators.

Reconstruction: Commercial Fisheries, Riverside Resorts, and Small Farms, 1865-1920

Time Period: Agricultural-Industrial Transition, 1815-1870; Industrial/Urban Dominance, 1870-1930
Themes: Agriculture, Architecture, Economic, Religion, Social/Education/Cultural, Transportation Military
Property Types: Farm complexes, Agricultural outbuildings, Rural vernacular, Stores, Mills, Churches, Schools, Roads/Wharves, Ordnance plants
Classes: Archaeological Sites, Standing Structures, Landscape Features, Town Plans, Objects, Intangibles (Folklife)

"We must look about us, shake off the lethargy, which our enemies say is super-induced by malaria and general laziness, and take hold of some of the great opportunities which lie around us, develop and utilize some of the possibilities of our soil, climate, rivers and railroads, and make old Charles County what she can be made, one of the most flourishing counties in the State"

Editor, Maryland Independent, 1883

Following the Civil War, Charles County suffered the same fate as most of the southern states. The basis of the economy, slave labor, was gone. While planters continued to rely heavily on tobacco cultivation, slave labor was replaced with various systems of tenancy or wage labor. Due to dwindling profits, credit collapsed and many planters fell deep into debt. In 1870, Charles County's crop fell in volume to less than half of what it was ten years earlier, and in price from eight cents per pound in 1869 to just five cents per pound in 1889. By 1909 prices had still not recovered, rising only to 7 cents.[29]

The post-war period marked the end of large farms. Without sufficient labor, large land owners were forced to sell portions of their land. In 1870 there were 545 farms in Charles County. By 1900 that number had more than tripled to 1,900 farms. Farm size continually decreased as large farms, those consisting of over 500 acres, were divided. The most dramatic increase was seen in the number of farms under fifty acres, which more than doubled between 1880 (361 farms and 1920 (728 farms).[30]

Thainston was built in 1865 for the Mitchell family. Designed by Baltimore architect Eben Faxon, it is one of a small number of substantial post-Civil War buildings.

[29] *Pogue and Smolek, p. 63-64.*

[30] *Rivoire, National Register Nomination for Widow's Pleasure. Maryland Historical Trust. Crownsville.*

The turmoil of the Reconstruction era continued in Charles County well into the 20th century. Because of these economic difficulties, population growth in the county stagnated between 1860 and 1920. The general economic decline, and later, stagnation that followed the Civil War is evident in the census figures between 1860 and 1890. By 1890, the number of county residents was nearly 1,400 less than in 1860.[31] With little industry or profitable agriculture drawing new residents to the county during the post-Civil War era, many young Charles County residents moved away as they reached maturity. As a result, new construction in Charles County virtually ceased until the late 1880's.

During this period of recession, local representatives looked to transportation improvements to revive Charles County's stagnant economy. The railroad not only provided efficient and inexpensive land transportation, but also affected significant physical change in the landscape. As early as 1854, a railroad through the county had been proposed, but was delayed by the Civil War. In 1872, the idea was revived, and the Baltimore and Potomac Railroad began construction of a line between Bowie, Prince Georges County and Pope's Creek in Charles County. Later, the Pennsylvania Railroad acquired the line and proceeded to connect it to Washington, DC via Bowie. The first regular daily passenger service from Cox's Station to Bowie began running in January 1873. A second railroad was planned for Charles County in 1868. That year the route between Brandywine in Prince George's County to Point Lookout in St. Mary's County via Hughesville was surveyed. However, due to financial reverses, the line was never completed past Mechanicsville in St. Mary's County. When the U.S. Naval Air Station was opened in St. Mary's County, the Navy acquired the old right of way and completed the railroad as far as the station.[32]

New "railroad" towns began to spring up along the railroad's route, often supplanting existing crossroads villages nearby. Beantown was replaced by Waldorf two miles to the west. Duffield was replaced by White Plains. Other villages sprang up in former farmland including La Plata, Faulkner, and Bel Alton. Each town consisted of little more than a small station, several houses, and sometimes a corner store. Throughout the second half of the 1870's freight service steadily increased, averaging 150 hogsheads a day. At the same time the railroad brought a considerable amount of groceries and other goods from Baltimore. While river freight continued to provide competition to the railroad, residents living in the county's interior greatly benefitted from the new means of transportation. Rail transportation was intrinsically connected to agricultural yields. However, far from being reliable, in years of poor harvests, such as 1873-74, the railroad reduced the number of trips made to Southern Maryland in light of declining profits from carrying freight. Neither mail nor goods were delivered depending on the profitability to the railroad company. Many stations lacked warehouses or agents to secure freight.

The importance of the railroad and its impact on the people and landscape of Charles County grew steadily every year. By the 1880's land along the railroad was considered the most valuable in the county and a great deal of building occurred along the tracks. Villages soon included hotels. The peak

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[31] *U.S. Census, 1860, 1870, 1880, 1890, "Charles County, Maryland."*

[32] *Klapthor, et al., p. 138-140.*

of passenger transportation was between 1900-1930 when two trains arrived and departed daily. Several hotels which were constructed in Waldorf, La Plata, Cox's Station (later Bel Alton) and Lothair (later Faulkner) attracted businessmen and tradesmen.

Padgett-Posey House, circa 1898.

La Plata was the county's most successful railroad town. The town was established in 1873 when the Baltimore and Potomac Railroad erected a station and warehouse on the Chapman family farm known as "La Plata." A post office was established at La Plata in November 1873. The town grew quickly, and by 1876, was one of the main stations in Charles County.[33] The approximately one square mile of land on which the town was laid out was donated by the Chapmans. Soon after its incorporation in 1888, La Plata initiated a campaign to get the county seat moved there from Port Tobacco. By the third quarter of the 19th century, the rise of railroad transportation and the increasing difficulty in navigating in the upper portion of the Port Tobacco River had affected the vitality of Port Tobacco as a town. As early as 1873, the suggestion was made that the courthouse be moved to La Plata. The ongoing conflict between Port Tobacco and La Plata split the county's political groups into two distinct factions. A special election, held in May 1892, determined that the majority of the county preferred that the county seat remain in Port Tobacco. However, a suspicious fire destroyed most of the existing courthouse in August 1892, and as a result, a second vote was held in 1895. La Plata was victorious, and the new courthouse was dedicated in 1896.[34] At that time, La Plata supplanted Port Tobacco as both the civic and commercial center of Charles County.

During this period steamboats remained an important mode of transportation in Charles County. Although the railroad diverted some goods, crops and passengers from the steamboat lines, the limited extent of the railroad system made the continued use of steamboat wharves necessary in many parts of the county. Numerous steamboat lines continued to ply the Potomac, Patuxent, and Wicomico Rivers. The heyday of the steamer lasted from around 1880 to 1920. Over the course of this period, several dozen steamboat companies served Charles County's numerous wharves. Among these were the Weems Line, the Potomac Steam Navigation Company, Ephraim S. Randall, and the successor to the Weems Line, the Maryland and Virginia Steamboat Company.[35]

Largely due to improved transportation, some agricultural diversification took place during the late-19th and early-20th century. Increasingly farmers produced a variety of crops including honey, assorted vegetables, and orchard products that were sold at local or regional markets. These market gardens increased in value from a meager $580 in 1880 to $69,610 in 1910. Dairy production increased from $53,878 in 1870 to over $140,000 in 1920. The total number of chickens raised

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[33] *Klapthor, et al., p. 139.*

[34] *Brown, et al., p. 65-66.*

[35] *Brown, et al., p. 39-41.*

locally doubled within one decade from 55,330 in 1880 to 109, 551 in 1890. By 1910 that number had increased to 184,389. An agricultural depression during the early years of the 20th century prompted some farmers to begin the cultivation of tomatoes and other canning crops. In conjunction with this agricultural diversification, a small canning industry took hold in the county. The first cannery in Charles County was opened in La Plata in 1883, and in the same year A.T. Whiting Co. operated a packing establishment at Rock Point for canning tomatoes, corn and other vegetables. By 1920 there were twenty-nine manufacturing facilities in the county. Modernization of agricultural equipment also affected the output of county farmers. Reapers, threshers, and bailers as well as steam-powered and combustion equipment arrived from the railroad in the early-20th century, allowing farmers to produce more goods using fewer farm hands. Improved fertilizers shipped from plants in Baltimore enhanced the county's soils, increasing their yield.

While farmers continued to rely mainly on tobacco production, several small industries began to take shape in the county. A lumber industry was the first to arise during this period. As late as the 1950s, a full 70 percent of the county's land was forested. As agricultural fields became worn out from tobacco cultivation they were replanted with fast-growing pine and gum trees that could tolerate poor soil conditions and were appropriate for timber harvesting as cordwood. The county was also blessed with stands of native tulip poplar and oak trees used for furniture and veneers. With the advent of steamboat transportation, lumber could be easily transported to sawmills in Baltimore.[36]

Commercial seafood was another important industry that began to appear in Southern Maryland during the 1870s and 1880s. Oysters in particular, along with shad and herring, were important exports in Southern Maryland during the late 19th century. Devastated as a result of the Civil War, commercial fishing in Charles County and throughout the Potomac River region regained its prominence between 1870 and 1900. In 1876, James W. Milner of the U.S. Commission of Fish and Fisheries toured the Potomac fisheries, noting the best fishing grounds. Chapman's Point Fishery at Chapman's Landing was noted for its abundance of shad, two kinds of herring, and rockfish. Other Charles County fisheries that he mentions include oyster beds along the "Yeocomico" (Wicomico) River, and fishing grounds at Nanjemoy and Maryland Point. By the last years of the 19th century, the Potomac River region boasted the largest commercial fisheries on the East Coast.

Early 20th century dairy barn at Maiden Point. In the early 20th century innovative farmers diversified by raising dairy cattle.

The U.S. Fish Commission established several hatcheries in the region including sub-stations at Chapman's Landing and Maryland Point. In 1898, the Commission reported that Charles County employed 480 men on 280 vessels at its various commercial fisheries. Largely due to over fishing, the Potomac fisheries began to decline by the first years of the 20th century.[37]

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[36] *Klapthor, et al., p. 161.*

[37] *Tilp, p. 17-19.*

Even more extensive was the Chesapeake Bay oyster industry. At least four large oyster bottoms were located off of Charles County's shoreline. These included Cobb Island Bar, Swan Point Bar, Kettle Bottom Shoals and Old Farm Bar, the largest in the area between Popes Creek and the Kettle Bottom Channel. Urban growth throughout the nation stimulated the growth of the packing industry in Baltimore. Improved rail transportation, combined with improvements in food preservation, meant for the first time canned goods could now follow rail lines across the county and into the frontier.

After the Civil War, the oyster grounds and fisheries to the north were largely depleted and many waterman from the North turned their efforts to the Chesapeake Bay. Between 1872 and 1892, Maryland produced over 10 million bushels per year on average . The harvest of 1884-85 brought in 15 million bushels, the highest yield ever, and represented one-third of the worldwide oyster harvest during that year. The agricultural depression of the post-war years encouraged many to abandon or supplement farming with seafood production.[38] By 1880, 120 people in the County claimed to be either a fisherman, sailor or oysterman. Roughly half were oystermen.

The enormous fortunes at stake in the oyster industry, combined with over harvesting and declining yields, led to the infamous Oyster Wars of the late 19th century. Competition between oystermen was fierce and at times led to violence. Oystermen from the Northern Neck of Virginia, and the Maryland and Virginia Eastern Shore began dredging local oyster grounds, stiffening yields of local watermen. Labor was also a problem and many accounts exist of immigrants being "shanghaied" during the times of peak harvests. Some were brutally treated. Other accounts tell of workers not being compensated, abandoned or thrown overboard. Maryland's conservation commissioner, Swepson Earle stated in the early twentieth century that "the toughest of tough places on the Chesapeake in the 1890's was Rock Point on the Potomac River at the mouth of the Wicomico...Three killings a week created no civic resentment, while many weeks during the oyster season marked the departure from this life of as many as five or six men."[39] Although it is difficult to judge just how overstated this may have been, in 1905 several highly publicized shoot-outs are known to have occurred off of the Cobb Neck Bar.[40]

As a result of the railroad, Maryland became the leading state for packing oysters as well as a variety of farm produce including tomatoes. In Baltimore, canning was second only to garment-making. In 1880 Baltimore contributed one-third of all canning done in the United States. Along the Patuxent River, Benedict rivaled Solomon's Island in the number of oyster packing houses. Between 1900 and 1920 there were four companies in operation. [41] Rock Point is known to have had at least four packing houses.

By the early 1920s, many of the area's steamboat lines had begun to flounder. Competition from the railroad, and more importantly, automobiles, caused the steamboat business to deteriorate. The last

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[38] *Johnson, ed. p. 5.*

[39] *Wennersten, p. 90*

[40] *Wennersten, p. 93*

[41] *Johnson et al. 8-10*

steamboat docked in Charles County in 1932. The greater ease of movement and economical aspects of the automobile attracted many former steamboat users. In addition, newer and better roads were being built throughout Charles County, making overland transportation faster and easier. In 1909, Maryland produced a plan to establish highway systems connecting all the counties. In Southern Maryland, the planned highway connected Mattawoman Village to Brandywine in Prince George's County, and ran from Mattawoman to Waldorf, Young's Switch (White Plains), La Plata, Spring Hill, Bel Alton, Faulkner, Newburg, and on to Lancaster's Wharf at Rock Point. A second highway was planned to connect Waldorf, Beantown, Bryantown, and Hughesville to points south in St. Mary's County. A third road connected La Plata to Port Tobacco, Welcome, Hilltop, Ironsides, Doncaster, and Riverside. While the entire system was never realized, the first proposal became the framework for present-day Route 301 (Crain Highway) and the second traces the current line of Route 5, Leonardtown Road. The third was realized in MD Route 6 (Port Tobacco Road). In order to service the steamboat wharves along the Potomac with automobiles, the state also planned a coastal route connecting each of the Potomac River wharves from Marshall Hall to Riverside. Portions of this were built, and have become Riverside Road in the western section of the county.

The first state road building project, a stretch of road connecting Waldorf and La Plata, was begun in 1910. Most of the county's roads were initially paved with oyster shells from the Indian deposits at Pope's Creek or with gravel from the numerous deposits across the county. By 1930, there were 167 miles of gravel road in Charles County, and only five miles of concrete highway.[42]

While tobacco remained the main export in Charles County throughout this period, changes in its usage altered production methods and trading. With the outset of World War I, domestic manufacturers began producing vast quantities of cigarettes for the American servicemen in Europe. In turn, the servicemen introduced this product to the Europeans, increasing the demand for Maryland tobacco. Charles County planters responded by increasing the acreage of land under cultivation. No longer was tobacco exported directly to foreign markets, but was first transported to cigarette manufacturers.[43]

The single most important and long-lasting industry established in Charles County during this period was the naval ordnance manufacturing plant built at Mattawoman Neck in 1890. The Naval Proving Ground was moved to Mattawoman Neck when transportation from the former Proving Ground at Annapolis to the Naval Gun Factory in Washington, DC became too dangerous. Nearly nine hundred acres of land was purchased for the proving ground, and later supplemented by an additional one thousand acres on Stump Neck. In 1898, the Naval Powder Factory was constructed, and the first powder was manufactured in 1900. During World War I, transportation to and from the factory was improved by the construction of a railroad spur from White Plains in 1917.

Although the Proving Ground was moved to Dahlgren, Virginia in 1921, the plant continued to operate and began tests that would lead to the development of jet propulsion and rocket testing at the naval station. Today the installation is known as the U.S. Naval Surface Warfare Center at Indian

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[42] *Brown, et al., p. 43-44.*

[43] *Klapthor, et al., p. 159.*

Head, and continues to be one of the County's major employers. From the beginning, the plant and proving ground provided an important and stable center of employment for the county. During the war years, the plant expanded, requiring more workers. The town of Indian Head grew up just opposite the gates of the installation. The Navy contributed to the housing and education of its employees and their children by building housing and a school at Indian Head.

The period following the Civil War saw the greatest advances in a county-wide system of education. In 1867, there were thirty-six public schools located in Charles County. Five of these were log structures and the rest were frame buildings. By the following year, there were an additional six schools for African American children in the county. Throughout the latter half of the nineteenth century, education in Charles County was mainly based on primary schools with one teacher located in one-room school houses. This simple system was enhanced by the county's first secondary institute opened in 1903 in La Plata. Known as the McDonough Institute, this school was funded by a trust set up by Maurice James McDonough in his will of 1804. His initial investment of $2,000 was earmarked for the education of the poor and orphaned children of Charles County. The trustees appointed to carry out McDonough's wishes decided to invest the money and let it accumulate. It was not until nearly a century after McDonough's death that the trustees found an opportunity to carry out the philanthropist's plan. By 1902, the fund had grown to $50,000. With the money, the trustees purchased the Lintner School building at La Plata and opened McDonough Institute in 1903. The institute served as a primary and secondary school for the entire county, offering academic, commercial, and agricultural classes. McDonough Institute was Charles County's only high school until 1924.[44]

Shiloh Church, Bryans Road. Erected in the 1880's.

In the decades after the Civil War, former slaves and free blacks established new communities which were often anchored by a church and schoolhouse. As the communities grew, stores, meeting halls and other structures were built in the surrounding area. Two of these communities include Pomonkey near present-day Bryans Road, and Shiloh near Newburg. Notable early African American churches are Old Shiloh Church and Cemetery (CH-500) built in 1881, Pleasant Grove Baptist Church (Ch-523) in Marbury circa 1908, Alexandria Chapel in Chicamuxen(CH-309) circa 1900, and St. Catherine's Catholic Church in Welcome, circa 1908.

Immediately following the Civil War, the county experienced a severe economic recession that resulted in the abandonment, sale and division of numerous large plantation tracts. By the end of the 19th century, many small-scale farmers had purchased parcels of former plantations and erected modest dwellings along with a host of agricultural and domestic outbuildings. These unpretentious rural farmsteads account for the majority of the documented sites from the "Reconstruction" period. A few examples include the Alexius L. Middleton House (CH-628) the Henry D. Middleton House (CH-

[44] *Klapthor, et al., p. 110.*

615), the Ernest M. Jameson House (CH-632) and the Jameson-Moran House (CH-683). Some of the era's most sophisticated homes in size, style and ornamentation include Brinkwood (CH-213), the Harry R. Bowling House (CH-614) and Sunnyside Farm (CH-214). Vernacular buildings constructed for small landowners or tenants were always one room deep, and often two stories in height. Examples include the Swann Tenant House (CH-685) and the Sam Montgomery House (CH-644). The James and Margaret Bowling Farm (CH-741) and the St. Clair Farm (CH-718) are good examples of early 20th century farmsteads. By the 20th century mail-order kit homes like the Milton Somers House, (CH-714) were being constructed in town and villages. The Hammond Cottage (CH-732) represents the types of bungalow-inspired dwellings erected in the riverside resort areas of Charles County during the early 20th century.

Two excellent examples of sacred architecture from the early 20th century include the Calvary United Methodist Church (CH-622) and St. Francis Chapel at Rock Point (CH-663). Constructed in 1904 in the railroad village of Waldorf, Calvary is the more formal of the two. Designed by architect B.G. Smith of New Jersey and built by local contractor Murray & Hamilton, its ornamentation includes a two-tier belltower, lancet windows and Victorian trim. More restrained is the St. Francis Chapel which in 1907, was erected as a mission church in the late 19th century fishing village of Rock Point. Several commercial structures that date from the early 20th century include the well-preserved Gallant Green Store (CH-602), the Old Waldorf Store and Post Office (CH-624) and Cooksey's Store (CH-608) in the 19th century crossroads village of Dentsville.

The Modern Era: Roads, Casinos & Suburbanization: 1920-present

Time Period: Industrial/Urban Dominance, 1870-1930; Modern Period, 1930-present
Themes: Agriculture, Architecture, Economic, Government/Law, Religion, Social/Education/Cultural Transportation
Property Types: Farm complexes, Agricultural outbuildings, Rural vernacular, Waterfront cottages, Mail-order houses, Hotels/Casinos, Courthouses, Churches, Schools, Roads/Wharves
Classes: Archaeological Sites, Standing Structures, Landscape Features, Town Plans, Objects, Intangibles (Folklife)

Since 1920, Charles County has experienced major changes in its economy, demographics, and physical development. The opening of Crain Highway after 1922, the construction of the Potomac River Bridge near Newburg in 1939, and the vast expansion of the Washington, DC suburbs have transformed life in the county. Between 1940 and 1950, the county's population increased by 33 percent. In the following decade it increased again by 39 percent, and again between 1960 and 1970 by 46 percent. Along with this massive population growth came changes in the landscape, as modern housing subdivisions began filling in agricultural fields and forested areas.

Among the most important events that led to this transformation was the opening of Crain Highway in the mid-1920s. Running north-south through the center of the county, the highway (US Route 301 today) eventually linked Charles County to Baltimore and points north. Robert Crain, a prominent county resident, was instrumental in lobbying the state for funds to build the highway. Originally known as the Southern Maryland Trunk Line, it was renamed Robert Crain Highway after its most fervent supporter. Ground was broken for this concrete-paved highway on September 30, 1922. The highway made automobile travel speedy and convenient for both farmers transporting goods to market in Baltimore, and for passengers doing business or visiting outside the county. The road also opened the area to tourism, as urban and suburban dwellers sought to escape to the country for a day or a weekend. It was not long after the opening of the road that modest travel lodgings began to appear along its length.

In 1940, the Governor Harry W. Nice Bridge (then known as the Potomac River Bridge) was completed between Newburg in Charles County and Dahlgren in King George County, Virginia. With this event, Crain Highway became a major north-south corridor between Maryland and Virginia, bypassing the city of Washington. Many hotels and entertainment-related businesses sprouted up along the corridor between 1940 and 1960.

The Waldorf Motor Court was built after the construction of Crain Highway.

One of the most influential of the entertainment industries that developed in the county was gambling. However, the first slot machines were brought to the area in the 1930s in preparation for the tercentenary celebration of the landing of the *Ark* and the *Dove*. The first of these "one-armed bandits" were installed in stores and hotels mostly in St. Mary's

The neon Wigwam sign reflects the whimsical roadside architecture of the 1960s.

County. Charles County soon followed their lead by placing slot machines at Chapel Point and Cobb Island. In 1949, Charles County legalized gambling, and casinos began to appear along Crain Highway where they were readily accessible from Baltimore and Washington, DC.[45] Along with the casinos came restaurants, cocktail lounges, and motels. Gambling became such an important business in Charles County that at one point a full quarter of the county's revenue derived from slot machines.[46] After slot machines were banned in Charles County in 1967, the area's popularity as a travel destination deteriorated. The construction of the Chesapeake Bay Bridge offered Washingtonians ready access to Maryland's ocean side resorts, draining the tourism trade out of Southern Maryland.[47]

The lasting impression of much of this 20th century development on Charles County has been the facilitation of further community growth. Better roads and services has meant that Charles County has become more accessible and attractive as a bedroom community for Washington, DC. Beginning with the 1960's establishment of St. Charles, a large-scale planned community in Waldorf, suburban-type development has grown precipitously. The population has continued to grow rapidly since the 1970s and local government has expanded to more adequately address growth management.

Domestic architecture during the modern period includes small waterfront cottages, traditional I-houses, tenant houses, and catalog or mail-order homes. The Sherwood Drive Cottage and the River Road Cottage (CH-617, CH-618) reflect the growth in waterfront residential and resort development within the county during the 1920s and 1930s. While few such examples have been surveyed, many such dwelling were constructed in Charles County, especially in the village of Benedict and in the numerous waterfront communities established in the Cobb Neck region. The Ann C. St. Clair (CH-627) property in the village of Dentsville, reflects the continuing popularity of the I-house form throughout the 1920s and into the 1930s. Two examples of American four-squares are the George J. Turner House (CH-656) and the James L. Carrico House (CH-613). These are likely mail-order homes and represent the housing options of the County's more prosperous residents.

During the period before World War II, Charles County remained relatively rural and agricultural tenancy remained prevalent. Examples include the Scout Camp Road Tenant House (CH-691) and the Jameson Tenant Farm (CH-648). After this time, the increasing availability of wage labor marked an effectual end to agricultural tenancy in Charles County. Commercial structures documented for this era range from the vernacular riverside store in Rock Point known as Shorter's Store (CH-662) to the more readily recognizable stepped brick storefront facade of the Issue Store and Post Office.

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[45] *Tilp, p. 302-303.*

[46] *Brown, et al., p. 211.*

[47] *Southern Maryland Heritage Partnership, The Southern Maryland Heritage Area Plan, (February 1997): p. 21.*

II. Past Preservation Efforts

Heritage resources first gained public attention during the 1930s beginning with the field research of the Historic American Building Survey (HABS). Established by Congress in 1933, HABS was a work program for architects, draftsmen and photographers left jobless by the Great Depression. By documenting "buildings of every description" the HABS workers established a lasting archive of historic architecture throughout the country. The HABS documentation also became primary source material for the then budding historic preservation movement. In Charles County, HABS workers identified for the first time some of Charles County's oldest and most significant historic buildings including Waverly, Locust Hill, Sarum, Rose Hill, and the Chimney House. Also at that time, the independent research of architectural historian Henry Chandlee Foreman was underway. Most notably, Foreman's work Early Manor and Plantation Houses in Maryland in 1934, and Tidewater Maryland Architecture and Gardens in 1956, drew attention to Southern Maryland colonial architecture for the first time and likely sparked some of the earliest preservation projects.

Purchased by philanthropist Alice Fergusson in 1930 , the circa 1790 Ridgate-Compton House was the first restoration project in Port Tobacco. Photo by Tom Pike.

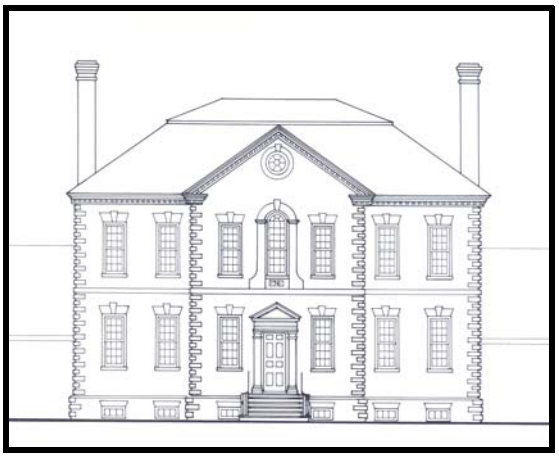
Efforts to preserve some of these historic buildings gained wide-spread momentum in Charles County just before World War II when the county's rural setting began attracting new wealthy residents. Eager to find country "retreats," several wealthy Washington suburbanites including politicians, military leaders and diplomats, purchased and refurbished historic dwellings in the county. The first public effort to preserve historic architecture began in Charles County during the 1958 Tercentenary. The first comprehensive History of Charles County, Maryland was published by Margaret Brown Klapthor and Paul Dennis Brown. Also in 1958, the Restoration Society of Port Tobacco was established to preserve one of the most significant colonial ports in Maryland.

With the explosion of post-War growth, a national historic preservation movement gained momentum. In 1966, The National Historic Preservation Act was signed authorizing the Secretary of the Interior to provide funding to States to conduct State-wide preservation surveys and plans. In response, the Maryland Historical Trust began several reconnaissance-level surveys throughout the State in the late 1960s. The most extensive reconnaissance-level documentation was undertaken by J. Richard Rivoire between 1970-72 and again in 1977. Rivoire documented almost 200 mostly pre-Civil War era historic sites in Charles County.

The National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, combined with local activities associated with the Nation's bi-centennial, generated a great deal of attention to a broad range of heritage resources in Charles County. In 1976, Charles County's second and more encompassing Charles County History: Bicentennial Edition was published by a local citizen committee.

Several other citizens groups and committees were formed and began to compile other aspects of Charles County's history. An extensive inventory of cemeteries was undertaken by the Charles County Historical Society under the direction of committee chair Michael J. Mazzeo, Jr. between 1978-1984 and compiled into the "Name Index of Cemetery Records" housed at the Southern Maryland Studies Center. Also by 1978, an oral history project sponsored by the newly established Southern Maryland Studies Center was underway.

In the 1970s interest in African American and American Indian heritage increased as well. George McDaniel, a graduate student at Duke University surveyed early African American dwellings in 1977-78. In 1979 he completed his dissertation and published Hearth & Home: Preserving A People's Culture in 1982. McDaniel worked closely with local historian William Diggs who amassed what has been referred to as one of the most significant collections of African American artifacts in Maryland. Diggs worked single-handedly to offer public programs about African American history and was the founder of the African American Heritage Society in La Plata. Diggs was a prolific promoter of Charles County's rural heritage. In 1978, working with McDaniels, William Diggs, along with his mother Rachael Diggs and Luther Stuckey participated in the Festival of American Folklife at the Smithsonian Institution, where a four-room tenant house from Southern Maryland was reconstructed to serve as a backdrop for presenting rural Southern Maryland culture.



St. Thomas Manor, built as the Provincial Headquarters of the Maryland Mission of the Society of Jesus in c. 1745. It stands today next to St. Ignatius Church at Chapel Point. Drawing by J.R. Rivoire.

In the early 1980s Rivoire continued his architectural documentation by conducting a series of intensive level surveys that eventually led to over twenty nominations to the National Register of Historic Places. His research was ultimately published in a monograph entitled, *Homeplaces: Traditional Domestic Architecture of Charles County, Maryland*. Rivoire's work stands as the definitive reference for information about pre-Civil War architecture in Charles County.

Archaeological research has been conducted in Southern Maryland since the 19th century, although few excavations have been conducted by professional archaeologists. The majority of the work still consists of preliminary cultural resource studies, broad ranging professional field surveys and amateur artifact collecting activities. In 1985 Dennis J. Pogue and Michael A. Smolek developed An Archaeological Resource Management Plan for the Southern Maryland Region which summarizes past documentation efforts and identifies twelve areas of concern throughout the region.

As the County continued to grow during the 1970s, 80s and 90s, and as the number of education programs about local history swelled, citizens began to recognize the growing need to protect historic sites. The Charles County Historical Trust (CCHT), formed in 1972 and re-organized in 1984, was established as a local arm of the Maryland Historical Trust and was an early advocate of historic

resources as a public as well as a private concern. In the spring of 1987, the CCHT urged Charles County Government to consider historic resources in the soon-to-be drafted County's Comprehensive Plan and suggested that the plan include a recommendation that Charles County adopt a historic preservation ordinance.

Bryantown Tavern c. 1900. Photo courtesy of Robert Cook

The 1990 Comprehensive Plan identified historic resources as "significant components of community character [that] must be preserved if their qualities are to continue to influence the appearance, social fabric and quality of life in the County." Furthermore, the plan envisioned establishing historic preservation districts in Port Tobacco and Bryantown while pursuing the voluntary designation of individual sites outside the two districts.

In 1991, draft Historic Overlay Zone legislation was developed by consultants Redman/Johnston Associates Ltd. and proposed for inclusion in the 1992 comprehensive rezoning. However, due to concerns raised by property owners and local organizations, legislation was not adopted. Major concerns regarded the process of designating local historic landmarks that would then be subject to the ordinance, and the types and extent of the work that would be reviewed. There was specific concern over the perception that properties could be designated without the owner's consent and that routine maintenance such as painting would be subject to review by a commission. Although the ordinance was put on hold for further study, some protection to historic resources was provided in 1996 when the revised subdivision regulations included historic resources as part of the technical review process. Recognizing that many cemeteries were most threatened when land was being developed, in 1996 the revised subdivision regulations for Charles County require that an easement be placed on family or other private cemeteries before a development plan is approved.

The 1997 Charles County Comprehensive Plan restated past preservation goals including the identification of sites having historic significance, the identification of appropriate preservation methods, and working to increase public awareness of historic/cultural resources. Specific implementation strategies were to update the inventory of historic properties, review development proposals, use incentives to preserve historic structures, investigate historic preservation zoning and increase public education.

In an effort to implement these goals, in 1998 Charles County undertook a five year historic sites survey with funding from the Maryland Historical Trust Non-Capital grant fund. A major component of this grant was to hire a full-time historic sites surveyor/historic preservation planner. The initial goals included undertaking the survey project and integrating historic preservation into the overall planning process. In 2001, a second grant fund, Preservation Incentives for Local Governments (PILG) allowed Charles County to address additional goals and strategies outlined in the Comprehensive Plan. PILG funded several significant public education products including the development and publication of *Preservation Matters*, a newsletter of the Charles County Heritage Preservation Program, and an informational brochure about preservation designations, incentives, and resources in the County.

PILG also led to the establishment of the Charles County Historic Preservation Advisory Council (HPAC). This group of ten citizens appointed by the Charles County Commissioners was established in May 2002 and charged with developing a comprehensive historic preservation plan that would guide future preservation activities. The committee met monthly to review various preservation programs and issues as well as to develop local goals and priorities. Of particular concern was the issue of historic preservation ordinances. Because a draft ordinance had failed in 1992, the HPAC wanted to provide sound recommendations that would not jeopardize the development of a comprehensive preservation program. The HPAC decided to draft a separate issue paper (Appendix A) outlining their discussion of historic preservation ordinances and how the committee came to the specific recommendations found in the Goals and Strategies section of this document.

Beginning in the 1990s State, local and private organizations began to consider a wider range of heritage resources including rural landscapes and roads, history museums and their collections and living traditions. In the 1990s the County's small museums formed the non-profit Charles County Museum Consortium as a means of working together for shared goals. In 1994, Ralph Eshelman, serving as consultant for the museum consortium, completed a strategic plan. Building on these findings Margaret Burke prepared an interpretive planning report in 1997.

Currently, folklorists Carrie and Michael Kline have developed the Southern Maryland Folklife Program. This is part of the *Maryland Traditions* program, a collaboration between the Maryland Historical Trust and the Maryland State Arts Council funded by the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA). The program strives to create sustainable regional folk arts infrastructure. Focusing their efforts on the African American gospel singing tradition in Southern Maryland, in July 2003, the Kline's released two CD's featuring the Shiloh Methodist Community Church Choir of Newburg, among several other choirs and performers. They have also worked with Nanjemoy residents to document foodways traditions in that area.

Also in the early 1990s regional plans were underway to consider regional heritage. Recognizing the economic potential of heritage tourism, in 1996 the Maryland General Assembly created the Maryland Heritage Preservation and Tourism Areas Development Program. The goals include enhancing visitor appeal, increasing economic activity associated with tourism, small business development opportunities, job growth and a stronger tax base as well as the preservation of historic buildings, conservation of natural areas, and greater access to an understanding of the history and traditional culture of the area.

C. 1940 tobacco barn at the Dyson Farm, Round Hill Road.

In 2003, the Southern Maryland Heritage Area Heritage Tourism Management Plan was completed by consultants Redman/Johnston Associates and approved by the Maryland Heritage Area Authority.

Although not recognized as a heritage preservation program, agricultural preservation projects have

supported heritage preservation programs. Efforts to preserve the cultural or rural landscapes in Charles County began in the 1980s and evolved out of concerns over growth management, resource protection, and agricultural preservation. Today Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation districts and easements protect 15,000 acres, the Rural Legacy Program protects over 1,000 acres of farm and woodland within the Zekiah watershed, and the Maryland Environmental Trust protects an additional 5,000 acres throughout Charles County. In addition, Federal and State-owned land exceeds 15,000 acres. All of these programs consider the historic qualities of a property as part of the project rating criteria. However, none specifically aim to protect historically significant landscapes or views.

III. Threats to Historic Resources

Many heritage resources in Charles County are, at present, seriously threatened by increasing development pressures, neglect, and a lack of public appreciation. The county has continued to grow as one of Washington, D.C.'s major bedroom communities over the past twenty years. Charles County's growth rate can be attributed to a number of factors including its proximity to the Washington metropolitan area. Charles County's relatively low tax rate, lower housing costs and rural character add to its appeal as a popular market. In 2000 Charles County's population was 120,546 and ranked the ninth fastest growing County in the State between the 1990 Census and Census 2000, reflecting an average annual rate of growth of 1.77 percent. During the previous decade, 1980 to 1990, Charles County ranked as the third fastest growing county in the State of Maryland.

Historically, the county's population began experiencing significant growth beginning in 1950. At that time, the population of the county was only 23,415 persons, due largely to the County's relative isolation and agrarian economy. Between 1950 and 1960, the population grew 39.1 percent, and between 1960 and 1970, an additional 46.5 percent increase in population was documented by Census figures. The following two decades witnessed even greater increases, with a 52.6 percent increase between the 1970 population count of 47,678 persons and the 1980 count of 72,751 persons, and a 64.3 percent increase when the 1990 count was listed as 101,154 persons.

Population growth has a direct correlation with the loss of historic properties. The 1990 Census reported 1,828 structures built between 1940 to 1949 and 1,930 structures built 1939 or earlier. These numbers were significantly reduced according to Census 2000 which recorded 1,511 structures built between 1940-1949 and 1,701 built by 1939 or earlier, representing a loss of 546 structures. This is roughly equivalent to one historic structure lost per week.

Since 1990, recent trends in the County's land use planning have begun to focus population growth and development within a designated growth area. These efforts may indirectly help to protect historic resources located outside designated growth areas. In addition, the County has committed to integrate historic preservation planning into its development review process in order to mitigate the negative impacts of development on historic sites.

Winkler's Shop Schoolhouse. Photo courtesy of Tom Pike.

<u>*Architecture*</u>

According to 18th century tax assessment records several thousand structures were standing in Charles County during the late 1700s. Today, under 100 of those remain. Those that have survived tend to represent the homes of the wealthy rather than those of the average citizen. Very few examples of our 18th century agricultural buildings survive.

The homes of tenants, servants or slaves from the 18th century also have not survived. Surviving auxillary buildings including meat houses, corn houses, cider houses, kitchens, hen houses and of course, tobacco houses are rare. Log construction for agricultural and domestic outbuildings and log chimneys continued throughout the early 19th century. The only known log dependencies to survive are found at Greenland (CH- 603) near La Plata.

Nordean Jackson House.

Charles County's standing historic structures are also threatened by the lack of recognition and general anonymity of most historic properties within the county, and by the lack of a coherent preservation community. There are relatively few properties in the county that are recognized by residents as historic, and of those properties only a handful are open to the public.

Simple, vernacular structures are especially threatened. Due to both a lack of public recognition of their historic significance, and to the difficulty in making these historic structures adaptable to 21st century living, many vernacular buildings are abandoned or replaced with contemporary dwellings. One and two-room log houses, first surveyed during the 1980s by George McDaniel, face an alarming rate of loss. Modest late 19th century farmhouses, often small and unadorned, are also threatened by abandonment and neglect.

Likewise, the small riverside cottages, like those found in Benedict, are endangered by inappropriate additions, alterations and even demolition. The limited number of waterfront or water view properties has encouraged home owners to rebuild larger, year-round dwellings in place of small seasonal cottages of the '20s and '30s. Finally, agricultural buildings, especially tobacco barns are now at serious risk of loss due to the persistent decline of agriculture and the virtual end of tobacco cultivation in Maryland.

Archaeology

As the area of earliest European settlement, Charles County offers some of the State's greatest potential for research regarding pre-historic Native American culture as well as17th century colonization and settlement; and with its extensive coastal area, for research regarding underwater archaeological resources. These resources are threatened by long-term trends in residential, industrial and commercial development, as well as erosion and erosion control measures. Five specific areas of concern have been identified within Charles County including Mattawoman Creek vicinity, Nanjemoy Creek vicinity, Port Tobacco Creek vicinity, Popes Creek/Piccowaxen Creek and Zekiah Swamp/Gilbert Swamp/Allen's Fresh Wetlands Area. Fortunately, many of these areas are owned by the State or Federal Government or are otherwise protected under various land preservation programs.

Cemeteries

An extensive inventory of cemeteries was undertaken by the Charles County Historical Society under the direction of committee chair Michael J. Mazzeo, Jr. between 1978-1984. J. Richard Rivoire included several cemeteries as part of the historic sites survey in the 1970s, and since that time private burial grounds have been included in all survey projects. While State and Federal law offers some protection against vandalism and destruction, often these offenses go unreported. Recognizing that many cemeteries were most threatened when land was being developed, in 1996 Charles County revised the subdivision regulations to require that an easement be placed on family or other private cemeteries before a development plan is approved. Despite several local and State regulations protecting family and private cemeteries by placing easements on the site, these resources continue to be threatened not only by development, but by abandonment, vandalism and lack of maintenance. A lack of organized public support and recognition of the history and significance of private burial grounds in the area also endanger historic burial grounds.

St. Mary's Bryantown Catholic Cemetery.

Jameson Farm, Bryantown, 19th- early 20th centuries.

Cultural Landscapes

The major threat to cultural landscapes in Charles County is the loss of farmland due to development pressure combined with the dwindling economic viability of farming. The Statewide Tobacco Buyout in 1999 virtually ended tobacco cultivation in Charles County. Alternative enterprises often require a different use of the land and agricultural outbuildings.[1]

Since the 1980s Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation districts and easements protect 15,000 acres, the Rural Legacy Program protects over 1,000 acres of farm and woodland within the Zekiah watershed, and the Maryland Environmental Trust in partnership with the Conservancy for Charles County protects an additional 5,000 acres throughout Charles County. In addition, Federal and State-owned land exceeds 15,000 acres. All of these programs consider the historic qualities of a property as part of the project rating criteria. However, none specifically aim to protect historically significant landscapes or views.

[1]Report of the Charles County Rural Commission. September 2002. Charles County Commissioners.

Living Traditions and Folklife

Like historic structures and archaeological sites, development pressure and changing demographics threaten living traditions as well. Tobacco farming and agricultural practices are threatened due to the Maryland State Tobacco Buyout and the overall decline in active farming. Maritime traditions such as crabbing, fishing, net weaving and boat building are endangered by high demand for waterfront property and declining economic viability of commercial crabbing and oystering in Southern Maryland. Traditions such as fur trapping, gospel singing and church dinners which were once part of the fabric of local communities are threatened by many of the same factors that threaten historic buildings: a lack of public recognition of their significance.

History Museums and Collections

Citizens have long been concerned with preserving Charles County's heritage and have worked to form grassroots organizations dedicated to the collection and preservation of that heritage. The African American Heritage Society and the Port Tobacco Restoration Society both have collections of artifacts used to illustrate local history. Of particular note is the collection of artifacts assembled by William Diggs during the 1970s which includes a rare collection of photographs, quilts, furnishings, agricultural and household technology reflecting the African American heritage of Charles County. The Southern Maryland Studies Center has a growing collection of important archival material. Other sites have limited collections but rather focus attention on interpretation of the County's history. (See Appendix F) In 1993 the County's small museums were united under the umbrella organization of the Charles County Museum Consortium. In 1994, Ralph Eshelman, serving as consultant for the museum consortium completed a strategic plan. Building on these findings, Margaret Burke prepared an interpretive planning report in 1997. While each museum faces unique threats and challenges, overall the county's public historic sites are threatened by a lack of recognition as well as a lack of private and public support. Furthermore, despite commendable volunteer efforts, county museums are limited by a lack of staff.[2]

[2] The Charles County Museum Consortium: A Strategic Plan for Their Improvement and Inter-Cooperation. Ralph Eshelman. 1994.

IV. Preservation Goals and Strategies

The goals and strategies are the most important component of the overall historic preservation plan. Based on the knowledge of historic resources, the threats to those resources, and past preservation efforts discussed in previous chapters, the Preservation Goals and Strategies outlines what the County hopes to accomplish over the coming years.

Goals are long range, generalized statements that represent the ultimate preservation desires as expressed by the citizen's group appointed for the task, the Historic Preservation Advisory Council. Accomplishing these goals will require a concerted, sustained effort over a period of time. The goals are intentionally broad to remain valid as the program evolves. For each goal, several strategies have been developed. These strategies are more specific and immediate in nature and are intended as intermediate steps toward achieving the goals.

Goal #1: Make use of a broad range of preservation tools and strategies to permanently protect the County's most significant historic assets.

Many communities have developed an array of preservation strategies that combine incentives with regulatory programs. Without these basic preservation tools Charles County lacks an effective means to protect and enhance its most significant heritage resources.

Loch Leven near Welcome. Erected circa 1750; remodeled c. 1850.

1.1 Formally adopt a historic preservation ordinance as a key strategy to protect significant historic districts and landmarks. Appoint a qualified Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) to administer the ordinance.

1.2 Specifically target Port Tobacco and Bryantown for local historic district designation. Encourage individual property-owners of historically significant sites to seek historic landmark designation.

1.3 Continue to promote the Maryland Historical Trust (MHT) Preservation Easement Program and work with MHT and the Charles County Historical Trust to monitor existing and future easement properties in Charles County.

1.4 Develop historic preservation design guidelines to be used by the Historic Preservation Commission to implement a historic preservation ordinance. Guidelines will establish appropriate materials, treatment and styles for renovation and new construction within the district.

1.5 Evaluate and establish as appropriate, improvement programs for historic districts including funding opportunities for revitalization and streetscape plans.

1.6 Evaluate and establish as appropriate, programs to acquire development rights, scenic and conservation easements, and fee simple lands for protection of critical historic corridors, viewsheds and vistas in Charles County, including the Maryland Scenic Byways Program.

1.7 Promote the adaptive reuse of historic structures for public and private uses including bed and breakfast facilities, country inns, visual arts centers, museums, non-profit organization facility headquarters or other appropriate uses when such uses minimize exterior alterations and are compatible with the surrounding neighborhood.

Goal #2: Develop programs and strategies to educate the public about heritage resources & their preservation.

Successful preservation programs depend upon education as a means of building public awareness and support for preservation activities.

2.1 Publish the updated Inventory of Historic Properties. Use inventory data for a wide range of educational programs including presentations, brochures, tours, etc.

2.2 Utilize workshops, publications and the internet to provide historic property owners and the general public with information regarding available preservation-related programs, organizations and incentives.

2.3 Continue to publish and expand distribution of the biannual *Preservation Matters*, the newsletter of the Charles County Heritage Preservation Program.

2.4 Through collaborative public education efforts, build consensus and support for a historic preservation ordinance and conduct public outreach before the formal public hearing process. Solicit the endorsement of key local organizations including the Charles County Historical Trust and the Charles County Historical Society, Conservancy for Charles County and the Museum Consortium. Work with local media to ensure accurate information is conveyed to the public.

2.5 Participate in and promote events to spotlight heritage resources in Charles County including Charter Day and Preservation Month.

C. 1800 Locust Grove on the Potomac River near Marshall Hall opposite George Washington's Mount Vernon.

Goal #3: Ensure that the historic preservation program has adequate resources to accomplish stated goals.

An effective preservation program must have the necessary resources to implement the goals and strategies. Up until this time, the current heritage preservation program has been largely developed with funding support from the Maryland Historical Trust. If the program is to meet its goals, Charles County must be prepared to fund program expenses while continuing to seek additional revenue sources.

Plank Bridge Farm corn crib. Mid 19th century.

3.1 Establish a historic preservation commission (HPC) to implement the goals and strategies outlined in the Historic Preservation Plan.

3.2 Fully fund a historic preservation planner position within the Charles County Department of Planning and Growth Management to implement the Heritage Preservation Program and to provide staff to the HPC. Ensure that personnel meet the professional qualifications for Archaeology and Historic Preservation as outlined in Federal Register, 36 CFR, Part 61.

3.3 Pursue Certified Local Government status that will allow Charles County access to federal funding to meet preservation objectives.

3.4 Leverage resources by developing partnerships with local, state and federal governmental and private organizations.

Goal #4: Promote incentives to encourage heritage preservation programs and projects.

Considering the high cost of most preservation projects, financial incentives are imperative to encourage developers and private property owners to choose preservation over new construction.

4.1 Promote the State and Federal income tax credit programs. The Maryland Rehabilitation Tax Credit offers an income tax credit of 20% of certified rehabilitation work. The Federal Rehabilitation Tax Credit offers an income tax credit for the certified rehabilitation of income-producing properties.

4.2 In accordance with State enabling legislation, create a local property tax credit where 10% of approved renovations will be reduced from a total property tax liability and/or create a 10 year property tax freeze on historic properties that are being rehabilitated.

4.3 Pursue additional incentives to encourage property owners to participate in local programs. For instance, Texas offers 20% tax assessment reduction for designated properties. This will strengthen the incentive package for all historic property owners, specifically those who own homes that have already been rehabilitated.

4.4 Evaluate implementation of density bonuses for developers that choose to rehabilitate and integrate a documented historic resource into a planned subdivision.

4.5 Give awards and other forms of public recognition for worthy preservation activities.

4.6 Provide assistance to organizations seeking grants for preservation-related activities.

4.7 Advocate for maintaining and strengthening the state tax credit program and other tax incentive programs.

4.8 Promote programs that support the preservation of historic landscapes and settings including Rural Legacy and Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Foundation (MALPF).

Goal #5: Continue the survey and evaluation of all heritage resources including buildings, structures, archaeological sites, and historic landscapes, as well as living traditions and history museums.

Charles County's heritage is not only preserved in historic architecture but in archchaeology, rural landscapes and roads, artifacts in our museums, and in the traditions we observe. Using a systematic approach to identify and document this wide range of resources is essential to fully understanding our cultural heritage and determining what is worthy of preservation and how best to preserve them. Survey data provides the basis for public education, project review, policy considerations and program development. Survey techniques should follow accepted State and Federal standards such as the Standards and Guidelines for Architectural and Historical Investigations in Maryland.

5.1 Survey and evaluate significant resources in Charles County that have not yet been identified including cultural landscapes, scenic vistas and rural roads.

5.2 Continue to update the Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties for Charles County.

5.3 Continue to nominate sites to the National Register of Historic Places.

5.4 Include an oral history component with future survey projects.

Early 20th century African American schoolhouse in Wicomico.

Goal #6: Promote heritage tourism initiatives throughout Charles County and the surrounding region.

How well a community preserves its resources has a direct correlation with the success of its heritage tourism programs. Coordination with tourism goals and projects would benefit both quality of life and economic development objectives.

6.1 Assist in the development of National Register itineraries and other projects that utilize current and future research on historic properties in Charles County.

6.2 Promote and support the implementation of the Southern Maryland Heritage Area (SMHA) Management Plan. Survey, promote and protect the resources related to interpretive themes and target investment zones identified in the SMHA Management Plan.

6.3 Work with the Charles County Department of Tourism, the Economic Development Commission, and other public and private entities with a strong interest in heritage tourism and its potential, to develop projects and programs that highlight historic resources.

6.4 Support the development, preservation and interpretation efforts of local museums and historic sites. Maintain and incrementally increase County financial support for history museums and programs. Promote the visitation and support of these sites by the local schools and the community at large.

Goal #7: Continue to develop and implement preservation planning and review.

Because rapid growth and development is the most pervasive threat to Charles County's heritage resources, overall preservation goals should continue to be integrated into the development review process.

7.1 Continue to review development proposals for potential adverse impacts on significant historic resources when granting permits for development or other forms of land alteration.

7.2 Develop comprehensive and easily accessible digital data on historic resources within the County.

7.3 Review Charles County planning documents for consistency or conflict with heritage preservation goals. To the extent possible, integrate heritage preservation goals into these plans.

7.4 Review and update the Charles County Historic Preservation Plan every six years. This should be carried out by the Historic Preservation Advisory Council with staff assistance and should incorporate broad citizen input.

Key Implementation Strategies

Goal	Strategy	Parties Involved	Year 1-5	Rationale
1.1 3.1	Draft and adopt a historic preservation ordinance/establish historic preservation commission	County Commissioners/PGM	1	A preservation ordinance would be the only mechanism to permanently protect historic districts.
1.2	Designate Bryantown & Port Tobacco as Local Historic Districts	County Commissioners/PGM/ Property Owners/HPC	2	These represent the two current National Register Districts and have the highest potential for heritage tourism.
1.5	Evaluate improvement programs for historic districts	PGM/HPC	2-3	Improvement of historic districts supports heritage tourism and economic development initiatives.
1.4	Develop design guidelines for historic districts	County Commissioner/ PGM/SDARB/HPC	3-4	Design guidelines will assist a Commission implement the ordinance
2.1 2.2 2.3 2.4 4.5	Continue a wide range of public education and recognition	PGM/local & state partners/HPC	Ongoing	Promote heritage resources and their protection in an effort to build private-sector support and investment.
3.4	Pursue Certified Local Government status	PGM/Maryland Historical Trust/HPC	3	This program is a key funding source for the historic preservation program.
4.2	Create local property tax credits for rehabilitation of historic properties. Consider other incentives.	PGM/County Commissioners	1-2	Incentives will compliment local designation and assist historic property owners.
5.1	Survey and protect significant cultural landscapes/rural roads/scenic views	PGM/Maryland Historical Trust/Scenic Byways Program SHA/Heritage Area Consortium	2	Although recognized as important, these resources and their protection have not yet been formally considered.
4.4 7.1 7.2 7.3	Evaluate current planning policies for effectiveness	PGM/HPC	Ongoing	Continue to integrate historic preservation into the overall planning process.

V. Building and Sustaining Preservation Partnerships

The most effective preservation programs are those that forge strong partnerships with agencies and organizations to consolidate resources and achieve common goals. The following is a list of such programs, and organizations that can assist in meeting the goals and strategies identified in the previous section.

National Trust for Historic Preservation (NTHP)
The National Trust for Historic Preservation provides leadership, education and advocacy to save America's diverse historic places and revitalize our communities. A private nonprofit organization with more than a quarter million members, the National Trust is the leader of the vigorous preservation movement that is saving the best of our past for the future.

Certified Local Governments Program (CLG)
Jointly administered by the National Park Service in partnership with the State Historic Preservation Office (MHT), the CLG Program is a model and cost-effective local, State, and federal partnership that promotes historic preservation at the grassroots level across the nation. Local governments strengthen their local historic preservation efforts by achieving Certified Local Government (CLG) status from the National Park Service (NPS). NPS and State governments, through their State Historic Preservation Offices (SHPOs), provide valuable technical assistance and a small matching grants preservation program. Using grants awarded by SHPOs, CLGs may produce historic theme or context studies, cultural resource inventories, assessments of properties to determine their eligibility for local and National Register of Historic Places designation, building reuse and feasibility studies, design guidelines and conservation ordinances, and publications to educate the public about the benefits of historic preservation.

C. 1875 Brown Log House, detail.

Maryland Historical Trust (MHT)
The Maryland Historical Trust was formed in 1961 to assist the people of Maryland in identifying, studying, evaluating, preserving, protecting, and interpreting the State's significant prehistoric and historic districts, sites, structures, cultural landscapes, heritage areas, cultural objects, and artifacts, as well as less tangible human and community traditions. The Trust is the principal operating unit within the Division of Historical and Cultural Programs, which is an agency within the Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development. The Trust offers a wide variety of services and heritage preservation programs, including: terrestrial and underwater archeology, architectural survey and registration, preservation planning, technical research, grant and local assistance, protective easements, cultural conservation, data management and GIS development, local government preservation assistance, historical and cultural museum assistance, and two state-owned museums.

Preservation Maryland (PM)

Preservation Maryland is a statewide preservation organization that is committed to engaging in and facilitating efforts to preserve, restore, rehabilitate and stabilize historic properties statewide, while promoting their future preservation. PM also works to expand, educate, and strengthen the Maryland preservation community. These activities are conducted through grant and loan programs, an ongoing outreach program, and strong advocacy. Founded in 1931 as The Society for the Preservation of Maryland Antiquities, PM is a major player in the development and support of preservation-related legislation and statewide heritage conservation policies. PM strongly supports managed growth and will assist MHT in its new heritage areas initiative.

Catslide House, Port Tobacco. 18th century. Photo by Tom Pike.

Maryland Association of Historic District Commissions (MAHDC)

The Maryland Association of Historic District Commissions, established in 1981, assists historic district commissions (HDC) and local governments by providing training, technical assistance, and information. MAHDC is the statewide leader in HDC resources. Its membership includes almost all of the state's 44 HDCs, many local governments, individual commission members, and residents or property owners of heritage resources in historic districts.

Maryland Heritage Alliance (MHA)

The Maryland Heritage Alliance was formed in 1991 to ensure that the interests of the Maryland preservation community are publicly represented and to provide a cohesive and coherent voice on behalf of issues that affect Maryland's unique historic, archeological, and cultural heritage. To this end, the MHA acts as an advocacy organization, communicating with local, state, and federal agencies and elected officials and maintaining a responsive and effective network for the exchange of information among the Maryland preservation community.

Maryland Environmental Trust (MET)

The Maryland Environmental Trust, an agency of the Maryland Department of Natural Resources (DNR), holds conservation easements on natural, agricultural, scenic, and historic properties and is the coholder of 13 easements Statewide with the Maryland Historical Trust. MET promotes and assists local land trusts throughout the state and operates Maryland's Rural Historic Village Protection Program.

Rural Legacy Program

DNR's Rural Legacy Program was established in 1997. Part of the State's Smart Growth and Neighborhood Conservation Initiative, it is designed to conserve land by protecting areas rich in farms, forests, and natural and cultural resources. The Program achieves this by partnering with local governments, land trusts, and citizens in the purchase of conservation easements.

Coalition to Protect Maryland Burial Sites

The Coalition is a State-wide organization which was formed in 1991 to protect human burial sites from unauthorized and unwarranted disturbance by man or nature. Through advocacy and education, the Coalition works to increase public awareness about the historic and cultural significance of burial sites.

Southern Maryland Heritage Area (SMHA)

The goal of the Southern Maryland Heritage Area is to act as a catalyst to coordinate regional tourism and preservation efforts. These efforts will be directed towards recognizing the significance of our heritage resources, conserving them, and galvanizing the human resource base of the region to increase significantly both the quality and quantity of heritage tourism in Southern Maryland. Ultimately, the regional cooperation generated by the heritage area development effort will enhance the regional tourism product, promote a better understanding of the value of our heritage resources, and support public policy initiatives aimed at supporting the preservation of our heritage resources.

Waverly, near Morgantown.

Southern Maryland Studies Center (SMSC)

The Southern Maryland Studies Center was founded by the College of Southern Maryland in 1976 in order to provide a central location for research on this historically important region. Researchers will find state and federal census records, newspapers, colonial records, church records, and local and state government records; a manuscript collection containing records of organizations, individuals, and families from the 18th century to the present century; a collection of print materials including books, newspapers, photographs, slides and maps; and an oral history collection comprised of over 300 interviews.

Potomac Heritage Partnership (PHP)

The Potomac Heritage Partnership seeks to promote the preservation and protection of heritage resources for the Potomac River watershed. Founded in 1995, PHP seeks to identify and assist those individuals and organizations at the local level within the Potomac River watershed who are contributing to their community's sense of place and importance through programs tied to heritage tourism's positive impact upon commerce, culture, and conservation.

Charles County Historical Trust (CCHT)
CCHT is a local non-profit organization that supports and promotes preservation-related activities in Charles County. Since established in 1974, CCHT has been active in efforts to restore Habre de Venture, the Port Tobacco home of Thomas Stone. The CCHT presents an annual preservation award to notable individuals, organizations or projects. The MHT easement inspection program is overseen by this organization.

Charles County Museum Consortium (CCMC)
Established in 1999, CCMC consists of representatives from Charles County museums and heritage organizations. Their mission is to assist member organizations in developing and promoting heritage programs and projects.

Conservancy for Charles County, Inc.
The Conservancy for Charles County is dedicated to preservation and protection of the County's natural and historic resources. Incorporated in 1996 as a nonprofit organization, the Conservancy is the only land trust in Charles County. Its central activity involves working with landowners in a voluntary program of conservation.