

**CH-506**  
**Knights of St. John Property**  
**La Plata vic.**  
**Private**

**circa 1910**  
**1937**

Acquired by the Knights of St. John of La Plata in 1936, the property on Hawthorne Road encompasses two historic buildings, one a vernacular frame I-house built prior to their acquisition of the lot, and the other a social meeting hall built for the Knights themselves in 1937. The original dwelling, erected by W.H. Martin circa 1910, is a typical example of a rural I-house with a decorative center gable on the facade. Established in 1927 in La Plata, The Knights of St. John Command #309 have continuously owned and utilized this site since 1936. Their first meeting hall, erected in 1937, is a good example of a simple frame meeting hall of the early 20th century.

MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST  
MD INVENTORY OF HISTORIC PROPERTIES

Inventory No. CH-506

=====

1. Name of Property

=====

historic name Knights of St. John Property

common/other name \_\_\_\_\_

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2. Location

=====

street & number 7840 Hawthorne Road not for publication \_\_\_\_\_

city or town La Plata vicinity  state Maryland code MD

county Charles code 017 zip code 20646

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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>2</u>	<u>2</u>	buildings
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	sites
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	structures
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	objects
<u>2</u>	<u>2</u>	Total

Is this property listed in the National Register?

Yes \_\_\_\_\_ Name of Listing \_\_\_\_\_

No

=====  
6. Function or Use  
=====

Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: DOMESTIC Sub: Single Dwelling  
SOCIAL Meeting Hall

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: DOMESTIC Sub: Single Dwelling  
SOCIAL Meeting Hall

=====  
7. Description  
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Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)

Other: Vernacular I-house  
Early 20th Century Vernacular

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)

foundation pier: poured concrete  
roof side gable: asphalt shingles  
walls frame: asphalt "brick-tex" sheets  
other (original siding: wood German siding)

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-506

=====  
Areas of Significance (Enter categories from instructions)

ARCHITECTURE  
SOCIAL HISTORY  
\_\_\_\_\_

Period of Significance circa 1910  
1937  
\_\_\_\_\_

Significant Dates circa 1910  
1937  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

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.

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

Sainty, Guy Stair. "'Self-Styled' Orders of St. John," Extracted from *The Orders of Saint John*. American Society of the Most Venerable Order of the Hospital of Saint John in Jerusalem, 1991. (Available online at [www.kwtelecom.com/heraldry/stjohn/bogus.html](http://www.kwtelecom.com/heraldry/stjohn/bogus.html))

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10. Geographical Data

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Acreage of Property 4.5 acres

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

The property at 7840 Hawthorne Road is designated as Parcel 48 on Map 32, Grid 3 on the Charles County Property Map.

**Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)**

The buildings at 7840 Hawthorne Road have been associated with Parcel 48, Map 32 since their construction circa 1910 and in 1937.

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11. Form Prepared By

=====

name/title Kathryn Gettings Smith, Architectural Historian  
 organization Charles County Planning Dept. date Oct. 15, 1998  
 street & number P.O. Box B telephone 301-645-0689  
 city or town La Plata state MD zip code 20646

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12. Property Owner

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name Knights of St. John (contact: Frank Cooper)  
 street & number P.O. Box 577 telephone 301-932-3921  
 city or town La Plata state MD zip code 20646

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MARYLAND INVENTORY OF HISTORIC PROPERTIES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

Inventory No. CH-506

Section 7 Page 1

Knights of St. John Property  
name of property  
Charles County, Maryland  
county and state

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The Knights of St. John Property encompasses a circa 1910 frame dwelling erected before the Knights acquired the property in 1936, as well as a 1937 frame meeting hall built by the organization. A second, larger meeting hall was added later. The dwelling, likely built by W.H. Martin who acquired the 9.5-acre lot in 1910, consists of a typical frame I-house common among the rural residences of Charles County. The 1937 meeting hall is a large, 1-story front gable frame building with little architectural adornment.

Located at the northwest corner of Hawthorne and Marshalls Corner roads, and bounded on the north by Bumpy Oak Road and on the south by Hawthorne Road, the Knights of St. John Property encompasses a level grassy lot with scattered brush and a few large shade trees. A wire fence divides the residence from the site of the two meeting halls. The modern meeting hall is in a severe state of disrepair.

DWELLING:

Set atop a poured concrete pier foundation, the 2-story side gable I-house features a single-pile, center passage plan, open eaves, and two interior chimneys with corbeled caps. The 3-bay facade faces southeast, and is divided by three openings on both the first and second stories. On the first story, a centered entrance is flanked by single double-hung wood sash windows, while three similar windows pierce the second story. The entry contains a single-leaf panel-and-light wood door surrounded by a square-edged wood casing.

Several styles of wood sash fill the window openings throughout the house. The original design was likely the vertical 2/2 sash that occupies the three second story facade windows. However, on the first story, the original sash has been replaced by sash configured with 6 lights over a single light. The window and door openings are trimmed with simple, one-piece square-edged wood casings, and a decorative center gable crowns the front roof slope.

Two vertically aligned windows containing replacement 1/1 wood sash pierce the north gable end, while two more window apertures open along the south end of the rear wall of the dwelling. Both these latter windows contain original 2/2 sash. A single-leaf paneled wood door opens into the house at the rear.

The house has been reclad with imitation brick asphalt sheets,

Section 7 Page 2

Knights of St. John Property  
name of property  
Charles County, Maryland  
county and state

=====

while the roof has been recovered with asphalt shingles.

MEETING HALL(S) :

The original Knights of St. John meeting hall was erected on this site in 1937. In the 1960s, a second concrete block meeting hall was erected adjacent to the original frame building. The frame hall consists of a 1-story, front gable building that has been reclad in asphalt shingles. The building was originally covered in wood siding. The steep front gable roof is clad in sheet metal and pierced by a single metal chimney flue near the rear. A molded wood raking cornice adorns the gable ends and the eaves are open.

Four openings divide the building's facade. The centered entrance, which contains a flush wood replacement door, is flanked by two windows on either side. Although boarded up, these openings originally contained 2/2 vertical light sash and are trimmed with square-edged wood casings. Rows of similar 2/2 sash windows line the east and west flanks of the building.

The meeting hall has been altered by the addition of asphalt siding on the exterior, the replacement of the front door, and the construction of an exterior concrete block flue on the west elevation. The original meeting hall is in poor condition.

The 1960s concrete block meeting hall was erected adjacent to the original hall's east elevation and set back to the north. This building features concrete block walls and a metal-clad gable roof that has been partially demolished. The hall is now in a ruinous condition.

OUTBUILDINGS:

Two non-historic sheds are associated with the original dwelling. Located northwest of the house, one of the sheds consists of a 1-story shed-roofed frame structure clad in wood weatherboard. The sloping roof is covered in rolled asphalt sheets. The second non-historic shed consists of a small pre-fabricated metal structure with a front gable roof. The former shed appears to date to the 1950s or 1960s, while the latter was manufactured during the 1970s or 1980s.

MARYLAND INVENTORY OF HISTORIC PROPERTIES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

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Section 8 Page 1

Knights of St. John Property  
name of property  
Charles County, Maryland  
county and state

=====

Acquired by the Knights of St. John of La Plata in 1936, the property on Hawthorne Road encompasses two historic buildings, one a vernacular frame I-house built prior to their acquisition of the lot, and the other a social meeting hall built for the Knights themselves in 1937. The original dwelling, erected by W.H. Martin circa 1910, is a typical example of a rural I-house with a decorative center gable on the facade. Established in 1927 in La Plata, The Knights of St. John Command #309 have continuously owned and utilized this site since 1936. Their first meeting hall, erected in 1937, is a good example of a simple frame meeting hall of the early 20th century.

The Knights of St. John is an ancient Catholic men's organization established centuries ago during the age of the Christian Crusades in Europe. The Knights of St. John of Jerusalem was one among many Chivalric orders founded in the tenth, eleventh, and twelfth centuries. These orders of knights consisted of men dedicated to fighting for the glory of God against the infidels. Today, only a few of these orders remain, and they have been vastly changed from their origins. Today, these orders focus on charitable activities within their communities.

The La Plata Command #309 of the Knights of St. John was established in 1927. In 1936, the organization purchased a 9.5-acre parcel of land on the north side of Hawthorne Road at Marshalls Corner for \$800. Prior to this, the property had briefly been in the hands of James C. Mitchell, who purchased it at public auction in 1932 following a land dispute within the Martin family. W.H. Martin first acquired the same 9.5 acres in 1910 from Jacob & Georgiana Butler for \$47.50. It is believed that Martin erected the dwelling that still occupies the eastern end of the property around 1910.

Following their acquisition of the site, the Knights built a frame meeting hall on the parcel. This building served as the organization's main meeting place until the 1960s when the larger concrete block hall was erected adjacent to the original structure. This modern hall has fallen into disrepair in recent years, as has the original frame meeting hall. While the Knights of St. John, Command #309 is still active, both meeting halls are no longer in use. In recent years, the Knights have begun planning for the construction of a new building, but have been unable, as of yet, to retain the requisite permits.

The original meeting hall is a rare example of an early-20th

MARYLAND INVENTORY OF HISTORIC PROPERTIES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

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Knights of St. John Property  
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=====  
century social hall in Charles County. Its simple form and decorative features are typical of this building type.

The dwelling that occupied the property when the Knights purchased it is a typical example of a frame vernacular I-house. Although somewhat altered on its exterior, the building's form remains intact.

INVENTORY OF HISTORIC PROPERTIES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

Inventory No. CH-506

Knights of St. John 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):**

DOMESTIC  
SOCIAL

**RESOURCE TYPE(S)**

**Category:** Building

**Historic Environment:** Rural

**Historic Function (s):** DOMESTIC/Single dwelling  
SOCIAL/Meeting hall

**Known Design Source:** Unknown



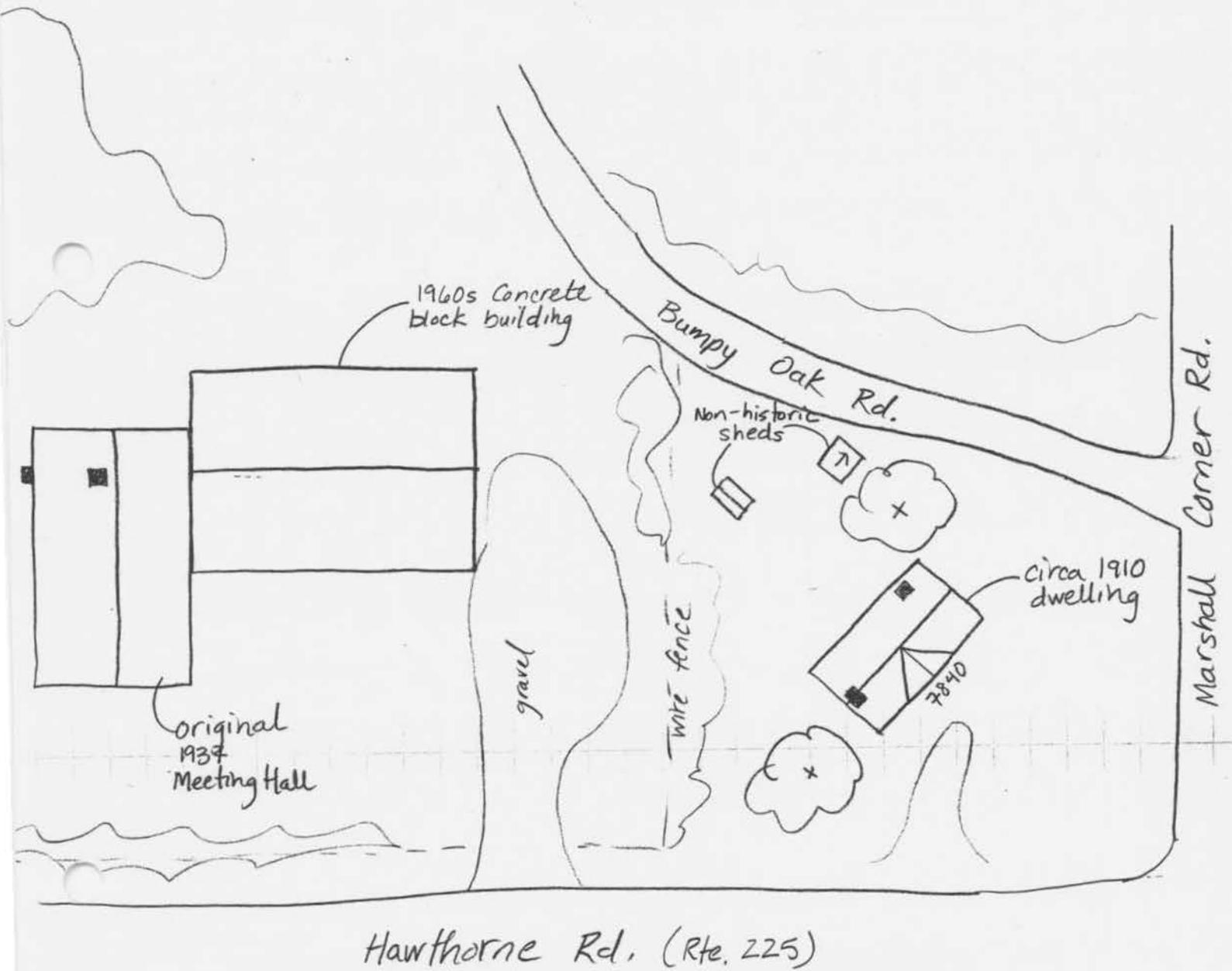
# RESOURCE SKETCH MAP

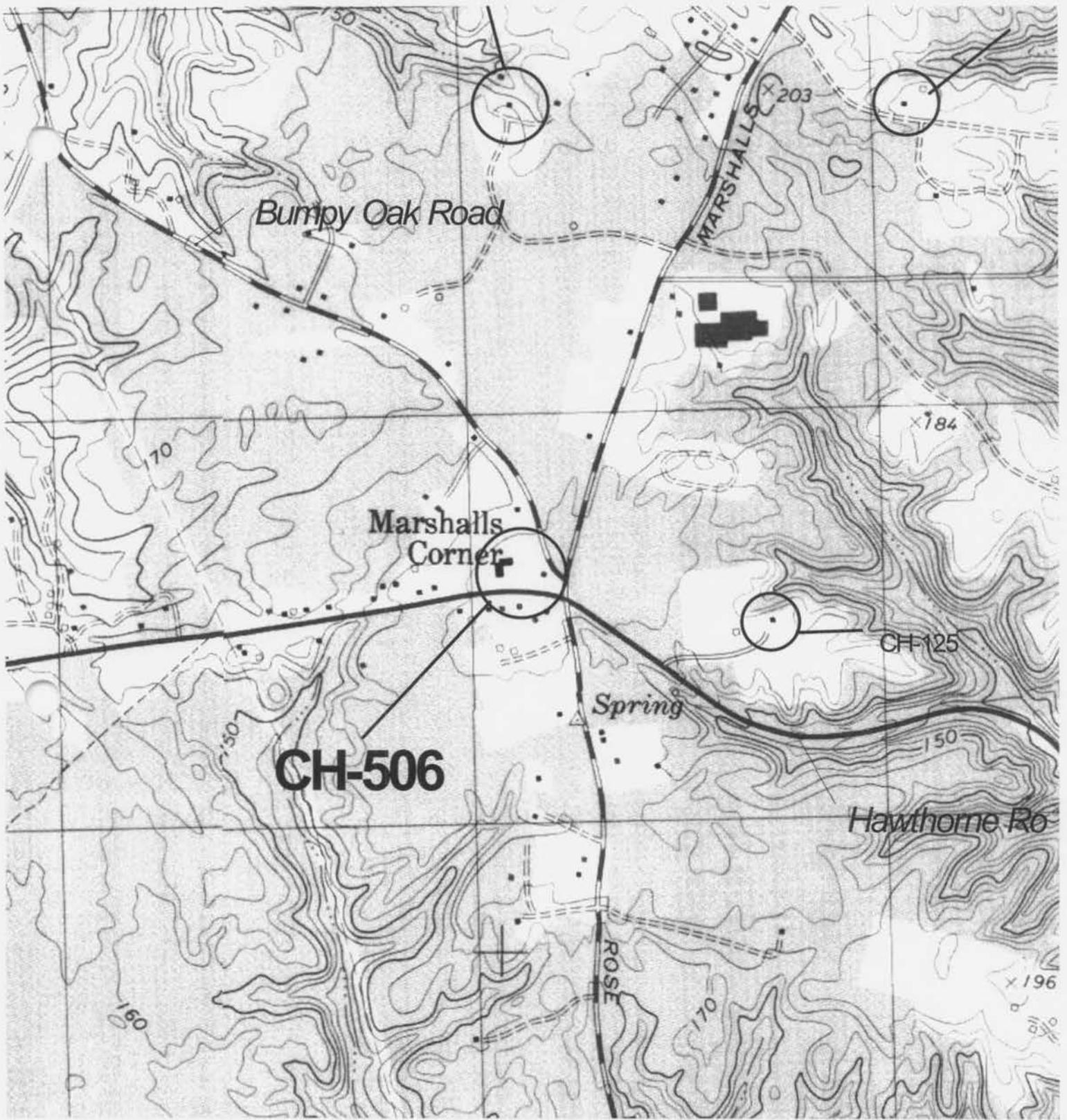
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KNIGHTS OF ST. JOHN PROPERTY  
CHARLES COUNTY, MD  
La Plata Vic.  
(7840 Hawthorne Rd.)

CH-506





**Knights of St. John Property  
Charles County, MD**

**CH-506**

**PORT TOBACCO, MD QUAD**



CH-506

KNIGHTS OF ST. JOHN PROPERTY

CHARLES COUNTY, MD

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MARYLAND SHPO

LOOKING NORTH

1 OF 5



CH-506

KNIGHTS OF ST. JOHN PROPERTY

CHARLES COUNTY, MD

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MARYLAND SHPO

LOOKING SOUTH

20F5



CH-506

KNIGHTS OF ST. JOHN PROPERTY  
CHARLES COUNTY, MD

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MARYLAND SHPO  
OUTBUILDINGS - SHEDS

3 OF 5



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KNIGHTS OF ST. JOHN PROPERTY  
CHARLES COUNTY, MD

K.G. SMITH

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MARYLAND SHIPO

MEETING HALL - LOOKING NE

4 OF 5



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KNIGHTS OF ST. JOHN PROPERTY  
CHARLES COUNTY, MD

K.G. SMITH

9/98

MARYLAND SHPD

MEETING HALL - LOOKING NORTH

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