

**MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST  
DETERMINATION OF ELIGIBILITY FORM**

NR Eligible: yes   
no

Property Name: Indian Head – White Plains Railroad Inventory Number: CH- 290

Address: Naval Surface Weapons Center City: Indian Head Zip Code: 20640

County: Charles USGS Topographic Map: Port Tobacco Quad

Owner: US Government Is the property being evaluated a district?  yes

Tax Parcel Number: N/A Tax Map Number: N/A Tax Account ID Number: N/A

Project: Mason Springs Cell Site – Verizon Agency: FCC

Site visit by MHT Staff:  no  yes Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Is the property located within a historic district?  yes  no

<i>If the property is within a district</i>		District Inventory Number: _____
NR-listed district <input type="checkbox"/> yes	Eligible district <input type="checkbox"/> yes	District Name: _____
Preparer's Recommendation: Contributing resource <input type="checkbox"/> yes <input type="checkbox"/> no Non-contributing but eligible in another context <input type="checkbox"/>		

<i>If the property is not within a district (or the property is a district)</i>	
Preparer's Recommendation: Eligible <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes <input type="checkbox"/> no	

Criteria:  A  B  C  D Considerations:  A  B  C  D  E  F  G  None

Documentation on the property/district is presented in: MIHP

**Description of Property and Eligibility Determination:** *(Use continuation sheet if necessary and attach map and photo)*

The Indian Head – White Plains Railroad began operation in 1919 and today consists of nearly fourteen and one-half (14.5) miles of standard gauge steel rails (installed in 1936-41; replacing the 1919 era sixty seven and one-half (67.5) lb/yard rails), treated wood ties, and steel spikes plates with spikes. The railroad served as an integral transportation link, supporting the powder production activities and proof-testing of weapons undertaken at the Naval Surface Weapons Center, Indian Head. The line connected the Center to the Pennsylvania Railroad and replaced the less efficient and sometimes impossible shipment of such materials via barges on the Potomac River from the Washington Navy Yard. Documentation that currently exists in the MIHP files indicates the property is eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A, in the areas of Transportation and Military significance at the local level. Site visits relating to this project offer no new information to challenge this conclusion. The railroad is in a very similar condition to the documentation provided in the MIHP records. The site is indeed "...associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patters of our history."

Prepared by: Kate Mahood

Date Prepared: 1-11-03

<b>MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST REVIEW</b>	
Eligibility recommended <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Eligibility not recommended <input type="checkbox"/>
Criteria: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> A <input type="checkbox"/> B <input type="checkbox"/> C <input type="checkbox"/> D	Considerations: <input type="checkbox"/> A <input type="checkbox"/> B <input type="checkbox"/> C <input type="checkbox"/> D <input type="checkbox"/> E <input type="checkbox"/> F <input type="checkbox"/> G <input type="checkbox"/> None
Comments: _____	
<u>[Signature]</u> Reviewer, Office of Preservation Services	<u>3/5/03</u> Date
<u>[Signature]</u> Reviewer, NR Program	_____ Date

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

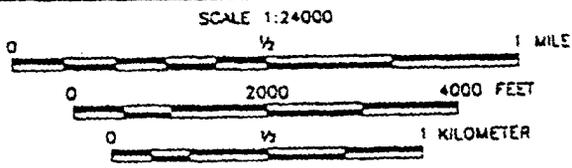
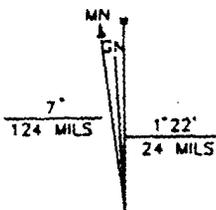
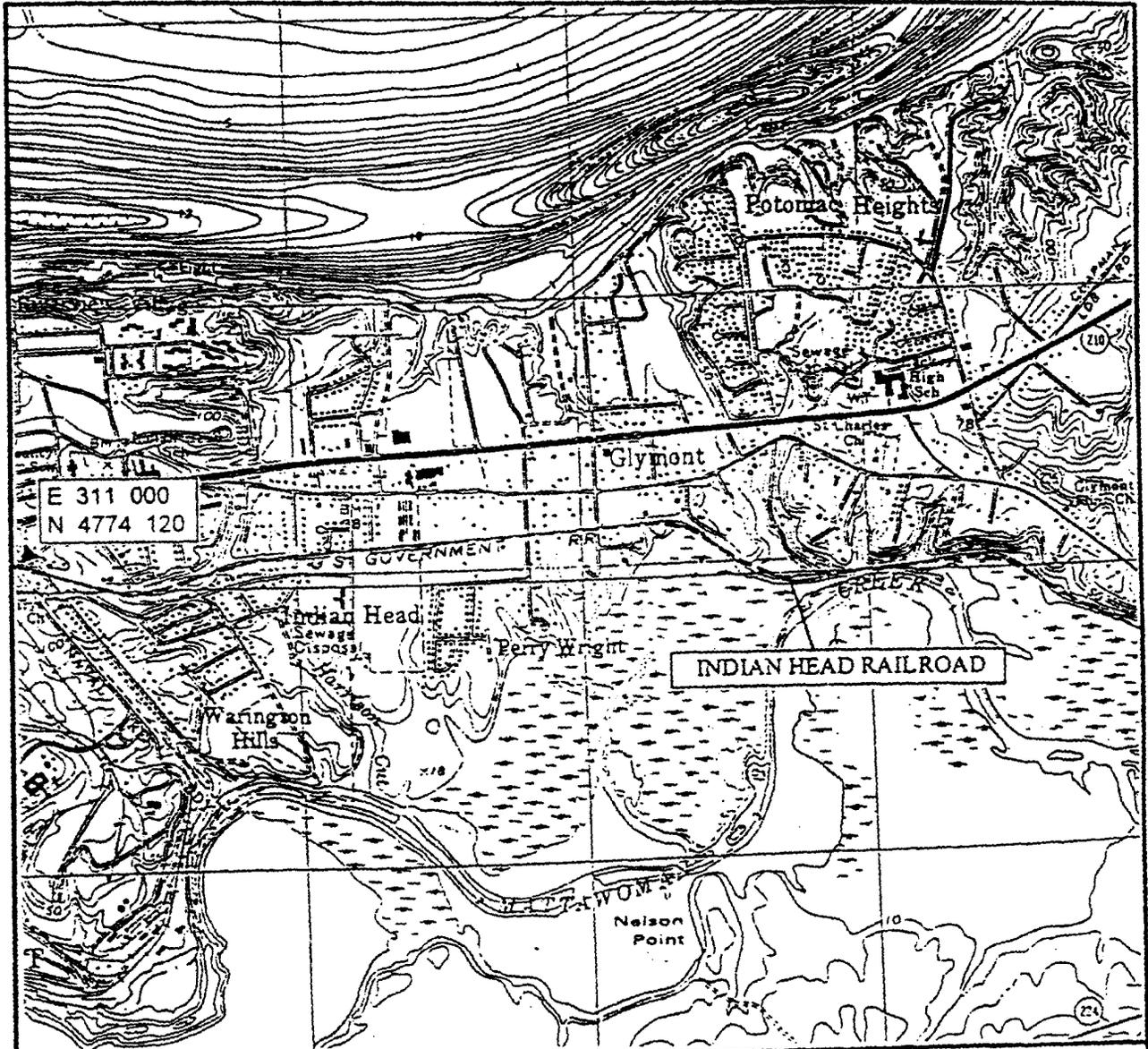
NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

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Section USGS Map

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Indian Head Railroad  
Charles County, Maryland



INDIAN HEAD, MD - VA  
QUADRANGLE LOCATION  
UTM REFERENCE (ZONE 18)

 R. Christopher Goodwin & Associates, Inc.  
241 EAST FOURTH STREET, FREDERICK, MD 21701

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National Park Service

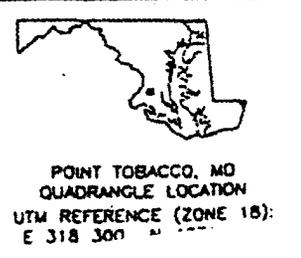
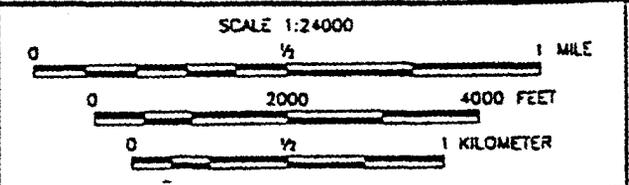
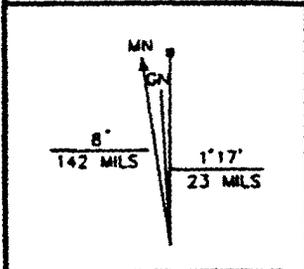
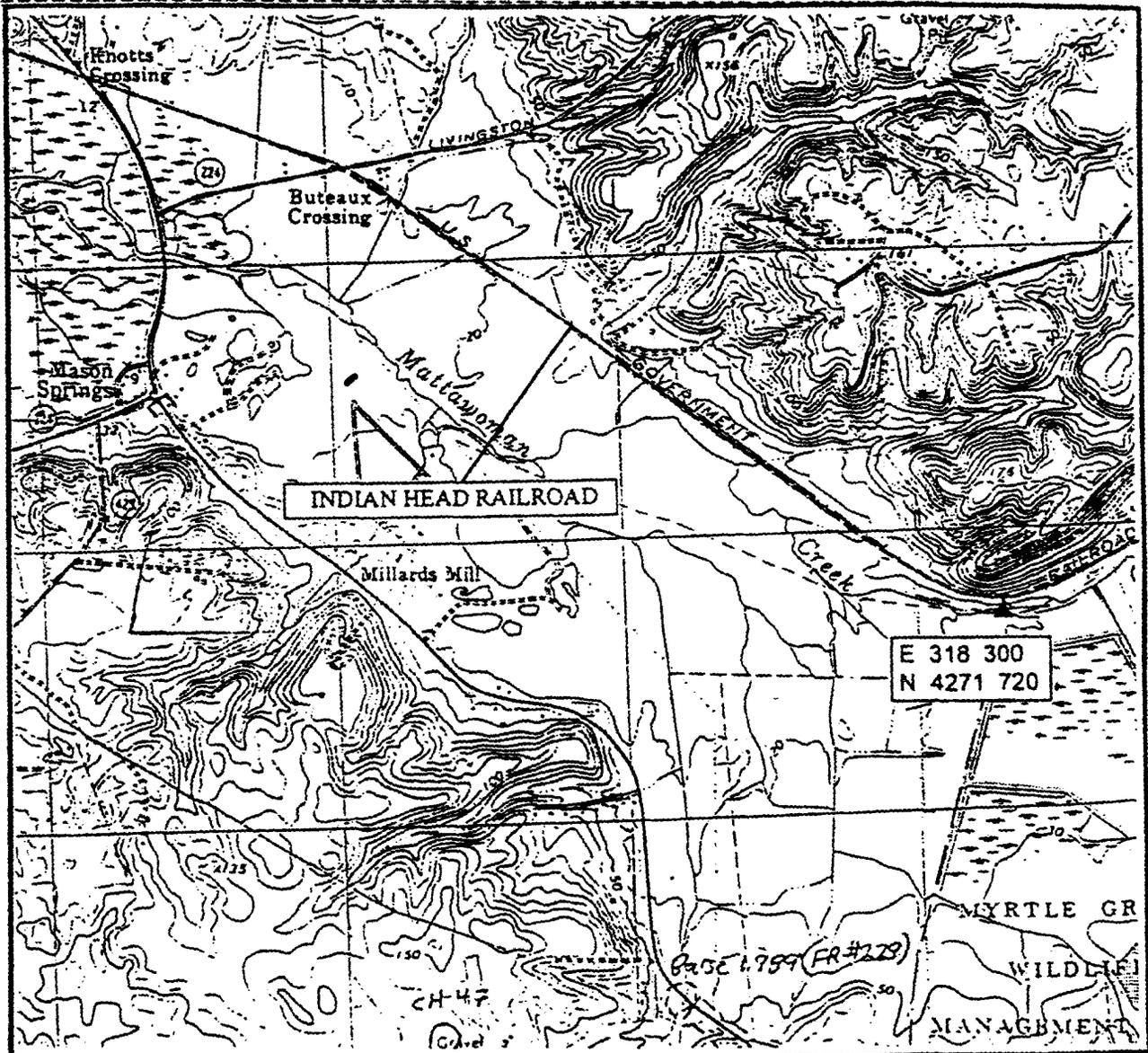
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Indian Head Railroad  
Charles County, Maryland



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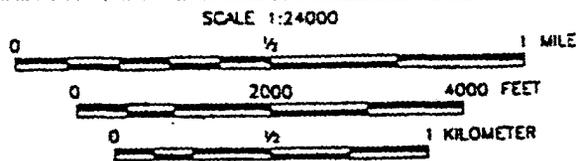
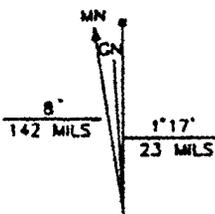
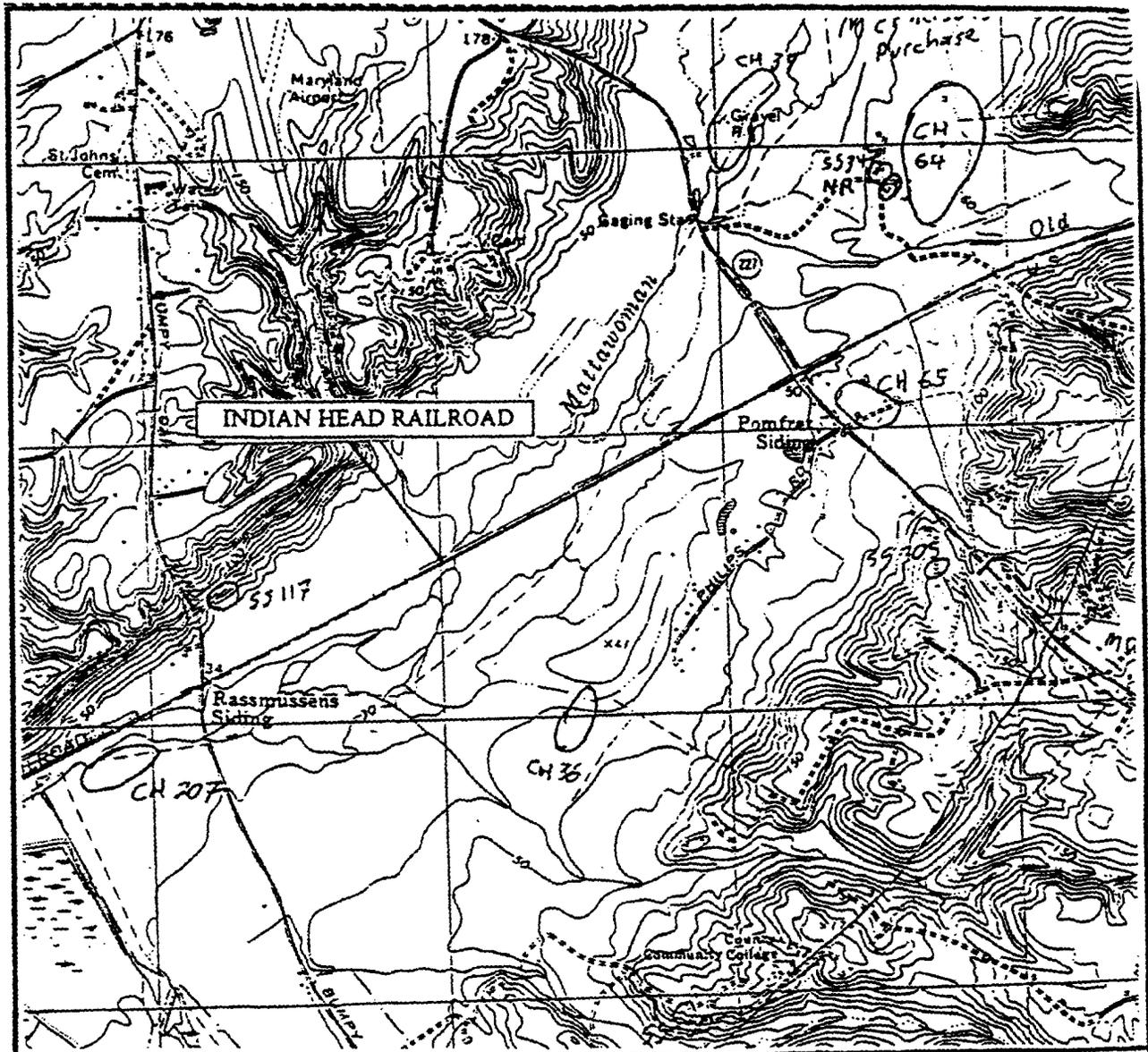
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Indian Head Railroad  
Charles County, Maryland



POINT TOBACCO, MD  
QUADRANGLE LOCATION



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National Park Service

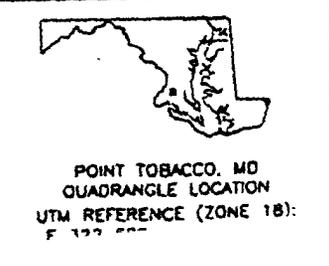
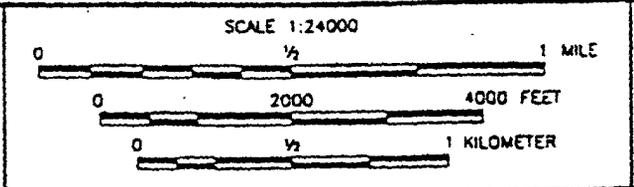
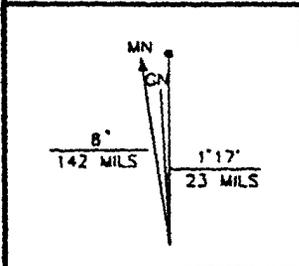
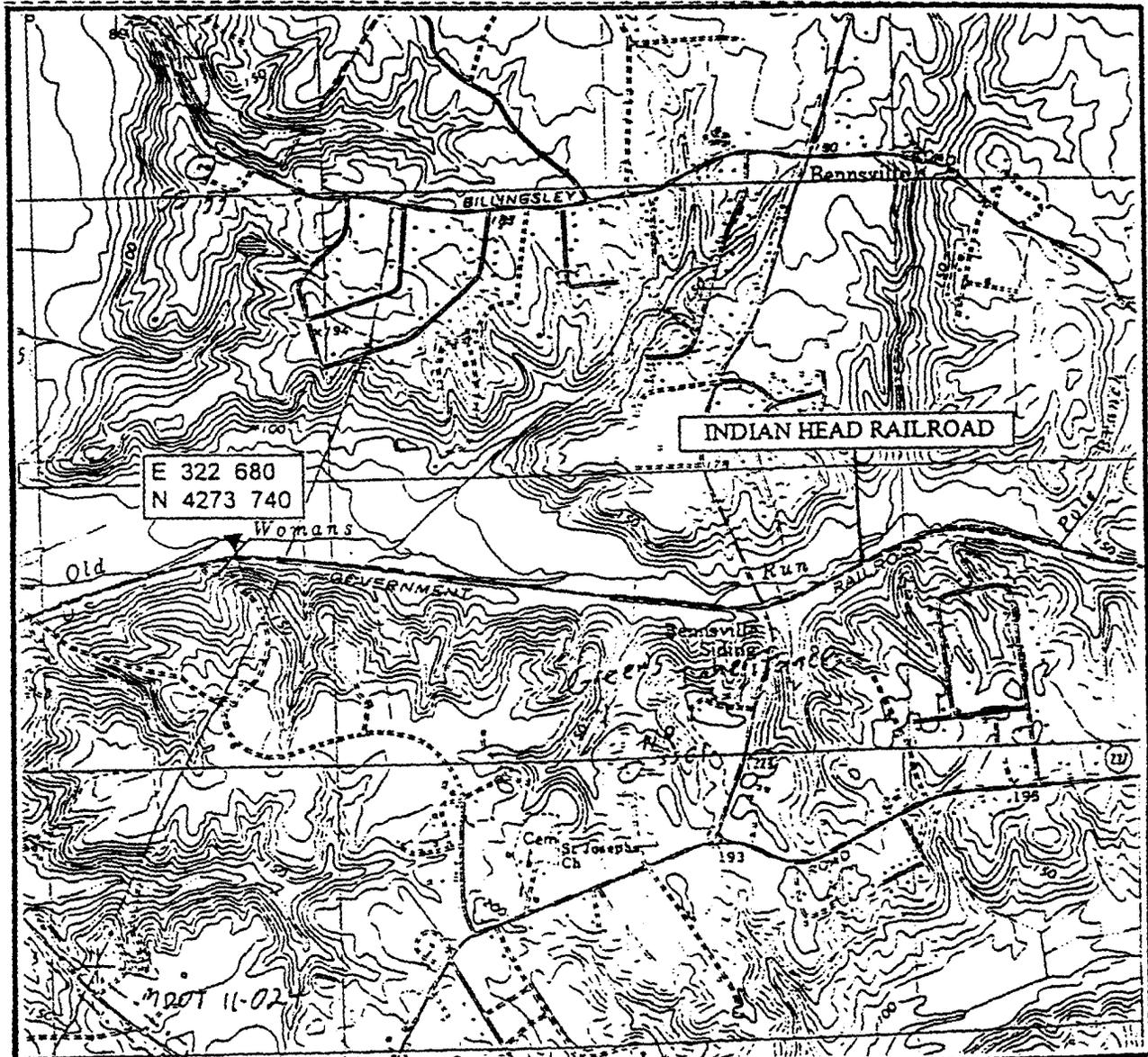
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Indian Head Railroad  
Charles County, Maryland



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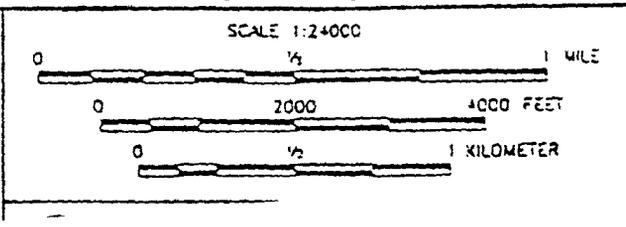
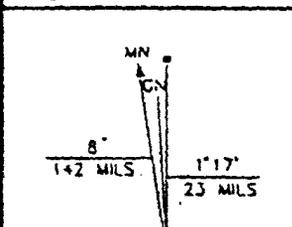
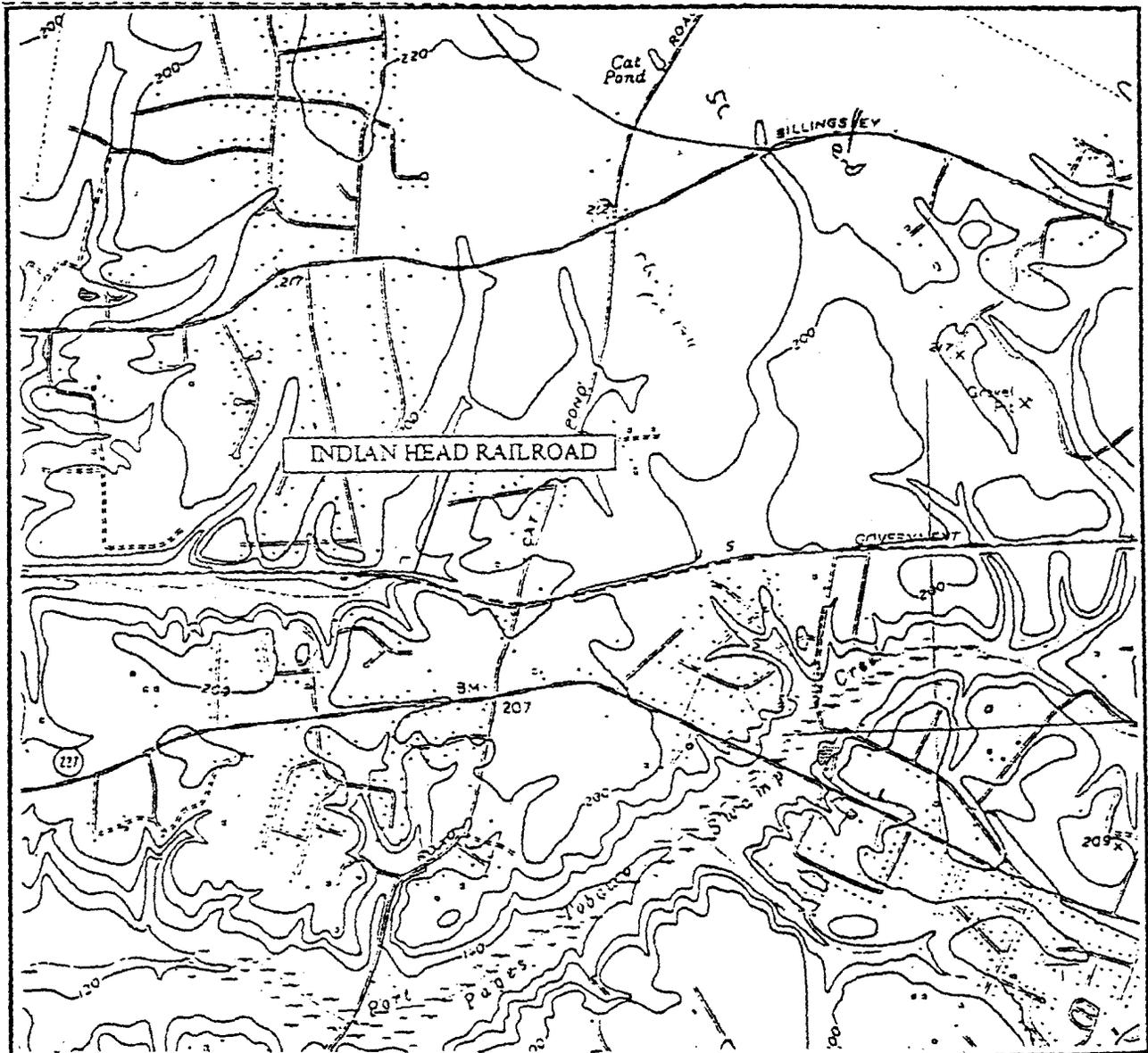
NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
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Indian Head Railroad  
Charles County, Maryland



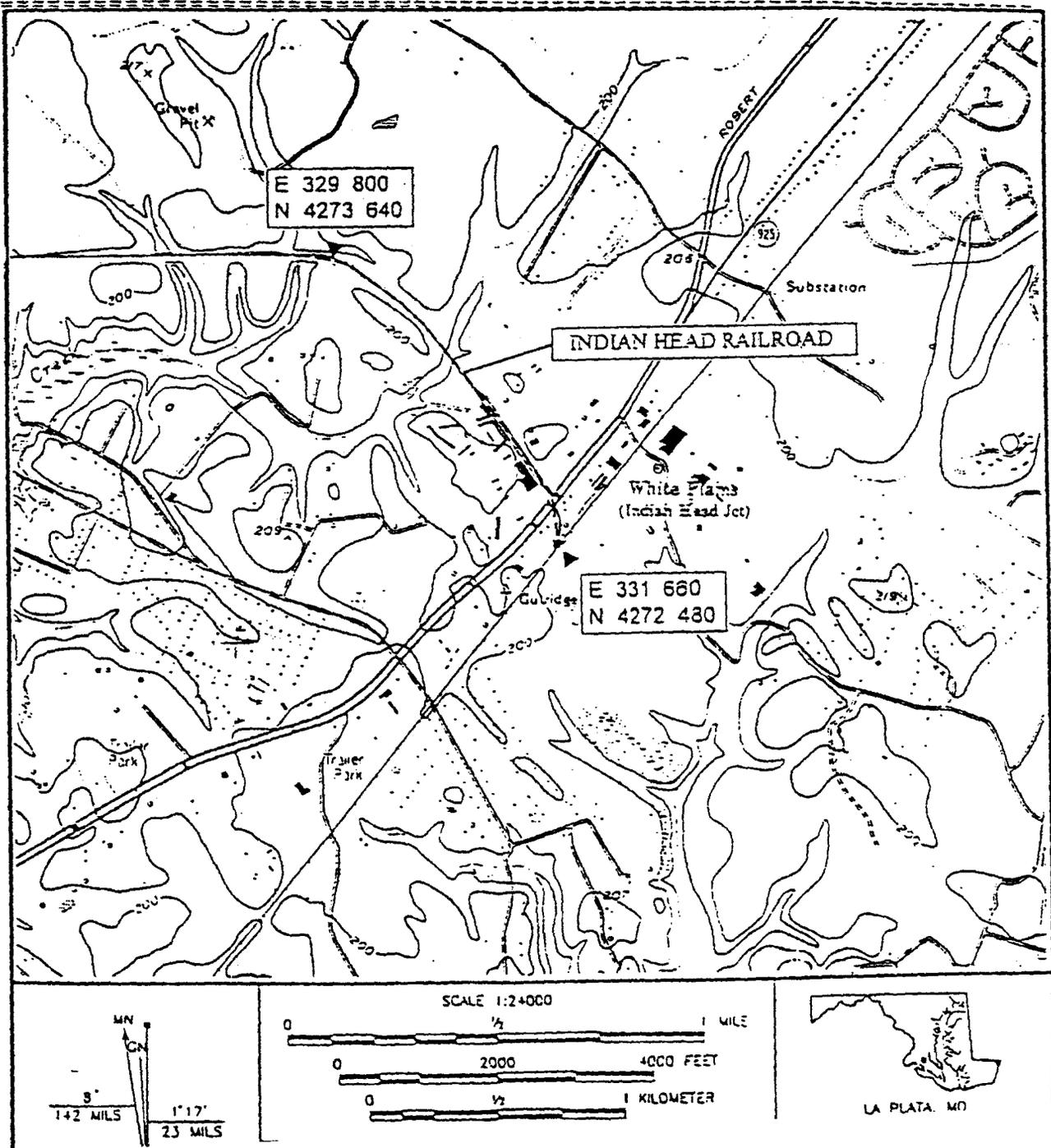
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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
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Indian Head Railroad  
Charles County, Maryland





CH-290

THE INDIAN HEAD-WHITE PLAINS RR  
MASON SPRINGS VIC +; CHAS CO, MD

KIMMATHOOD / January 10, 2003

NEGATIVE w/ SHPO

GENERAL VIEW @ CROSSING w/ <sup>RT</sup> 424.

Photo 1 of 2



CH-215

The Indian head-White Plains RR  
MASON Springs Vic, CHAS Co., MD

KEMAHOOD / JANUARY 10, 2003

NEGATIVE w/ SHPO

GENERAL VIEW, Looking EAST,

PHOTO 2 of 2

CH-290  
1919 A.D.  
Indian Head - White Plains Railroad  
Charles County, Maryland

Public - Federal

### **Capsule Summary**

The Indian Head - White Plains Railroad was opened in 1919 as an integral transportation link to support the powder production activities located at Naval Surface Weapons Center, Indian Head. The 14.5 mile line, which carried raw materials and finished products, connected the Pennsylvania Railroad with the internal rail network at Indian Head. Prior to the construction of the rail line, finished powder was shipped via barges to the Washington Navy Yard. After 1919, much of the powder was shipped using the new railroad. The railroad also was used to transport material for proof-testing at the proving ground. Much of the equipment tested at Indian Head during the period was too heavy for river shipment from the Washington Navy Yard. The addition of the railroad provided a vital link in the continued development and operation of the Indian Head naval installation. The Indian Head - White Plains Railroad possesses the qualities of significance under Criterion A of the National Register of Historic Places in the areas of Transportation and the Military on the local level. Although official use of the railroad continued until 1986, the period of significance for the Indian Head - White Plains Railroad is defined as 1919 to 1956, the years of operation associated with the Powder Factory.

The Indian Head - White Plains Railroad comprises of 14.5 miles of track extending from Indian Head Naval Surface Warfare Center to White Plains, Maryland. Construction began on the line in 1918 and was completed in 1919. The railroad retains its original alignment despite having been washed-out on several occasions. The railroad is in good condition due to consistent use for maintenance crews and occasional use by base-sponsored events.

Between 1939-1942, the original 67.5 pound rails were replaced with 100 pound rails. Features of the Indian Head Railroad include the roadbed, bridges, culverts, and sidings. The total acreage of the of the structure is approximately 160 acres. The railroad is centered on a 50 foot right-of-way that travels through marshlands and forests. The contributing resources within the proposed structure are the railroad track and right-of-way between the installation at Indian Head and White Plains. The railroad is owned entirely by the federal government along the 14.5 mile route.

Public - Federal

**Maryland Comprehensive Historic Preservation Plan  
Statewide Historic Contexts**

**I. Geographic Organization:**

Western Shore

**II. Chronological/Developmental Periods:**

Industrial/Urban Dominance A.D. 1870-1930  
Modern Period A.D. 1930-Present

**III. Prehistoric/Historic Period Themes:**

Military  
Transportation

**IV. Resource Type:**

Railroad

**Category:**

Structure

**Historic Environment:**

Rural

**Historic Function(s) and Use(s):**

Transportation - Supplying naval installation with equipment and shipping their finished product.

**Known Design Source:**

Fred and Marshall Baily - Contractors

USDI/NPS NRHP Registration Form  
CH-290  
"Indian Head - White Plains Railroad"  
Charles County, Maryland

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NPS Form 10-900  
(Rev. 10-90)

OMB No. 10024-0018

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 for individual properties and districts. See instructions in How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

=====

1. Name of Property

=====

historic name: Indian Head - White Plains Railroad  
other names/site number: U.S. Railroad, Government Railroad

=====

2. Location

=====

Naval Surface Weapons Center, Indian Head Division  
street & number: N/A not for publication N/A  
city or town: Indian Head vicinity  
X  
state: Maryland code: MD county: Charles code: 017 zip code:  
20640

=====

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

=====

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, 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. I recommend that this property be considered significant \_\_\_\_\_ nationally \_\_\_\_\_ statewide \_\_\_\_\_ locally. ( \_\_\_\_\_ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

\_\_\_\_\_  
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 for additional comments.)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of commenting or other official Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency and bureau

=====  
4. 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 Date of  
Keeper Action

=====  
5. Classification  
=====

Ownership of Property (Check as many boxes as apply)

- \_\_\_\_\_ private
- \_\_\_\_\_ public-local
- \_\_\_\_\_ public-State
- x  public-Federal

Category of Property (Check only one box)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing	Noncontributing
<u>  1  </u>	<input type="checkbox"/> buildings
<u>  </u>	<input type="checkbox"/> sites
<u>  </u>	<input type="checkbox"/> structures
<u>  </u>	<input type="checkbox"/> objects
<u>  1  </u>	<input type="checkbox"/> Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register Not Specified

Name of related multiple property listing (Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.) N/A

=====6

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: TRANSPORTATION Sub: Rail-related

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: TRANSPORTATION Sub: Rail-related

=====

7. Description

Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: N/A Sub: N/A

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)

foundation: N/A  
roof: N/A  
walls: N/A  
other: WOOD; METAL:Steel; CONCRETE

Narrative Description (Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

=====  
8. Statement of Significance  
=====

Applicable National Register Criteria (Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing)

- A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations (Mark "X" in all the boxes that apply.)

- A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B removed from its original location.
- C a birthplace or a grave.
- D a cemetery.
- E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F a commemorative property.
- G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance (Enter categories from instructions)  
TRANSPORTATION  
MILITARY

Period of Significance: 1919 - 1956

USDI/NPS NRHP Registration Form  
CH-290  
"Indian Head - White Plains Railroad"  
Charles County, Maryland

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Significant Dates: 1919

Significant Person (Complete if Criterion B is marked above): N/A

Cultural Affiliation: N/A

Architect/Builder: Baily, Fred (Contractor)  
Baily, Marshall (Contractor)

Narrative Statement of Significance (Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

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9. Major Bibliographical References

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(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS)  
 preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.  
 previously listed in the National Register (Pearree 1974)  
 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  
 Federal agency  
 Local government  
 University  
 Other

Name of repository: Indian Head Technical Library  
Naval Archives

=====

10. Geographical Data

=====

Acreage of Property: 160 acres  
UTM References (Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

	Zone	Easting	Northing
Start	18	311 000	4774 120
	<u>x</u>	See continuation sheet.	

Verbal Boundary Description

SEE CONTINUATION SHEET

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

=====  
11. Form Prepared By  
=====  
name/title: Elaine K. Kiernan, Preservation Planner  
organization: R. Christopher Goodwin & Assoc., Inc.  
date: November 1997  
street & number: 241 East Fourth Street, Suite 100  
telephone: 301-694-0428  
city or town: Frederick state: Maryland zip code: 21701

=====  
Additional Documentation  
=====  
Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.  
A sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative black and white photographs of the property.  
Additional items (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

=====  
Property Owner  
=====  
(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

Department of the Navy  
Indian Head Division  
Naval Surface Warfare Center  
Indian Head, Maryland 20640-5035

USDI/NPS NRHP Registration Form  
CH-290  
"Indian Head - White Plains Railroad"  
Charles County, Maryland

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Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
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Section 7 Page 1 CH-290  
"Indian Head-White Plains Railroad"  
Charles County, Maryland

**Description**

The Indian Head - White Plains Railroad comprises 14.5 miles of track extending from Indian Head Naval Surface Weapons Center to White Plains, Maryland. Construction began on the line in 1918 and was completed in 1919. The railroad retains its original alignment despite having been washed-out on several occasions. The railroad is in good condition due to consistent use for maintenance crews and occasional use by base-sponsored events.

Between 1936-1942, the original 67.5 pound rails were replaced with 100 pound rails. Features of the Indian Head Railroad include the roadbed, bridges, culverts, and sidings. The total acreage of the structure is approximately 160 acres. The railroad is centered on a 50 foot right-of-way that travels through marshlands and forests. The contributing resources within the proposed structure are the railroad track and right-of-way between the installation at Indian Head and White Plains. The railroad is owned entirely by the federal government along the 14.5 mile route.

**General Description**

The Indian Head - White Plains Railroad was built to connect the naval testing and production facilities at Indian Head with the Pennsylvania Railroad at White Plains. The track traversed 14.5 miles of swamp and woodland between Indian Head and White Plains. The railroad was built to transport freight and was not designed for passenger service. From the spur at the Pennsylvania Railroad line (now Conrail) the railroad travels in a northwesterly route across Maryland State Route 301 through light industrial and residential areas of White Plains, Maryland. After leaving the residential area of White Plains the railroad travels through several miles of agricultural areas before joining and following the course of Old Woman's Run. The railroad then changes to a southwesterly heading and passes over into the marshlands of the Mattawoman Creek. The Indian Head - White Plains Railroad, after following the Mattawoman Creek for approximately seven miles, crosses into a residential area of the incorporated town of Indian Head, where it intersects several streets, before it passes into the naval installation. (See attached map.)

The Indian Head - White Plains Railroad is a standard gauge railroad with the rails set three feet apart. The line has been out of regular use since the mid-1980s although maintenance crews and periodic events still have occasion to use the rails. The maximum grade along the railroad is 2 per cent and the maximum curve is -5 degrees.

The site for the Indian Head Railroad was surveyed by a team from the Pennsylvania Railroad Company in the spring of 1918. The contract for construction of the railroad was awarded to Fred and Marshall Baily in the summer of 1918. The railroad, completed by the brothers and a

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National Park Service

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"Indian Head-White Plains Railroad"  
Charles County, Maryland

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thirty-man crew in the spring 1919, extended from White Plains in a southwesterly direction through 14.5 miles of forests and marshlands to Indian Head Division, Naval Surface Warfare Center.

The Pennsylvania Railroad already maintained a small freight yard at White Plains when construction on the Indian Head spur began in 1918. In order to accommodate the increased freight traffic at White Plains, the U. S. Navy constructed a separate freight yard large enough to accommodate 30 freight cars and to facilitate the transfer of rolling stock between Pennsylvania and Navy locomotives. Navy trains approached the naval installation through a classification yard where the rolling stock was uncoupled from the locomotive and grouped according to its final installation. Once inside the naval installation, the Indian Head - White Plains track connected with an existing, lighter weight electric track that was already in use at Indian Head.

In early 1935, Commander Johnson, in a letter to the Bureau of Ordnance, emphasized that the "...complete renewal [of the railroad track was] absolutely necessary within a few years time" (Inspector of Ordnance, February 15, 1935). In May 1935, a memorandum to Commander W. W. Wilson reiterated the need for total replacement of the 67.5 pound rails with 100 pound ASCE rail at a rate of two miles of track per year in order to meet the requirements of the national re-armorment plan. Approval was given almost immediately by the Bureau of Yards and Docks. Between 1936 and 1941, all of the track between Indian Head and White Plains was replaced with the recommended 100 pound rail.

Extensive maintenance work also was performed on the right-of-way between Indian Head and White Plains during this period. Additional concrete culverts were installed in areas prone to washouts during storms. Existing culverts, crossings, cuts and fills were repaired and rotting ties were replaced. By 1941, major modifications and repairs to the railroad were complete and only upkeep by the railroad crews was necessary.

In 1955, Hurricane Connie washed out 4.9 miles of track between Livingston Road (Route 224) and Bensville Road (Route 228). Prior to Hurricane Connie, 1013 square feet of bridge and culvert openings existed along this stretch of the railroad. After the hurricane, only 561 square feet of these structures were operational. Three bridges were destroyed and abandoned by the Navy; a total of 302 square feet. These bridges were later replaced with culverts constructed with reinforced concrete pipe. Remnants of the 67.5 pound rail from the original track was used as lateral supports for the new culverts. By the time repairs were completed on the washed-out track, twenty new culverts were constructed for a total of 487 square feet.



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"Indian Head-White Plains Railroad"  
Charles County, Maryland

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13.5 long set on two concrete abutments. At mid-span of the bridge, the beams rest on a third piling that is also constructed of concrete. The third bridge is located between Bumpy Oak Road and Pomfret Road (Route 227) and has a span of 47.5 feet. Like the other two bridges, it is constructed of steel and concrete. In order to span the reach width, 3, 15-foot steel girders are interconnected and set on three concrete pilings with one abutment on either end of the bridge. As with the other bridges, the track is then laid on top of these steel girders.

Sixty-three pieces of rolling stock are dispersed around the naval installation and are generally used for storage. All of the rolling stock was constructed between 1941 and 1983. Rolling stock includes seven forty-foot flat cars. One of these cars is ca. 1952, one is ca. 1979, three are ca. 1983, and two are unknown. There are twenty-four, fifty-foot steel boxcars. Ten of these are ca. 1954, the other two are ca. 1945. There are twenty-one, forty-foot boxcars six of which are steel and the remaining fifteen are wood. The wood boxcars were constructed ca. 1953 while the six steel boxcars are constructed ca. 1954. Five tank cars are located at Indian Head. The 8053 gallon tank was constructed ca. 1955 as was the 8000 gallon. The 8095 gallon tank was constructed ca. 1957, the 9660 gallon ca. 1941, and the 10186 gallon is unknown. Two locomotives are included within the collection. One was acquired in 1983 but has an unknown construction date as does the second. As recently as 1993 a third locomotive was among those at Indian Head but it may have been accessed in that year. There is one caboose, the construction date of which is unknown and there is one coach car, the construction date of which is also unknown. A gang car, ca. 1951, also is located at Indian Head and is currently in use by the Public Works Department for maintenance work on the Indian Head - White Plains Railroad.

A more focused construction date for many of the rolling stock that remains at Indian Head is not possible due to missing or incomplete records. Also dating the rolling stock using physical characteristics is an imperfect method of identification since many of the older rolling stock were salvaged for parts by the Navy. Therefore a boxcar currently located at Indian Head may have wheels that were manufactured in 1936 and the axles in 1942, though the car might have been constructed in 1953.

While the Indian Head - White Plains Railroad was in full operation, the rolling stock was used to haul coal, cotton, alcohol, ammonia, sulphur, ether, phenol, oil, armor plate and machinery for use in various munitions manufacturing and for shipment to the Dahlgren Naval Weapons Warfare Center in Virginia. As the mission of the Indian Head installation changed from a powder factory to the production of polaris missiles and rockets and as road access to Indian Head improved, rail shipments were limited to coal, oil, and machinery. The 63 pieces of rolling stock that remain on the installation are representative types of the rolling stock that would have been used along the Indian Head - White Plains Railroad between 1919 and 1956. These pieces of rolling stock do not qualify as contributing elements to the proposed structure for several factors.

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The main consideration is the age of the collection. Of the 63 pieces of rolling stock at Indian Head, only 4 are over fifty years of age. Records suggest that these four pieces were acquired by Indian Head after 1956, after the end date for the railroad's period of significance. The remaining 59 pieces of rolling stock were not associated with the Indian Head - White Plains railroad during the period of significance. These pieces were used internally on the installation. Additionally, the design of the rolling stock is not unique to the military. The rolling stock is the same type of rolling stock associated with civilian railroads.

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**Summary**

The Indian Head - White Plains Railroad was opened in 1919 as an integral transportation link to support the powder production activities located at Naval Surface Weapons Center, Indian Head. The 14.5 mile line, which carried raw materials and finished products, connected the Pennsylvania Railroad with the internal network at Indian Head. Prior to the construction of the rail line, finished powder was shipped via barges to the Washington Navy Yard. After 1919, much of the powder was shipped using the new railroad. The railroad also was used to transport materials for proof-testing at the proving ground. Much of the equipment tested at Indian Head during the period was too heavy for river shipment from the Washington Navy Yard. The addition of the railroad provided a vital link in the continued development and operation of the Indian Head naval installation. The Indian Head Railroad possesses the qualities of significance under Criterion A of the National Register of Historic Places in the areas of Transportation and the Military on a local level. Although official use of the railroad continued until 1986, the period of significance for Indian Head - White Plains Railroad is defined as 1919 to 1956, the years of operation associated with the Powder Factory.

**Naval Ordnance Station History**

The Naval Ordnance Station at Indian Head was established in 1890 to replace facilities at the Annapolis Proving Ground whose location on the Severn River limited its testing potential. Still largely undeveloped, the landscape and topography at Indian Head fulfilled the Department of the Navy's environmental requirements. Additionally, the location on the Potomac River provided easy access to the gun factory at the Navy Yard in Washington, D.C. The installation, under the command of Ensign Robert B. Dashiell, was used for testing guns, ammunition, and armor plate for Navy ships. Range testing was conducted over the Potomac River. (Bowlin 1988:5-6; Carlisle 1990:4-5; Cannan et al. 1995:231; Stevens et al. 1995).

Within 10 years of its establishment, the proving ground at Indian Head began experiencing limitations similar to those of the earlier Annapolis Proving Ground. Heavy traffic along the Potomac River and the development of longer range weapons forced the proving ground to expand. Consequently, in 1901 the Navy purchased 1,084 additional acres. This additional land made possible the testing of longer range guns across Mattawoman Creek to the opposite shore.

In 1900, a powder factory was established at Indian Head. This factory represented the first chemical manufacturing plant operated by the Navy and the second operated by a branch of the military (Cannan et al 1995:60). The factory was known as the Single Base Line because the powder was composed of a single base, nitrocellulose. The factory comprised 29 production and support buildings (Carlisle 1990:21).

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The Indian Head naval installation played an important role during World War I. Activities for both the proving ground and the powder factory increased and both areas expanded through the construction of additional buildings. By mid-1918, the powder factory had manufactured 10,000,000 pounds of new powder and reworked 800,000 pounds of old powder. At the proving ground, the number of batteries was doubled from two to four, allowing firing up and down the Potomac River. Despite the proving ground's role during the war, it became increasingly evident that the Indian Head facility was not suitable for testing longer range weapons. This problem was alleviated by the purchase of land for a new proving ground in Virginia, southwest of Indian Head, which officially was designated Dahlgren Proving Grounds in July 1919.

As in the case of military installations across the country, the Indian Head facility experienced a dramatic slowdown following World War I. By 1921, all proving ground activities at Indian Head were moved to the new site at Dahlgren, VA; Indian Head's employment during this period fell to approximately 500 employees. In 1932, the Bureau of Ordnance received funds to equip a new plant for recrystallizing stockpiles of Explosive D powder that were becoming increasingly unstable (Bowlin 1988:40; Stevens et al. 1995).

By the end of the 1930s, activity at the Indian Head powder plant accelerated rapidly as conflicts mounted in Europe and the Far East. Production at Indian Head increased following President Roosevelt's 1937 cash-and-carry policy that allowed European governments to purchase American weaponry, providing they paid for it in cash and arranged for private transport. In 1939, Indian Head was producing an average of about 17,000 pounds of new powder and reconditioning 4,000 pounds of old powder each day. One year later, new powder production increased to 25,000 pounds per day (Bowlin 1988:41; Stevens et al. 1995).

World War II brought a surge of activity to the Naval Powder Factory. As a result of re-armorment, and cash and carry policies, powder production at the factory surpassed World War I levels. A number of new laboratories and facilities were established and the existing powder production facilities were expanded. Most construction began during 1941. DuPont served as the major contractor during these expansions of the powder factory. The expansion called for new distillation, storage, solvent recovery, and magazine buildings. The expansion of the Power Factory facilities was completed in 1942.

The immediate effect of the Allied victory in World War II was a precipitous drop in the strength of the armed forces. The end of the war was accompanied by a slowdown at Indian Head, but not the base closure that many anticipated. By 1948, deteriorated relations with the Soviet Union resulted in a resurgence of military build-up (Best et al. 1995:20-30). Consequently, peacetime military forces grew to an unprecedented size (Hammer 1990:13). The Korean Conflict was perhaps the largest impetus to naval expansion during this period.

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At Indian Head, the most significant changes during the post-war period included a shift in production from smokeless powder to rocket propellant, and an increased work in research and development. The Korean Conflict in 1950 increased employment at Indian Head and necessitated the construction of more than one hundred new buildings. The 1954 completion of the Biazzi Nitroglycerin Plant, where chemicals are produced for double-base, multi-base, and cast-type solid propellants, was the last step in the shift from powder to propellant production. In 1956, the Single Base Line produced its last lot of smokeless powder.

The establishment of the proving ground at Indian Head occurred during a time of reform and modernization for the Navy. During the 1880s, the United States was considered an inferior naval power (Hagan 1991:195). However, the United States government began to construct a "New Navy" to protect America's growing international interests. During the last years of the nineteenth century and the early years of the twentieth century, the Navy adopted numerous technological changes. Heavily-armored steel warships replaced obsolete wooden ships. Wireless telegraphs and radio revolutionized communications (Cannan et al, 1995:59). It was within this context of modernization that the Indian Head proving ground was established and developed into a modern research and development facility for the Navy.

### Transportation

Indian Head was specifically chosen for its isolation so that weapons testing could be undertaken without danger to commercial traffic. During the early years of the station, the Potomac River provided the best means of access to Indian Head because the local unimproved roads were often impassable. The river was used to ship supplies, equipment, and personnel. Proofing of guns manufactured at the Washington Navy Yard continued as the primary mission at the Indian Head station; however, Indian Head also began testing gunpowder and armor plate from outside sources, such as DuPont and Bethlehem Steel.

During the first winter of operation at Indian Head, ice was so severe on the Potomac River that the tugs from the Washington Navy Yard could not get downriver for two weeks. After the second week without communication from the Navy Yard, Lieutenant Dashiell traveled to Washington on foot and by a freight train (1890, Naval Proving Ground, Naval Powder Factory, Naval Propellant Plant, 1961). Thus, the need for an alternative route of external transportation was made obvious early in the installation's history.

Few roads existed within southern Maryland at the turn of the century. Established routes were limited to dirt roads that were nearly impassable for much of the year due to the swampy topography of southern Maryland. The few roads that did exist generally lead to White Plains and

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La Plata and provided access to the Pennsylvania Railroad. Farmers used the railroad at these locations to ship their products to market and to purchase supplies. Other residents of southern Maryland utilized the Potomac River for their livelihood, major food source, and as a primary transportation route.

Transportation improvements in southern Maryland remained limited well into the twentieth century. However, in 1933, the 325th Company of the Civilian Conservation Corps were assigned to Indian Head to open a work camp. Among the jobs accomplished by the CCC was planting new trees, beautifying the station at Indian Head, and improving roads (Barr 1990:9). Despite the effort of the 325th Company, road improvements were limited to the route between Washington D.C. and Indian Head. By the 1940s, many country roads that did not directly connect to Washington D.C. or Indian Head were still unpaved.

This situation changed by the 1950s, when the post-war building boom lead to the nation-wide road improvement. The railroad slowly was replaced by the automobile. Many residents who formerly traveled far from home to purchase supplies could now purchase them closer to home. From that point on, transportation changed from limited access depended on the weather, to easy accessibility to downtown Washington, D.C. within an hour.

**Indian Head - White Plains Railroad**

The construction of a railroad line into Indian Head was proposed as early as 1902 in official correspondence between the Officer in Charge and the Bureaus of Ordnance and Yards and Docks, but no action was taken. The 1917 expansion of the powder factory did not initially include a railroad spur, but the limitations of poor transportation were felt swiftly in delays as the military mobilized for entry into World War I. By 1918, the situation was deteriorating rapidly and the plant expansion was considerably behind schedule. This delay was the subject of many letters between the Bureau of Ordnance and the Bureau of Yards and Docks, each criticizing the other for the delay. In July 1918, the Chief of the Bureau of Ordnance wrote to the Chief of the Bureau of Yards and Docks voicing his opinion on the reason for the slow progress at Indian Head. "In reference to the BuYD [Bureau of Yards and Docks] who called to the attention of this Bureau [Ordnance] to the fact that the particular reason for delay in work at Indian Head was lack of proper transportation facilities. In this this Bureau agrees but it also desires to point out the fact that the Railroad to Indian Head might well have been started on May 8, 1918 upon the completion of the survey made by the Pennsylvania Railroad, whereas bids for the construction of this road are not to be opened until July 15, 1918. [This] Bureau suggests that every effort be made towards the construction of the railroad."

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Discussion over the railroad continued between the bureaus for some time. The lack of reliable transportation in the expansion of the powder factory was addressed even in the Secretary of the Navy's Fiscal Year Report for 1918. The contract for construction of the railroad ultimately was awarded to Fred and Marshall Baily, and their 30-man crew began construction of the railroad line on August 8, 1918. The government purchased a 50 foot right-of-way spanning approximately thirty-four parcels of land for a total of 160 acres. The cost for the construction of the railroad was \$812,969.44. The rails were 67.5 pounds per yard and were originally rolled for the Russian government, but the unstable political situation in that country made it unlikely that the Russian government would expect delivery (Inspector of Ordnance, February 15, 1935). The 14.5 mile track was completed on May 9, 1919, and opened to traffic on May 29, 1919 (MacKinnon, 1940).

The government owned railroad spur connected the isolated Indian Head Proving Ground with the Pope's Creek branch of the Pennsylvania Railroad and made possible shipments of freight, powder, and equipment (Wartime History, 1945). Several harsh winters had made the Potomac River impassable between December and February, drastically reduced the powder factory's capacity to meet production schedules. During these winter months, some supplies were freighted via rail to LaPlata, then transported to Indian Head by truck. This approach was cost prohibitive and only possible until the spring thaw made the roads impassable. When the river reopened to traffic in the spring, the additional barges and carfloats necessary to ship stockpiled supplies were not immediately available due to the war effort. In addition, increased proof-work at the proving ground competed with river traffic and placed the installation's main supply route under occasional fire.

The Indian Head - White Plains spur also served the newly established Dahlgren Proving Ground. Freight and equipment were sent via the Indian Head spur to the installation wharf. Once at the wharf, the freight cars were loaded onto carfloats and towed to Dahlgren. This supply system was still in place during the World War II mobilization period when, 270 of the 1,268 freight cars transported by the Indian Head railroad were routed to the proving ground at Dahlgren. This practice continued until the 1950s, when highway transport provided a more efficient means of shipping materials to Dahlgren. By early 1935, recommendations for "...the complete renewal" of all of the rail line between White Plains and Indian Head, as well as those on base, was considered to be "absolutely necessary within a few years time" (Inspector of Ordnance, February 15, 1935). It was suggested in a memorandum to Commander W. W. Wilson on May 24, 1935 that, based on the present "re-armorment plan," the rails between Indian Head and White Plains be replaced by 100 pound ASCE rail at a rate of two miles per year over a period of approximately seven years. In the same memorandum, it was noted that a request for \$15,000 to renew the rail at the White Plains yard had been submitted to the Bureau of Ordnance. That Bureau, in turn, forwarded the funding request to the Bureau of Yards and Docks. The author of the memorandum stressed that this request was extremely urgent as the existing rail system was too light for the Pennsylvania Railroad locomotives. Trains brought shipments of freight cars to the White Plains stop of the Pope

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Creek branch of the Pennsylvania railroad for delivery to the Navy. The Navy would then pick up those shipment with its own engines and haul it themselves back to Indian Head. The Pennsylvania Railroad train at the White Plains stop would then turn itself around and continue on its route. By the 1930s, the original 67.5 pound rails were too light for the heavier Diesel-Electric engines that were being used by the Pennsylvania Railroad and was creating a problem with maneuverability when delivering or picking up a shipment. Additionally, several preventative repairs are recommended for the White Plains line along the Mattawoman Creek. Several bad washouts along the rail line put it out of commission for several weeks so that freightcars had to be routed via the Washington Navy Yard. Concrete culverts were installed to prevent further washouts, but the memorandum recommended that several more culverts be installed.

By 1939, the re-armorment plan prompted the Bureau of Yards and Docks to update its installations in preparation for the possible entry of the United States into World War II. Included in these improvements was the repair and/or replacement of existing track at Indian Head. By the fall of 1942, almost 90 percent of the track on the Indian Head - White Plains line had been replaced. In addition to updating the railroad track, the commander of the Powder Factory also requested the replacement of the three existing steam engines with Diesel-Electric engines citing the firehazard posed by the engines, and the high maintenance costs, the inability of the steam engines to negotiate the worst grade on the White Plains line (a 2 percent grade at Blair's Hill) at a speed greater than 5 mph. In addition, existing engines were unable to haul more than six freight cars over Blair's Hill. Approval for the purchase of a 500 horsepower, 90-ton Diesel-Electric locomotive was given in November 1939.

Increased construction and production levels at the naval station, which accompanied World War II, made the railroad link between Indian Head and the Pennsylvania Railroad invaluable. The naval facility nearly doubled in size to accommodate new powder production factories, laboratories, and employee housing. Peak powder production levels were reached at the Naval Powder Factory in March of 1945, when the installation manufactured 4 million pounds of smokeless powder (U.S Naval Powder Factory July 8, 1949:2). In addition, the railroad also was used for the shipment of test materials and supplies to Dahlgren. Traffic along the railroad line increased accordingly. By the end of the fiscal year 1943, Indian Head transported nearly 1,000 railcars of materials (Command History, 1945). In contrast to 542 railcars of materials were transported in 1935.

As early as 1952, a feasibility study was proposed to determine whether shipment by railroad or by truck was more economical. As time went on, the importance of the railroad diminished as roads improved and truck shipments became more cost effective. With the closure of the Powder Factory, the role of the Indian Head railroad as an integral part of the naval installation waned. Regular use of the internal railroad continued into the 1960s. The last shipment run on the railroad spur was in 1986.

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**Conclusion**

The original mission of Indian Head as a naval proving ground necessitated an isolated location. The expansion of the proving ground to include a powder factory required a reliable transportation system for timely delivery of raw material required for powder production. An installation managed rail line met these requirements. The decision to construct the Indian Head Railroad was made during World War I when reliable of shipments were critical to wartime production. While the operation of the railroad was initiated late in the war effort, its presence contributed to the high level of powder production and reworking at Indian Head in the post-World War I era. With America's entrance into World War II, the railroad continued to provide an important link between the production of powder and support of the war effort. The past record of high and efficient level of smokeless powder production during World War II combined with reliable transportation, afforded Indian Head a perfect position for consideration as a site for other production facilities in the late-1950s. The Indian Head - White Plains Railroad possesses qualities of significance under Criterion A of the National Register of Historic Places in the areas of Transportation and the Military at the local level of significance.

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**Boundary Description**

The boundary of the "Indian Head Railroad" extends from the spur at the Pennsylvania Railroad (now Conrail), in a northwesterly route across Maryland State Highway 301 through a light industrial and residential areas in White Plains, Maryland. After leaving the residential area, the railroad crosses two branches of the Port Tobacco Creek. The railroad then enters a forested area comprising largely of deciduous trees. At the second branch of Port Tobacco Creek, the railroad changes direction to a westerly heading. The railroad then crosses two roads: Pagett Road and Middletown Road. After crossing Middletown Road, the railroad follows the course of Old Woman's Run, including crossing Bensville Road (Route 228), for several miles. After the Indian Head Railroad crosses Pomfret Road (Route 227) it changes direction to a southwesterly route, passing into the marshlands of the Mattawoman Creek. As the railroad follows the course of the Mattawoman Creek, just after crossing Bumpy Oak Road, the railroad is bounded on the south by the Myrtle Grove Wildlife Management Area. At this point the railroad changes its heading to a northwesterly direction. After crossing Livingston Road (Route 224) and Indian Head Road (Route 225) in rapid succession, the railroad enters a large marshland section of the Mattawoman Creek. The railroad then enters the residential area of the town of Indian Head, where it crosses five streets in rapid succession. These roads are Poplar Lane, Woodland Drive, Blair Road, Indian Head Avenue, and Mattingly Avenue. After crossing Mattingly Avenue, the railroad enters the naval installation.

**Boundary Justification**

The boundary of the nominated "Indian Head - White Plains Railroad" consists of the 14.5 miles of track and the 25-foot right-of-way on either side of the track that runs between the Pennsylvania Railroad (now Conrail) and the boundary line of the naval installation at Indian Head.

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Point	Zone	Easting	Northing
1	18	318 3004271	720
2	18	322 6804273	740
3	18	329 8004273	640
End	18	331 6604272	480

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**Photographs**

The following information is the same for all photographs:

1. Indian Head - White Plains Railroad
2. Charles County, Maryland
3. Elaine K. Kiernan
4. 10/97
5. R. Christopher Goodwin & Associates, Inc., Frederick, Maryland

Photo #

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|----|---|
| 1  | 6. Track, railbed, and landscape between Route 224 and Bumpy Oak Road facing southeast.<br>7. 1:9 |
| 2  | 6. Track, railbed, and landscape between Route 224 and Bumpy Oak Road facing southeast.<br>7. 2:9 |
| 3  | 6. Concrete and steel culvert between Route 224 and Bumpy Oak Road facing south.<br>7. 3:9        |
| 4  | 6. Concrete culvert at Route 228 facing north.<br>7. 4:9  |
| 5  | 6. Siding at Route 224 facing northwest.<br>7. 5:9  |
| 6  | 6. Freight yard at White Plains facing northwest<br>7. 6:9  |
| 7  | 6. 20' Steel and concrete bridge between Routes 225 and 224 facing south.<br>7. 7:9               |
| 8  | 6. 27' Steel and concrete bridge between Route 224 and Bumpy Oak Road facing southwest.<br>7. 8:9 |
| 9. | 6. 30' steel and concrete bridge between Bumpy Oak Road and Route 227 facing north<br>7. 9:9      |

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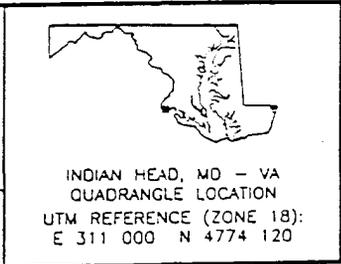
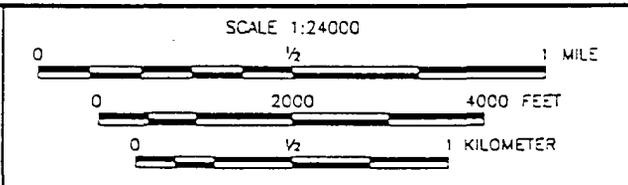
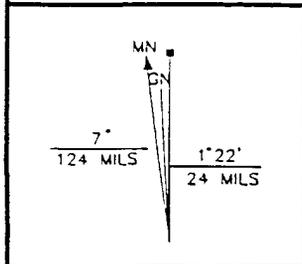
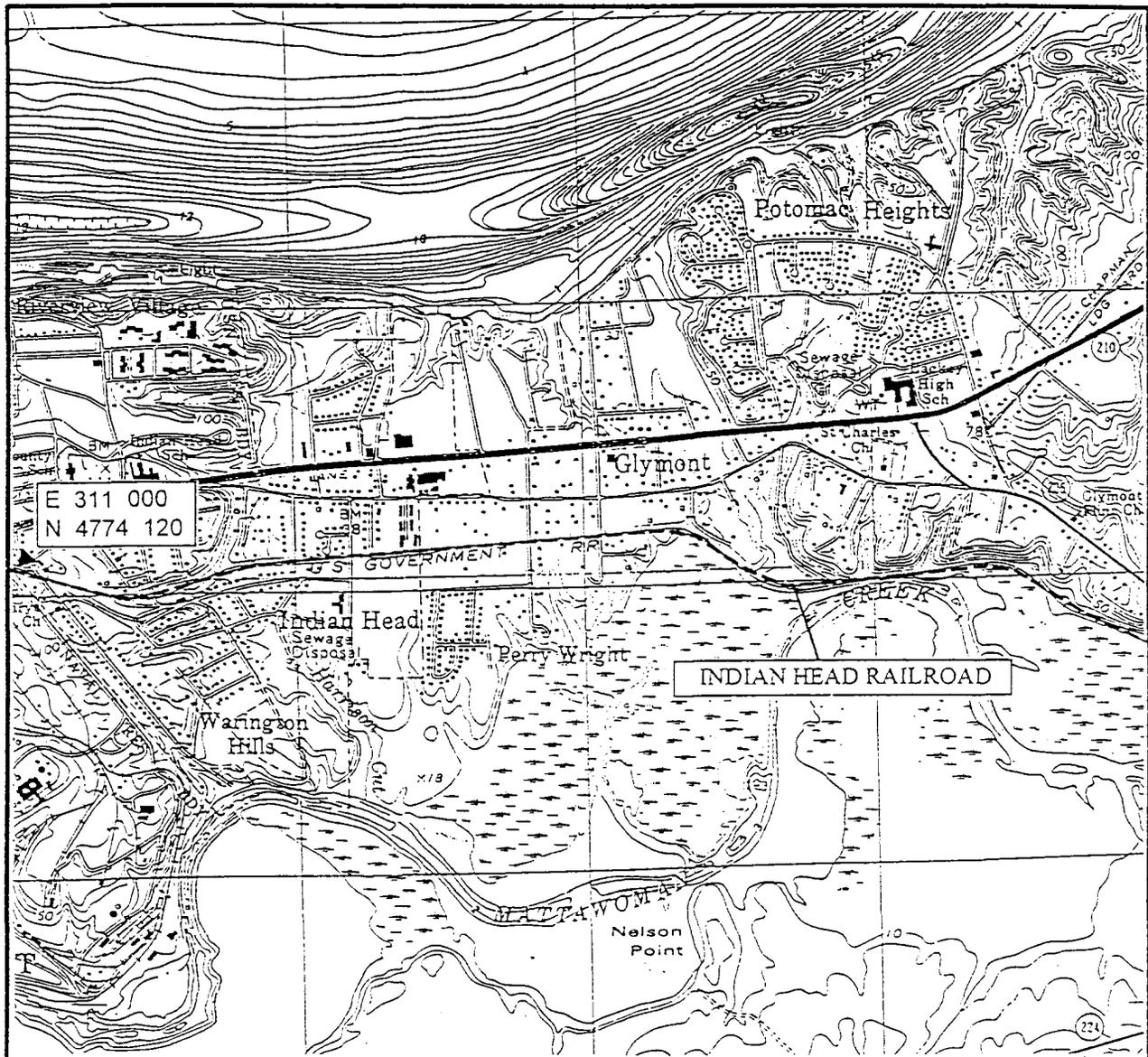
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241 EAST FOURTH STREET, FREDERICK, MD 21701

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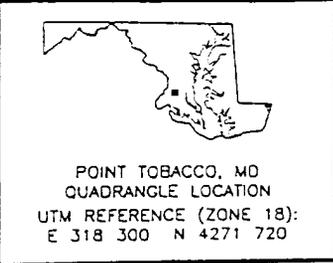
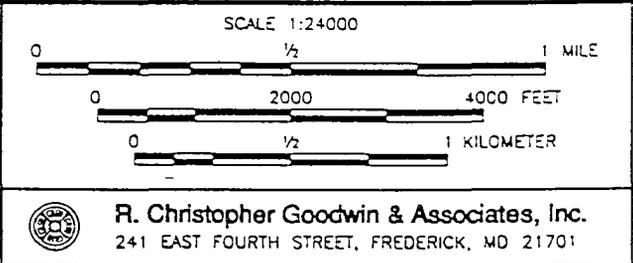
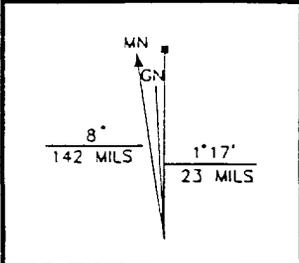
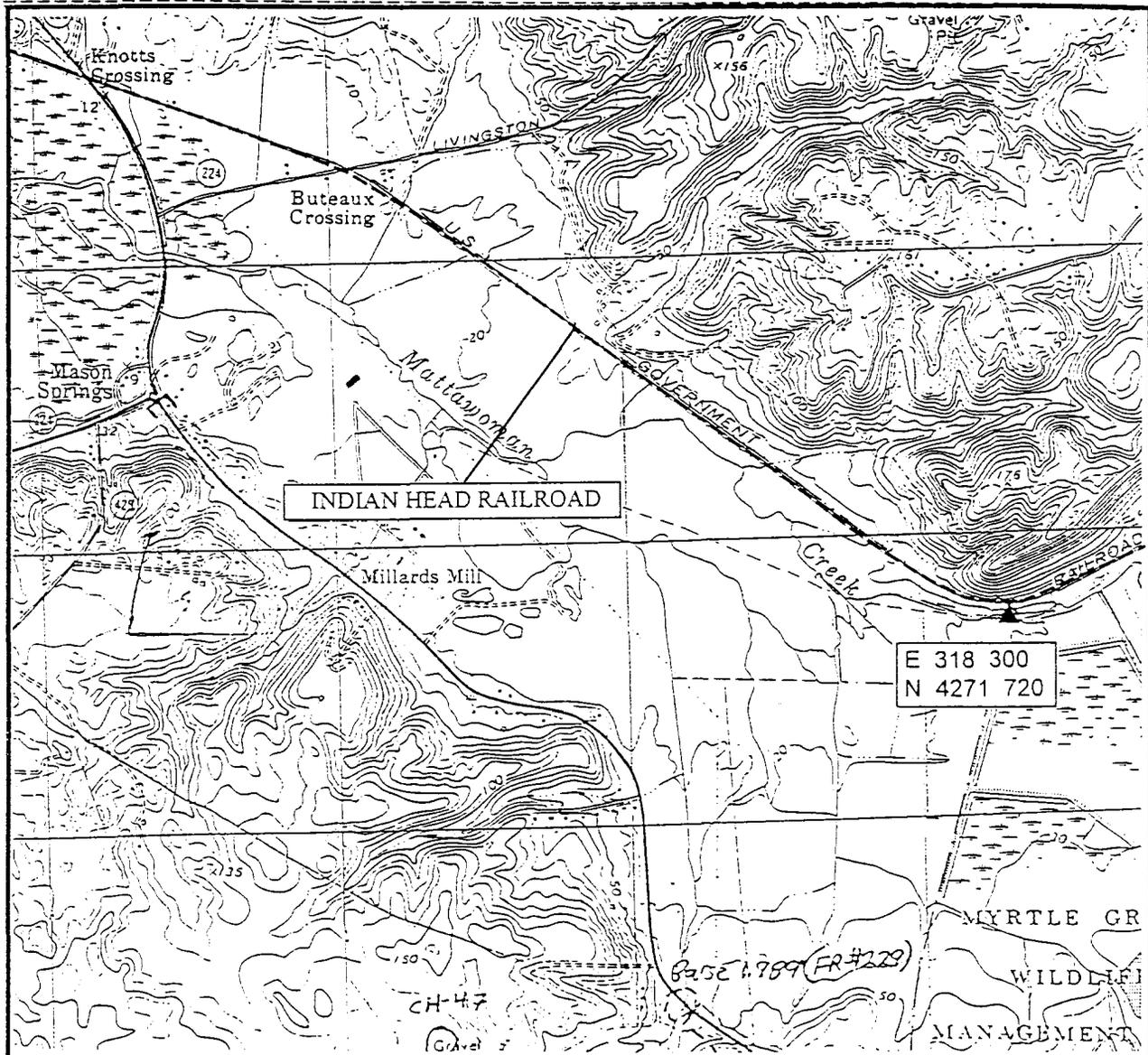
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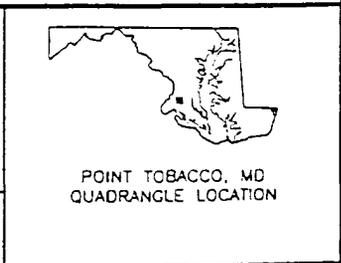
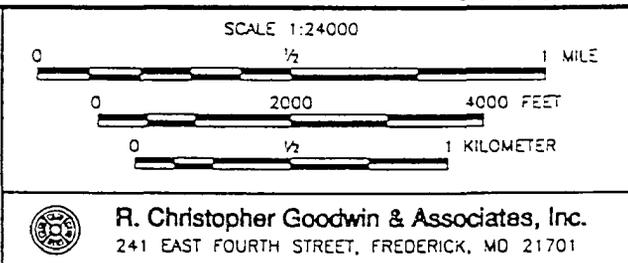
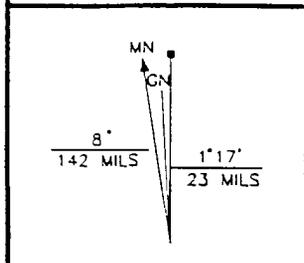
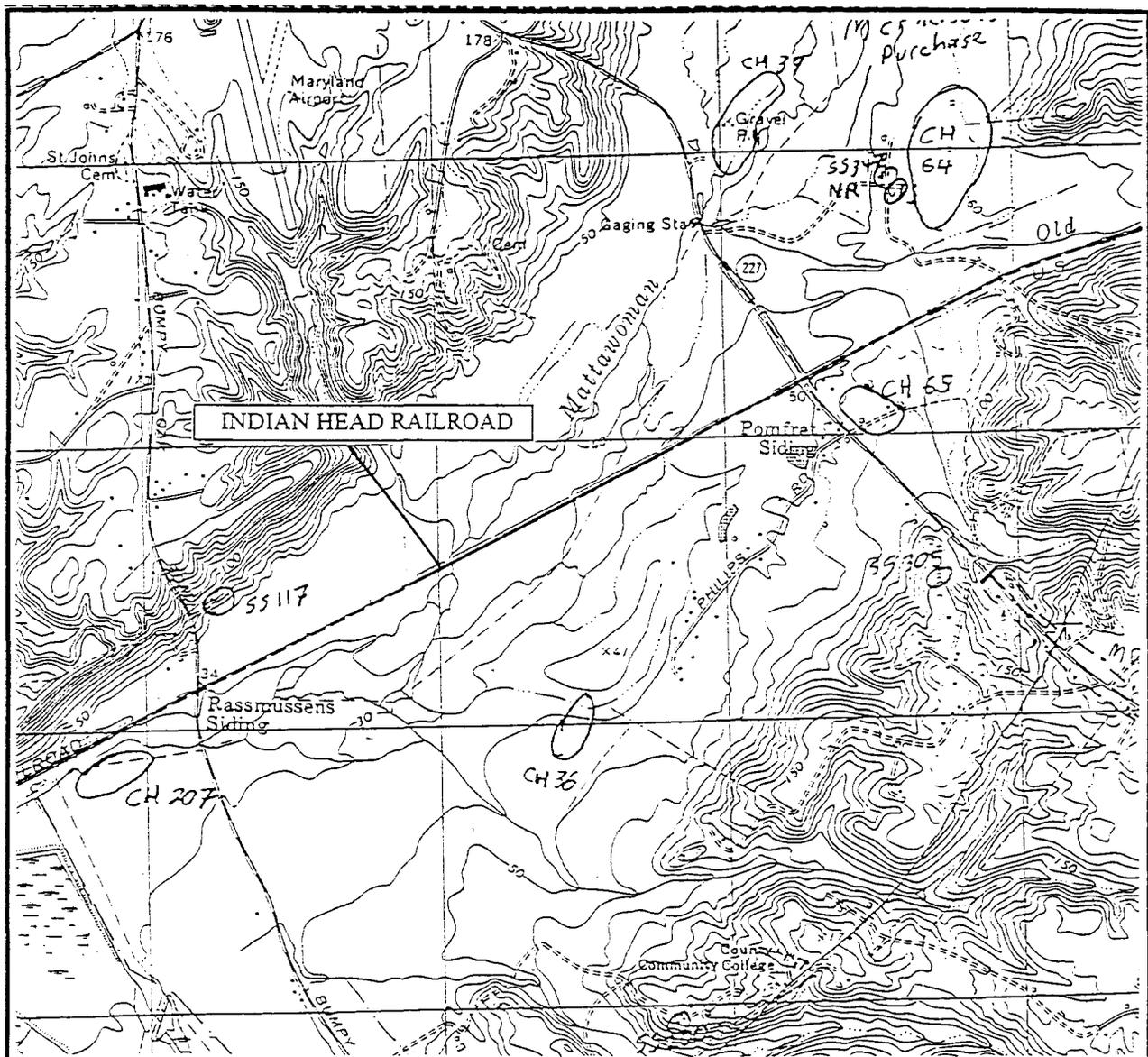


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241 EAST FOURTH STREET, FREDERICK, MD 21701

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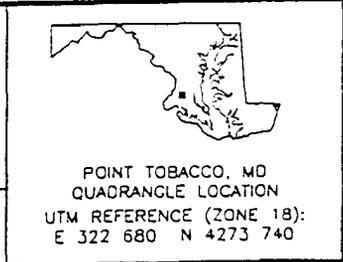
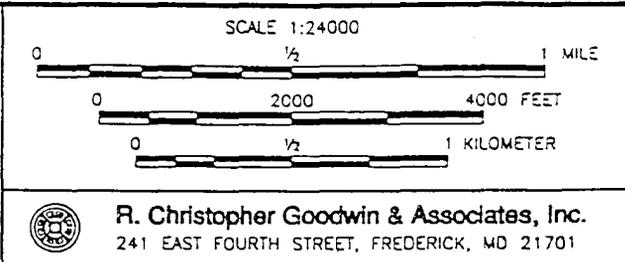
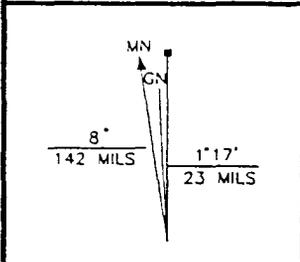
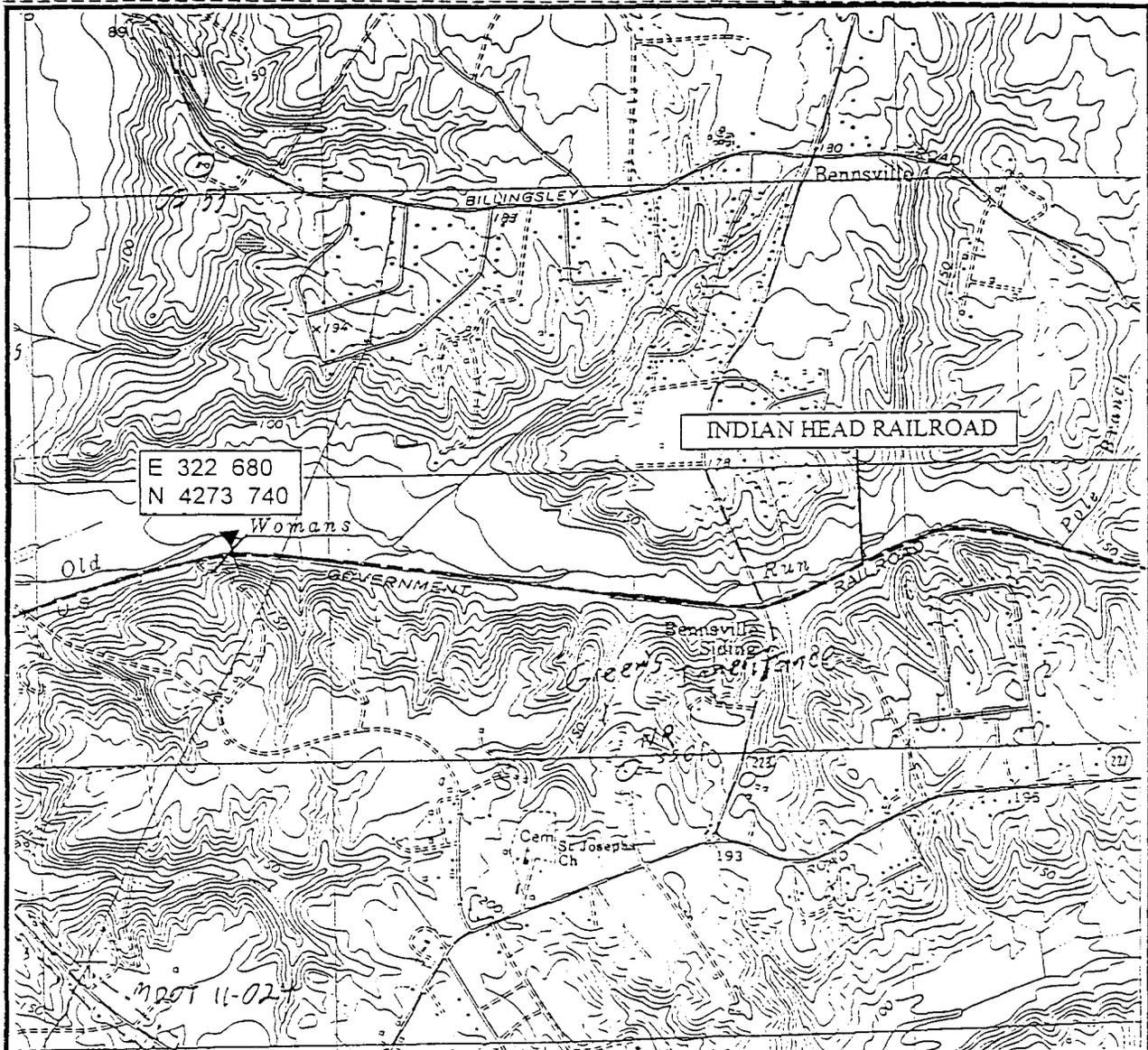
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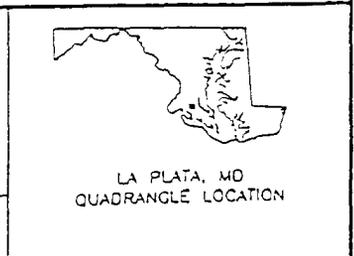
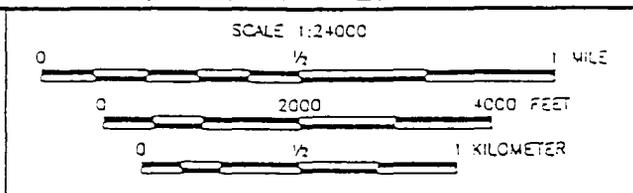
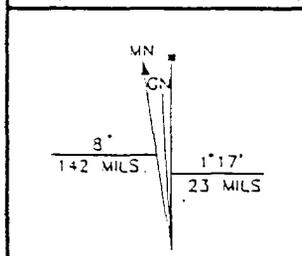
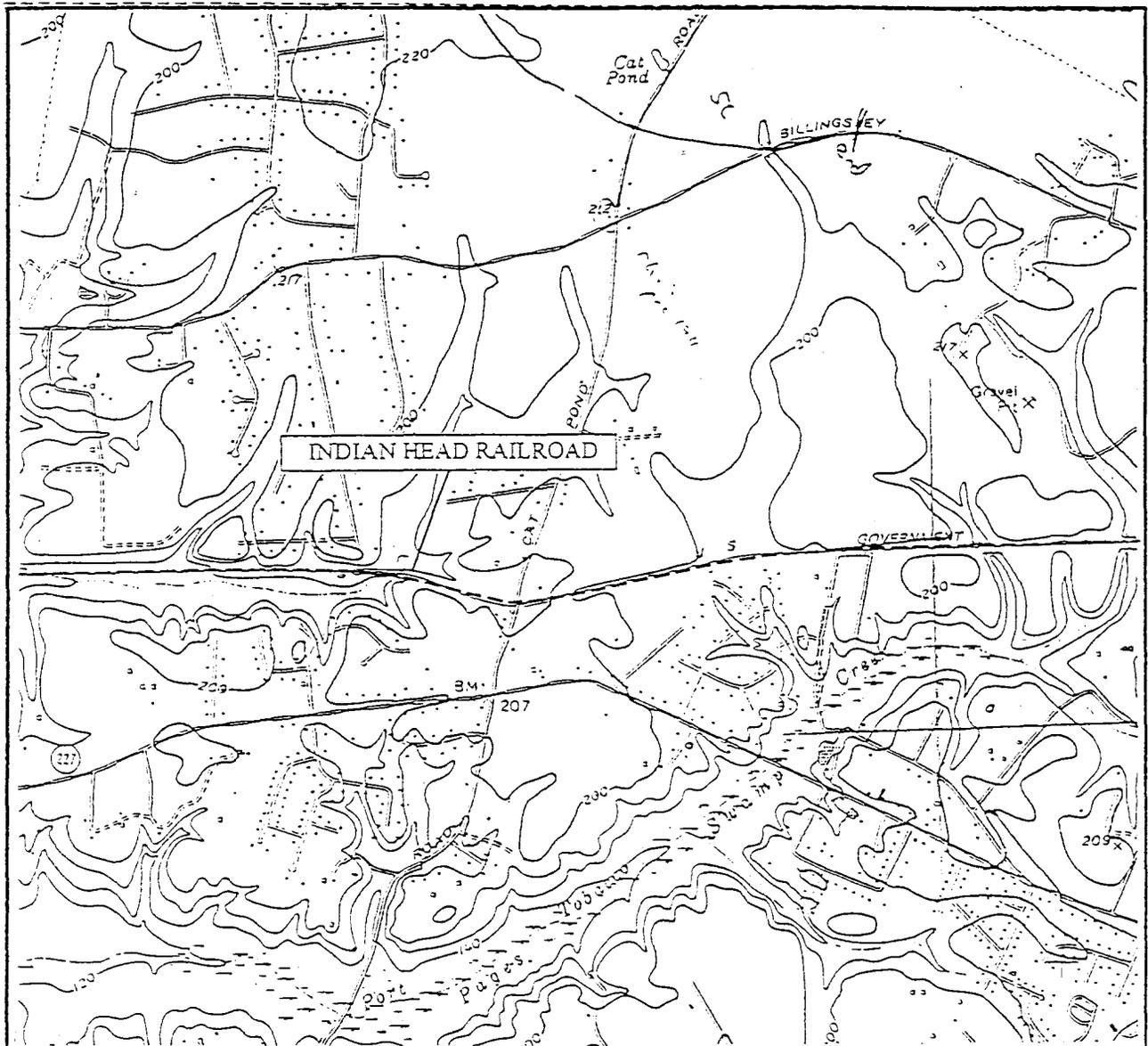
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Indian Head Railroad  
Charles County, Maryland



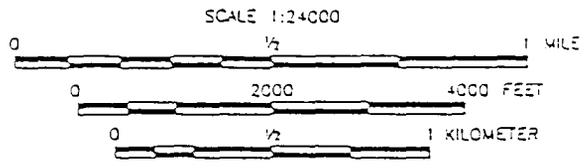
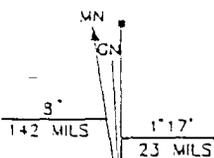
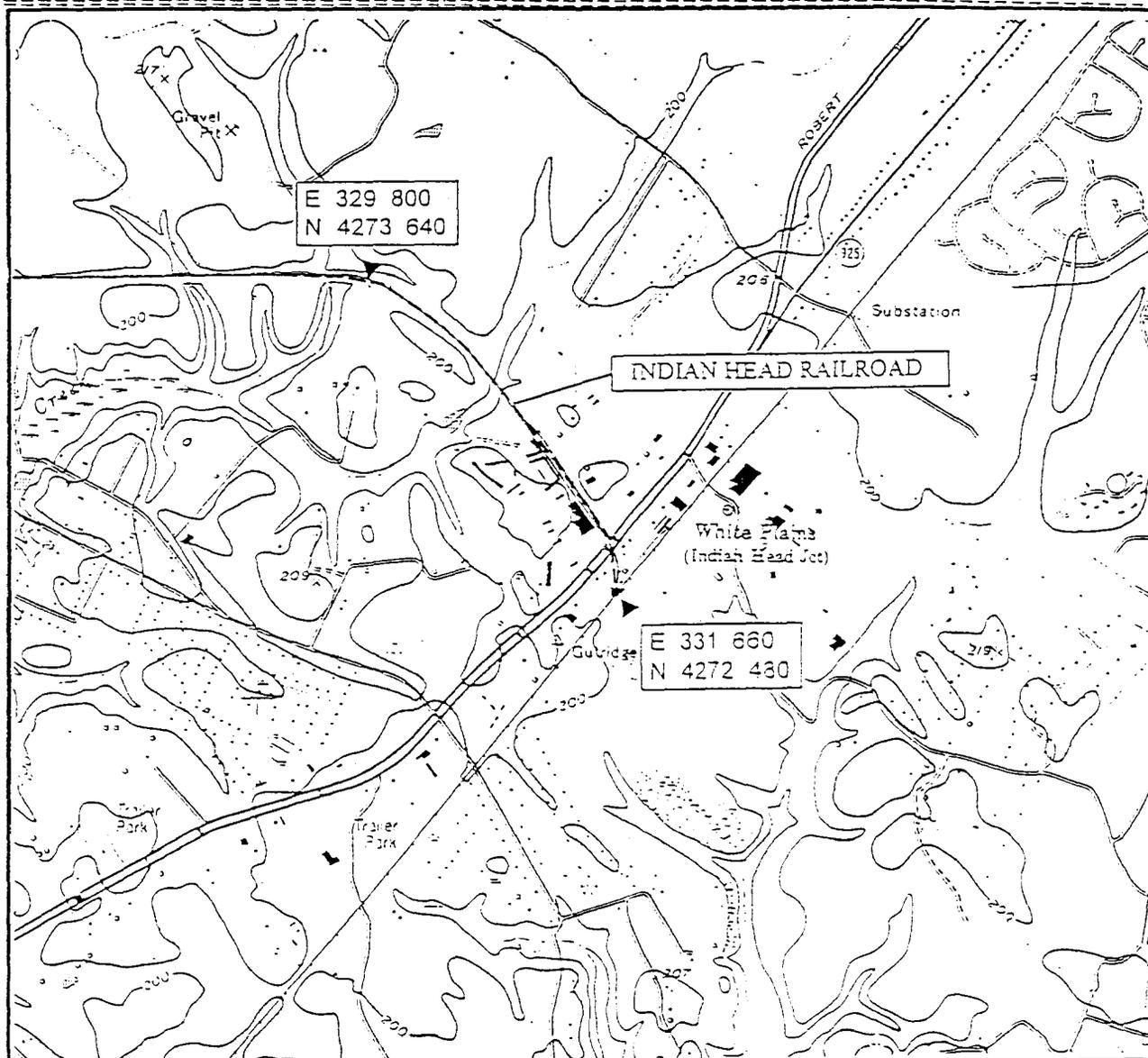
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INDIAN HEAD - WHITE PLAINS RAILROAD

CHARLES COUNTY, MD

E. KIERNAN

10/97

R. CHRISTOPHER GOODWIN + ASSOC.

TRACK + LANDSCAPE BETWEEN RT. 224 + BUMPY OAK Rd.

1:9

<No. 4>TCP 30-03 NNNNN+15AU 037



CH-3-30

INDIAN HEAD - WHITE PLAINS RAILROAD

CHARLES COUNTY, MD

E. KIERNAN

10/97

R. CHRISTOPHER GOODWIN & ASSOC.

TRACK & LANDSCAPE BETWEEN RT. 224 + BUMPY OAK Rd. - SE

<No. 7> TCF 3G-82 NNNNNH+03ALI 03Y

Z:9







CH-290

INDIAN HEAD - WHITE PLAINS RAILROAD

CHARLES COUNTY, MD

E. KIERNAN

10/97

R. CHRISTOPHER GOODWIN + ASSOC.

CONCRETE CULVERT AT RT. 228 - N VIEW

4:19



CH. 290

INDIAN HEAD - WHITE PLAINS RAILROAD

CHARLES COUNTY, MD

E. KIERNAN

10/97

R. CHRISTOPHER GOODWIN & ASSOC.

SIDING AT RT. 224 - NW VIEW

TCP: 83 83 HHHHH: JTAU 888

5:9



CH-290

INDIAN HEAD - WHITE PLAINS RAILROAD

CHARLES COUNTY, MD

E. KIERNAN

10/97

R. CHRISTOPHER GOODWIN & ASSOC.

FREIGHT YARD AT WHITE PLAINS - NW VIEW

6:9

TOP 00 02 NNNNN 04AU 02B



CH-290

INDIAN HEAD - WHITE PLAINS RAILROAD

CHARLES COUNTY, MD

E. KIERNAN

10/97

R. CHRISTOPHER GOODWIN + ASSOC.

20' STEEL + CONCRETE BRIDGE AT RTs 225 + 224 - SOUTH VIEW

7:9



CH-290

INDIAN HEAD - WHITE PLAINS RAILROAD

CHARLES COUNTY, MD

ELAINE KIERNAN

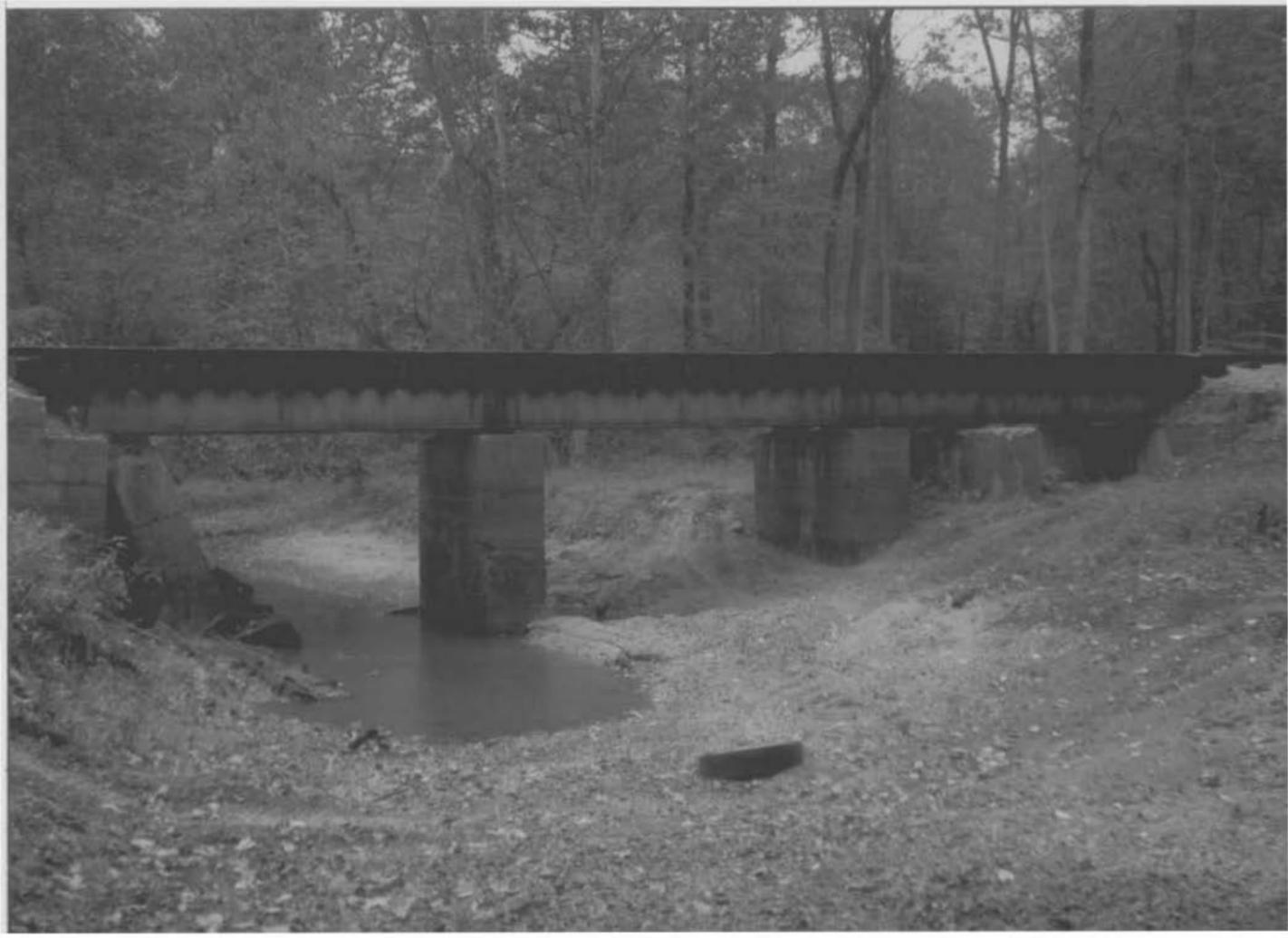
10/97

R. CHRISTOPHER GOODWIN + ASSOC.

27' STEEL + CONCRETE BRIDGE BETWEEN RT 224 + BUMPY OAK RD.

SW VIEW

8:9



CH-290

INDIAN HEAD - WHITE PLAINS RAILROAD

CHARLES COUNTY MD

E. KIERNAN

10/97

R. CHRISTOPHER GOODWIN + ASSOC.

101' 03" 00" N111°11' 01" E 033'

30' CONCRETE + STEEL BRIDGE AT BUMPY OAK RD. + RT 227

N VIEW

9:9