

**MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST
DETERMINATION OF ELIGIBILITY FORM**

NR Eligible: yes no

Property Name: Hurlock-Preston Spur

Inventory Number: **CAR-372 / D-847**

Address:

Historic district: yes no

City: Hurlock

Zip Code: 21643

County: Dorchester

USGS Quadrangle(s): Preston, Rhodesdale

Property Owner: Maryland Transit Administration

Tax Account ID Number: 15011688

Tax Map Parcel Number(s): 280

Tax Map Number: 400

Project: Excess Real Property - Hurlock to Preston

Agency: Maryland Transit Administration

Agency Prepared By: John Milner Associates, Inc.

Preparer's Name: Douglas C. McVarish

Date Prepared:

Documentation is presented in: see references below

Preparer's Eligibility Recommendation: Eligibility recommended Eligibility not recommended

Criteria: A B C D Considerations: A B C D E F G

Complete if the property is a contributing or non-contributing resource to a NR district/property:

Name of the District/Property:

Inventory Number:

Eligible: yes

Listed: yes

Site visit by MHT Staff: yes no

Name:

Date:

Description of Property and Justification: *(Please attach map and photo)*

Physical Description of the Resource:

This approximately 5.8-mile long, single track rail line extends from a switch junction with the former Dorchester and Delaware Railroad line at the east side of Hurlock, Dorchester County, immediately east of Railroad Avenue (Photo 1), to its termination in Preston, Caroline County (Figure 1). Its termination point is the northeast side of Railroad Avenue, near Chambers Street in the northern portion of Preston. As noted in the history section, this short segment was originally part of a substantially longer line, the Baltimore, Chesapeake, and Atlantic Railroad, originally known as the Baltimore & Eastern Shore Railroad.

The line formerly extended south of its junction with the former Dorchester and Delaware Railroad, but the tracks have recently been removed (Removed rails are piled in the vicinity of the Hurlock Freight Station.) From the junction, the line extends generally northwest east of Railroad Avenue and then east of side streets off the east side of Main Street. North of Hurlock, the line extends through farmland (Photo 2) crossing Milligantown Road, Bobtown Road, Gravel Branch Road, and Beulah Road. It emerges amongst commercial uses when it crosses East New Market-Ellwood Road (Maryland Routes 16/331), about 1,000 feet southeast of the Preston Road intersection (Maryland Route 318), then turning northwest to cross Hunting Creek and past the rear of

MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST REVIEW

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MHT Comments:

Jim Terrence
Reviewer, Office of Preservation Services

6/22/09
Date

B. Kuntz
Reviewer, National Register Program

6/22/09
Date

Linchester Mill (MD Inventory CAR-5) (Photo 3).

The line extends along the southwest side of James T. Wright and Preston Lions Club Parks. The line terminates about 200 feet northwest of the northwest end of Railroad Avenue, a thoroughfare that adjoins several former industrial buildings.

The railroad line itself has been refurbished in recent years. The ties, rails, ballast, and associated riprap, railroad crossing signs, mile posts, and whistle posts, all postdate 1958. Accessible portions of the contain the following buildings and structures:

Hurlock Freight Station. This station, located east of the railroad tracks and north of the Dorchester and Delaware Railroad crossing, was previously surveyed and was assigned MHT survey number D-64 (photos 4 and 5). The National Register of Historic Places eligibility review form for the property described it as follows:

The 1890-1910 Hurlock Freight Station is a one story, four bay building with gable roof and rectangular plan consisting of three main rooms. Originally sheathed with board and batten siding, the building is currently covered with asbestos shingles but does retain remnants of the original sash as well as several distinctive peaked window hoods.

The station was recommended eligible for the National Register under Criterion C as a rare surviving railroad freight station of its period.

Preston Passenger Station. This station, formerly located on the southwest side of the railroad tracks, 0.1 mile west of MD Route 324, has been demolished. Concrete curbs demarcate the former station location (Photo 6). At the time of its survey, the station was assigned survey number CAR-162.

Railroad Objects

Other structures and objects associated with the railroad line include switches. Two switches were identified on the line. One, at the north end of the line, was used to shift train cars onto a spur track that served nearby cannery businesses (photos 7 and 8). At the south end of the spur, the switch transferred train cars to and from the intersecting Cambridge and Seaford Railroad line.

The second mentioned switch can be dated by a date stamped on its housing. This date indicates that the switch substantially postdates 1969.

The Preston switch is substantially older. The stand base is labeled as follows: "Bethlehem Steel Co., New Century Stand, Pat. June 2, 99." This switch stand may be an earlier version of one illustrated in Patent 1,498,873 by James M. Hoffer and assigned to the Bethlehem Steel Company (Figure 2). According to switch industry executive John Lesh, "New Century switch stands have been used by most major railroads throughout North American over the past 100-plus years" (Wanck 2001). Therefore, without additional evidence, assigning an exact or approximate date to the switch is difficult.

Portions of the mechanism are missing, but remaining parts include the stand, a metal foot lever; the switch mechanism itself with four reflectors that pivoted when the foot lever was pushed, reading either red or green; and portion of the switch rod that connected the switch mechanism to the switch rail.

Bridges

A number of bridges are located on the truncated north-south line. Survey of these bridges was outside the scope of the current

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investigation.

1. Unnamed tributary of Gravel Run northwest of crossing of Bobtown Road, Hurlock vicinity
2. Gravel Run west of Gravel Branch Road
3. Hunting Creek in vicinity of Linchester Mill, Preston

Adjacent Commercial Buildings

Commercial buildings were often built close to rail lines to take advantage of the line as a means for shipment of raw materials and products. Among the buildings in the vicinity of the spur line are:

Hurlock

Warehouse, rear, 300 Broad Street. Tax Map: 400, Tax Parcel: 279. Tax ID #: 15007877

This warehouse is located along the east side of the rail line in the rear of the 300 Broad Street property (Photo 9). The shallow, gabled roof building is divided into seven bays along its side wall with shallow pilasters. Each bay contains an oblong window. The south gable end contains paired sliding metal door, recessed slightly behind the wall. The exterior walls are sheathed in metal sheet.

Preston

Remnants of two industrial complexes are located within the immediate vicinity of the north end of the railroad spur.

- 1) J. Lednum's Cannery, east side of Railroad Avenue. Tax Map: 600, Tax Parcel: 114. Tax ID #: 04015088

The first portion consists of a gabled roof warehouse, built with a flat-roofed, south extension (Photo 10). The warehouse is of wood-framed construction, while the extension is constructed of concrete block. The second portion is a truncated gabled roof, wood-framed storage shed, located at the intersection of Railroad Avenue and Chambers Street.

The warehouse may be an enlarged version of that depicted on the 1934 Sanborn map of Preston. At that time, it was a small, oblong, single-story warehouse, attached on its east end to a storage building that was in turn attached to a cannery. The addition is not shown on the 1934 Sanborn map.

- 2) Possible A.W. Sisk's Corn and Tomato Cannery warehouse, west side of Railroad Avenue. Tax Map: 600, Tax Parcel: 575. Tax ID #: 04011635

This narrow, oblong, wood-framed, two-story, gabled roof storage building sheathed in corrugated metal, may be a remnant of the A.W. Sisk cannery and the later Choptank Canning Company cannery (Photo 11). In 1917, a one-story building with this approximate footprint was identified on a Sanborn map as a potato warehouse, while in 1934, as part of the Choptank cannery, a two-story building was indicated as a general warehouse. This building was served by a siding off the west side of the rail line.

In addition, south of Preston, the rail line extends to the rear of Linchester Mill (CAR-5). Tax Map: 59; Tax Parcel: 93. Tax ID #: 04009851

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MHT Comments:

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Reviewer, National Register Program

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This mill is described as follows on the historic sites survey summary sheet:

Linchester Mill is located in the southern corner of the village of Linchester, south of Preston (Photo 3). The building is a frame structure built on a masonry foundation with an inoperative overshot wheel. The majority of the structure dates from the period of the Civil War when it was reported in poor condition.

History of the Rail Line

The rail line between Preston and Hurlock is a remaining segment of the former Baltimore and Eastern Shore Railroad, established in 1890 as the first railroad to cross the Delmarva Peninsula from Ocean City west to Claiborne. In 1891, three trains were operated in each direction along the 87-mile long line. Preston and Hurlock were separated by the intermediate Douglass station, two miles north of Hurlock (Vienna 2006:54). No trace of this station exists.

Hurlock was established in 1867 as a stop on the Dorchester and Delaware Railroad. A grocery store was built near the station in 1869 by John M. Hurlock. He also built the village's first residence (Wheatley 1992:1). The location of Hurlock as a stop on the Baltimore and Eastern Shore Railroad established the town as the junction of two Eastern Shore railroad lines and resulted in both commercial and residential growth (Wheatley 1992:1-2).

The town also grew in response to the growth agriculture in the area. In 1891, Joseph B. Andrews and Company established a cannery in the community which they operated until 1921 when it became the American Stores Cannery. Two or three other canneries operated in the Hurlock area, sometimes under a succession of owners. Cannery owners included Adkins and Douglas, Cameron Brothers, P.H. Cannon, F.W. Carroll, W.H. Neal and Son, Roland Webster and Company, and John M. Wright, Jr. (Burton 1986:83).

Preston was established in about 1845 as Snow Hill. Its initial growth was hindered by initial lack of transportation links. Prior to the coming of the railroad, commerce with Baltimore was carried on through Choptank, a steamboat landing about two and one-half miles south on current Maple Avenue Extended. According to rail historian John C. Hayman, Preston eventually provided the highest volume of freight of any station on the line with the exception of Salisbury (Hayman 1979:89).

In 1894, the Baltimore & Eastern Shore Railroad was reorganized as part of the Baltimore, Chesapeake, and Atlantic Railroad, formed from numerous rail and steamship companies serving the Delmarva Peninsula when it was purchased by John E. Searles of New York, Secretary of the Sugar Trust. Several hundred miles of railroad and fourteen steamboats were merged into the new company, capitalized at \$3,725,000. It soon became known by the nickname of the "black cinders and ashes" line. At the peak of operations four daily passenger trains and two freight trains stopped at Preston (New York Times 1894; Vienna 2006:53-54). Initial running time for the journey between Baltimore and Ocean City was about five hours (Hayman 1979:91).

In 1899, Scott & Company of Wilmington, Delaware, sold a controlling interest in the Baltimore, Chesapeake, and Atlantic Railway Company to the Pennsylvania Railroad for \$2,250,000. At that time, the company owned about 90 miles of railroad, fifteen steamboats, and over 100 wharf properties (New York Times 1899).

Preston was also the site of canning factories. During pre-World War I years, it was common for 20 to 25 freight cars of canned tomatoes, apples, and watermelon to be shipped during harvest time from Preston. At one time, 16 canneries existed within seven miles of Preston, and three were located within town near the railroad (Preston n.d.).

In the early 1900s, J.T. Dennis operated a cannery in partnership with a Mr. Carroll in Preston. Nearby, J.R. Phillips, a physician,

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and S.E. Douglas operated a cannery. In 1910, J.F. Lednum owned a cannery, as did A.W. Sisk. The latter was known as the Preston Canning Company. A 1917 Sanborn map shows A.W. Sisk's corn and tomato cannery located southwest of the railroad alignment north of the station, while the opposite side of the street was occupied by J.F. Lednum's tomato cannery (Sanborn 1917). By 1923, J.W. Sisk and Son remained on the southwest side of the railroad. On the northeast side of the line was a building supply warehouse, a one and two-story cannery building, a one-story warehouse, and a one-story storage building (Sanborn 1923b). By the mid-1930s, numerous buildings of the Choptank Canning Company (formerly A.W. Sisk's cannery) were located on the southwest side of the railroad tracks, while J.F. Lednum's cannery occupied several buildings northeast of the railroad line (Sanborn 1934).

In Hurlock, the W.H. Neal and Son, Inc. cannery was located south of Broad Street (current Route 307 and the former Dorchester and Delaware Railroad, and east of the Baltimore, Chesapeake and Atlantic Railroad. Neal operated a can-making business that was eventually sold to the Continental Can Company. Its factory was located adjacent to the east side of the railroad south of the depot (in the approximate vicinity of the current police station) (Sanborn 1923a).

In the early 1900s the railroad line suffered a series of reverses. An unusually cold winter caused the Chesapeake Bay to freeze over in the winter of 1903-1904, stopping boat traffic. The Baltimore fire of 1904 affected its business further, and the company went into voluntary receivership (Clark 1950:II:883).

In 1928, the Baltimore, Chesapeake, and Atlantic Railroad suffered foreclosure and was bought by capitalists affiliated with the Pennsylvania Railroad for \$1 million. The demise of the line began when a hurricane washed away the trestle into Ocean City. By the 1930s, the line had been further truncated due to the lack of railroad bridges over the Sinepuxent Bay and the Nanticoke and Choptank rivers (Clark 1950:II:884).

In 1976, with the Conrail takeover of the Pennsylvania Railroad holdings, the Queenstown to Queen Anne segment of the line was taken out of service, as was the Hurlock to Vienna line. For a time, the segments from Queen Anne to Denton, Preston to Hurlock, and Hebron to Salisbury were operated by Conrail under subsidy (Hayman 1979:168).

Rail Service Associates assumed operation of the Cambridge to Seaford branch and the spur line from Hurlock to Preston on August 11, 1977. The lines were managed through a separate company, the Maryland and Delaware Railroad (Hayman 1979:171).

Evaluation: In its original, untruncated state, the Baltimore, Chesapeake, and Atlantic Railroad line was a significant portion of the transportation network of the state, extending the length of the eastern shore and connecting with the east-west Cambridge to Seaford line to provide service to other points in the eastern United States. However, as mentioned, this line has been severely truncated and now consists of short segments, among them, this c. six-mile spur connecting Hurlock and Preston. This spur is no longer used, and vegetation is growing through the rail ties in many places.

Few historic elements of the line remain. Most of the ties, rails, and rail bed were replaced in relatively recent years. One possible pre-1960 element may be the switch to a siding in Preston. The date of installation of this switch is not known. The only other historic element of the line that has been identified is the Hurlock Freight Station. The Preston Station has been demolished leaving its concrete floor slab/platform. Older whistle posts and mile posts, if present, were outside areas accessible for survey.

Due to alterations and elimination of historic fabric, the spur line lacks integrity of design, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association, and is recommended not eligible under any of the National Register criteria.

References:

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Date

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Date

D-047 \ CAR - 372

Hurlock-Preston Spur

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1992 History of Hurlock. Town of Hurlock, Hurlock, Maryland.

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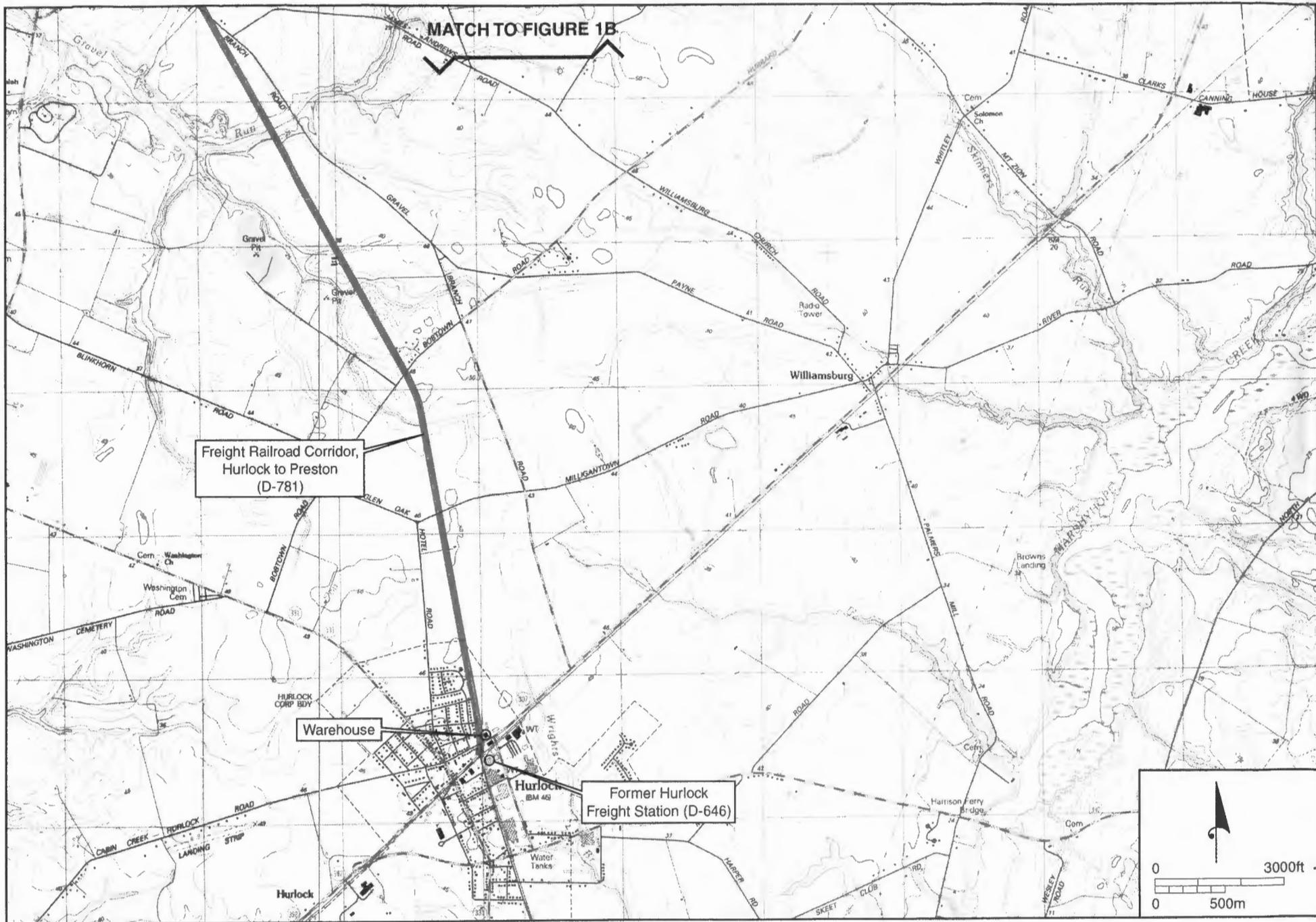


Figure 1A. Freight Railroad Corridor, Hurlock to Preston. Detail, *Federalsburg, MD* 7.5-minute quadrangle (USGS 1988).

710-110-110

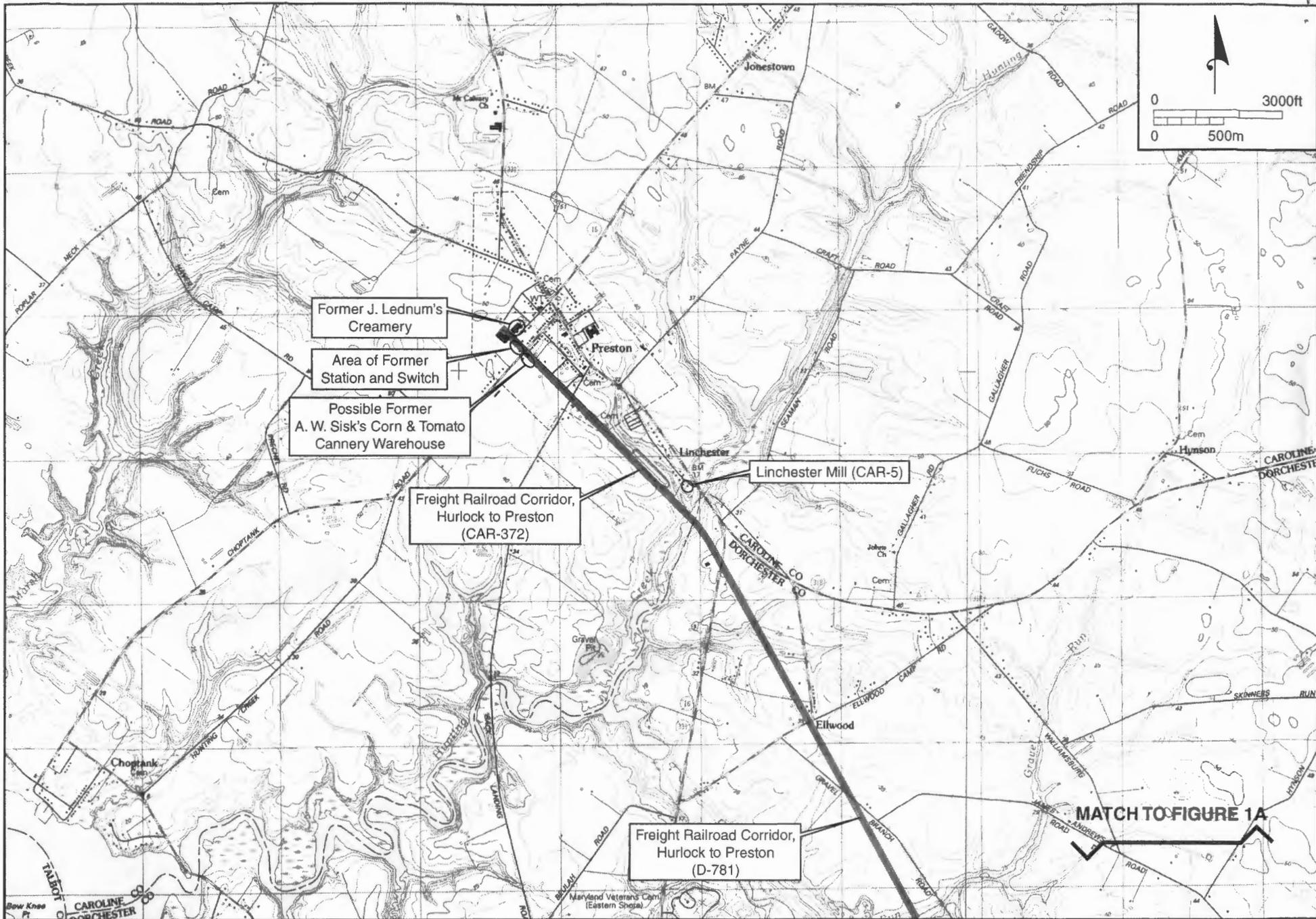


Figure 1B. Freight Railroad Corridor, Hurlock to Preston. Detail, Preston, MD 7.5-minute quadrangle (USGS 1988).

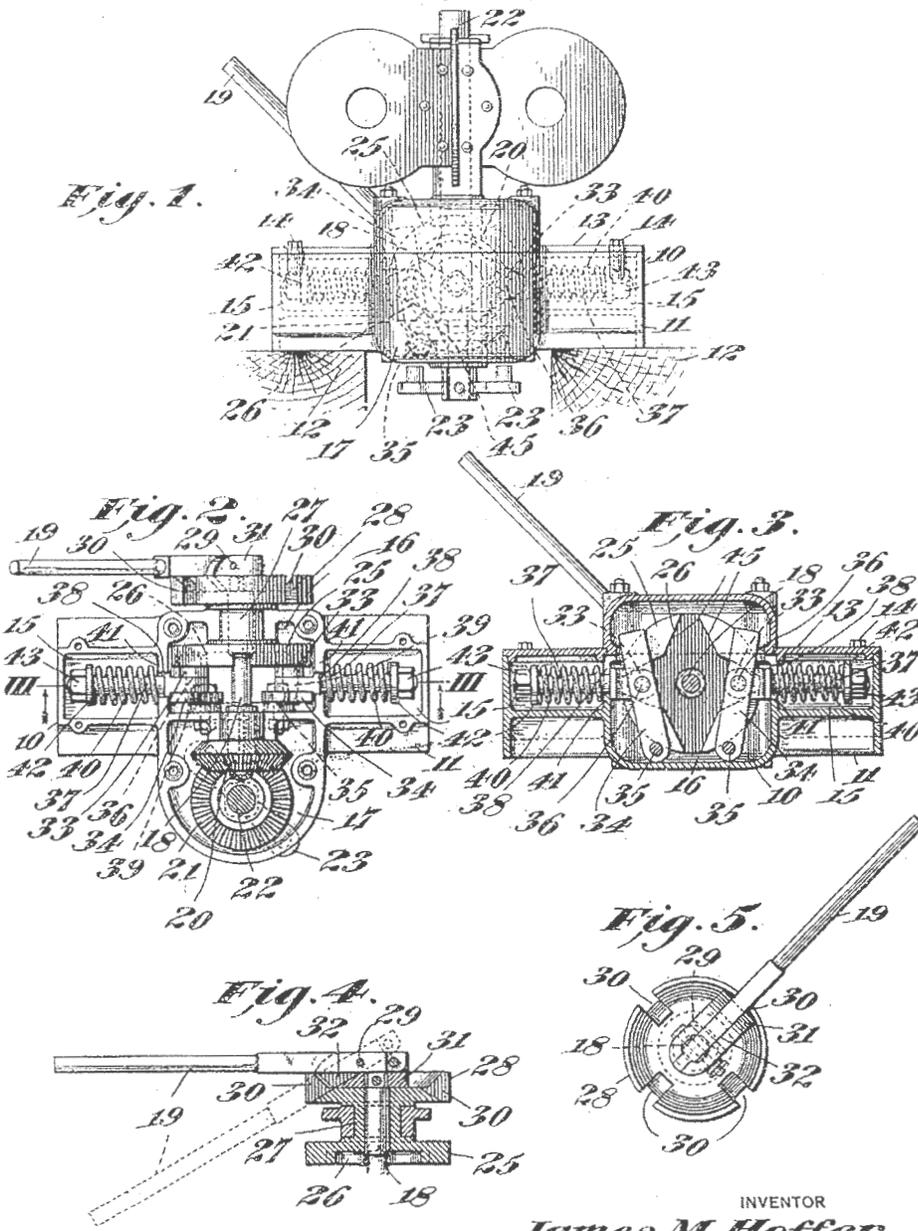
June 24, 1924.

1,498,873

J. M. HOFFER

SWITCH STAND

Filed April 19, 1924



INVENTOR
James M. Hoffer.
 BY
A. B. Reavis
 ATTORNEY

Figure 2. Switch Stand. U.S. Patent 1,498,873 (Hoffer 1924).



MIHP# D-847 and CAR-3TL
Hurlock-Preston Spur
Dorchester County, MD
Douglas McVay

712008
MDSHP0

Junction of former Dorchester & Delaware
Railroad and Hurlock-Preston spur toward north

1/10



MIHP# D-847 and CAR-372

Hurlock-Preston Spur

Dorchester County, MD

Douglas C McVinish

7/2008

MDSHPD

General view of Hurlock-Preston Spur,
northwest of Hurlock toward northeast

#2110



MIHP# D-847 and CAR-372

Hurlock-Preston Spur

Dorchester MD

Douglas C. McVane Jr

7/2008

MDSHPD

Hurlock Freight Station, southward side toward northeast

#3/10



MIHP# D-847 and CAR-372

Hurlock - Presto Spin

Dorchester, MD

Douglas C McVarr

712008

MDSHPO

Hurlock Freight Station Southwest and southeast
Sixty-two and twenty!

4/10

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Hurlock-Preston Spur

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Former Preston Passenger Station location toward
Northwest

#5/10



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Hurlock - Preston Spur

Carroll, MD

Donald C McVane

7/2008

MDSHP

Switch and spur-track Preston toward southeast

#6/10



MIHP# CAR-372 and D-847

Hurlock-Preston Spur

Caroline, MD

Douglas C McVint

712008

MDSHPO

"New Century" switch stand, Preston
tower number

4/7/10



MIHP # D-847 and CR-371

Hunlock-Preston Spar

Dorchester, MD

Donald C McVane

712008

MDSHP0

Warehouses, north of Broad Street,
Hunlock, toward northeast.

#8/10



RISK SON

MIHP CAR-372 and D-847

Hurlock-Preston Spur

Caroline, MO

Douglas McVint

7/2008

MOSHPO

J. Lednum's Cannery, Preston General view toward
Northwest

#9 / 10



MIHPH CAR-3720ND-847

Hurlock-Preston Spur

Caroline MD

Douglas C McVane

7/2008

MDSHPO

Possible A W Sisk's COM and Tunnel Carriage
wanchuan Preston Northeast 200 Northeast Sisk's
toward southwest

#10/10