NPS Form 10-900
(Rev. 8-86)

OMB No. 1024-0018

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See Instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name St. Mary's Roman Catholic Church, Newport
other names/site number CH-20

2. Location

street & number St. Mary's Church Road N/A [ ] not for publication
city, town Newport [X] vicinity
state Maryland code MD county Charles code 017 zip code 20622

3. Classification

Ownership of Property
[X] private
[ ] public-local
[ ] public-State
[ ] public-Federal

Category of Property
[X] building(s)
[ ] district
[ ] site
[ ] structure
[ ] object

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	1	buildings
2		sites
		structures
		objects
3	1	Total

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this [X] nomination [ ] request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property [X] meets [ ] does not meet the National Register criteria. [ ] See continuation sheet.

Signature of certifying official STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER Date 4/11/91

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property [ ] meets [ ] does not meet the National Register criteria. [ ] See continuation sheet.

Signature of commenting or other official Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

[ ] entered in the National Register.
[ ] See continuation sheet.
[ ] determined eligible for the National Register. [ ] See continuation sheet.
[ ] determined not eligible for the National Register.
[ ] removed from the National Register.
[ ] other, (explain:) _____

Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

SUPPLEMENTARY LISTING RECORD

NRIS Reference Number: 91000603 Date Listed:5/30/91

St. Mary's Roman Catholic Church, Newport
Property Name:

Charles
County:

MD
State:

Multiple Name

This property is listed in the National Register of Historic Places in accordance with the attached nomination documentation subject to the following exceptions, exclusions, or amendments, notwithstanding the National Park Service certification included in the nomination documentation.

Patrick W. Andrus
Signature of the Keeper

6/6/91
Date of Action

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Amended Items in Nomination:

Ron Andrews with the MD SHPO has clarified that the Period of Significance for this property begins in 1798, the year of the earliest dated burial in the contributing cemetery. The form is now officially amended to include this information.

DISTRIBUTION:
National Register property file
Nominating Authority (without nomination attachment)

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories fr[illegible]nstructions)

RELIGION/religious structure
FUNERARY/cemetery

Current Function[illegible]enter categories from instructions)

VACANT/not in use
FUNERARY/cemetery

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(enter categories from instructions)

GREEK REVIVAL

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation BRICK
walls BRICK
roof METAL
other WOOD

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

DESCRIPTION SUMMARY:

Converted for use as a parish hall in 1906 and now vacant, St. Mary's Church is a rectangular, brick structure, four bays in length and three bays wide at its former west end facade. The exterior walls, incorporating portions of an earlier church structure, are of common bond construction and were once painted, which probably first occurred when the building achieved its present form ca. 1840. Of simple architectural styling typical of the Greek Revival period in this locality, the exterior features large, 12-over-12 pane sash windows with marble sills, and sawtooth patterned corbeled eaves on the side elevations. The windows were originally fitted with exterior blinds, since removed, and the formerly wood shingled roof has been overlaid with metal sheathing. A marble cornerstone at the building's northeast corner bears the date 1840. On the interior there is a single large room below a vaulted ceiling, with a balustraded gallery along the north, south and west walls supported by round, tapered columns. At the east end there is a painted and gilded altarpiece composed of stop-fluted pilasters with Ionic capitals below an arched broken pediment. Elaborate stenciling decorates the ceiling and walls, most of which survives intact. When the building was converted to a parish hall ca. 1906, the pews of the nave and gallery, gallery stairs that once flanked the entrance door, and the altar were all removed. The building was subsequently enlarged by a frame addition to the west end and a smaller brick addition to the east end. Immediately north of the church and extending to the west is the church cemetery, the oldest section of which contains a number of gravestones of unusually high artistic merit, nearly all of which are inscribed on the reverse "A. Geddess, Balto." Of particular interest in the cemetery is the burial plot of the Brent-Merrick family, which includes several impressively scaled and ornamented monuments enclosed within a decorative mid-nineteenth century wrought iron fence. Immediatley southeast of the church is the site of a ca. 1855 rectory. Adjacent to this is the present parish church and attached rectory, built in 1954 on the site of a 1906 church building.

[X] See continuation sheet No. 1
For General Description

GENERAL DESCRIPTION:

The 60-acre St. Mary's Church property is located about one mile north of the village of Newport and occupies a rural, agricultural setting. The existing church complex, situated at the north end of the property, encompasses one historic structure, a historic cemetery, one historic archeological site, a 1954 church and attached rectory built on the site of a 1906 church, and miscellaneous insignificant and non-historic ancillary buildings and structures. The following description of important historic and non-historic resources is keyed to the site plan (Attachment #1). Although the church complex is at the extreme northwest corner of the property, the entire 60 acre parcel is historically integral to the church site, and there is a high probability that yet unidentified historically associated archeological sites exist on the balance of the land included in this nomination (Attachment #2).

CONTRIBUTING: (Numbers correspond to Site Plan)

1. Historic Church. A rectangular, 36 by 52-foot, common-bond brick structure, this building was replaced in 1906 when a new church was constructed on an adjacent site. Used for many years as a parish hall, it is now vacant. Despite many years of neglect, the building's masonry walls, roof and interior framing, and surviving original interior and exterior finishes are in good condition. The structure is currently being stabilized, and plans are being formulated for its complete restoration.

Built on an east-west axis and with a gable roof, the church originally faced west. This facade, later covered by a one-story addition, featured a transomed, double-leafed entrance door flanked by two windows. In the gable above are two, 6-over-6 pane sash windows and, below the apex, an arched recessed panel. Four evenly spaced windows, with flat arches, molded marble sills and 12-over-12 pane sash extend the length of both side elevations. At the east end there are two first floor doors and two gable windows. Other exterior features include a corbeled, sawtooth patterned eave cornice on the side elevations, and a marble date stone inscribed 1840 on the north side of the building's northeast corner. A wood framed belfry is said to have stood at the west facade. No evidence of it remains, nor is there any physical indication that it was an original feature.

See Continuation Sheet No. 2

The church as it existed in 1840 contained a single ground floor room, or nave, below a shallow, vaulted ceiling. The altar was centered on the east wall, while a balustraded gallery extended across both side walls and the west end. Supported by round tapered columns with simple Doric capitals, the gallery was reached via two sets of stairs that flanked the west entrance door (see Attachment #3). All of the circa 1840 pews in the nave and gallery as well as the gallery stairs and altar were removed ca. 1906 when the building was converted for use as a parish hall; however, portions of the gallery stair balustrades and part of the altar remain preserved. Also remaining is the altarpiece, composed of tapered stop-fluted pilasters with Ionic capitals and an arched broken pediment, all of thich retains its original painted and gilded surfaces. Equally as noteworthy as the altarpiece is extensive stenciling and other painted decorations on the vaulted ceiling and walls, much of which remains preserved. Originally, artificial lighting was provided by three oil-fired lamps or chandeliers suspended from the ceiling below ornate plaster medallions.

Structural and finish details reveal evidence that the existing edifice represents a major reconstruction of an earlier building. There is, for example, a clearly defined change in the exterior masonry that begins about half way up all four walls. Even more obvious is the complete difference in the masonry of the gables over that of the walls. There are also distinct irregularities in the brickwork framing the first floor windows, particularly below the sills and around the arches, and the 1840 cornerstone appears to have been inserted in the wall rather than contemporary with the surrounding masonry. The strongest indication of a major rebuilding of an older structure is revealed by two former first floor doors with carefully laid segmental arches in the east wall. Later bricked in, these former openings clearly predate the two existing doors, whose framing and trimwork is consistent with the c.1840 carpentry and woodwork of the rest of the building. In addition, these earlier doors extended within the area occupied by the altar, and the plaster covering their interior surfaces retains traces of stenciling matching that of the walls and other interior surfaces. With the exception of these details, the building's woodwork is characteristic of the second quarter of the nineteenth century. Assuming that the lower part of the building's exterior walls are those of an earlier building, the absence of a watertable suggests that the masonry does not date earlier than the last decade of the eighteenth century when projecting watertables on brick buildings were becoming increasingly less common in this locality.

See Continuation Sheet No. 3

Following the conversion of the building to parish hall, a rectangular, one story, frame addition was made to the west end for use as classrooms and offices and which continues to serve that function. A smaller, brick appendage was also built against the east end. Neither of these additions physically impacted on the integrity of the building's early masonry. It was also about 1906 that two exterior, brick stove chimneys added to the building in the early 1850s were removed. An interior stove chimney was then constructed against the east wall in the former sanctuary, and extends up between the two principal parts of the altarpiece.

2. Cemetery. The cemetery is composed of three distinct sections, identified on the site plan as 2a, 2b and 2c.

2a. This is the oldest part of the cemetery, the majority of the extant stones bearing dates from 1798 through the 1850s. All of the monuments mark the graves of descendents of those who founded the church and parish in the late seventeenth century and who continued to maintain it under private ownership until the early nineteenth century. The largest and most intact pre-Civil War Roman Catholic church cemetery in Charles County, it is especially interesting for the number of monuments representing the work of the Geddess monument firm of Baltimore. Examples of this firm's work has been documented in other private and church cemeteries in the county, but not in as high a concentration nor with as much artistic variety. Most of the stones are of a tablet form, with relief carved willows and religious symbols in varying combinations within an arched panel; others, such as the 1833 Sheiburn memorial, are much more elaborately ornamented. Among the most impressive monuments are those of the Brent-Merrick family. Enclosed within a wrought iron fence dating about 1850, the Brent-Merrick plot includes the grave of U. S. Senator William Duhurst Merrick (d. 1857), who is said to have cast the deciding vote that allowed Texas entry in the Union. Another interesting aspect of this section of the cemetery is the fact that nearly all of the monuments have been periodically whitewashed over a span of many years, a maintenance practice not seen or documented in other cemeteries in the county but one which undoubtedly contributed to their generally excellent state of preservation. Although wide spaces exist between many of the stones (which are set in parallel lines extending north from the church), clearly defined depressions in these area evidence the existence of many now unmarked graves.

See Continuation Sheet No. 4

2b. This section of the cemetery, separated from the older area by a shallow swale and a stretch of wooded ravine, was reserved for negro members of the parish. Long neglected, it has recently been cleared of undergrowth and landscaped. There are only a few monuments that survive. Most are homemade and date from the early part of this century. However, like the older section, there is clearly discernable evidence of other, now unmarked burial sites. Historical evidence suggest that this section of the cemetery, and that identified as 2c, did not come into use until after 1877.

2c. Most of the monuments in this part of the cemetery date from the twentieth century, although there are several stones dating from the last decades of the nineteenth century. As in the earlier section, the family names of those who played a prominent role in the history of the church and parish are well represented.

3. Building Site. This is the site of the first church rectory for which there is little documentation. Built c.1855, it was a frame structure with a north-south axis and faced west. An 1877 deed refers to the "rectory and schools attached," and it is possible that the rectory was joined to the church by an enclosed hyphen or other structure. The rectory was demolished about the time the existing 1954 church was built.

NON-CONTRIBUTING:

4. Church and Rectory. This rectangular structure, with a shallow gable roof and brick veneered exterior walls, was built in 1954 on the site of the 1906 church, the latter described as a simple frame structure with a stuccoed exterior. A small frame wing off this building's northeast corner serves as the present church rectory.

See Continuation Sheet No. 5

8. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

☐ nationally ☐ statewide ☒ locally

Applicable National Register Criteria ☐ A ☐ B ☒ C ☐ D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions) ☒ A ☐ B ☐ C ☒ D ☐ E ☐ F ☐ G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)
ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance
1822-1900
1798

Significant Dates
1840

Cultural Affiliation
N/A

Significant Person
N/A

Architect/Builder
Unknown

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

SIGNIFICANCE SUMMARY:

St. Mary's Roman Catholic Church, cemetery and property combine to form a uniquely important resource in a local historic context. The 1840 church is the second oldest Catholic church building in Charles County, and the only public-use building dating before the Civil War to retain original interior woodwork and other contemporary ornamentations and finishes. Among these features, the painted and gilded altarpiece and the stenciled decoration of the wall and vaulted ceiling are particularly noteworthy. The historical significance of the building and site is further enhanced by the adjacent cemetery. The largest and most intact of the county's pre-Civil War Catholic church cemeteries, it encompasses an unusually large number of monuments of high artistic quality. Many of these memorial stones bear the signature of "A. Geddess," who founded the long-active Geddess monument firm of Baltimore in 1822. The period of significance begins with 1825 just after the founding of the Geddess monument firm in Baltimore, and closes with 1900 by which time the cemetery's present appearance was established.

The period of significance begins with 1798, the earliest dated burial in the cemetery.

☒ See continuation sheet No. 7
For HISTORIC CONTEXT and MARYLAND COMPREHENSIVE HISTORIC PRESERVATION PLAN data.

HISTORIC CONTEXT:

MARYLAND COMPREHENSIVE HISTORIC PRESERVATION PLAN DATA

Geographic Organization: Western Shore

Chronological/Development Period(s):

Rural Agrarian Intensification A.D. 1680-1815
Agricultural-Industrial Transition A.D. 1815-1870

Prehistoric/Historic Period Theme(s):

Architecture/Landscape Architecture/Community Planning
Religion

Resource Type:

Category: Buildings, Objects, Site

Historic Environment: Rural

Historic Function(s) and Use(s):

RELIGIOUS/religious structure
FUNERARY/cemetery

Known Design Source: None

See Continuation Sheet No. 8

HISTORIC CONTEXT: HISTORIC SETTING:

St. Mary's Church represents a major rebuilding of an earlier, possibly eighteenth century, structure that occurred about 1840. This was the last decade of a period of significant building activity in this locality that began in the late 1810s coincidental with an improved economic environment. About one-third of all the county's inventoried historic buildings date from this period. St. Mary's Church, Newport, was one of several Roman Catholic churches that were built in the county between about 1830 and the 1850s as the various congregations and parishes became officially organized and structured in the decades following the century-long suppression of public Catholic worship. Of these churches, and of all public-use buildings erected in the county before the Civil War, St. Mary's is the only one to remain essentially intact. It is, as well, the only pre-Civil War Roman Catholic church site--aside from the Jesuit mission headquarters at St. Thomas Manor--to have a clearly chronicled history of ownership, development and use beginning with its origins as a Franciscan mission, 1674-1697, to the construction of the existing historic structure.

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HISTORIC CONTEXT: RESOURCE HISTORY:
(NOTE: Numbers with a CH prefix refer to the Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties)

When the parish of St. Mary's, Newport, was established in 1695, its boundaries encompassed what was then the most intensely settled section of the county. Most of the region's staunchest Catholic families lived in the immediate area, including the Boarmans, Brookes, Edelens, Neales and others prominent in the early colonial history of this locality. By 1697 there were three places of Roman Catholic worship in the vicinity of the town of Newport that had been in existence since the 1670s and 1680s, one of which was the first documented Franciscan mission in the English colonies. Following the 1692 Act that established the Church of England as Maryland's official religion and barred Catholics from all civil rights, and until the Maryland Constitution of 1776, Catholics in the area worshiped at privately owned chapels or in the homes of parishioners. The site of the existing church complex is believed to have been occupied by Catholic places of worship beginning as early as the 1670s.

The property on which St. Mary's Church is situated is part of a 400-acre tract known as St. Thomas that was patented by Thomas Sympson in 1665.[1] These 400 acres lay contiguous to two other tracts, one of 100 acres called Simpkin and another of 1180 acres called St. George, also patented by Sympson in 1665 and 1672 respectively.[2] Sympson was living in Charles County as early as 1659, when he was named a juror.[3] In a 1663 deed he referred to himself as "of Wicokomeco [Wicomico]," and mention is made of his "now dwelling hows," which later deeds indicate stood on or quite close to the present St. Mary's Church property.[4]

Very little is actually known about Thomas Sympson, though his descendents (who later spelled the name Simpson) continued to occupy parts of the St. Thomas tract well into the nineteenth century. He was clearly a key figure in the social and religious activities of the Newport neighborhood, while also possessing extensive land-holdings elsewhere in Charles County. It is reasonable to assume the family was Catholic, given that almost all of their neighbors were of that faith and that the majority of the land transactions Sympson and his son executed between 1665 and the 1730s were to or from prominent local Catholics. In this regard, it is possibly significant that the major portions of Thomas Sympson's patented tracts--including St. Thomas, Simpkin and St. George--derived from warrants originally granted to John Lewger, (1602-1665), and assigned to Sympson by Lewger's son and heir, John Lewger, Jr., (1628-1669). The elder

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Lewger was a highly educated Anglican minister who converted to Catholicism in 1634 and was closely associated with the Catholic Lords Baltimore.[5]

Published accounts of the history of the St. Mary's Church and parish, and the Franciscan mission established at Newport about 1674 by Father Basil Hobart (a k a Richard Hobbart), consistently credit Major William Boarman, (ca. 1630-1709), with providing the foundation for the mission and the building of the first Catholic chapel in this area. However, the land records associated with the St. Mary's Church property clearly show a much closer link between Hobart's mission, the Sympson family, and the tract known as St. Thomas.

Boarman's traditional identification with the early history of St. Mary's Church and parish stems from a 1697 listing of Catholic chapels and other places of Catholic worship in Charles County, one of which was a chapel standing on Maj. Boarman's plantation about two miles from Newport and about one mile north of the existing St. Mary's Church complex.[6] The plantation, known as Boarman's Rest, had been granted to Boarman in 1661, though Boarman is not believed to have actually occupied the land until 1671 and probably not until much later.[7] The chapel that stood on Boarman's Rest was described in 1697 as "30 feet long and 20 wide...built about 16 or 18 years [ago]" (or about 1680). Maj. Boarman's will, probated in 1709, devised his Boarman's Rest dwelling plantation to his son Benedict, "provided always that my son and his heirs keep and preserve in good order and repair forever the Chappell that is now standing on my Dwelling plantation." Boarman also bequeathed 1,000 pounds of tobacco "unto the Church," and another 1,000 pounds of tobacco "unto the poor belonging to the said Church."[8]

While Boarman's reference to his chapel is of considerable interest, many other Catholic families in Maryland maintained private chapels or rooms in their homes for religious services during the 1692-1776 period when Catholics were forbidden to hold worship services in public places. The traditional belief that Boarman's chapel was the predecessor of the existing St. Mary's Church, and that it served as the chapel of the Franciscan mission, is seemingly refuted by other contemporary accounts and the recorded history of the St. Thomas tract where the existing church complex is located.

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In 1697 the sheriffs of the various Maryland counties were directed to report to the Governor and Council the names of "what Romish Priests and lay Brothers are resident in their respective Countys, and what Churches, Chappels, or places of worship they have..." The Charles County sheriff reported that "Here there are three Romish priests and one Lay Brother, vizt: Richd. Hubbert, Fryer, after the Order of St. Francis; Wm. Hunter, and Robt. Brooke of the Order of the Jesuits, [and] Wm. Burley, lay Brother..." The places of worship were described as "One Chapel, near New Port Town about 40 feet long and about 20 feet wide...built above twenty years. Also another Chapel at Major Wm. Boarman's about 30 feet long and 20 wide, being within two miles of the aforesaid, and has been built about 16 or 18 years; also a place of worship used at Priest Hubbert's own dwelling-house, about a mile and a half from the aforesaid Chapel..."[9] The fact that the small crossroads community of "New Port Town" was established on a part of the Sympson's St. Thomas grant of 1665; that by 1697 a chapel had been in existence near the Newport settlement for more than 20 years; and that the site of the existing church complex is also on part of the St. Thomas tract and within one mile of the town, all indicate that the original church of St. Mary's parish was situated on St. Thomas, not on Boarman's plantation. Further, the Franciscan mission at Newport was active for only about 23 years, beginning with Hobart's arrival in Maryland about 1674[10] and essentially ending with his death at Newport in 1698. Hobart's appearance ca. 1674 coincides with the "above twenty years" date of construction of the Newport chapel given in the 1697 sheriff's report.

While the Franciscans were a mendicant order, Father Hobart left a will, in which he styled himself "Richard Hobert of Charles County, Gent.," that bequeathed varying amounts of silver, gold and tobacco to his friends as well as his fellow Franciscan and Jesuit priests.[11] Interestingly, Hobart's first bequest was 3 pounds sterling to his friend William Harbert (d. 1718), a well-to-do local merchant and an Anglican and a member of the vestry of nearby William and Mary Parish. Hobart also named Mr. George Tubman, the then Anglican rector of William and Mary Parish, as a beneficiary of his estate. Supporting the conclusion that Hobart's chapel stood on the property known as St. Thomas is the fact that nearly all those named in his will that were not priests had direct associations with that property, especially so in the decade immediately following Hobart's death. It is also of interest that the Sympson's, who had held and occupied the St. Thomas tract since 1665, did not enter into any transactions relating to the property until after Hobart's death, and that the first sales were to several individuals named

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in Hobart's will. That many of those to whom parts of the land were sold were prominent local Catholics, and that these same individuals and their descendents continued to dominate St. Mary's eighteenth and early nineteenth century history, only adds further evidence that the site of the existing church complex was of special importance.

In 1703, Benjamin Hall, (1667-1721), one of the executors of Father Hobart's will, and a former Anglican who converted to Catholicism following his marriage to Mary Brooke in 1696/97, purchased two parts of the St. Thomas tract that together totaled 118 acres.[12] Both deeds were also witnessed by Father Hobart's friend, William Harbert. In 1716 Hall conveyed both parcels to John Wathen, a Catholic whose descendents still live in the immediate area.[13] Hall and Wathen, the latter a millwright and house carpenter, were both associated with Richard Edelen, who was also a Catholic and who was closely related to the Neales, Piles, Boarmans, Brookes and others who are known to have assisted Father Hobart in his mission work. Only three years previously, Edelen had secured from Thomas Sympson, Jr., a 2,000-year lease of 200 acres of St. Thomas which land lay near the northeast corner of the original tract. The 200 acres were described as binding on "Chapple Branch" (now known as Lancaster Run). Another boundary point given in the lease was "a bound red oak...standing by an old field called Chapple Old Fields."[14] These 200 acres are believed to have encompassed the site of the existing church complex.

Richard Edelen, (1671-1760), was a local builder who lived in the Newport area from about 1708 until the 1740s when he relocated closer to present-day Bryantown several miles to the north. He had at least 8 children, all of whom married into prominent Catholic families. Historical evidence associates Edelen with the construction of several extant eighteenth century houses in Charles County, including Maiden Point (CH-130), Wicomico Fields (CH-206), Society Hill (CH-37), Westwood Manor (CH-151) and Sarum (CH-15;NR), as well as other houses in the southeast and eastern section of the county that no longer survive.[15] Between 1714 and 1743 Edelen purchased other portions of St. Thomas, several of which lands were contiguous to "Chapple Branch," but sold most of these by the time of his death.[16] Edelen's will is of particular interest for its specific bequest to Rev. George Hunter, Superior of the Maryland Mission of the Society of Jesus at St. Thomas Manor (CH-6;NR), of "one acre of land...called St. Thomas near Newport...it being our famelys burying place and whereon our Chapple now stands."[17] The inventory of Edelen's

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personal estate lists "Church furniture" valued at 5 pounds, 10 shillings.[18] Edelen's estate had not been settled as late as 1775; as far as can be determined, no deed of transfer for the chapel and one acre devised to Rev. Hunter was ever recorded.

Three years before his death, Richard Edelen conveyed 115 acres of St. Thomas "on Chapple Branch" to Dr. John Corry, husband of Edelen's granddaughter Elizabeth.[19] Corry subsequently purchased two additional contiguous parts of the St. Thomas tract from Ignatius Simpson and Richard Wathen,[20] both of which had been previously owned by Richard Edelen. When he died in 1772 he bequeathed these three tracts, which comprised his dwelling plantation,[21] to his wife Elizabeth for life and then to his son William. According to the 1783 tax assessments, the land was improved by a dwelling house with two brick chimneys, a detached kitchen,[22] and four unidentified ancillary structures. Elizabeth Corry resided on the land until her death in 1798, at which time ownership was assumed by William Corry. Two years later, William expanded the plantation to 363 acres by the purchase of an adjacent part of St. Thomas from his cousin Thomas Lancaster.[23]

It is likely, though not easily proven, that the Corry's plantation encompassed the site of the chapel referred to in Richard Edelen's will; it is even more probable that the chapel named in 1697 also stood on the property. Certain physical details of the existing historic church show that it incorporates portions of an earlier brick structure; however, this was evidently built between the time of Elizabeth Corry's death in 1798 and 1816 when William Corry conveyed three acres of St. Thomas inherited from his father to Matilda Wathen, who then immediately transferred the same land to Rev. John Cary.[24] Two years later, William Corry conveyed the balance of his St. Thomas plantation to Rev. Cary,[25] then the Jesuit Superior at St. Thomas Manor. These were all the same lands binding on Chapple Branch originally patented by Thomas Sympson and subsequently owned by Richard Edelen and Dr. John Corry.

Rev. Cary retained possession of the land until 1842 when he transferred 2 acres to the Archbishop of Baltimore, describing it as land "where a Catholic Church has been recently erected."[26] While the 1842 deed refers to the church as "recently" built, the architectural evidence indicates that it actually represented a rebuilding of an older church, a conclusion further supported by the number of early nineteenth century gravestones in the adjacent cemetery. There are as well a number of recorded references

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to a building that stood there prior to 1840. For example, Elizabeth Corry's 1798 will bequeathed money "to the pastor of the Church."[27] In 1827 Elizabeth Brent made two bequests of money "to the minister officiating at the Catholic Church near Newport" for the purchase of "ornaments suitable in said Church for the Celebration of Divine Service [and for] Church plate."[28] A legal document filed with the county court that same year references a public notice attached "to the door [of] Newport Catholic Church."[29] The 1833 will of Jane Brent devised to the pastor of "St. Mary's Church at Newport...my gig and horse, dining room carpet and all my Church stuff and Church furniture for the use of said Church."[30]

The reason the church had to be rebuilt is not known. Possibly, its roof was damaged in a storm or by fire, or perhaps it had become too small to adequately respond to the needs of a growing congregation. Whatever the case, the 1840 construction/rebuilding date commemorated by the cornerstone of the existing building is confirmed by the 1840 will of parishioner Margaret Posey. The widow of Col. Belain Posey (see Timber Neck Farm, CH-297;NR) and a daughter of Dr. John and Elizabeth Corry, she bequeathed $100.00 to Rev. Aloysius Mudd, pastor, and Alexius Lancaster, church trustee, "to be applied by them towards building a new Catholic Church, near Newport."[31] In 1843 Rev. Mudd received a bequest of $450.00 from Catherine Edelen, who instructed that it be "applied toward paying for the building of the Newport Catholic Church, known and called St. Mary's Church...or for improvements to [the] said Church [or] enclosing the yard or burying ground..."[32] According to a diary of Alexius Lancaster, (1794-1856), it was nearly 10 years before the building was completed; much of the work described by Lancaster suggests the renovation/rebuilding of an older structure rather than the completion or maintenance of an entirely new building.[33]

In 1853 the lands conveyed to Rev. Cary by William Corry in 1818 were sold to Dr. Calistus Lancaster by the President and Directors of Georgetown College, to whom it had been devised by Rev. Cary's will.[34] Although Lancaster, like his brother Alexius, was a trustee of St. Mary's Church, the lands were conveyed to him individually, not as a church representative. Dr. Lancaster, who later moved from the county, died intestate in 1855. In 1863 his lands were purchased at a court ordered sale by Lucretia Lancaster, the executrix of his estate.[35] In 1877 Lucretia Lancaster conveyed 14 acres of the St. Thomas tract to the "Trustees of the Rectory and schools attached at St. Mary's Roman Catholic Church of Newport." The 14 acres were described as embracing the two-acre lot on which the church stood

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and which had been sold to Rev. Cary in 1816 and reserved from the 1853 conveyance to Dr. Calistus Lancaster.[36] The property was subsequently increased to its present size of 60 acres--all part of the original tract called St. Thomas binding on "Chapple Branch" (now Lancaster Run)--and title transferred to the Corporation of Roman Catholic Clergymen.

NOTES:

(Unless otherwise noted, all land and probate records are at the Charles County Courthouse, La Plata. Records of the Maryland State Archives as given as: Annapolis. Liber and folio numbers are given as XXX/000.)

1. Patents: 7/601, Annaplis.
2. Ibid., 7/604; 16/342. (The remaining balance of all three tracts were resurveyed into one tract of 1138 acres called St. Thomas in 1724. Patents: P.L.#5/660, Annapolis.)
3. Deeds: B#1/102.
4. Maryland Archives: 53/474; Deeds: H#2/214.
5. Patents: 7/601,603,604 and P.L.#5/660; Deeds: B#1/12; Edward C. Papenfuse, et al., A Biographical Dictionary of the Maryland Legislature, 1635-1789, 2 vols. (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1985), vol. 2, p. 533.
6. Edwin Beitzell, The Jesuit Missions of St. Mary's County, Maryland (privately printed, 1976), p. 31.
7. Rev. C. F. Thomas, The Boarmans (privately printed, 1934), pp. 26,27; Boarman files, Harry Wright Newman Collection, Southern Maryland Studies Center, La Plata.
8. Wills: AB#3/25.
9. Beitzell, pp. 30,31.
10. Alexander Wyse, O.F.M., "The Franciscans in Colonial Maryland," Frs. Julian Davies and Michael Meilach, eds., The Provincial Annals (New York: n.p., 1984), pp. 33-41.
11. Wills: A#2/205. (An annotated transcript of Hobart's will in Father Wyse's article incorrectly identifies several of Hobart's beneficiaries.)
12. Papenfuse, et al., vol. 1, pp. 381,382; Deeds: C#2/61,63.
13. Deeds: H#2/37,45.
14. Ibid., D#2/67.
15. Compiler's architectural research files.
16. All of these transactions are referenced and discussed in Harry

See Continuation Sheet No. 16

Wright Newman, Charles County Gentry (Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Company, 1971), pp. 131-136.

17. Wills: AD#5/191.
18. Inventories: 1753-1766/261.
19. Deeds: G#3/93.
20. Ibid., G#3/401, O#3/214.
21. Wills: AE#6/149.
22. 1783 Tax Assessments, Charles County, District 2, Land.
23. Deeds: IB#3/303.
24. Ibid., IB#11/439,441.
25. Ibid., IB#12/380.
26. Ibid., IB#25/27.
27. Wills: AK#11/444.
28. Ibid., WDM#15/509.
29. Court Proceedings: 1826-1829/494, La Plata.
30. Wills: WDM#15/527.
31. Ibid., DJ#16/243.
32. Ibid., DJ#16/305.
33. Transcript in possession of St. Mary's Church, Newport; original in private collection.
34. Deeds: RHM#1/599.
35. Ibid., GWC#1/246.
36. Ibid., BGS#2/88.

See Continuation Sheet No. 17

HISTORIC CONTEXT: RESOURCE ANALYSIS:

The ca. 1840 St. Mary's Church, the adjacent cemetery and the property they occupy are of unquestionable architectural and historical significance in a local context. The church, though no longer in use, is the second oldest Catholic church building in Charles County. (The oldest surviving Catholic church in the county, St. Ignatius Church at St. Thomas Manor (NR), built in 1798, was gutted by fire in 1866; its interior and roof both date from a subsequent rebuilding. The next oldest of the county's Catholic churches, St. Mary's Church at Bryantown (CH-46), was extensively altered at various times in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and then substantially rebuilt following a fire in 1963.) Of even greater importance, it is the county's only pre-Civil War structure built for public use that retains its original interior woodwork and other contemporary decorative embellishments and finishes. Despite the loss of its pews, altar and gallery stairs, sufficient evidence of their design remains to facilitate an accurate replication. Of further interest is the fact that if the earlier structure the existing building incorporates was erected as early as or before 1798--and there is no firm evidence that it was not--then it may well represent the oldest standing Catholic church in the county for which significant physical evidence of its overall plan survives.

The St. Mary's Church cemetery, particularly the oldest section immediately north of the historic church, is of comparable importance. In addition to the fact that all of those intered there are descendents of those who founded the church and parish in the late seventeenth century, many of the monuments are of unusually high artistic merit. Nearly all of those gravestones dating between the 1820s and the 1860s were executed by the Geddess firm of Baltimore; especially noteworthy are the Sheirburn and Brent-Merrick memorials. While there are three other Catholic church cemeteries in the county dating before the Civil War, they are not as large, do not possess the same degree of historical integrity, nor are their monuments of a similar level of quality in design or execution.

As the property history (Section 8, pp. 3-9) has shown, the parish of St. Mary's, Newport--the first Charles County mission of the Society of Jesus to follow the founding of the Jesuit mission at St. Thomas Manor--can also trace its origins to the establishment of a Franciscan mission on or near the site of the existing church complex ca. 1674. The first Franciscan mission in English North America for which significant documentation

See Continuation Sheet No. 18

survives, it existed for only about 23 years but nevertheless represents an important part of Maryland's late seventeenth century political, religious and social history. The post-1697 history of the St. Mary's parish and the existing church site is of equal importance in a similar context. In 1708 there were 709 professed Catholics living in Charles County. The only other Maryland county with a higher Catholic population was neighboring St. Mary's County. Despite the fact that Maryland Catholics were denied their basic civil rights between 1692 and passage of the Maryland Constitution of 1776, the Catholic population in this area steadily increased, the majority of whom lived in the section of the county between Bryantown and Newport. As amply illustrated by the history of St. Mary's Church and St. Mary's Parish, it was a very private, closely knit and necessarily self-sustaining community, reflecting an aspect of regional and local social history that has yet to be fully explored or appreciated.

9. Major Bibliographical Referenc

See endnotes for Section 8, Continuation Sheets No. 15, 16.

Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties: Charles County. Maryland Historical Trust, Annapolis, Maryland.

[X] See continuation sheet No. 15, 16

Previous documentation on file (NPS):
- [ ] preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- [ ] previously listed in the National Register
- [ ] previously determined eligible by the National Register
- [ ] designated a National Historic Landmark
- [ ] recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- [ ] recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

Primary location of additional data:
- [X] State historic preservation office
- [ ] Other State agency
- [ ] Federal agency
- [ ] Local government
- [ ] University
- [ ] Other

Specify repository: _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property 60 acres

USGS Quad: Popes Creek, Maryland

UTM References

	Zone	Easting	Northing
A	18	330900	4255880
B	18	334050	4254620
C	18	333630	4254260
D	18	332990	4255760

[ ] See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

[X] See continuation sheet No. 19

Boundary Justification

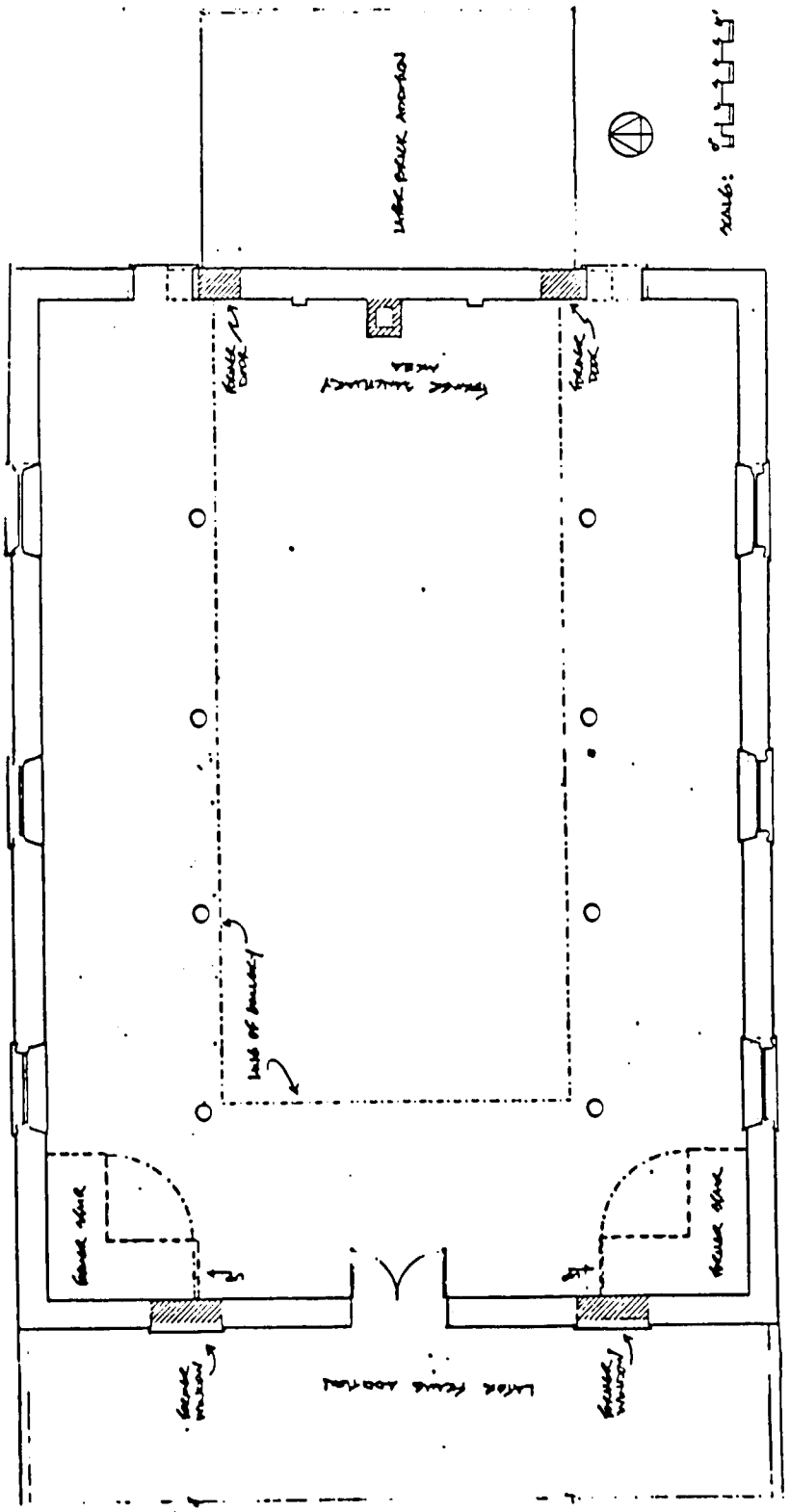
[X] See continuation sheet No. 20

11. Form Prepared By

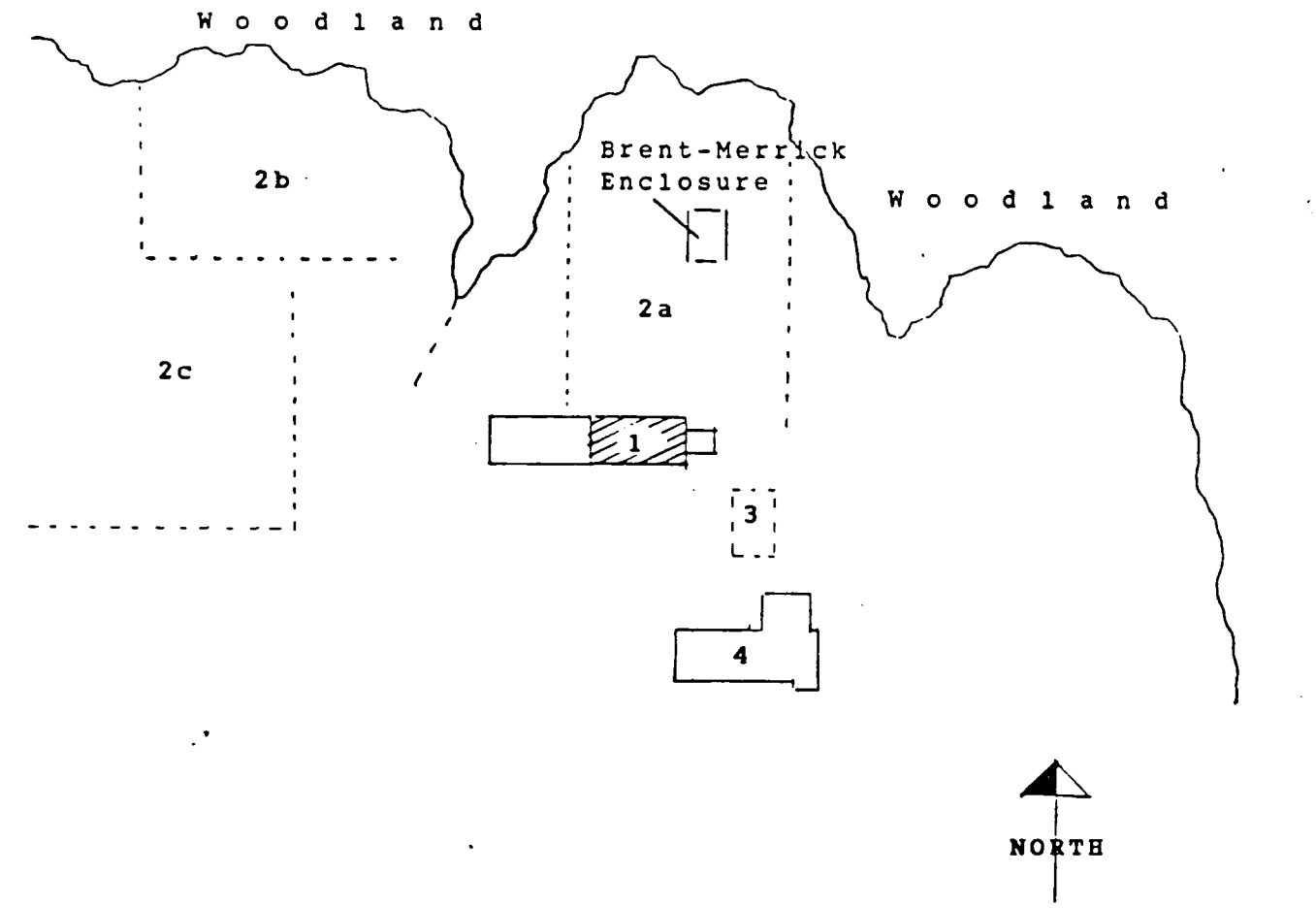
name/title J. Richard Rivoire
organization Historical Architectural Consultant date November 1990
street & number P.O. Box 132 telephone (301)932-1000
city or town La Plata state Maryland zip code 20646

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION:

The boundaries are drawn to include the known historic resources and maintain a setting historically associated with the property. The property is bordered on the north, west and south sides by land that historically was connected to the St. Mary's Church site primarily as agricultural lands, but was later separated from the existing tract. Lancaster Run, which essentially forms the east boundary of the tract, was formerly known as "Chapple Branch" and has historically remained a key boundary of the church property. The land also includes those areas which might contain archaeological sites significant to the historical use and development of the property as it relates to the existing church and earlier religious-use structures that evidently occupied this property beginning about 1674.


LINE OF BALCONY
ST. MARY'S CHURCH, NEWPORT (CH-20)
GROUND FLOOR PLAN

SITE PLAN



NOT DRAWN TO SCALE

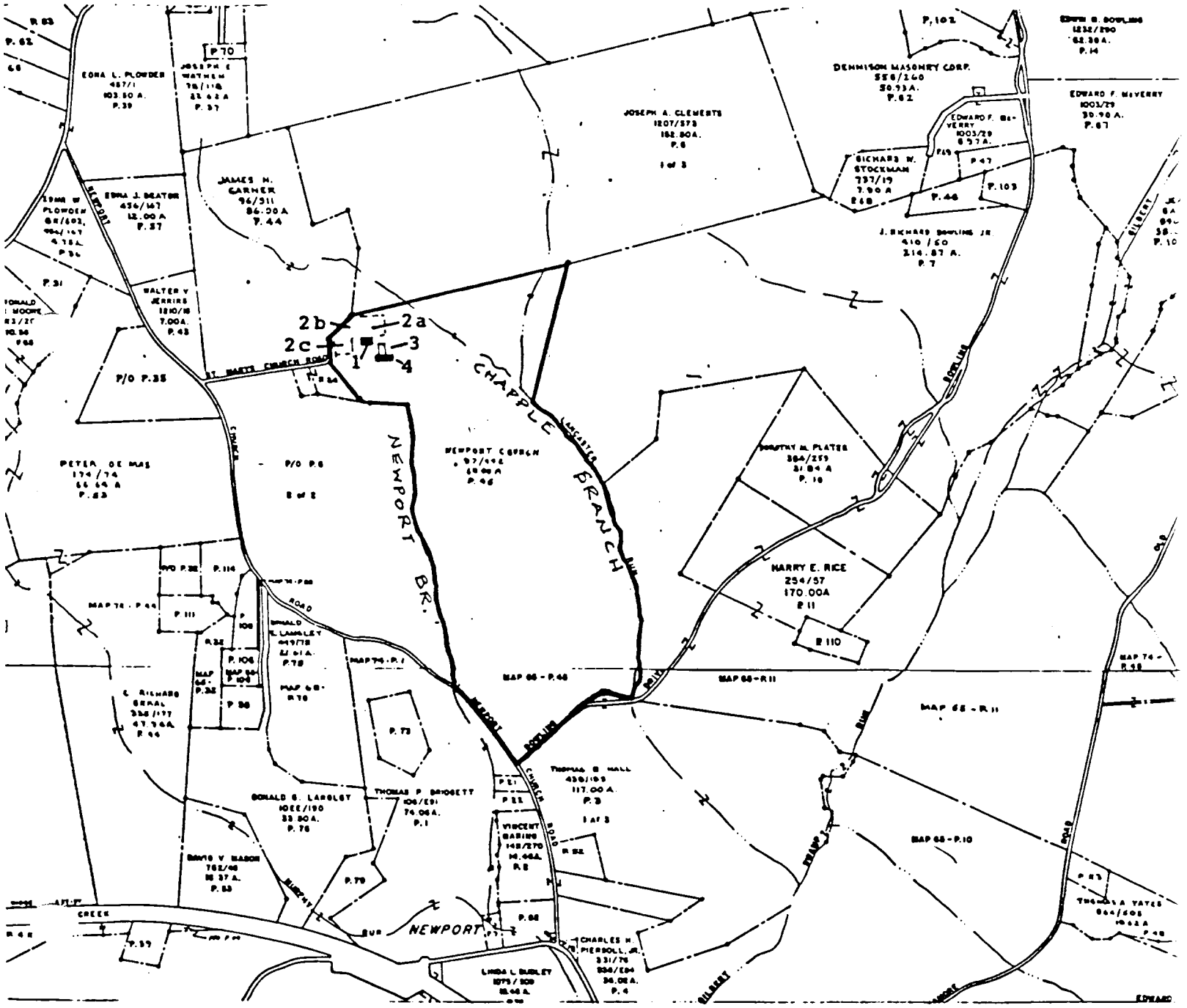
See Continuation Sheet No. 6

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

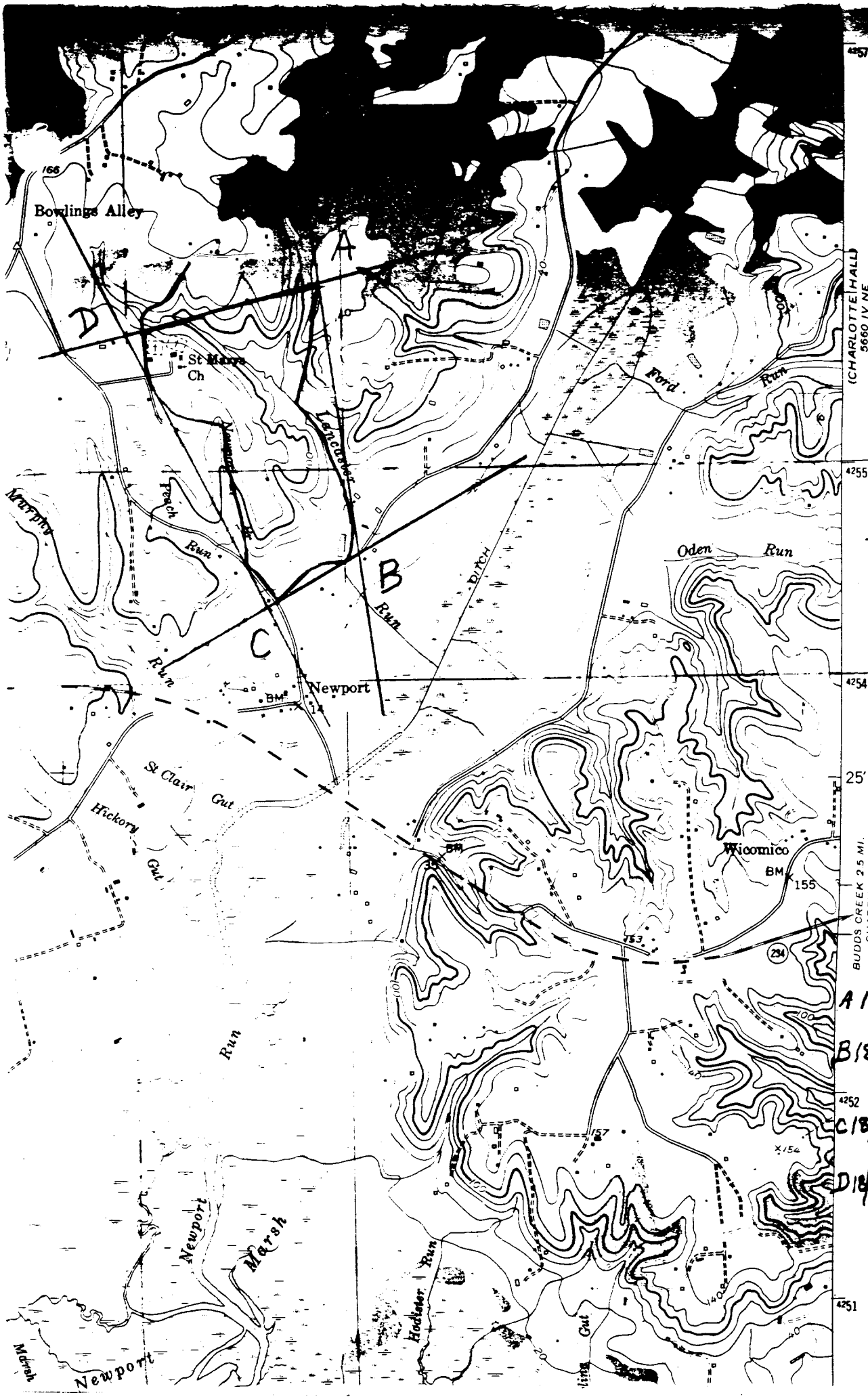
St. Mary's Roman Catholic Church, Newport
Charles County
Maryland CH-20

Section number 10 Page 19



See Continuation Sheet No. 20

Ref.1 Charles County Tax Maps #65 and #66 (Rev. to June, 1988), Parcel 45. Maryland Department of Assessments and Taxation.



St. Mary's Roman Catholic Church, Newport

CH-20

Charles Co. Maryland

A 18/333900/4255880

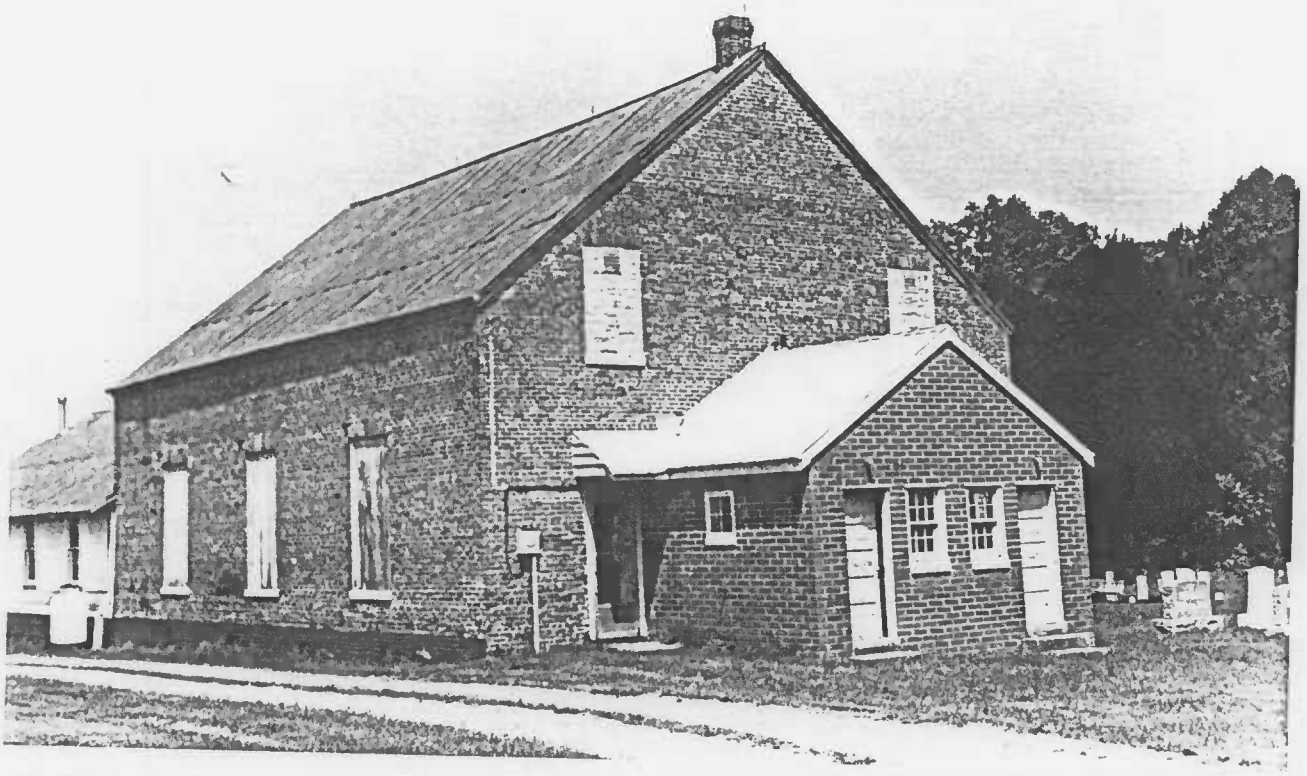
B 18/334050/4254620

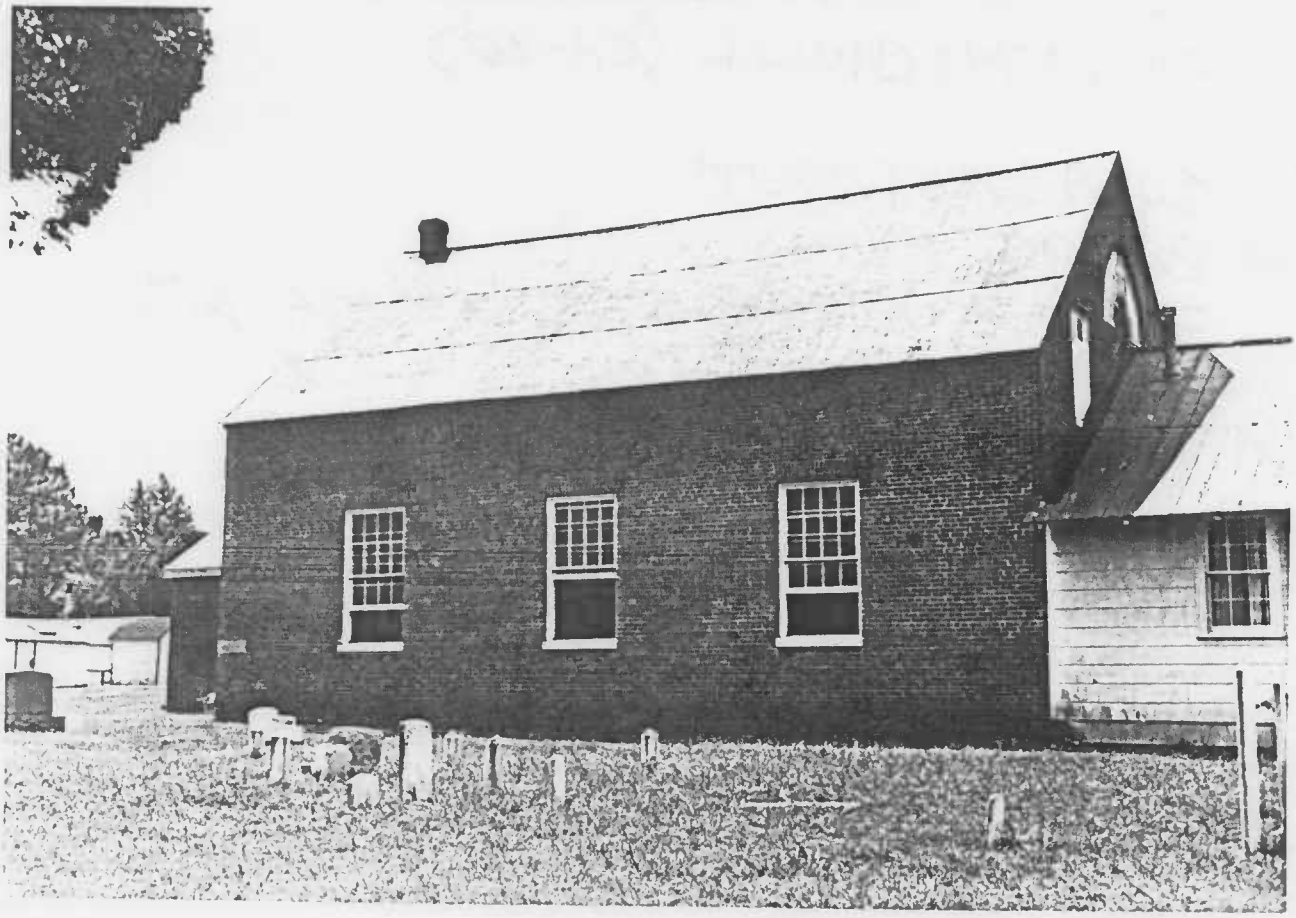
C 18/333630/4254260

D 18/332990/4255760

Pope's Creek Quad

CH-20





ST. MARY'S CHURCH (CH-20)

ST. JOHN, WEARMOUTH
8/1990

VIEW OF CHURCH FROM SE
1/10

ST. MARY'S CHURCH (CH-20)

ST. JOHN, WEARMOUTH
8/1990
SO. MD. STUDIES CENTER, UPLAND, MD
VIEW OF CHURCH FROM N-NW
2/10

CH-20

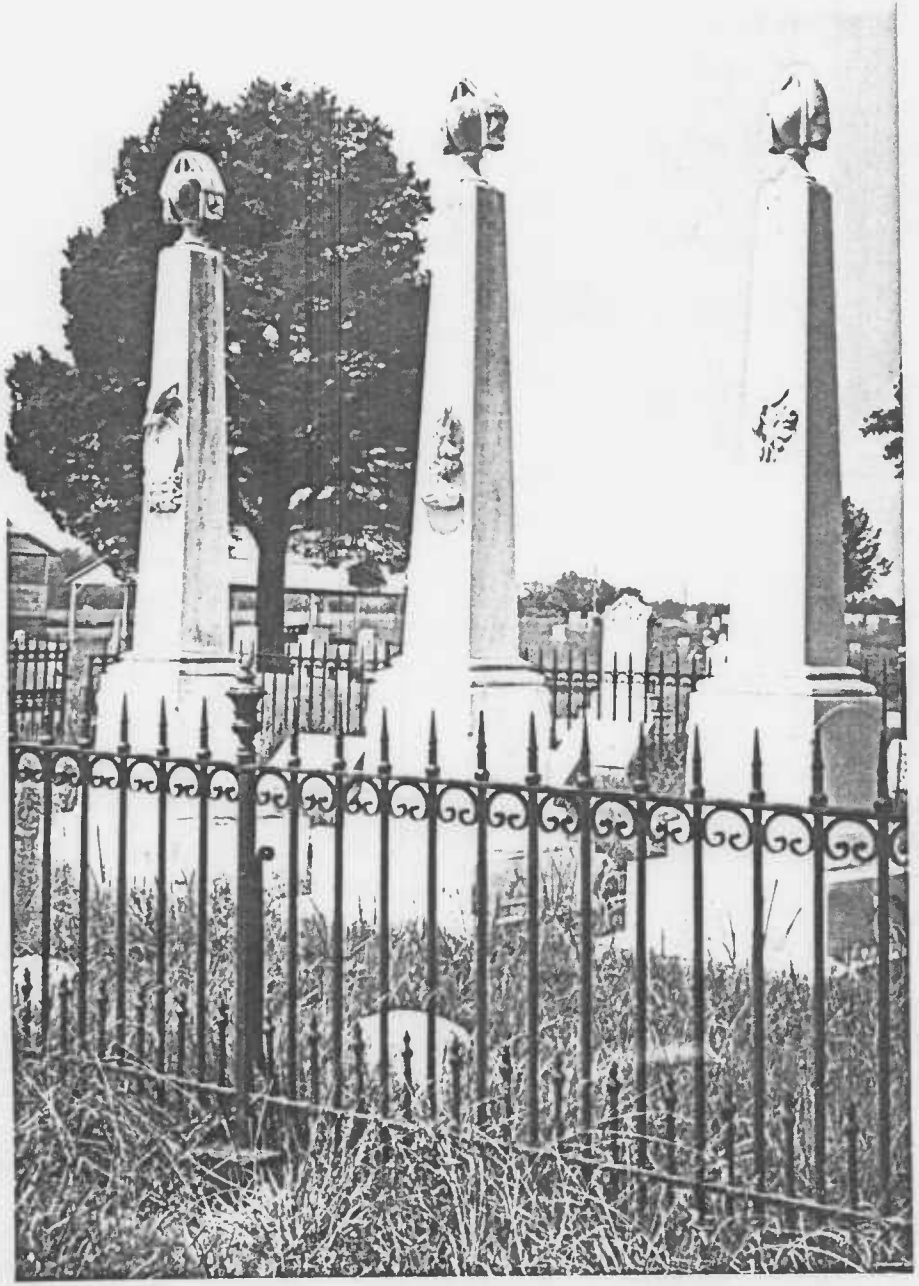
ST. MARYS CHURCH (CH-20)

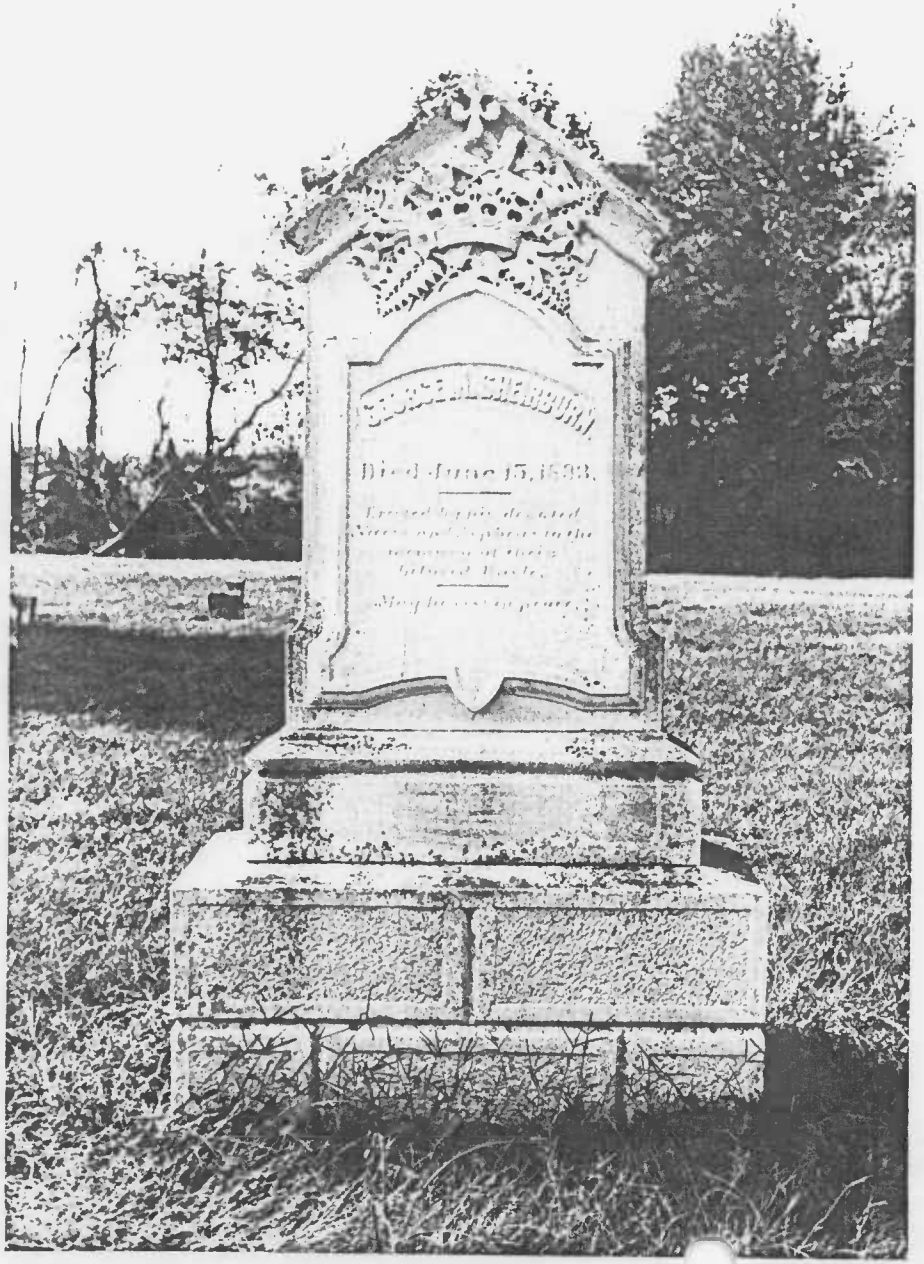
J.R. RIVOIRE
9/1990

VIEW OF CHURCH & CEM. FROM E
3/10

ST. MARYS CHURCH (CH-20)
CHARLES
J.R. RIVOIRE
9/1990
J.R. RIVOIRE
VIEW OF MODERN CHURCH & RECTORY
FROM W
4/15

CH-20





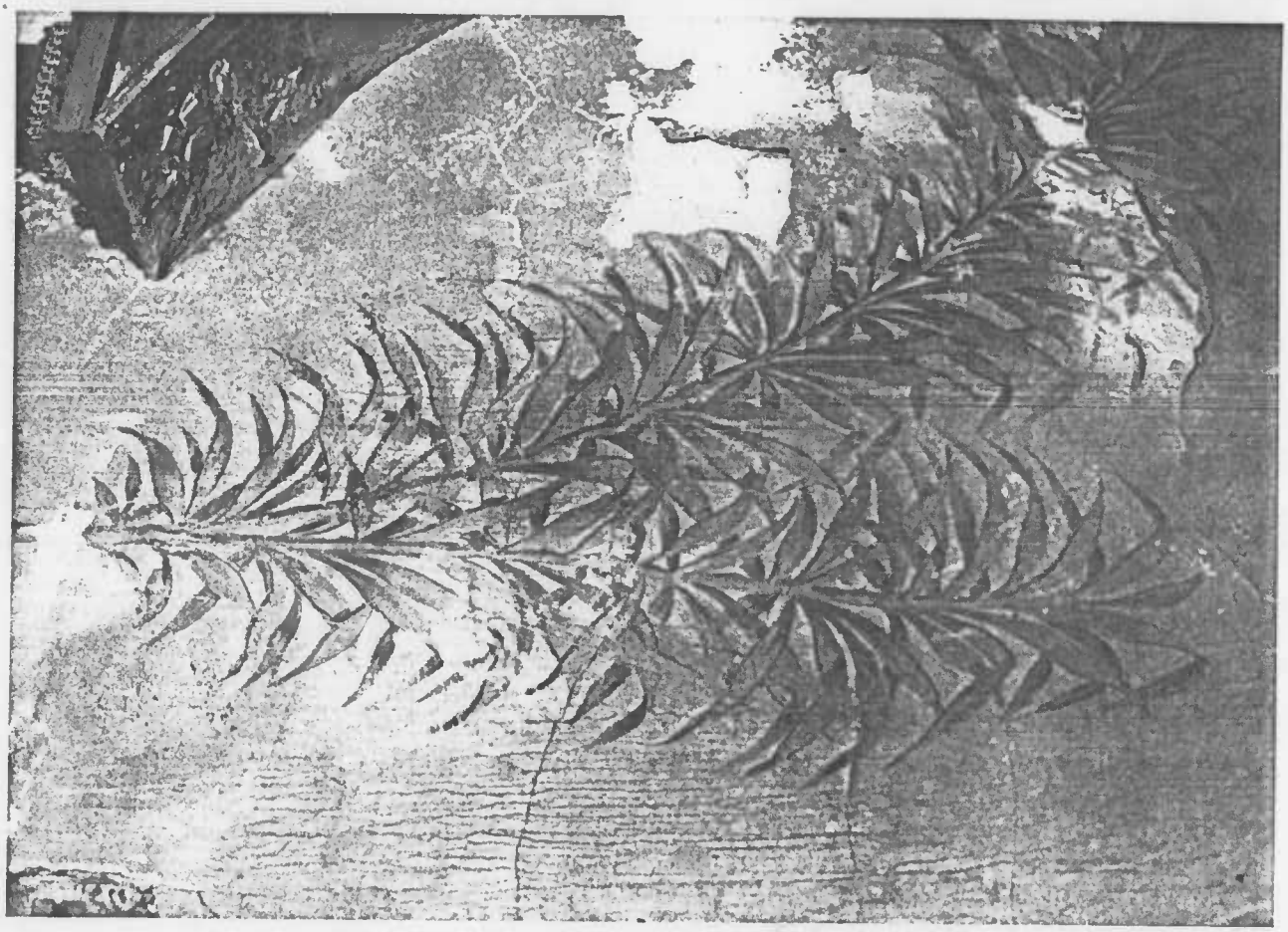
ST. MARY'S CHURCH (CH-20)
CH
J.R. RIVOIRE
9/1990

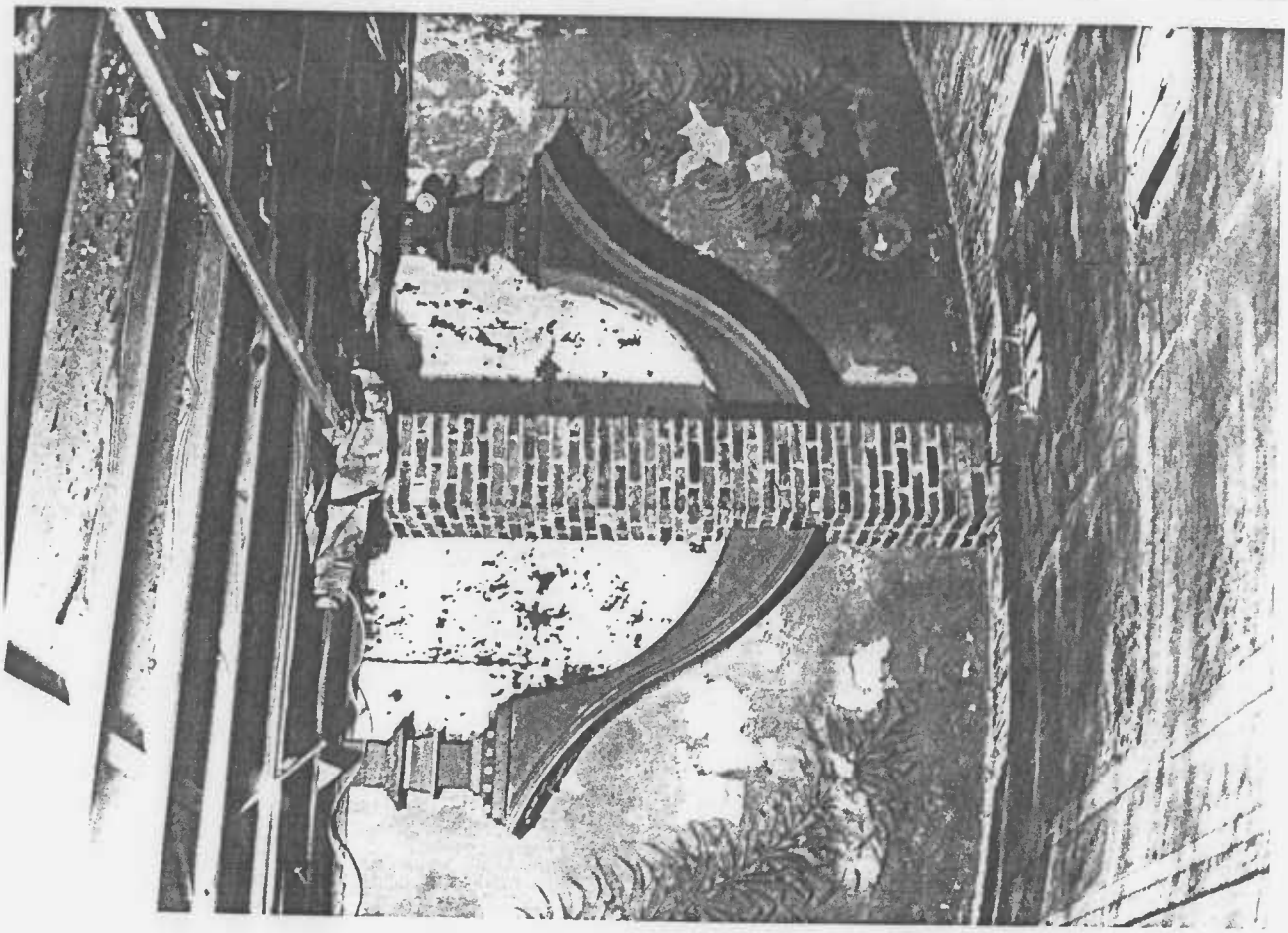
SUPERFICIAL MONUMENT

ST. MARY'S CHURCH (CH-20)
CHARLES
J.R. RIVOIRE
9/1990
J.R. RIVOIRE

MERRICK MONUMENTS
10/10

CH-20

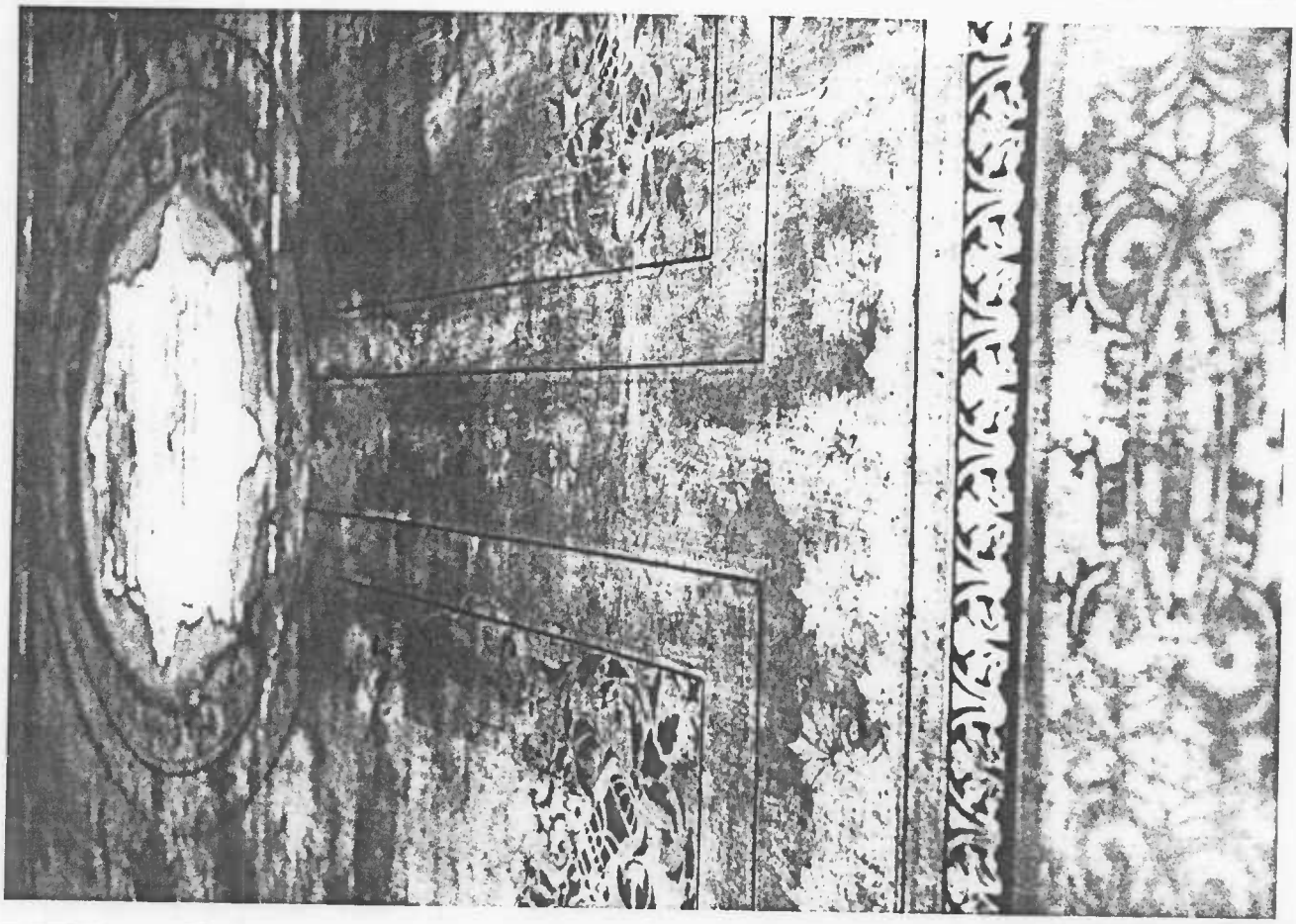




ST. MARY'S CHURCH (CH-20)
CHARLES
J.R. PIVOIRE
11/1990

PEDIMENT of 1840 ALTARPIECE
5/10

ST MARY'S CHURCH (CH-20)
CHARLES COUNTY, MD.
J.R. PIVOIRE
11/1990
J.P. PIVOIRE, LA PLATA, MD
DET. of PAINTED PALM FRONDS
FLANKING ALTARPIECE
6/10



CH-3

ST. MARY'S CHURCH (CH-20)

J.R. RIVOIRE

11/1990

DET. OF CEILING

5/10

ST. MARY'S CHURCH

J.R. RIVOIRE

11/1990

DET. OF CEILING

7/10