PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY

HISTORIC SITE SUMMARY SHEET

Survey: PG#68-79-1 Building Date: 1901

Building Name: Poppleton-Roberts House

Location: 5104 Emerson Street, Edmonston, Maryland

Private/Residence/Occupied/Good/Inaccessible

Description:

The Poppleton-Roberts House is a side-gabled frame house two stories high and five bays by two. Siding is German, painted white on the first story and light gray-green on the second. Windows are long 2/2 double hung sash with plain board surrounds. The roof surfaces, which are extensive and prominent features of this house, are covered with asbestos shingle of the same gray-green color. The principal facade and gable ends are sheltered by a deep covered porch whose hip roof is integral with that of the house; the porch posts are chamfered with jigsawn brackets. Above the central entrance, a large dormer, set into the slope of the porch roof below forms a central cross gable and dominates the second story of the principal facade. There are two chimneys at the gable ridge, symmetrically flanking this central gable. On each side of the central dormer is a very shallow "eye brow" shed dormer. Some of the gable surfaces are sided with clipped-corner shingles. There are several large evergreen trees in the front yard of the house, and lining the street to the east are several large old magnolias which were probably planted near the time of construction of this house.

Significance:

The Poppleton-Roberts House is a unique example of its type in Prince George's County. Its gable-on-hip roof and wraparound porch are reminiscent of French Colonial dwellings of the deep South, while its late Victorian trim and the shallow shed dormers look forward into the twentieth century. It was built in 1901 by A. D. Poppleton. In 1900 Poppleton had contracted to purchase two acres of land from J. Harris Rogers; he then undertook construction of this large and unusual residence on this land which was not yet legally his. The house was complete and the Poppleton family took up residence in 1901, but Poppleton was unable to pay the costs of the construction. Suit was brought and the property was offered for sale in order to pay the debt. Information in the court case provides important information about construction of the period, e.g., labor costs, names of local contractors, and time spent in the various phases of construction. Combining an updated French Colonial profile with late Victorian decorative elements, the Poppleton-Roberts House is a unique and prominent feature of the Edmonston community.

Acreage: 1.33 acres

Poppleton-Roberts House

PG#68-79-1

HISTORIC CONTEXT:

MARYLAND COMPREHENSIVE HISTORIC PRESERVATION PLAN DATA

Geographic Organization: Western Shore

Chronological/Development Periods:

Industrial/Urban Dominance - AD 1870-1930

Historic Period Themes:

Architecture, Landscape Architecture, Community Planning

Resource Type:

Category: Building

Historic Environment: Suburban

Historic Functions and Uses: Domestic/Single dwelling

Design Source: unknown

Survey No. PG#68-79-1

Magi No.

DOE ___yes ___no

MARYLAND INVENTORY OF HISTORIC PROPERTIES

Maryland Historical Trust State Historic Sites Inventory Form

1. Name (indicate preferred name)

historic Poppleton-Roberts House

and/or common

2. Location

street & number 5104 Emerson St. ___ not for publication

city, town Edmonston ___ vicinity of congressional district 5

state Maryland county Prince George's County

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	___ educational	_X_ private residence
___ site	**Public Acquisition**	**Accessible**	___ entertainment	___ religious
___ object	___ in process	___ yes: restricted	___ government	___ scientific
	___ being considered	___ yes: unrestricted	___ industrial	___ transportation
	_X_ not applicable	_X_ no	___ military	___ other:

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

name Ethel Talley

street & number 5104 Emerson St. telephone no.:

city, town Edmonston state and zip code MD 20740

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Prince George's County liber 5066

street & number 14735 Main Street folio 495

city, town Upper Marlboro state MD 20772

6. Representation in Existing Historical Surveys

title None

date ___ federal ___ state ___ county ___ local

depository for survey records

city, town state

7. Description

Survey No. PG#68-79-1

Condition		Check one	Check one
___ excellent	___ deteriorated	___ unaltered	X original site
X good	___ ruins	X altered	___ moved date of move _____
___ fair	___ unexposed		

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

The Poppleton-Roberts House is a large two-story frame house of a type which is rare in Prince George's County. Its gable-on-hip roof and wraparound porch give it the appearance of a French Colonial style house of the deep South. It stands on an oversized lot fronting on one of the principal streets of the Edmonston community.

The house is two stories high and side-gabled, five bays by two. The south facade and the east and west gable ends are sheltered by a deep covered porch whose hip roof is integral with that of the house; the porch posts are chamfered with jigsawn brackets. Entrance is in the central bay of the five-bay south facade. Centered at this point in the porch roof is a projecting cross gable which forms a small entry canopy; this gable is sided with clipped-corner shingles.The canopy marks the entrance to the porch by a short flight of concrete steps.

Above the central entrance, a large dormer forms a central cross gable and dominates the second story of the main south facade; centrally located, it pierces the south plane of the gable roof and is set into the slope of the porch roof below. The gable front of this dormer encloses two 2/2 double hung sash windows which light the second story; above these two windows, the upper gable is sided with clipped-corner shingles.

Siding is German, painted white on the first story and light gray-green on the second. Windows are long 2/2 double hung sash with plain board surrounds. The roof surfaces, which are extensive and prominent features of this house, are covered with asbestos shingle of the same gray-green color. There are two chimneys at the gable ridge, symmetrically flanking the central cross gable.

In addition to the central gable dormer of the main south facade, two other pairs of dormers light the second story and add variety to the lines of the house. On each side of the central dormer, a very shallow shed dormer opens out of the south plane of the roof. Each of these shallow "eye brow" dormers encloses two narrow side-by-side horizontal six-pane windows. An entirely different type of shed dormer, large and vertically oriented, lights each of the gable ends of the house. Each projects substantially from the gable end, and is set into the slope of the porch roof below; each encloses two long 2/2 double-hung-sash windows. The gable surface above the

8. Significance

Survey No. PG#68-79-1

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

Specific dates 1901 **Builder/Architect**

check: Applicable Criteria: ___A ___B X C ___D
and/or
Applicable Exception: ___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.

The Poppleton-Roberts House is a rare, indeed unique example of its type in Prince George's County. Its gable-on-hip roof and wraparound porch are reminiscent of French Colonial dwellings of the deep South, while its late Victorian trim and the shallow shed dormers look forward into the twentieth century. It was one of the earliest dwellings built in the community of East Hyattsville (which would become Edmonston), and certainly one of the most prominent. It is a noticeable landmark in the community of Edmonston.

The land on which this part of Edmonston was developed had been part of the tract "Charles and Rebecca" which made up the southeasterly part of the Calvert family's Riversdale plantation This part of the land was known as Spa Woods; it lay a short distance northeast of Bladensburg's Spa Spring Park, within the loop of the mill race for the Calvert family's Avalon Mill. This land was purchased in 1886 by J. Harris Rogers of Hyattsville, and years later he undertook a plat of subdivision for the property as a residential expansion of Hyattsville. The land was surveyed and platted as "East Hyattsville" in 1903, but the plat was not recorded, and during the early years of its development, building lots were sold by metes and bounds rather than by lots and blocks. The subject house was built before the land was platted for subdivision.[1]

In 1901 A. D. Poppleton contracted to purchase two acres in the northernmost section of this land from J. Harris Rogers. Poppleton paid Rogers a deposit of approximately 40% of the cost of the property, but a deed was not executed. In spite of this, Poppleton undertook construction of a large and unusual

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[1] Hopkins, G. M., Atlas of Fifteen Miles Around Washington including the County of Prince George Maryland, 1878; unrecorded plat of East Hyattsville, Prince George's County Courthouse, Drawer 11, #99; Prince George's County Deed JWB#7:85.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Survey No. PG#68-79-1

See Notes, Item 8

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property 1.33 acres

Quadrangle name Washington East **Quadrangle scale**

UTM **References** do NOT complete UTM references

	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
A				B			
C				D			
E				F			
G				H			

Verbal boundary description and justification

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 Susan G. Pearl, Research/Architectural Historian

organization Prince George's County Historic Preservation Commission **date** March 1993

street & number 14741 Gov. Oden Bowie Drive **telephone** 301-952-3521

city or town Upper Marlboro **state** MD 20772

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
Shaw House
21 State Circle
Annapolis, Maryland 21401
(301) 269-2438

windows is sided with rectangular lapped shingles.

There are several large evergreen trees in the south (front) yard of the house; lining the street to the east are several large old magnolias which were probably planted near the time of construction of this house.

residence on this land which was not yet legally his. He purchased lumber and hardware, and hired a mason, plasterer, painter, and several carpenters; the house was essentially complete by the end of 1901 and the Poppleton family had taken up residence early in 1902. Poppleton had run up a bill of over $1800 for construction of the house, and was unable to pay his debts. One of his largest creditors, The Frank Libbey Company, suppliers of lumber, brought suit against Poppleton for non-payment of debt, and the Equity Court appointed trustees to sell the property in order to pay the debts.[2] A public sale was set for 12 May 1902; the property was advertised as including a handsome new eight-room house with a porch all around, a summer kitchen and all necessary outbuildings, on 2 acres of rich land only 1/2 mile from the steam and electric cars.[3] The high bidder was Rufus Clarke of Washington, D. C., who offered $1500; the trustees conveyed the property to Clarke in June 1902. A month later, Poppleton still occupied the property, and Clarke requested and received from the Court an order for Poppleton to vacate the property and deliver it to Clarke, now the legal owner.[4]

The Equity Court case which describes Poppleton's situation is particularly interesting and informative. The case itemizes the work of the various craftsmen in their attempts to receive payment. Carpenter John Decatur worked for 43 1/2 days (at $2 per day) to complete the house, and carpenter Lenthel Poppleton (almost certainly a relative) worked for 50 days at $1.50 per day. Painter George M. Suit applied one coat of paint to the exterior of the house, and two to the interior in December 1901 and January 1902. A bill for a large variety of building supplies was owed to William P. Magruder, Hyattsville lumber and hardware dealer. The Bill of Complaint made it clear that Poppleton had undertaken construction before he owned the land, that the dwelling was "large, handsome and valuable",and that by early 1902 it was entirely complete and occupied by the defendant (Poppleton) as his private residence.[5]

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[2] Prince George's County Equity #2840

[3] ibid.

[4] ibid; Prince George's County Deed #9:35.

[5] ibid.

It is not certain whether Rufus and Annie Clarke ever lived in the Poppleton house; they sold the property within a year to Helena Grove of Washington, D. C. The Grove family probably did occupy the house, but only for a short time; in 1905 Helena and Edward Grove sold the two-acre property to F. Ambrose Armstrong, whose family occupied the house until 1919.[6]

In order to secure payment, Helena Grove held a mortgage on the property which she had conveyed to Armstrong. Armstrong took out a second mortgage at the same time. Although the Armstrong family occupied the house for nearly 15 years, Armstrong defaulted on payments for the second mortgage, and suit was brought to recover payment.[7] In 1919 the property was offered at public sale and the high bid of $2200 was offered by Bertha Lee Miller.[8] It is doubtful that the Miller family ever lived in the house; they sold the property to a real estate speculator, who in 1928 sold it to James A. and Edna F. Roberts. James and Edna Roberts raised their family in this house, and it has remained the home of their heirs to this day.[9]

The Poppleton-Roberts House is significant for its unusual form, which combines an updated French Colonial profile with late Victorian decorative elements. It is also significant for the information available about its construction, e.g., labor costs, names of contractors, and time spent in the various phases of construction. The Poppleton-Roberts House was one of the earliest dwellings built in the community of East Hyattsville (now Edmonston), and is a familiar and prominent visual feature in its neighborhood.

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[6] Prince George's County Deeds #11:505, #25:37

[7] Prince George's County Mortgages #25:39, 41, 44; Prince George's County Equity #5181.

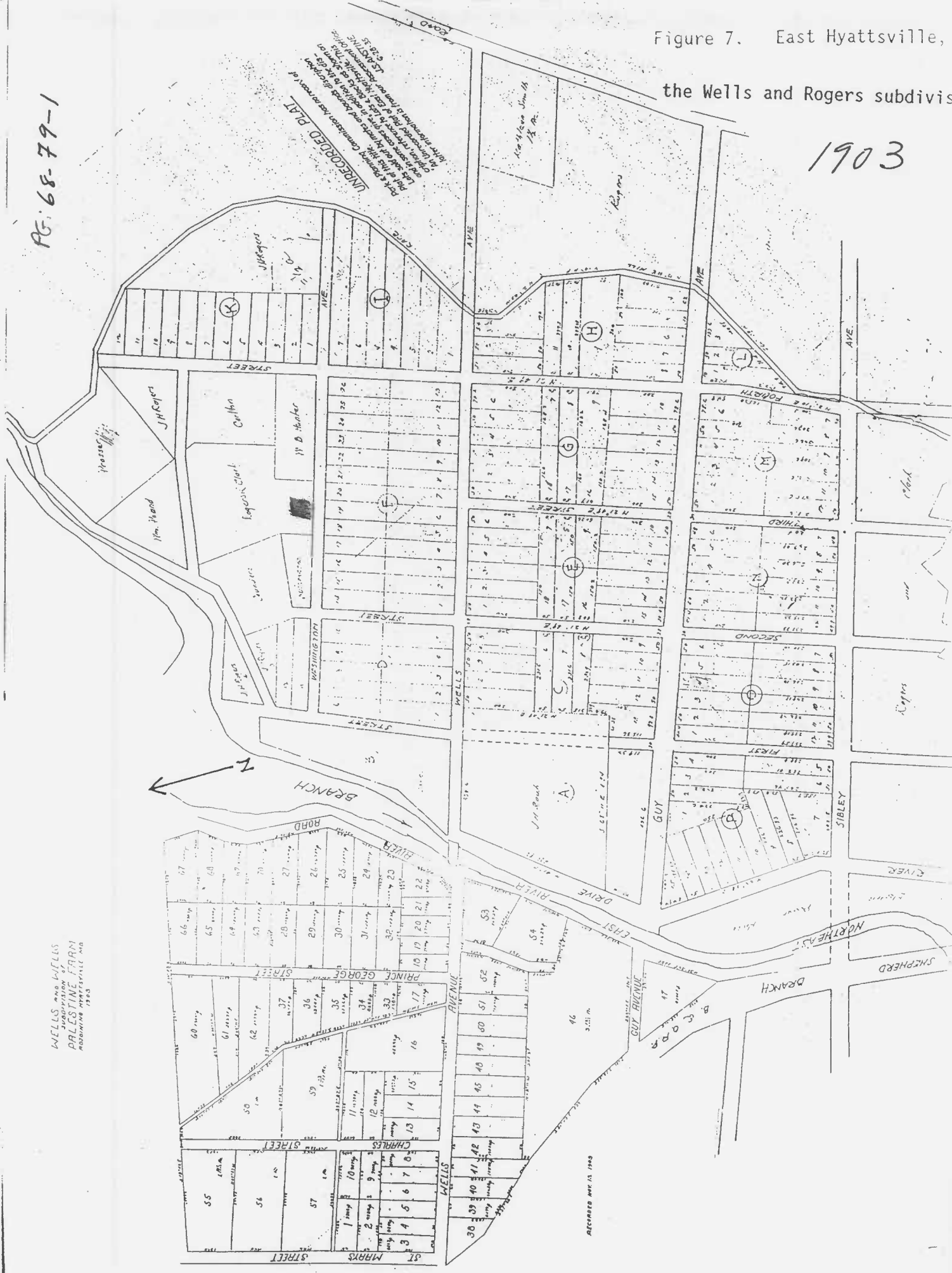
[8] Prince George's County Equity #5181; Prince George's County Deed #143:166.

[9] Prince George's County Deeds #303:373, #5066:495; Prince George's County Estate File #25617.

Figure 7. East Hyattsville, the Wells and Rogers subdivis

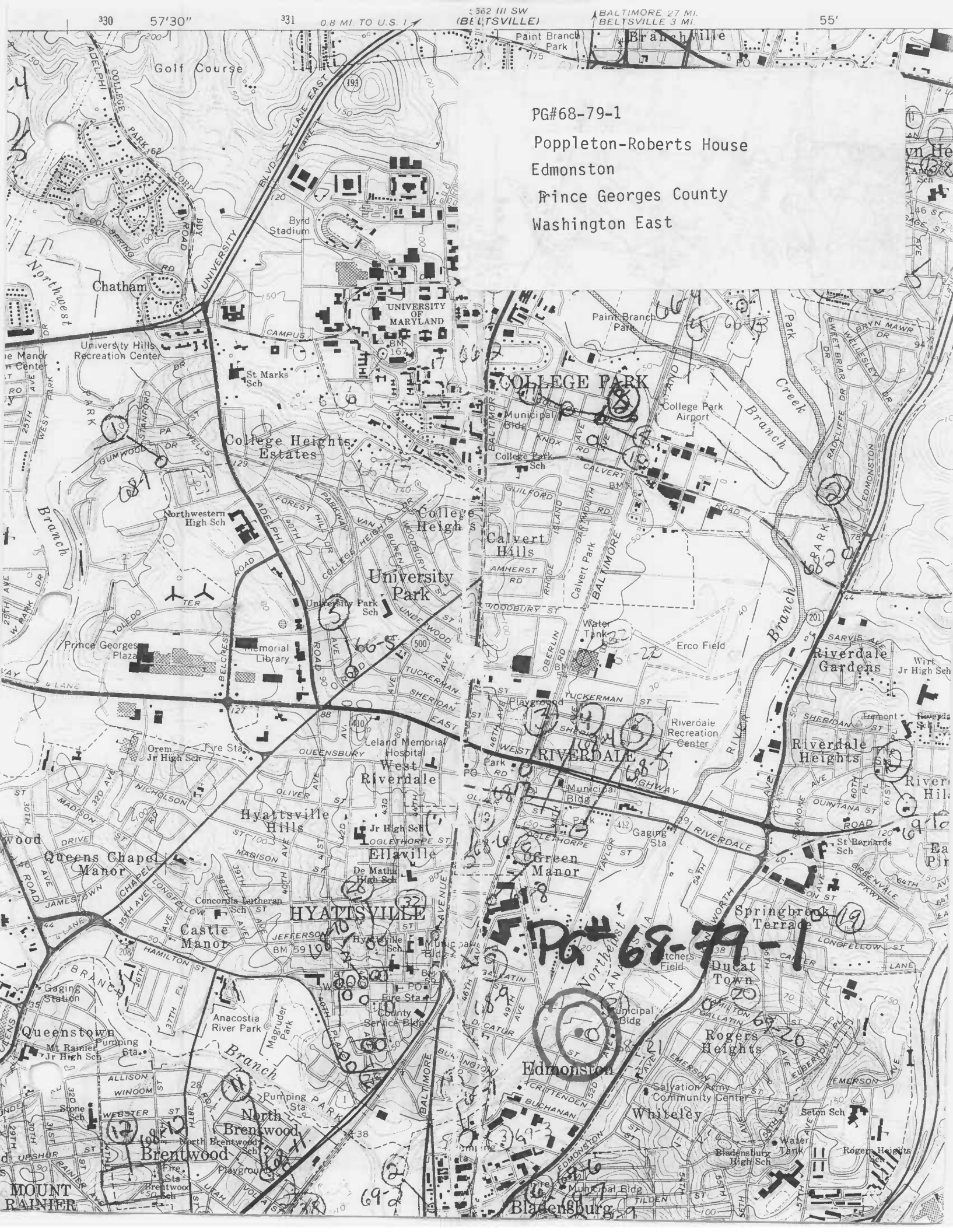
1903

PG: 68-79-1



PG: 68-79-1

Figure 48. Section of Edmonston east of river (Rogers subdivision), Frank Atlas, 1940.


PG#68-79-1
Poppleton-Roberts House
Edmonston
Prince Georges County
Washington East
330
57'30"
331
0.8 MI. TO U.S. 1
(BELTSVILLE)
BALTIMORE 27 MI.
BELTSVILLE 3 MI.
55'
Golf Course
Paint Branch Park
Branchville
Byrd Stadium
Chatham
UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND
University Hills Recreation Center
St Marks Sch
COLLEGE PARK
College Park Airport
Municipal Bldg
College Park Sch
College Heights Estates
Northwestern High Sch
College Heights
Calvert Hills
University Park
University Park Sch
Prince Georges Plaza
Memorial Library
Water Tank
Erco Field
Riverdale Gardens
Wirt Jr High Sch
Playground
Riverdale Recreation Center
Leland Memorial Hospital
Orem Jr High Sch
Fire Sta
West Riverdale
RIVERDALE
Riverdale Heights
Hyattsville Hills
Jr High Sch
Ellaville
Gaging Sta
St Bernards Sch
Queens Chapel Manor
De Matha High Sch
Green Manor
Concordia Lutheran Sch
HYATTSVILLE
Springbrook Terrace
Castle Manor
Hyattsville Sch
Municipal Bldg
County Service Bldg
Ducat Town
Gaging Station
Anacostia River Park
Magruder Park
Queenstown
Mt Rainier Jr High Sch
Pumping Sta
Rogers Heights
Edmonston
Salvation Army Community Center
Whiteley
Seton Sch
Stone Sch
North Brentwood
Brentwood
North Brentwood Sch
Playground
Bladensburg High Sch
Rogers Heights Sch
MOUNT RAINIER
Bladensburg
Municipal Bldg
PG#68-79-1

Pg # 68-79-1

Poppleton - Roberts House
Prince George's Co. MD
Susan G. Pearl
February 1993
MD SHPO
South facade from SW

1 of 3

PG # 68-79-1

Pippleton Roberts House
Prince George's Co., MD
Susan L. Pearl
February 1993
MD SHPO
South facade

3 of 3

PG # 68-79-1

Poppleton-Roberts House
Prince George's Co, MD
Susan H. Pearl
February 1993
MD SHPO
South gable detail

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