

**Chapel Point**  
**CH-16**  
**Port Tobacco vic.**  
**Public**

**17<sup>th</sup>- 20<sup>th</sup> centuries**

Located on the east side of Port Tobacco Creek, Chapel Point was established before 1640 as a mission by the Jesuit missionary Father Andrew White. In 1649, a 4,000 acre parcel was formally granted to the Jesuits by Lord Baltimore consisting of land on both sides of the Potomac. By this time Chapel Point had been established as the Jesuit seat which included 400 acres upon which St. Thomas Manor (CH- 6 NR) and St. Ignatius Chapel(CH-7 NR) were later constructed. Operated by the Jesuits as working farms until the second quarter of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Chapel Point farm cultivated wheat, corn and tobacco and was supported by both African slaves and Irish servants. Structures known to have once stood on the property during the Colonial period include a warehouse, wharf and store. During the Civil War, Federal troops occupied the site and in the 1880's a resort for Washingtonians, known as Bellview was established at Chapel Point. An amusement park was constructed on the site in 1926 which continued to operate throughout the 1940's. The property is now owned by the State of Maryland as a limited access park and includes a collection of 20<sup>th</sup> century structures including a one story front gable tenant house, granary and several tobacco barns.

# Maryland Historical Trust

## Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties Form

Inventory No. CH-16

### 1. Name of Property (indicate preferred name)

historic Chapel Point  
 other \_\_\_\_\_

### 2. Location

street and number 8160 Pieces Lane X not for publication  
 city, town Port Tobacco X vicinity  
 county Charles

### 3. Owner of Property (give names and mailing addresses of all owners)

name State of Maryland Dept. of Forests & Parks  
 street and number Tawes State Office Building telephone Unknown  
 city, town Annapolis state MD zip code 21404

### 4. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Charles County Courthouse tax map and parcel: 54 p.42  
 city, town La Plata liber 258 folio 390

### 5. Primary Location of Additional Data

- Contributing Resource in National Register District
- Contributing Resource in Local Historic District
- Determined Eligible for the National Register/Maryland Register
- Determined Ineligible for the National Register/Maryland Register
- Recorded by HABS/HAER
- Historic Structure Report or Research Report
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

### 6. Classification

Category		Ownership	Current Function		Resource Count	
<input type="checkbox"/>	district	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape	Contributing	Noncontributing
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	building(s)	<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce/trade	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> recreation/culture	<u>1</u>	<input type="checkbox"/> buildings
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> defense	<input type="checkbox"/> religion	<u>10</u>	<input type="checkbox"/> sites
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	site		<input type="checkbox"/> domestic	<input type="checkbox"/> social	<u>3</u>	<input type="checkbox"/> structures
<input type="checkbox"/>	object		<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation	<u>14</u>	<input type="checkbox"/> objects
			<input type="checkbox"/> funerary	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress		<input type="checkbox"/> Total
			<input type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> unknown		
			<input type="checkbox"/> health care	<input type="checkbox"/> vacant/not in use		
			<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> other:		
					<b>Number of Contributing Resources previously listed in the Inventory</b>	
					<u>1</u>	

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## 7. Description

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### Condition

<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated
<input type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> altered

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

Currently operated as a limited access park, Chapel Point stands on the west bank of the Port Tobacco River and now consists of over 800 acres owned by the State of Maryland. As the principle seat of the Jesuits in Maryland, the site has been continuously occupied since at least the 17th century. The property surrounds St. Ignatius Church (CH-7) and St. Thomas Manor (CH-6 NR), the principle structures originally associated with this site. Currently, the property includes a 1930 tenant house, granary, and two tobacco barns. At least 14 sites are also known to exist including a warehouse, mill, wharf and store dating from the colonial period; and a dance hall, pavilion, hotel, bathhouse, barn and cottage, from the late 19th century. Because the property was operated as a working farm for the last 300 years, additional sites related to agriculture are undoubtedly present on the property. Visible historic resources include several extant 20th century agricultural buildings and the visible concrete block foundations of a late 19th - early 20th century riverside resort complex at Chapel Point.

The boundaries of the park border the Port Tobacco River on the west and extend on either side of Chapel Point Road. Two boundary stones or uncertain age may mark the early property boundaries at the corner of the Nitze Farm and the Brooks Farm.

# 8. Significance

Inventory No. CH-16

Period	Areas of Significance	Check and justify below			
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> health/medicine	<input type="checkbox"/> performing arts	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> archeology	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> invention	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-1999	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment/ recreation	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> religion	
<input type="checkbox"/> 2000-	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> ethnic heritage	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science	
	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/ settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> social history	
	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning		<input type="checkbox"/> maritime industry	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation	
	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation		<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other:	

<b>Specific dates</b>	1649-1930	<b>Architect/Builder</b>	Unknown
<b>Construction dates</b>	1649-1930		

Evaluation for:

National Register                       Maryland Register                       not evaluated

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. (For compliance reports, complete evaluation on a DOE Form - see manual.)

Chapel Point is significant for its important association with Maryland's religious and agricultural history. Chapel Point was originally part of St. Thomas Manor, the largest and oldest of five Jesuit estates in Maryland. St. Thomas Manor was patented in 1649 by Father Copley who assigned 4,000 acres to Thomas Matthews including the St. Thomas Manor property to the east of Port Tobacco Creek and almost all the land encompassing Cedar Point Neck to the west. Chapel Point was operated as an active farm until the second quarter of the 20th century. Chapel Point, including St. Ignatius Church and St. Thomas Manor was regarded as the home farm while the Cedar Point Neck property operated on a system of tenancy to support the Manor and the Jesuits (now Fourth) Point. The farm included a grist mill, which in 1850 was upgraded to steam power. The mill stood adjacent to a warehouse and wharf and tavern. The milling operation was prosperous until 1880, when roller technology made previous mills obsolete.

During the Civil War, Chapel Point was described as the camping ground of the Federal Army from the beginning of hostilities to the end. During the occupation nothing could be done except to look on and see the property being destroyed" The Jesuits sued the War department for \$31,000 damages to timber, crops, livestock and other resources destroyed or requisitions by military during the occupation, but received a mere \$4,000 in return.

In the mid 1880's the Jesuits formed a joint venture with brothers J.C. and W.M Howard to build a resort at Chapel Point known as Hotel Belleview, bringing passengers from Washington on such steamboats as George Law, Harry Randall and Samuel J. Pentz. In 1926 Ben Bowling Wills acquired the Chapel Point Property including 851 acres from the Jesuits and began to develop an amusement park on the site which he referred to as "Chapel Point Park; the Pride of the Potomac" Picnic grounds and bathing beach. Within several years . In 1936 Wills defaults on his mortgage and returns the property to the Jesuits, shifting his attention to excursion boats. By Labor day, 1930, seventy-five thousand people had visited Chapel Point, marking a new single season record.

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## 9. Major Bibliographical References

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Inventory No. CH-16

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## 10. Geographical Data

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Acreage of surveyed property 827.54

Acreage of historical setting 827.54

Quadrangle name Popes Creek

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

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### Verbal boundary description and justification

Chapel Point is associate with Charles County Property Tax Map 54, Parcel 42.

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## 11. Form Prepared By

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name/title Cathy Hardy/Historic Sites Surveyor

organization Charles County Planning

date 5/22/2002

street and number 200 Baltimore Street

telephone 301-396-5815

city or town La Plata

state MD zip code 20646

The Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties was officially created by an Act of the Maryland Legislature to be found in the Annotated Code of Maryland, Article 41, Section 181 KA, 1974 supplement.

The survey and inventory are being prepared for information and record purposes only and do not constitute any infringement of individual property rights.

return to: Maryland Historical Trust  
DHCD/DHCP  
100 Community Place  
Crownsville MD 21032  
410-514-7600

MARYLAND INVENTORY OF HISTORIC PROPERTIES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

Inventory No. CH-16

Section 9 Page 1

Chapel Point  
name of property  
Charles County, MD  
county and state

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Major Bibliographic References:

Brown, Jack D., et al. Charles County, Maryland, A History.  
Charles County Bicentennial Committee, 1976.

Charles County Land Records, Charles County Courthouse, LaPlata, Maryland.

Cudahy, Brian J. Twilight on the Bay: The Excursion Boat Empire of B.B. Wills  
Tidewater Publishers, Centreville, MD, 1998

Klaphor, Margaret Brown. The History of Charles County, Maryland.  
LaPlata, MD: Charles County Tercentenary, Inc., 1958.

KFS Historic Preservation Group. *Architectural, Historical, and Archaeological Investigations  
at Blossom Point Farm, Blossom Point Testing Facility, Charles County, Maryland.*  
Submitted to the U.S. Army Corp of Engineers, Baltimore District. 1990.

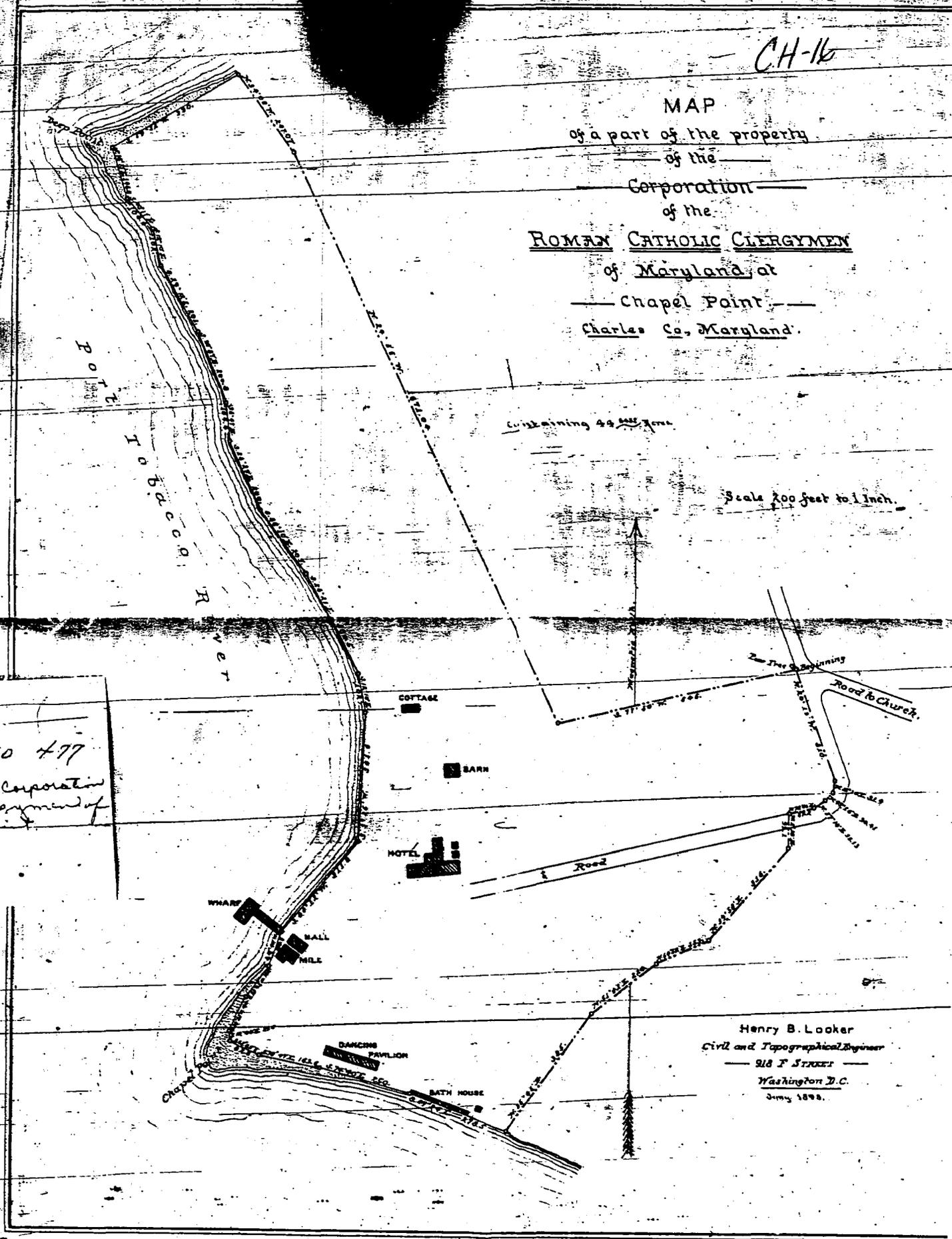
CH-16

MAP  
 of a part of the property  
 of the  
 Corporation  
 of the  
ROMAN CATHOLIC CLERGYMEN  
 of Maryland, at  
 Chapel Point,  
 Charles Co., Maryland.

Containing 49 1/2 A.C.

Scale 200 feet to 1 inch.

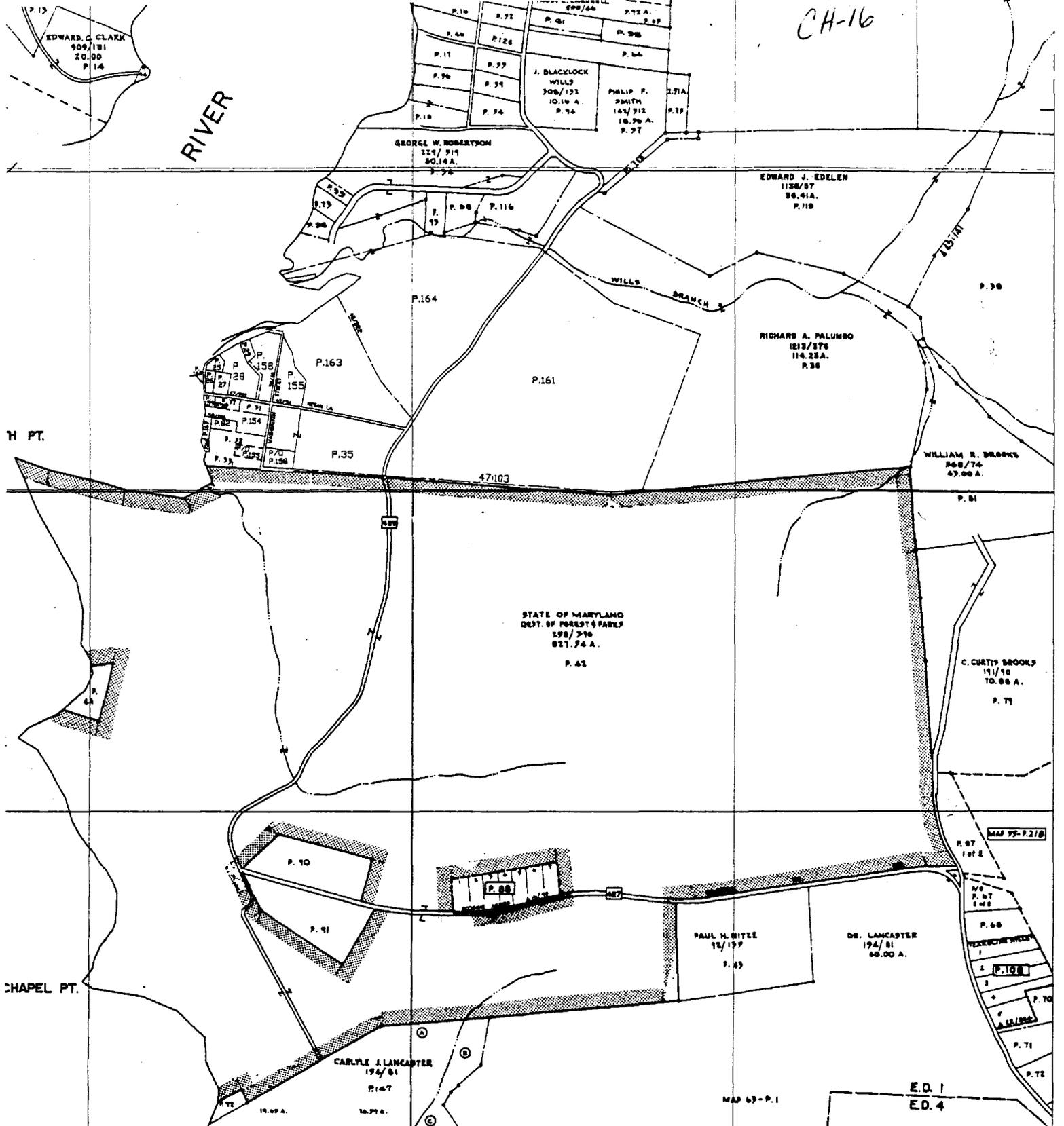
Plot  
 Folio 477  
 of the Corporation  
 of Clergymen of  
 Chapel Point



Henry B. Looker  
 Civil and Topographical Engineer  
 918 F Street  
 Washington D.C.  
 July 1898.

CH-16

RIVER



H PT.

CHAPEL PT.



63

791

SEPT '00	CAT			
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797

CHARLES COUNTY,

80C

88010.9mN  
400026.5mE

MAP 54

CH-16 Charles County, MD  
Name: CHAPEL PT. LANDING  
Location: POPES CREEK VIC.  
Quad: POPES CREEK





CH 16

CHAPEL POINT  
CHARLES CO. MD

C. HARDY

11/2001

WHARF REMAINS, LOOKING S

1011