

SITE NUMBER: WA-II-976  
ADDRESS: Shafer Memorial Park, Boonsboro, MD  
OWNER/LOT NUMBER/ACCESS: public park  
BUILDING DATE: 1930s-

Shafer Memorial Park is a large, public park located on a parcel of land west of Main Street and north of Potomac Street. The park boundaries were originally defined by the rear alleys of the lots facing each of these streets. The park grounds contain playing fields, playground equipment, and several structures including: a stone bandstand, frame shelterhouses, stone restrooms, a stone concession stand, and several stone bridges which cross a stream that meanders through the park. The park serves as the center of recreational activity for the town.

Two stone gate posts are located on North Main Street at the alley between the houses numbered 112 and 116 North Main. One has a plaque that indicates that the park was constructed as a Works Project Administration project and was partially funded by the City of Boonsboro. It was dedicated on July 15, 1939. The park is not noted on any of the historic maps of Boonsboro.

The site is within the Western Maryland Geographic Organization, the Modern Development Period, and falls within the Historic Period Themes of Social/Education/Cultural; and Architecture, Landscape Architecture, and Community Planning.

See Maryland Historic Sites Inventory Form for further information.

Prepared by Julianne Mueller, July 1992

**MARYLAND COMPREHENSIVE STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION PLAN:**

**STATEWIDE HISTORIC CONTEXT**

Geographic Organization: Western Maryland

Chronological/Development Periods: Modern Period

Historic Period Theme: Social/Education/Cultural; and  
Architecture, Landscape Architecture, and Community Planning

Resource Type:

Category: buildings, site

Historic Environment: small, rural town

Historic Function and Use: park

Known Design Source: Works Progress Administration

**Maryland Historical Trust  
State Historic Sites Inventory Form**

**MARYLAND INVENTORY OF  
HISTORIC PROPERTIES**

Survey No. WA-II-976

Magi No.

DOE  yes  no

**1. Name** (indicate preferred name)

historic Shafer Memorial Park

and/or common

**2. Location**

street & number Park Drive

not for publication

city, town Boonsboro

vicinity of

congressional district

state Maryland

county Washington

**3. Classification**

| Category                                 | Ownership                                  | Status  | Present Use                            |  |
|--|--|---|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> district        | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied          | <input type="checkbox"/> agriculture   | <input type="checkbox"/> museum            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> building(s)     | <input type="checkbox"/> private           | <input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied                   | <input type="checkbox"/> commercial    | <input checked="" 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 checked="" 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted | <input type="checkbox"/> industrial    | <input type="checkbox"/> transportation    |
|  | <input type="checkbox"/> not applicable    | <input type="checkbox"/> no                           | <input type="checkbox"/> military      | <input type="checkbox"/> other:            |

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

name Town of Boonsboro

street & number 11 St. Paul Street (Town Hall)

telephone no.: 301-432-5141

city, town Boonsboro

state and zip code MD 21713

**5. Location of Legal Description**

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Washington County Courthouse

liber several

street & number Summit Ave. & W. Washington Street

folio

city, town Hagerstown

state MD

**6. Representation in Existing** Historical Surveys

title Survey of Boonsboro

date October 1991- August 1992

federal  state  county  local

pository for survey records Maryland Historical Trust

city, town Crownsville

state MD

# 7. Description

Survey No. WA-II-976

**Condition**

excellent  
 good  
 fair

deteriorated  
 ruins  
 unexposed

**Check one**

unaltered  
 altered

**Check one**

original site  
 moved    date of move \_\_\_\_\_

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

SEE ATTACHED

# 8. Significance

Survey No. WA-II-976

| Period                                    | Areas of Significance—Check and justify below    |  |   |  |
|---|--|--|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric      | <input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric  | <input checked="" 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/         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799        | <input type="checkbox"/> art                     | <input type="checkbox"/> engineering                   | <input type="checkbox"/> music                  | <input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899        | <input type="checkbox"/> commerce                | <input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement        | <input type="checkbox"/> philosophy             | <input type="checkbox"/> theater         |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900- | <input type="checkbox"/> communications          | <input type="checkbox"/> industry                      | <input type="checkbox"/> politics/government    | <input type="checkbox"/> transportation  |
|   |  | <input type="checkbox"/> invention                     |   | <input type="checkbox"/> other (specify) |

**Specific dates** 1939 **Builder/Architect** Works Progress Administration & Civilian Conservation Corps

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.

SEE ATTACHED



### The Setting

Shafer Memorial Park is a large, public park located in Washington County (lot P.735) in Boonsboro. It is bounded on the east and south by Park Drive that is parallel and immediately west of Main Street and parallel and north of Potomac Street, the two principal thoroughfares in Boonsboro. It is bounded to the west and north by private property from which it is not separated by a street. To the south the park is bordered by residential buildings that face the park. To the west and north, the park is bounded by undeveloped land. And, to the east, the park faces the rear of the residential and commercial properties that line the west side of North Main Street.

### The Site

The site, which is essentially square in shape, contains ball diamonds, a basketball court, a playground area, a horseshoe pitching area, two small parking lots, and several structures including: a stone bandstand, frame shelterhouses, stone restrooms, a stone concession stand, equipment storage buildings, and several stone bridges which cross a stream that now cuts a straight path through the park.

Two stone gate posts are located on North Main Street at the alley between the houses numbered 112 and 116 North Main. One has a plaque that indicates that the park was constructed as a Works Progress Administration project and was partially funded by the City of Boonsboro. It was dedicated on July 15, 1939.

The park is also home to a cannon that was cast during the Revolutionary War at the Mount Aetna Furnace. Apparently defective, it was never sent into battle. When the furnace site was purchased in 1826, the owner donated the cannon to the Boonsboro Democratic Party who fired it during elections and other patriotic holidays. Records say that the cannon, despite its defects, was fired all day on July 4, 1876 to commemorate the county's centennial. The cannon was rededicated in Shafer Memorial Park on a new base of native limestone during the bicentennial celebrations.

## 8. SIGNIFICANCE

Shafer Memorial Park is one of a series of parks constructed in Maryland by the federal government in conjunction with local governments under the Works Progress Administration during the Great Depression. The park has served as the center of recreational activity for Boonsboro since the late 1930s when it was first dedicated. It is the site of annual festivals and events, as well as daily and weekly activities.

### Early History of the Land

The land on which the park is now situated was originally the site of a large tannery in the early 19th century. It was owned by Jonathan Shafer whose descendants later donated the land for the park. The tannery office was located in what is now 102 North Main Street.

Unfortunately, the park site is not depicted on any of the historic maps of Boonsboro and it is therefore, not possible to determine how long the tannery stood on the site or the condition of the land when it was donated in the 1930s.

### The Park

The idea for a park was first conceived in 1937 by Mayor John Hershberger and William Bast, a prominent local citizen whose family had lived in Boonsboro for several generations. Within two years, the concept began to turn into reality: land was purchased, a park designed, and construction had begun. Financing was provided through the joint efforts of local organizations and the federal government. The local Lions Club provided 30% of the money; the WPA provided 70%.

The park is comprised of several parcels of land that were either donated or sold to the town of Boonsboro over a series of years. The first of these was a lot sold to the city for \$500 by Mary S. Shafer and deeded June 2, 1939. The land is described as

"...Parcel No. 1: Being all that tract of land beginning at the northwest corner of lot number one in the town of Boonsboro... and containing 3.5 acres and 31 perches of land, more or less, it being part of a tract of land called "Beall's Chance". Parcel No. 2: ...containing four acres and 101 perches of land, more or less....The aforesaid conveyance is hereby made upon the express condition, and the grantee so accepts the same, that the land herein described, given, granted and conveyed, shall be used exclusively and only in perpetuity as a Public Park to be known as "Shafer Memorial Park" and upon the non-user of said land as "Shafer Memorial Park" as aforesaid by the said Mayor and Council of Boonsboro, then and in that event the said land is to revert and become part of the estate of the said Mary S. Shafer....And the grantor does hereby reserve all water rights she now has to

the present spring located on Parcel No. 2 hereof and the grantee hereby agrees to make proper provision to dispose of the water from said spring so that it will not cause damage in any way to the land and property of the said grantor..."<sup>1</sup>

According to newspaper accounts, the land was swampy and full of creeks. A topographical map of the proposed park drawn by J.B. Ferguson & Co. of Hagerstown confirms this.<sup>2</sup>

The second lot was sold to the city for \$500 by Susan A. Lakin and deeded August 14, 1939. The land was described as

"...fronting thirty (30) feet on the west side of North Main Street in said town of Boonsboro and running back therefrom with that uniform distance of two hundred and sixty-four (264) feet, more or less, to the land of Mary S. Shafer, and being the northernmost thirty (30) feet of Lot No. 3 on the Plat of Boonsboro..."<sup>3</sup>

The construction of the park initially began on these two parcels. Plans were developed by William Hetzer of the Works Progress Administration and the construction was completed by the Civilian Conservation Corps. Members of the Corps lived in a camp between Boonsboro and Keedysville. They divided their time between park projects in Keedysville, Antietam Battlefield, and Boonsboro.<sup>4</sup> In Boonsboro, the Corps was responsible for clearing and extensively grading the land and for routing three streams into a single meandering one (which has since been straightened). The WPA built the bridges across the stream and constructed the first park structures. All of the structures were built of fieldstone from nearby land and included the bandstand, a concession stand, and public restrooms. When first completed, the park contained an island, known as Duck Island for the many ducks which lived there, at the western end of the site. (This island was removed when the stream was later rerouted.)

The park was dedicated during a ceremony on July 15, 1939 at which the guest speakers were Francis Dryden, the Administrator of the WPA and Congressman William D. Bryan. The following week, Maryland Governor Theodore McKeldin visited the site and addressed an

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<sup>1</sup> Uncited deed in the records of the park at the Boonsboro Municipal Building.

<sup>2</sup> Map in the private collection of Doug Bast. Date of map was located in a corner of the map which is now missing.

<sup>3</sup> Uncited Deed in the records of the park at the Boonsboro Municipal Building.

<sup>4</sup> The municipal park created in Keedysville, Taylor Park, is much smaller and contains fewer structures than Shafer Memorial Park.

audience.

The park was administered by a park commission that was created by an ordinance June 10, 1940. It consisted of five people, known as the Park Commission of Boonsboro, Maryland, whose duty it was to create rules and regulations for the use of the park, as well as manage the site as necessary.

Although the park was dedicated July 15, 1939, it is clear from meeting notes of the Park Commission that the WPA's work at the park remained incomplete in June 1940. In April 1941, the Commission hired a caretaker and a concessionaire. The park quickly became a popular place, because, by May 1941, the Commission was forced to develop parking regulations to stem uncontrolled automobile traffic.

The popularity of the park continued to grow. Possibly as a gesture of civic pride, a third parcel, which was six-tenths of an acre in size, was donated to the city in 1944 by the Greencastle Packing Company.

The park became the home of several annual events, the most important of which is a summer carnival called Boonsboro Days. In addition, the park provided playing grounds for ball leagues in the summer.

Over the years, the site continued to be maintained by a caretaker under the direction of the Park Commission, but little was done (or needed) to upgrade or improve the park. By 1960, however, it became clear that the park needed improvement in terms of facilities and patrolling for litter and unruly users. Recommendations were made regarding the removal of dead trees, the posting of speed limit and stop signs, the construction of additional shelters, the draining and cleaning of the stream, and the setting of an enforced curfew at 11:00 p.m.

In 1961 the nearby Moss stable was razed and lumber from it was used by Clarence Line to build new shelters near the ballpark. The dugouts were also repaired. Free labor was provided for these efforts by the Washington County Roads Department. Other improvements that year included the installation of lights, the removal of trees, and the selling of the park ducks. It had become too cumbersome to move them each winter to a farm for housing and then return them in the spring.

In 1962, a concerted effort was made to improve the playground area. The area was moved to the south side of the park and several pieces of equipment were donated by the mayor and city council.

In 1963, Clarence Line was commissioned to erect a second shelter which was completed in 1964.

During the early 1970s, discussions were held to put a tennis court in the park, but this never materialized. Other plans, such as

flooding part of the park to create an ice rink in winter, failed because it was not cold enough for the ice to freeze. Other plans, such as the construction of bleachers and the setting of an earlier curfew were implemented. The park was expanded during this time. A final and fourth parcel was donated by the M.T. Warrenfeltz Co. April 18th, 1970 and included 1.09 acres.

Today, the park continues to serve the community. Local organizations regularly donate funds for its upkeep. These are supplemented by fees gathered from organized athletic leagues that regularly use the facilities. On any given sunny day, the park is filled with users, young and old alike, who take advantage of the shaded areas, the playgrounds, and ball fields. The park provides the only central community meeting place in Boonsboro, other than the schools.

### Significance

A preliminary evaluation of this park was made in November 1991 by Julianne Mueller during a survey of Boonsboro. At that time a survey site number WA-II-976 was assigned and it was determined that the site is a contributing element to Boonsboro's historic character. A summary sheet on the building with photographs was submitted to the Maryland Historical Trust in August 1992. The summary provides a basic description of the site and its buildings and places it within the Maryland Comprehensive State Historic Preservation Plan: State Historic Context (Western Maryland Geographic Organization; the Modern Development Period; the Historic Period Themes of Social/Education/Cultural; and Architecture, Landscape Architecture, and Community Planning).

Upon the suggestion of Julianne Mueller to the Boonsboro Historical Society, the general history of the site was researched. It was concluded that the park is an excellent example of how federally funded projects during the Great Depression affected small towns in rural Maryland. Shafer Memorial Park is one of the most elaborate city parks constructed in this area by the WPA. Although it would not qualify for individual listing on the National Register due to the many alterations to the park design over the years, it is a contributing element to the overall historical character of the town, and may meet eligibility Criteria A and C for listing on the Maryland Register.

**Criterion A -- The property is associated with significant historical events.** The park is the only project in Boonsboro associated with the federally funded WPA program during the Great Depression.

**Criterion B -- The property is not associated with a significant person.**

**Criterion C -- The building exhibits exceptional architectural design, method of construction,**

or craftsmanship, or is the product of a trained architect. As an good example of mid-20th century park design, the original park structures are a contributing element to the architectural significance of Boonsboro.

**Criterion D -- The property may provide important information about history or prehistory.** The property has not been assessed for its archeological potential. However, because of the amount of grading and rerouting of streams that occurred when the park was established and in consequent years, it is unlikely that prehistoric finds or finds associated with the early history of Boonsboro are extant (or near the surface).

**BIBLIOGRAPHY**

Bast, Doug, private collection: Topographical map of proposed park site, and photographs of the park in the 1940s.

Boonsboro Municipal Building: Records of the Shafer Memorial Park Commission, 1940-1973.

Thomas, Susan K., "Roving Reporter Writes About Boonsboro's Shafer Park," Boonsboro News, September 16, 1954.

"Maryland Cracker Barrel" Special Commemorative Issue: Boonsboro: 200th Anniversary, Vol. 20, No. 6, June/July 1992.

Walking Tour Brochure of Boonsboro.

Washington County Deeds and Tax Records

BOONSBORO MAYOR AND COUNCIL  
11 St. Paul St.  
Boonsboro, Maryland 21713  
(301) 432-5141

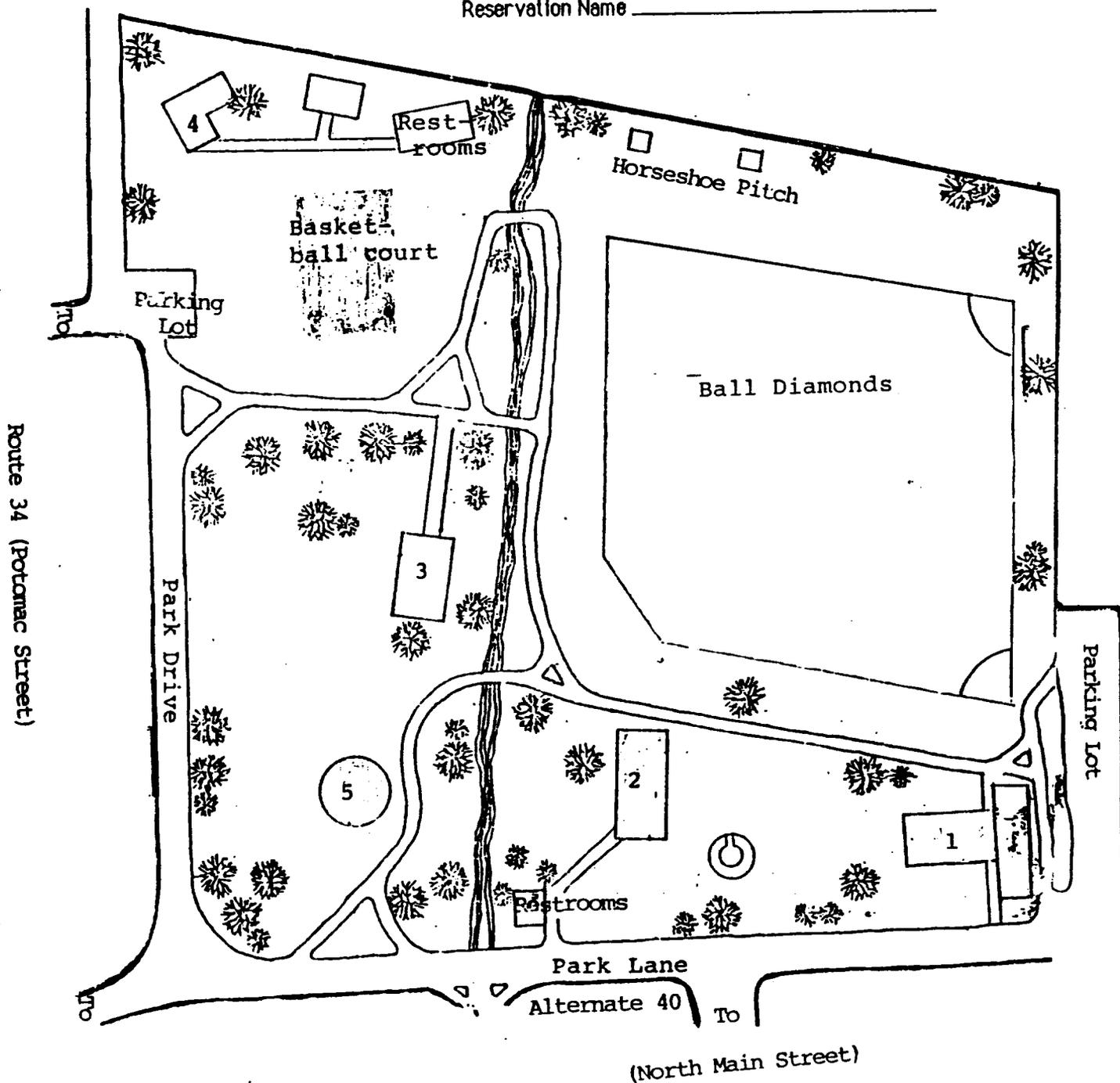
WA-II-976

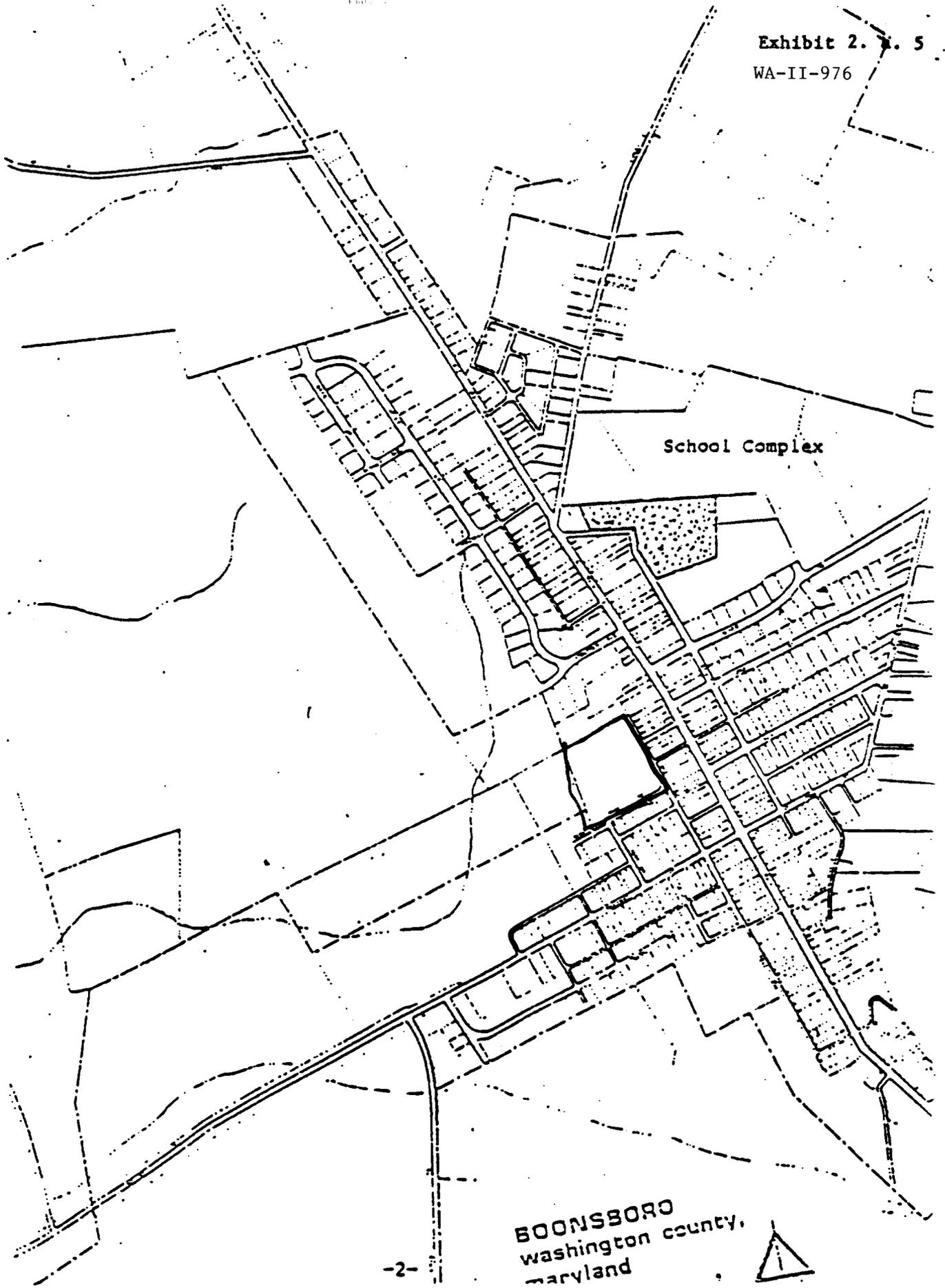
We are pleased to reserve Pavilion Number(s) \_\_\_\_\_ for your use on \_\_\_\_\_.  
Thank you for choosing Shafer Memorial Park for your event. Shafer Memorial Park is officially open to the public from May 30th through September 30th. Pavilion rental fees must be paid in advance of the booking date.

FEEs: Pavilion Numbers 1, 2, 3 and 4 - \$20.00; Pavilion Number 5 (Bandstand) - \$15.00

1. Softball diamond is strictly a first-come-first-serve basis.
2. Special booking for soft ball tournaments, Boonesborough Days, etc. must be cleared through the Park Commission.
3. For your use: softball diamonds; adult, toddler and handicapped accessible swings; horseshoe pitch; basketball court and playground equipment.

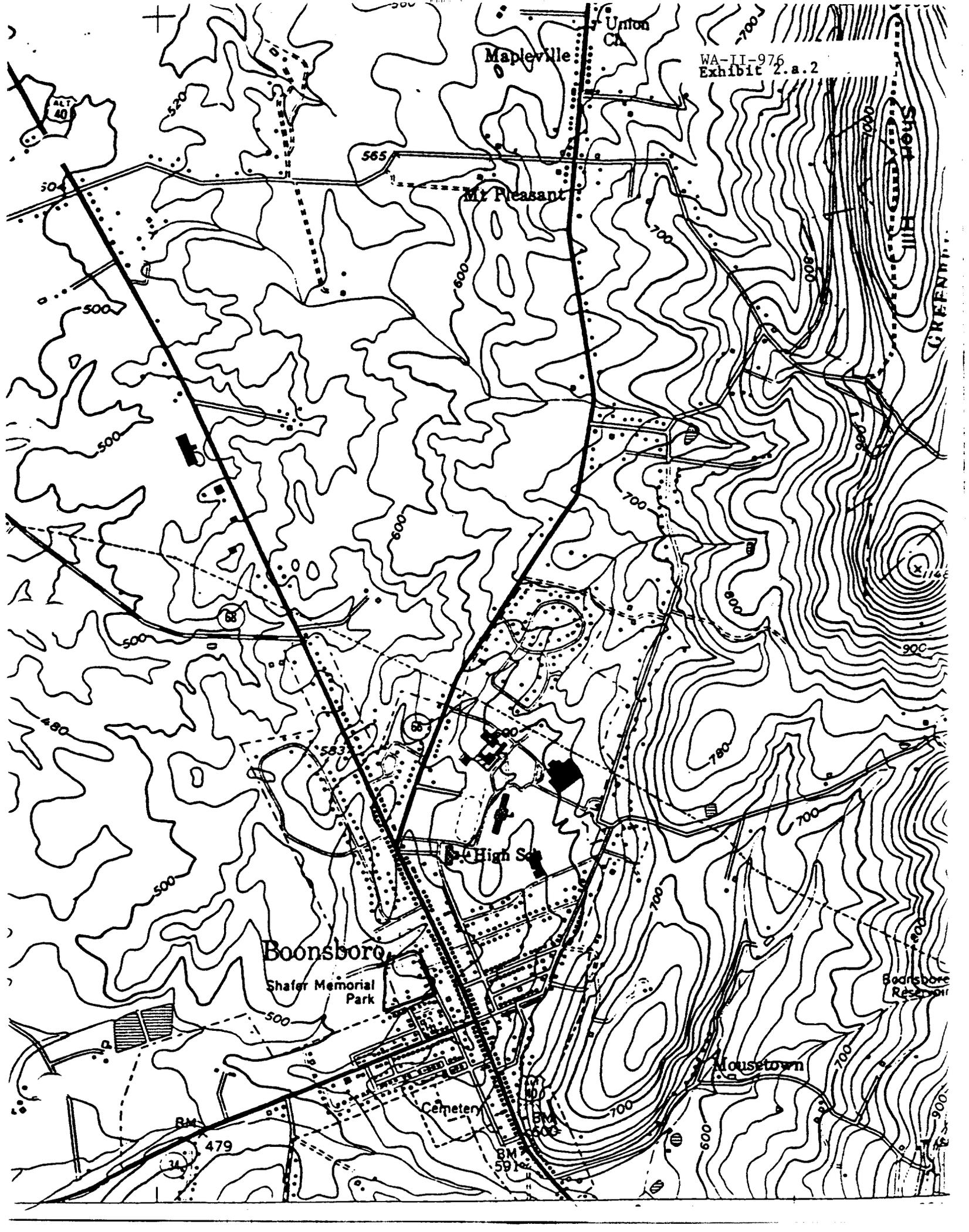
Reservation Name \_\_\_\_\_





School Complex

BOONSBORO  
Washington county,  
Maryland



WA-II-976  
Exhibit 2.a.2

Mapleville

Mt Pleasant

High S

Boonsboro

Shafer Memorial Park

Cemetery

Mousetown

Boonsboro Reservoir

BM 479

BM 591

SHOOTING RANGE  
GREEN



23. 10. 1971

WINEYER PACE, BERNARD, NASHVILLE

1/17

JUNE 1971

10/17/71







T. A. P. 22

SHREFFER MINE, BONFACOL, WASH. CO.

122

JULIE MUELLER

LOOK NO 22



1. The first part of the book is a  
history of the world from the beginning  
of time to the present day.

2. The second part of the book is  
a history of the United States  
from the time of the first  
settlements to the present day.