HO 732, Mentzel Paper Factory,
1892.
Ellicott City, public access.
Capsule Summary, page 1.

Description:

The Mentzel Paper Factory ruins stand on the south bank of Sucker Branch, west of the CSX railroad tracks. Erosional fill covers much of the factory's foundations and of the former railroad siding abutment. These are all of rough-cut granite, and were configured to provide secure footings for the shafting and gears which drove the machinery. No trace of a dam survives on Sucker Branch, and, indeed, the 1894 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map for the complex indicates that the power source was steam.

Significance:

Henry D. Mentzel's paper making enterprise is significant as an attempt to diversify the industrial base of the Patapsco Valley in the last quarter of the nineteenth century. In 1881, Mentzel leased facilities from the Union Manufacturing Company, and produced a variety of papers from cotton rags supplied by the Union textile mills. One of twenty-nine Maryland paper factories in 1886, Mentzel's operations were not large. By 1892, Mentzel concluded

that expansion was justified, and so purchased the lot across from the Union Works, adjacent the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad, where he built the installation now ruinous today.

Mentzel's factory was the only entirely new industrial facility constructed during this period on a previously undeveloped site. The other industrial operations on the Patapsco between Union Dam and Elkridge occupied older sites. This new factory was a modern operation, with sprinkler-protected work rooms, a water tank filled by steam pump, steam engines for motive force, and easy access to the railroad. In spite of the fire protection, the buildings suffered two major blazes in 1895 and 1896, the latter conflagration destroying the entire factory. Mentzel chose not to rebuild. Consolidations of paper factories into even larger facilities at the turn-of-the-century, and the dominating growth of wood-pulp papers at this same time made facilities like Mentzel's non-competitive.

MARYLAND INVENTORY OF HISTORIC PROPERTIES

Survey No. HO 732

Magi No.

DOE __yes __no

Maryland Historical Trust State Historic Sites Inventory Form

1. Name (indicate preferred name)

historic Mentzel Paper Factory

and/or common

2. Location

street & number Southwest side of Sucker Branch at CSX Railroad tracks ___ not for publication

city, town Ellicott City X vicinity of congressional district sixth

state Maryland county Howard

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
___ district	X public	___ occupied	___ agriculture	___ museum
___ building(s)	___ private	X unoccupied	___ commercial	___ park
___ structure	___ both	___ work in progress	___ educational	___ private residence
X site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	___ entertainment	___ religious
___ object	___ in process	___ yes: restricted	___ government	___ scientific
	___ being considered	X yes: unrestricted	___ industrial	___ transportation
	X not applicable	___ no	___ military	X other:

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

name State of Maryland

street & number Natural Resources, Department of Forests and Parks telephone no.:

city, town Annapolis state and zip code Maryland 20701

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Please see continuation sheet. liber

street & number folio

city, town state

6. Representation in Existing Historical Surveys

title None

date ___ federal ___ state ___ county ___ local

depository for survey records

city, town state

7. Description

Survey No. HO 732

Condition		Check one	Check one
___ excellent	___ deteriorated	___ unaltered	X original site
___ good	X ruins	___ 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.

Resource Count: 2

The site of the Mentzel Paper Factory consists of partially intact rough cut granite foundations and a stone abutment to support a former railroad siding. These ruins extend approximately 180 feet west of the present railroad tracks and 70 feet south of Sucker Branch. Erosional fill has covered the remains of additional foundations to the south and west for structures recorded in the 1894 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map for Ellicott City (see Maps. 3 in this inventory, and additional information in Section 8, Significance). The visible ruins terminate in a standing corner to the northwest, now washed by the waters of the branch. Evidently this portion of the foundation was the most substantially constructed, as it comprises the only part of the factory complex to have a cellar story. Here ran shafting and gears between two parallel stone walls set only 3.5 feet apart, and of some 83.5 feet in length. Each granite wall is two feet wide. The north foundation wall, facing the branch, contains two openings, each three feet wide. Whether these provided access to the cellar as doorways or served only as apertures for wastes is not clear from the visible evidence.

Like the factory ruins, the railroad abutment is also partially covered by fill. Extending along the east side of the complex, parallel to the existing railroad, the siding wall has perhaps tumbled into the factory site and over time become covered. To the north, the abutment wall emerges intact from the sloping ground and forms a corner at the waters edge, where it turns ninety degrees to meet the existing railroad bridge over the branch.

8. Significance

Survey No. HO 732

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below				
___ prehistoric	_X_ archeology-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	
_X_ 1700–1799	___ art	___ engineering	___ music	___ theater	
___ 1800–1899	___ commerce	_X_ exploration/settlement	___ philosophy	___ transportation	
___ 1900–	___ communications	___ industry	___ politics/government	___ other (specify)	
		___ invention			

Specific dates 1892 **Builder/Architect** unknown

check: Applicable Criteria: _X_ A __ B __ C _X_ D
and/or
Applicable Exception: __ A __ B __ C __ D __ E __ F __ G

Level of Significance: __ national _X_ state __ local

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

Mentzel Paper Factory

The Mentzel paper factory ruins mark an attempt to diversify the industrial base of the Patapsco valley in the late-nineteenth century. Paper-making operations had been attempted in several locations in the valley in the eighteenth and early-nineteenth centuries, but had remained at the level of small-scale craft-driven enterprises, often intended to supply specific printers or book publishers. The Mentzel operations reflect both a growing professionalization of the industry which took place in the last quarter of the nineteenth century and a trend toward larger establishments with a greater variety of products. In addition, the factory's reliance on steam-driven rather than water-power made it a clearly modern facility, as many mills in the Patapsco valley traditionally driven by water supplemented their operations with powerful steam engines at this time. Water here was more useful for the actual manufacture of paper and as a convenient receptacle for industrial wastes. Continued developments in the industry at the turn-of-the-century--toward even larger, consolidated enterprises, and the dominance of cheaper wood-pulp over rag-based papers--gradually put factories like Henry Mentzel's out of business. Had it not burned, the factory would not have been able to compete with these wider market changes; this likely accounts for the abandonment of the site instead of its reconstruction.

Henry D. Mentzel purchased 4.45 acres at Sucker Branch on 17 September 1892, where he undertook construction of a paper factory. Earlier deeds give no indication of structures on this part of the property, though the parcel Mentzel purchased included an easement along an existing farm lane, which ran from the

[Please see continuation sheet.]

9. Major Bibliographical References

Survey No. HO 732

Please see continuation sheet.

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property 57

Quadrangle name Ellicott City

Quadrangle scale 1 : 24,000 — 7.5 Series

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

Since the original parcel boundaries are no longer clear in the public record, the site begins at the southwest intersection of Sucker Branch with the CSX Railroad, and proceeds in a rough rectangle 100 feet south and 250 feet west; this incorporates the standing ruins and the sites of additional foundations.

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	Henry K. Sharp		
organization	none	**date**	19 November 1998
street & number	100 South Street West	**telephone**	804/295-0140
city or town	Charlottesville	**state**	Virginia 22902

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

MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST
DHCP/DHCD
100 COMMUNITY PLACE
CROWNSVILLE, MD 21032-2023

Inventory Number HO 732
Mentzel Paper Factory, Howard County
Section 5.1

Howard County Circuit Court
8360 Court House Drive
Ellicott City, Maryland 21043

Howard County Tax Map 25

Parcel 55: this parcel is not indexed in the Howard County property tax system. Such a circumstance invariably indicates state ownership of land and its consequent removal from the tax roles.

site of a barn on the road to the Patapsco Female Institute down to the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad at Sucker Branch (Howard 59/20). The owner of the easement, Mrs. Dorothy L. Reuse, reserved the right to use the road and water her livestock at the branch (Howard 52/438).

Construction must have begun immediately, for within two years, the factory was fully operational. In November 1894, the Sanborn Company published the results of its survey of Ellicott City structures for fire insurance, and included the Mentzel factory. The notes and plan on page four reveal that the Mentzel Paper Company operations comprised four frame buildings, the largest of these housing six discrete functions of the factory. Three additional outbuildings stood to the south of the main building; two were oil houses, and the third a warehouse adjoining the railroad. The main building contained paper-making functions in three second-story rooms--beaters, beater stock and rotary, and finishing. The first floor and basement, which extended under one section only, contained shafting and gears for driving the machinery above. Power evidently was not derived from Sucker Branch, as the works contained three engines--25, 50, and 250 horsepower--and an eighty foot iron chimney. No trace of a dam survives on the property. A six-hundred-foot water pipe to a 12,000 gallon tank on a neighboring hill supplied water for papermaking operations and for a sprinkler system, protecting the second floor only from fire. Probably one of the smaller engines pumped water from the branch to the hill-top tank. The Sanborn surveyor recorded that thirty hands worked the factory, and that a watchman was present.

A fire originating in the warehouse in late May 1895 caused five-thousand dollars damage to the works, about one-seventh of the total investment in the factory, exclusive of land (*Ellicott City Times*, 1 June 1895, p. 3). One year later, at the end of April 1896, a much more disastrous fire destroyed the entire operation, with a loss reported at 30,000 dollars (*Maryland Journal*, Towson, 2 May 1896). The Company evidently went into bankruptcy, and the factory owners never rebuilt. Henry D. Mentzel and Benjamin Frank were appointed receivers, and they sold "the site on which said Company's Mill lately stood" to James Tyson on 27 October 1898 (Howard 69/249).

The Mentzel Paper Company did exist in an earlier incarnation, before the Sucker Branch facility was established. Henry Mentzel leased an unused mill at the failing Union Manufacturing Company in 1885, just two years before that company was sold at auction to the Dickey family. The cotton mill was to furnish rags for paper production and the U. S. Postal Service sold waste paper to

Mentzel, who produced manila, card, and rope paper, some of which was shipped north for making sand paper (Munnikhuysen, no page reference). John B. Munnikhuysen, the source for this information, based his report on unattributed oral interviews, and perhaps got his dates incorrect, as the *Baltimore County Union* reported that this earlier operation of the Mentzel Factory, on the Baltimore County side of the Patapsco, began production in the summer of 1881 (*Baltimore County Union*, 30 July 1881). Additional newspaper reports place the factory under suspended operations in 1885, the result of an engine failure (*Catonsville Argus*, 14 February 1885, "Items from Union"); the victim of a fire (*Baltimore County Union*, 11 September 1886); and again of suspended operations from "dullness of trade" (*Catonsville Argus*, 27 July 1889).

In 1886, Mentzel's mill was one of twenty-nine paper factories operating in Maryland. "Few of these were of any importance," concluded an early-twentieth-century survey and history of the industry, though in any case, the commercial prospects for expansion seemed bright enough for Mentzel to establish the new operation at Sucker Branch in 1892 (Weeks, p. 334). This site, which Mentzel owned outright--itself a significant advantage over leased facilities--also placed his works adjacent the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad. The siding built to accommodate shipments directly connected the paper factory to the nation's dominant transportation network, and is another example of the effect of the railroad in opening to development sites formerly considered less easily accessible to industrial uses.

Inventory Number HO 732
Mentzel Paper Factory, Howard County
Section 9.1

Deeds as mentioned in text.

Howard County Historical Society Library; vertical file, Mills, untitled manuscript notes on the Mentzel Paper Mill (contains newspaper references).

Maryland and District of Columbia Gazetteer and Business Directory. Baltimore: R. L. Polk and Company, 1891; 1894-5; 1896-7.

McGrain, John W. *From Pig Iron to Cotton Duck: A History of Manufacturing Villages in Baltimore County*. Towson, Md.: Baltimore County Public Library, 1985.

_____. *Molinography in Maryland Series*, Howard County notebook. Maryland State Archives, Special Collections, SC 4300, loc 02/04/14.

Munnikhuysen, John B. "A Short History of the Paper Making Industry in Baltimore City and County, Maryland" 1939; Enoch Pratt Free Library, Maryland Room, Vertical Files, Papermaking and Trade.

Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps; Ellicott City; 1894 Set, p. 4. Library of Congress, Geography and Maps Division, catalogue number 3599.

Weeks, Lyman Horace. *History of Paper Manufacturing in the United States* (New York: The Lockwood Trade Journal Company), 1916.

Inventory Number HO 732
Mentzell Paper Company, Howard County
Maryland Comprehensive State Historic Preservation Plan
Statewide Historic Contexts

Geographic Organization:

Piedmont

Chronological Development/Periods:

11) Industrial/Urban Dominance A.D. 1870-1930

Historic Period Themes:

3) Economic

Resource Type:

Category: Site

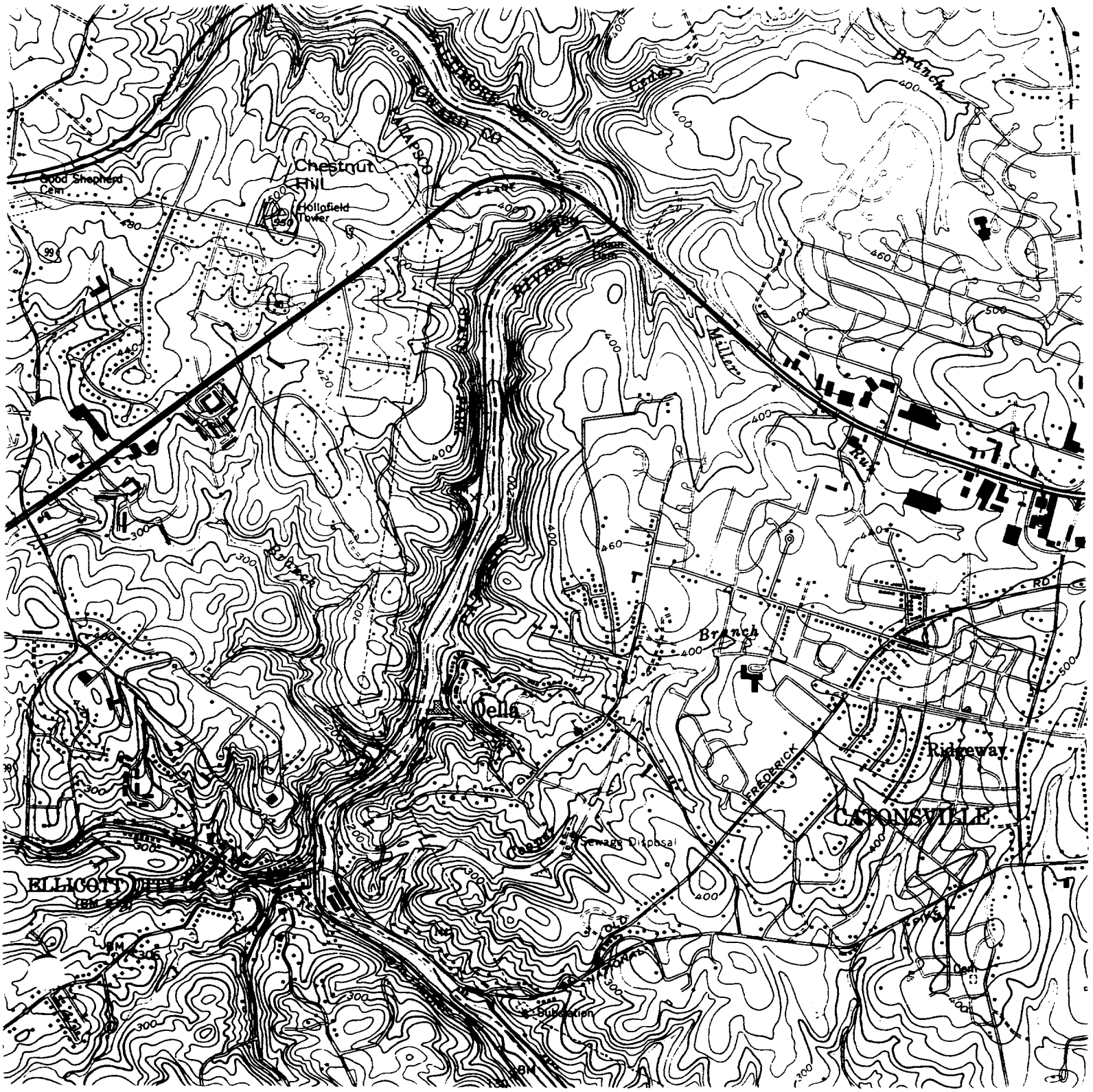
Historic Environment: Rural/Village

Historic Functions and Uses: Paper Manufacturing Mill.

Known Design Sources: None

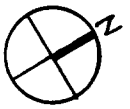
Inventory Number HO 732
Mentzel Paper Factory, Howard County
Maps.1

U.S. Geological Survey
Ellicott City 7.5 Quadrangle

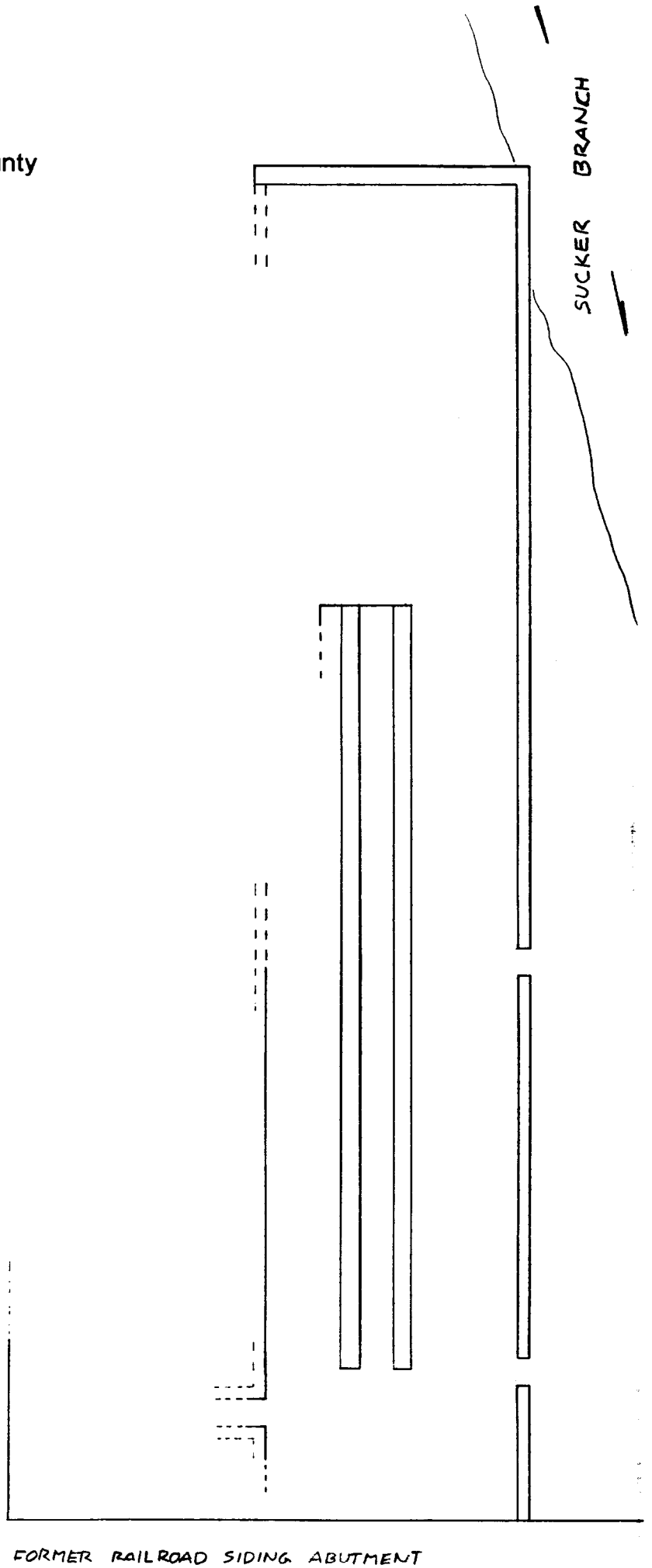


Inventory Number HO 732
Mentzel Paper Factory, Howard County
Maps.2

Resource Site Plan

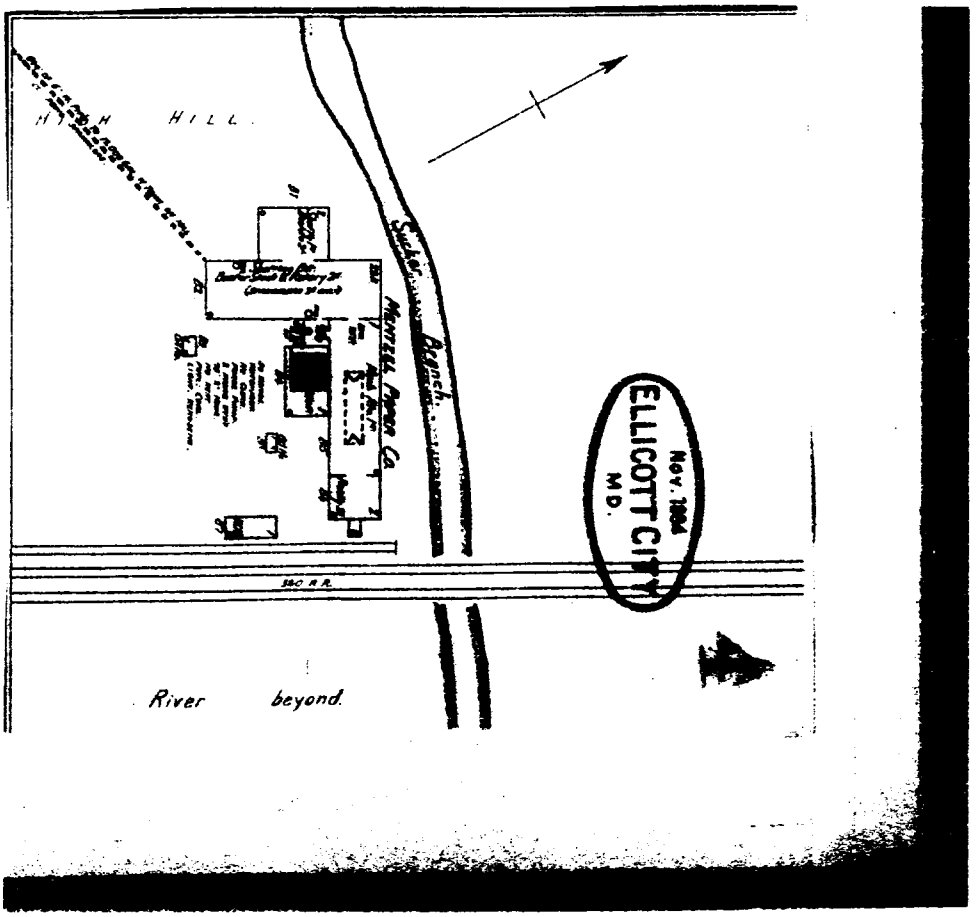


SCALE 1:16
1998
H. K. SHARP



Inventory Number HO 732
Mentzel Paper Factory, Howard County
Maps.3

Sanborn Fire Insurance Map for Ellicott City, 1894, Map 4, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C., Geography and Maps Division, catalogue number 3599.



HO 732
MENTZEL PAPER FACTORY
HOWARD COUNTY, MARYLAND
HENRY K. SHARP
APRIL 1997
MARYLAND SHPO
VIEW EAST
5/5