



# 7. Description

Survey No. BA-1585

<b>Condition</b>		<b>Check one</b>	<b>Check one</b>	
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input type="checkbox"/> original site	
<input type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved	date of move _____
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unexposed			

Prepare both a summary paragraph and a general description of the resource and its various elements as it exists today.

The building which housed the Avalon Shops was located southeast of Catonsville on a short dirt lane off Gun Road, approximately 1/4 mile west of where Rt. I-95 passes over the Patapsco River Valley.

The shops consisted of two rectangular one story brick buildings which shared a common wall. The larger of these was eleven bays long and five bays wide with a square tapered industrial chimney stack on the north end. Brick pilasters separated the bays on all four facades and a corbelled cornice ran completely around the building. On the north and south gable ends, the pilasters extended two stories, breaking at a corbelled capital between the first and second floors. A wide, raised corbelled band ran above these capitals as well as along the steeply pitched eaves. Both the tall windows with 9/9 sash and the wide doors had segmental arched heads with three-course header arches. A circular window pierced the gable stories of the north and south facades.

The tapered square brick chimney at the north end of the building rose in three stages. Above the first level was a corbelled ledge and above this was a simple band with recessed houndstooth brickwork. At the top was a corbelled chimney cap.

The adjoining building to the east was five bays wide and five bays long, and generally similar in appearance to the larger structure, although slightly smaller in height. Two series of buttressed concrete walls ran around portions of the exposed three sides and a small concrete deck supported by concrete piers extended from two of the second story windows on the east facade. The interior of this building was not accessible.

The interior of the main building was divided into two rooms of unequal size. The north room, approximately three bays long, was separated into two floors, with access to the second floor gained by a ladder. The south room was open to the roof and was spanned by seven wooden trusses.

A moveable hoist spanned the room below the level of the roof trusses and could be moved from one of the rooms to the other on a track set onto a heavy corbelled ledge on either facade wall. The hoisting mechanism could also be moved laterally, allowing heavy machinery or other objects to be moved to any point in the room. The brickwork of the interior repeated that of the exterior, especially in the use of brick pilasters with corbelled capitals. With the exception of the hoist, a few wooden benches and a small oven, there was little in the interior to indicate the original appearance of the shops. To the west of the two buildings was a small brick shed roofed outbuilding with segmental arched windows on three sides and a door with stone steps on the fourth side.

# 8. Significance

Survey No. BA-1585

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/humanitarian
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		

Specific dates	unknown	Builder/Architect	unknown
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check: Applicable Criteria:  A  B  C  D  
 and/or  
 Applicable Exception:  A  B  C  D  E  F  G  
 Level of Significance:  national  state  local

Prepare both a summary paragraph of significance and a general statement of history and support.

The stone house at the side of the Avalon Shops is a survival of a series of industrial enterprises that flourished in the Patapsco Valley from about 1761 onward. Caleb Dorsey, Ironmaster, purchased the tracts Taylor's Forest and Long Acre in 1761, and at the time of his death some eleven years later, his inventory showed him the owner a forge, Dorsey's Forge, the site under discussion. This forge apparently supplied bayonets and forged items such as swivels during the Revolutionary War, but probably did not make cannons, as has been claimed, because cannons were the product of a smelting furnace where molten metal was readily available. The cannons made in this vicinity were most likely cast at Elkridge Furnace in Howard County.

The grounds at Dorsey's Forge were also used for William Whetcroft's Slitting Mill in 1775 under agreement with Samuel Dorsey. The slitting mill sliced bar iron into sheets that could be further cut up into rods or strips for heading by hand into nails. This was a new product for the American colonies, at least for Maryland, and the General Assembly voted Whetcroft start-up funds as a step toward self-sufficiency.<sup>1</sup>

Neither in the 1798 tax list nor the 1804 inventory of Edward Dorsey of Caleb is there mention of stone houses.<sup>2</sup>

Dorsey's Forge was offered for sale in 1815 following a family lawsuit, and the for-sale advertisement mentioned a "dwelling house," but that structure could well have been a frame dwelling found in the Edward Dorsey inventory.<sup>3</sup>

Several members of the Ellicott family purchased the works and by the time of the 1820 census were doing a considerable business in nail making both here and at their earlier site near present Granite Hill-Oella. The firm traded under the name of Evan T. Ellicott and Company, with an output of \$120,000 per annum in sheet iron, boiler plate, nail plates, nails, and brads as reported on the census

form of 1820. The seven Ellicott partners conveyed their personal shares to the newly incorporated Avalon Company in March 1923, and, in this deed, the name "Avalon" was used for the first time and superseded "Dorsey's Forge." The preamble to the act of incorporation stated of the Ellicotts that "they are the proprietors of certain tracts situated on and contiguous to the Patapsco Falls, that on said lands they have extensive water power, capable of being advantageously used for various manufacturing purposes; that they have already erected thereon suitable buildings, and are prosecuting an extensive manufacturing of rolled and sheet iron, and nails; and they are desirous of increasing their capital stock for the purpose of extending their improvements."<sup>4</sup>

The old Avalon Nail Works burned down in 1845 and a new plant was built by John McCrone and Company who purchased the area south of the B.&O. tracks. McCrone was back in business by the time of the 1850 census, with an annual output of 40,000 kegs of nails. Singewald in his 1911 study of the State's iron industry states that the practically new installation was pulled down in 1854 and replaced by a large steam-powered works with seven puddling furnaces, three trains of rolls, and 44 nail machines.<sup>5</sup>

The house on the north side of the tracks (the Bruns house) was part of the Andrew Ellicott property, and upon his insolvency, it was advertised for sale.<sup>6</sup>

John Chandler Smith, owner of the adjoining property called "Waveland" bought the property<sup>7</sup> and deeded it to his daughter Matilda Frances Smith in 1884.<sup>8</sup> In 1892, Miss Smith sold 2¼ acres, the present lot size, to Edward James Turner for \$1,500.<sup>9</sup> The 1896 tax ledger for District 13 is missing, but the 1911 ledger calls it a double house. Turner sold to J. Edward Bruns in 1912, and the 1918 tax ledger showed dimensions of the structure as 36 x 36, its value \$1,296.<sup>10</sup> This house still remains in the Bruns family. It could conceivably date to the 1815-1822 building program of the Ellicott family. It seems to match up with a square shown on the 1850 map by J.C. Sidney; it certainly existed by 1851 and can be identified in the Sachse Lithograph of c. 1857.<sup>11</sup>

The great flood of July 24, 1868, heavily damaged the Avalon works, which was at that time owned by H.L. Brooke and Company. It was never put back into service.

The 1876 tax ledger listed Avalon Iron Works with "22 buildings as per field book," with a total value of \$6,585.

The 1877 atlas by G.M. Hopkins shows the scattered buildings of the Avalon Forge Company, but only a few houses appeared in Bromley's 1898 atlas. About 1910, the Baltimore County Water and Electric Company headed by Victor Bloede acquired the iron works site and put up a new generation of industrial buildings to filter and pump water for the outwestern corner of the county and city. The old dam was rebuilt as a hydroelectric plant with its generators housed inside the dam. The new buildings were found in the 1911 tax ledger, along with a Corliss steam engine, centrifugal pumps, and two electrical generators. The 1918 tax ledger lists "Stone House at Avalon" (\$1610) as well as a frame house (\$966), and three other houses (total value of \$1449). The 1915 Bromley atlas, Plate 5, showed the electrical buildings. On that map, present River Road was "Edgewood Avenue," and Avalon Forge Road had become Gun Road. The brick pumping station buildings were aligned with their ridge lines perpendicular to the river, whereas the two main buildings of the old nail works had been aligned in parallel to the banks, largely ruling out the possibility that the 20th Century works was an adaptation of the old structures. The Sache lithograph does show one long building set perpendicular to the river bank, but its design includes a monitor clerestory that bears no resemblance to the filtration plant.

The electrical and water works was acquired by Baltimore City in 1922, but the installation was obsolete by 1926, and in 193\_, the tract was acquired by the State to develop as a part of the Patapsco State Park. The old stone dwelling was occupied by a Baltimore City employee, George Schnoerr, who was allowed to stay on under lease by the Park Service. That house is most likely one of the "two stone dwellings" advertised in the 1852 settlement of John McCrone's Estate.<sup>12</sup>

The river bottom was subjected to further devastation by the flood of June 1972, when the Patapsco cut a new path around the dam and heavily damaged the dam, pump house, and sand filter plant. The State Board of Public Works decided in 1978 to demolish the pumping buildings, but as of early 1979, there were no funds budgeted for the project. The dam, which was to have been restored under the first plan, was opposed by environmentalists and by the Corps of Engineers and was undergoing demolition in April of 1979. The only structures in good condition at this once-busy site are the stone house in the park and the Bruns house.<sup>13</sup>

Addenda: These brick buildings were scheduled for demolition to begin on July 20, 1983. The demolition was delayed until July 25 to allow emergency recording of the buildings, which was undertaken July 22 by Geoffrey Henry and Orlando Ridout V of the Maryland Historical Trust and Ross Kimmel of the Department of Natural Resources.

NOTES

1. John W. McGrain, "The Development and Decline of Dorsey's Forge," Maryland Historical Magazine, 72 (Fall, 1977): 346-352.
2. Chancery Papers No. 2382, Hall of Records.
3. Federal Gazette, October 21, 1815, p. 1.
4. Laws of Maryland, Acts of 1822, Chapter 199.
5. Joseph T. Singewald, Report on the Iron Ores of Maryland (Baltimore, 1911), p. \_\_\_\_\_.
6. Baltimore American, April 21, 1851.
7. B.C. Deeds, HMF 9:532.
8. B.C. Deeds, WMI 141:363.
9. B.C. Deeds, LMB 194:551.
10. B.C. Tax Ledgers, District 13: 1911, f. 20; 1918, f. 99.
11. Lois B. McCauley, Maryland Historical Prints (Baltimore, 1975), p. 107.
12. American, May 31, 1852.
13. Park Superintendent Donald G. Gaber to author, April 4, 1979.



MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST

INVENTORY FORM FOR STATE HISTORIC SITES SURVEY

**1 NAME**

HISTORIC

AND/OR COMMON

Avalon Shops

**2 LOCATION**

STREET & NUMBER

Off Gun Road, Glen Artney Area

CITY, TOWN

Catonsville

VICINITY OF

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

STATE

Maryland

COUNTY

Baltimore

**3 CLASSIFICATION**

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

**4 OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME

Department of Natural Resources (Maryland)

Telephone #:

STREET & NUMBER

Taylor Avenue

CITY, TOWN

Annapolis

VICINITY OF

STATE, zip code

Maryland 21401

**5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE,  
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Baltimore County Court House

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

Towson

STATE

Maryland

Liber #:

Folio #:

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE

DATE

FEDERAL  STATE  COUNTY  LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE

**7 DESCRIPTION**

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED      DATE _____
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

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

The Avalon Shops is a structure of two rectangular buildings with a common wall. Both are one story with gable roofs (open on the interior) with ridge on the long axis, parallel, running north-south. Details and composition of the walls are the same. The longer section is to the west, the smaller set on the east wall of this, near the south end.

The very fine brickwork of the elevations provides a grid of pilasters and cornice into which openings are set. (The pilasters extend above the cornice on the gable ends.) Openings are segmental arched, with three-course header arches. The longest wall is ten bays, the gable ends 5 except for the stack end (north) of the main section, which has three wide bays. The average bay width is 14' on the long elevations; about half that in the ends.

The interior consists of two large rooms, open to the trusses, which are wooden with iron ties, modified "Waddel A".

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

**8 SIGNIFICANCE**

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

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SPECIFIC DATES      1910      BUILDER/ARCHITECT

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**STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE**

The Avalon Shops building was part of the drinking water operation which included the Avalon Dam, owned by the Baltimore County water and Electric Company (cf. McNamara, 0.45). It is significant mostly in its visual character, an example of the degree of architectural style which was applied to industrial buildings of the later 19th century.

Recommendations

This structure has been approved for demolition by the Maryland Historical Trust. An alternative should be considered by the Department of Natural Resources. The structure is still sound, with some masonry repair needed on the north wall. The building has been used by DNR as a garage in the past, and could continue so. The principal reason for abandoning the structure was the flood of Hurricane Agnes in 1972.

If demolition occurs, all materials should be salvaged, especially the slate roof-tiles, which may be used in other DNR buildings.

**9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES**

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

**10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA**

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY \_\_\_\_\_

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

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

STATE COUNTY

STATE COUNTY

**11 FORM PREPARED BY**

NAME / TITLE

John D. Hnedak, Historic Sites Survey Team Captain

ORGANIZATION

Maryland Historical Trust

STREET & NUMBER

21 State Circle

CITY OR TOWN

Annapolis

DATE

1978-79

TELEPHONE

269-2438

STATE

Maryland 21401

The Maryland Historic Sites Inventory was officially created by an Act of the Maryland Legislature, to be found in the Annotated Code of Maryland, Article 41, Section 181 KA, 1974 Supplement.

The Survey and Inventory are being prepared for information and record purposes only and do not constitute any infringement of individual property rights.

RETURN TO: Maryland Historical Trust  
The Shaw House, 21 State Circle  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401  
(301) 267-1438

282198

BA-1585

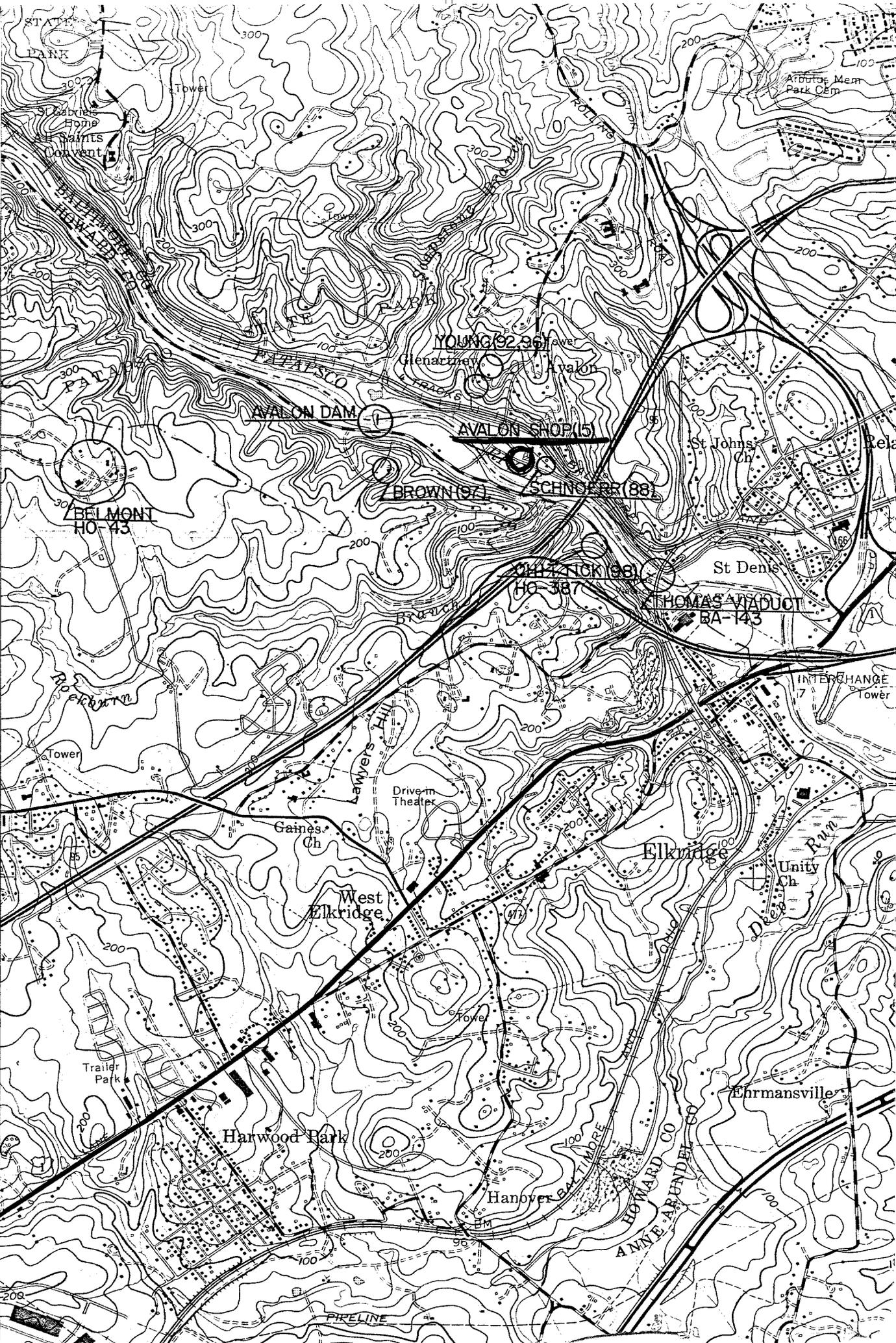
Maryland Journal, March 9, 1901

From Avalon

... The Old Gun Road, some times known as the Avalon Forge Road, is being put in first class condition. The road is being widened and graded, .... part of the road has already been shelled. To-day it is in better shape and condition than it ever has been since Gen. George Washington first surveyed it out; for it is said that this was his route when with the continental army, he retreated from Philadelphia, going from Avalon to Elk Ridge Landing, where he took boats for Virginia. This is historic land. ....

BA 1585  
RELAY  
QUAD

4345000m N  
4344  
4343  
4342  
12'30"  
4341  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 27 MI.  
SAVAGE 5.7 MI.  
III NE  
AGE



UNITED STATES  
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
GEOLOGICAL SURVEY

BA-1585  
Avalon Iron Works  
Baltimore West Quad

76°45'  
39°15'

350000m.E.

351 CATONSVILLE (JUNC. U.S. 40 ALT.) 1.7 MI. 42'30"

BALTIMORE (JUNC. U.S. 40 ALT.) 1.7 MI. 42'30"



House (C.C.)  
4345000m.N.

4344

4343

4342

12'30"

4341

WASHINGTON, D.C. 27 MI.  
SAVAGE 5.7 MI.

5662 III NE  
(SAVAGE)



(in Putaseo state Park) ~~Page~~

BA-1585 AVALON SHOPS



(in Patasco State Park)

B9-1585

AVALON SHOPS



(<sup>in</sup> Patasco State Park)

~~BA~~

BA-1585 AVALON SHOPS



BA-1585 AVALON SHOPS

(Potomac State

Park BA)



(in Patasco State Park) ~~1951~~

BA-1585 AVALON SHOPS



(in Patascoe State Park) ~~BA~~

BA-1585 AVALON SHOPS



(in ~~the~~ ~~area~~ ~~of~~ ~~the~~ ~~park~~)  
Tatavasco State Park

BA-1585

AVALON SHOPS



(Pataskia<sup>in</sup> State Park)

BA-1585

AVALON SHOPS



AVALON SHOPS BA-1585

PATAFSCO .015

INTERIOR, EAST PORTION  
LOOKING SOUTH

JDH

MARCH 1979



1585  
BA-~~1586~~

Avalon Pumping Station

Fresh water from Patuxent pumped to Catonsville + Towson

Photo from Catonsville Reservoir, Ba County Public Library