

## ADDENDUM

**Plank House**  
**CT-257**  
**1665 Wilson Road**  
**Huntingtown, Calvert County**  
**Amy Bolasky Skinner**  
**The Ottery Group, Inc.**  
**August 10<sup>th</sup>, 2009**

### **Section 7. DESCRIPTION**

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

#### **SUMMARY**

The Plank House is located on the east side of Wilson Road between Paul Hance Road to the northeast and Dunn Road to the southwest. The house is located on 102 acres of undeveloped forest. In the nineteenth century, the parcel was associated with the larger Richard Hance Farm and was passed between his heirs; Henrietta Hance Wilson, her husband, Samuel B. Wilson, and her sister Rebecca Hance. The property was sold to Louis and Hazel Goldstein in 1956; their heirs continue to own it today. Vacant for approximately 60 years, the house is in extremely poor condition and susceptible to collapse.

#### **DESCRIPTION**

The Plank House is located on the east side of Wilson Road on a low hill approximately twenty feet from the road side. The house's original driveway is slightly south of the building and curves up the hill to the dwelling. An undeveloped forest surrounds the house on all elevations. As the dwelling has been abandoned for many years there are no landscaped areas or plantings around the house; there are many trees, vines and overgrowth around the exterior. Materials removed or fallen from the house due to deterioration remain around the house exterior.

The Plank House<sup>1</sup> is a modest, one-story, three-by-one bay dwelling with a steeply pitched, metal standing seam, side-gable roof. Though the house has been abandoned for 60 years, the roof remains in good condition with no breaks in the metal seam. There is an exterior end, brick chimney on the south elevation. The chimney's cap has crumbled but its base is in good condition. The house is constructed of rough-hewn planks secured with dovetail joints. Sandy mud chinking is laid between the horizontal laid planks, sealing the dwelling. Originally, the house's exterior was clad in vertical circular-sawn boards attached with wire cut nails. Parts of boards remain however most have been removed or are deteriorated; the exterior is in very poor condition. The gable-ends are clad in clapboard that is deteriorated. The house is supported by a brick pier foundation that has some re-pointing with modern concrete. Fenestration is symmetrical with a small window opening on either side of the central doorway; there is no window glazing. There is a window opening on the north elevation's first story and another in the gable-end's loft. There is a central door opening on the east elevation; there are no doors in the house.

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<sup>1</sup> The Plank House was previously documented in 1976 with a Maryland Inventory of Historic Places form. The following paragraphs expand and update that original survey form; for additional information regarding original materials and the interior reference the 1976 form. Stinson, Merry MIHP Form CT-257 "Plank House" 1976.

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The Plank House has deteriorated almost to the point of being a ruin. When the house was documented in 1976 a shed-roof addition on the north elevation was noted. This addition is no longer visible. During the 1990s an effort was made to relocate the Plank House however due to financial constraints and the lack of an appropriate location, the relocation of the house never materialized.

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### **Section 8. SIGNIFICANCE**

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

### **SUMMARY**

Calvert County encompasses a narrow piece of land between the Chesapeake Bay to the east, and the Patuxent River to the west and south. It is surrounded by water on all sides except to the north where it adjoins Anne Arundel County. Calvert County is the smallest of the five counties of Southern Maryland and fourth oldest in Maryland.<sup>2</sup> Although the County once stretched to the headwaters of the Patuxent River in modern-day Frederick County, it now measures only 218 square miles, making it the smallest of all Maryland counties. High cliffs characterize Calvert County's bay side shoreline. Conversely, the numerous creeks along the Patuxent River facilitated maritime traffic, servicing the County's richest agricultural lands.

Wilson Road runs parallel to the Chesapeake Bay and is bound to the north by Plum Point Road and to the south by Emmanuel Church Road. Huntingtown and Prince Frederick are the two largest towns in close proximity. The Plank House, is located on a stretch of road between the Wilson Road and Plum Point Road intersection to the north and the Wilson Road and Emmanuel Church Road intersection to the south.

Ornate and modest twentieth century homesteads, tobacco barns, farm outbuildings, and tenant houses are linked by Wilson Road, which has been a prominent local thoroughfare since the mid-nineteenth century. Other significant landscape features along Wilson Road in the mid-nineteenth century include a steamship landing, a wharf and a windmill located at Plum Point.<sup>3</sup> Dunn Road is the only other road that dates to the mid-nineteenth century. Dunn Road branches off Wilson Road and originally extended all the way east to the Bay and as far west as the Freeland properties.<sup>4</sup> Today, Dunn Road ends at Suit's Chance, a farm in a County Agricultural Preservation District.<sup>5</sup> In historic maps dating to the mid-nineteenth century, many large farm properties stand along Wilson Road including Letchworth's Chance (CT-25), the Ireland Farm (CT-26), the Owen H. Jones Farm (CT-476), the Baden-Anderson Farm (CT-27), and a modest side-parlor house known as the Plank House (CT-257).<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Stein, Charles Francis. "A History of Calvert County." Schneidereith & Sons: Baltimore, 1977: 1.

<sup>3</sup> 1865 Martenet Atlas of Maryland.

<sup>4</sup> Morris Suit Interview. Oral History Interview with Amy Bolasky Skinner for Wilson Road Historic Context Study, 10 March 2009.

<sup>5</sup> Morris Suit Interview.

<sup>6</sup> A.D. Bache, United States Coast Survey, Western Shore of Chesapeake Bay, 1847. Available at the Calvert Marine Museum.

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The Wilson Road area can be found on maps dating to the seventeenth century. Augustine Hermann placed Plum Point on his map in 1675, and depicted a number of plantations along the shores of the Chesapeake Bay and the Patuxent River. Later, in the mid-nineteenth century, the Martenet map shows Plum Point in excellent detail. In 1892, the United States Geological Survey depicts Plum Point and Wilson Road, and subsequent modifications to this map by the USGS reveals various changes on the landscape, including the addition to new structures and the alteration of roadways, including Plum Point Road. For example the 1910 USGS Topographic Map shows three improved roads extending east from Wilson Road toward the Bay.<sup>7</sup> The northernmost road is Patience Place. The Ireland family farmstead (CT-26) is located along this road. Although the property and buildings were visible in the mid-nineteenth century, Patience Place does not appear mapped until about the early-twentieth century.<sup>8</sup> The next road to the south is Angelica Drive. The Owen H. Jones family farm (CT-476) is located at the end of this road. The Owen H. Jones farm can trace its roots to the Hance and Wilson families back to the mid-nineteenth century. The southernmost road is Camp Kaufmann Road. The Agnes Buckler House (CT-478), visible on the 1910 topographic map, is located at the end of Camp Kaufmann Road on a dirt trace.

The most significant change to the area occurs in the mid-twentieth century. The 1932 US Geological Survey Topographical Map shows subdivisions and new roads along Wilson Road as Calvert County connects with surrounding counties.<sup>9</sup> Letchworth's Chance (CT-25) is subdivided and the Neeld Estates appears with many private properties clustered along the Bay's shoreline. Additionally, on this map Dunn Road no longer connects to Stinnett Road. Since the 1930s Dunn Road has only been accessible from Wilson Road. A new road, branches east off Wilson Road, south of Patience Place. Paul Hance Road is the location of the original Paul Hance House (CT-474) as well as the former H. Oscar Bowen House (CT-473). Although they no are longer standing, both properties were visible in the mid-nineteenth century.

The last major alteration to the roads connecting to Wilson Road was documented in the 1939 Topographic Map surveyed by the US Department of Agriculture and also appears on the current Topographic Map for Wilson Road.<sup>10</sup> The map shows the original northern curvature of Plum Point Road; however, it also demonstrates the changed and improved Plum Point Road running due east towards the Bay and the wharf ruins. The modern road takes this path.

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<sup>7</sup> Topographic Map of Prince Frederick, Maryland Quadrangle, United States Geological Survey, 1900. Available at the Calvert Marine Museum.

<sup>8</sup> Topographic Map of Prince Frederick, Maryland Quadrangle, United States Geological Survey, 1900. Available at the Calvert Marine Museum.

<sup>9</sup> Topographic Map of Prince Frederick, Maryland Quadrangle, United States Geological Survey, 1932. Available at the Calvert Marine Museum.

<sup>10</sup> Topographic Atlas of Maryland Counties of Calvert Charles and St. Mary's, United States Department of Agriculture, Soil Conservation Service, 1939. Available at the Calvert Marine Museum and Topographic Map of Prince Frederick, Maryland Quadrangle, United States Geological Survey, 1993. Available through Terrain Navigator.

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The history of the Wilson Road area can be defined by two overarching themes: Agriculture and Transportation. The movement of goods, such as tobacco, was facilitated by water transportation that linked individual plantations to shipping centers in the County and around the Chesapeake Bay. Later, in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the development of inland road networks became essential to the commercial success of Calvert's plantations.

Water transportation had always been the most effective means for shipping and receiving goods throughout Calvert County. Until the twentieth century roads in Calvert County were rural and unimproved; steamships took goods to places like Baltimore to be sold or shipped overseas. "The creation of regular commercial and passenger service on the Bay helped boost the local economy. The most successful of the early attempts to create a regular shipping line in Calvert County was established by Captain George Weems in 1817. The Weems Steamship Line was the principal carrier between the Port of Baltimore and southern Maryland."<sup>11</sup>

In the Wilson Road vicinity there was a wharf at Plum Point. The first wharf at Plum Point was located 250 to 300 feet north of the present Plum Point Road. It was relocated further south in 1893 and rebuilt three quarters of a mile long, "L-shaped" and one of the longest on the Chesapeake Bay. The location of the wharf was one catalyst for development along Wilson Road. Areas around the wharf became gathering places where locals could watch the ships load and use the private beaches. Some families allowed the public to park on their land while others created private beach cottages for rent.<sup>12</sup> The Wilson Store (later the Dixon Store) was a combined store and post office often frequented by locals and visitors alike. Plum Point was a bustling area along Wilson Road until August of 1933 when a hurricane devastated the farms and the crop along Wilson Road. The hurricane demolished the warehouse as well as most of the pier.

Wilson Road's association with agriculture can be seen in the landscape and found in the local relationships of residents. One result of the reliance on tobacco is seen in the area of Calvert County along the Bay, notably a lack of central towns, as well as "the significant role that elite planters had in the political and social life in the community, and the complex interrelationships between the various classes and races living together within the community."<sup>13</sup> Wilson Road, an example of the broader characterization of Calvert County, was a prime location for tobacco farming, a "combination of favorable soil and topography, good river transportation and fortunate economic considerations contributed to Calvert County's being overwhelmingly agricultural from its beginning, with tobacco the

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<sup>11</sup> Dames & Moore, "Historic Sites Context Study and National Register Evaluation." The Calvert County Historic District Commission, 1995:4 and Stein 1977:169.

<sup>12</sup> Eshelman & Associates, "Calvert County Steamboat Wharves and Landings: Architectural Level Survey and Inventory." The Calvert County Historic District Commission, 1996 and Carpenter, Evelyn B. "A History of Carpenter's Beach." Calvert County Marine Museum: Unpublished manuscript, 1984.

<sup>13</sup> Kulikoff, Allan, "Tobacco and Slaves." University of North Carolina: Chapel Hill, 1986 and Dames & Moore 1995: 5.

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principal cash crop.”<sup>14</sup> Families settled along Wilson Road to live and grow tobacco. Wilson Road has no town center nearby with the closest town being Huntingtown, 9 miles to the northwest, or Prince Frederick 4.5 miles to the southwest. Being in such close proximity, all the families along Wilson Road socialized with, went to school with, worshipped with and often married one another. Many of the current residents along Wilson Road have surnames such as Bassford (later Carpenter), Wilson, Hance, Jones, Ireland. The expansive layout of family farms along the landscape of Wilson Road highlights the way Calvert County was settled as a result of tobacco farming. Tobacco would remain the chief crop and one of the defining features of the County until well into the late twentieth century.

After World War II with improvements to transportation a “dramatic change to the character and landscape of Calvert County” occurred.<sup>15</sup> The area is now linked to the Washington-Baltimore metropolitan area and real estate prices have increased while demands for tobacco have decreased. With properties along Wilson Road no longer focused on tobacco farming tenants have moved away and dwellings are vacant. Many family homesteads have been subdivided to provide land and houses for current and future generations.

Despite modern changes to Calvert County, the agricultural landscape along Wilson Road is not so altered that one cannot discern the historic character. The Wilson Road area can be characterized as a rural farming community whose origins are firmly rooted in the production of tobacco. From its first settlements at places like Angelica in the 1600s, farming was the primary economic focus that helped establish the community along Wilson Road. In many ways, the community remains largely unaltered, with descendants of nineteenth century settlers still living in the area today, namely the Degges at Letchworth’s Chance (CT-25), the Carpenter’s at Bellcar (CT-472), the Ireland farm (CT-26), the Hance’s at Paul Hance Farm (CT-474), the Hance/Jones’ at Owen H. Jones Farm (CT-476), and the Buckler’s at Agnes H. Buckler Farm (CT-478 and S. Chester Buckler Farm CT-492). These families continue to leave their legacy along the landscape through the buildings, structures, and vistas that have historically characterized Calvert County.

The intensive nature of tobacco farming required many farmers in Calvert County to take on extra workers to produce a successful crop. As the cycle of tobacco is over a year from planting to prizing and selling, cheap labor was essential to make the work profitable. Prior to the Civil War, farmers relied on slave labor to plant, tend, pick, strip, and dry the tobacco; however, following emancipation at the end of the war, tenant farming and other forms of sharecropping replaced the system of slavery as the primary means by which the tobacco economy could continue.

Tenant farming and sharecropping were similar forms of economy wherein a landless farmer was provided land on which to produce a crop, primarily tobacco along Wilson Road.<sup>16</sup> Because of the

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<sup>14</sup> Dames & Moore 1995: 4.

<sup>15</sup> Dames & Moore 1995: 17.

<sup>16</sup> Prola, Rosemary. *Ponds Wood Road Historic Context*, 2007: 2-3.

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relative value of tobacco per acre compared to other crops, it was favored by small farmers who owned less than one hundred acres. Also, the relatively small size of the farms provided plenty of work for tenant farmers who could move from one farm to the other.<sup>17</sup> To earn extra income tenants helped farm owners hang and strip tobacco in the winter and often raised their own crops as well.<sup>18</sup> Since some aspects of tobacco cultivation were labor intensive yet relatively low skill, tenant farmers with larger families could get help from their children to increase profitability.<sup>19</sup> The system, much like sharecropping, provided little upward economic or social mobility; as a result, very few tenant farmers earned enough money to buy a farm of their own and improve their situation.<sup>20</sup>

Tenant farming and sharecropping were essential to tobacco cultivation in the area; however, the impact these forms of labor had on farmers was often negative. Tenant farming and sharecropping were hard ways of life, with long hours, little income, and little promise of advancement. Many farmers also lacked a complete education as they often dropped out or missed a lot of school to work in the fields and earn extra income for their families. Some farmers believed that tenant "farming was akin to slavery" because it allowed landlords to maintain a low cost workforce when slavery was no longer legal.<sup>21</sup> The economic constraints of tenant farming and the racism and segregation many tenant farmers faced in the first half of the twentieth century made it difficult for tenant farmers to improve their situation.<sup>22</sup> In many cases, tenant farmers drifted from farm to farm and took on side jobs in the off season including construction, oyster fishing, raising other crops, grave digging, and driving tobacco to Baltimore.<sup>23</sup>

A good relationship was an interdependent one where the farm owner was dependent on the tenant for their labor and the tenant was reliant on the owner for housing, goods and services in the time before the crop was sold.<sup>24</sup> If a tenant was in a good situation on a certain farm, they were motivated to be good tenants and hard workers; likewise, if an owner wanted to keep a good tenant, he needed to provide the best resources and equipment.<sup>25</sup> While whites and African-Americans did not enjoy the same privileges and opportunities, on the farm there was a sense of a common goal and a mutual interest in a successful crop yield. Many farm owners grew up with the children of their tenant farmers and were raised in part by tenant farmer's wives.<sup>26</sup> The farm owners and tenant farmers worked side-by-side in the tobacco fields and developed a strong sense of kinship and dependency.<sup>27</sup> Former tobacco farmer Jackson Evans

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<sup>17</sup> Dames & Moore, 1995: 4-10.

<sup>18</sup> Sundermann, Anne. *The Money Crop*. Crownsville, Maryland: The Maryland Historical Trust, 2005: 43.

<sup>19</sup> Dames & Moore, 1995: 4-12.

<sup>20</sup> Sundermann, Anne M. *The Money Crop* 2005: 41.

<sup>21</sup> Sundermann, Anne M. *The Money Crop* 2005: 43.

<sup>22</sup> Sundermann, Anne M. *The Money Crop* 2005: 88-89.

<sup>23</sup> Poe, William A. *Images of America: African Americans of Calvert County*. Charleston, SC: Arcadia Publishing, 2008: 114 and 157.

<sup>24</sup> Jackson Evans Ireland Transcript.

<sup>25</sup> Jackson Evans Ireland Transcript.

<sup>26</sup> Sundermann, Anne M. *The Money Crop* 2005: 85-86.

<sup>27</sup> Jackson Evans Ireland Transcript.

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Ireland felt that tenant farming, “was kind of paternalistic, but you had an obligation to take care of your tenants.”<sup>28</sup> Farm owners helped their tenants secure material goods and deal with bureaucracy. As Ireland explained, “if a tenant had a problem... a lot of the older tenants were illiterate... you found things for them to do so they could make some money...”<sup>29</sup>

Although the tenant houses were small and often did not have running water or even electricity, they allowed the tenant farmers to have their own home at no additional cost.<sup>30</sup> Tenant houses were often located on the margins of property boundaries. They were typically one or two stories with a chimney and an outhouse. Tenant houses were “plain in appearance” and usually had “no structural or decorative features outside such as a porch, window shutters or door or window trim.”<sup>31</sup> The interior often had irregular boards and walls that had not been whitewashed.<sup>32</sup> Farm owners would add onto the houses as it became necessary, particularly to accommodate a good tenant’s growing family.<sup>33</sup> In later years mobile homes replaced the houses as they provided modern amenities. Tenants also had the opportunity to farm the land around their house in their free time to earn extra cash for necessities or future land ownership.<sup>34</sup>

A number of farmers along Wilson Road, including the Carpenters and Andersons, had tenant houses built for specific families who were mainstays on the farm. The connection between the farm owner, his tenant and their families played an important role in the continued success of tobacco farming in Calvert County through the late-twentieth century. These relations along Wilson Road are clear from the histories of each farm and the families who worked them.

### STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Plank House is significant architecturally as a rare surviving antebellum era house with plank, not the more typical log construction, and unaltered, modest window openings. It is not clear if the house was built for or occupied by slaves, free black tenants, or white tenant farmers. The house form resembles former slave cabins, being of modest design, with two interior rooms and a loft. However, the Plank House is slightly larger and more refined. The Plank House, like tenant houses, is significant not only for its simplistic architecture, but also for its contributions to the rural-agricultural heritage and history of tobacco farming in Calvert County.

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<sup>28</sup> Jackson Evans Ireland Transcript.

<sup>29</sup> Jackson Evans Ireland Transcript.

<sup>30</sup> Sundermann, Anne M. *The Money Crop* 2005: 41-42.

<sup>31</sup> McDaniel, George W. *Hearth and Home: Preserving a People's Culture*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1982: 7-8.

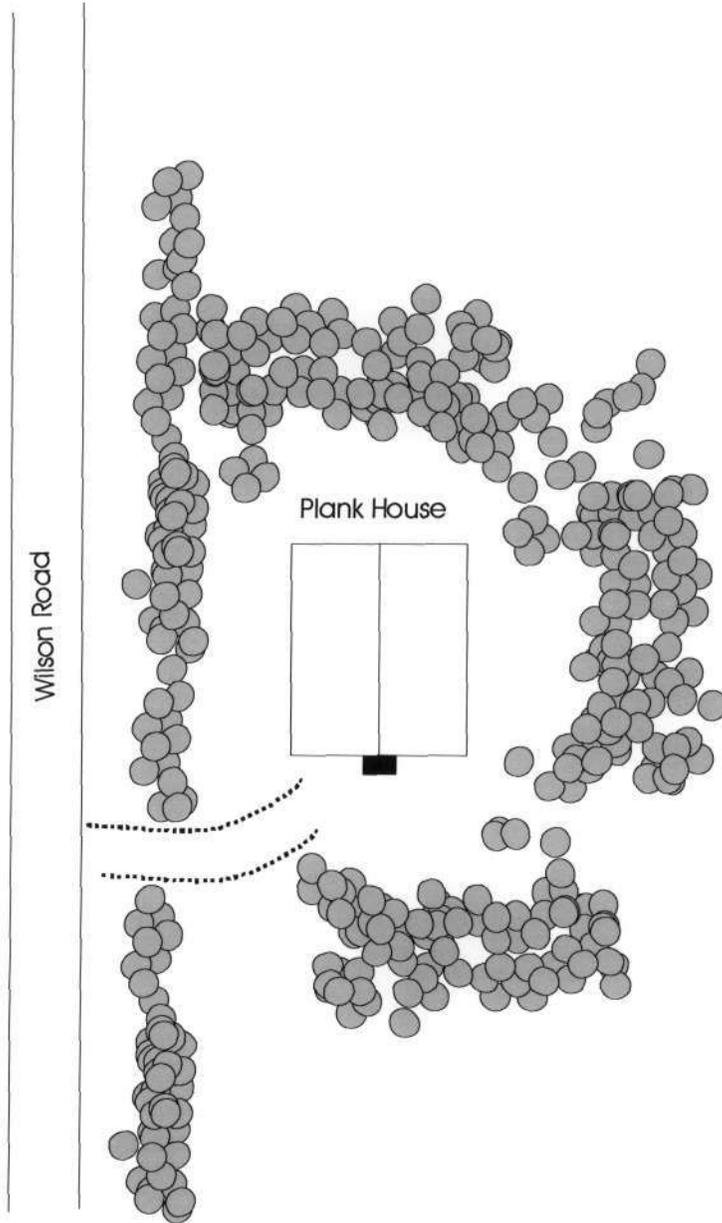
<sup>32</sup> McDaniel, George W. *Hearth and Home* 1982: 8.

<sup>33</sup> Jackson Evans Ireland Transcript.

<sup>34</sup> Sundermann, Anne M. *The Money Crop* 2005: 45.

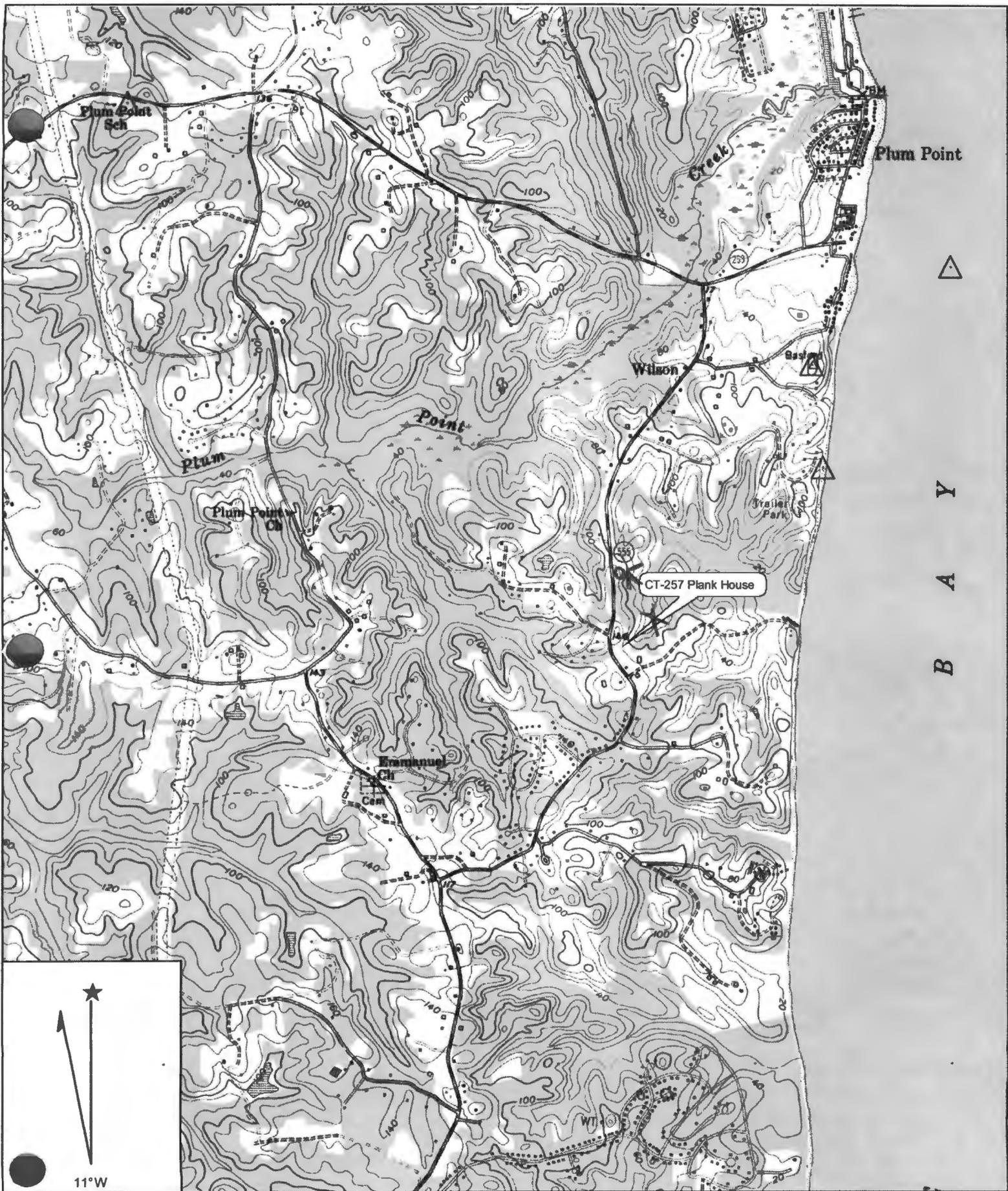
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Maryland Historical Trust Inventory No. CT-257  
Plank House  
Huntingtown, Calvert County MD  
Site Plan  
Not to Scale  
Cabin, 1665 Wilson Road



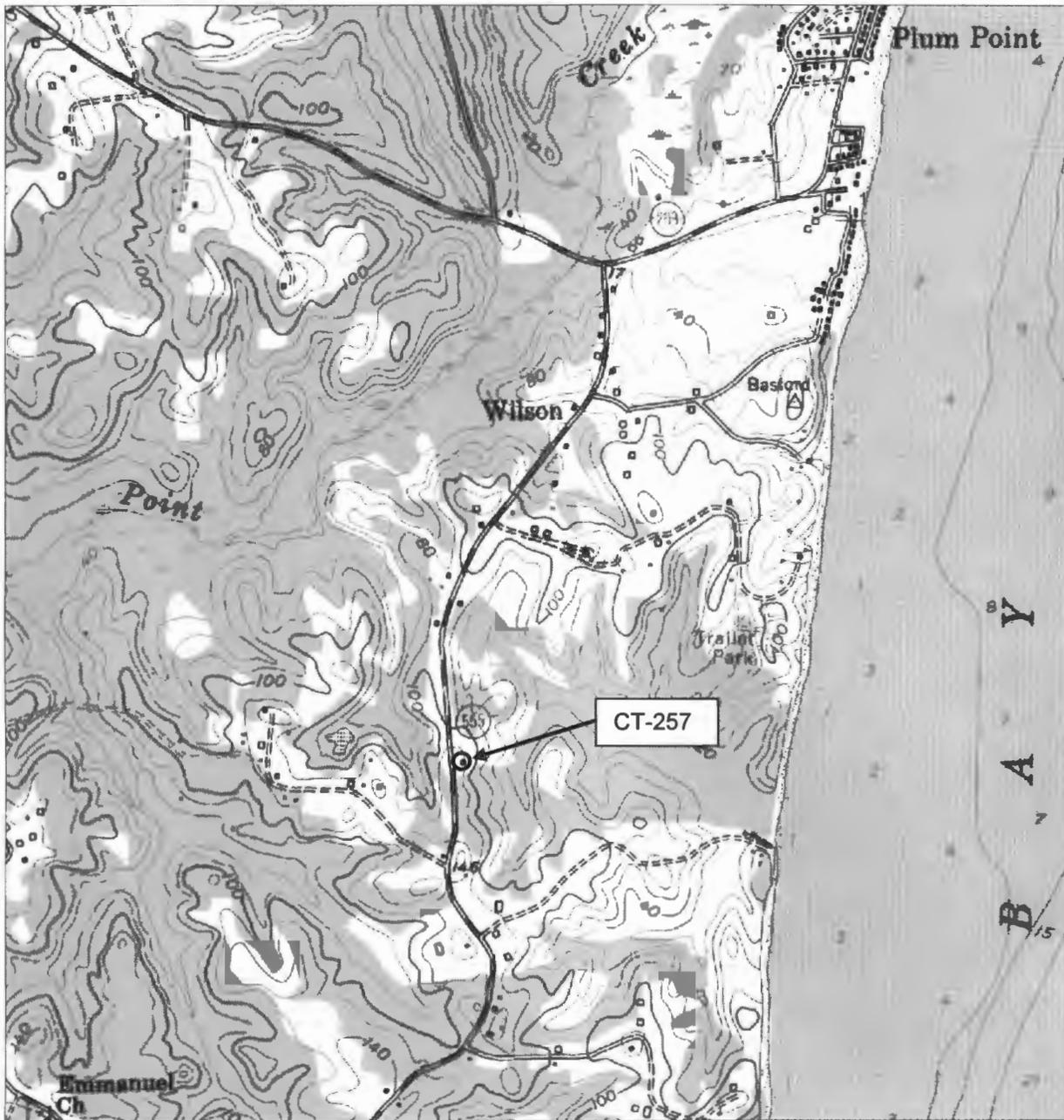


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A  
Y

Name: PRINCE FREDERICK  
 Date: 5/4/2009  
 Scale: 1 inch equals 2000 feet

Location: 038°35'31.9" N 076°32'02.25" W  
 Caption: CT-257 Plank House  
 1665 Wilson Road  
 Huntingtown, MD

CT-257  
Plank House  
1665 Wilson Road  
Prince Frederick Quadrangle 1953, Photorevised 1974





CT-257.

Plank House

Calvert County MD

Stacy Patterson

2.12.2009

MID SHPO

West Facade

1 of 5



CT-257

Plank House

Calvert County MD

Stacy Patterson

2.12.2009

MD SHPD

North Elevation

2 of 5



CT-257

Plank House

Calvert County MD

Stacy Patterson

2.12.2009

MD SHPD

South Elevation

3 of 5



CT-257

Plank House

Calvert County MD

Stacy Patterson

2.12.2009

MD SHPD

East Elevation

4 of 5



CT-257

Plank House

Calvert County MD

Stacy Patterson

2.12.2009

MD SHPO

Dove tail North Detail

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