CAPSULE SUMMARY - PROUTY BARN 'C' (CT-1085)

Prouty Barn 'C' is the oldest of five barns located on this large, privately owned farm adjacent to the Patuxent River in Huntingtown. The barn measures 24 x 52 feet and is constructed of hewn timbers and wrought nails. It has a transverse axis plan and sheds on the south and east sides. The original, horizontal siding was replaced with vertical planks and hinged ventilation doors on all the exterior walls of the barn. A concrete block stripping room is found in the west shed and two windows are located along the east wall of the room. A double vertical prize is located in the barn. In spite of extensive rebuilding, there is evidence that the barn was originally only 32 feet long with an original 12 foot wide center hallway. The barn is no longer used for curing tobacco.

Survey No. CT-1085

Magi No.

DOE __yes __no

Maryland Historical Trust
State Historic Sites Inventory Form

1. Name (indicate preferred name)

historic

and/or common Prouty Barn C

2. Location

street & number Pott's Point Rd. ___ not for publication

city, town Huntingtown X Cox vicinity of congressional district

state MD county 20639

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

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

name John Prouty

street & number Pott's Point Rd. telephone no.: 535-0977

city, town Huntingtown state and zip code MD 20639

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Calvert county Courthouse liber JLB 30

street & number Main Street (MD 765) folio 117

city, town Prince Frederick 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. CT-1085

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

See Attachment.

8. Significance

Survey No. CT-1085

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	X agriculture	___ economics	___ literature	___ sculpture
___ 1600–1699	X architecture	___ education	___ military	___ social/ humanitarian
? 1700–1799	___ art	___ engineering	___ music	___ theater
X 1800–1899	___ commerce	___ exploration/settlement	___ philosophy	___ transportation
X 1900–	___ communications	___ industry	___ politics/government	___ other (specify)
		___ invention		

Specific dates **Builder/Architect**

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 Attachment.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Survey No. CT-1085

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property _____

Quadrangle name Benedict, 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

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 Tora L. Williamsen-Berry
c/o Calvert County Historic District Commission

organization Dept. of Planning and Zoning

date June 30, 1990

street & number Courthouse

telephone 535-1600

city or town Prince Frederick

state MD

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

PS-2746

7. DESCRIPTION CT-1085

The Prouty farm is a wonderfully preserved farm, perfect for the study of the development of tobacco farming in Calvert County. It has five barns recorded by this survey, four of which are dated twentieth century barns, and one of which is an early, possibly eighteenth century barn with wrought nails. Prouty barn C is the early barn. It is located to the south of the house and the rest of the barns are beyond the house to the north and north-east. The barn measures twenty-four by fifty-two feet. It has a transverse axis plan and sheds on the south and east sides. The timbers are hewn and there are wrought nails in the framing system. The framing indicates that at some point there was a change from horizontal to vertical siding.

The barn is divided into ten and eight foot bays and has a twelve-foot wide cross-axial passageway. There are studs remaining between the posts on a portion of the south side, and empty mortises elsewhere including the north side. The tie beam above the cross-sill has stud mortises but there are no corresponding mortises in the cross-sill. This timber is probably re-used, or possibly, the barn once only measured thirty-two feet and was expanded to the east at which time the sill from the previous east side was removed and replaced by another sill. This is possible, although it seems unlikely since there is no clear evidence of siding along this cross-sill/wall, and the plate that extends across the north and south ends of the barn is continuous. The current support system is concrete block. According to the owner, the barn originally had wooden blocks as the support system. Posts are eight by eight inches, hand hewn (extremely rough on one side) and pit sawn. They are joined via mortise and tenon joints with trunnels. The down braces are hewn, eight by three inches and joined to the sill via half-dovetail joints with trunnels. The cross sill measures nine by ten inches, is hewn and half-lapped with the sill. The horizontal nailing rails that support the current vertical siding are four by three and circular sawn. The extant early studs are two and one-half by three inches, hewn and pit sawn. Fully mature machine cut nails and wire nails are evident in the studs where siding was attached. The studs are attached to the down braces with hand wrought rose head nails.

The original horizontal wall siding has been replaced by vertical siding on all exterior walls of the barn. There are eight hinged ventilation doors on the north side, and a few on the south side. Tin has been nailed to the open area beneath the sill in order to seal it off from cold winds. Roof rafters are on four foot centers and rest on a flat false plate. Four windbraces and three collars support the roof. The barn originally had a wooden shingle roof, as evidenced by the riven shingle nailers still in place underneath the corrugated metal roof. The tier poles are peeled logs separated by three feet, zero inches vertical distance and only three feet six inches horizontal distance. There is a double vertical tobacco prize located in the barn. No markings were visible on this unusual prize.

7. DESCRIPTION (CONT.) CT-1085

The south shed measures sixteen feet wide. The rafters of the shed join to the bottom of those of the barn, so it is difficult to determine for certain that this shed is an addition, but the evidence for siding and a door on the south wall of the barn make this interpretation likely. It is possible that an earlier shed stood here at one time. There are mortises for nonexistent nailers in the corner posts of the barn. The shed is built of re-used and circular sawn timbers. Some of the tie beams and rafters are re-used. The bay system of the shed is the same as that of the barn. There is a double door into the shed centered along the wall, and one four foot wide door towards the east on the south wall of the shed. Concrete blocks support the frame. The shed is covered with vertical siding and has a few hinged ventilation doors. The roof is of corrugated metal and has no underlying shingle nailers. There is no evidence for a wall that would have separated the south shed from the west shed, and the materials used are similar, so it appears that they were both built at the same time.

The west shed measures sixteen feet wide. It has a double door between the second and third posts from the north. A four foot wide door once hung between the third and fourth posts from the north. The west shed is divided into eight and four foot wide bays. The posts are supported on concrete blocks. The new timbers used are circular sawn and have wire nails, many re-used timbers are also visible. The shed has a corrugated metal roof and there are no shingle nailers underneath. Vertical wall siding with minimal ventilation covers the exterior. The west shed has a stripping room. This room measures sixteen by twenty-four feet. It is excavated one foot below ground and floored five feet above ground. The walls of the stripping room are built of concrete blocks, and circular sawn joists support the floor/ceiling. A four foot wide door that has been removed and is now simply an open doorway allows access to this room. There are two windows in the east wall of the room.

8. SIGNIFICANCE CT-1085

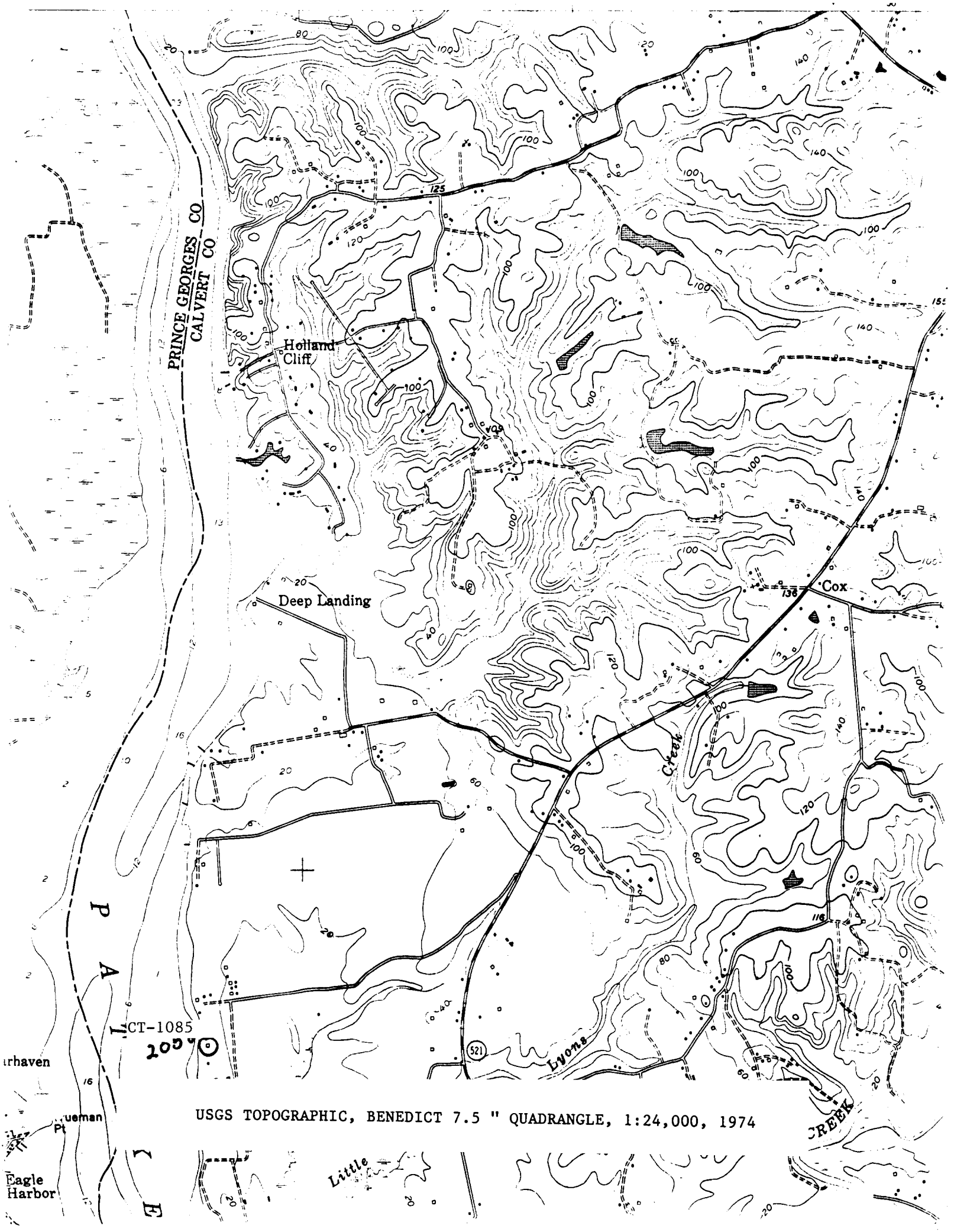
This barn is architecturally significant for a variety of reasons. The wrought nails nailing the studs to the down brace indicate that it was built, at the latest, ca. 1810. This barn is one of the earliest found by the survey. If the barn originally measured its current fifty-two by twenty-four feet, which seems likely, then it was extremely large for a barn of such early date. The many alterations this barn has undergone are indicative of the changes dictated by the changing nature of the tobacco industry. The double vertical tobacco prize is highly unusual.

This barn also yields information regarding agricultural history in Southern Maryland. In February 1990, a tobacco barn survey was initiated in order to study the tobacco barns of Calvert County. Until fairly recently, tobacco was the most important farm crop of the county. More acreage was devoted to its cultivation than for both of the next most extensive farm products (corn and wheat). The barns and stripping houses related to this "Tobacco Culture" are widely recognized as the most common element on the rural landscape. These structures are also the most threatened, as the market for tobacco declines. They seem to have, at present, only limited capabilities for re-use. Many barns and stripping houses now stand empty. The purpose of this survey has been to gather information and document a wide sample of these structures before they disappear from the landscape.

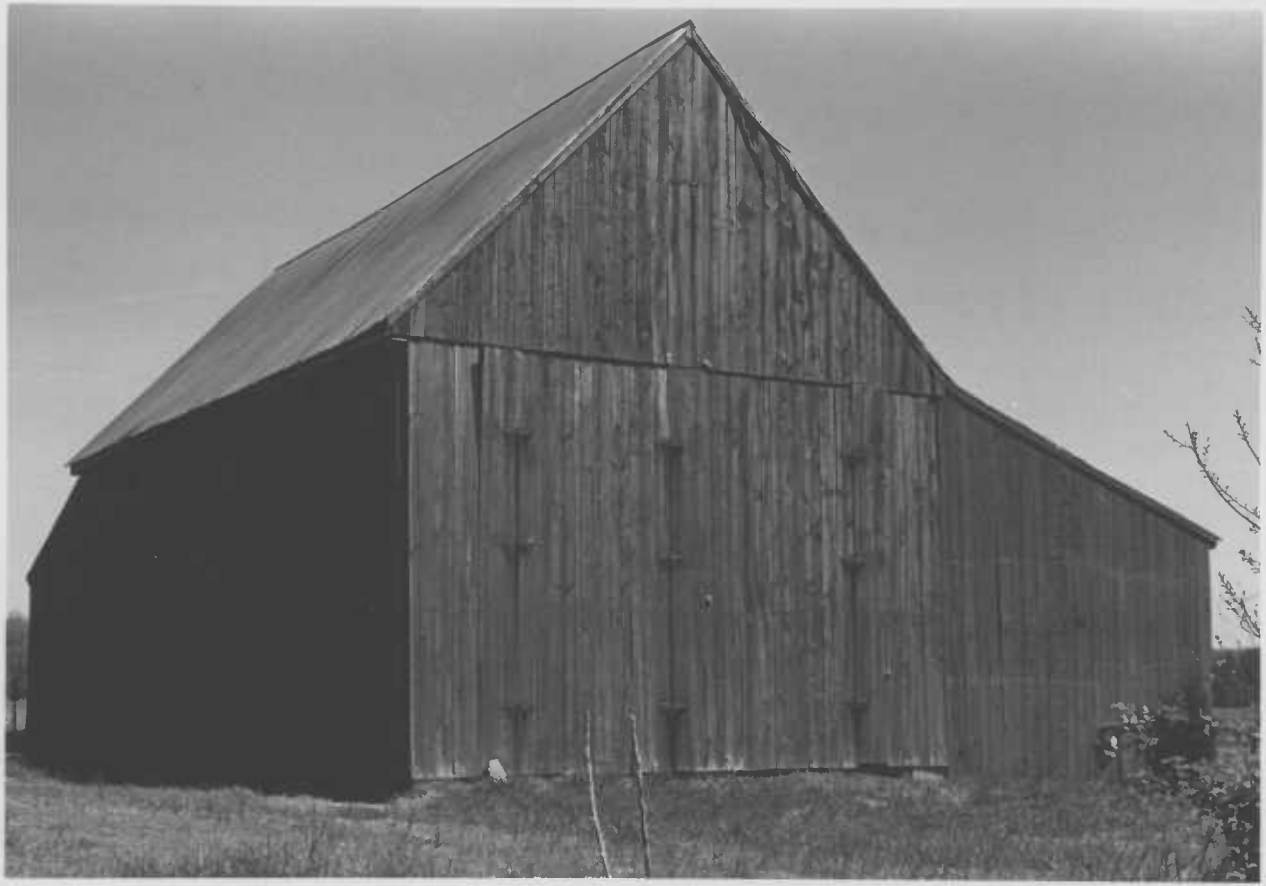
Historical Period theme(s): Eighteenth Century-; Tobacco; Agriculture
Geographical Organization: Western Shore Chesapeake Bay Calvert Cty MD
Chronological/Developmental Period: Eighteenth Century - Present
Resource Type(s): Tobacco Barn

The barn continued to be used until a few years ago when Mr. Prouty went out of the business of growing tobacco. Over its years of use, the barn underwent many changes and alterations. There has been such extensive rebuilding and alteration that it is difficult to interpret the sequence of certain events. As discussed in the description, it seems possible, though not likely, that the barn was originally not as long as it is now and rather, measured only thirty-two feet long. Empty mortises in the top plate in the central aisleway indicate that these post locations have been moved or changed. It is possible that the empty mortises indicate the original location for a doorway. The twelve-foot wide central aisle is unusual for an early barn, but it appears to be original, as the sills do not show any evidence of having been cut. The west cross-sill has had the downbraces replaced. The tie beam above the east cross-sill is probably a re-used timber since it has mortises on two foot centers, but there are none in the cross-sill below. The horizontal siding has been removed from the entire barn. The

east and west sills and top plates are modern circular sawn replacements and therefore have no mortises. The doors that probably were originally located along the central aisleway no longer exist, since the original posts are absent. At some point during the twentieth century, the south and west sheds were added and the shingle roof was replaced by metal. It was also during the twentieth century that the siding was changed from horizontal to vertical, as evidenced by the circular sawn wire nailed horizontal rails. As stated, this barn has undergone so many changes and modifications that it is difficult to interpret the barn with any certainty. However, it is evident that there was a desire to expand the hanging capacity of the barn and to widen its aisle way in order to allow vehicle access. In addition, the cost of materials made it more economical to use vertical rather than horizontal siding. The stripping room was another modification made to adapt the barn to twentieth-century tobacco agricultural techniques.



USGS TOPOGRAPHIC, BENEDICT 7.5 " QUADRANGLE, 1:24,000, 1974



CT 1085
Prouty Barn 'C'
Huntingtown
Tara L. Williamson
Northwest
April, 1990