9302971

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

Property/District Name: Richardsmere Survey District Survey Number: CE-1541

Project: Rehabilitation of Bridge #7058, MD591 over Love Run Agency: SHA

Site visit by MHT Staff: X no ___ yes Name R. Andrews/B. Hannold Date 2/15/94

Eligibility recommended ___ Eligibility not recommended X

Criteria: X A ___B X C ___D Considerations: ___A ___B ___C ___D ___E ___F ___G ___None

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

This small Cecil County community located just off Rte. 1 on the Octoraro Creek was founded in the nineteenth century as Porters Bridge. According to information prepared by SHA, the small village grew up around Stephen Porter's Mill, established in the 18th century, and a bridge crossing the Octoraro Creek. By 1858 the community had about one half dozen houses. In 1877 the village had approximately eight buildings including the gristmill, the mill owner's house, a sawmill, a store, blacksmith's shop, and a number of houses. Of these buildings only three or four are possibly extant today and these have been substantially altered. Also extant are a late 19th century iron truss bridge and an early 20th century concrete bridge and a number of modern houses. The once tightly clustered rural village today has a scattered and incohesive appearance. Richardsmere lacks the integrity necessary to convey a sense of the 19th century mill village and thus does not meet the National Register Criteria.

See attached history and description prepared by Ms. Rita Suffness for more information

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

Prepared by: Rita Suffness, SHA

Elizabeth Hannold — February 24, 1994
Reviewer, Office of Preservation Services — Date

NR program concurrence: X yes ___ no ___ not applicable

R Andrews — 2·25·94
Reviewer, NR program — Date

Survey No. CE-1541

MARYLAND COMPREHENSIVE HISTORIC PRESERVATION PLAN DATA - HISTORIC CONTEXT

I. Geographic Region:

X	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
X	Agricultural-Industrial Transition	A.D. 1815-1870
X	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
X	Architecture, Landscape Architecture, and Community Planning
X	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): Village: residential, commercial, industrial, transportation

Known Design Source: _____

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Attachment 5

The bridge is located in the very small Cecil County settlement of Richardsmere, which was initially settled in the nineteenth century and named Porters Bridge for the structure over Octoraro Creek located north of the core of the settlement. This crossing of the Octoraro Creek was established at a very early date to provide access to Stephen Porters Mill. This mill, the only structure to exist at the time, is shown on Map 6 of the Commissioners Road Book of the Western Portion of Maryland, 1792. By 1858 about one half dozen structures had been built on the opposite side of Octoraro Creek from Porters, (later Magraws) Mill, constituting the small community of Porters Bridge. The covered bridge shown in the 1877 Lake, Griffing and Stephenson Atlas provided access between Magraw's Mill and the house on the west side with the few houses and a sawmill on the other side. This covered bridge was replaced in 1885 by the existing truss structure, Bridge No. 7057 (CE 914).

The Commissioners acted on the need to establish a public road in the May 12, 1794 order of the Cecil County Levy Court, which required the laying out of a Publick Road from Brick Meeting House in East Nottingham to Stephen Porters Mill on the Octoraro Creek. This road was shown on map 7 of the Commissioners Road Book. On a local level, this road provided access between the Cecil County towns northwest of the bridge, such as Conowingo and Rising Sun and Colora east and southeast of Octoraro Creek. More importantly, the crossing at Porters Bridge was part of the road network providing a connection between Philadelphia and Baltimore. It became part of a major north-south route which evolved into US 1.

The State Roads Commission reports working on the road numerous times throughout the years. The 1908-10 edition of the Report of the State Roads Commission recounts that work was undertaken on the section from Oakwood to Porters Bridge, and a 1916 SRC map indicated that sections of the road had been taken over by the Commission by 1916, and, as a result, were improved by macadam and vitrified brick. However, citing the narrow and badly aligned Pratt truss bridge over Octoraro Bridge, the State Roads Commission bypassed a 6,320 foot section of the road, within which Porters Bridge was located, in 1933 (Report of the State Roads Commission for the Years 1931-1934, p. 44).

Just south of Octoraro Creek the original road, later US 1 and now MD 591, spanned Love Run before splitting off to access the two towns of Rising Sun (to the east) and Colora (to the southeast). The need for a new structure over Love Run was noted in the 1873 survey of the road across Porters Bridge, and the surveyor, William Waring, under contract to the County Commissioners, indicated a slight southward realignment of the road, requiring a new structure.

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This survey probably resulted in the construction of the metal and wood bridge which was destroyed by Hurricane Agnes in 1972. At a later date, probably in the first decade of the twentieth century, the road was returned to the more northerly roadbed which existed prior to the 1873 survey, and the current concrete slab bridge is thought to have been constructed at that time. It is possible that the 16 foot width of the metal and wood bridge was the reason that it was bypassed.

Some of the village of Porters Bridge was shown in the rendering of the "Mill and Farm Property of H. S. Magraw, Esquire" in the 1877 Lake, Griffing and Stephenson Atlas of Cecil County. The entire village proper is shown as part of District 8, Mount Pleasant, and is comprised of three buildings owned by Magraw (residence, grist mill and an unidentified structure) on the west side, a "Building Association" structure, a blacksmith shop, saw mill and dwellings owned by J. Fortune, J. Coats, A. Moore, N. Barnett, and J. G. Richards on the east side. Of these structures, only three are possibly extant: the C. W. Lowe residence at 142 Colora Road, which may have been the 1858 store, possibly analogous with the "Building Association" structure of 1877, Bess Walker's residence at 165 Colora Road, which may be the A. Moore House of 1877, and the Blakesley House at 149 Colora Road, an older and much altered portion of which may be a remnant of the 1858 B. Hynerman House, and the 1877 Coats house. The George Lowe residence at 164 Colora Road is in the general location of the sawmill shown both in 1858 and 1877. These resources are identified in the enlarged US GS quad map included as Attachment 4 and shown on Attachment 7.

The community retains the two bridges, but has been infilled by some contemporary structures and no longer retains much visual integrity. In addition, the portion of the bypassed section of US 1, which has been named Porters Bridge Road, is the location of new structures. Having lost so many structures, the community has a much more open appearance than it would have had originally around the crossing of Love Run, the original core of the settlement to the south of Octoraro Creek. Thus it does not approximate the original appearance of what must have been a tightly clustered, though small, rural village. Most damaging to the integrity of the village is the loss of the most important structures, the Mill and House owned by Stephen Porter in the late eighteenth century, and later owned by Mrs. M. A. Harlan and H. S. McGraw, which was the progenitor of the crossing of the Octoraro Creek and thus the settlement. Because of this lack of integrity, the village would not likely meet the criteria for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places.

Richardsmere
(a.k.a. Porters Bridge)
Attachment 4

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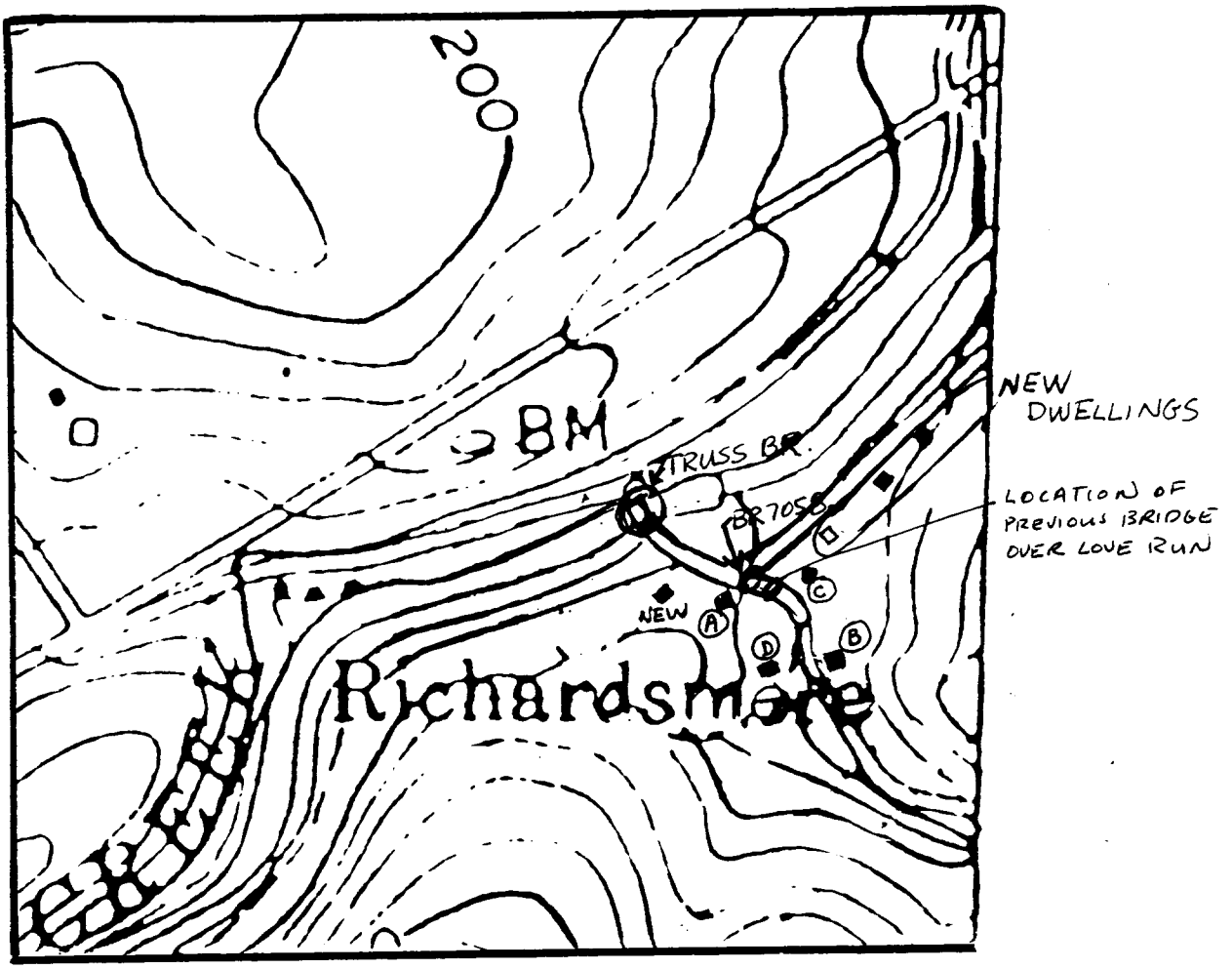

Attachment 2

CONOWINGO

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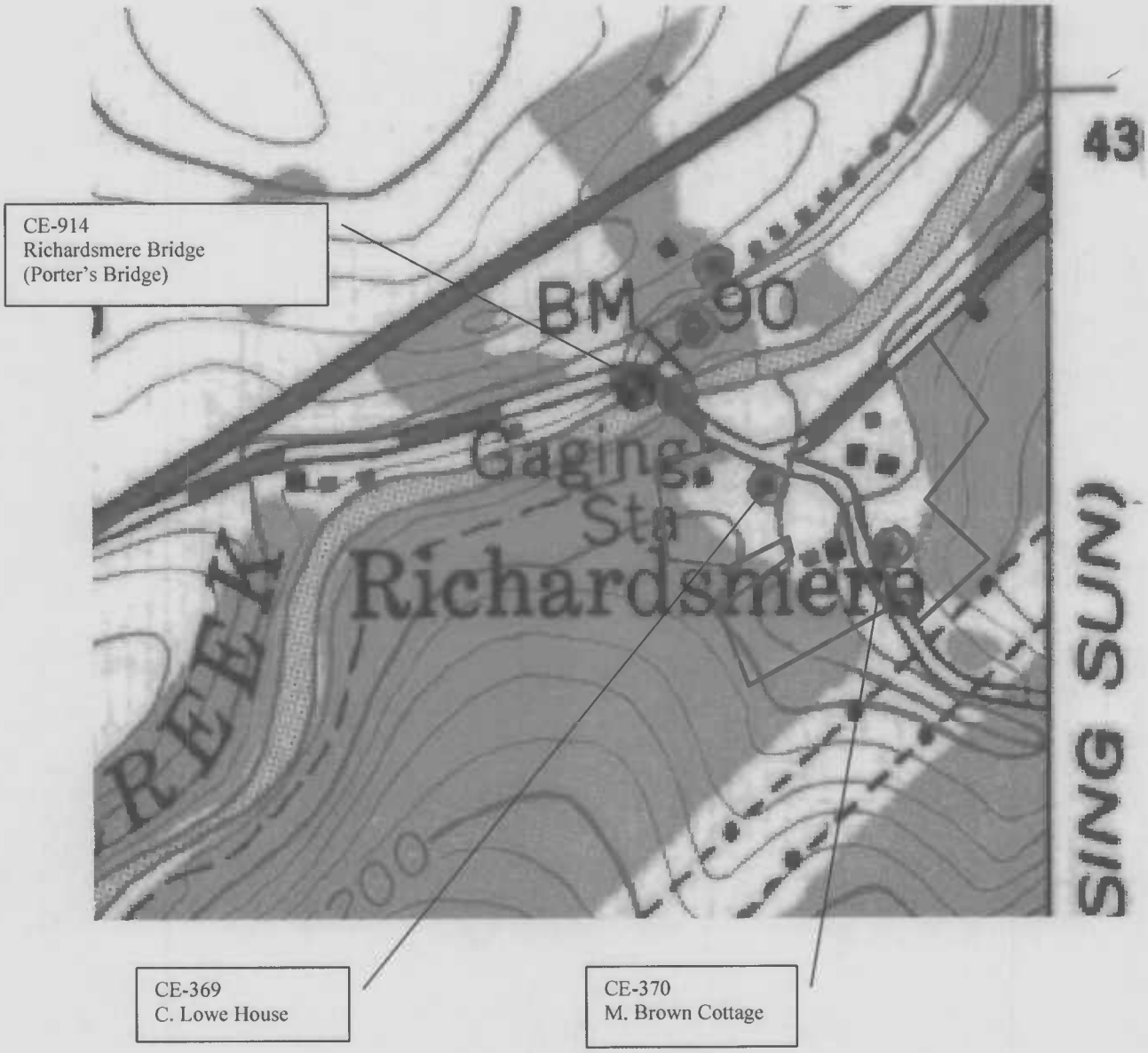
Richardsmere (Porter's Bridge) Survey District
Conowingo Dam Quad
Cecil County



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Richardsmere Survey District
Nineteenth Century Dwellings
134 Colora Rd.

CE-1541
Blakesley House
149 Colora Rd.

CE-1541
George Lowe House
164 Colon

CE-1541
Bess Walker House
165 Colorado Rd.