

INDIVIDUAL PROPERTY/DISTRICT
MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST
INTERNAL NR-ELIGIBILITY REVIEW FORM

Property/District Name: Perryman Historic District Survey Number: HA-1722

Project: Perryman Power Plant Agency: DNR/PSC

Site visit by MHT Staff: no yes Name Ron Andrews Date 3/91

Eligibility recommended Eligibility not recommended

Criteria: A B C D Considerations: A B C D E F G None

Justification for decision: (Use continuation sheet if necessary and attach map)

The community of Perryman is eligible for the Maryland Register under Criterion A for its association with the canning industry in Harford County. Through the last 19th century and well into the 20th century, Harford County was the leading canning area in Maryland. About a half a dozen canning communities developed in the southern section of the county along the Chesapeake Bay where the soil was best for growing vegetables. The Mitchell Company, which relocated to Perryman in 1917 and was among the largest canning operations in the County. Perryman, which was established possibly as early as the 18th century, underwent rapid development as a result of the Mitchell move. Mitchell probably selected Perryman because the railroad ran through it and because of Mitchell family associations with the area since at least the mid 19th century.

Of all the canning communities which once existed in Harford County, Perryman is the only one to remain fairly intact, despite significant new construction in recent years. Among the important resources remaining in Perryman are houses built for the Mitchells and their staff, the company office, portions of the canning plant, and a few commercial buildings such as stores and the post office. The period of significance appears to be from 1917, when the Mitchell Company moved to town, to 1941, the start of World War II. Further research may reveal reasons for considering earlier periods as significant.

Documentation on the property/district is presented in: Project file

Prepared by: Ron Andrews

Elizabeth Hannold March 5, 1991
Reviewer, Office of Preservation Services Date

NR program concurrence: yes no not applicable

R. Andrews 8-25-93
Reviewer, NR program Date

Survey No. HA - 1722

MARYLAND COMPREHENSIVE HISTORIC PRESERVATION PLAN DATA - HISTORIC CONTEXT

I. Geographic Region:

- Eastern Shore (all Eastern Shore counties, and Cecil)
- Western Shore (Anne Arundel, Calvert, Charles, Prince George's and St. Mary's)
- Piedmont (Baltimore City, Baltimore, Carroll, Frederick, Harford, Howard, Montgomery)
- Western Maryland (Allegany, Garrett and Washington)

II. Chronological/Developmental Periods:

- Paleo-Indian 10000-7500 B.C.
- Early Archaic 7500-6000 B.C.
- Middle Archaic 6000-4000 B.C.
- Late Archaic 4000-2000 B.C.
- Early Woodland 2000-500 B.C.
- Middle Woodland 500 B.C. - A.D. 900
- Late Woodland/Archaic A.D. 900-1600
- Contact and Settlement A.D. 1570-1750
- Rural Agrarian Intensification A.D. 1680-1815
- Agricultural-Industrial Transition A.D. 1815-1870
- Industrial/Urban Dominance A.D. 1870-1930
- Modern Period A.D. 1930-Present
- Unknown Period (prehistoric historic)

III. Prehistoric Period Themes:

- Subsistence
- Settlement
- Political
- Demographic
- Religion
- Technology
- Environmental Adaption

IV. Historic Period Themes:

- Agriculture
- Architecture, Landscape Architecture, and Community Planning
- Economic (Commercial and Industrial)
- Government/Law
- Military
- Religion
- Social/Educational/Cultural
- Transportation

V. Resource Type:

Category: District

Historic Environment: Rural

Historic Function(s) and Use(s): Residential, Commercial, Industrial

Known Design Source: NA

5 March 1991

to: Beth Hannold
fr: Ron Andrews
su: Perryman
Harford County

Last week I made a field visit to the Perryman area with Chris Weeks. Based upon the historical information Chris provided and what I saw during my visit I have to say that I think Perryman is eligible for National Register listing, under at least criterion A, for historic associations. Perryman's significance comes from association with the canning industry in Harford County.

Through the late nineteenth century and well into the twentieth century, Harford County was the leading canning area in Maryland. Originally, tomatoes and corn were the major items canned; later fruit, to a somewhat lesser degree, became a major item for canning. About a half a dozen canning communities developed in the southern section of the county along the Chesapeake Bay where the soil was best for growing vegetables. The Baker, Mitchell, and Osborne companies were the largest canning operations in Harford County.

In 1917, the U. S. Army condemned a vast area along the bay to establish the present Aberdeen Proving Ground and in the process obliterated the canning communities. The Baker operation moved to Aberdeen and the Mitchell firm to Perryman. Both Aberdeen and Perryman literally border the proving ground. Perryman, which was established possibly as early as sometime in the eighteenth century, underwent a rapid development as result of the Mitchell move. Mitchell probably selected Perryman because the railroad goes through it and because of Mitchell associations with the area since at least the mid-nineteenth century. The railroad was necessary for shipping the canned goods.

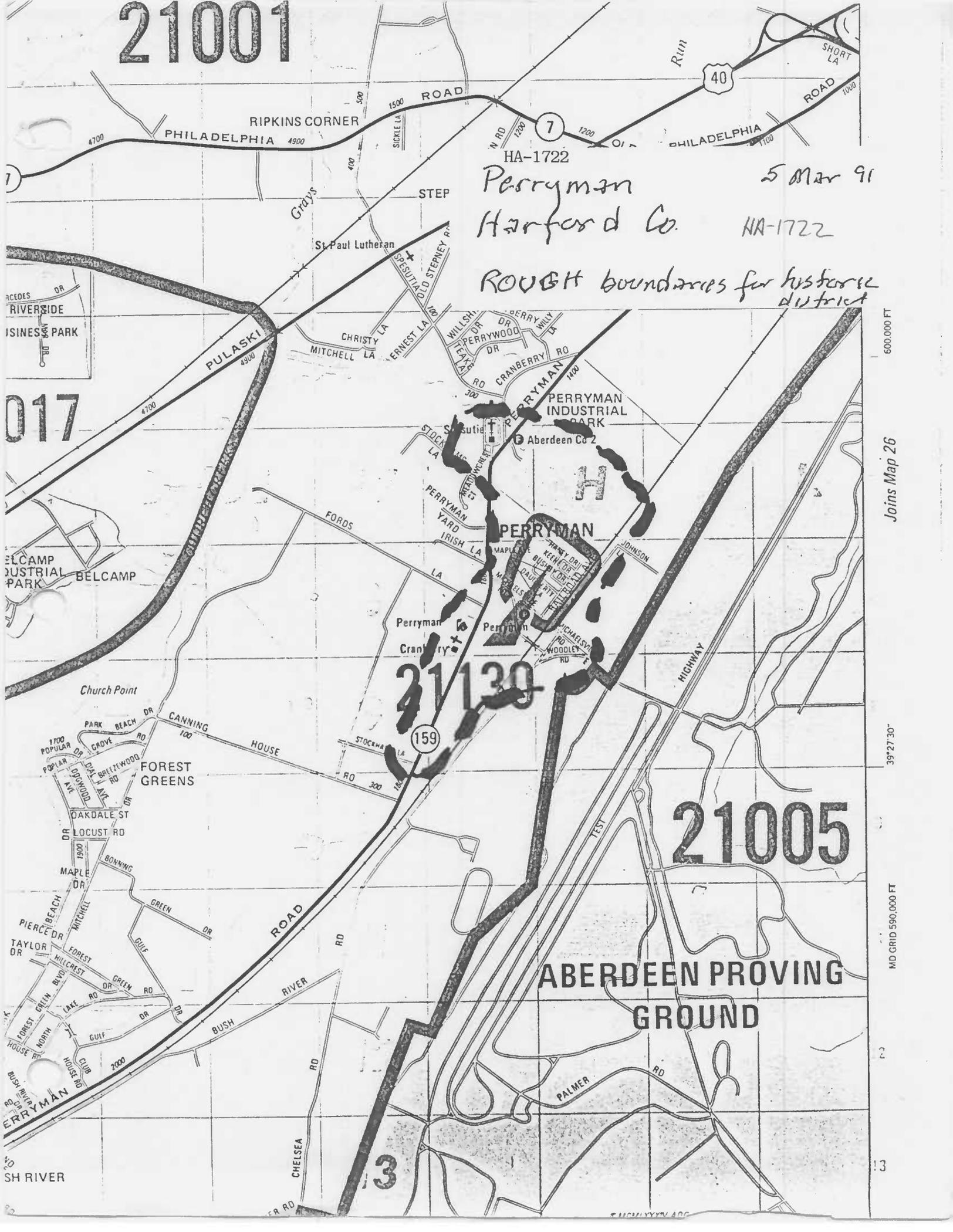
Of all the canning communities which once existed in Harford County, Perryman is the only one to remain fairly intact. As noted above, the proving ground operation destroyed several, possibly about a half dozen, canning communities. Aberdeen has been significantly altered in recent years with new construction. Among the important resources in Perryman are houses built for the Mitchells and their staff, both managers and workers, the company office, portions of the canning plant, and a few commercial buildings such as stores and the post office. Some of these standing resources pre-date the move of the canning operation in construction period but they were integral parts of the town operation after the canning operation was established.

Memo, Andrews to Hannold
Perryman, Harford County
5 March 1991
Page 2

As for a period of significance, 1917 to the start of World War II, 1941, would appear to be appropriate for the association with the canning industry. Research may reveal reasons for considering earlier periods as significant. I am less sure about boundaries. The resources are scattered with several non-contributing resources, generally post WW II resources, mixed in. Many of the non-contributing resources appear to be on the edges of the district. I think that present-day property lines for the historic resources would be a good starting point for establishing district boundaries. Enclosed is a ROUGH set of boundaries based upon my visit last week.

Integrity of historic character was an issued raised during the review. Compromises have been made over time but I do believe that the area meets integrity standards. The community has always had a scattered, open look which is still the general appearance. Perryman never developed in the traditional sense of a town. The railroad, which presently is lined with chain-link fence, is an important historic feature, possibly the reason Mitchell selected the Perryman site. I do not feel that the fencing or the trailer park near the center of the area create enough of a compromise to the setting to eliminate eligibility.

21001



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HA-1722

5 Mar 91

Perryman
Harford Co.

HA-1722

ROUGH boundaries for historic district

RIVERSIDE
BUSINESS PARK

017

BELCAMP INDUSTRIAL PARK

PERRYMAN INDUSTRIAL PARK

PERRYMAN

21130

159

21005

ABERDEEN PROVING GROUND

600,000 FT

Joins Map 26

39°27'30"

MD GRID 590,000 FT

13

3