

CH-503
Old Pomonkey High School
Pomonkey
Public

1930s

The Colonial Revival-style Old Pomonkey High School consists of a 1-story stuccoed masonry structure with two distinct sections. One is a large front gable building, three bays wide and six in length. Attached to the southeast side of the gable-roof structure is the second part, a 1-story, 2-bay flat-roofed wing. It appears that the gable-roofed section pre-dates the 1-story wing. The building is sparingly detailed with gable end cornice returns and brick rowlock window sills.

The Old Pomonkey High School served as the first African-American public high school in Charles County. Established in 1922 in a modest 2-story frame building on the present site, the school continued to operate until 1969. In the 1930s, the current building replaced the earlier frame school house. The present structure is a typical example of rural schoolhouse architecture of the early-to-mid 20th century. The building's large windows, high ceilings, and Colonial Revival styling are indicative of school buildings of this era.

MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST
MD INVENTORY OF HISTORIC PROPERTIES

Inventory No. CH-503

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1. Name of Property

=====

historic name Old Pomonkey High School

common/other name _____

=====

2. Location

=====

street & number Metropolitan Church Rd. not for publication _____

city or town Pomonkey vicinity X state Maryland code MD

county Charles code 017 zip code 20640

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3. State/Federal Agency Certification

N/A

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4. National Park Service Certification

N/A

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5. Classification

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Ownership of Property (Check all that apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- 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>	<u>0</u>	buildings
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	sites
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	structures
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	objects
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	Total

Is this property listed in the National Register?

Yes _____ Name of Listing _____

No X

MARYLAND INVENTORY OF HISTORIC PROPERTIES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Inventory No. CH-503

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6. Function or Use

=====

Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: EDUCATION Sub: School

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: VACANT Sub: Not in use

=====

7. Description

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Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)

Colonial Revival

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)

foundation solid: stuccoed

roof front gable: asphalt shingles

walls masonry: stuccoed

other _____

Narrative Description (Describe the historic and current condition of the property.)

See Continuation Sheet No. 7-1

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8. Statement of Significance

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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.

MARYLAND INVENTORY OF HISTORIC PROPERTIES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Inventory No. CH-503

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Areas of Significance (Enter categories from instructions)

EDUCATION
ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance 1922-1969

Significant Dates 1922
ca.1930
1969

Significant Person (Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

Cultural Affiliation Undefined

Architect/Builder Unknown

Narrative Statement of Significance (Explain the significance of the property.)

See Continuation Sheet No. 8-1

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9. Major Bibliographical References

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(Cite the books, articles, legal records, and other sources used in preparing this form.)

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

Charles County Land Records, Charles County Courthouse, La Plata, Maryland.

Charles County Retired Teachers Association, *A History of the One and Two-Room Schools in Charles County*, Unpublished manuscript, 1976.

Charles County Retired Teachers Association, *A Legacy: One- and Two-Room Schools in Charles County*, Unpublished manuscript, 1984.

Klapthor, Margaret Brown. *The History of Charles County, Maryland*. La Plata, MD: Charles County Tercentenary, Inc., 1958.

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10. Geographical Data
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Acreage of Property 16.547 acres

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

The Board of Education property on Metropolitan Church Road is designated as Parcel 136 on Map 12, Grid 5 on the Charles County Property Map.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The school has been associated with Parcel 136, Map 12 since its construction circa 1930.

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11. Form Prepared By
=====

name/title Kathryn Gettings Smith, Architectural Historian
organization Charles County Planning Dept. date Oct.14,1998
street & number P.O. Box B telephone 301-645-0689
city or town La Plata state MD zip code 20646

=====
12. P r o p e r t y O w n e r
=====

name Charles County Board of Education
street & number P.O. Box D telephone _____
city or town La Plata state MD zip code 20646
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MARYLAND INVENTORY OF HISTORIC PROPERTIES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Inventory No. CH-503

Section 7 Page 1

Old Pomonkey High School
name of property
Charles County, Maryland
county and state

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The Colonial Revival-style Old Pomonkey High School consists of a 1-story stuccoed masonry structure with two distinct sections. One is a large front gable building, three bays wide and six in length. Attached to the southeast side of the gable-roof structure is a 1-story, 2-bay flat-roofed wing. It appears that the gable-roofed section pre-dates the 1-story wing. The building is sparingly detailed with gable end cornice returns and brick rowlock window sills.

Facing northeast, the school stands on a 16.5-acre lot on the southwest side of Metropolitan Church Road. The property is level and open with a few mature trees growing in the vicinity of the school building. A large asphalt parking area dominates the northwestern side of the site and chainlink fencing encloses a playground at the rear of the building.

The older of the two sections of the school is the large front gable portion. Set on a continuous masonry foundation, and covered by an asphalt shingle roof, this portion of the school is distinguished by its boxed cornice and decorative cornice returns, its large combination window openings, and rough stuccoed surface. The northeast elevation of this structure contains three identical window bays evenly spaced along the wall. Each opening contains a pair of 9/9 wood sash windows topped by a fixed 6-light wood transom. The windows are set on brick rowlock sills.

Four identical combination windows occupy the first four bays of the building's northwest elevation. This wall is divided into six even bays by projecting masonry wall buttresses. The first four of these bays, moving from northeast to southwest, contain the same paired 9/9 sash windows seen at the front. The fifth bay holds a double-leaf flush wood door entry capped by two stacked 6-light transoms. The final northwest bay, set nearest the building's west corner, contains a single 9/9 wood sash window set on a rowlock brick sill.

The rear gable end of the older section contains no openings other than a vent located high up on the wall near the eaves.

Four of the original six bays that divide the southeast wall of the original section are obscured by the 1-story, flat-roofed addition. However, the two remaining bays, located near the rear of the building, contain openings that mirror the last two bays on the northwest side of the school.

Section 7 Page 2

Old Pomonkey High School
name of property
Charles County, Maryland
county and state

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Set flush with the facade of the original building, the 1-story, masonry addition was made to the northeast side of the original school and provides an additional entrance. The wing is two bays wide and constructed of hollow ceramic tile blocks covered in a rough stuccoed surface. The flat roof is shielded by a low parapet wall, and the side walls are buttressed in a similar manner as on the original school. A small 1-story, flat roofed masonry addition extends off the southeast wall of the wing.

The wing's facade consists of two large bays, one containing a recessed entrance approached by three concrete steps, and the other, a paired window. The entry contains two single-leaf panel-and-light wood doors flanked by 2-light sidelights set atop paneled bases. A pair of 9/9 wood sash windows set on a rowlock brick sill occupies the window bay to the southeast of the entrance.

No openings break the wing's southeast wall. However, its surface is articulated by a series of four masonry wall buttresses. The rear of the wing contains two window bays, one whose sash is missing, and the other with its original 9/9 wood sash in place.

OUTBUILDINGS:

There are no associated outbuilding.

MARYLAND INVENTORY OF HISTORIC PROPERTIES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Inventory No. CH-503

Section 8 Page 1

Old Pomonkey High School
name of property
Charles County, Maryland
county and state

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The Old Pomonkey High School served as the first African-American public high school in Charles County. Established in 1922 in a modest 2-story frame building, the school continued to operate until 1969. In the 1930s, the current building replaced the earlier frame school house. The present building is a typical example of rural schoolhouse architecture of the early-to-mid 20th century. The building's large windows, high ceilings, and Colonial Revival styling are indicative of school buildings of this era.

Early education in Charles County was conducted by tutors in private homes or in small schoolhouses on the plantations. The earliest public schools in Charles County date to the second quarter of the 19th century. Before this, private funds and property were utilized to run the few schools in the County. It was not until the 1850s that the County's school board became active in purchasing land and paying for the construction of public primary schools. By 1860, the county had thirty two schools, all housed in log or frame one-room schoolhouses. Public education was not, however, offered to African Americans in the County until after the Civil War. In 1868, six "colored" schools were in operation in Charles County.

The village of Pomonkey had its beginnings as a crossroads on several important travel routes through the northwestern part of Charles County. As a center of commerce and trade, the small village became a social and commercial focal point. By the turn of the 20th century, Pomonkey was a thriving business and residential community incorporating approximately twenty large homes, four general stores, two livery stables, a blacksmith shop and a sawmill, all within a one mile radius of present-day St. John's Chapel.¹ Its convenient location made it a logical location for a school. In 1865, the first public school in Pomonkey was opened in a one-room frame schoolhouse located on the southwest side of Metropolitan Church Road within what is today the SMECo right-of-way.² This school served the area's white population and continued to operate into the 20th century.

It is unknown when the first "colored" school in Pomonkey was

¹ Interview with Mrs. Louise Highby of Pomonkey, December 9, 1998.

² Interview with Mrs. Louise Highby of Pomonkey, December 9, 1998.

MARYLAND INVENTORY OF HISTORIC PROPERTIES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Inventory No. CH-503

Section 8 Page 2

Old Pomonkey High School
name of property
Charles County, Maryland
county and state

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opened. However, in 1921, the Joshua Lodge of the Order of Good Samaritans donated a parcel of land on "the south side of the public road leading from Pomonkey Warehouse to the Bumpy Oak," to the County Board of Education. The charitable order's intention was to provide a site for the erection of the first African-American high school in the County. A 2-story frame schoolhouse was erected and opened in 1922.³ This being the sole high school for African Americans, many students traveled long distances from all parts of the County to attend. Often, students from very far away would board at the homes of local residents during the school year.

During the 1930s, the frame schoolhouse was replaced by the present-day masonry structure. The high school operated until 1969 when the last class graduated. A Pomonkey High School Alumni Association has been formed in recent years, with an active membership. One of its activities was the placement of a historic marker explaining the schools history at the north corner of the site.

³ As a point of comparison, the County's first "white" high school was opened in Indian Head in 1919.

MARYLAND INVENTORY OF HISTORIC PROPERTIES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Inventory No. CH-503

Old Pomonkey High School
name of property
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HISTORIC CONTEXT:

Geographic Organization: Western Shore

Chronological/Development Period (s):

Industrial/Urban Dominance, 1870-1930
Modern Period, 1930-present

Prehistoric/Historic Period Theme (s):

EDUCATION

RESOURCE TYPE(S)

Category: Building

Historic Environment: Rural

Historic Function (s): EDUCATION/School

Known Design Source: Unknown

MARYLAND INVENTORY OF HISTORIC PROPERTIES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Inventory No. CH-503

Old Pomonkey High School
name of property
Charles County, Maryland
county and state

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Chain of Title:

February 25, 1904: John W. Waring to Joshua Lodge No.
65
Charles County Land Records
Liber FDM 15 Folio 200

November 5, 1921: The Joshua Lodge No. 65, Independent
Order of Good Samaritans to The
Board of Education, Charles County
\$1.00
16.75 acres on South side of public
road leading from Pomonkey warehouse
to the Bumpy Oak
Charles County Land Records
Liber 39 Folio 88

RESOURCE SKETCH MAP

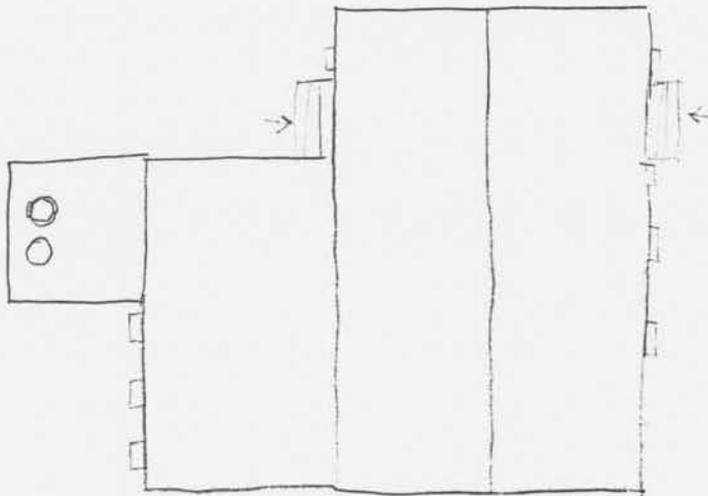
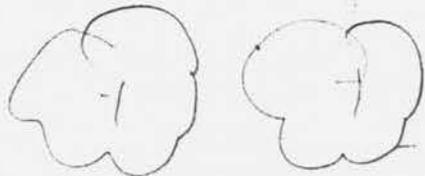
10/98

CH-503

Old Pomonkey High School /
Metropolitan Church Rd.
CHARLES COUNTY, MD
POMONKEY VIC.



chainlink fence



entrance
↑

Paved
Parking
Area

side walk



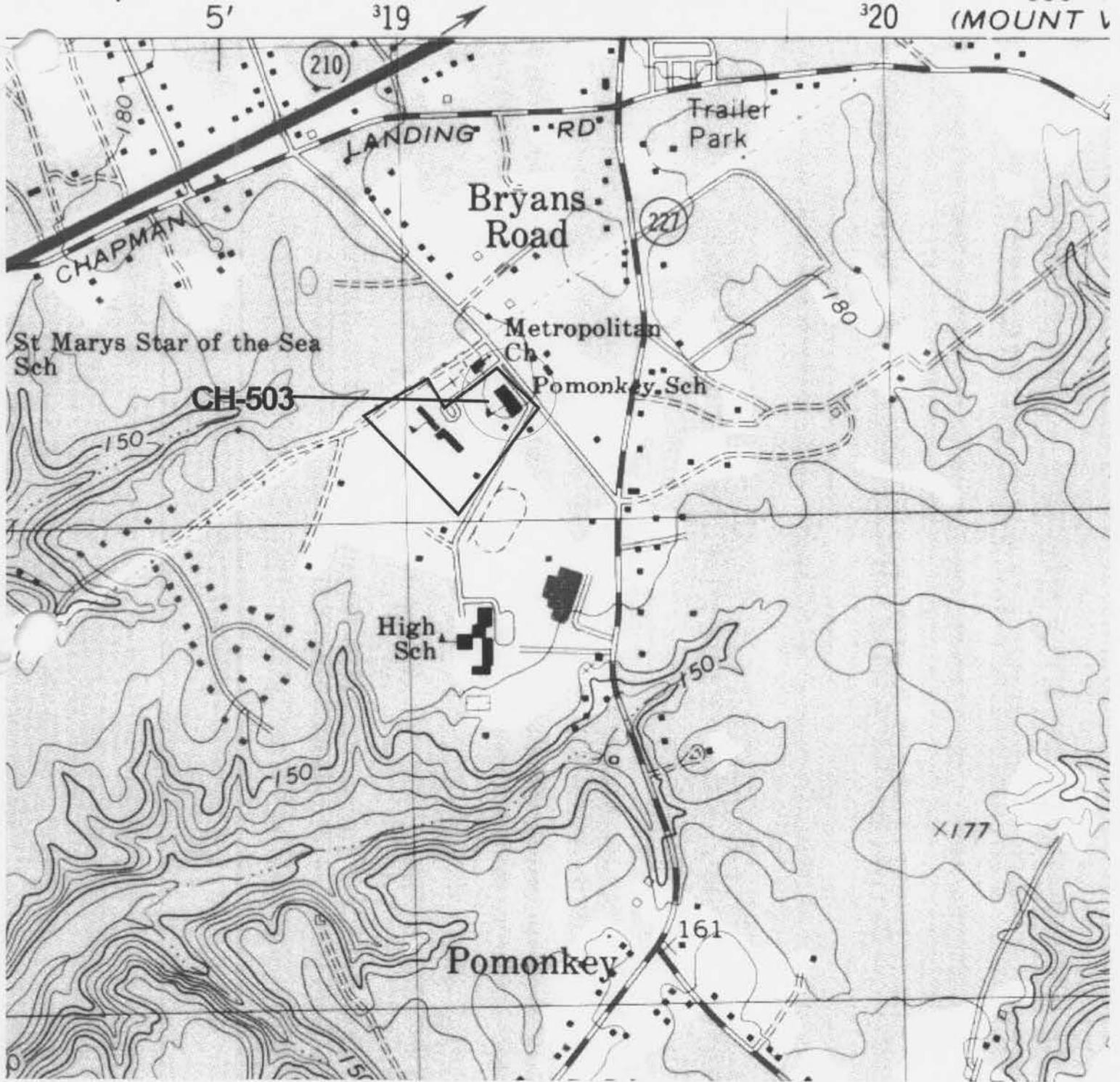
historic marker
x

Metropolitan Church Rd.

NOT TO SCALE

INTERCHANGE 37 (INT. 495) 14 MI.
WHITE HALL 6 MI.

5561 1
(MOUNT V



Old Pomonkey High School
Charles County, MD

CH-503

PORT TOBACCO, MD QUAD
(1966) 1978



CH-503

OLD POMONKEY HIGH SCHOOL

CHARLES COUNTY, MD

K.G. SMITH

10/98

MARYLAND SHPO

LOOKING WEST

1 OF 3



CH-503

OLD POMONKEY HIGH SCHOOL
CHARLES COUNTY, MD

K.G. SMITH

10/98

MARYLAND SHPO

LOOKING EAST

2 OF 3



CH-503

OLD POMONKEY HIGH SCHOOL
CHARLES COUNTY, MD

K.G. SMITH

10/98

MARYLAND SHPO
LOOKING NORTH

3 OF 3