WI-504
Willards
Private and Public

19th and 20th centuries

The village of Willards is the most recently established town in eastern Wicomico County having been developed during the last years of the nineteenth century as an additional stop on the railroad line between Salisbury and Berlin, which was operated by the Baltimore, Chesapeake & Atlantic Railroad after its 1894 purchase of the assets of the Baltimore and Eastern Shore Railroad Company. The town took its name from Captain Willard Thomson, superintendent of Harlan and Hollingsworth, a steamboat builder located in Wilmington, Delaware. Captain Thomson was later appointed to a position in Salisbury in the offices of the Baltimore and Eastern Shore Railroad, and continued on with the B. C. & A. until his death in 1917.

In an article written for *The Wicomico News* on January 19, 1922, a detailed profile of the town was printed. The article stated that:

> *Just twenty five years ago, where the present site of Willards is now located, was field and forest. Look at it today. We have a thriving, prosperous little town located on the B. C. & A. R. R. and slightly touching the stone road leading from Baltimore to Ocean City. We have seven stores in Willards all doing a splendid business, two large crate and basket factories, a very large shirt factory, and one tomato cannery. These are our industrial activities, which furnish employment to more than 300 men, women, and children with a monthly pay roll of more than $4,000.00 a month. Willards enjoys also a big mine prop business, and just now hundreds and hundreds of telephone poles are being brought in and shipped to various points, which is another big activity that employs lots of labor. It would be an easy matter to rent twenty five houses right now to the people who are desirous of locating in an industrial center.*

The construction of the Ocean City Road in 1913-14 did encourage additional development along its path, and construction in Willards continued steadily through the

1920s until the Depression. Not until the past twenty years have new houses appeared along town streets.

Maryland Historical Trust
Maryland Inventory of
Historic Properties Form

Inventory No. W I-504

1. Name of Property (indicate preferred name)

historic Willards

other Willards Survey District

2. Location

street and number not for publication

city, town vicinity

county

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

name Various owners

street and number telephone

city, town Willards state MD zip code 21874

4. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Wicomico County Clerk of Court tax map and parcel Map , P.

city, town Salisbury, Maryland liber folio

5. Primary Location of Additional Data

Contributing Resource in National Register District
Contributing Resource in Local Historic District
Determined Eligible for the National Register/Maryland Register
Determined Ineligible for the National Register/Maryland Register
Recorded by HABS/HAER
Historic Structure Report or Research Report at MHT
Other:

6. Classification

Category	Ownership	Current Function		Resource Count	
				Contributing	Noncontributing
x district	public	agriculture	landscape	50	buildings
building(s)	private	x commerce/trade	recreation/culture		sites
structure	x both	defense	X religion		structures
site		x domestic	social		objects
object		education	transportation		
		funerary	work in progress	50	Total
		government	unknown		
		health care	vacant/not in use	**Number of Contributing Resources previously listed in the Inventory**	
		industry	other:		

7. Description

Condition

	excellent	deteriorated
x	good	ruins
	fair	altered

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

The village of Willards is located along MD 346 (Old Ocean City Road) approximately ten (10) miles east of the City of Salisbury in Wicomico County, Maryland. The main road access is provided by way of Old Ocean City Road from the east and west and the Willards-Whiton Road to the south and the Bethel Road to the north. A modest grid of streets, located between MD 346 and the old railroad right-of-way, define the town limits related to its years of principal growth from the 1890s through the first decades of the twentieth century. During the second half of the twentieth century development has exceeded these limits to include the land located between MD 346 and US Route 50, which essentially borders the south edge of the village.

The historic structures that define the village of Willards largely date to the last decades of the nineteenth century and the first half of the twentieth century. Approximately fifty (50) standing structures line the primary roads and a few side streets of the village. Principal among the historic properties is the Eden Methodist Church (WI-506), one of the oldest dated structures in the village. A particularly distinctive building in the center of the community is the old Willards Ticket Office (WI-505). The construction of the Ocean City Road in 1913-14 provided a new avenue along which a host of new dwellings were erected in Colonial Revival, four-square and bungalow styles.

The majority of the structures in Willards, however, are modest two-story or single-story frame dwellings with side hall/parlor or center hall/single-pile plans. Resting on low brick or concrete block foundations, the houses are generally covered with asbestos shingles, aluminum, or later vinyl siding, and the medium to steeply pitched roofs are covered with asphalt shingles. Most of the houses have been reworked with replacement sash, although some houses retain original two-over-two or single pane sash windows. There are a number of structures, principally houses, that date to the first half of the twentieth century and follow popular four-square and bungalow forms. In many instances the main block is extended to the rear by a modest single story or two-story service wing.

Name Willards Survey District

Continuation Sheet

Number 8 Page 1

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance	Check and justify below		
1600-1699	agriculture	economics	health/medicine	performing arts
1700-1799	archeology	education	industry	philosophy
x 1800-1899	x architecture	engineering	invention	politics/government
x 1900-1999	art	entertainment/ recreation	landscape architecture	religion
2000-	commerce		law	science
	communications	ethnic heritage	literature	social history
	community planning	exploration/ settlement	maritime history	transportation
	conservation		military	other:

Significance dates	Architect
Specific dates	**Builder**

Evaluation for:

National Register _Maryland Register X not evaluated

Prepare a one-paragraph summary statement of significance addressing applicable criteria, followed by a narrative discussion of the history of the resource and its context. (For compliance reports, complete evaluation on a DOE Form – see manual.)

The village of Willards is the most recently established town in eastern Wicomico County having been developed during the last years of the nineteenth century as an additional stop on the railroad line between Salisbury and Berlin, which at the time was operated by the Baltimore and Eastern Shore Railroad, and after 1894, the Baltimore, Chesapeake, & Atlantic Railroad Company. The town took its name from Captain Willard Thomson, superintendent of Harlan and Hollingsworth, a steamboat builder located in Wilmington, Delaware.[1] Captain Thomson was later appointed to a position in Salisbury in the offices of the Baltimore & Eastern Shore Railroad.

In an article written for *The Wicomico News* on January 19, 1922 a detailed profile for the town was printed. The article stated that:

> *Just twenty five years ago, where the present site of Willards is now located, was field and forest. Look at it today. We have a thriving, prosperous little town located on the B. C. & A. R. R. and slightly touching the stone road leading from Baltimore to Ocean City. We have seven stores in Willards all doing a splendid business, two large crate and*

[1] John C. Hayman, *Rails Along the Chesapeake: A History of Railroading on the Delmarva Peninsula, 1827-1978*, Marvadel Publishers, 1979, p. 93.

basket factories, a very large shirt factory, and one tomato cannery. These are our industrial activities, which furnish employment to more that 300 men, women, and children with a monthly pay roll of more than $4,000.00 a month. Willards also enjoys a big mine prop business, and just now hundreds and hundreds of telephone poles are being brought in and shipped to various points, which is another big activity which employs lots of labor. It would be an easy matter to rent twenty five houses right now to the people who are desirous of locating in an industrial center.[2]

[2] *The Wicomico News*, January 19, 1922.

9. Major Bibliographical References

WI-504

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of project area			
Acreage surveyed	approximately 75 acres		
Quadrangle name	Whaleyville, Maryland	Quadrangle scale	1:24,000

Verbal boundary description and justification

The boundary established for this district is drawn to include the historic structures that contribute to the signficance of the town. The boundary lines follow principal streets or right-of-ways inherent in the town grid.

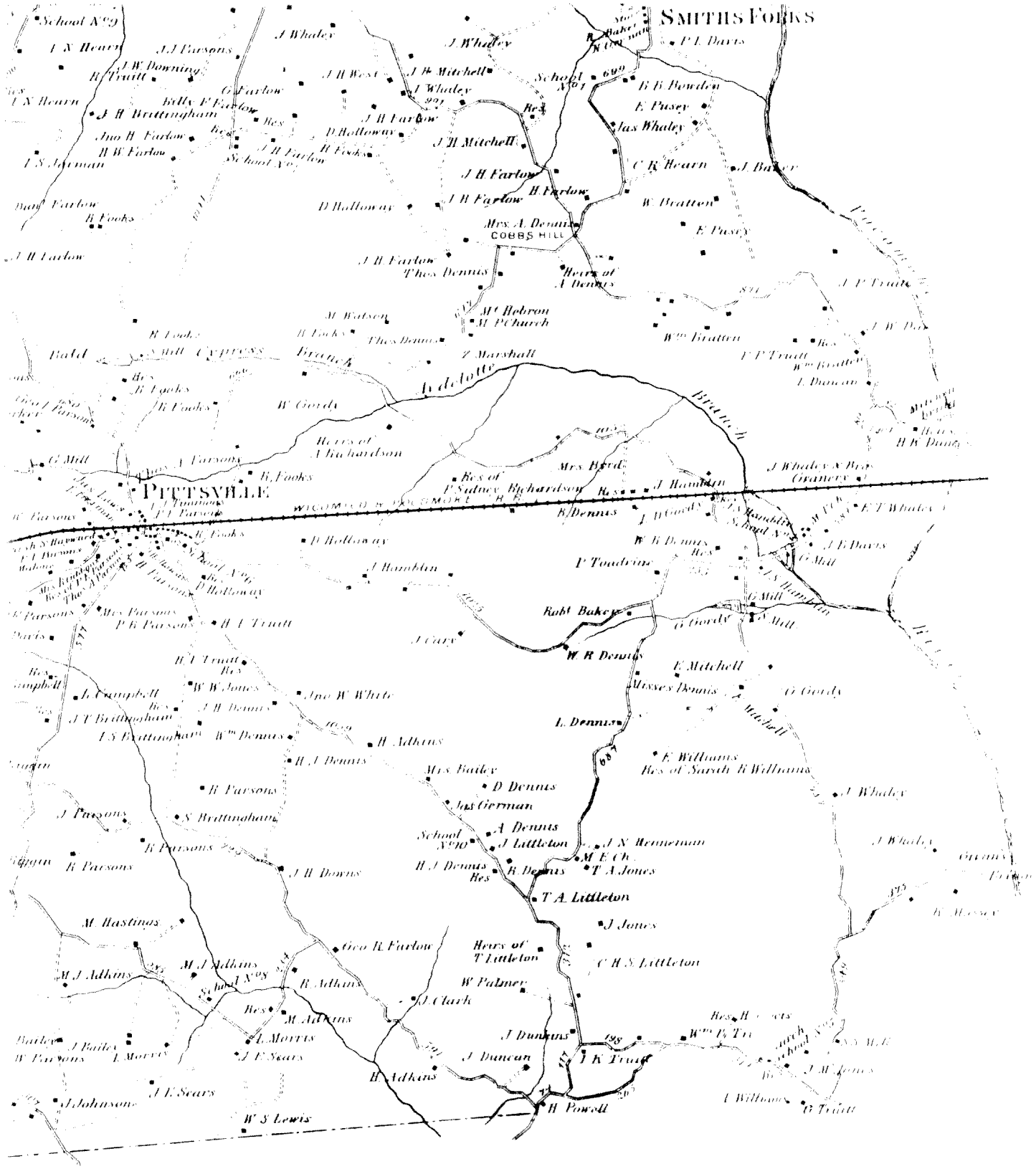
11. Form Prepared by

name/title	Paul B. Touart, Architectural Historian		
organization	Private Consultant		
street & number	P. O. Box 5	date	10/23/00
city or town	Westover, Maryland 21871	phone	410-651-1094

The Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties 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.

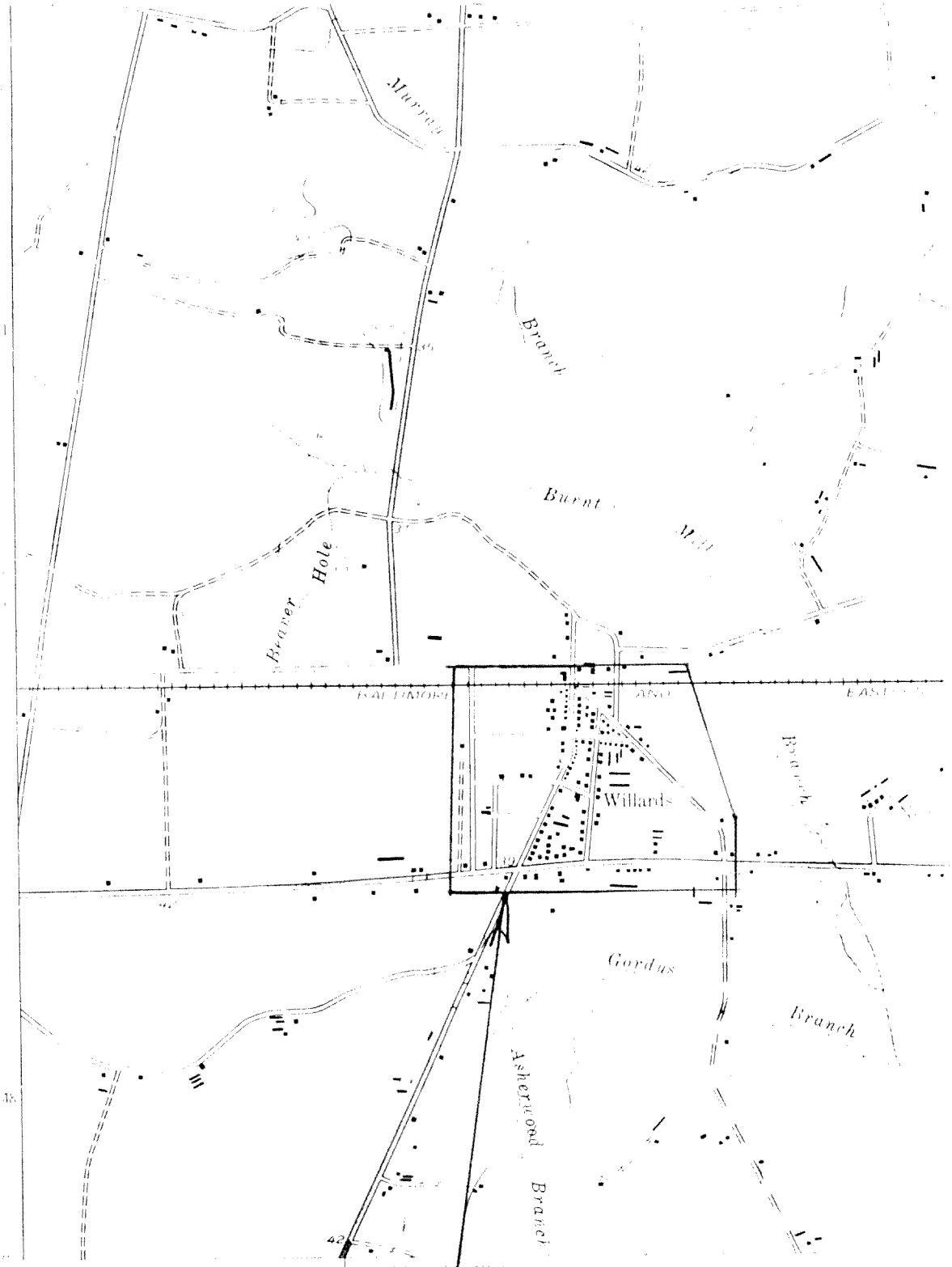
The survey and inventory are being prepared for information and record purposes only and do not constitute any infringement of individual property rights.

return to: Maryland Historical Trust
DHCD/DHCP
100 Community Place
Crownsville, MD 21032
410-514-7600



WI-504
Willards Survey District

Lake, Griffing and Stevenson Atlas
1877



Mapped by the Army Map Service
Published for civil use by the Geological

Contour interval 10 feet

Topography by photogrammetric methods from aerial photographs 1942 and plane table surveys 1942

Polyconic projection. 1927 North American datum
10,000 foot grid based on Maryland coordinate system and Delaware coordinate system
1000 meter Universal Transverse Mercator grid zone 18, shown in blue

WI-504
Willards Survey District

Whaleyville, Maryland Quadrangle
1942