

**CH-539**  
**Medley Farmhouse**  
**Waldorf vic.**  
**Private**

**circa 1900**

The Medley Farmhouse, erected circa 1900, is a substantial example of a typical Vernacular Victorian I-house in Charles County. The 2-story, frame structure features a centered front gable and was once adorned by a wrap-around porch. Its spacious proportions and relative high level of interior decoration make it among the most substantial examples of its type in the County. A 1-3/4-story frame wing located at the north end of the house may contain the remnants of an earlier dwelling. The house was built circa 1900 for the Medley family.

MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST  
MD INVENTORY OF HISTORIC PROPERTIES

Inventory No. CH-539

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1. Name of Property

=====

historic name Medley Farmhouse  
Common/other name Part of "Laurel Branch"

=====

2. Location

=====

street & number 8590 Ben~~n~~sville Road not for publication         
city or town Waldorf vicinity X state Maryland code MD  
county Charles code 017 zip code 20603

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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>1</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>1</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

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: DOMESTIC Sub: Single dwelling

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

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

Early 20th Century Vernacular Victorian

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)

foundation pier: brick (infilled across front)

roof side gable: asphalt shingles

walls wood frame: asbestos shingles

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-539

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Areas of Significance (Enter categories from instructions)

ARCHITECTURE  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Period of Significance circa 1900  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Significant Dates circa 1900  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

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

CH-539

9. Major Bibliographical References

(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.

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 66.941 acres

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

The property is designated as Parcel 2 on Map 6, Grid 11 on the Charles County Property Map.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The Medley Farmhouse has been associated with Parcel 2, Map 6 since its construction.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Kathryn Gettings Smith, Architectural Historian  
organization Charles County Planning Dept. date May 28, 1999  
street & number P.O. Box B telephone 301-645-0689  
city or town La Plata state MD zip code 20646

12. Property Owner

name Russell Bracey  
street & number \_\_\_\_\_ telephone 301-934-3881  
city or town Waldorf state MD zip code 20603

Section 7 Page 1

Medley Farmhouse  
name of property  
Charles County, Maryland  
county and state

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The Medley Farmhouse, erected circa 1900, is a substantial example of a typical Vernacular Victorian I-house in Charles County. The 2-story, frame structure features a centered front gable and was once adorned by a wrap-around porch. A 1-3/4-story frame wing located at the north end of the house may contain the remnants of an earlier dwelling at this location.

The house once occupied a 276-acre farm sandwiched between what is now Bennsville Road (once the public road from Port Tobacco to Piscataway) and Mattawoman Creek. The present tract has been reduced in size to 66.9 acres, and consists of an open area surrounding the house, and a wooded area at the rear which slopes off to the Creek on the west. Several large pine trees surround the house which is approach by a paved driveway. One non-historic garage accompanies the house.

The Medley Farm house consists of a 2-story, side gable frame structure with a single-pile, central passage plan. An original 2-story rear "ell" extends of the west wall of the main house. The building stands on a brick pier foundation that has been infilled along the front of the building with brick. The walls rise to two full stories and are clad in asbestos shingles. Two original interior chimneys have been removed above the roof line. The side gable roof features asphalt shingling, cornice returns at the gable ends, and a centered front gable clad in fishscale singles and pierced by a lunette window. At one time, the building's facade and south side were encompassed by a 1-story wrap-around porch.

The symmetrically arranged facade contains a centered entrance that holds a single-leaf replacement panel-and-light wood door. The door is sheltered by a replacement gabled portico set on brick posts. The main entrance is flanked by two original 2/2 sash windows on either side, while the second story holds three evenly spaced apertures of the same design. Similar windows pierce the remainder of the main block along with the rear "ell." The windows throughout are trimmed with simple square-edged wood casings.

The 1-3/4-story frame wing to the north of the main block contains replacement windows on its first story, and 4-light wood casements above, which light the garret rooms. The wing also stands on a brick pier foundation that has been infilled with brick along its front face. Covered by an asphalt shingle-clad gable roof, the wing's most distinctive feature is its gable end brick chimney. The chimney is asymmetrical in design with only a single shoulder on its west face. It stands atop a shallow watertable, and

MARYLAND INVENTORY OF HISTORIC PROPERTIES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

Inventory No. CH-539

Section 7 Page 2

Medley Farmhouse  
name of property  
Charles County, Maryland  
county and state

culminates in a rebuilt cap. While the age of the chimney was difficult to determine, its large bricks and weathered appearance indicate that it may significantly pre-date the main block of the house. In addition, the traditional relationship of service wing to main block is reminiscent of many early 19th century houses in Charles County.

Several additions and alterations have been made to the house over the years. In addition to the change in cladding materials, the house has been extended at the rear by two frame additions made to the main block. The wing has also been extended by a 1-story frame shed-extension on its west face. A small projecting box bay addition was also made at the north gable end of the main block. In addition, an exterior brick chimney was added along the west wall of the wing addition.

The dwelling's interior has also undergone significant changes with much of the original material covered by new finishes. The exception is in the center stair hall and on the second floor of the main block. The central stair hall contains a typical circa-1900 Colonial Revival-style dogleg stair with a half landing and paneled closed stringer. Much of the first story floor has been covered with carpeting, but where it is visible (closet under stair), it consists of three-inch tongue-and-groove boards.

The wing reveals little of its age on the interior. The first story contains the kitchen which is adorned by match stick wainscoting and square-edged baseboards. A steep enclosed dogleg stair in the kitchen's southwest corner rises to the two garret rooms above. Inspection of the stair carriage indicates that it dates to the last quarter of the 19th century or later. The garret rooms are sparsely finished with plywood walls and ceiling and random-width flooring. A paneled partition wall with a beaded vertical board door separates the two spaces. The door appears to be constructed using cut nails. The 4-light wood casement windows hold old blown glass, and may possibly have been reused from an earlier structure.

OUTBUILDING:

A 3-bay side-gable concrete block garage stands a short distance southwest of the house. The garage appears to date to the 1960s.

MARYLAND INVENTORY OF HISTORIC PROPERTIES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

Inventory No. CH-539

Section 8 Page 1

Medley Farmhouse  
name of property  
Charles County, Maryland  
county and state

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The Medley Farmhouse is a substantial example of a turn-of-the-20th-century vernacular I-house in Charles County. Its spacious proportions and relative high level of interior decoration make it among the most substantial examples of its type in the County. Built circa 1900 for the Medley family, the house replaced or expanded an older structure, the remnants of which may be contained within the traditional north service wing.

Francis O. Medley purchased this 276-acre farm for \$2500 from the heirs of George S. Harris in 1869. Harris, a substantial Charles County landowner at the time, had acquired the property shortly before his death in 1847 from Richard H. Marshall. Marshall had inherited the land from his prominent father, Doctor Thomas Marshall of Marshall Hall.

Following the Civil War, Harris's heirs were apparently unable to maintain the property, and were forced to sell to Medley. After purchasing the farm, Medley may have lived in a pre-existing dwelling on the site until around 1900 when the present main block of the dwelling was built.

Medley devised his lands to his wife who passed it on to their sons, George and J. Frank Medley. The property remained in the family until 1939, when it was subdivided and the portion containing the house, sold to the present owner's parents.

MARYLAND INVENTORY OF HISTORIC PROPERTIES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

Inventory No. CH-539

Medley Farmhouse  
name of property  
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county and state

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**HISTORIC CONTEXT:**

**Geographic Organization:** Western Shore

**Chronological/Development Period (s):**

Industrial/Urban Dominance, 1870-  
1930

**Prehistoric/Historic Period Theme (s):**

ARCHITECTURE

**RESOURCE TYPE(S)**

**Category:** Building

**Historic Environment:** Rural

**Historic Function (s):** DOMESTIC/Single dwelling

**Known Design Source:** Unknown

MARYLAND INVENTORY OF HISTORIC PROPERTIES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

Inventory No. CH-539

Medley Farmhouse  
name of property  
Charles County, Maryland  
county and state

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**Chain of Title:**

March 19, 1813: Josias F. Beall of Prince George's  
County to Dr. Thomas Marshall of  
Charles County  
\$2750.33  
"Strife" & "The Vineyard" = 97.25  
acres plus part of "The Vineyard"  
located between "Laurel Branch" &  
"Run at a Venture"  
Charles County Land Records  
Liber JB 10 Folio 267

March 16, 1846: Richard H. & Harriet M. Marshall of  
Frederick County, Maryland to George  
S. Harris of Charles County  
January 1, 1839: Richard Marshall  
sold to G.S. Harris all the part of  
real estate given to him by his  
father, the late Dr. Thomas Marshall  
of Charles County  
\$3500  
275 acres  
Charles County Land Records  
Liber WM 2 Folio 381

June 29, 1847: Will of George S. Harris  
Devised his land to his children  
Charles County Register of Wills  
Liber DJ 16 Folio 429

April 13, 1869: Heirs of G.S. Harris to Francis O.  
Medley  
\$2500  
276 acres "Laurel Branch"  
Charles County Land Records  
Liber GAH 2 Folio 282

March 13, 1900: Will of Francis O. Medley  
Devised land to Harriet R. Medley  
Charles County Register of Wills  
Liber HP 19 Folio 96

July 6, 1909: Will of Harriet Medley  
Land given to George E. & J. Frank

MARYLAND INVENTORY OF HISTORIC PROPERTIES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

Inventory No. CH-539

Medley Farmhouse  
name of property  
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Medley  
Charles County Register of Wills  
Liber CHP 19 Folio 381

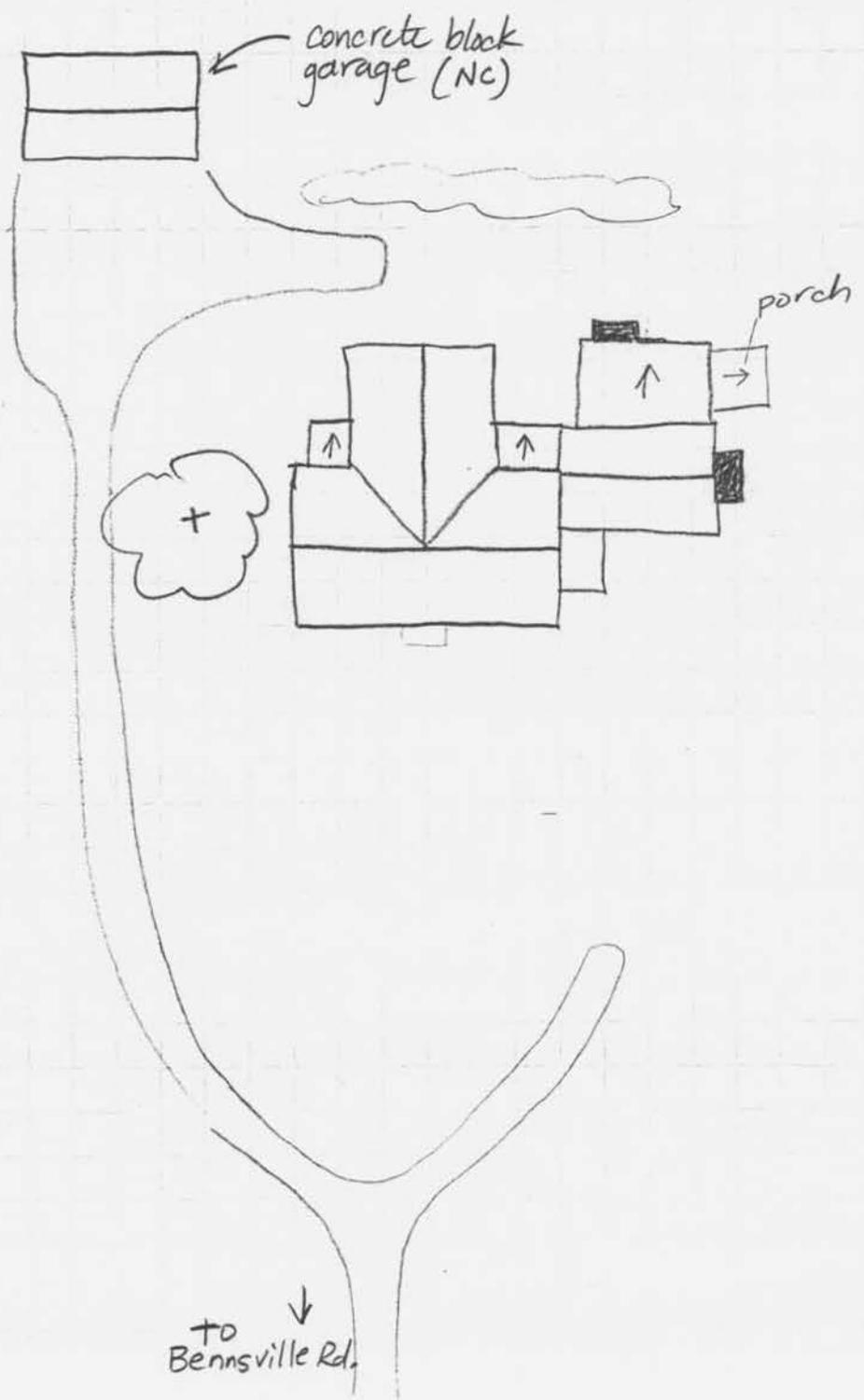
November 12, 1910: George E. Medley, et al. to Thomas  
Henry & Laurelia C. Medley of  
Charles County  
276 acres  
commonly called "Laurel Branch"  
Charles County Land Records  
Liber HCC 22 Folio 444

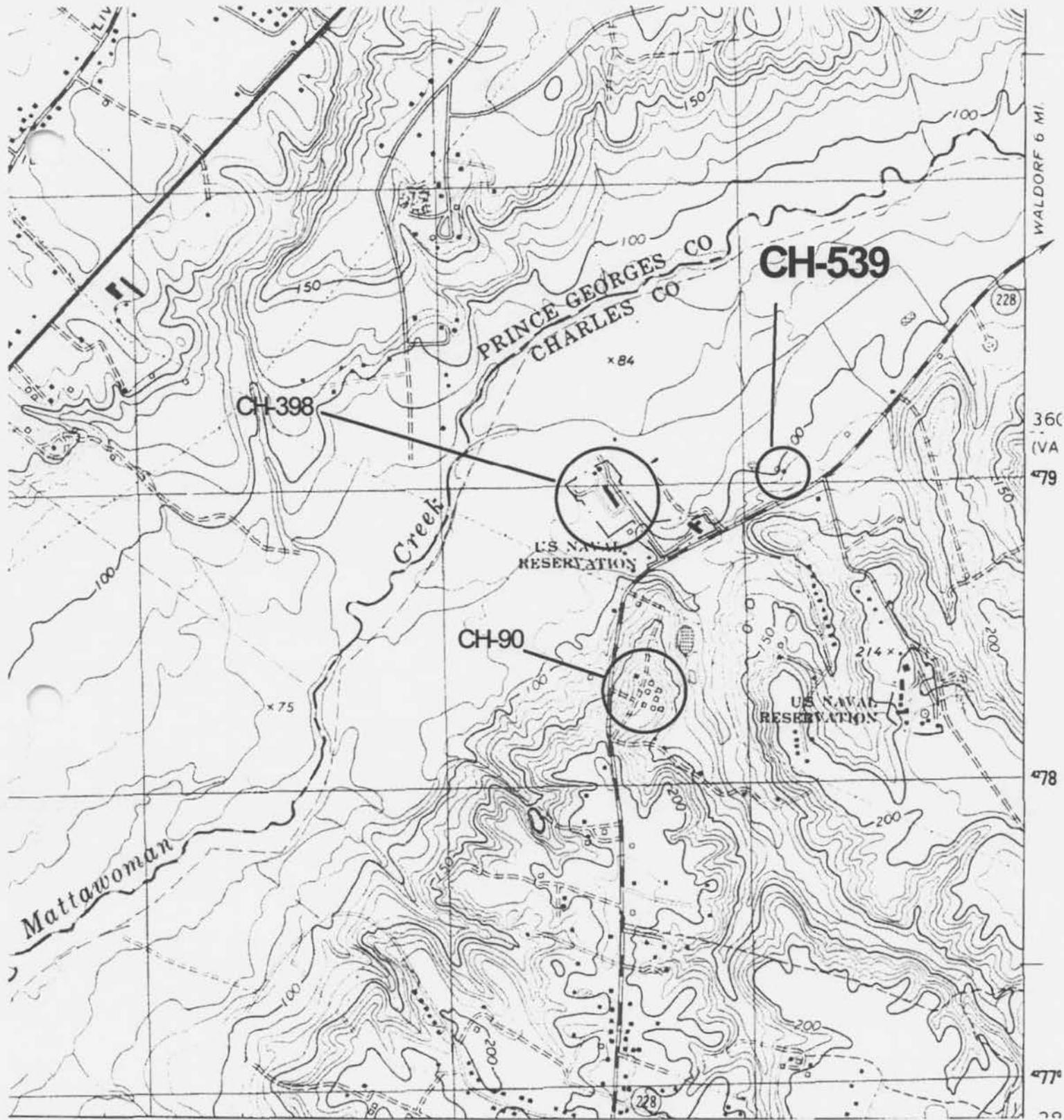
November 14, 1939: T. Henry & Laurelia C. Medley to  
J.E. & Mary E. Bracey  
92.5 acres  
"Part of Laurel Branch" "Strife"  
"Run At A Venture" & "Vineyard"  
Charles County Land Records  
Liber 71 Folio 280

RESOURCE  
SKETCH  
MAP  
3/99

MEDLEY FARMHOUSE  
8590 Bennsville Rd.  
CHARLES COUNTY, MD  
BERRY VIC.

CH-539





Medley Farmhouse  
Charles County, MD

CH-539

MOUNT VERNON, MD-VA QUAD



CH-539

MEDLEY FARMHOUSE  
CHARLES COUNTY, MD

K.G. SMITH

MARYLAND SHPO

FACADE - LOOKING NW

3/99

1 OF 7



CH-539

MEDLEY FARMHOUSE

CHARLES COUNTY, MD

K.G. SMITH

MARYLAND SHPO

LOOKING SW

2 OF 7

3/99



CH-539

MEDLEY FARMHOUSE

CHARLES COUNTY MD

K.G. SMITH / 3/99

MARYLAND SHPD

LOOKING EAST AT REAR OF NORTH WING

3 OF 7



CH-539

MEDLEY FARM HOUSE

CHARLES COUNTY, MD

K.G. SMITH / 3/99

MARYLAND SHPO

SW CORNER OF HOUSE

4 OF 7



CH-539  
MEDLEY FARMHOUSE  
CHARLES COUNTY, MD  
K.G. SMITH /3/99  
MARYLAND SHPO  
INTERIOR, MAIN STAIR  
5 of 7



CH-539

MEDLEY FARMHOUSE

CHARLES COUNTY, MD

K.G. SMITH / 3/99

MARYLAND SHPO

INTERIOR - 2ND FLOOR, NORTH WING

6 OF 7



CH-539

MEDLEY FARMHOUSE

CHARLES COUNTY, MD

K.G. SMITH / 3/99

MARYLAND SHPO

GARAGE - EAST ELEVATION

7 OF 7