CH-354 c. 1914
Chillum
La Plata
Private

Built by W. Mitchell Digges shortly after he acquired the property in 1914, Chillum is named for the ancestral English home of the Digges family. A large and very handsome two-story, L-shaped frame house, it is of late Victorian design. Typical of this house type, it has deep verandas and many gables. It is one of the more prominent private homes in La Plata, enhanced by spacious and attractively landscaped grounds.

Survey No.: CH-354 (PACS C99)

Maryland Historical Trust
Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties Form
U.S. 301 South Corridor Transportation Study

DOE ___yes ___no

1. Name: (indicate preferred name)

historic Chillum

and/or common Digges Property

2. Location:

street & number 509 Washington Street ___ not for publication

city, town La Plata ___ vicinity of congressional district

state Maryland county Charles

3. Classification:

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
___district	___public	_x_occupied	___agriculture	___museum
_x_building(s)	_x_private	___unoccupied	___commercial	___park
___structure	___both	___work in progress	___education	_x_private residence
___site	**Public Acquisition**	**Accessible**	___entertainment	___religious
___object	___in process	___yes: restricted	___government	___scientific
	___being considered	___yes: unrestricted	___industrial	___other:
	_x_not applicable	_x_no	___military	
			___transportation	

4. Owner of Property: (give names and mailing addresses of all owners)

name W. Mitchell Digges, Jr., c/o Edward S. Digges

street & number P.O. Box 580 telephone no.:

city,town La Plata state and zip code MD 20646

5. Location of Legal Description

Land Records Office of Charles County liber 1225

street & number 101 Catalpa Drive folio 163

city,town La Plata state MD

6. Representation in Existing Historical Surveys

title Inventory of Historic Sites in Calvert, Charles, and St. Mary's Counties

date 1980 ___federal _x_state ___county ___local

depository/survey records Maryland Historical Trust

city,town Crownsville state Maryland

7. Description

Survey No.: CH-354 (PACS C99)

Condition		Check one	Check one	
excellent	___deteriorated	___unaltered	_x_original site	
_x_good	___ruins	_x_altered	___moved	date of move _____
___fair	___unexposed			

Resource Count: 5

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

Chillum was previously inventoried by the Maryland Historical Trust in the 1970s; however, an extensive survey form was not completed. Chillum is a 2½-story, 5-bay cross-gable house with Folk Victorian influences on the west side of Washington Avenue in La Plata, Charles County. Constructed in 1915, the house has an L-shaped plan, a projecting cutaway center bay on the east and south elevations, and cutaway bays at the north and south gable ends.

The structure has a metal, cross-gable roof with centered gables on the east, north, and south elevations. The house has two brick chimneys; one is located near the center of the house and the other is located near the west exterior wall of the ell. The house is of wood-frame construction with wood clapboards; the foundation is not visible. The windows are 9/1 double-hung wood with wood shutters.

The east, or front elevation has an off-center projecting cutaway bay with a double door. The doors have a 3-light transom. The full-width hipped-roof porch has a pediment aligned with the try. The pediment is supported by paired, round tapered wood columns. The porch wraps around the north and south elevations, and is screened at the first bay. The fenestration pattern is symmetrical, with four full-height windows on the first story and five windows on the second story. The gable above the cutaway bay and the pediment each have a semi-circular window.

The north elevation has a 2-story cutaway bay at the gable end which has a door and two windows on the first story, three windows on the second story, and a semi-circular window in the gable end. The 2-story ell, which is 3-bays wide, has a gable in the center bay, and two windows on the first and second stories. Located at the first bay of the ell is a 2-story shed-roof addition with windows on both stories, and a smaller 1-story shed-roof addition which has a sliding glass door.

The west elevation of the house is concealed at the first and second bays by the shed-roof additions. There are four casement windows on the first story and one window on the second story. The west elevation of the ell is 1-bay wide and has two small windows in the gable end.

The south elevation has a cutaway bay similar to the bay on the north elevation, and a projecting bay with a gable in the center of the ell. The fenestration pattern is symmetrical, with eight windows and two doors on the first story, and nine windows on the second story. The first bay of the ell has a small shed-roof entry porch.

There are four buildings associated with this property. Two of the buildings are wood-frame sheds with asphalt shingle, front-gable roofs. Constructed circa 1915, the sheds are located west of the house.

The third outbuilding is a garage with an asphalt shingle, gable roof. Constructed circa 1915, e garage is of wood-frame construction and is located west of the house and sheds.

7. Description (Continued)

The fourth outbuilding is a 2-story barn with a standing seam metal, gable roof. Constructed circa 1915, the barn is of wood-frame construction and is located west of the house, sheds and garage.

The property is located on the west side of Washington Street on a large level site. The site is generally clear of trees; there are some mature trees near the house. There are residences to the north and south and woods to the west. The property's setting is a residential area of the town of La Plata, along the historic main road to Washington, D.C.

8. Significance

Survey No.: CH-354 (PACS C99)

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
rehistoric	__archaeology-prehistoric	__Community planning	__landscape architecture	__religion
__1400-1499	__archeology-historic	__conservation	__law	__science
__1500-1599	__agriculture	__economics	__literature	__sculpture
__1600-1699	__architecture	__education	__military	__social/ humanitarian
__1700-1799	__art	__engineering	__music	
__1800-1899	__commerce	__exploration/settlement	__philosophy	__theater
x 1900-	__communication	__industry	__politics/government	__transportation
		__invention		__other:

Specific dates 1915 Builder/Architect

check: Applicable Criteria: ___A ___B x C ___D
and/or
Applicable Exceptions: ___A ___B ___C ___D ___E ___F ___G

Level of Significance: ___national ___state x local

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

"Chillum" is a 2½-story, 5-bay cross-gable house with Folk Victorian influences located in La Plata, Charles County. Judge W. Mitchell Digges purchased the 2.02 hectare (5 acre) lot in 1914. The parcel currently retains this size. According to the records of the Charles County Tax sessor, a house was constructed on the land in 1915. The residence was named "Chilham", also elled "Chillum", for the English ancestral home of the Digges family. The property remains in the Digges family. There are no detailed, published historic maps or atlas of Charles County, Maryland which locate and indicate ownership of buildings.

Chillum is a large house with Folk Victorian influences. The popularity of Folk Victorian buildings coincides with the construction of cottages. In fact, many two-story cottages with ornate Victorian woodwork are regarded as Folk Victorian. The Victorian wood detailing found on both resource types was made possible by new manufacturing advancements and increased shipping ability during the second half of the nineteenth century. These developments had a strong impact on the types of folk houses built in rural areas during this period. Typically built during the years 1870 to 1910, Folk Victorian style dwellings were simple folk housing forms ornamented with Victorian decorative details. As the Folk Victorian style attained popularity in the late nineteenth century, Folk Victorian detailing was sometimes added to earlier National Folk houses and I-houses.

There were many different types of Folk-Victorian houses including front-gable, gable front and wing, side-gable, and pyramidal hipped roof. In some ways, these houses are difficult to categorize because they frequently combine elements of various Victorian styles. Queen Anne detailing, such as spindle porch supports are often combined with bracketed eaves derived from the Italianate style, and lancet windows derived from the Gothic style. Common to most Folk Victorian houses, however, are wide front porches with carved decorations such as sunbursts and scrollwork. Like the earlier National Folk forms, the widespread adoption of Folk Victorian dwellings and details resulted from the broad availability of machined wooden components which were mass-produced and made available to rural areas by the growth of railroads in the nineteenth century (McAlester 1984:309-10).

"Chillum" is located in Charles County, in southern Maryland. The Native American inhabitants of southern Maryland from the Piscataway and Potobac nations were joined by European settlers beginning in 1634 with the establishment of St. Mary's City by Leonard Calvert. Successive waves of colonists took up tracts of land further inland from the Chesapeake Bay along the Patuxent and Potomac rivers and their tributaries. Charles County was formed in 1658 and Prince George's

8. Significance (Continued)

County was established in 1696. Settlement was confined to inland areas until road clearing began in the mid-eighteenth century as a result of the establishment of port towns and Maryland's rising population. Tobacco cultivation dominated the economic and social life of both Charles and Prince George's counties until the mid-nineteenth century when soil exhaustion necessitated agricultural diversification. The introduction of rail lines in 1873 linked Prince George's and Charles counties with the surrounding area, encouraging trade and settlement. While the suburbanization of Prince George's and Charles counties was ensured by the widespread availability of the automobile in the mid-twentieth century, these southern Maryland counties have also retained their rural and agricultural character.

NATIONAL REGISTER EVALUATION:

Chillum, constructed in 1915, was previously surveyed by the Maryland Historical Trust in the 1970s. The property is eligible for the National Register under Criterion C, as a significant example of a large house with Folk Victorian influences. The original windows, detailing, and materials remain, and the property has not been significantly altered. In addition, the house has retained its historic outbuildings, which remain unaltered. The setting of the property, a large wooded urban lot, remains intact. The property is not eligible under Criterion A, as research conducted indicates no association with any historic events or trends significant in the development of national, state or local history. Historic research indicates that the property has no association with persons who have made specific contributions to history, and therefore, it does not meet Criterion B. Finally, the structure has no known potential to yield important information, and therefore, is not eligible under Criterion D.

MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST

Eligibility Recommended X **Eligibility Not Recommended** _____

Comments: Criterion C

Reviewer, OPS: Suzanne Pickens Date: 07/21/1997

Reviewer, NR Program: [signature] Date: 4/4/01

9. Major Bibliographical References Survey No.: CH-354 (PACS C99)

See Continuation Sheet

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property 2.02 hectares (5 acres)
Quadrangle name La Plata, MD Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

Verbal boundary description and justification

See Continuation Sheet

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	code	county	code
state	code	county	code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Caroline Hall/Ryan McKay

organization P.A.C. Spero & Company date September 1996

street & number 40 W. Chesapeake Avenue, Suite 412 telephone (410) 296-1635

city or town Baltimore state Maryland

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 purposed only and do not constitute any infringement of individual property rights.

return to: Maryland Historical Trust
DHCP/DHCD
100 Community Place
Crownsville, MD 21032-2023
(410) 514-7600

9. Major Bibliographical References (Continued)

Brown, Jack D., et al. Charles County, Maryland, A History. Charles County Bicentennial Committee, 1976.

Charles County Retired Teachers Association. A Legacy: One- and Two-Room Schools in Charles County. La Plata: Dick Wildes Publishing Company, 1984.

Klapthor, Margaret Brown, and Paul Dennis Brown. The History of Charles County, Maryland. La Plata: Charles County Tercentenary, Inc., 1958.

Martenet, Simon J. Martenet's Map of Maryland, Atlas Edition. Baltimore, 1866.

Maryland Geological Survey. [1840] Map of Eastern Maryland with 1860 Additions. Copy on file at Maryland Historical Trust, Crownsville, MD.

McAlester, Virginia and Lee. A Fieldguide to American Houses. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1983.

Pavoire, J. Richard. Homeplaces, Traditional Domestic Architecture of Charles County, Maryland. La Plata: Southern Maryland Studies Center, 1990.

Wearmouth, John M. Charles County Railroad. An unpublished paper on deposit at the Prince George's County Historical Society. August 1984.

Ibid. La Plata, Maryland, 1888-1988, 100 Years, The Heart of Charles County. La Plata: Town of La Plata, 1988.

10. Geographical Data (Continued)

Verbal boundary description and justification:

The National Register boundaries of Chillum follow the current property lines of 509 Washington Avenue (Charles County Tax Maps 108 and 109, Parcel 103). This 2.02 hectare (5 acre) parcel is bounded on the north, south and west by adjacent parcels and on the east by Washington Avenue. The boundary includes the house and the contributing shed, garage, and barn. The property is the parcel historically associated with the house.

Maryland Comprehensive Historic Preservation Plan Data Sheet

Chillum CH-354 (PACS C99)
509 Washington Street, La Plata, Charles County

Historic Context:

MARYLAND COMPREHENSIVE PRESERVATION PLAN DATA

Geographic Organization:

Western Shore

Chronological/Developmental Period Theme (s):

Industrial/Urban Dominance A.D. 1870-1930

Prehistoric/Historic Period Theme(s):

Architecture

RESOURCE TYPE:

Category (see Section 3 of survey form):

Buildings; Private Ownership; Public Acquisition - Not applicable; Occupied; Not accessible; Private Residence

Historic Environment (urban, suburban, village, or rural):

Village

Historic Function(s) and Use(s):

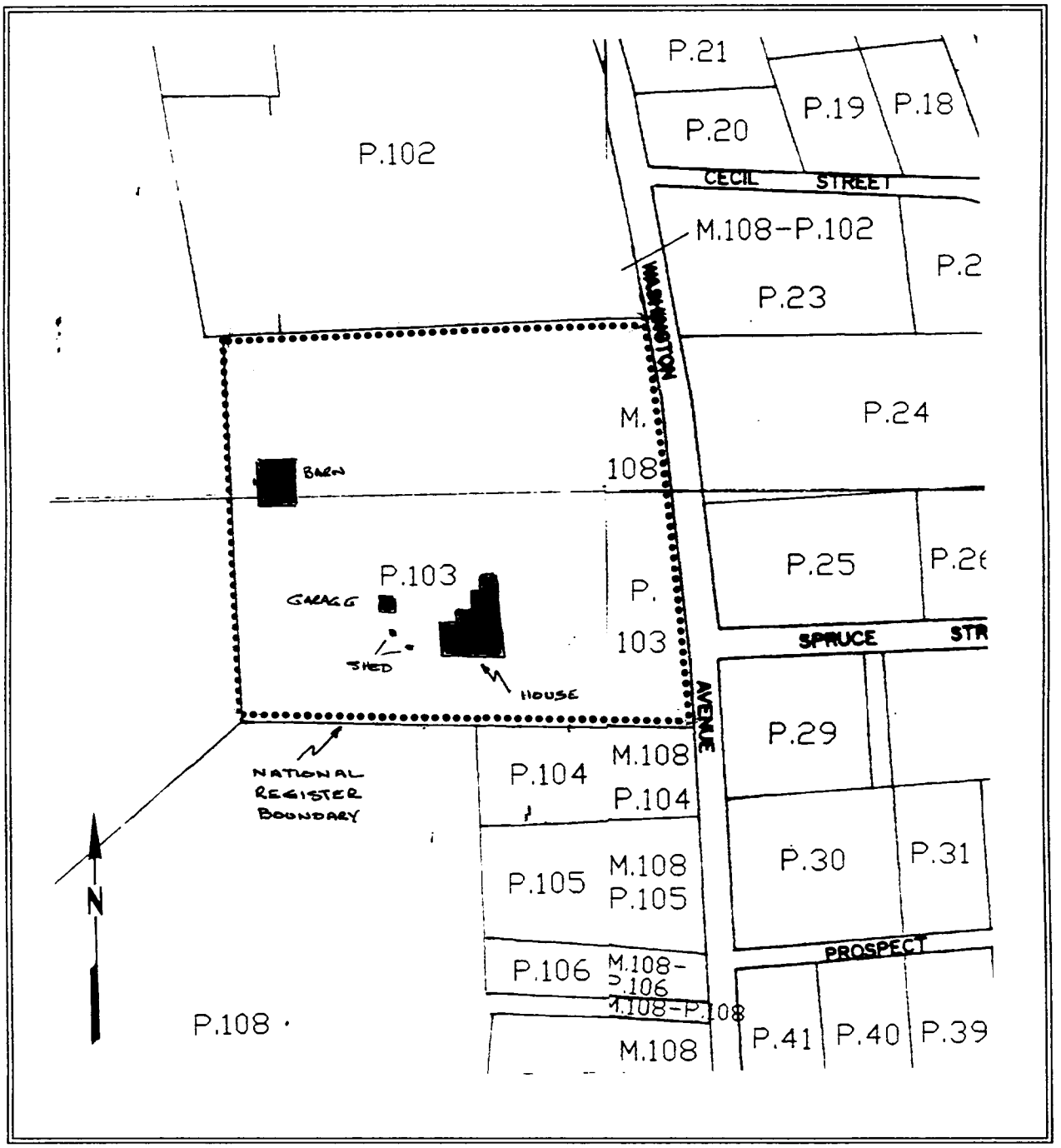
Residence

Known Design Source (write none if unknown):

None

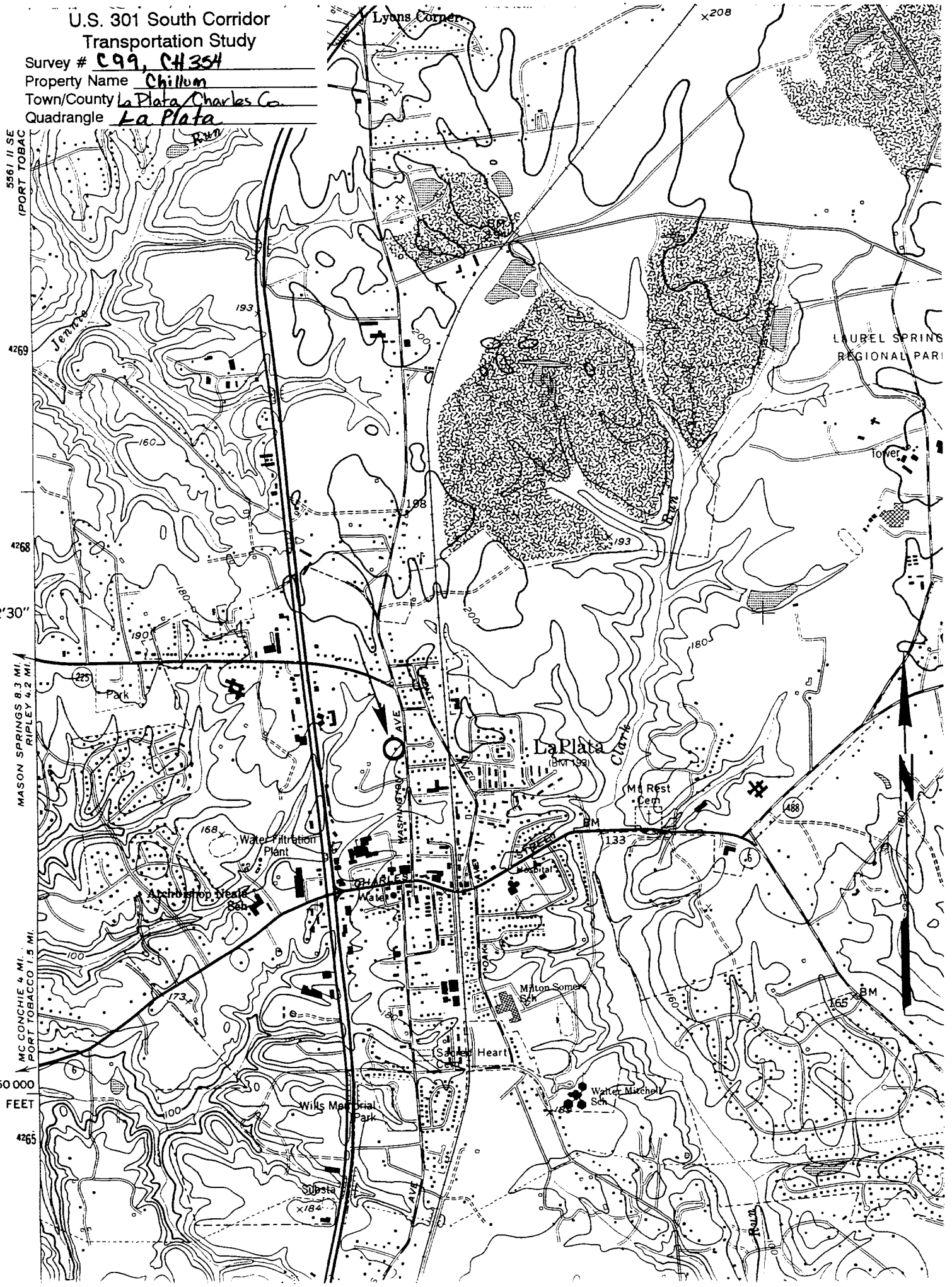
10. Geographical Data (Continued)

Resource Sketch Map and National Register Boundary Map:



U.S. 301 South Corridor
Transportation Study

Survey # C99, CH354
Property Name Chillum
Town/County La Plata/Charles Co.
Quadrangle La Plata



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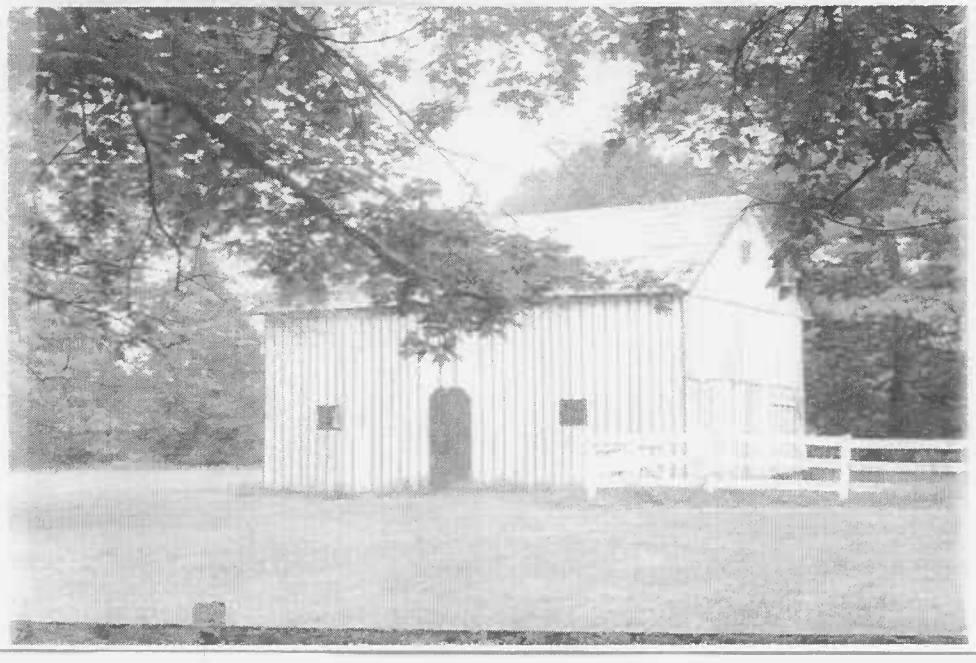
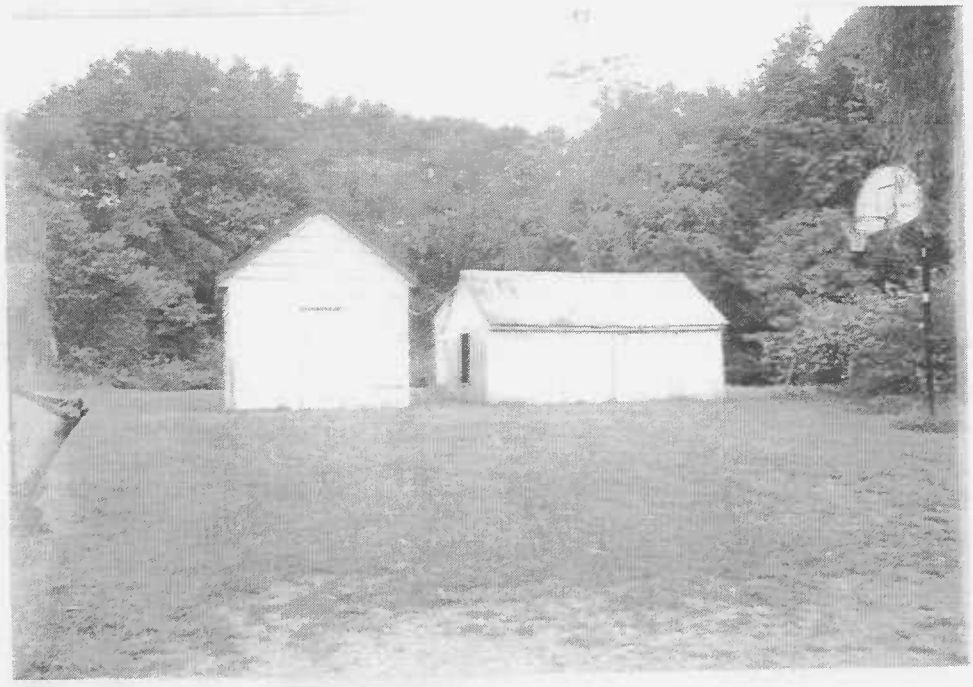
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