NPS Form 10-900
(Rev. 8-86)

OMB No. 1024-0018

(Multiple County)

AA: 5
PG: 69-26

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name: Baltimore-Washington Parkway

other names/site number: n/a

AA-5
PG: 69-26

2. Location

street & number: D.C. border near the Anacostia River, northeast to just below Jessup Road (MD 175)

☐ not for publication

☒ vicinity

state: Maryland code: MD county: Prince Georges code: 033 zip code

Anne Arundel code: 003

3. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resources within Property	
		Contributing	Noncontributing
☐ private	☐ building(s)		buildings
☐ public-local	☒ district		sites
☐ public-State	☐ site	ca.125	4 structures
☒ public-Federal	☐ structure		objects
	☐ object	ca.125	4 Total

Name of related multiple property listing: Parkways of the National Capital Region, 1913-1965

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register: 0

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this ☐ nomination ☐ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property ☐ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria. ☒ See continuation sheet.

Signature of certifying official — Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property ☐ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria. ☐ See continuation sheet.

Signature of commenting or other official — Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

☐ entered in the National Register.
☐ See continuation sheet.

☐ determined eligible for the National Register. ☐ See continuation sheet.

☐ determined not eligible for the National Register.

☐ removed from the National Register.

☐ other, (explain:)

Signature of the Keeper — Date of Action

4. STATE/FEDERAL AGENCY CERTIFICATION

In my opinion, the property meets the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting or other official — Date 1/19/91

State Historic Preservation Officer
State or Federal agency and bureau

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)	Current Function (enter categories from instructions)
TRANSPORTATION/vehicle-road related	TRANSPORTATION/vehicle-road related
" /parkway	" /parkway

7. Description

Architectural Classification (enter categories from instructions)	Materials (enter categories from instructions)
OTHER/parkways	foundation
" /NPS landscape architecture	walls
	roof
	other steel, asphalt/concrete, stone native vegetation

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

SUMMARY DESCRIPTION

The federal portion of the Baltimore-Washington Parkway is coterminus with its historic right-of-way boundaries: extending northeast from the eastern border of the District of Columbia near the Anacostia River, through Prince Georges County and Anne Arundel County, Maryland, encompassing 1,353 acres. The nineteen-mile federally owned and maintained section of the parkway terminates just below Jessup Road (MD 175) at the Baltimore City line. The irregular right-of-way is 400 to 800 feet wide, and contains the dual-lane roadway, a variable-width median of 15 to 200 feet, a flanking buffer of natural forest and cultivated native vegetation, scores of culverts, and twenty-two bridges. The terrain is composed of generally forested, gentle hills with modest vistas but no outstanding scenic features. Although promoted since the early twentieth century, construction was not initiated by the federal Bureau of Public Roads until 1942, with most development occurring from 1950-54. Its design as a defense highway and alternative commuter route thus blends foundling parkway characteristics of landscape architecture and materials with post-war economies, so that stylistically it represents the end of a fifty-year continuum of parkway construction. The historic district includes inestimable contributing elements of landscape architecture and approximately 125 contributing structures, including eighteen bridges and numerous culverts with decorated headwalls.

DEVELOPMENT AND HISTORY

One of the earliest proposals for treatment of the land through which the Baltimore-Washington Parkway is routed came from Charles Ellicott, who would continue to influence regional development for decades to come. In American Forestry magazine (1910), he recommends the

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8. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the ificance of this property in relation to other p rties:

☐ nationally ☒ statewide ☒ locally

Applicable National Register Criteria ☒ A ☐ B ☒ C ☐ D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions) ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ E ☐ F ☒ G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)	Period of Significance	Significant Dates
TRANSPORTATION	1942--54	1942, 1950
LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE		1954

Cultural Affiliation

n/a

Significant Person

Architect/Builder

National Park Service

Federal Bureau of Roads

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

The Baltimore-Washington Parkway achieves state and local significance in the areas of transportation and landscape architecture under criteria A and C: It is associated with urban development of the national capital as a federal center, it exemplifies the last period of construction for this type of road, and it is the only fully developed parkway of its kind in Maryland. It achieves extraordinary significance under criteria G as a contributing element to the national capital park and parkway system developed during the first half of the twentieth century, although the parkway itself was constructed largely between 1950-54 and is less than fifty years old. Although conceived and promoted from the 1920s, construction of the Baltimore-Washington Parkway was not initiated until 1942. Its enabling legislation justifies it: as a major scenic artery within the park and parkway system of the nation's capital; as a formal entrance to the city of Washington, D.C.; as a defense/military route among suburban federal installations and the city; and as a contributing element to the commercial and residential development of the Baltimore-Washington corridor. The parkway maintains original integrity of setting, design and associations characteristic of the earliest parkways designed for pleasure motoring--the preservation of natural topography and vegetation for scenic purposes coupled with "high-speed" elements of modern freeway design.

9. Major Bibliographical References

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See: Major Bibliographic References of the multiple property nomination "Parkways of the National Capital Region, 1913–1965."

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Previous documentation on file (NPS):
- [ ] preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- [ ] previously listed in the National Register
- [xx] previously determined eligible by the National Register
- [ ] designated a National Historic Landmark
- [ ] recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- [ ] recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

Primary location of additional data:
- [ ] State historic preservation office
- [ ] Other State agency
- [x] Federal agency
- [ ] Local government
- [ ] University
- [x] Other

Specify repository: National Capital Planning Commission

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property 1,353

UTM References

	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
A	18	331700	4309260	B	18	331140	4309140
C	18	331880	4309580	D	18	332590	4309650

[ ] See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

The boundary of the nominated district is delineated by an elongated polygon whose vertices are marked by the UTM coordinate points A through MM.

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Boundary Justification

The boundary is coterminus with the original right-of-way determined by the federal Bureau of Public Roads and that which is maintained by the National Park Service. It encompasses numerous manmade features--culverts, bridges, and contributing landscape-architectural elements--in addition to the natural topographic features.

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11. Form Prepared By

name/title Sara Amy Leach - Historian
organization National Park Service date 15 September, 1990
street & number P.O. Box 37127 telephone 202-343-9607
city or town Washington, DC 20013-7127 state _____ zip code _____

creation of a National Capital Forest "beginning at the bounding line of the District of Columbia at Bladensburg and extending northeast nearly twenty miles until it crosses the Patuxent River. . . ," and extending east toward Annapolis for a total of about 100,000 acres. This vast young forest of "hardwood and pine," should be the object of applied forestry and rehabilitation, as it contained "a variety of species difficult to find in any other area of equal size."[1]

More than a decade later, he expanded and refined the vision to include control of the natural topography with reforestation and reclamation, provisions for an arboretum, and "plans for boulevards or parkways passing thru (sic) or along the sides of the proposed reservation, connecting Washington, Baltimore and Annapolis, also other roads, bridle paths and trails." This system would consist of portions of existing roads, and link up with park arrangements in Baltimore and Washington.[2]

The region through which the parkway would eventually be constructed was "gently rolling in character, the highest elevation but a little over 300 feet above sea level," and containing numerous streams and a good deal of marshy land.[3]

In the 1920s, the first substantial discussion of a "boulevard" or parkway between Baltimore and Washington addressed three much-publicized needs: to alleviate the traffic congestion on U.S. Route 1/Baltimore-Washington Boulevard, "a byword for unsightly signs and constructions"; construction of "a protected parkway figuring as the local link of the great eastern North-South highway through the two cities"; and the establishment of a ceremonial approach into Washington.[4] (In the next decade, additional criteria would arise, such as establishing access to suburban-based federal facilities, and creating a defense/military thoroughfare.) Many interested parties voiced an opinion: the Baltimore-based Manufacturer's Record and local newspapers, the American Society of Landscape Architects, and government agencies--D.C.'s Office of Public Buildings and Public Parks (OPB&PP, which merged with the National Park Service in 1933), the Commission on Fine Arts, and the Maryland State Roads Commission.

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[1] William M. Ellicott, "A National Forest," and F.W. Besley, "A Report on the Washington Forest," reprint from American Forestry (June 1910), p. 5.

[2] Stephen Child and William Ellicott, "Report of the American Society of Landscape Architects on National Forest and Regional Plan, Washington, D.C." (February 1921) RG 66, Box 27.

[3] Ibid Child and Ellicott.

[4] "Report to the Baltimore Chapter A.I.A. by its Committee on National Capital Regional Plan (27 May, 1936).

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Several variations on the parkway theme were proposed.[5] OPB&PP Director Clarence O. Sherrill envisioned a parkway spanning 100 to 1,000 feet for light, high-speed traffic, with no rail or auto crossings:

> It would seem very desirable to me to work out, in connection with the extension of the National Capital Park system, a real park boulevard connecting Washington and Baltimore entirely independent of the present turnpike, . . .to have such boulevard confined to passenger traffic and of such width as to provide ample tree space; to construct it preferably with two roadways, having parking in the middle and also on either side, . . .follow the contours of the land so far as possible to acquire reasonable grades. . . There should be utilized for the route the forested valleys and branches of the streams between Washington and Baltimore, . . .the Anacostia River, the Patuxent, the Little Patuxent, the Middle Patuxent and the tributaries of the Patapsco.[6]

Similarly, landscape architect T.C. Jeffers proscribed a "high-speed" road within a right-of-way of 300 to 1,700 feet wide as an "essential route for rapid and uninterrupted travel" among federal offices and parks.[7]

The Washington Times, too, supported the "proposed parkway boulevard between Washington and Baltimore [that] would not only meet the increasing needs of traffic, but would provide a magnificent entrance to the National Capital."[8] The military significance of such a road, linking Forts Myer and Howard, Camp Meade and the Naval Academy in Annapolis, also surfaced as an enticement "to move the administration to help finance it as a war insurance measure." This argument failed here, but ultimately became the impetus for successful construction of Suitland Parkway during World War II.[9]

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[5] Nolen to Demaray (4 March, 1948) RG 328. The name was always intended to be Baltimore-Washington, because of the many visitors coming to the capital, and it was felt "that name would serve to interest Maryland in completing its part of the route beyond Fort Meade."

[6] "Public Not Yet Awake to Full Needs of Highway Expansion," Manufacturer's Record (26 November, 1925); C.O. Sherrill to Victor H. Power (23 October, 1925). RG 328.

[7] T.C. Jeffers, "Baltimore Parkway: Its Purpose and Relation to U.S. Department of Agriculture Property in Vicinity o Beltsville" (4 June, 1935).

[8] Editorial, "For Washington-Baltimore Parkway Boulevard, Washington Wants It," Washington Times (17 October, 1925).

[9] Victor Power to C.O. Sherrill (21 October, 1925); Wm. M. Ellicott to Frederick A. Delano (21 October, 1925). RG 328.

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None of these road schemes would have an administrative means for completion, however, until 1926 when the National Capital Park and Planning Commission was created (to replace its 2-year-old predecessor, the National Capital Park Commission). The NCP&PC's all-important mission was to "provide for the comprehensive, systematic, and continuous development of park, parkway, and playground systems of the National Capital."[10] Chaired by Frederic Delano, president of the American Planning and Civic Association (and FDR's uncle), the NCP&PC would become a major determiner of urban aesthetics during expansion of the Washington metropolitan area.

Jay Downer, an engineer, and Gilmore D. Clarke, a landscape architect, were specialists in urban planning and served as consultants for the development of the Baltimore-Washington Parkway. In New York, Downer had been chief engineer with the Bronx River Parkway Commission and the Westchester County Park Commission, which earned him honorary membership in the American Society of Landscape Architects.

Clarke was a consulting landscape architect on the Mount Vernon Memorial Highway and its model, the Westchester parkway system, until 1935. He then established a practice in New York with Michael Rapuano, and concurrently served as dean of Cornell University's College of Architecture for many years. Clarke served on Washington's Commission of Fine Arts from 1932-50, for thirteen years as chairman.

Thomas C. Jeffers, Sr., (1889-1952) served as principal landscape architect for most of the Washington parkway system. He also worked in the Olmsted Brothers' Massachusetts office for six years prior to joining the OPB&PP in 1923, then went with the NCP&PC when it was created in 1926. Jeffers's twenty-six-year career included the design of the George Washington Memorial, Suitland, and Rock Creek and Potomac parkways, as well as Anacostia Park, and he was a consultant to the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission.[11]

NCP&PC planner Charles Eliot, II, was descended from a family of landscape architects. His father worked with the Olmsted Brothers and is credited with founding the first metropolitan system of parks in Boston.[12] Two others who contributed to development of the Baltimore-Washington

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[10] Cited in Frederick Gutheim, Worthy of the Nation (National Capital Planning Commission, 1977), p. 169.

[11] L.Z., "Thomas C. Jeffers Sr., A Biographical Minute," Landscape Architecture, vol. 42, no. 4 (July 1952), p. 173.

[12] Newton, Design on the Land, p. 389.

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Parkway in later years were Harry T. Thompson, associate superintendent of the National Capital Parks, and Domenico Aunese, NPS landscape architect from 1946-51. William Housmann was architect of the bridges, which were designed during the war years. Collectively and continuously, these men directed the planning, design, and implementation of Washington's park and parkway system.

> The 1926 act vested powers in the National Capital Park and Planning Commission to prepare a comprehensive plan, but parkways to and through the city remained the dominant themes in the agency's work program.[13]

In 1928, architect and NCP&PC member Milton Medary espoused the landscaped-parkway ideal as an entry to the city: "He spoke highly of the approach to Washington from Baltimore by way of the Anacostia valley" route, among others.[14] This northerly approach was a particular eyesore, according to an AIA assessment, which noted that "no other great Capital in the world is approached through such unattractive surroundings as those encircling Washington on the Maryland side."[15] About the same time, Eliot urged parkway connections between Oxen Run and the Eastern Branch of the Anacostia River, and encouraged a riverside drive on the Virginia shore similar to that of the Potomac Palisades Parkway--as well as the encircling Fort Drive circuit that would never materialize. Addressing the Anacostia Park development, his 1927 report to the NCP&PC confirms that discussion of a regional connection had been ongoing for many years:

> Between Washington and Baltimore, a number of parkway routes have variously been suggested. The valley of the Eastern Branch offers the opportunity to combine a parkway route with provision of park and play space for the rapidly growing communities along the present Baltimore Boulevard. A parkway from Baltimore and Camp Meade through the valley of Indian Creek and the Eastern Branch might properly enter the Anacostia River Park at the District Line and lead the visitor to the Nation's Capital by the Training School and Arboretum.[16]

After years of debate over location, construction of the new National Arboretum commenced in 1927 between Mount Hamilton, Hickey Hill, and Anacostia Park. Both Anacostia Park and the

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[13] Ibid., p. 170-71.

[14] Ibid., p. 196.

[15] "Report to Baltimore Chapter A.I.A. by its Committee on National Capital Regional Plan" (27 May, 1936), p. 1.

[16] Charles W. Eliot II, "Preliminary Report: Park System for the National Capital Washington Region" (February 1927), p. 13.

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Arboretum represent links in the park system dependent upon parkways for access. (In fact, in 1945 it was proposed that Arboretum staff take responsibility for planting and maintenance of the parkway to provide "a very considerable extension of its present territory"; a concept all parties agreed upon, but that apparently was never implemented.[17]) Anacostia Park also contains the related Kenilworth Aquatic Gardens, and was slated to contain a connector parkway heading south along the Potomac River. This development along the D.C.-Maryland line spurred officials from both jurisdictions to seek a cooperative regional agreement.

In Maryland, where complementary planning and legislation was required if the definition of regional byways was to be fulfilled, William M. Ellicott early on urged the undertaking of a very large park system with a parkway component. He wrote:

> I am strongly urging cooperative planning and park and suburban development between Baltimore and Washington and the linking up of drives which may be made to follow stream valleys and forest lands[:] Roads along various branches of the Patuxent, the Patapsco, and the Falls of the Potomac. . . .[18]

By June 1928, according to a newspaper account, the Maryland State Roads Commission had re-evaluated its appraisal of only five years earlier--that an additional Baltimore-to-Washington road was unnecessary--and predicted that within a decade the proposed "boulevard" would be in place; constructed by the state and on which commercial traffic was to be banned.[19] This assessment was based on the fact that the state could not singlehandedly afford to build a new road through Prince Georges and Anne Arundel counties, so after the federal portion was determined, "the State Highway Department of Maryland at a subsequent date picked up the conception of a parkway on to Baltimore. . .more or less hitching their wagon to a star."[20]

The Maryland-National Capital Park & Planning Commission (MNCP&PC) was created in 1927 to represent portions of Montgomery and Prince Georges counties and complement the NCP&PC. Endowed with the power to acquire land and levy taxes, the commission's tasks were greatly influenced by the author of its comprehensive plan, planner and engineer Irving R. Root. Later, in 1943, legislation was passed that gave the state the power to acquire or condemn needed land "for

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[17] U.S. Grant to Frederic A. Delano, "Baltimore Parkway, Extension of Arboretum" (20 March, 1945).

[18] Wm. Ellicott to Mr. Coldren (June 13, 1928) RG 328.

[19] "New Washington Road Predicted," Baltimore Sun (June 1928). RG 328.

[20] Hearings before the Committee on Public Works on H.R. 5990, No. 81-10 (1-2 February, 1950), p. 16.

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the construction of a parkway, highway, motorway or freeway between the City of Washington, D.C., and the City of Baltimore. . . ."[21]

The NCP&PC advocated the parkway project in its annual reports from 1926 to 1929, but the vehicle for the federally owned portion--as far north as Camp Meade--came in 1930 with the Capper-Cramton Act (H.R. 26). Ulysses S. Grant, III, head of the NCP&PC, recognized the potential of the bill to finance a model parkway that would increase the region's tax base, while recognizing the project as a cooperative effort between federal and state authorities:

> There seems to be great opportunity for a parkway similar to the Bronx Parkway in Westchester County, New York, between Washington and Baltimore, following up the Anacostia River and its tributaries. Such a parkway would be a source of delight to a great many people and I believe of economic benefit to the country it would cross. . . . The federal government is ready to do a part in such a project in the immediate vicinity of the National Capital, but evidently Baltimore and Maryland will have to do the rest.[22]

Conrad Wirth, of the NPS and the NCP&PC, contacted the Baltimore Board of Park Commissioners for this reason, "regarding the possibility of drawing up a complete plan showing the possibilities of such a [road, though conceding that] the Washington-Baltimore Parkway is still some distance away."[23]

The approximate route of the parkway was mapped out as early as 1927. It extends out from a well-developed Anacostia River and Bladensburg-area park, and culminates in a proposed Patuxent River valley park; along the way, the linear parkway clings to the east flank of the B&O Railway right-of-way, traversing about ten miles of existing federal and District property owners.[24]

One option readily defeated as impractical was to widen the existing Washington-Baltimore Boulevard, rather than build the parkway anew. Widening and rebuilding had already occurred

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[21] Laws of Maryland 1943, Chapter 644, filed 29 September, 1944.

[22] U.S. Grant, III, to William Ellicott (21 June, 1930).

[23] Conrad Wirth to William Morris (11 December, 1930) RG 328.

[24] NCP&PC and Charles Eliot, "Park System for National Capital Washington Region, Project C, Baltimore Camp Meade Parkway (February 1927). RG 66.

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once during the 1930s, and many felt it would be the more expensive choice because of the high price of abutting land that was already littered with roadside development: an estimated $1,000 per developed acre compared to $20 per acre for new land.[25] Another reason for creating two distinct roads was the segregation of commercial and non-commercial traffic, for it was the "large amount of passenger car traffic which now congests this route, which when mixed with the commercial traffic, makes that route so hazardous."[26] For many years Route 1 was blamed for having "one of the highest accident and fatality rates of any comparable highways in this country."[27]

The proposal for a Baltimore-Annapolis-Washington wilderness area was revived in the early 1930s when the U.S. Forest Service received an emergency fund of $20 million to purchase lands for a national forest. It also was thought of as a convenient vehicle with which to expediate parkway construction, by using Civilian Conservation Corps labor and avoiding a special appropriation.[28] The forest scheme was also advocated as a form of disguising the parkway's taking lines then being studied, so as to avoid purposeful inflation of land prices in the selected right of way.[29] By this time, however, there had been substantial publicity about the parkway and its route between the two cities, and this could not have been construed as a serious ruse.

Despite the years' discussion of the parkway, the Public Roads Administration cited the first real efforts toward construction as a MNCP&PC report of 1937. In "Regional Planning, Baltimore-Washington-Annapolis Area," traffic-survey statistics show that nearly 80 percent of travelers had locations in Maryland, Virgina or Washington, as their origin or destination. The parkway, as proposed in the report, commenced at the D.C. boundary and Anacostia Creek, running north through the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Beltsville facility, west of Fort Meade, and on to Baltimore; new rights-of-way were recommended, as was immediate construction financed with federal assistance--perhaps through the Federal Aid Highway Act. The next year, a reconnaissance survey of the proposed area was undertaken by the Bureau of Public Roads, which determined three potential routes for the parkway.[30]

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[25] Fisher to Ellicott.

[26] John Nolen Jr. to Samuel Lauver (31 May, 1944).

[27] Secretary of the Interior to George E. Dondero (14 April, 1948).

[28] Ward Shepard, "Proposed National Forest between Washington and Baltimore" (28 May, 1933).

[29] D.K. Este Fisher Jr. to William Ellicott (28 February 1935).

[30] H.J. Spelman, "Baltimore Parkway" (28 August, 1944), p. 2. RG 328.

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Later on, informal agreement was reached that the Bureau of Public Roads would develop surveys between Washington and the northern limits of Fort Meade, and that the Maryland Roads Commission would develop surveys between that point and Baltimore. . . . From Jessups Road to Baltimore the Maryland State Roads Commission had charge of the construction of a modern freeway as part of their regular Federal-aid program.[31]

As late as the 1940s, when authorities continued to ponder the route question, interested parties including the Prince Georges County Citizens Association, Prince Georges County Federation of Certified Associations, and the MNCP&PC endorsed this path as one that would best serve the county. The MNCP&PC passed a resolution reasserting that the parkway "vitally affects the future planning of this commission for the metropolitan area and is of particular benefit and great interest to the citizens of Prince Georges County."[32]

The extent of the parkway envisioned in the 1940s was more extensive than that ultimately constructed, due in large part to the failure of other park and parkway elements such as the Fort Drive, an extension of Constitution Avenue, and a southerly Maryland branch of the George Washington Memorial Parkway.

Its planning continued during the early 40s, with construction slated for the five-year period beginning at war's end. All surveys, plans, and supervision of construction were conducted by the Bureau of Public Roads (now Federal Highway Administration); landscape and architectural features were designed by NPS staff; general plans were approved by the NCP&PC, and structures were approved by the National Fine Arts Commission, at the time chaired by Gilmore Clarke. Local road changes were approved by the Maryland State Roads Commission and MNCP&PC.[33]

The war was one justification "for an express highway joining the National Capital with a series of federal installations to the northeast, culminating at Fort Meade. . . . The Commission selected a route going largely through grounds already owned by the federal government, so as to reduce the cost of the right-of-way to a minimum."[34] The designation of 'expressway' is aprapo in this context,

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[31] Department of Commerce, Bureau of Public Roads, "Final Construction Report, Vol. 2: Roadway, Baltimore-Washington Parkway" (n.d. 1955), p. 6. Located FHWA final construction report files, Arlington, Va.

[32] MNCP&PC, "Resolution" (6 April, 1944), RG 328.

[33] Department of Commerce, "Final Construction Report," vol. 2, p. 12.

[34] U.S. Grant to George Dondero (3 February, 1950)

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for historically one important parkway characteristic is that its composition be of new and undeveloped land that is as remote as possible--for scenic and economic reasons. As the parkway exists today, it is a combination of expressway and parkway qualities.

Among the facilities and the employees that the parkway intentionally served were the Agricultural Research Center (2,500 workers) and Fort Meade (10,000 residents); Schrom Airport (near Greenbelt) and Baltimore Friendship Airport; the Patuxent Wildlife Refuge (50 persons), the D.C. Home for Feeble-minded Children and, in the District, the National Training School for Boys (900 persons), and the new site of the National Arboretum. Most important in the post-war context of organized housing and park land, is Greenbelt (more than 7,000 persons).

The latter was built as a model planned garden community, one of a trio of "greenbelt" residential areas developed by the Resettlement Administration as a model solution to the nation's critical housing shortage. The Washington region was selected as the first site because there were no existing housing vacancies and rental costs were 30 percent higher than comparable cities. The location was determined not only for an absence of significant development, but because the adjacent landowner, the Agriculture Department, agreed to purchase the property for its experimental farm if the housing project failed. Construction of the crescent-shaped Greenbelt commenced in 1936, and the first tenants moved in a year later.[35]

The novelty of Greenbelt was--and remains--its network of neighborhood units, interior parks and walkways, and segregated vehicular and pedestian circulation. In addition to a noteworthy layout, it features an 1,100-acre park directly accessed from the parkway. Although the Greenbelt Park operated by the NPS-NCR today is not as fully developed as designers of the '40s had planned, it contains many of the elements. According to a proposed plan, the parkway was to bisect the park with visitor services provided on both flanks, including an eighteen-hole golf course; organized and tourist camp areas; and recreation, picnic, and hiking areas.[36] Today the park is largely undeveloped, offering tent camping, picnic sites, and hiking trails; it carries on the integrated park, parkway, and suburban development idealized by urban planners at the time. Greenbelt's distinctive feature was its parkland buffer, "a safeguard against haphazard development," that could be used for

[35] Mary Lou Williamson, ed., Greenbelt: History of a New Town, 1937-1987 (Norfolk/Virginia Beach: Donning Co., 1987), p. 25.

[36] T.C. Jeffers, "Study of Proposed Park and Recreation Development, Greenbelt Area" (August 1949). RG 79.

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gardening, recreation, or future development.[37]

When Greenbelt was conceived, there was little significant private development along the Washington-Baltimore corridor. A 1940 real estate atlas of Prince Georges County shows the parkway occupying the least-developed stretch of land between the District (east) and Anne Arundel (west) lines, and between the Pennsylvania Railway (south) and Route 1 (north). Residential subdivisions in the Riverdale area were thick along the east flank of Route 1, with the town of Cheverly beginning to expand outward; Greenbelt remained the lone subdivision at the north end of the parkway route through the county.[38]

That housing subdivisions the likes of Riverdale, Bladensburg, and Greenbelt were beginning to dominate the countryside on Washington's outskirts, is evidence of the new role of the car and regional road systems, affording the "greater possibility of decentralized habitation and recreation."[39] More than twenty years later, the same conclusion was drawn in a report on the Baltimore-Washington region:

> The most significant finding. . .is that transportation is not the dominant or controlling factor in shaping our cities. With the mobility provided by the automobile, the urban dweller has, for all practical purposes, been freed of distance limitations in his choice of a place to live.[40]

The Baltimore-Washington Parkway certainly had a positive impact on economic development in Prince Georges County--and in particular along this northeast corridor--although it is impossible to determine how much of it is in addition to that which would have occurred naturally. One report predicted that "the fantastic growth in the Baltimore-Washington area since the end of World War II is but a sample of things to come."[41]

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[37] Williamson, p. 31.

[38] Plat Book of Prince George's County, Maryland, vol. 1 (Philadelphia: Franklin Survey Co., 1940).

[39] Nolen and Hubbard, Parkways and Land Values, Harvard City Planning Studies XI (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1937), introduction.

[40] National Capital, and Baltimore Regional Planning Councils, "Baltimore-Washington Interregional Study" (late 1960s?), p. 1.

[41] National Capital, and Baltimore Regional Planning Councils, "Baltimore-Washington Interregional Study" (no date, late 1960s?), p. 1. RG 328.

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Historically, the economic impact of a parkway on a region is founded on a tax-base expansion that might otherwise not exist, balanced against federal acquisition of land that diminishes the amount of taxable property. The built-in advantage to the Baltimore-Washington Parkway centered on existing government ownership of about one-third of the land over which it was routed. In terms of regional economics, since there was no optional and taxable use for the abutting property, the parkway could only represent an asset to the area.

The more typical circumstances of the Westchester (NY) parkway system reveal certain absolute new growth. Overall county growth rose 585 percent between 1910-32, while growth in the "affected area" of the parkway rose 1,278 percent during the same period. This gain "was the result of the interaction of the parkway or any other specific element," including the character and growth of the population.[42] Evidence on behalf of the Bronx River system shows "the parkway at least participated in creating gains and that the measure of its participation was greater in the narrower strip adjacent to it."[43]

Private industry, federal agencies, residential subdivisions, and transportation entities that subsequently situated near the parkway recognized that "the zones along the corridor of transportation routes leading to Baltimore have the highest [potential-growth] values in the county."[44] Since the 1950s, Prince Georges County and Doctor's Hospitals have been built nearby, as was Baltimore-Washington International Airport. During the late 1940s, a review of sites for an airport to serve the increasing number of personal and business aircraft revealed not only that fast access to the capital was a priority, but the future need for airports "must be met largely outside the more densely developed suburban sections in Montgomery and Prince Georges counties in Maryland and in Fairfax, Virginia."[45] Today, some of the county's largest clusters of office and research-and-development buildings--in Beltsville, Greenbelt, Laurel--rely on the parkway for arterial access.[46]

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[42] Nolen and Hubbard, p. 93-94.

[43] Nolen and Hubbard, p. 93.

[44] Franz Vidor and Richard Kraft, "Preliminary Draft of the Baltimore-Washington Interregional Study Report" (30 June, 1960), p. 13. RG 328.

[45] NCP&PC Coordinating Committee, "A Preliminary Study of Possible Sites for One or More Airports for Personal Aircraft in the District of Columbia" (January 1948).

[46] Prince Georges County Economic Develpment Corporation, "Prince George's County, Maryland: Survey of Office and R&D Buildings" (December 1987).

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Similarly, the latest federal organizations to locate directly adjacent to the parkway are the National Security Agency and NASA's Goddard Space Flight Center.

In 1969 the parkway was briefly designated as a component of Interstate 295; and in 1982 it was dedicated to Gladys Noon Spellman, a former congresswoman from Maryland who died in 1988.

LEGISLATION

The history of the Baltimore-Washington Parkway's enabling legislation and funding is closely tied to the evolution of the American highway program as a whole. It also reflects the changing role of roads, from pleasure-vehicle use to one of speed and convenience--and the Baltimore-Washington Parkway's ultimate function as a little of each.

Just as automobiles spurred the development of recreation-oriented parkways, they instigated a series of highway offices and schemes. The Office of Public Roads and Rural Engineering was formed in 1916, within which was a division devoted to national park and forest roads. The same year, the Federal-Aid Road Act appropriated $75 million to help the states finance construction or improvement of public roads used for mail delivery. The bill also provided $1 million annually, for ten years, for the construction of highways in, or partially in, national forests. An amended Federal Highway Act of 1921 largely retained the features of the earlier act; and in 1939 the Office of Public Roads was removed to jurisdiction of the Federal Works Agency and it was renamed the Public Roads Administration. The Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1944 authorized $500 million a year for the first three post-war years; use of federal aid for urban areas; and specified a National System of Interstate Highways up to 40,000 miles. In 1949 the Public Roads Administration was transfered from the Agriculture Department to the Commerce Department.[47]

Specific to parkway development, short-lived federal legislation was enacted in 1934 in which each state was required to spend not less than 1 percent of federal highway funds for "appropriate landscaping of parkways and highway roadsides," but in 1940 a new bill allowed for the acquisition of "strips of land necessary for the restoration, preservation, and enhancement of scenic beauty adjacent to scenic highways."[48]

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[47] Truman Strobridge, Records of the Bureau of Public Roads, No. 134 (Washington, D.C.: National Archives, 1962), pp. 2-5; Department of Transportation, America's Highways 1776-1976, p. 456, 487.

[48] U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration, Scenic Byways '88 (April 1988), p. xiii.

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Authorization for the NCP&PC to acquire land and rights-of-way for this and other parkways dates to the Capper-Cramton Act of 1930. This presented a financial dilemma for Maryland, which wanted to complete the parkway on up to Baltimore, for the legislation says "the United States is not to share in. . .the cost of construction of roads [in Maryland] except if and as Federal aid highways."[49] Parkways, by banning trucks and therefore excluding the entire class of commercial traffic, were ineligible for this aid package. In 1944, however, Public Roads Administration Commissioner Thomas MacDonald reported that, "We now have authority to add to Federal Aid Highways any parkway so designated by the State Highway Department."[50] Ultimately, the federal government paid half the cost of the $15 million Maryland-owned portion of the parkway. To facilitate acquisition of the parkway land, Maryland enacted a blanket consent giving the U.S. government the right to buy, condemn, and receive any land or easements through the MNCP&PC "for the construction of a parkway, highway, motorway or freeway" between Baltimore and D.C. [51]

After nearly three decades of delays, the parkway project finally got underway on 9 September, 1942. Under presidential directive, the Public Roads Administration received a $2 million appropriation of unobligated National Industrial Recovery Act funds to purchase nongovernment-owned right-of-way for the parkway, and to construct it as a national defense measure, primarily to serve Fort Meade.

> At the time this move was initiated, the officials of the State of Maryland were called in and asked if they would cooperate, . . .that they would continue the highway on to Baltimore. The officials of Maryland agreed to do this.[52]

According to this agenda, the parkway was to be completed in 1945-47. Yet, two years later little progress had been recorded. In addition to the war-related conservation of materials, the NCP&PC and Public Roads Administration were still unable to agree on a route for the parkway, or on the nature of traffic to use it.[53]

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[49] Capper-Cramton Act (Public-No. 284--71st Congress. (29 May, 1930)

[50] NCP&PC Minutes (16-17 March, 1944).

[51] Laws of Maryland 1943, Chapter 644, Section 1-31A.

[52] Congressional Record--House, vol. 96, no. 103, 81st Congress/2nd session (15 May, 1950), p. 7126.

[53] Minutes of the NCP&PC (17-18 February, 1944), RG 328. Thre was also concern that the funds would be lost if not used by 30 June of that year.

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In an effort to refuel the project, bills were introduced in 1948 to dually fund the Baltimore-Washington and Suitland parkways as defense projects to access Camp Springs. The NCP&PC, which considered them "essential elements in a comprehensive and coordinated plan of parkways" for the region, supported it. But "because the Suitland Parkway is already laid and paved on one roadway, whereas the Baltimore-Washington Parkway would require many millions to complete or make usable," the projects were divorced from one another and subsequent legislation was quickly approved for the former road.[54]

Later that year H.R. 5990 was introduced in Congress, which authorized completion of the Baltimore-Washington Parkway and removed its control from the Bureau of Public Roads to the National Park Service. During 1950 hearings on the bill before the Committee on Public Works, it was reported that all the Maryland-owned portion had been surveyed, 7.2 miles was under construction, and 5.3 miles was programmed.[55] Delays at the federal end became potentially embarrassing, as Congressman Lansdale G. Sasscer of Maryland pointed out:

> We are confronted with a situation where we have the Government having started a project, the State of Maryland came on to meet it and now it is not finished and is a complete loss unless it is finished.[56]

Consequently, the cost of completing the federal section was estimated at $13-$15 million, and although its scenic properties remained integral to construction, by this time it was conceded that:

> The main reason. . .is not to construct a parkway. There are two reasons for it. One is access to Government property, and the other is to alleviate the traffic on Roadway No. 1.[57]

In July 1950 the Senate concurred with the House of Representatives' recommendation for passage of the bill with only minor changes, and it became law shortly thereafter. According to Section 2:

> The parkway shall be constructed, developed, operated, and administered as a limited access road primarily to provide a protected, safe, and suitable approach for passenger-vehicle traffic to the National

[54] T.S. Settle to Grant, Demaray and Nolan (3 June, 1949).

[55] No. 81-10 Baltimore-Washington Parkway Hearings, p. 34.

[56] No. 81-10 Baltimore-Washington Parkway Hearings, p. 47.

[57] Congressional Record--House (25 May, 1950), p. 7792.

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Capital and for an additional means of access between the several Federal establishments adjacent thereto and the seat of government in the District of Columbia.[58]

CONSTRUCTION SEQUENCE

The twenty-nine-mile parkway was constructed as two separate but connecting units: The northern, ten-mile Maryland section was built in 1949-51 by the Maryland State Roads Commission in cooperation with the federal Bureau of Public Roads, which was responsible for building the nineteen-mile southern portion.

FEDERALLY OWNED AND MAINTAINED SECTION

The $2 million funding in 1942 marks the official commencement of the design process, financed the clearing, grading and draining of two single-lane segments of road, and the acquisition of land to complete the right-of-way. The MNCP&PC acquired the right-of-way between the D.C. line and Bladensburg with funds advanced by the NCP&PC. Three-mile road fragments were constructed at the southern terminus from the Bladensburg Peace Cross to Greenbelt, and at the northerly terminus from Laurel Road to the Jessup Road entry to Fort Meade.

Additional construction funding was not legislated until 1950--not to exceed $13 million, later raised to $14.5 million--but the preparation of drawings and plans continued throughout the war. Including the original $2 million appropriation, as of 1950 the parkway cost $770,000 per mile.

Sixteen bridges with a pavement width of 72 feet were slated, at an estimated cost of about $5.3 million. About one and one-half miles of state and county roads were rebuilt, and three miles of local roads relocated. Two 24-foot divided pavements were built, with area for a third lane "that will undoubtedly be built in the near future."[59]

National Park Service and Public Road Administration officials cooperatively designed parkway bridges throughout 1944-45. Good Luck Road was "one of the first structures built on the parkway," and it is nearly identical to the Seminary Avenue Bridge of the Cross County (NY)

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[58] U.S., Statutes at Larage, LXIV, p. 401. In June 1952, Congress increase the appropriation for building the Baltimore-Washington Parkway to $14.5 million, U.S., Statutes at Large, LXVI, p. 159.

[59] Congressional Record, (25 May, 1950), p. 7793.

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Parkway, designed by Gilmore Clarke about 1930.[60] Both feature twin spans with buttresses at the median and each wingwall; the whole covered with rough-faced ashlar in the form of cladding, voussoirs, quoining, and concrete coping. Ironically, Clarke was responsible for some of the most picturesque and derivatively styled bridges of the earlier Westchester County parkway system that combine reinforced concrete, steel, and iron with the texture of rough-faced stone cladding and unique designs.[61]

More than a decade later, his attitude reflects the cleaner design aesthetics brought on by the war and improved technology. Clarke then advocated that a "more or less standardized design may be adopted for similar structures, which could be generally used throughout" and, he confessed:

> As I look at bridges which I designed twenty and more years ago, I feel like taking an ax and cutting off the excrescents which in my younger days I deemed necessary. Now the simpler we make bridges, the better we like them and, incidentally, the more simple the structures are, the better they stand the test of time.[62]

The American Society of Landscape Architects (ASLA) committee charged with studying parkways and roads came to the same conclusion in its 1950 policy adopted toward parkway bridges:

> Which in essence eliminates the purely stylistic, traditional or eclectic approach in favor of designs rooted in. . .basic principles of architectural design. This does admit the judicious use of stylistic elements where the application is. . .not an accretion, and it does permit an ultimate design in which the appearance may reflect precedent but is wholly contemporary in conception.[63]

The bridges serving the Baltimore-Washington Parkway aptly reflect this range, from sentimental rustic styling to sparer concrete construction. Other site concerns arose, such as the utility lines serving the Agricultural Research Center, which NPS hoped to "be rerouted or relocated so that as few crossings as possible would remain, and those that must remain as as crossing or paralleling lines will be placed underground"; and, to "see maintained sufficient width of woods buffer to

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[60] Harry Thompson to Gilmore Clarke (5 October, 1945), RG 66.

[61] Gilmore D. Clarke, "Landscape Construction Notes 35, Notes on Texture in Stone Masonry," Landscape Architecture, vol. 21, no. 3 (April 1931), p. 197-208.

[62] Gilmore Clarke to Harry Thompson (18 October, 1945).

[63] Committee on Public Roads, Controlled-access Highways, Parkways, "Selected 1950 ASLA Committee Reports," Landscape Architecture, vol. 41, no. 2 (January 1951), p. 60.

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camouflage the existence of nearby lines."[64]

Further construction was stalled because of lack of funding. The NPS's 1947 budget included $15 million for construction of three national parkways--George Washington Memorial, Blue Ridge, and Natchez Trace--and it was hoped that the 1948 budget would include Baltimore-Washington Parkway funding, so that:

> The Washington section of the parkway could thus attain the status of a national parkway like that of the Mount Vernon Memorial Highway and become part of the Nation[al] Capital Park system.[65]

As of November 1952, ten of the eighteen bridges were underway, and half the parkway was graded, with paving to begin the next year. Ultimately, 149 tracts of land were acquired in all; 832 acres from private owners, representing a little more than ten miles of the parkway. The balance of the property was transfered to the Bureau of Public Roads from the agencies that owned it. In the process, thirty-five dwellings and two commercial airplane hangers were condemned. The right-of-way-per mile cost totaled $39,000, cost per acre (including improvements), $480.[66]

MARYLAND-OWNED AND MAINTAINED SECTION

It was the original intention of the federal government that the state of Maryland finance the parkway, and authorization of a toll road from Baltimore to Washington--along this same route--had been made by the state legislature in 1940. However, Congress felt it unwise to give a state rights through federal property, which composes so much of the parkway's right-of-way.

> The [NCP&PC] has therefore recommended that this portion of the project be set up as an extension of the Anacostia River Parkway, thus incorporating it into the park system of the National Capital, making it eligible for construction by the National Park Service.[67]

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[64] Harry T. Thompson to H.J. Spellman (1 February, 1945).

[65] Rudolph Kauffmann II, "Baltimore-Washington Parkway Slowly Begins to Take Shape," The [Washington] Evening Star (6 March, 1946), p. 1.

[66] Department of Commerce, "Final Construction Report," vol. 2, p. 10.

[67] NCP&PC Minutes of Conference regarding Route for Baltimore-Washington Parkway (4 November, 1942).

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As funding for the federal portion of the parkway was being addressed in congressional hearings, Maryland had already completed seven miles of its ten-mile portion. In keeping with federal parkway stipulations, the state consented to build it with a 400-foot minimum right-of-way, with dual 24-foot roadways divided by medians no less than 100 feet wide--although contemporary appearance suggests this was not fully complied with.[68] On 16 December, 1950, the section of this route from Baltimore to Friendship International Airport officially opened.

PRESENT CONDITION

The Baltimore-Washington Parkway (BWP) occupies the western edge of the Atlantic Coastal Plain, on the edge of the Piedmont plateau. Historically throughout the early twentieth century, the geographic region through which the BWP runs was composed of hardwood forest. The dominant types were red and white oak, sweet gum and tulip trees, however, the cleared portions of the parkway were initially invaded by Virginia pine and other scrub growth such as blackjack oak and black locust. More recently, southern yellow pine, oaks, ash and sweet birch have grown up in the right-of-way, in addition to occasional mountain laurel, American holly, and tupelo.[69]

The topography ranges from gently rolling to steep and includes several drainage basins. From the District line north to Kenilworth Avenue, the soil is silty and clayey, supporting trees that were salvaged during construction or weed trees that invaded later. From Kenilworth to Landover Road, the terrain is a rugged 25 to 65 perent slope, with a heavy wood of Virginia pine and mixed hardwoods. The soil make up of silt and sandy loam predominates up to the Jessup Road interchange. From Landover to the NASA Access Road, the naturally undulating, low pitch of the land is topped by a mix of hardwoods with scrub and Virginia pines close to the shoulders and an understory of mountain laurel and holly. Between Good Luck Road and I-495, the parkway traverses Greenbelt Park: the median and roadsides here are thickly wooded with mixed pine and oak, approaching a climax forest. From the NASA access to Jessup Road, the parkway lies in a nearly level, rolling plateau no steeper than 4 percent. USDA lands flank both sides of the parkway up to the Patuxent River, which contain oak, tulip, ash, maple, sweet gum, and sycamore; the flat, marshy, floodplains of both Patuxent Rivers contain only deciduous plants such as white ash, red

[68] Congressional Record, Vol. 96, No. 103, 81st Congress/2nd Session (18 May, 1950), p. 7125; Congressional Record, Vol. 96, No. 104, 81st Congress/2nd Session (25 May, 1950), p. 7791.

[69] System Design Concepts, Clarke & Rapuano, and Bolt, Beranek & Newman, "Baltimore/Washington Parkway Study Report" (April 1981), Sec. II, p. 43. Located in NCR-Profesional Services; F.W. Besley, "Map of Anne Arundel County Showing Forest Areas by Commercial Types" (1913), LC; F.W. Besley, "Map of Prince Georges County Showing Forest Areas by Commercial Types" (1912), LC.

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maple, birch. Between the two rivers, the parkway is bordered largely by Fort Meade lands; mature oak and pine coexist here with second-growth scrub pine woodlands.

The median varies from a mown, grassy strip in some areas--between Landover and Riverdale roads--to dense woodland--between Good Luck Road and I-95, and between the rivers.[70]

The parkway makes two major waterway crossings in the federal section, the Patuxent and Little Patuxent rivers. Four railroad crossings exist: the B&O Railroad at the D.C. line, Kenilworth Avenue, and near Maryland Route 32; and the Conrail/Amtrak (formerly Pennsylvania RR) line by Kenilworth Avenue connectors. Three types of bridges cross the parkway and interchanges: rigid arch of reinforced concrete, beam with steel or concrete, and steel girder.[71] In addition to overpasses and underpasses, scores of culverts and drainage infrastructures exist along the parkway.

The development flanking the parkway begins in the District of Columbia as dense industrial and roadside commercial; from the border to the Greenbelt area, it is comprised primarily of single-family residential subdivisions interspersed with high-rise apartments and commercial enclaves. From NASA to Jessup Road, adjoining property is almost completely federal or public.

Since the parkway opened in 1954, maintenance on road and park land has been aimed at the preservation of five aesthethic qualities "with the objective of not only minimizing negative impacts, but also of enhancing parkway character wherever possible." Features to be preserved include: right-of-way with heavy slope vegetation; opposing roadways separated by a variable-width median; curvilinear road alignments; stone-faced bridge abutments; and contour grading fit to the topography.[72]

The parkway was constructed according to design standards established by the Bureau of Public Roads in November 1943, which were incorporated into the standards for rural sections of interregional highays in a report issued early the following year.[73] These include the accommodation of "high-speed" traffic of 75 miles per hour throughout; a right-of-way 400 to 800

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[70] System Design Concepts et al., sec. II, pp. 41-48.

[71] System Design Concepts et al., sec. II, p. 5.

[72] Ibid, sec. III, p. 7-8.

[73] Department of Commerce, Bureau of Public Roads, "Final Construction Report, Baltimore-Washington Parkway, Vol. 2: Roadway" (1955?), p. 8. Located in FHWA final construction report files, Arlington, Va.

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feet across; mainline lane width of 12 feet, with a 12-foot shoulder designed for conversion to a third auto lane if needed; and a median 15 to 200 feet wide, in keeping with desirable parkway standards. There are no outstanding scenic or natural highlights along the route, but the parkway does play off the natural landscape and indigenous plant growth. The route provides a modest undulation of tangential curves, gentle valleys with a maximum grade of 3 percent, and contrasting open and solid planting arrangements. Entrance and egress ramps are similarly treated as landscaped graduations to roadways that were purposely situated at a higher or lower grade than the mainline:

> Designs for these interchanges differ according to the probable traffic volume to and from the parkway, and vary from the standard full cloverleafs to less-elaborate connections.[74]

About three miles of local roads were rerouted to accommodate the parkway route, which followed the least-developed path northeastward.

Construction implemented with the initial $2 million funding took place from July 1945 to August 1947, and included four grading projects. No further work was undertaken until January 1951 when additional funding was legislated, leading to completion of the parkway in October 1954. The latter bulk of the work was divided into separate projects: eighteen bridge, eleven grading, and six paving. Cost of the stone facing used on the majority of structures was $90-$122 per cubic yard; the granite dimensioned masonry, $265-$375 per cubic yard. The total grading cost for the parkway was $3.8 million, paving $3.4 million.[75]

The first four projects--completed by 1947--consisted of the grading of two sections: Laurel-Fort Meade Road to Jessup Road, and MD 450 to a tributary of the Northeast Branch north of Riverdale Road. These were followed by the stretch from Laurel-Bowie to Fort Meade roads, then portions from the tributary to Laurel-Bowie Road, and the region closest to the D.C. line, respectively; concurrent to which construction of drainage conduits and paving was also accomplished. The culmination of construction in 1954-55 were the approaches to the Anacostia River bridge, installation of traffic signs and guardrails, and right-of-way fencing.[76]

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[74] Ibid., p. 9.

[75] Ibid., pp. 11-12.

[76] Ibid., p. 14.

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BRIDGES

Originally there were fourteen highway grade separations intended to traverse the federal portion of the parkway, in addition to three river crossings, and two railway crossings. The design of these structures was carried out during WW II (though domestic construction was limited to defense-related projects by the Bureau of Public Roads' Design Office) in cooperation with the National Capital Parks, "who were particularly interested in the architectural features of the designs."[77] Bridge styling ranged from stone-clad elements characteristic of the earliest parkways, to streamlined concrete constructions reflective of the 1940-50s, depending upon its location.

> In general, where the Parkway went under a State or County road, stone facing was used on the exposed portions of the structures. This usually consisted of stone of varied colors, obtained from local quarries, with granite masonry trimming. The architectural features of the various structures were varied to give each bridge a distinctive, individual appearance. The structures that were not stone-faced had the exposed concrete faces given a smooth, plywood-formed finish.[78]

The cost of the eighteen original bridges (exclusive of engineering) was approximately $6.62 million. Work on bridge contracts began on 5 January, 1951, with the Little Patuxent River crossing, and were complete by 11 June, 1954.[79] Because the stone treatment on each was a more delicate undertaking than the general construction, a sample of the wall work was prepared on a preliminary basis for NPS approval, prior to overall finishing.

Today, the parkway is crossed over by eight road- and railways: Route 450/Annapolis Road, Good Luck Road, Route 193/Greenbelt, NASA Access Road, Route 197/Laurel-Bowie Road, Route 198/Fort Meade Road, Route 32/Savage Road, abandoned tracks near Route 32, and the Greenbelt pedestrian bridge. The parkway crosses over the Patuxent and Little Patuxent rivers and eight subordinate roads: Route 50 at Kenilworth Avenue, Kenilworth Avenue, Route 202/Landover Road, Route 410/Riverdale Road, Interstate 95, Beaverdam Road, Route 212/Powder Mill Road, and the abandoned old Fort Meade Road.

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[77] Department of Commerce, Bureau of Public Roads, "Final Construction Report, Baltimore-Washington Parkway, Vol. 1: Bridges" (1 August, 1955), p. 4. Located in FHWA final construction files, Arlington, Va.

[78] Ibid.

[79] Ibid, p. 4-5.

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The bridges at Route 450, Good Luck Road, and Route 32 (rail and vehicular)--all crossing over the parkway--best reflect the origins of parkway-structure styling. The double spans and wing walls are covered with decorative rough-cut stone; the segmental arches feature voussoirs; and buttresses and intersecting seams are quoined. (Route 32 is constructed with steel beams, but the wingwalls are treated appropriately.) The thorough decorative treatment is attributable to the bridge position, such that parkway motorists view the entire structure.

> The stone facing used on the wingwalls, parapets, and arch spandrels was usually a native stone obtained from local quarries in Maryland. It varied in color among brown, grey, and blue, some being seam and some split-faced, and of varying sizes. It was finished with raked joints. . . . Dimensioned (grey granite) masonry trimming was used on the arch ringstones, pier ends, abutment corners, and copings.[80]

An intermediate design treatment is found on the bridges at Routes 410, 193, 212, and 198. Each features a combination of concrete span and recessed support walls that curve out to meet the wingwalls. These, too, are clad with dressed rough-cut stone, but they are smaller and more angular than the previous type of bridges. The double row of steel railing is more visually obvious here, because it is an element anchored abruptly by each wingwall.

The bridges designed with the least regard for rustic-like detailing are those that carry the parkway over the rivers and local roads: Kenilworth Avenue, Route 202, Beaverdam Road, Route 197, and old Fort Meade Road. These more modest single and double spans lack any decorative stone treatment in lieu of very simple poured-concrete structural units. The greatest reason for aesthetic and financial economy here is that these structures are not seen by parkway travelers and therefore do not need to reflect traditional parkway styling. All bridges originally permitted a 14-foot vertical clearance at the pavement's edge, 16 feet at the center point.

CULVERTS

There are approximately 175 box and pipe culverts along the federally owned portion of the Baltimore-Washington Parkway, which open onto the flanks and/or the median. About 100 of these have formal headwalls or wingwalls. Many culverts were classified as "incidental road work" included in some of the bridge-construction contracts, while others were part of roadway contracts. "Work on culverts was concurrent with bridge operations. . . . Headwall construction was similar to

[80] Ibid., p. 6.

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bridge-abutment construction with the same procedures being used."[81]

The dressed conduit headwalls represent contributing architectural elements to the parkways' historicity. The decoratively finished inlets are many sizes and shapes, featuring rows of dimensioned stone cladding. The predominant forms are 18-inch, 24-inch and 36-inch pipe culverts, ranging to the most visible and dramatic twin box culvert 4-by-6 feet, and a 6-foot arch culvert. The openings are finished by a broad lintel or ornamental semicircular archwork, voussoirs, and a keystone.

LANDSCAPE

No final or comprehensive design plans have been located for the parkway landscape. However, based on occasional site plans and written documentation, it was undoubtedly the intention of NPS architects and landscape architects to retain the thick, forested vegetation of the right-of-way and median, interspersed with areas of grassy lawn. An undated (probably ca. 1945-55) service-area study, for example, indicates clusters of bushy vegetation broken up by open space to allow for visibility and variation, with individual or grouped plantings highlighting the residual island fragments created by access ramps and parking areas. According to a turnaround study (1952) where the right-of-way is narrowest, the contour of the topography immediately adjacent to the mainline was altered from gentle slope to a pattern of steep parallel banks on the flanks and in the median. Two years after the parkway opened, Riverdale Road apparently typified the ideal landscaping, for Conrad Wirth felt that "the preservation of existing indigenous plant material such as now exists in this area is a requisite of parkway standards."[82]

Plans (1955) exist for five of the major intersections: 175/Jessup Road, 212/Powder Mill Road, 201/Kenilworth Avenue, 202/Landover Road, and 450/Annapolis Road. According to these drawings, the northern terminus of the federal portion of the parkway just below Jessup Road featured two large areas of "existing trees" on the west flank, with the remaining property on both sides and between the roadways open with picturesque scatterings of 7-foot nannyberry, 4-foot flowering dogwood, red maple and northern red oak, water tupelo, white fringetree, and some 7-foot eastern redbud.

[81] Vol. 1: Bridges, p. 73.

[82] Conrad Wirth to Orlo A. Bartholomew (20 July, 1956), RG 326, Box 127.

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The prevalent landscape at Route 212, formerly East-West Highway, was an existing buffer of forest around the interchange area, the interior portion planted with willow oak, red maple, and northern red oak, 6-foot Washington hawthorne, and a sprinkling of flowering dogwood.

The Route 201/Kenilworth crossing contains a greater diversity of introduced plantings, probably because of the greater amount of existing development and necessary construction for the parkway at this point. Two small banks of existing trees and a border of 2-foot red pine along the southbound flank serve as the backdrop for groupings of pin, scarlet, willow, and northern red oak; red and eastern white pine; red maple, 7-foot redbud, American planetree, water tupelo and flowering dogwood; as well as a few southern crabapple, shagbark hickory, and 7-foot blackhaw viburnum.

Entirely new plantings were slated for the Route 202/Landover Road interchange. These include red maple and nothern red oak, Washington hawthorne, redbud, blackhaw viburnum, and flowering dogwood, as well as some pin oak and black willow.

At Route 450/Defense Highway, the diamond-shaped intersection was planned as a lightly landscaped open space enclosed on all sides by forest buffer. The plantings slated for the area were predominantly 6-foot American hornbeam, scarlet oak, blackhaw viburnum, red maple, and northern red oak, with some 6-foot southern crabapple and flowering dogwood. Overall, the most frequent choice was red pine, northern bayberry, fragrant sumac, flowering dogwood, and northern red oak--native enhancements to the young forest that existed along the parkway at that time.

INVENTORY OF STRUCTURES

Note: (listed south to north with construction project numbers in parentheses)
cost is exclusive of engineering
* = non-contributing

U.S. Route 50 (Project 1A6):
Built 1952-54; continuous steel plate girder, 513 feet; carries BWP over the Anacostia River; 4 spans; completion cost $1.41 million.

MD Route 201/Kenilworth Ave. (1A5):
Built 1952-53 as River Road rerouted; concrete rigid frame; carries 6 BWP lanes over 4 lanes; 2 82-foot spans; cost $287,500.

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(1A10)
Built 1953-54; steel plate girder; entrance ramp; carries 1 BWP lane over 2; 3 spans 114 feet; cost $303,900.

(1A7)
Built 1953-54; concrete rigid frame; carries 2 (southbound) BWP lanes over 2 (northbound) BWP lanes; 1 44-foot span; cost $205,800.

(1A4)
Built 1952; concrete rigid frame; carries BWP over B&0 RR; 1 span 38 feet; cost $243,226.

MD Route 202/Landover Road (1A3):
Built 1952-53; concrete rigid frame; 6 BWP lanes over 2 lanes; 2 52-foot spans; cost $300,300.

MD Route 450/Annapolis Road (1A2):
Built 1951-53 as Defense Highway; concrete rigid frame; carries 4 lanes over 4 BWP lanes; 2 55-foot spans; cost $437,000.

MD Route 410/Riverdale Road (1B2):
(2) Built 1951-53; concrete rigid frame; carries 2 BWP lanes over 2 lanes; 60-foot span; cost $372,524.

Good Luck Road (1C2):
Built 1951-52; concrete rigid frame; carries 3 lanes over 4 BWP lanes; 2 71-foot spans; cost $270,300.

Interstate 95*:
Interchange built 1962.

Beaverdam Creek Culvert*:
(2) Built 1966; concrete box culvert; carries 2 BWP lanes; 2 10-foot spans.

Greenbelt Pedestrian Bridge* (0.3 miles from Route 193):
Built 1983; steel box beam single-girder; 1 lane over 4 BWP lanes; 2 106-foot spans.

MD Route 193/Greenbelt Road (1D2):
Built 1952-53 as Branchville-Glenn Dale Road, reconstructed 1965; concrete rigid frame; carries 5 lanes over 4 BWP lanes; 2 82-foot spans; cost $181,000.

NASA Goddard Space Flight Center Access Road*:
Built 1966; span-steel plate girder and wide flange beam; 6 spans.

X See continuation sheet

Beaverdam Road (1E2):
Built 1952-53; concrete rigid frame; carries 4 BWP lanes over 2 lanes; 1 39-foot span; cost $224,200.

MD Route 212/Powder Mill Road (1E3):
Built 1951-53 as East-West Highway; concrete rigid frame; carries 4 BWP lanes over 2 lanes; 1 60-foot span; cost $272,3000.

MD Route 197/Laurel-Bowie Road (1F3):
(2) Built 1951-53; concrete rigid frame; carries 2 BWP lanes over 2 lanes; 1 84-foot span, 1 91-foot span; cost $333,126.

Patuxent River Bridge (1F2):
(2) Built 1951-53, reconstructed 1976; concrete T-beam; 3 BWP lanes; 5 78-foot spans; cost $488,500.

Old Fort Meade Road (1G3):
(2) Built 1951-52; concrete rigid frame; carries 2 BWP lanes over 2 abandoned lanes; 1 43-foot span; cost $140,510.

MD Route 198/Fort Meade Road (1G2):
(2) Built 1951-52; concrete rigid frame; carries 3 lanes over 2 BWP lanes; 1 65-foot span, 1 63-foot span; cost $243,152.

Little Patuxent River Bridge (1H2):
(2) Built 1950-53, reconstructed 1976; concrete T-beam; 3 BWP lanes; 5 78-foot spans; cost $577,102.

MD Route 32/Savage Road and B&O Railway (1J2):
(2) Built 1950-52 (Annapolis Junction Road, reconstructed 1977); steel-plate girder; 3 BWP lanes and 1 track lane over 4 lanes; 2 58-foot spans; cost $359,694.

UTMs continued

	zone/easting	northing	
E	18/332380	4309970	
F	18/333330	4310550	
G	18/333060	4301830	
H	18/333940	4311690	
I	18/334300	4311480	
J	18/334510	4313340	points A - Q:
K	18/334740	4313180	Washington East, D.C.-MD quad
L	18/335080	4315160	
M	18/335820	4315200	
N	18/336600	4317380	
O	18/336680	4317270	
P	18/337340	4317820	
Q	18/337540	4317580	
R	18/337900	4318060	points R, S:
S	18/338080	4318000	Lanham, MD quad
T	18/338600	4318930	
U	18/338720	4318850	
V	18/339020	4320580	
W	18/339200	4320330	
X	18/339500	4321920	
Y	18/339860	4321910	
Z	18/340730	4324700	
AA	18/340940	4324300	
BB	18/341560	4326020	points T - KK:
CC	18/341590	4327810	Laurel, MD quad
DD	18/343820	4328650	
EE	18/344030	4328380	
FF	18/345080	4329790	
GG	18/345240	4329620	
HH	18/346210	4330810	
II	18/346260	4330680	
JJ	18/347270	4331920	
KK	18/347520	4331920	
LL	18/348200	4333210	points LL, MM:
MM	18/348020	4333280	Savage, MD quad

NPS Form 10-900-b
(Jan. 1987)

OMB No. 1024-0018

AA-5

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Documentation Form

This form is for use in documenting multiple property groups relating to one or several historic contexts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900-a). Type all entries.

A. Name of Multiple Property Listing

PARKWAYS OF THE NATIONAL CAPITAL REGION, 1913 - 1965

B. Associated Historic Contexts

EVOLUTION OF THE URBAN PARKWAY
DEVELOPMENT OF THE NATIONAL CAPITAL PARKWAY SYSTEM

C. Geographical Data

The estimated 75-100 miles of parkways located in the National Park Service's National Capital Region are found in Washington D.C.; Montgomery, Prince Georges, and Anne Arundel counties in suburban Maryland; and Arlington and Fairfax counties, and the City of Alexandria, in Northern Virginia. The boundaries of the contributing arterial thoroughfares are coterminus with their rights-of-way, and include the Baltimore-Washington Parkway and Suitland Parkway, extending from the eastern boundary of the District of Columbia; the Mount Vernon Memorial Highway/George Washington Memorial Parkway along the Potomac River shoreline between Mount Vernon and Great Falls; Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway between the East and West Potomac Parks and Rock Creek Park; and numerous strip parks located throughout the greater Washington area, including the Sligo Branch Parkway.

☐ See continuation sheet

D. Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this documentation form meets the National Register documentation standards and sets forth requirements for the listing of related properties consistent with the National Register criteria. This submission meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60 and the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Planning and Evaluation.

Signature of certifying official — Date: 1/19/91

Maryland State Historic Preservation Officer
State or Federal agency and bureau

I, hereby, certify that this multiple property documentation form has been approved by the National Register as a basis for evaluating related properties for listing in the National Register.

Signature of the Keeper of the National Register — Date

NPS Form 10-900-b
(Jan 1987)

OMB No 1024-0018

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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E. Statement of Historic Contexts

Discuss each historic context listed in Section B.

EVOLUTION OF THE URBAN PARKWAY

The parkways constructed in the Greater Washington area range stylistically from nationally significant schemes modeled on the precedent-setting, picturesque suburban New York system, to include simple tributary byways and the straightforward Baltimore-Washington Parkway completed shortly after mid-century. Contributing cultural influences include the increased use of the automobile, the City Beautiful movement, and popularity of outdoor recreation.

A parkways' foremost task is to separate traffic into two distinct groups: pleasure motorists and heavy commercial users. During the early decades of automobile use, the greatest proportion of use was devoted to recreation. But in the late 1930s when the emphasis shifted from the pastime of "getting there" to simply "arriving"--so, too, changed road design. The newly formed National Capital Park & Planning Commission (NCP&PC) in 1927 indicated:

> There are and should be in the development of plans. . . a number of things which may be called parkways, to serve as lines of pleasure traffic; but in another sense part of the thoroughfare system of the District. There is overlapping there of the two types of functions. We need to be careful. . .that it does not extend too far.[1]

NCP&PC landscape architect Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr., cites only two criteria that serve as a design guide--"controlling purposes" and local physical conditions--from which four types of parkways emerge: an elongated park, a glorified and ornamental street, and:

> A thoroughfare, boulevard, or parkway, the prime purpose of which is to enable the public to travel from one part of its course to another under conditions which are made more enjoyable by almost any means, than those of an ordinary city street.[2]

Within this last category are three subtypes: a single road with planted and ornamental flanks, which "may be really verdant and justify the name 'parkway'"; dual roadways with a central planted strip and some flanking ornamentation, much like a boulevard; and a central road flanked by any type of formal or informal landscaping, with or without pedestrian amenities.

The fourth parkway model is "somewhat intermediate and transitional between the first and the third" type, a border treatment that does not attempt to buffer surrounding buildings, and often places the roadway to one side of the green space and a waterway. This "border parkway" was later cited in a Washington-Baltimore regional study that called for "eventual acquisition [of]

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[1] Minutes of the NCP&PC (16-18 September, 1927).

[2] Frederick Law Olmsted, "Memorandum as to 'Border Roads' for Parkways and Parks" (25 September, 1925), pp. 1-3. RG 66, Box 156.

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selected stream valley 'strip parks' [to] be protected by public purchase of scenic easements in all parks of the area." While these do not possess extraordinary scenic qualities, they protect the floodplain and "assure provision of open spaces to prevent uninterrupted built-up areas."[3]

During the 1930s, one application of the term "parkway" hinged on use and legal access. Of a parkway, highway and freeway, all involve public land; the parkway alone is devoted to recreation rather than movement; and only the highway allows adjacent land owners to retain rights of light, air or access.[4]

This is supported by the casually synonymous use of "freeway" and "parkway" within the context of landscape by itself, rather than the thoroughfare in its entirety. A freeway, for instance, was characterized by one planner as about 100 feet wide with a center pavement "flanked by 20-foot strips of parkway, planted with trees, ground covers, shrubs, and hedges. . .adequate for a landscape composition of varied interest."[5] Shared features include the pleasure derived from planted borders instead of billboards and business frontage, a reduced volume of traffic, improved travel time, and safety. This type of road was considered particularly effective in an area where residential and business subdivisions were slated, and was destined to reorient transportation patterns--a setting particularly relevant to development of the Baltimore-Washington metropolitan corridor.

Legally, a parkway was designed simply as "an attenuated park with a road through it," but the federal government did not address general parkway guidelines until the "Regulations and Procedure to Govern the Acquisition of Rights-of-way for Parkways" was approved by the Secretary of the Interior on 8 February 1935.[6] This was the foundation for a set of eight characteristics intended to differentiate parkways from ordinary highways, as identified by the NPS three years later. It represents the culmination of thirty years of modern parkway planning--designated, ironically--just as the highway needs of the nation were about to shift away from recreational motoring.

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[3] MNCP&PC, "Regional Planning Report IV: Baltimore-Washington-Annapolis Area" (November 1937), p. 2, 34.

[4] Baltimore-Washington-Annapolis report, p. 60.

[5] George D. Hall, "The 'Freeway', A New Thought for Subdividers," Landscape Architecture, vol. 21, no. 2 (January 1931), p. 115-118.

[6] NCP&PC, "Comments on Report of Maryland State Planning Commission on State Recreational Areas," (unpublished, 1938?), cited in Jere Krakow, "Historic Resource Study, Baltimore-Washington Parkway" (1987), p. 28; this and resource studies on other NPS Washington-area parkways are collectively published in Jere L. Krakow, Historic Resource Study: Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway, George Washington Memorial Parkway, Suitland Parkway, and Baltimore-Washington Parkway (NPS, January 1990). Memorandum for A.E. Demaray, Appendix A, Minutes of the NCP&PC (16-17 March, 1944), p. 2. RG 328.

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These specifications are: a limit to non-commercial, recreational traffic; the avoidance of unsightly roadside developments; a wider-than-average right-of-way to provide a buffer from abutting property; no frontage or access rights, to encourage the preservation of natural scenery; preference for a new site, to avoid already congested and built-up areas; to best access native scenery; the elimination of major grade crossings; well-distanced entrance and exit points to reduce traffic interruptions and increase safety.[7] Collectively, they ensured a self-contained, well-preserved, and safe thoroughfare.

Despite these in-house Park Service ideals, in 1944 the U.S. Department of Interior complained that, "To date, Congress has not defined parkways. Legislation pertaining to parkways is piecemeal and lacks uniformity."[8]

In Washington, at least, the definition of a parkway has historically differed according to the period of development, site, and transportation needs. And although its function as a road can never be divorced from its scenic role, parkways have been consistently patterned as formally or informally designed connectors within a system of predetermined destinations that include parks and monuments--and later, federal reservations. Credit for this belongs to the City Beautiful movement.

CITY BEAUTIFUL MOVEMENT

The City Beautiful movement that developed around the turn of the century is evidenced in particular in the urban park systems of Boston and New York--a vital element of which are parkways. Using these as models, planners and landscape architects assembled in Washington to develop a similar program for the nation's capital. The McMillan Plan of 1902 calls for numerous "parkways" linking the Great Falls, Mount Vernon, Potomac River bridges, and existing parks. Like New York City's Riverside Drive, Washington had its own token "riverside drive," a muddy carriage path built in 1904. It wound around the Tidal Basin and up 26th Street in northwest, serving as a literal and figurative prologue to the era of parkway construction.

The parkway was a byproduct of the suburbanization movement, born in the late nineteenth

[7] Harlan D. Unrau and G. Frank Williss, Administrative History: Expansion of the National Park Service in the 1930s (Washington D.C.: Denver Service Center, 1983), p. 146; ASLA fellow Laurie D. Cox identified the same standards in an article, "Appearance: Essential Element in Superhighway Plans," Landscape Architecture, vol. 32, no. 2 (January 1942), p. 56.

[8] Memo to Demaray, Appendix A, p. 1.

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century; however, its role accelerated with the increasing sense of city-to-city regionalism and the rise of motoring characteristic of the twentieth century,.

> The purpose served by parkways and boulevards is, roughly, to provide agreeable routes connecting parks with each other, the parks with the centers of population, and the suburbs and countryside with the congested districts. The first two purposes have long been established. The last is a recognition of the changed methods of travel introduced with the automobile.[9]

The car--which gave enormous impetus to the improvement of the American road system in general--had a significant impact on parkways and the development of recreational roadways. According to Charles W. Eliot II: "It is the informal landscape parks of all sizes, and in the parkways, that the automobile has notably changed the situation."[10]

As an added bonus, Eliot felt that if recreation-seekers took to scenic roads, it might alleviate the inevitable and increasing congestion of national and state parks, as well as "atone for the exclusion of automobiles from landscape parks except under rigorous conditions," which he advocated.[11] The speed of motorized vehicles, as compared to horse-drawn carriages, also lent itself to new design needs: convenient and unobtrusive parking areas, service facilities, and dramatic-but-simple landscaping enjoyable from afar at 75 mph, rather than in detail at a meandering pace.

Although the District of Columbia's Division of Trees and Parking (established in 1871 and later part of the city's Engineer Department) was "one of the first public bodies to regard street-tree planting as a public function," the city trailed behind others in the development of urban green space. Massachusetts, one of the forerunners in the City Beautiful movement, became the first state to enact legislation for the caring of shade trees on public highways in 1890. But it was not until 1933 and the National Industrial Recovery Act that "appropriate landscaping of parkways or roadside on a reasonably extensive mileage," was provided at the federal level.[12]

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[9] Eliot, p. 36; for information on Eliot, see footnote 24.

[10] Charles W. Eliot, II, "The Influence of the Automobile on the Design of Park Roads," Landscape Architecture, vol. 13, no. 1 (October 1922), p. 27.

[11] Eliot, p. 36.

[12] Wilbur H. Simonson, "Roadside Planting," Landscape Architecture, vol. 26, no. 4 (July 1936), p. 167.

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comprehensive scheme of urban parks and parkways in Washington. "There has been candid admission in Congress," reported one newspaper, "that the park system of the National Capital is not what it should be"--for which the poor "economies of the past five years" were blamed.[13]

As the desirability for sophisticated roads grew, "the modification of highway design to conform to the principles and technique of landscape architecture" became a direct concern of the American Society of Landscape Architects (ASLA). This remained true even as the engineering aspects of road construction improved, because "the fundamental purpose of roadside planting operations should be to make the highway strip a mere foreground, or screen against what lies beyond."[14] As late as 1940, however, an ASLA editorial reported:

> There is still a tendency to consider the work of the landscape architect as a last step after all the other important decisions of design are made and put into effect.[15]

Despite the growing acknowledgement that landscape architecture was a mandatory component to road design, certain parkway characteristics remained subordinate to one another: Traffic provisions, safety, and economical maintenance take precedent over landscape design; while landscape-design features including location, alignment, profile, and adaptation to natural topography, take precedent over horticultural embellishments. All, however proportioned, are crucial parkway elements.[16]

And last, the site design of a parkway should appear compositionally natural, with irregular groupings of plantings recommended: The purpose was to enhance native vegetation beyond. According to one landscape architect:

> In the open countryside it is a mistake to use exotic plants, or anything which is not indigenous to that general region and to the particular type of topography at hand. . . .Native materials should be

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[13] Bill Price, "A Great National Park Along the Potomac," Washington Times (18 April, 1922).

[14] Simonson, p. 171, 173; ASLA committee reports of 1939-40 outline the procedure for the collaboration between landscape architects and engineers "in the design and construction of highways, "Landscape Design in Highway Development," Landscape Architecture, vol. 32, no. 2 (January 1942), p. 72.

[15] Harlean James, "Comment: Tendency to View Landscape Contribution as Final Step," Landscape Architecture, vol. 30, no. 3 (April 1940), p. 117.

[16] Arthur R. Nichols, "Landscape Design in Highway Development," Landscape Architecture, vol. 30, no. 3 (April 1940), p. 115.

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used not only because they are likely to be more permanent than others, . . .but most important of all, because the effect of regional individuality may be retained.[17]

Thus, during the first half of the twentieth century, a recognized set of design criteria evolved that were common to all parkways constructed. These were initiated with New York's Westchester County system of the early twentieth century, under the aesthetic direction Gilmore Clarke, the landscape architect who would greatly influence parkway development in Washington. Also, as technology improved and recreational goals changed, new motives altered the appearance and use of these roads up to World War II, when parkway development was--for all practical purposes--usurped by modern highway construction.

DEVELOPMENT OF THE NATIONAL CAPITAL PARKWAY SYSTEM

In Washington, Maryland and Virginia, the national capital park system is composed of more than 8,761 acres and 74 miles of formal parkways. The major components are: Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway, connecting Rock Creek Park in and north of Washington, to the East and West Potomac Parks along the river; more than 12,000 acres of neighborhood "stream valley," or "strip," parks that cushion and protect the crucial tributaries, many adjacent to Rock Creek Park; the Mount Vernon Memorial Highway, connecting the estate and Washington via the Potomac shore and Memorial Bridge, and its extension into the George Washington Memorial Parkway, up to Great Falls in Maryland and Virginia[18]; Suitland Parkway, a defense-highway link to Andrews Air Force Base; the Baltimore-Washington Parkway, an intercity thoroughfare that serves as a primary commuter route and defense road among the two cities and several federal reservations.

Some elements of Washington's fully idealized parkway system did not come to fruition. The Fort Drive circuit, a proposed connection of forty or so Civil War fortifications, would have encircled the city. Two extensive links with the George Washington Memorial Parkway remain unbuilt: a parkway along the Chesapeake & Ohio Canal route between Great Falls and Cumberland, Maryland, which would have served as a ceremonial entry to the city, and a similar route in Maryland along the Potomac River south to Fort Washington. Only a few fragments of disjunct border parkways

[17] Malcolm Dill, "Planting in Streets, Parkways, Highways, and Byways," Landscape Architecture, vol. 22, no. 2 (January 1932), p. 129-31.

[18] In 1989, the 7.7-mile portion of this parkway in Maryland, from the MacArthur Boulevard in Montgomery County to Canal Road in the District of Columbia was redesignated the Clara Barton Parkway with the enactment of Public Law 101-177/101st Congress (Approved November 28, 1989).

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exist of the never-realized Archbold-Glover Parkway in northwest D.C. Despite their absence, a system of largely complete parkways does exist in the capital.

The vision of a National Capital laid out along wide avenues and ceremonial routes replete with parks and formal city entrances, is descended from the design scheme of engineer-turned-city planner Maj. Charles Pierre L'Enfant. His 1791 plan for the Federal City incorporates political, residential, and commercial centers, as well as waterways such as the Potomac and Anacostia (or Eastern Branch) rivers, two canals, and Rock Creek with its tributaries.

With the urban schemes of Paris and other world capitals in mind, L'Enfant surveyed the site of the future U.S. capital from all directions, including the north approach from Baltimore, "which offered travelers a synoptic view of the town and its natural setting from the hills above the Bladensburg Road."[19] Among the guidelines for his plan are thoroughfares "to not merely contrast with the general regularity, not to provide a greater variety of seats with pleasant prospects. . .but principally to connect each part of the city."[20] In addition to "outroads" identified on William T. Partridge's 1926 study of plans by L'Enfant and his successor, William Ellicott, a "city entrance" occupies a prominent position on the Potomac River in the approximate area where the Baltimore-Washington Parkway exits the city today.[21] Little of L'Enfant's vision was constructed during the eighteenth- or nineteenth centuries, however.

New and extended modes of transportation dominated the nineteenth century that--for service and speed--superseded those provided by water- and roadways. A rail line operated between the two cities in 1835, bettering the traditional stage coach travel time by half.[22] The Baltimore & Ohio Railroad opened a direct line to Washington City and encouraged regional development between the capital and not-insignificant Maryland port to the north. All the while, in Washington and environs a miscellany of crossroads towns and farms steadily grew up within the ten-mile city boundaries. One exception to such growth was the region along the east bank of the Anacostia River: "An area of commanding panoramic views and a hilly topography.[23]

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[19] Gutheim, Frederick, Worthy of a Nation (D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1977), p. 20.

[20] Cited in Gutheim, p. 25..

[21] Gutheim, p. 32.

[22] Ibid. p. 49.

[23] Ibid., p. 108.

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The first attempt to cohesively develop L'Enfant's scheme beyond city limits came in the 1890s with successive--but equally ineffectual--legislation, the 1893 and 1898 Highway Acts. Authorization was introduced for a plan extending L'Enfant's street plans, taking into account already-established subdivisions, but it failed to address funding or offer a timetable for implementation. The "Permanent System of Highways Plan," however, became the foundation for the McMillan Commission's revival of the original urban scheme in the grand, baroque tradition.

Several nationwide movements contributed to Washington's urban development at this time: The unparalleled success of the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago turned designers on to comprehensive and formally integrated city planning that included a generous landscape component, the essence of the City Beautiful movement; the increasing popularity and affordability of the automobile, which necessitated adequate roadways and service facilities; and the general decline of urban living conditions through overcrowding and poverty, which logically resulted in the out-of-doors as a popular recreation destination.

A trio of local events further drew the focus to Washington. "A small group of the country's best-known designers" assembled there to coordinate the centennial celebration of the "removal of government" to the city; the American Institute of Architects convened in 1900 to address issues of sculpture, landscape and public-building design; and, Senator James McMillan of Michigan orchestrated the creation of the Senate Park Commission. The McMillan Commission--as it is better known--was a highly influential group that advised the formation of a team of professionals "eminent in their professions, who shall consider the subject of the location and grouping of public buildings and monuments to be erected in the District of Columbia and the development of the entire park system of the District of Columbia."[24]

Commission members included: Charles Moore, assistant to McMillan (who later served on the Commission of Fine Arts for twenty-seven years); Charles Eliot II, whose father designed Boston's comprehensive park system and worked at the Olmsted brothers' firm; Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr., a principal in that office and head of the nation's first landscape-architecture curriculum at Harvard University; pre-eminent architects Charles F. McKim and Daniel Burnham, both of whom worked on the Columbian Exposition; and sculptor August Saint-Gaudens who joined the team later. Moore, Olmsted and Eliot would remain key figures in the design of the national capital region during the next three decades.

[24] Ibid., p. 113, 116.

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In addition to downtown development, the McMillan Commission recommended a series of drives and park connections around the city: in Virginia along the Potomac River down to Mount Vernon, in Maryland and D.C. up to Great Falls; a Fort Drive to connect forty or so historic Civil War sites; and to enlarge and embellish Rock Creek Park for intensified recreational use.[25] In keeping with L'Enfant's vision:

> The City Beautiful movement in Washington was. . . swept along to include city entrances, parkways, boulevards, monumental bridges, and entire streets.[26]

This was followed by the Commission of Fine Arts' (CFA, established in 1910) recommendation in 1918 for a "permanent system of highways [to] be revised to allow for the new park schemes." Crucial to a citywide network of local and "grand entrance" parkways was the Olmsted Brothers' urging for protection of the Rock Creek Park property. The idea followed up by a U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' recommendation for the acquisition of 400-foot strips of land along Rock Creek and its tributaries in D.C. and neighboring Montgomery County, Maryland.[27]

ROCK CREEK & POTOMAC PARKWAY: 1913–1935

The Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway was legislated 1913 as a two and one-half-mile connector between the East and West Potomac Parks on the river, and Rock Creek Park and the zoo. Rock Creek Park was established in 1890 as a nature preserve, an "open valley" of streams and forest to which hiking and riding trails were later added. A winding two-lane road, Beach Drive, provides the primary access through the park, which occupies 1,754 acres in the District and Montgomery County, Maryland. Access to the park interior is limited to about twenty entry points from small neighborhood thoroughfares.

Distinguishing traffic use through the park was an issue during the 1920s, even as the parkway was being developed. Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr., believed there should be a distinction between the lower and upper portions of the Rock Creek Valley. The bulk of the valley--above the zoo--

[25] Ibid., p. 125.

[26] Ibid., p. 135.

[27] Ibid., p. 145; these neighborhood parkways, also called "strip parks" or "border roads," protected the creek's floodplain and provided welcome green space within the urban sprawl.

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remains a park, while the parkway to the zoo is the narrowest right-of-way and serves as a commuter route. "You must be careful not to ruin that valley if it is to be all one. The valley of Rock Creek should not be turned into that kind of thoroughfare and ruin the stream and park character," he warned.[28]

A parkway linking the zoo and the Potomac parks was first studied in 1900, when Congress allocated $4,000 to employ landscape architect Samuel Parsons, Jr. During the early years of the century--concurrent to the McMillan Commission's workings--two options evolved. The first was to fill the valley and enclose the creek in an underground brick culvert--the fate that earlier befell Tiber Creek. This was determined to be a long-term and costly undertaking, and the commission pursued the second option: to maintain the open-valley plan and bring a road through it, thus allowing east-west traffic to traverse the park on bridges at non-grade level.[29]

But it was not until President William Howard Taft signed the parkway's enabling legislation in March 1913 that any progress was made--for reasons of conservation and transportation:

> That for the purpose of preventing the pollution and obstruction of Rock Creek and of connecting Potomac Park with the Zoological Park and Rock Creek Park, a commission. . .is authorized and directed to acquire. . .such land and premises. . .lying on both sides of Rock Creek. . . .That [such] lands. . .are hereby appropriated to and made a part of the parkway herein authorized to be acquired.[30]

The bill--whose justification resembled the New York legislation of 1906 that resulted in the Westchester parkways--included a $1.3 million appropriation for land acquisition, the cost of which was to be shared equally by District and federal governments. The Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway Commission, which included landscape architect James D. Langdon, sought to acquire slightly more than 4.1 million square feet of land, assessed at $1.42 million. By 1923, the commission had 82 percent of its goal, but funds ran out while twelve acres were still needed. This was mitigated through boundary adjustments and land condemnations. Segments of the road were under construction in the mid-20s, but title disputes and unacquired land prevented a continuous thoroughfare. The last leg of the parkway, between K and P streets, opened to traffic in October 1935.[31]

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[28] NCP&PC minutes (16-18 September, 1927), p. 15.

[29] Barry Mackintosh, Rock Creek Park: An Administrative History (Washington, D.C.: NPS History Division, 1985), p. 49.

[30] Congressional Record, pp. 4693-94, 4816. Pub. 432, 62nd Congress, 37 Stat. 885.

[31] Mackintosh, p. 61, 63.

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BORDER, STRIP, AND STREAM VALLEY PARKS

Ancillary to Rock Creek, and the Potomac and Anacostia Rivers are a number of "strip" or "border" parks that occupy the floodplain of local tributaries or park-related topography. These have historically been identified for local importance.

> Stream valley parks form the backbone and major portion of the District of Columbia and Metropolitan Park System. Their value as routes for passenger car traffic augmenting the city and metropolitan street system cannot be overestimated. One of their primary values which is often overlooked is the conservation of small wild life, woodland and water.[32]

In the District, Maryland and Virginia, a total of 11,552 publicly owned acres were devoted to such stream valley parks by the late 1930s, with nearly 12,000 additional acres planned.[33]

Maryland's Sligo Branch Parkway, conceived in the 1920s, is the single-largest strip park in the region. It descends about ten miles (northwest to southeast) from the city of Wheaton in Montgomery County to Hyattsville in Prince George's County, to link up with parkway extensions of the northeast and northwest branches of the Anacostia River, the Baltimore-Washington Parkway and Anacostia Park. The two-lane, undivided roadway winds alongside Sligo Creek, where numerous picnic and recreational spots are provided in a wooded setting, although access to the parkway from adjacent neighborhoods is limited. Right-of-way width varies within relatively narrow boundaries, and offers a limited buffer between the road and community development. During the late 1930s, Maryland was accepting donations of stream valley lands of 80 to 100 feet wide, with a total of forty-six miles anticipated upon completion.

The Piney Branch Parkway (extending east at 16th Street and Arkansas Avenue) was to average 400 feet wide, as an extension of Rock Creek Park's Beach Drive in 1908, and again in the 1920s.[34] Similarly, Pinehurst Parkway (extending west from the park along Beech Street to the Montgomery County line) is a slim green space flanked by residential streets that "embraces an important feeder stream."[35] The function of flood control was one important reason to protect these small waterways.

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[32] Max Wehrly, "Stream Valley Parks in the District of Columbia and Metropolitan Area" (12 October, 1939). RG 328, Box 18.

[33] Ibid.

[34] Mackintosh, p. 64.

[35] "Potomac Power Dam Report Due Today," Evening [Washington] Star (13 January, 1944). RG 66, Box 69.

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Linear parks created between roadways also include Beach Parkway (at the northernmost point of the District boundary) and the nearby North Portal Parkway at Blair Road. A "Northern Parkway" around Western Avenue and Oregon Avenue-extended (out to Old Bladensburg Road) was identified in 1945 as a priority project for the next five years by the Maryland National Capital Park & Planning Commission, as were improvements to the Western Avenue-Dalecarlia Reservoir area, and the George Washington Memorial Parkway from D.C. to Great Falls. Only the last of these three was constructed, and it was not completed until 1965.[36]

The western corner of the District contains the fragments of a minor park and parkway system that also failed to materialize in its entirety. Glover-Archbold Park in north Georgetown very nearly connects with the Rock Creek & Potomac Parkway. The NCP&PC had long planned for the nearby Whitehaven Parkway to extend from the Palisades Park to Massachusetts Avenue through this park, but today it exists as a road leading to it, then as a green extension of the park, and picking up again as a brief parkway that ends at Wisconsin Avenue. This was still a trouble spot in the 1950s when the NCP&PC sought to acquire the land between Wisconsin Avenue and Dumbarton Oaks Park to link the parkway with Whitehaven Street, only to discover that Dumbarton's dedication deed prohibits the incorporation of roadways.[37] In the 1920s, the Office of Public Buildings and Grounds sought to build the Klingle Valley Parkway to connect with the Normanstone Parkway, north of Dumbarton Oaks Park and the Naval Observatory, to serve as a western detour around the zoo; the development of each continued into the 1950s, but the connection between them never did.[40]

Nearby, the Arizona Parkway was slated for development between Canal Road and Van Ness Street: In a "portion of the valley of Foundry Branch along the general line of Arizona Avenue. . .of a parkway character that will provide facilities as a means of access to the park and to provide for a scenic highway for through traffic."[41] Had this been accomplished, it would have completed a link with the Dalecarlia Parkway, which occupies the right-of-way buffer along the Dalecarlia Reservoir grounds, situated at the D.C.-Montgomery County boundary abutting the Palisades Park.

Another slender park exists in the B&O railroad right of way that turns north at the Maryland

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[36] Fred Tuemmler to John Nolen (22 March, 1945). RG 328.

[37] W.E. Finley to Mr. and Mrs. Robert Woods Bliss (12 March, 1959).

[40] Mackintosh, p. 64-65.

[41] "Memorandum of Agreement between the NPS and the Government of the District of Columbia Relative to the Development of the Arizona Parkway" (16 April, 1948) RG 66, Box 8.

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line, and continues along the west side of the reservoir. Between Massachusetts Avenue and Bradley Boulevard, the Little Falls Parkway serves as a limited-access thoroughfare that leads into Chevy Chase, Maryland, park areas. During the 1920s, it was proposed to use this and the Dalecarlia property as part of "a circuit drive around the District of Columbia beyond Rock Creek Park."[42] Between the District line and Great Falls lies the Cabin John Creek, whose valley "in many respects compares favorably in scenery with the famous valley of Rock Creek." The NCP&PC sought this parkway to connect the city of Rockville with the Potomac River.[43]

The two linear parks that contain the Anacostia River branches are served by minimal abutting roads, although they are not identified as parkways proper. A similar parkway is found in the Cabin Branch tributary (between Sheriff Road and Central Avenue), located in Maryland near the Eastern Avenue District boundary. In 1927 the National Capital Parks and Planning Commission recommended that land in the creek's floodplain "be acquired for park purposes to serve the growing communities of Capitol Heights and Seat Pleasant." Oxen Run, flanking the Southern Avenue D.C. boundary, was also slated to "be developed with a parkway and recreational facilities" in the 1920s. Today the upper valley portion contains a golf course and lands that connect with the Suitland Parkway, and the lower valley consists of a park; neither includes a designated parkway.[44]

Planning for these parkways had quickly become a regional concern, one taken up by the National Capital Parks and Planning Commission (NCP&P, founded 1926) and Maryland National Capital Park & Planning Commission (MNCP&PC, 1927). To protect Rock Creek's watershed to the north, an extension of the park was idealized, but "to inspire the District's neighbors to substantive action, the carrot of federal aid was deemed necessary."[45]

The vehicle for the expansion of Rock Creek Park into Maryland, the Mount Vernon Memorial Highway and other parkways was the Capper-Cramton Act, approved 29 May, 1930. This act provided $16 million "for the acquiring of such lands in the District of Columbia as are necessary and desirable for the suitable development of the National Capital park, parkway and playground

[42] Charles Eliot II and NCP&PC, "Preliminary Report: Park System for the National Capital Washington Region" (February 1927), p. 16. RG 328.

[43] Eliot and NCP&PC, "Park System. . . ," p. 16.

[44] Eliot and NCP&PC, "Park System. . . ," p. 16.

[45] Mackintosh, p. 67.

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system. . . ." It provided that the government would grant one-third, and advance two-thirds, of the cost of these constructions, with a $1.5 million ceiling for the federal contribution and $3 million more for the advance.[46]

MOUNT VERNON MEMORIAL HIGHWAY: 1928–1932
GEORGE WASHINGTON MEMORIAL PARKWAY: 1930–1965

The George Washington Memorial Parkway (GWMP) on the Virginia shore includes the parkway from Mount Vernon, about twelve miles south of Washington, to Great Falls, fifteen miles to the north. The oldest portion--from the estate to the site of Memorial Bridge--was built as the Mount Vernon Memorial Highway (MVMH) from 1928-32; and the northern parkway leg, as the GWMP, from the 1930s-65. Buffering the District shore, the parkway is composed of Palisades Park, the Chesapeake & Ohio Canal [National Historical Park], and the B&O railway right-of-way as far as the Montgomery County line.

The MVMH was legislated on 23 May, 1928, to commemorate the bicentennial of George Washington's birth--an idea dating to a citizen's group organized in 1886. In 1930 Congress concluded the parkway should extend even farther: north to Great Falls on both shores, and down to Fort Washington in Maryland. Two years later, all existing and future components were renamed the George Washington Memorial Parkway.

Gilmore Clarke, consulting landscape architect for the MVMH, attested that the Bronx River Parkway (1923), a thirteen-mile thoroughfare in New York designed exclusively for pleasure motoring, set the precedent for the Virginia parkway:

> I doubt whether the Mount Vernon Memorial Highway would have been built in the manner in which it was, had those in charge not seen and profited by the work of the Westchester County Park Commission. And so Washington has one example of the type of motorway that should. . .extend out from every portal of the city.[47]

Even before the MVMH/GWMP was begun, this New York parkway was cited as a model for a

[46] Mackintosh, p. 67-68.

[47] Gilmore Clarke, "D.C. Need of Modern Parkway Cited by Fine Arts Chairman," The Sunday [Washington] Star (5 June, 1938).

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similar thoroughfare leading north from the nation's capital. The proponent was "keenly interested in the subject of trying to work out a parkway between Washington and Baltimore on lines somewhat similar to the Bronx Parkway--a parkway which will average perhaps a thousand feet in width, but vary according to local conditions, topography, etc."[48]

Clarke was responsible for designing bridges and small architectural elements of the parkway, as well as heading the design team made up largely of Westchester County Parkway Commission alumni: besides himself, engineer Jay Downer, landscape architect Wilbur Simonson, and plantsman Henry Nye. Clarke's MVMH bridges are characteristically romantic and rustic, low-slung segmental-arched concrete with rough-faced stone cladding--nearly identical to those he designed for Westchester.

The fifteen and one-half-mile MVMH was built by the federal Bureau of Public Roads and was one of the first facilities planned using aerial photography, which afforded much greater detail of topography, drainage patterns, the existing road, and options for the new parkway. These novelties generated a more sinuous and irregular roadway than did traditional, tangential curves.[49]

From Mount Vernon to Alexandria, the four-lane, undivided road clings to the shoreline it protects, from thickly wooded sections to open, grassy embankments and marsh; occasional overlooks and park/parking areas provide points for picnicking and occasional views to Fort Washington across the river. In contrast, the route from Alexandria to the bridge is divided by a median, open and manicured. This portion also contains several formal monuments--the Columbia Island Circle at the junction of the bridge, the Navy-Marine Memorial, and the LBJ Memorial Grove --the backdrop to which is an ongoing vista of the magnificent Washington skyline. In recent years the parkway has been augmented by a bicycle/pedestrian path of complementary winding character.

Federal acquisition of land northward continued from the 1930s to 1966: The 9.7-mile north leg of the Virginia parkway from Memorial Bridge to the interstate Beltway was completed in 1965 at a cost of $30 million. The 7.7-mile Maryland section on the opposite shore (renamed the Clara Barton Parkway in 1989) cost $18 million. The entire parkway is composed of 7,146 acres, of which 44 percent are developed (road, pavement, lawn) and 42 percent are natural woodlands; about 300 acres of scenic easements offer additional protection.

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[48] Letter to Joseph T. Shirley (17 November, 1927), RG 328.

[49] Department of Transportation, America's Highways, p. 329, 396.

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SUITLAND PARKWAY: 1943–1944

As the 1940s approached, highways, expressways, and turnpikes took on new and more exacting connotations--and were in great demand. The lagging economy and impending war demanded that speed, safety, and efficiency take precedent over aesthetic considerations. With these ideals gaining strength, parkways could no longer be developed strictly as pleasure roads.

> By the 1930s especially express highways [were promoted] with a view toward rescuing their cities. As urbanites moved to the suburbs of deteriorating and congested cities, planners insisted that an accelerated road program would hasten traffic flow and boost morale and economic development. . . . Highway building was a form of social and economic therapy.[50]

Post-Depression unemployment was great, and throughout the 1930s President Franklin D. Roosevelt thought "principally of highway building as part of a package aimed at relieving unemployment"; yet, by 1939 he still "simply could not make up his mind about the relationship between road building and economic recovery." Meanwhile, the Bureau of Public Roads began to press for a 30,000-mile national expressway system.[51]

A highway-needs study of the Baltimore-Washington region reported that parkways are intended "for passenger vehicle use only, and to accommodate high-speed vehicles without interference from other vehicles which may stop or start to load or unload passengers or enter or depart from such highways"; while freeways are "designed to accommodate passengers and commercial traffic."[52] And while the emphasis was clearly moving away from pleasure motoring, it remained an integral-if-diminishing component of general road construction, for the Federal Highway Act of 1938 (section 8) provides:

> For the construction and maintenance of parkways, to give access to national parks and national monuments, or to become connecting sections of a national parkway plan. . . .[53]

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[50] Mark Rose, Interstate: Express Highway Politics 1941-56 (Lawrence: Regents Press of Kansas, 1979), p. 5.

[51] Rose, p. 2, 4, 10.

[52] E.D. Merrill to Thomas MacDonald (19 March, 1945), RG 328.

[53] Memo for A.E. Demaray, Appendix A, p. 1.

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With World War II came a modern and new justification for a road type that combines parkway principals with freeway efficiency; its model was the sleek, direct, and high-speed oriented German autobahen. Beginning in 1941, FDR called for a priority on "roads important to national defense," and later that year he restricted the Federal Works Administration to approving only those road projects "essential to national defense as certified by the appropriate Federal defense agencies."[54] This included access roads to military installations, defense plants, airports, and ports. The Defense Highway Act of 1941 appropriated $10 million in federal monies to this end, to be matched with state funds.

Suitland Parkway (1943-44) exemplifies such a defense highway, although its origin lays with the McMillan Commission's plans. The nine and one-half-mile dual-road parkway connects South Capital Street in the District to Route 4 in Maryland, and Bolling Field with Andrews Air Force Base (formerly Camp Springs Army Air Base). The $6 million construction cost was part of the Camp Springs development, pushed through Congress as a War Department expenditure. Plans to extend it eastward to the Chesapeake Bay were never fulfilled.

The parkway remained unfinished in 1945 when it became the responsibility of the National Park Service, and so it remains today. Yet, "it was so designed and construction so executed that the roadway system could be ultimately developed into a fully landscaped parkway."[55] About four miles of the "B roadway" in Maryland is unpaved, so traffic shares a single, undivided 24-foot lane. Five major bridges traverse the parkway, whose right-of-way is composed of nearly eighty-eight acres. Other characteristics include some at-grade crossings, semi-maintained buffer plantings, and a variable-width median 6 to 200 feet wide. The parkway's unfinished and uncharacteristic state must have been perceived as an invitation for improvement, for in 1958 it was proposed to bring it up to "freeway standards at several points."[56]

One function of a defense highway was to be impervious to air attack. Thus, a typical parkway site--fitted to the natural contours of the landscape--would provide a detour and scatter area, while plantings would provide camouflage for vehicles seeking concealment. While the efficient autobahen formula did enhance the safety and the speed factors, it failed as a defensible avenue because, noted one Bureau of Public Roads representative: "I recall how effectively these direct and highly conspicuous arteries, passing from one important center to another, can be used to guide

[54] Rose, p. 12.

[55] D.G. White to T.S. Settle (22 April, 1948), RG 328.

[56] Washington Star ??

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hostile air attack to its important objectives."[57] The limited access of parkways and military highways also permitted easy closure to non-military traffic in times of emergency.[58] This application was later confirmed when justifying the Baltimore-Washington Parkway.

While construction of non-military projects was stalled until "September 6, 1945, when Harry S Truman dropped wartime controls [and] normal state and federal road construction got underway," the planning process continued all the while.[59] Congress had approved a national system of interstate highways and a system of secondary and feeder roads in rural areas with passage of the Federal-Aid Highway Act 1944. In the meantime, FDR also created the Interregional Highway Committee, which included Frederic Delano of the NCP&PC (and FDR's uncle), and Rexford Tugwell, who worked on the planned city of Greenbelt. Road construction was a high priority:

> This deferment of normal construction programs has resulted in a huge backlog of needed highway facilities which is most serious in and near cities where traffic congestion is our country's No. 1 post-war highway problem.[60]

It is not surprising, then, that "the years after 1945 were especially prosperous for members of the road transport and highway construction industries." And between 1946-50, state, local, and federal officials spent $8.4 billion--more than any previous five-year period in history.[61]

In this hurried context, landscape architects continued to assert that even the most efficient and streamlined road could be improved at no extra cost through preliminary incorporation of landscape features like grade differentials and plantings. Characteristics essential to parkway aesthetics also benefitted highway design, though they were considered unnecessary. "Most of these practices have been dictated. . .by the criterion of beauty," asserted one critic. "Yet time has proved not only their

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[57] H.S. Fairbank, "Military Highways," Proceedings of the 27th Annual Highway Conference, vol. 43 (July 24, 1941), p. 37.

[58] Carl W. Wild, "Designing Highways for Peace and Defense," Landscape Architecture, vol. 32, no. 4 (July 1942), p. 137-39.

[59] Rose, p. 12.

[60] Wilbur Simonson, "Advanced Designs for Post-War Highway Needs," Landscape Architecture, vol. 33 (July 1943), p. 130.

[61] Rose, p. 29, 31.

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popularity, but also their promotion of safety, comfort, and speed with respect to traffic, and efficiency with respect to maintenance and operation.[62]

These not unfamiliar factors include the elimination of grade crossings, the aesthetic treatment of bridges with material such as rough-faced stone, elimination of access to abutting properties, and separation of directional traffic by a central, planted strip. With the maturation of parkway use and design from pleasure motorway to a thoroughfare aimed at speed, safety, and national defense, the elements were in place for development of the Baltimore-Washington Parkway.

BALTIMORE-WASHINGTON PARKWAY: 1942–1954

The Baltimore-Washington Parkway (BWP) stretches twenty-nine miles northeastward from the capital to Baltimore: the northern ten miles were built and are maintained by the state of Maryland; the southern nineteen miles (to Jessup Road) were built by the Bureau of Public Roads and are maintained by the National Park Service. Although completed after mid-century, a Baltimore-to Washington route was studied and promoted from the 1920s as a proper entry to the capital, and a safer option to the near-parallel U.S. Route 1, unanimously proclaimed one of the deadliest stretches of road in the nation.

Here, era and function are reflected in a design that blends parkway principles with post-war austerity. The route accesses Fort Meade, the Agricultural Research Center, and the then-experimental Greenbelt community, as well as other reservations that abut more than half its course. By extending the road to Baltimore, Maryland grabbed the opportunity to develop an important route at relatively small expense.

The forested flanks and modest natural topography are much-suited to high-speed appreciation. This is speculatively the simple background envisioned by landscape architect T.C. Jeffers, for the parkway was never technically completed with a comprehensive planting plan. The bridge designs also indicate a concession to economy. The crossings over and visible from the parkway are clad in the rough-faced stone associated with structures of the 1920-30s, while the bridges underneath are unadorned concrete arches.

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[62] Laurie D. Cox, "Appearance: Essential Element in Superhighway Plans," Landscape Architecture, vol. 32, no. 2 (January 1942), p. 55-56.

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A $2 million appropriation in 1942 took the BWP as far as land acquisition and piecemeal grading, which was followed by eight years of continued design and discussion over funding and purpose. Although the war threat had passed, the thoroughfare was justified like Suitland Parkway. "This is, in reality, a national-defense road," one congressman testified in 1950 hearings. "If this is not a national-defense road from here to Fort Meade and the other Federal reservations, it would be difficult to point one out."[63] The federal portion of the parkway today retains its scenic qualities and characteristics, and serves as a primary intercity and regional route. Stylistically it reflects the final gasp of parkway development, as the aesthetics originally intended as park connectors merged with high-speed expressway design.

Thus, as the parkways of the national capital were systematically conceived during the first half of the twentieth century, in the wake of the precedent-setting parkway network of suburban New York, their design and implementation reflect a transportation priority. Recreation, conservation, commemoration, and military defense are diminishing--and often overlapping--secondary justifications. After World War II, creative parkway development was--for all practical purposes--eclipsed by modern highway construction.

[63] Congressional Record, vol. 96, no. 103, 1950, p. 7131.

F. Associated Property Types

I. Name of Property Type parkway

II. Description

The National Capital parkway system is composed of more than 8,761 acres of protected arterial byways in Washington, D.C., suburban Maryland, and Northern Virginia, totaling more than 74 miles. The contributing parkways include the Rock Creek and Potomac, Mount Vernon Memorial Highway George Washington Memorial, Suitland, Baltimore-Washington, and numerous neighborhood strip parks (although this last category is not included in the acreage/miles figures given). All are related to provide a "garden system" within a densely developed urban scheme, in keeping with a scale and layout that dates to the eighteenth century. The parkways serve as a link among the parks, monuments, and suburbs of the national capital region, with features that include scenic overlooks, hiking/biking trails, picnic/parking areas, native and ornamental plantings, and formal monuments--each situated to provide advantageous vistas and accessible day-use recreation

III. Significance

The various parkways of the national capital reflect the culmination of several national trends after the turn of the century: the City Beautiful movements' emphasis on integrated urban green space; automobility and the rapid development of road systems; and the decline in the quality of city living and resulting popularity of outdoor recreation. In Washington, D.C., the McMillan Commission's recommendation for a series of parks and parkways was coupled with the American Institute of Architects's assessment of a cityscape badly in need of formal planning and direction--in keeping with the original eighteenth-century urban scheme by Pierre L'Enfant. The four primary parkways and numerous small, regional strip parks--developed from 1913 to 1965 through the cooperative efforts of Maryland, Virginia, and District authorities--collectively represent all major justifications

IV. Registration Requirements

A. Landscape architecture
1. natural terrain and topography
2. existing and enhanced native vegetation
3. variable-width median and buffer articulation
4. vistas

B. Architecture/structures
1. dual-lane roadway
2. culverts and guard rails
3. bridges
4. monuments and statuary

C. Site
1. limited and well-distanced access
2. vertical and horizontal curves
3. enhancement of natural scenic features
4. roadside overlooks, parks, parking areas

[X] See continuation sheet

[ ] See continuation sheet for additional property types

II. Description continued

by local and visiting citizenry. All associated architectural and landscape architectural characteristics typify the period of parkway development--from the early twentieth century to World War II. For each, traffic is limited to non-commercial motoring; single- and dual-lane roads fit the natural topographic contours, and variable-width medians separate lanes when possible; indigenous vegetation has been preserved, maintained, and encouraged, especially as right-of-way buffer from adjacent property owners; limited access and few, if any, at-grade crossings enhance factors of speed and safety; and private access and commercial frontage is banned, as is unsightly signage. Bridges, culverts, walls, and similar structures are designed as harmonious complements to the natural environment. Materials such as rustic rough-cut stone masonry and concrete are used in eclectic and romantic compositions of horizontal, arched designs. All properties remain largely unchanged from their period of development, and are used today for their original purpose of transportation in and around Washington, D.C.

III. Significance continued

for a parkway type of thoroughfare. Consistently intended as a transportation route, the Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway and strip parks also represent natural-resource conservation efforts; the Mount Vernon Memorial Highway/George Washington Memorial Parkway, a ceremonial and recreational route; Suitland, a defense highway; and the Baltimore-Washington Parkway, a defense and intercity highway. After the precedent-setting network of suburban New York parkways--after which it was idealized--Washington's system is the most comprehensive and monumental extant in the nation. Aesthetically unaltered, the parkways remain vital components of the regional transportation arteries and they continue to contribute to the historic symbolism and design of the nation's capital.

G. Summary of Identification and Evaluation Methods

Numerous resources were used to evaluate the significance of Washington, D.C.'s parkway system. The general history of the period of significance--approximately the first half of the twentieth century--is historically linked to regional cultural organizations and the comprehensive plans they issued: the McMillan Commission, National Capital Park and Planning Commission, the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission, and the Commission of Fine Arts. Each has been concerned with the same historic and physical boundaries of the national capital and neighboring suburbs in Maryland and Virginia. The integrity of the contributing landscape-architectural features and structures has remained high because of ongoing ownership and maintenance by the National Park Service, the arbiter of the guiding Secretary of the Interiors' Standards for Historic Preservation. Federal records exist for each parkway in the collection of the National Archives, as well Historic Resource Study: Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway, George Washington Memorial Parkway, Suitland Parkway, Baltimore-Washington Parkway, by Historian Jere Krakow (NPS, 1990). Also, a Rock Creek Park administrative history documents the development of that parkway. The original section of the George Washington Memorial Parkway--the Mount Vernon Memorial Highway--is listed in the National Register of Historic Places and is the subject of a historic-resource study being produced by EDAW Inc. of Alexandria. The Historic American Buildings Survey/Historic American Engineering Record Division, NPS, completed a selective survey of historic bridges in the National Capital Region, NPS, including many associated with the parkways discussed here. This material provided information on the contexts and themes related to the parkways: conservation, history and development of the park and parkway system of the national capital, and the influence of automobiles and the development of commuter arteries.

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RG 351, Records of the District of Columbia
RG 328, National Capital Park & Planning Commission
RG 79, National Park Service
RG 30, Bureau of Public Roads

[X] See continuation sheet

Primary location of additional documentation:

- [ ] State historic preservation office
- [ ] Other State agency
- [XX] Federal agency
- [ ] Local government
- [ ] University
- [ ] Other

Specify repository: National Capital Region, NPS; National Capital Planning Commission

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X See continuation sheet

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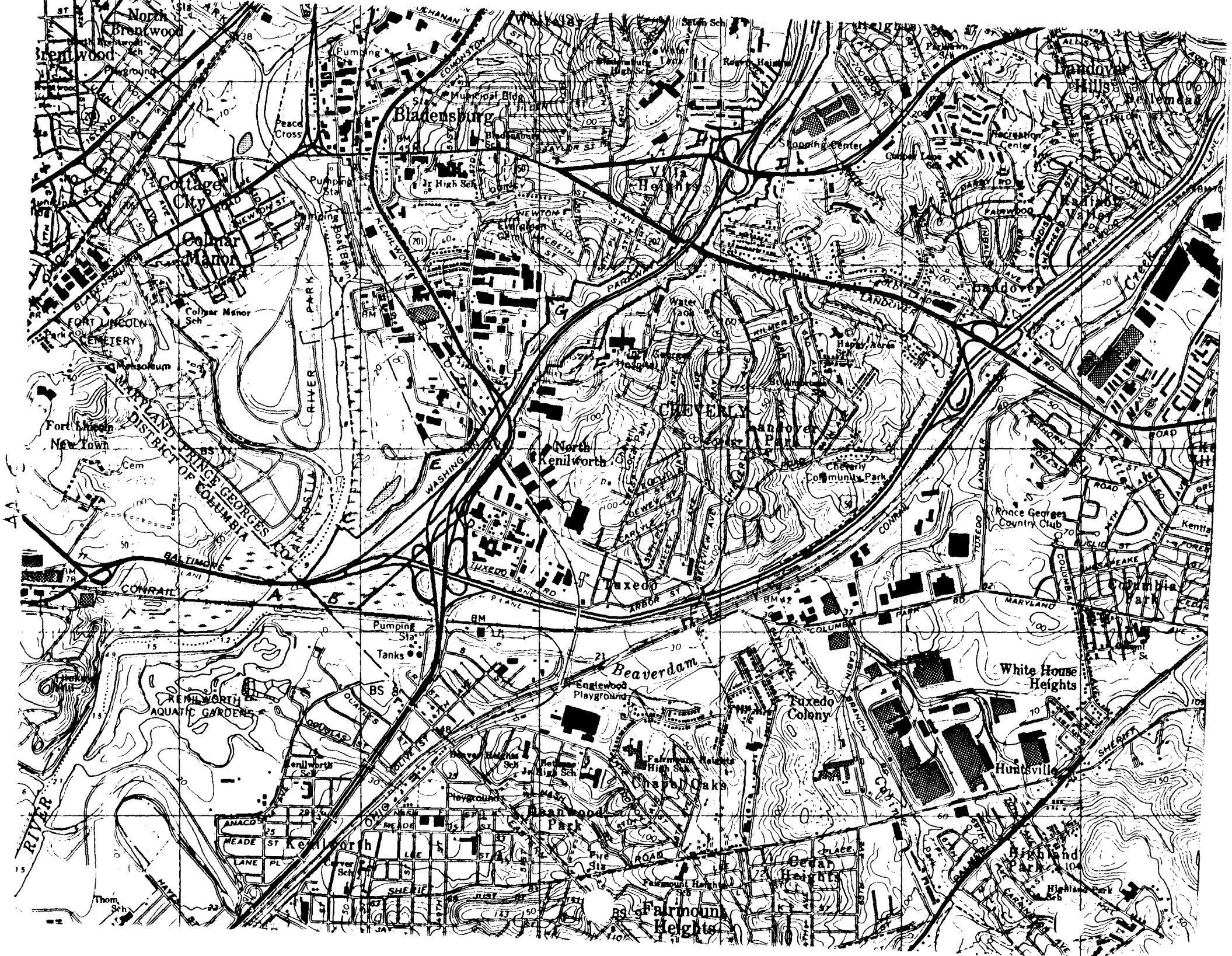

North Brentwood
Brentwood
Bladensburg
Cottage City
Colmar Manor
Colmar Manor Sch
FORT LINCOLN CEMETERY
Mausoleum
Fort Lincoln New Town
MARYLAND
PRINCE GEORGES
DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
ANACOSTIA RIVER
Peace Cross
Municipal Bldg
Pumping Sta
Jr High Sch
Bladensburg Sch
Sanitary Landfill
Boat Basin
Evergreen Cem
Water Tank
Dr. George Hospital
Happy Acres
Stanton Sch
Roger Heimann
Bladensburg High Sch
Parkdale Sch
Stanning Center
Recreation Center
Garden Lake
Landover Hills
Bellemead
Kenilworth Valley
Landover
CHEVERLY
Landover Park
Cheverly Community Park
North Kenilworth
Prince Georges Country Club
Tuxedo
Columbia Park
Beaverdam
Englewood Playground
Tuxedo Colony
White House Heights
Huntsville
Chapel Oaks
Fairmount Heights High Sch
Kenilworth Aquatic Gardens
Kenilworth Sch
Kenilworth
Deanwood Park
Playgrounds
Carver Sch
Fire Sta
Cedar Heights
Fairmount Heights Sch
Fairmount Heights
Highland Park
Highland Park Sch
Thom Sch
CONRAIL
BALTIMORE
WASHINGTON
CONRAIL
MARYLAND
TUXEDO
LANDOVER
COLUMBIA
KENILWORTH
BLADENSBURG
NEWTON
PARKWOOD
SHERIFF
ANACOSTIA RIVER

WASHINGTON EAST QUADRANGLE
DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA – MARYLAND
7.5 MINUTE SERIES (TOPOGRAPHIC – BATHYMETRIC)

A1-5

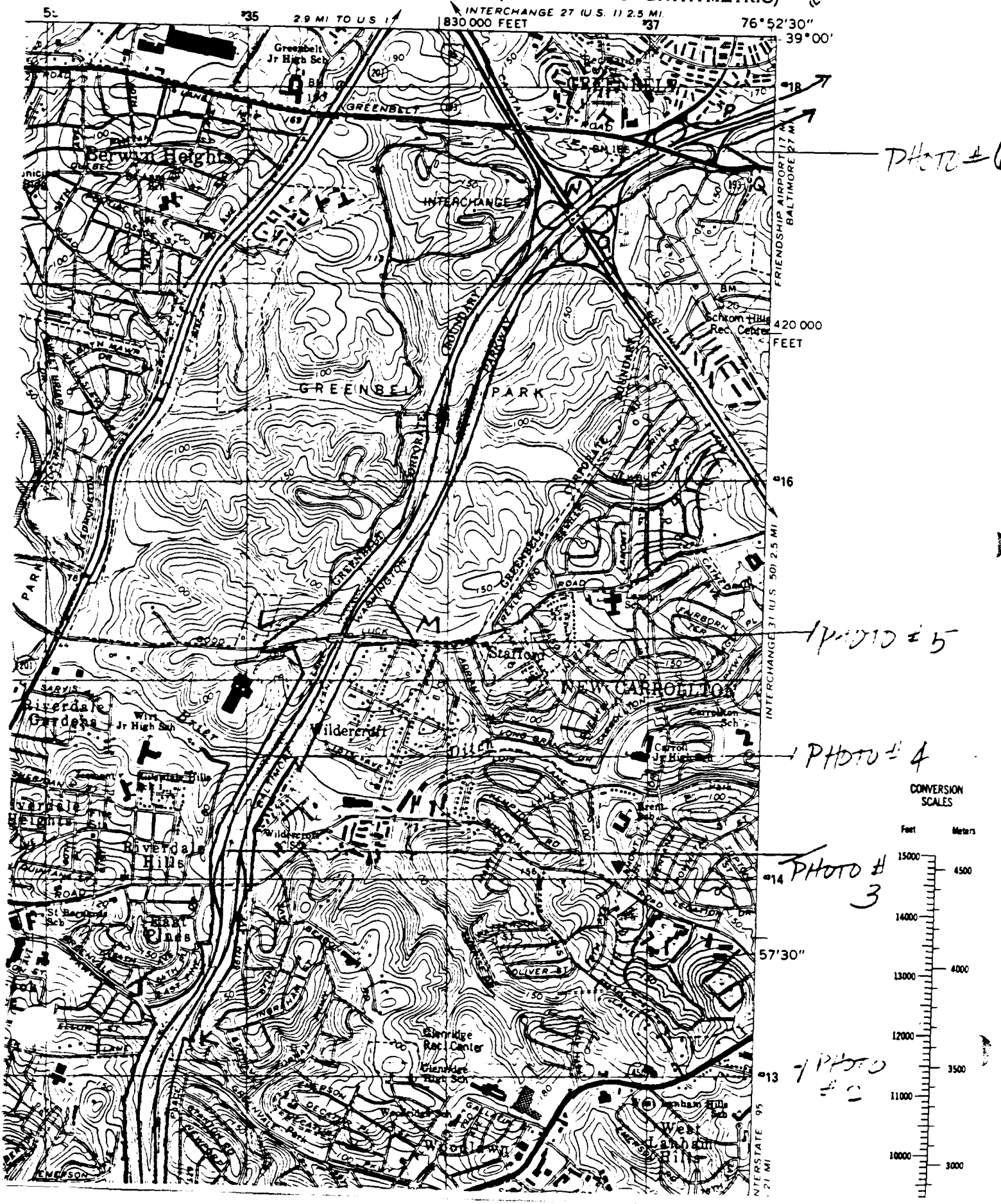


PHOTO #6

PHOTO #5

PHOTO #4

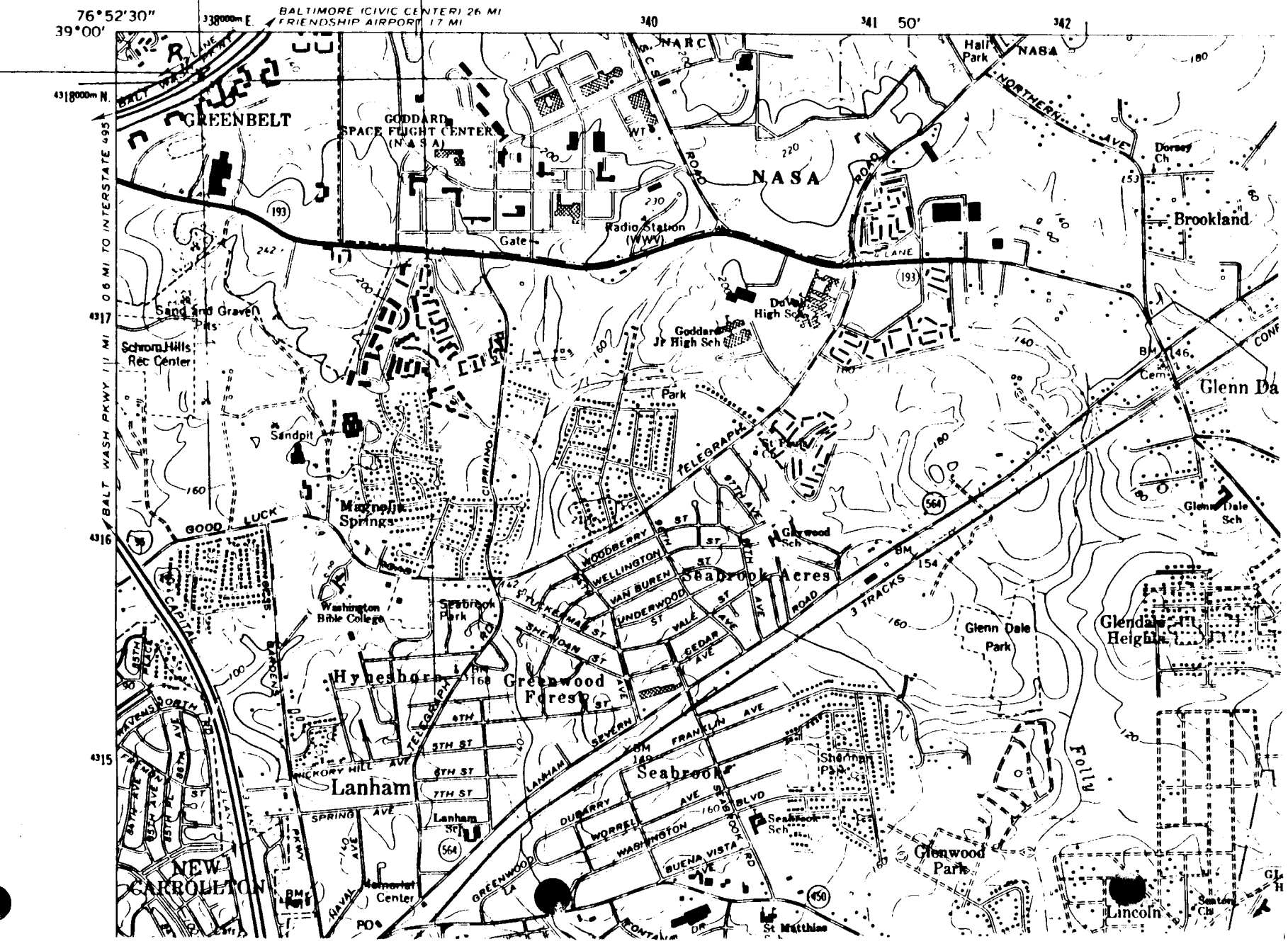
PHOTO #3

PHOTO #2

AA-5

PHOTO #7

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
GEOLOGICAL SURVEY



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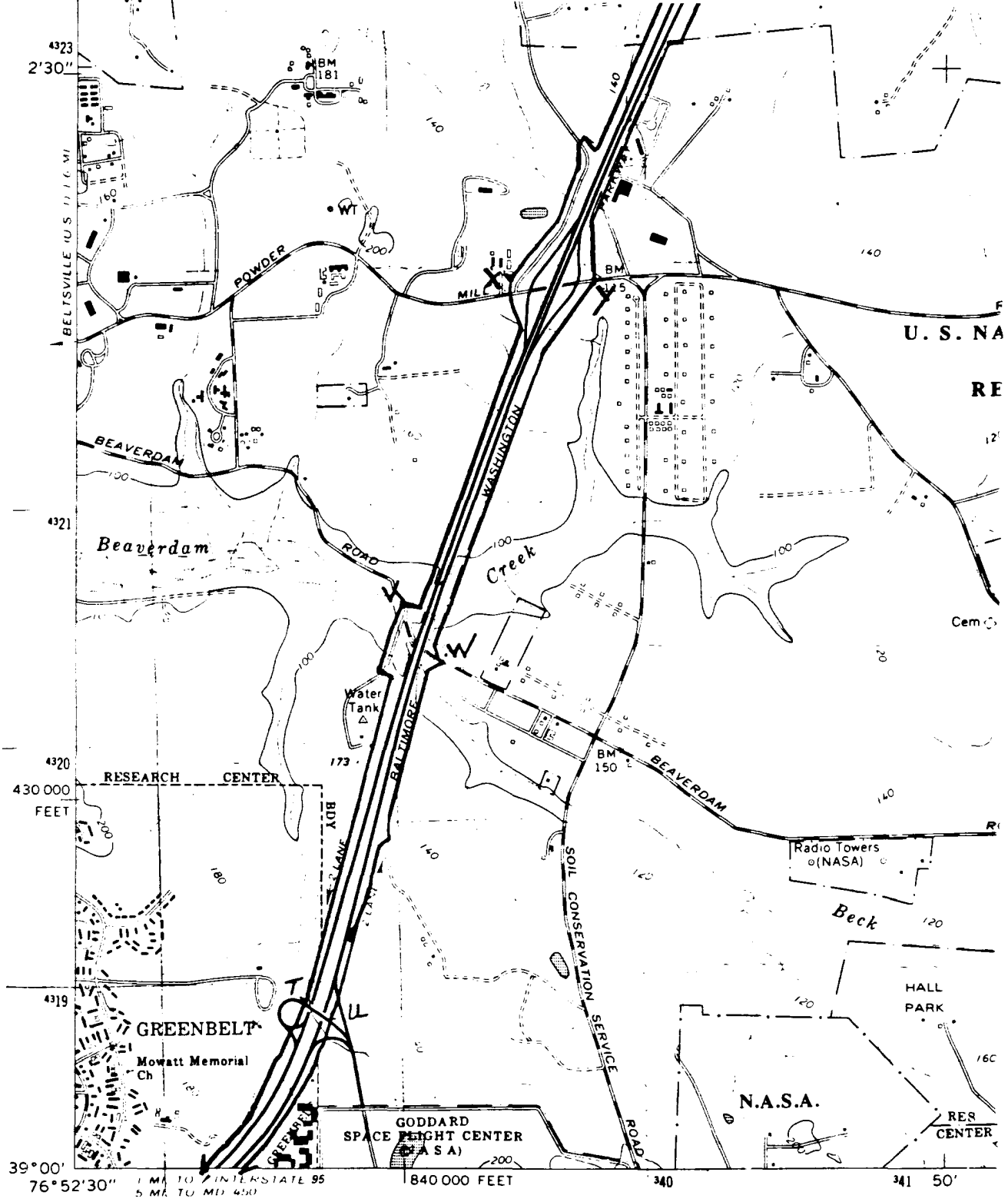


(WASHINGTON EAST) 5661 IV NW

Mapped by the Army Map Service
Edited and published by the Geological Survey
Control by USGS, USC&GS, USCE, USSCS, and WSSC

Topography by photogrammetric methods and by planetable surveys 1943. Revised by the Geological Survey 1965

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

Fine red dashed lines indicate selected fence and field lines where generally visible on aerial photographs. This information is unchecked

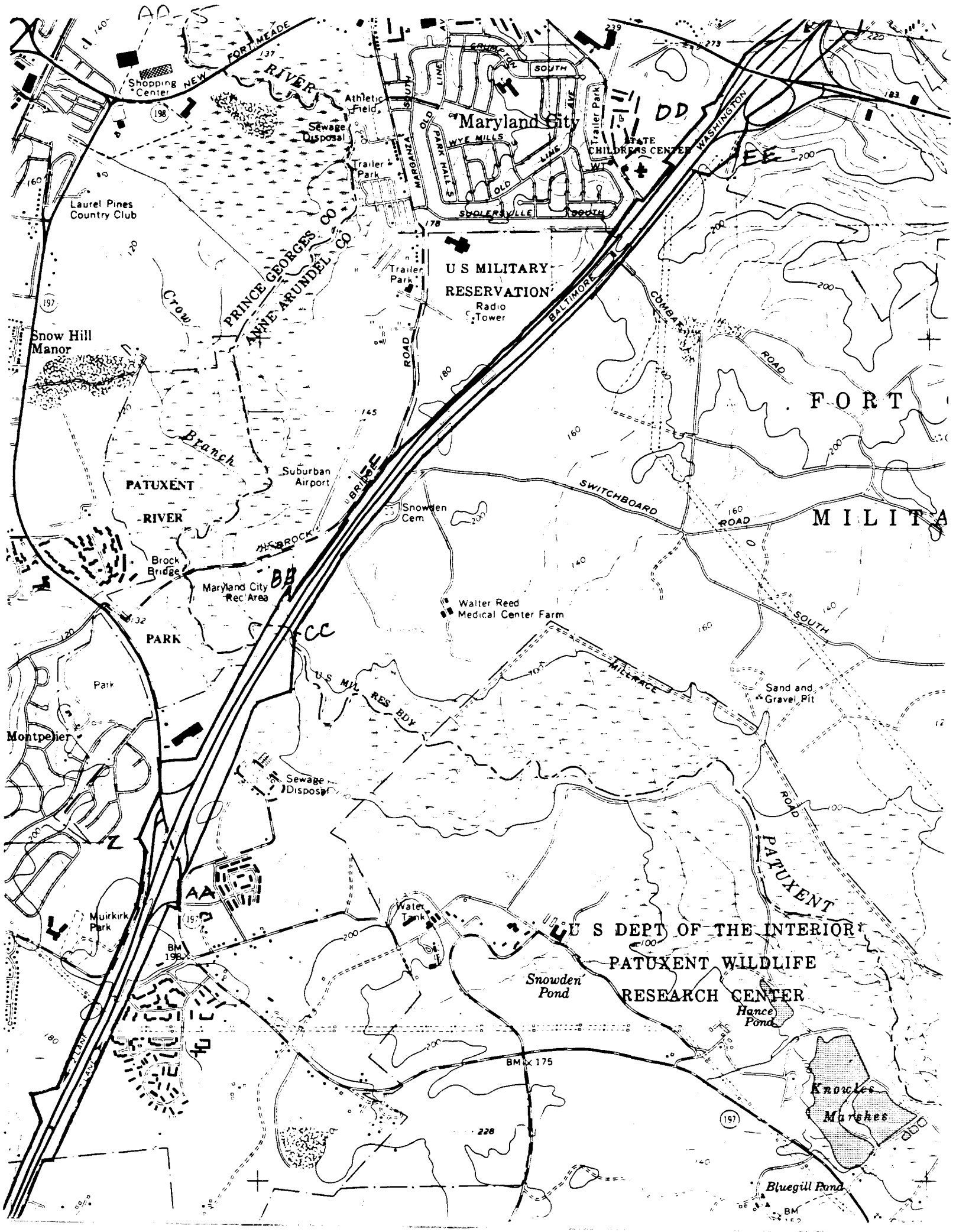
Red tint indicates areas in which only landmark buildings are shown

There may be private inholdings within the boundaries of the National or State reservations shown on this map

Purple tint indicates extension of urban areas

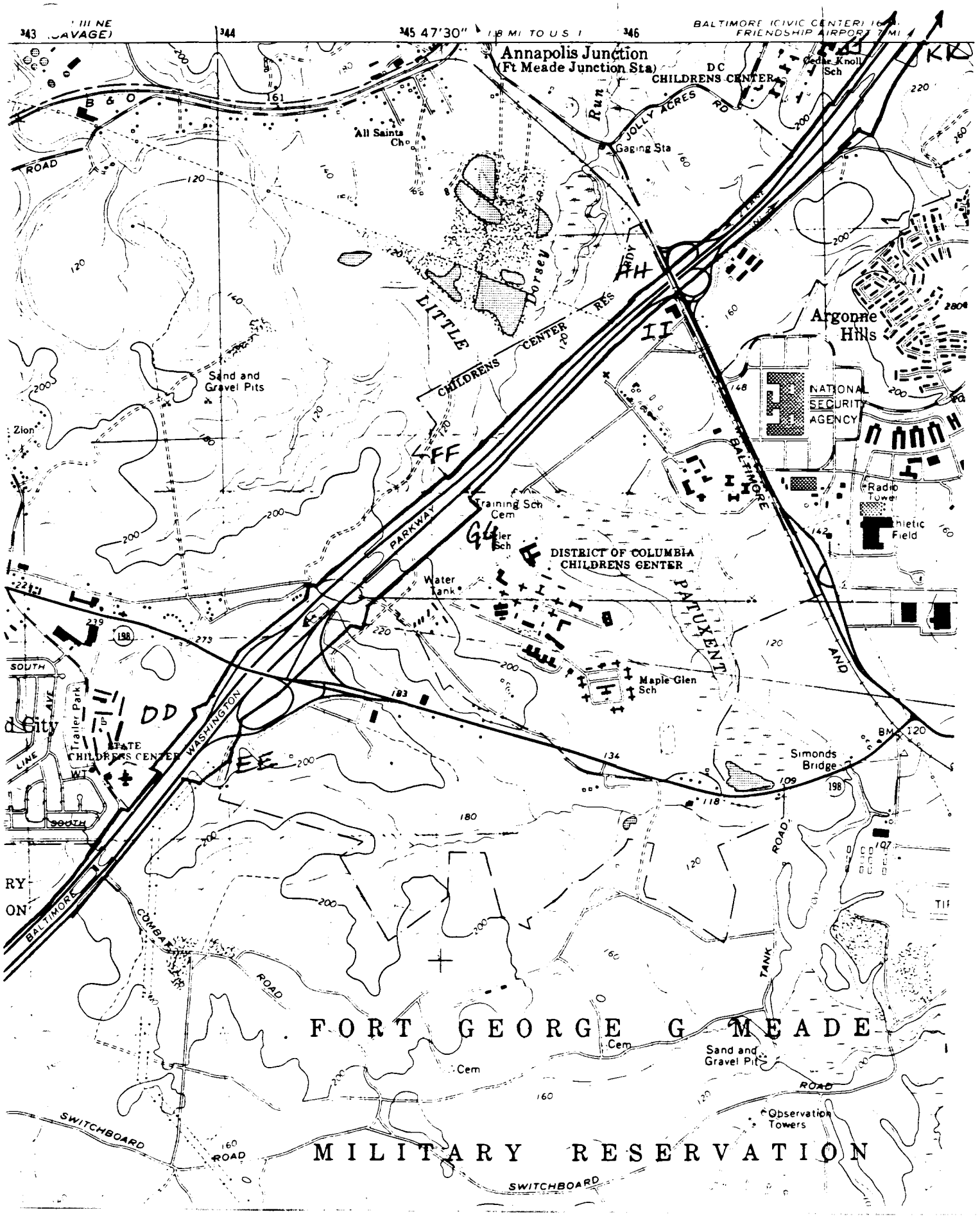
MN
GN
8½°
151 MILS
1°09'
20 MILS

UTM GRID AND 1979 MAGNETIC NORTH DECLINATION AT CENTER OF SHEET


AA-5
Shopping Center
NEW FORT MEADE
RIVER
Athletic Field
Sewage Disposal
Trailer Park
Maryland City
GRIMPTON
SOUTH
OLD LINE
MARGANTZ
PARK HALL
WYE MILLS
OLD LINE AVE
SOUDERSVILLE
SOUTH
Trailer Park
STATE CHILDREN'S CENTER
WASHINGTON
DD
EE
Laurel Pines Country Club
PRINCE GEORGES CO
ANNE ARUNDEL CO
Crow
Trailer Park
U S MILITARY RESERVATION
Radio Tower
BALTIMORE
COMBAT
ROAD
Snow Hill Manor
ROAD
FORT
Branch
Suburban Airport
BRIDGE
PATUXENT
RIVER
Snowden Cem
SWITCHBOARD
ROAD
MILIT
BROCK
Brock Bridge
Maryland City Rec Area
BB
PARK
CC
Walter Reed Medical Center Farm
SOUTH
Park
U S MIL RES BDY
MILLRACE
Sand and Gravel Pit
Montpelier
Sewage Disposal
ROAD
PATUXENT
AA
Muirkirk Park
Water Tank
U S DEPT OF THE INTERIOR
PATUXENT WILDLIFE
RESEARCH CENTER
Snowden Pond
Hance Pond
BM 175
Knowles Marshes
Bluegill Pond
BM

AA-5

LAUREL (
MAI
7.5 MINUTE SEF



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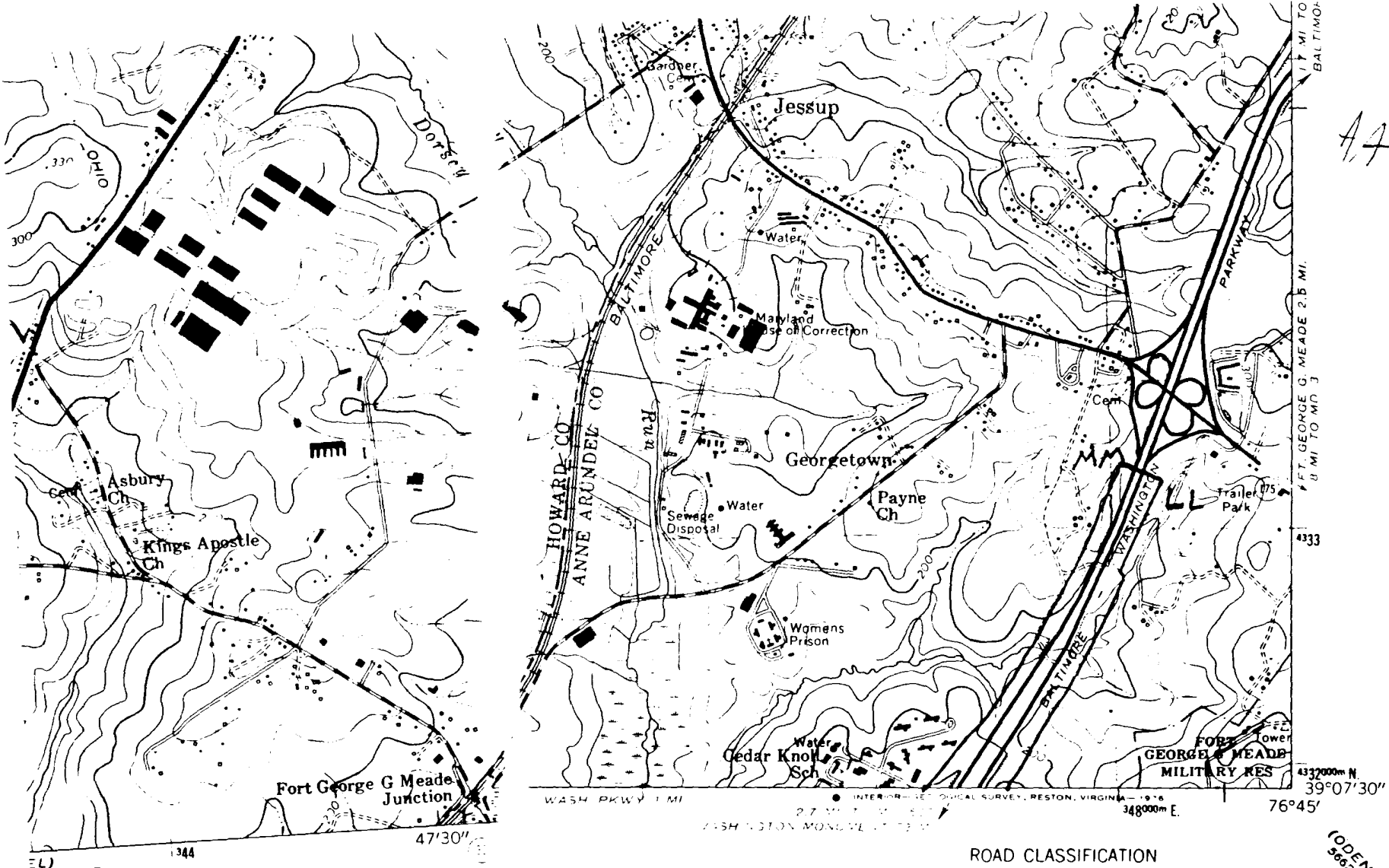
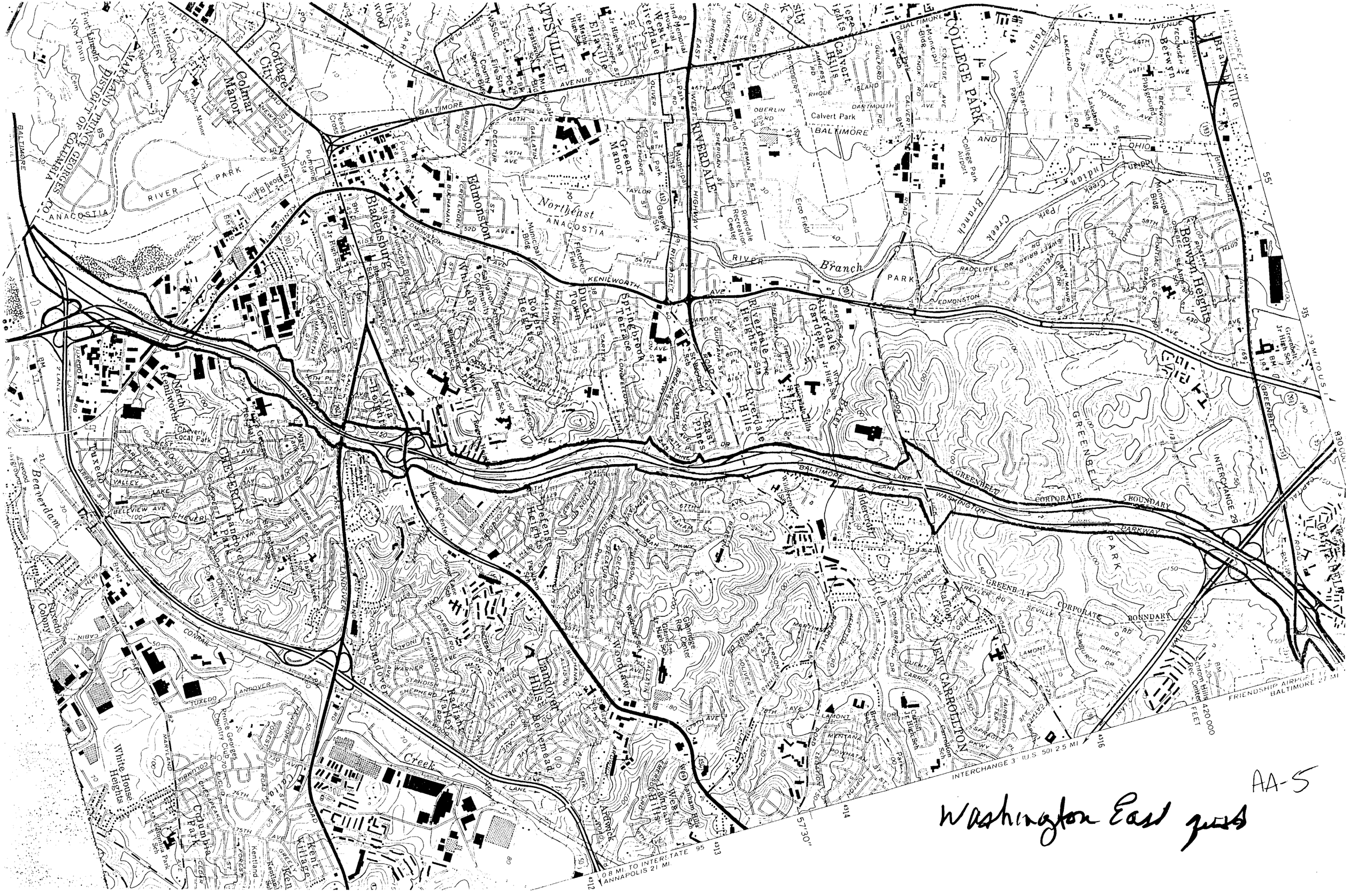


VAL 20 FEET
TICAL DATUM OF 1929

NAL MAP ACCURACY STANDARDS
URVEY, RESTON, VIRGINIA 22092
AND SYMBOLS IS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST

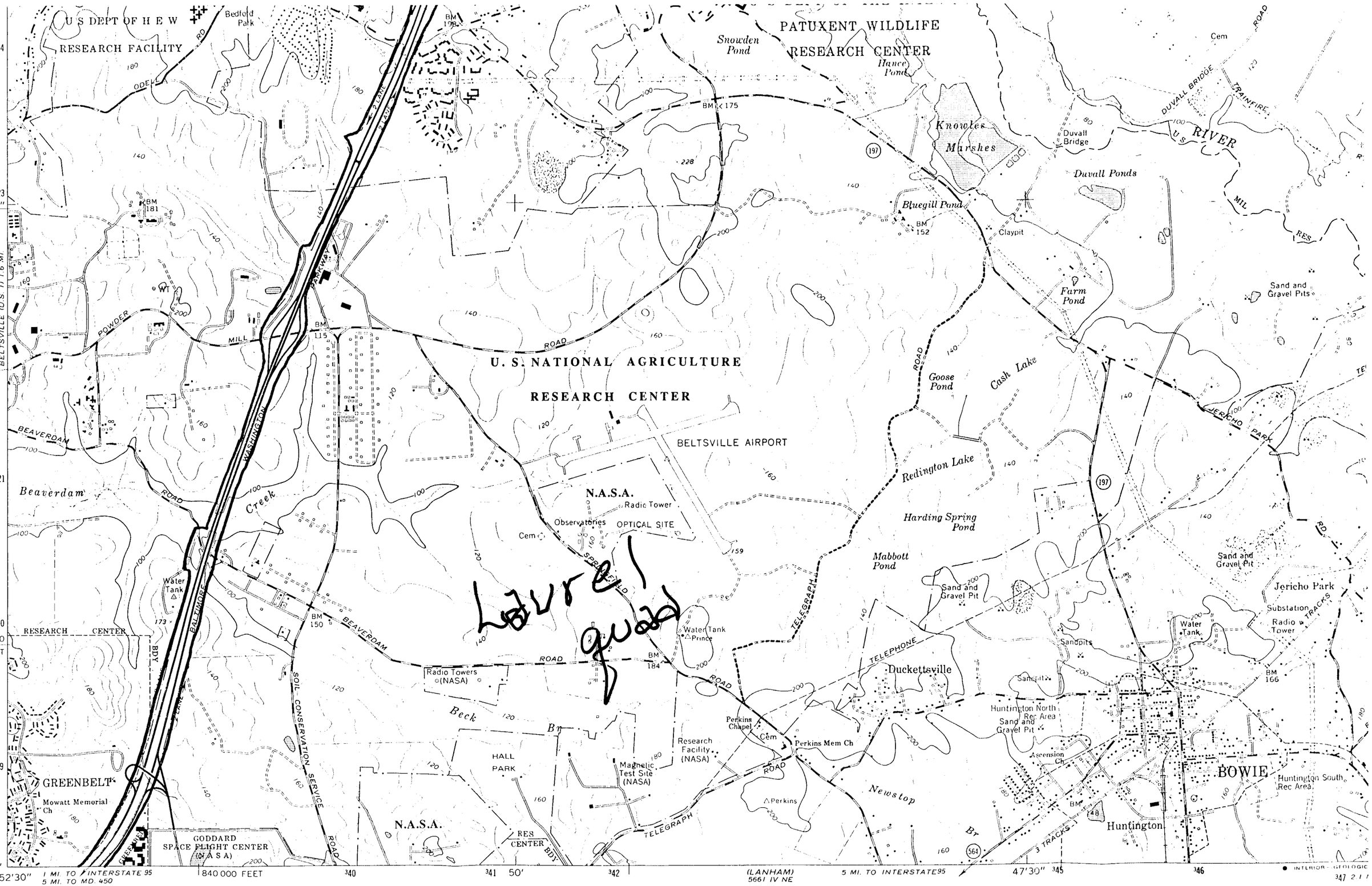
SAVAGE, MD.

NE/4 LAUREL 15' QUADRANGLE
N3907.5—W7645/7.5
1957
PHOTOREVISED 1966 AND 1974
AMS 5662 III NE—SERIES V833

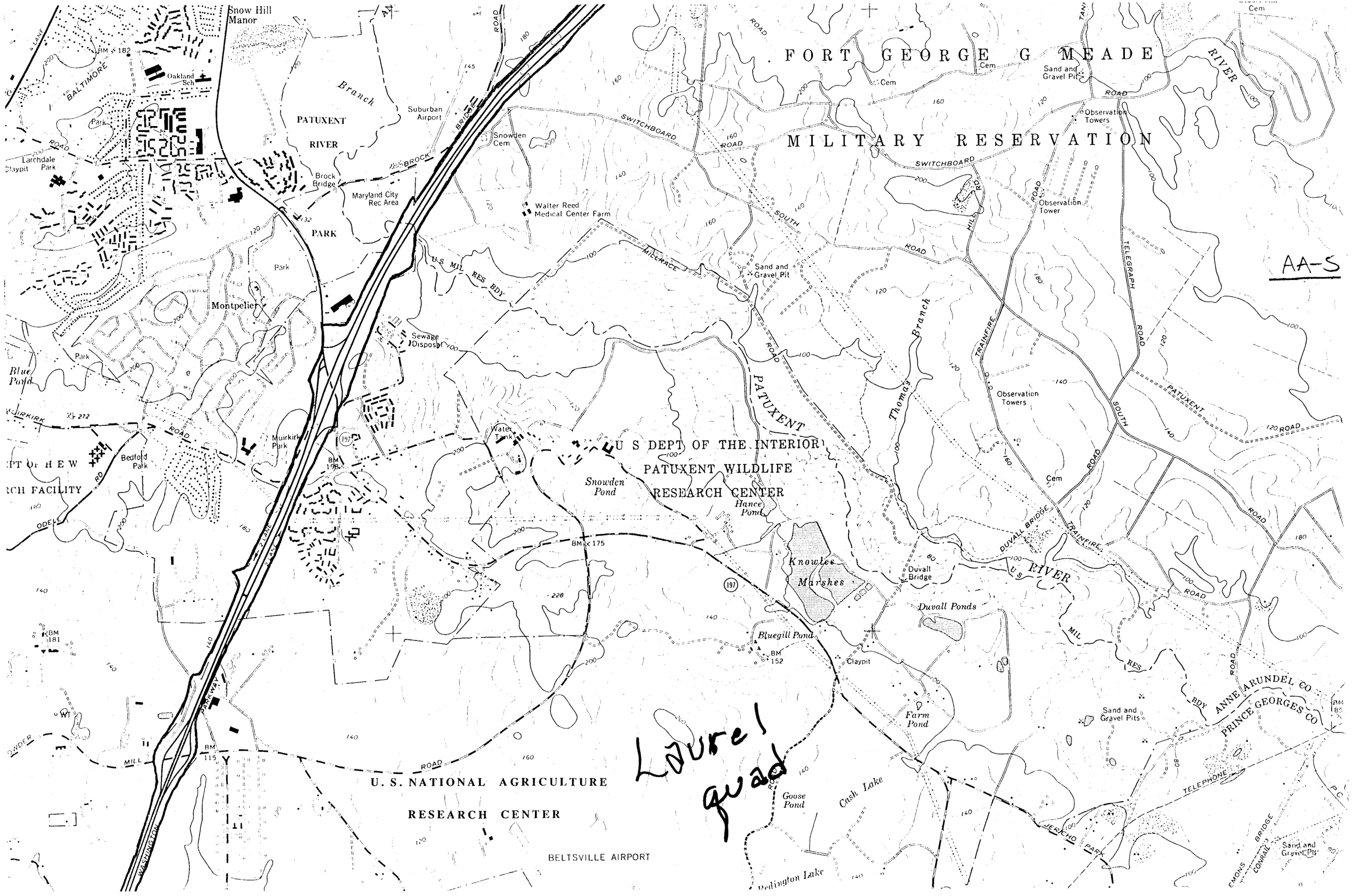


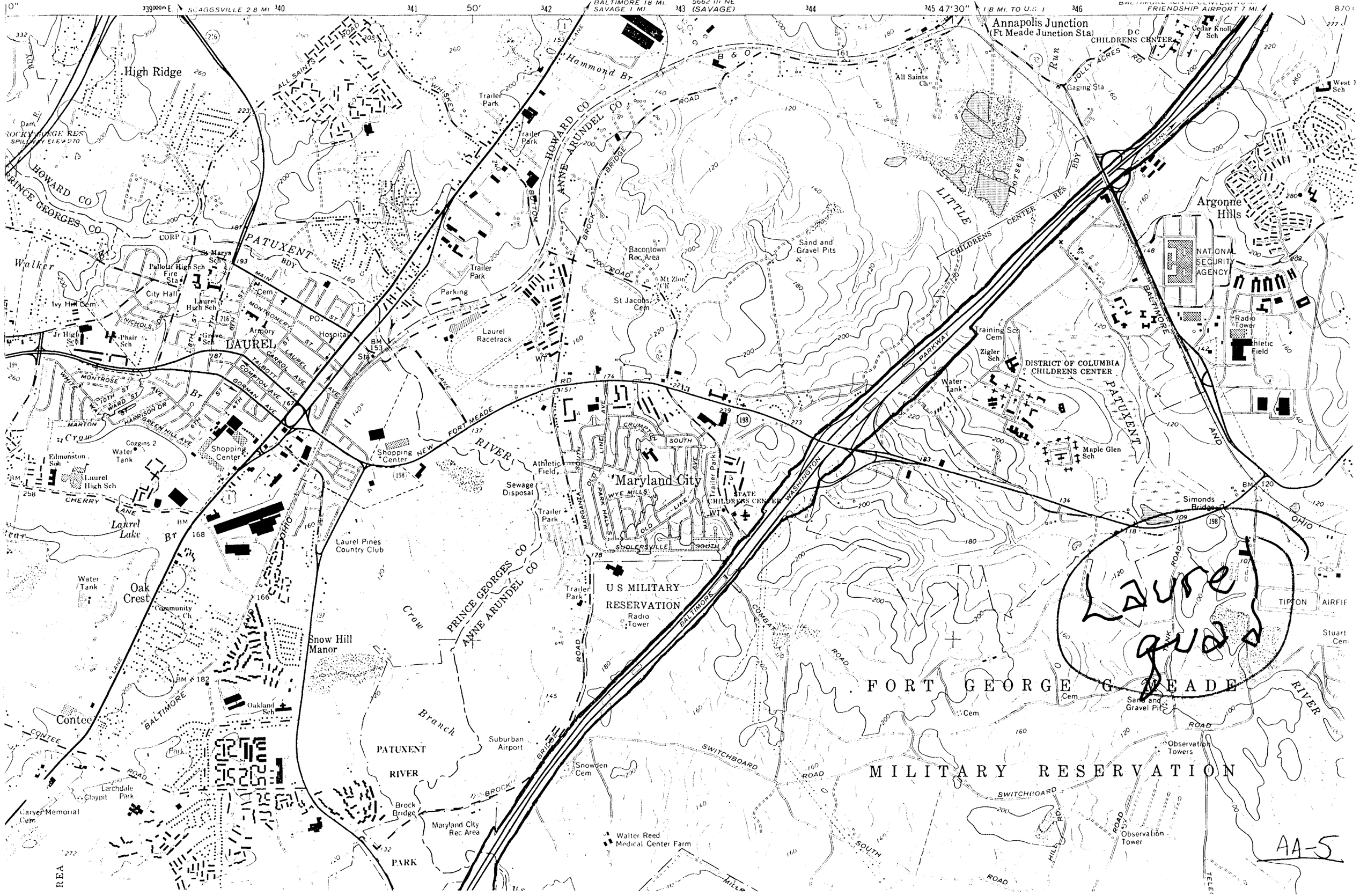
AA-5

Washington East quad



Mapped by the Army Map Service
Edited and published by the Geological Survey
Control by USGS, USC&GS, USCE, USSCS, and WSSC
Topography by photogrammetric methods and by planetable surveys 1943. Revised by the Geological Survey 1965


AA-S
Laurel quad
FORT GEORGE G MEADE
MILITARY RESERVATION
U S DEPT OF THE INTERIOR
PATUXENT WILDLIFE
RESEARCH CENTER
U. S. NATIONAL AGRICULTURE
RESEARCH CENTER
BELTSVILLE AIRPORT
Snow Hill Manor
Oakland Sch
Larchdale Park
Claypit
Suburban Airport
Snowden Cem
Brock Bridge
Maryland City Rec Area
Walter Reed Medical Center Farm
Sand and Gravel Pit
Observation Towers
Observation Tower
Montpelier
Sewage Disposal
Muirkirk Park
Bedford Park
Water Tank
Snowden Pond
Hance Pond
Knowles Marshes
Duvall Bridge
Duvall Ponds
Bluegill Pond
Claypit
Farm Pond
Goose Pond
Cash Lake
Sand and Gravel Pits
ANNE ARUNDEL CO
PRINCE GEORGES CO
PATUXENT RIVER
Thomas Branch
Blue Pond
Cem
BALTIMORE
SWITCHBOARD ROAD
SOUTH ROAD
MILLRACE
TRAINFIRE ROAD
TELEGRAPH ROAD
DUVALL BRIDGE
TELEPHONE ROAD
JERICHO PARK
EMONS BRIDGE
CONRAIL
MILL ROAD
WASHINGTON PARKWAY
ODEL RD
MUIRKIRK ROAD
BROCK BRIDGE ROAD
U S MIL RES BDY
MIL RES BDY
BM 182
BM 181
BM 272
BM 198
BM 175
BM 152
BM 115
BM 85
197
228


SCAGGSVILLE 2 8 MI
BALTIMORE 18 MI
SAVAGE 1 MI
(SAVAGE)
FRIENDSHIP AIRPORT 7 MI
Annapolis Junction
(Ft Meade Junction Sta)
DC CHILDRENS CENTER
High Ridge
Hammond Br
HOWARD CO
ANNE ARUNDEL CO
PRINCE GEORGES CO
PATUXENT BDY
LITTLE PATUXENT
Dorsey Run
Argonne Hills
NATIONAL SECURITY AGENCY
LAUREL
Maryland City
RIVER
Crow Branch
Laurel Lake
Oak Crest
Snow Hill Manor
Contee
Laurel Pines Country Club
Suburban Airport
PATUXENT RIVER PARK
Maryland City Rec Area
U S MILITARY RESERVATION
FORT GEORGE G MEADE
MILITARY RESERVATION
DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA CHILDRENS CENTER
Laurel guad
AA-5

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
GEOLOGICAL SURVEY

AA-5

5662 III SW (BELTSVILLE)

Lanham quad

76°52'30"
39°00'
338000m.E.
BALTIMORE (CIVIC CENTER) 26 MI.
FRIENDSHIP AIRPORT 17 MI.
340
341 50'
342
4318000m.N.
4317
4316
4315
BALT. WASH. PKWY. 1.1 MI. 0.6 MI. TO INTERSTATE 495
BALT WASH PKWY
GREENBELT
GODDARD SPACE FLIGHT CENTER (N A S A)
NARC
NASA
Hall Park
NORTHERN
Radio Station (WWV)
Gate
Sand and Gravel Pits
Schrom Hills Rec Center
Sandpit
Magnolia Springs
GOOD LUCK
Washington Bible College
Seabrook Park
Hyneshoro
Greenwood Forest
Lanham
Seabrook
Seabrook Acres
NEW CARROLLTON
Memorial Center
Lanham Sch
Seabrook Sch
Glenn Dale Park
Glenwood Park
Folly
DuVal High Sch
Goddard Jr High Sch
Gaywood Sch
St Paul's Ch
St Matthias Sch
3 TRACKS
TELEGRAPH
CIPRIANO
CAPITAL
GARDENS
RAVENSWORTH RD
HICKORY HILL AVE
SPRING AVE
NAVAL
GREENWOOD LA
LANHAM
SEVERN
FRANKLIN AVE
DUBARRY
WORRELL AVE
WASHINGTON BLVD
BUENA VISTA AVE
SHERIDAN ST
TUCKERMAN ST
UNDERWOOD ST
VALE ST
CEDAR AVE
WELLINGTON ST
WOODBERRY ST
VAN BUREN ST
4TH
5TH ST
6TH ST
7TH ST
9TH AVE
97TH AVE
BM 168
BM 149
BM 154
BM 160
BM 142
BM 140
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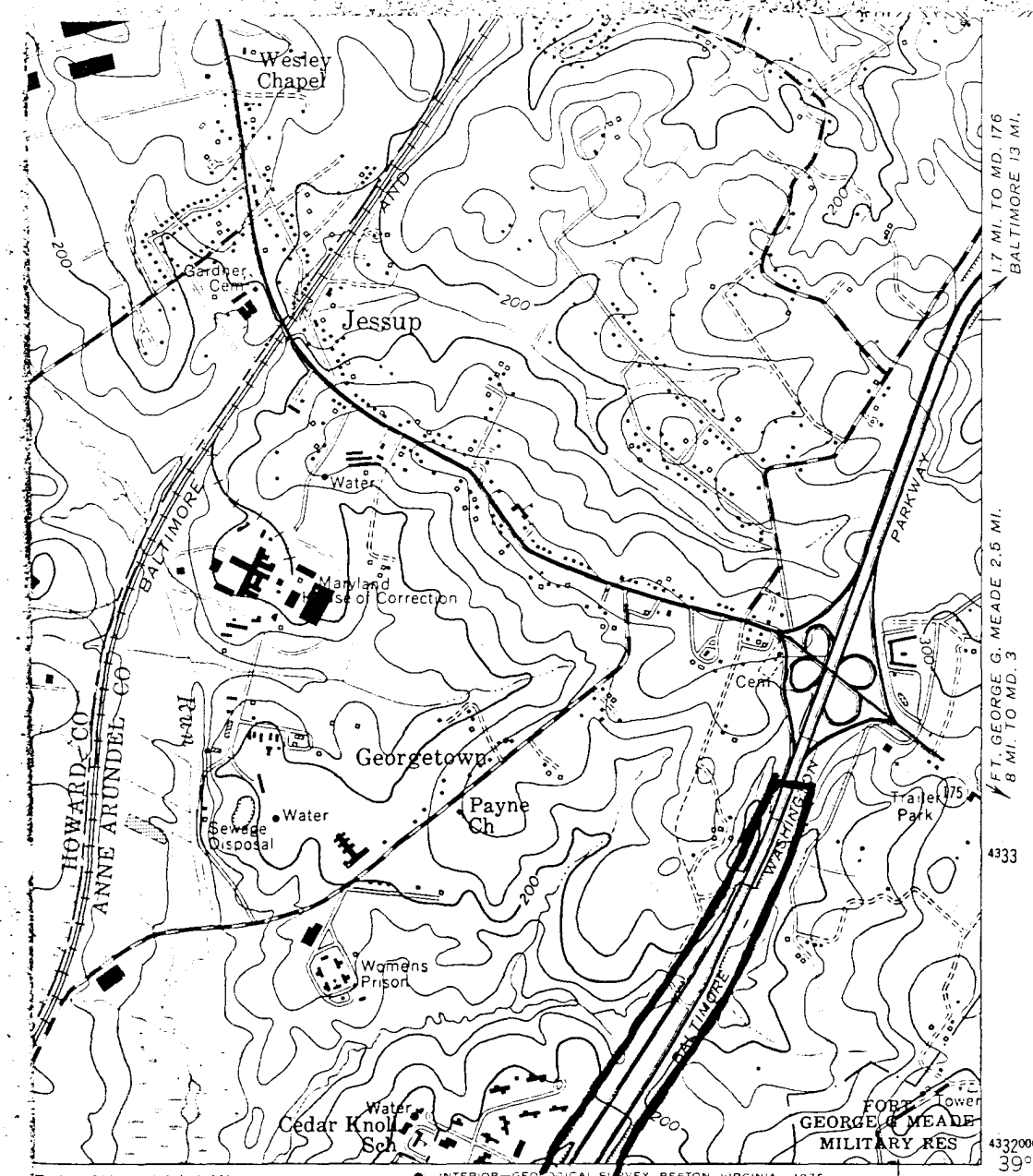
BM 90
BM 180
BM 160
BM 160
BM 160



Baltimore-Washington Parkway

AA-5

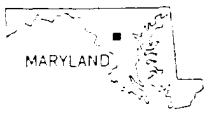
PG: 69-26

ROAD CLASSIFICATION

Heavy-duty — Light-duty

Medium-duty — Unimproved dirt

U. S. Route — State Route



QUADRANGLE LOCATION

SAVAGE, MD.

NE/4 LAUREL 15' QUADRANGLE

N3907.5—W7645/7.5

1957

PHOTOREVISED 1966 AND 1974

AMS 5662 III NE—SERIES V833

AA-5

LIST OF PHOTOGRAPHS - Baltimore-Washington Parkway

Photographer/Date: Sara Amy Leach, April 1988
Location of negatives: National Capital Region (NPS) files

1 View north, from north of 450, to Gladys Noon Spellman dedication sign

2 Arched culvert, between routes MD 450 and MD 410

3 View north, from just north of MD 410

4 Double box culverts, between MD 410 and Good Luck Road

5 Bridge across BWP at Good Luck Road

6 Bridge across BWP at MD 193/Greenbelt Road

7 View south, from median at MD 193/Greenbelt Road

8 BWP Bridge across MD 197/Laurel-Bowie Road

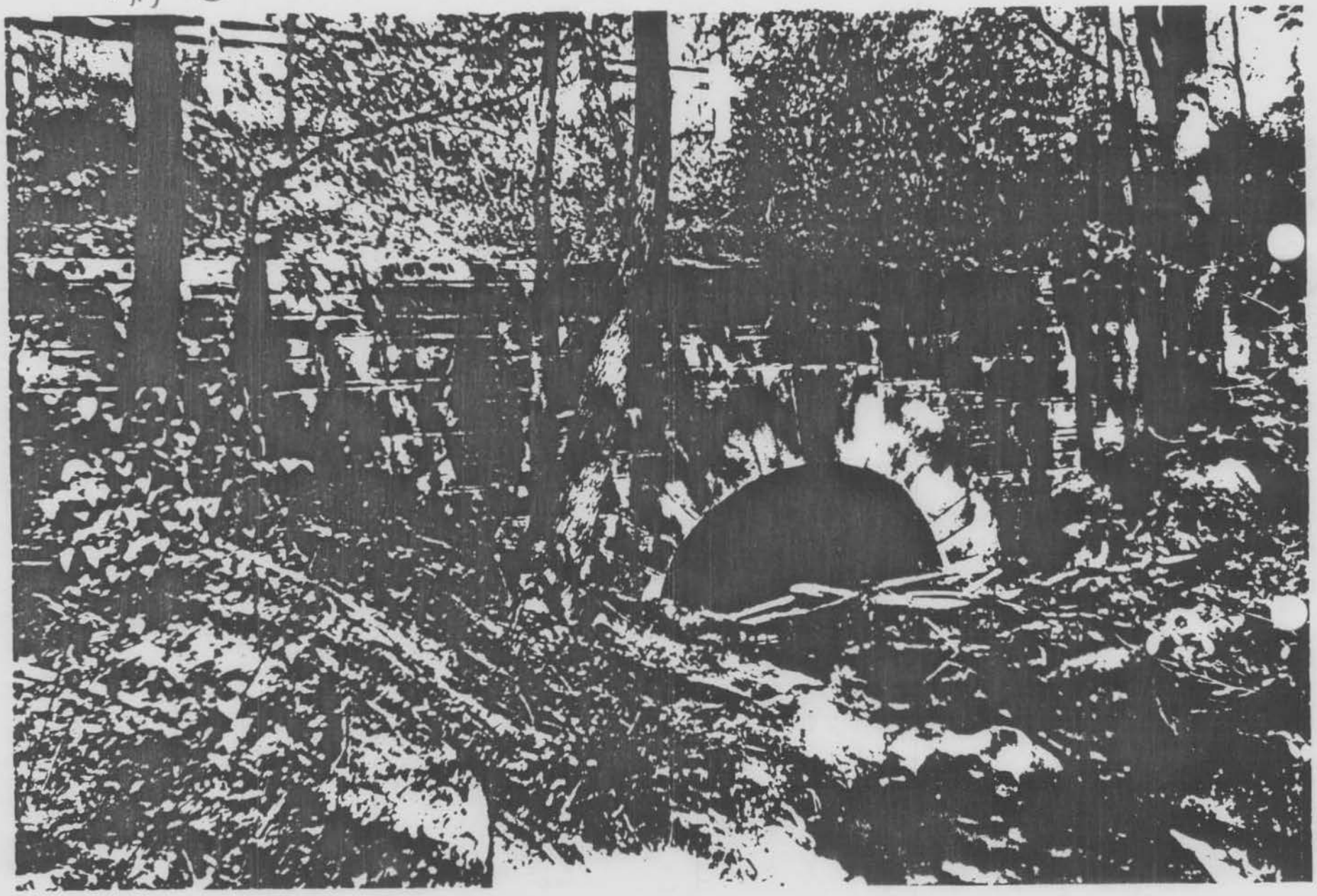
9 BWP Bridge across abandoned Old Fort Meade Road

10 View south to box culvert in median, between MD 32 and MD 175.

PHOTO #1 AA-5

PHOTO #2

AA-5



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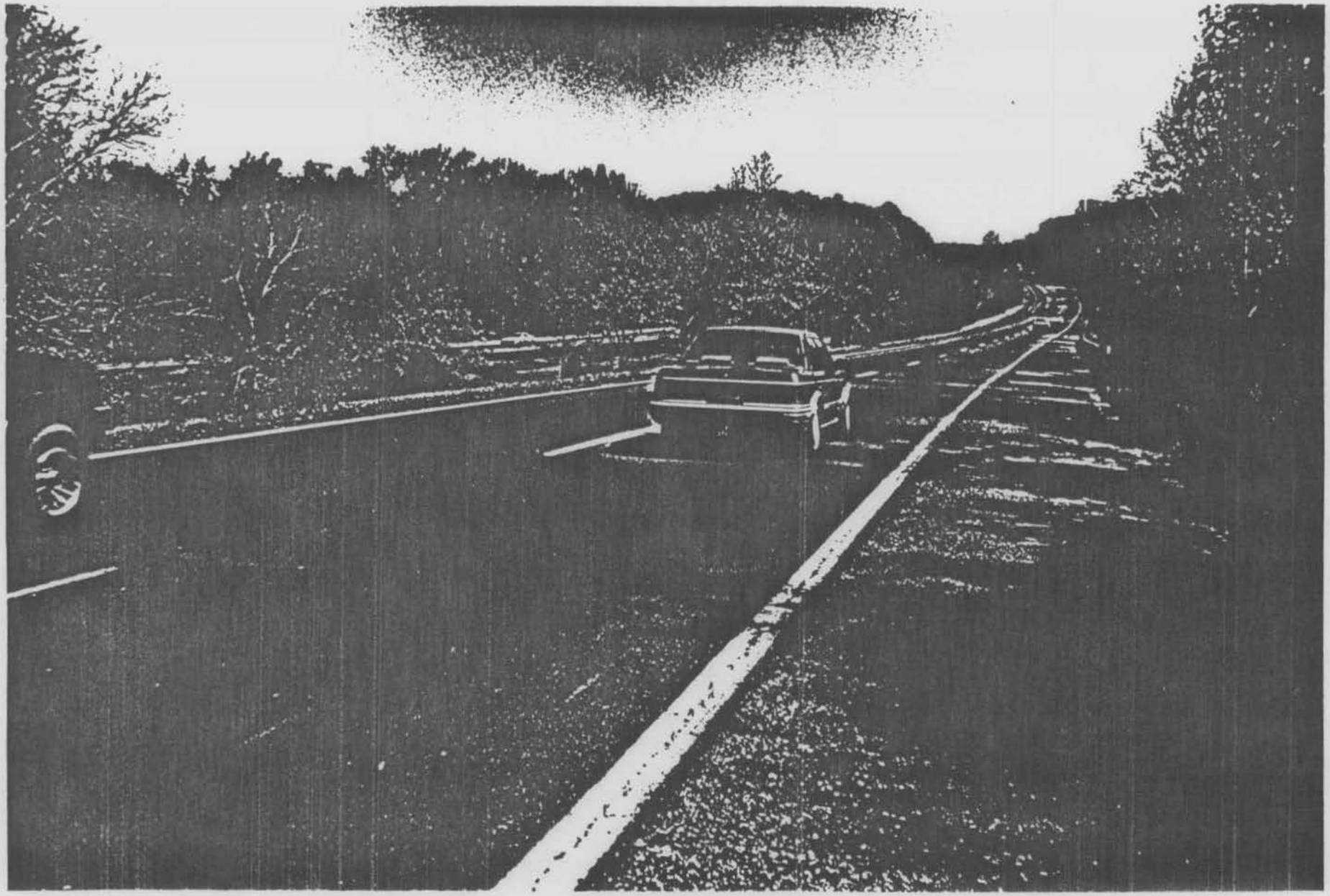
AA-5



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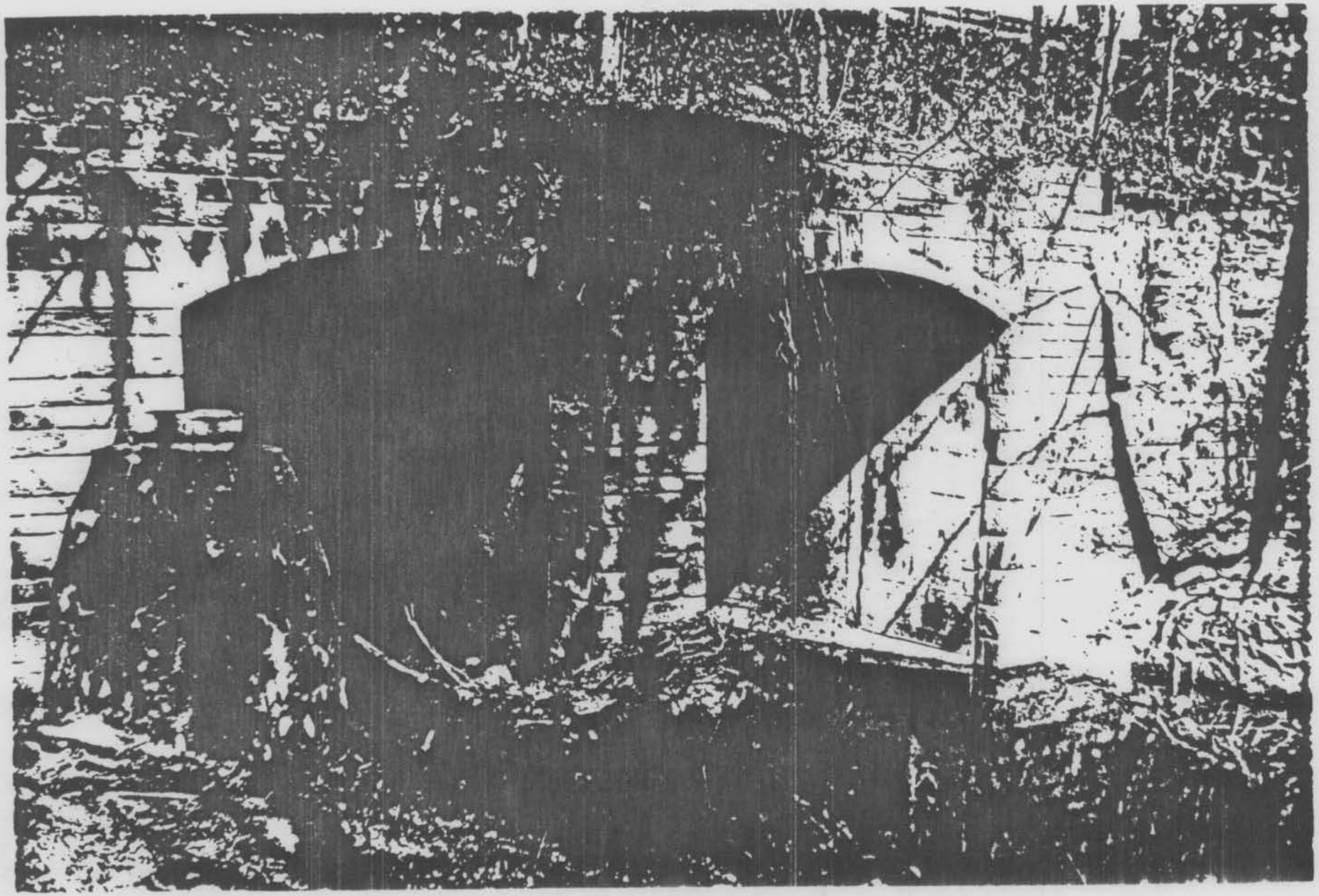

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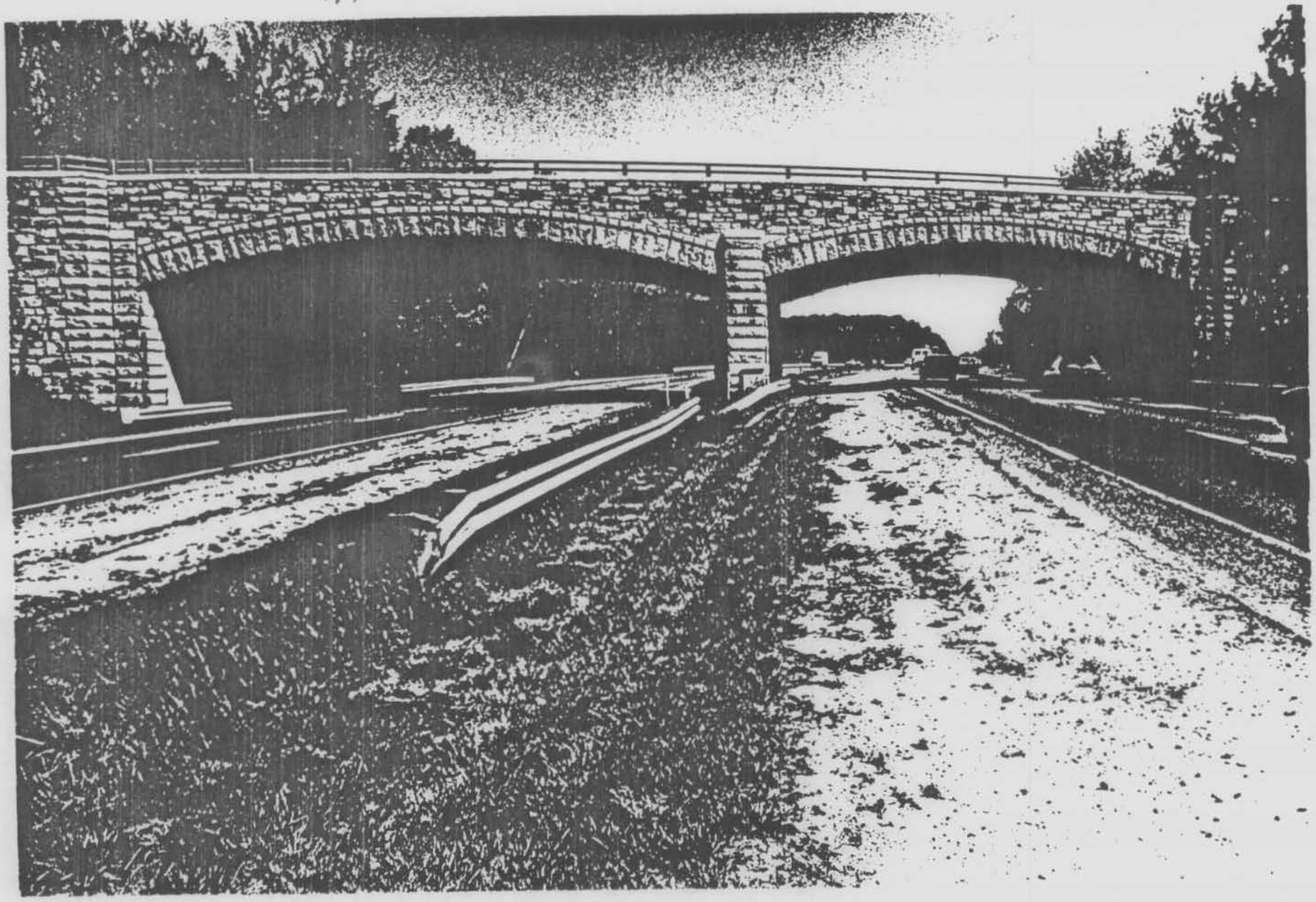

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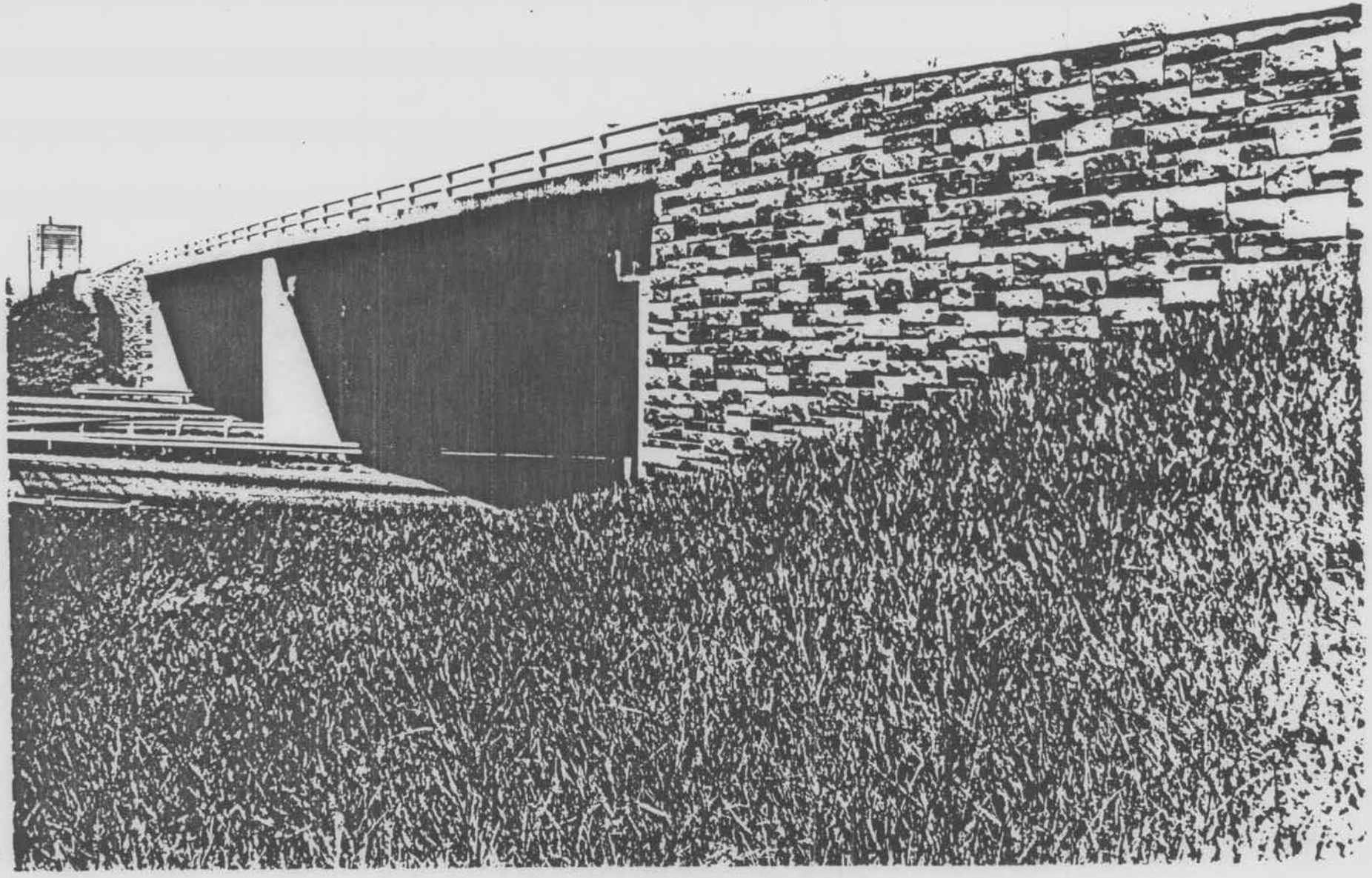

PHOTO #7 AA-5

PHOTO #8 AA-5

PHOTO #9 AA-5

PHOTO #10 AA-5