

Survey # F-4-131

Approximate date September 14, 1862

Old Sharpsburg Road

Street Address: Reno Monument Road between Fox Gap Road and mountain summit

Town, State: Middletown vicinity, MD

Private , public

This property is included in the survey of resources associated with the Civil War Battle of South Mountain, which occurred on September 14, 1862. The Old Sharpsburg Road runs south from U.S Alternate 40 along what is now called Bolivar Road. It then turns west at a three-way intersection onto Reno Monument Road. The road then climbs the eastern face of South Mountain on a steep grade, crossing the mountain at Fox's Gap into Washington County and down the western face of the mountain toward Sharpsburg. The modern version of the Old Sharpsburg Road is a 1 1/2 lane paved road. It follows the same path shown on 1862 Army Engineers maps. Today's road appears to maintain the same width and grade as the original, tracking through a cut that appears similar to what appears in Civil War photographs taken at or near Fox's Gap. The road was one of the approach routes used by the Union Army in an attempt to dislodge Confederate defenders from Fox's and Turner's Gaps during the Battle of South Mountain. The road was directly involved in the course of the battle and the military action that took place on September 14, 1862. The roads and the three mountain gaps through which they passed were critical to the objectives of both the Union and Confederate armies. The road was of strategic importance because it provided access to one of the few crossing places through the mountains. Turner's Gap about a mile to the north, became the focal point for the fight and was the main objective for the Union army as it attempted to follow the Confederates into the Hagerstown Valley and capture the divided rebel army. The Old Sharpsburg Road also is one of the oldest through Frederick and Washington Counties, having been established as early as the 1730s.

Photo Reference: Photo #

Form Prepared By: Paula S. Reed, PhD and Edith B. Wallace
Woodward-Clyde
200 Orchard Ridge Drive
Gaithersburg, MD 20878

Date: February, 1998

Maryland Historical Trust State Historic Sites Inventory Form

Survey No. F-4-131

Magi No.

DOE yes no

1. Name of Property (indicate preferred name)

historic Old Sharpsburg Road

and/or common Reno Monument Road

2. Location

street & number South Mountain

 not for publication

city, town Middletown

 vicinity of

congressional district 6

state Maryland

county Frederick

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 type="checkbox"/> park
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational	<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> transportation
	<input checked="" 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 Frederick County Roads Department

street & number Winchester Hall, East Church St.

telephone no.:

city, town Frederick

state and zip code MD 21701

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Frederick County Courthouse

Liber

street & number 100 W. Patrick Street

Folio

city, town Frederick

state MD

6. Representation in Existing Historical Surveys

title National Register Nomination Form, South Mountain Battlefields, F-4-17 A,B,C

date February, 1986

 federal state county local

depository for survey records Maryland Historical Trust

city, town Crownsville

state MD

7. Description

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

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

The Old Sharpsburg Road runs south from U.S Alternate 40 along what is now called Bolivar Road. It then turns west at a three-way intersection onto Reno Monument Road. The road then climbs the eastern face of South Mountain on a steep grade, crossing the mountain at Fox's Gap into Washington County and down the western face of the mountain toward Sharpsburg.

The modern version of the Old Sharpsburg Road is a 1 1/2 lane paved road. It follows the same path shown on 1862 Army Engineers maps. Today's road appears to maintain the same width and grade as the original, tracking through a cut that appears similar to what appears in Civil War photographs taken at or near Fox's Gap. The road was one of the approach routes used by the Union Army in an attempt to dislodge Confederate defenders from Fox's and Turner's Gaps during the Battle of South Mountain on September 14, 1862.

8. Significance

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Period	Areas of Significance	Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input checked="" 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater	
<input 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 September 14, 1862 **Builder/Architect**

check: Applicable Criteria: A B C D
and/or
Applicable Exceptions: A B C D E F G
Level of Significance: national state local

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

The Old Sharpsburg Road is significant for its association with the Civil War Battle of South Mountain. The road was directly involved in the course of the battle and the military action that took place on September 14, 1862. The roads and the three mountain gaps through which they passed were critical to the objectives of both the Union and Confederate armies. The road was of strategic importance because it provided access to one of the few crossing places through the mountains. Turner's Gap about a mile to the north, became the focal point for the fight and was the main objective for the Union army as it attempted to follow the Confederates into the Hagerstown Valley and capture the divided rebel army. The Old Sharpsburg Road also is one of the oldest through Frederick and Washington Counties, having been established as early as the 1730s.

The discovery on September 13, 1862 of General Robert E. Lee's Special Order #191, the Lost Order, in a field near Frederick where the Confederates had camped precipitated the march of the Army of the Potomac toward South Mountain along the Old National Pike. The turnpike crossed the mountain running west toward the center of Lee's divided army. Had Union commander, George B. McClellan approached the mountain with speed, as he had indicated he would to President Lincoln, the Battle of South Mountain might have ended differently.¹

The Special Order #191 detailed General Lee's deployment of the Army of Northern Virginia in September 1862. In addition to the siege of Harper's Ferry by three divisions under Stonewall Jackson from the west and two divisions under Lafayette McLaws from the northeast, the orders described the location of Robert E. Lee and James Longstreet with two divisions at Hagerstown and D.H.Hill's division, alone at Boonsboro, just below Turner's Gap. With the knowledge of the divided nature of Lee's army on the west side of South Mountain, and the small defensive line at the pass, McClellan felt confident in his army's ability to catch Lee's forces in this vulnerable position. However, McClellan's infamous cautiousness and over-estimation of the size of his opponent, delayed the movement of the Army of the Potomac for half a day. The result of his slow approach to the pass at South Mountain was to give the Confederate defenders time to reinforce their tenuous position and begin pulling their divided army together again at Sharpsburg.

General Alfred Pleasonton's Cavalry were the first Union troops to approach South Mountain by the Old National Pike on September 13, 1862. Jacob

¹Stephen W. Sears, "Fire on the Mountain," *Blue and Gray*, December-January, 1986-86, p. 11

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DOE ___ yes ___ no

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D. Cox's Kanawha Division was in Middletown to serve as support for the cavalry.² Brigadier General Cox reported, "At 6 o'clock in the morning of September 14 the division marched from Middletown under an order...from Major-General Reno, directing me to support...the advance of General Pleasanton, who, with his brigade of cavalry and artillery, was moving up the Hagerstown turnpike toward the positions of the enemy in the pass of South Mountain."³ Here the famous warning "My God, be careful" from Colonel Moore, who had been paroled by the Confederates, convinced Cox that a greater force was on the mountain than the Lost Orders had led them to believe, a result of McClellan's delay.⁴ Thus began the Federals' plan to flank the defenders on the left and right by the convenient Sharpsburg and Hagerstown Roads leading from the National Pike at Bolivar. General Cox continued, "...I rode forward to find Pleasanton, who was...where the old Sharpsburg road leaves the turnpike. I found that he was convinced that the enemy's position in the gap was too strong to be carried by a direct attack, and that he had determined to let his horsemen demonstrate on the main road, supporting the batteries... while Scammon should march by the Sharpsburg road and try to reach the flank of the force on the summit."⁵ Later in the day, Hooker's I Corps would be sent by General McClellan down the Old Hagerstown Road (Mt. Tabor and Frostown Roads) to flank the left side of the Confederate defense.⁶ D.H.Hill's response to the deployment of the Union troops as he viewed them from his headquarters at the Mountain House on the crest of the pass, would set up the battles at Fox's and Turner's Gaps. Major General Hill stated, "Should the truth be known, the battle of South Mountain, as far as my division was concerned, will be regarded as one of the most remarkable and creditable of the war...the division numbered less than 5,000 men the morning of September 14, and we had five roads to guard, extending over a space of as many miles."⁷

The Old Sharpsburg Road, now Reno Monument Road, leaves the Old National Pike at Bolivar and crosses South Mountain at Fox's Gap heading west toward Sharpsburg. The road figures prominently in the plans of the Federals to outflank Hill's Confederate forces on the left of Turner's Gap simultaneously with the attack on the Old Hagerstown Road on the right. By using these flanking approaches, the Confederate defenders would have to stretch their forces dangerously thin.⁸

²James V. Murfin, *The Gleam of Bayonettes*, New York: Thomas Yoseloff, 1965, p. 162.

³Jay Luvaas and Harold W. Nelson, eds. *The US Army War College Guide to the Battle of Antietam, the Maryland Campaign of 1862*, Washington: Harper Collins, 1987, p. 16, citing the Official Records, War of the Rebellion, Vol. XIX, Part I, p. 458-9.

⁴War College Guide, P. 17.

⁵War College Guide, p. 17, citing *Battles and Leaders of the Civil War*, vol. II, p. 585-6.

⁶Murfin, p.178

⁷Official Records, Vol. XIX, Part I, p. 1021.

⁸Scott D. Hartwig, "My God Be Careful! The Morning Battle of Fox's Gap," *Civil War Regiments*, Campbell, CA: Savas Publishing Co. 1997, p. 33

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DOE yes no

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The Kanawha Division, IX Corps of the Army of the Potomac, under the command of Brigadier General Jacob D. Cox were given the task of turning the right flank of General D.H. Hill at Fox's Gap.⁹ Scammon's Brigade found the Sharpsburg Road well defended by Bondurant's batteries, and were forced to the left again along the "loop" farm lane. In the fields to the left of the Sharpsburg Road, just below the crest of the mountain, much of the morning battle raged.¹⁰

The afternoon of September 14th, following a lull in the battle for Fox's Gap, both forces' reinforcements began to appear. Up the Sharpsburg Road came Brigadier General Orlando B. Willcox's First Division in support of Cox's Kanawha Division. "I was ordered by General Burnside to ...march up by the Sharpsburg road, and take up a position near Cox...I planted a section of Cook's battery near the turn of the road, and opened fire on enemys battery across the main pike. After a few good shots, the enemy unmasked a battery on his left, over Shriver's [Fox's] Gap, from a small field enveloped by woods."¹¹ Following this attack came a charge by Hood's Confederate brigade. In the words of Colonel Benjamin C. Christ, USA: "I therefore led forward the 17th Michigan on the right of the road while Colonel Welsh advanced on the left with 45th Pennsylvania and 46th New York...then opened fire on the enemy with terrible effect, piling the road and field with his dead and wounded..."¹² The Confederate forces had been pushed north and west from Fox's Gap but Turner's Gap had not yet fallen.

⁹War College Guide, p.15

¹⁰Hartwig, p.50 map

¹¹Report of Willcox, O.R. XIX, Part I, p. 428, from War College Guide, p. 38.

¹²O.R. XIX, Part I, p. 437

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DOE yes no

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HISTORICAL CONTEXT:

MARYLAND COMPREHENSIVE PRESERVATION PLAN DATA

Geographic Organization: Piedmont

Chronological/Developmental Period(s):

Agricultural-Industrial Transition, A.D. 1815-1870

Prehistoric/Historic Period Theme(s):

Military

Resource Type:

Category: Structure

Historic Environment: Rural

Historic Function(s) and Use(s):

Transportation/Road

Known Design Source: None

9. Major Bibliographical References

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Books

- Hartwig, D. Scott, Civil War Regiments, A Journal of the American Civil War, Vol 5, #3, "Antietam, the Maryland Campaign of 1862". Article entitled "My God, Be Careful! The Morning Battle of Fox's Gap", Savas Publishing Co., Campbell, CA, 1997.
- Luvaas, Jay and Harold W. Nelson eds., The U.S. Army War College Guide to the Battle of Antietam, The Maryland Campaign of 1862, Harper Collins Publishers, Washington, 1987.
- Murfin, James V., The Gleam of Bayonets, The Battle of Antietam and Robert E. Lee's Maryland Campaign, September 1862, Thomas Yoseloff, New York, 1965.
- Roth, Dave, "The General's Tour of South Mountain", Blue & Gray Magazine, Dec-Jan, 1986-87.
- Schildt, John W., The Ninth Corps, At Antiem, Chewsville, Maryland, 1988.
- Sears, Stephen W., "Fire On The Mountain, The Battle of South Mountain September 14, 1862", Blue & Gray Magazine, Dec-Jan, 1986-87.
- Sears, Stephen W., Landscape Turned Red, The Battle of Antietam, Ticknor and Fields, New York, 1983.
- Swinton, William, Army of the Potomac, Smithmark Publisher, New York, 1995.
- U.S. War Department, The War of Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies, Series I, Vol XIX, Parts I and II, Government Printing Office, Washington, 1880-1901.

Manuscripts

- rye, Dennis, National Register Nomination Form, South Mountain Battlefields F-4-17-A,B,C, 1986.

Maps

- The Official Military Atlas of the Civil War, Plate 27, Gramercy Books, New York, 1983.
- Engineers Maps, 1862, National Register Nomination, South Mountain Battlefields F-4-17-A,B,C, 1986.
- Macombe Map, 1861.

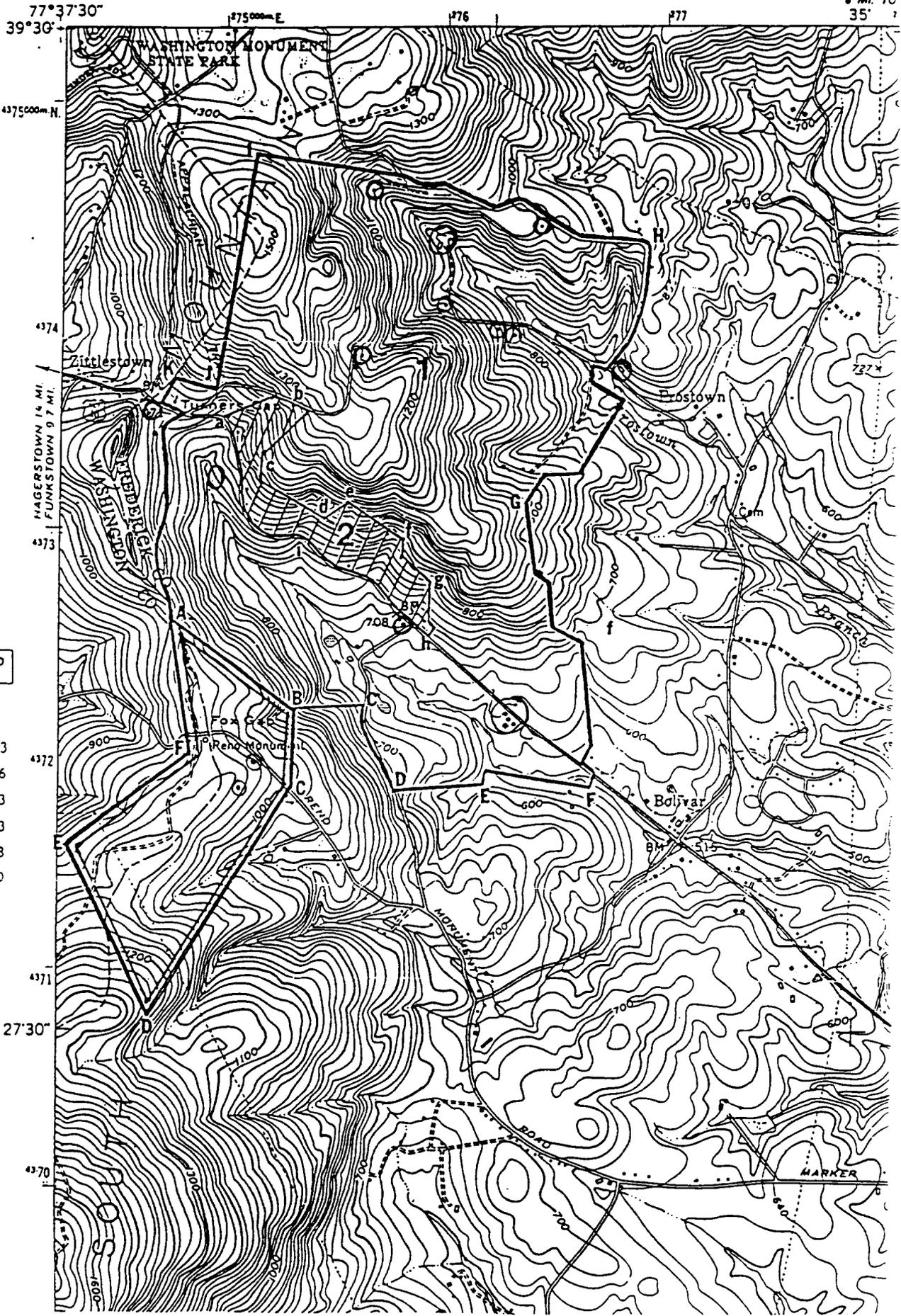
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(FUNKSTOWN)

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
GEOLOGICAL SURVEY



E-4-131

MA
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35'



FOX'S GAP

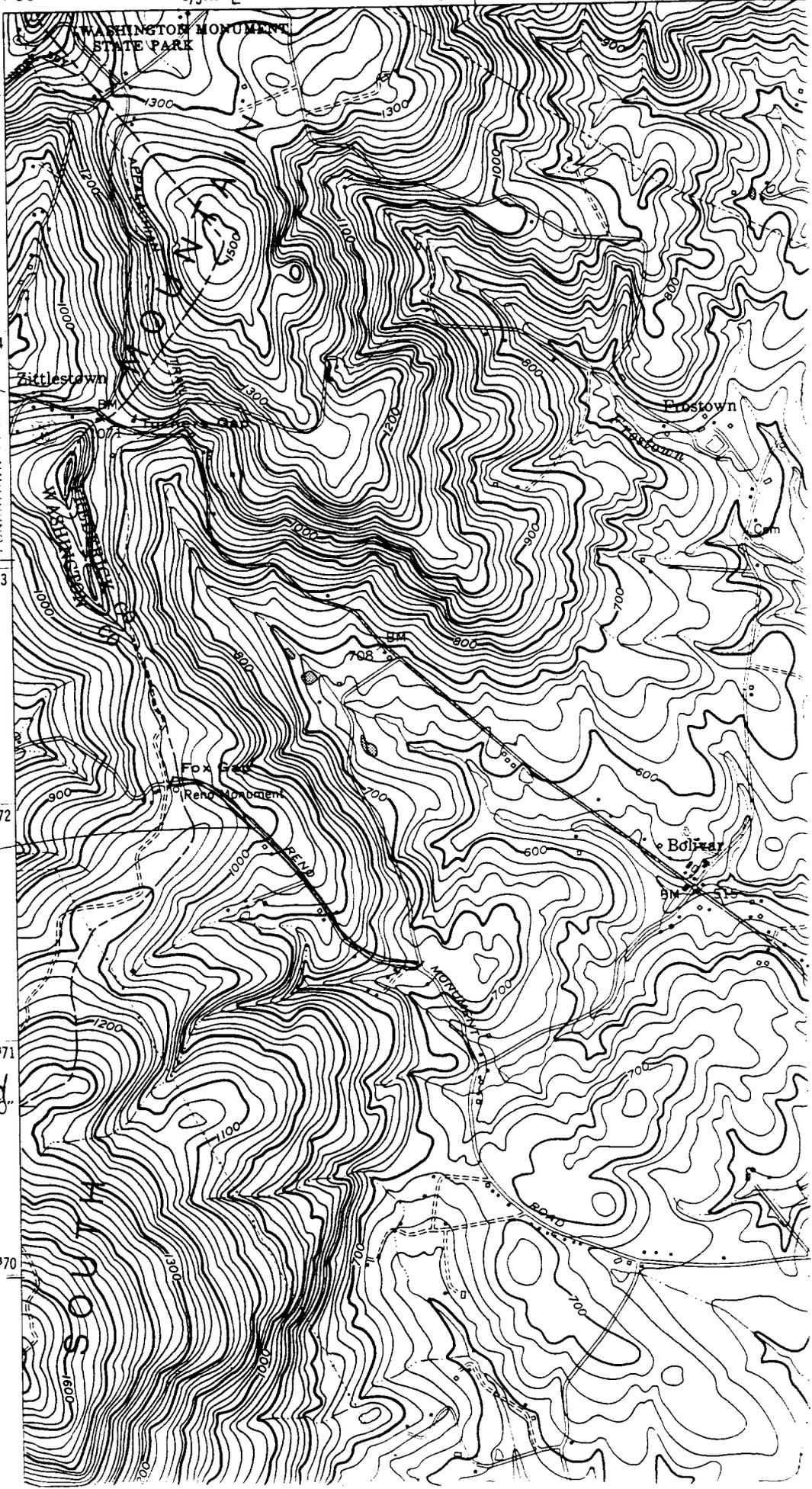
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- B: 18/275333/4372196
- C: 18/274312/4371863
- D: 18/274662/4370813
- E: 18/274287/4371588
- F: 18/274875/4372000

SW
TOWN

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
GEOLOGICAL SURVEY

77°37'30" 275000m E 276 277
39°30' 4375000m N



F-4-131
Old Sharpsburg
Road
Middletown Quad



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Old Sharpsburg rd segment
Frederick Co., Maryland
Edith B Wallace

10 March 1998

Maryland SHPO
view looking East

1/1