Capsule Summary
CE-1503
Principio Iron Works Blacksmith/Wheelwright Shop
Principio
Private Circa 1890

The Principio Company was established in 1720. Beginning in 1725, intensive ironmaking activity started at the site and continued until the American Revolution. After the war, Samuel Hughes operated a cannon factory on the site, and, in 1836, the property passed to Joseph and George Price Whitaker, who made a series of capital improvements to it. Today the property reflects the Whitaker era of ownership.

This single-story, side gabled brick building was originally divided into two shops. The south room formerly housed the blacksmith shop while the north room housed the wheelwright shop. The blacksmith shop was important not only for shoeing horses and other animals used for agricultural and industrial purposes, but also in maintaining farm, furnace, and forge machinery. The wheelwright maintained the charcoal wagons and other wheeled farm equipment.

CE-1503

MARYLAND COMPREHENSIVE HISTORIC PRESERVATION PLAN DATA

Geographic Organization:

Eastern Shore

Chronological/Development Period (s):

Agricultural-Industrial Transition: 1781-1835
Industrial-Urban Dominance: 1870-1930

Prehistoric/Historic Period Theme (s):

Economic

Resource Type:

Category: Building

Historic Evironment: Village

Historic Functions (s) and Use (s):

Blacksmith/Wheelwright Shop

Known Design Source:

MARYLAND INVENTORY OF HISTORIC PROPERTIES

Survey No. CE-1503

Magi No.

DOE ___yes ___no

Maryland Historical Trust State Historic Sites Inventory Form

1. Name (indicate preferred name)

historic Principio Iron Works - Blacksmith/Wheelright Shop

and/or common Principio Furnace

2. Location

street & number Maryland Route 7 and Principio Creek Bridge ___ not for publication

city, town Principio Furnace X vicinity of congressional district

state Maryland county Cecil

3. Classification

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

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

name York Building Products

street & number 1020 N. Hartley Street telephone no.:

city, town York state and zip code PA 17405

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Cecil County Courthouse liber NDS65

street & number Main Street folio 794-98

city, town Elkton state MD

6. Representation in Existing Historical Surveys

title

date ___ federal ___ state ___ county ___ local

depository for survey records

city, town state

7. Description

Survey No. CC-1503

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

SEE CONTINUATION SHEET

8. Significance

Survey No. CR-1503

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

Specific dates **Builder/Architect**

check: Applicable Criteria: X A ___B ___C ___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.

SEE CONTINUATION SHEET

9. Major Bibliographical References

Survey No. CE-1503

May, Earl Chapin. Principio To Wheeling. New York: Harper & Brothers, 1945.

Robbins, Michael W. The Principio Company. New York: Garland Publishing Co., 1986.

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property 90 acres

Quadrangle name Havre De Grace, MD

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

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

The Principio Iron Works property is bounded by Principio Creek to the east and south, by Maryland Route 7 to the north, and by Principio Station Road to the west.

This boundary encompasses all the resources associated with the historic iron works.

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	Lee R. Maddex, Project Coordinator Sr.		
organization	Institute for the History of Technology & Industrial Archaeology	date	4/30/98
street & number	1535 Mileground	telephone	(304) 293-3829
city or town	Morgantown	state	WV 26505

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
514-7600

PS-2746

The Principio Company was established in 1720. Beginning 1725, intensive ironmaking activity started at the site and continued until the American Revolution. After the war, Samuel Hughes operated a cannon factory on the site, and, in 1836, the property passed to Joseph and George Price Whitaker, who made a series of capital improvements to it. Today, the property reflects the Whitaker era of ownership. The property consists of the Second Empire-style company office building, two 1920s corn cribs, foundational remains of a circa 1836 barn, a circa 1850 tool house, a 1890s wagon barn, standing remains of a 1890s blacksmith/wheelwrights shop, a 1890 charcoal kiln, a circa 1890 wash house, foundational remains of a scale house, foundational remains of two charcoal barns, 1837 charcoal iron blast furnace with hot blast stove and waterpowered blowing engine, partial remains of a 1890 hoist house, a 1890 blower engine house, and a circa 1850 shanty.

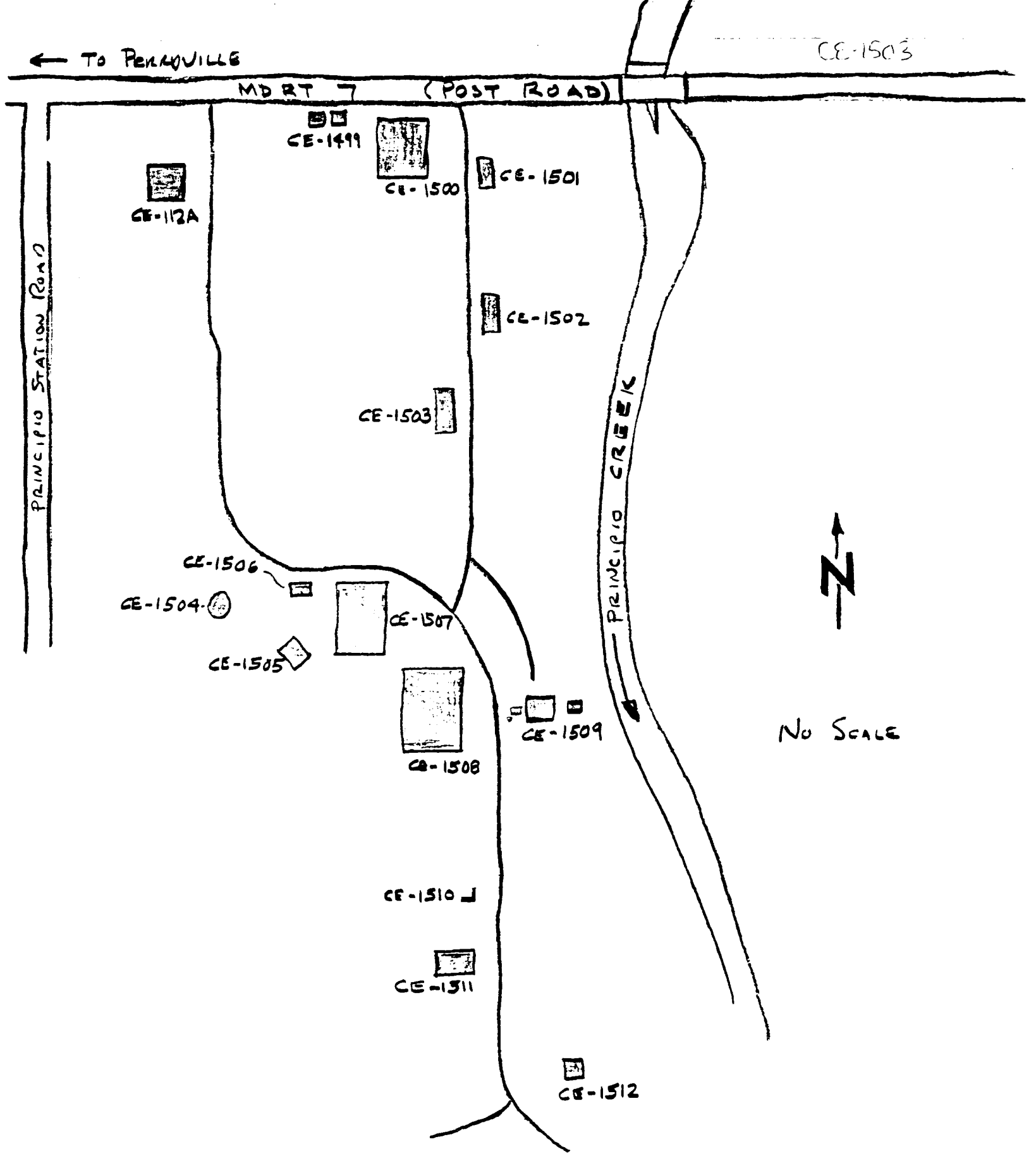
Resource Count: one (1)

The blacksmith/wheelwright shop was built circa 1890. It is a single-story side-gabled brick building. This building is divided into two shops. The south room formerly housed the blacksmith shop, while the north room housed the wheelwright shop. The roof has collapsed and the doors and windows are missing.

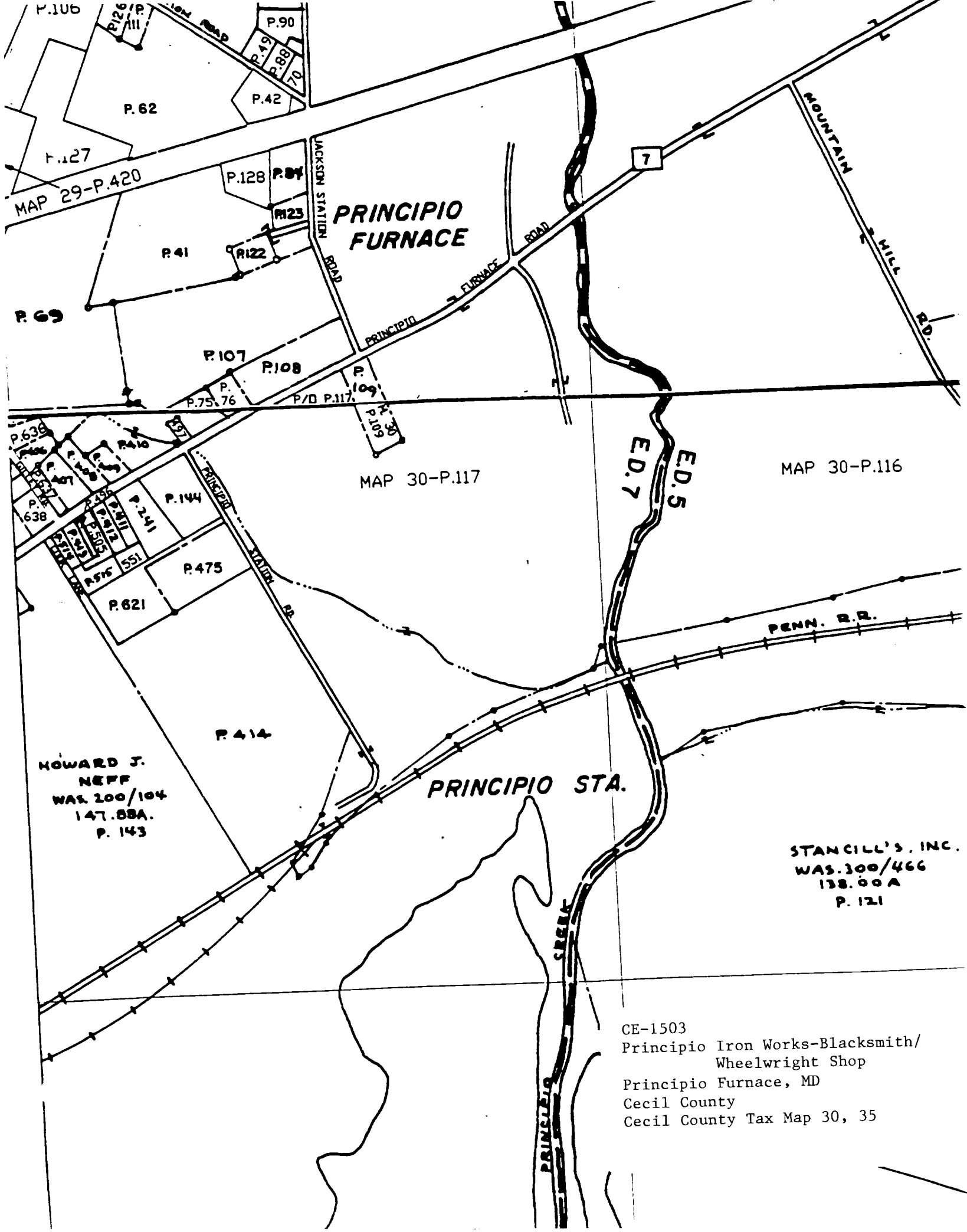
The blacksmith shop was important for not only shoeing horses and other animal used for agricultural and industrial purposes, but also in maintaining farm and furnace and forge machinery. The wheelwright maintained the charcoal wagons and other wheeled farm equipment.

The blacksmith/wheelwright shop is significant under Criterion A for the area of industry. The practical arts of blacksmithing and wheelwrighting were important to maintaining the industrial machinery, equipment, and wagons used at the Principio Iron Works and the blacksmith/wheelwright shop was the locus of these important activities.

Established in 1720, the Principio Company constructed the Principio Iron Works, the first blast furnace and refinery forge in the Maryland Colony. Located at the head of the Chesapeake Bay, the ironworks plantation consisted of the 1725 Principio Furnace, the 1728 Principio Forge, a store, and dwellings. The Principio Iron Works operated until the time of the American Revolution when they were abandoned. The property was confiscated by the state of Maryland in 1781, and it passed to Colonel Samuel Hughes in 1785. Hughes rebuilt the furnace and added a foundry for the production of cannon. After these works were destroyed by British raiders during the War of 1812, Hughes rebuilt the ironworks, but it bankrupted him and the property passed to his creditors in 1817. The property remained virtually idle for the next two decades when it was first acquired by David Stewart and others in 1834, who in turn sold it Joseph Whitaker II and his brother George Price Whitaker in 1836. The Whitaker brothers completely renovated the aged ironworks, erecting a new blast furnace plant and new worker housing. Importantly, the site was crossed by the recently completed Philadelphia, Wilmington and Baltimore Railroad which created a nexus enabling the ironwork's products to reach larger national markets. Following the Civil War, George Price Whitaker embarked on a second program of capital improvements which included the construction of a new dam, hot blast stove, blowing engine, and waterpowered turbine. Expanding the scope of production at the site, Whitaker, in 1883-84, erected a steampowered forge for the manufacture of wrought iron blooms. The 1837 furnace could not produce enough iron to keep his forge operating continuously and Whitaker commenced a third period of capital improvements to remedy this shortfall. Completed in August 1890, Whitaker erected a cupola-style blast furnace with hot blast stoves, blower engine house, boiler house, hoist house, and a cast house, but these improvements were abandoned shortly after his death in December 1890. Control of the property then passed to Whitaker's nephew Nelson E. Whitaker, who chose to close down the furnaces and produce wrought iron blooms only. Bloom production became closely allied with the Tyler Tube and Pipe Company of Washington, Pennsylvania, owned by William P. Tyler, Nelson E. Whitaker's son-in-law. The forge continued to operate until 1925 when production ceased. The storied Principio property reverted to agricultural use.



Principio Iron Works
Resource Sketch Map
May 1998
Principio Furnace, Cecil County, Maryland



CE-1503
Principio Iron Works-Blacksmith/
Wheelwright Shop
Principio Furnace, MD
Cecil County
Cecil County Tax Map 30, 35

CE-1503
BLACKSMITH/WHEELWRIGHT SHOP
PRINCIPIO IRON WORKS
CECIL COUNTY, MARYLAND
LEE R. MADDEX
MARCH 1998
SOUTHEAST ELEVATION
MARYLAND SHPO
~~6/16~~