

CAPSULE SUMMARY  
9030 Crain Highway (CH: 565)  
Charles County, Maryland

Built around 1880, this vernacular I-house illustrates late-19<sup>th</sup> century architectural trends in southern Maryland. The surviving agricultural outbuildings on the property reflect the continued importance of agriculture to the southern Maryland economy during the late-19<sup>th</sup> century. The dwelling and its outbuildings were erected for Philip Reed Wills, who owned the property from 1872 to 1938. Wills had inherited the land, historically part of Gilpin Hill, from his father, Francis R. Wills.

The wood frame I-house is set back from the road on a large grassy lot with scattered mature trees and a gravel driveway. The house is no longer occupied and two 1960s ranch houses lie to the north of the original building. The two-story, three-bay structure was built on a brick pier foundation. This was one of the only houses surveyed on the U.S. Route 301 Corridor with a brick pier foundation. It is clad in wood German siding and features 6/6 wood windows. An interior brick chimney with a corbeled cap rises from the standing seam metal, side gable roof. On the east side of the dwelling, there is a one-story attached kitchen. There are four historic outbuildings to the northeast of the dwelling, consisting of three barns and a shed.

MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST  
MD INVENTORY OF HISTORIC PROPERTIES

Inventory No. CH: 565

=====

1. Name of Property

=====

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

=====

2. Location

=====

street & number 9030 Crain Highway not for publication \_\_\_\_\_  
city or town Bel Alton vicinity \_\_\_\_\_ state Maryland code MD  
county Charles County code 17 zip code 20611

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3. State/Federal Agency Certification N/A

=====

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>5</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>5</u>	<u>2</u>			Total

Is this property listed in the National Register?

Yes \_\_\_\_\_ Name of Listing \_\_\_\_\_  
No X

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

Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: DOMESTIC Sub: Single Dwelling

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: VACANT/NOT IN USE Sub: \_\_\_\_\_

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

Vernacular

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)

Foundation Pier: Brick Stretcher Bond

Roof Side Gable: Standing Seam Metal

Walls Frame: Wood German Siding

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  
9030 Crain Highway  
Charles County, Maryland

Inventory No. CH: 565  
Page 4

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

Architecture

Agriculture  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Period of Significance 1880-1950  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Significant Dates c. 1880  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

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.)

Carley, Rachel. *The Visual Dictionary of American Domestic Architecture*. New York, NY: Henry Holt and Company, 1994.

Charles County Land and Will Records. Charles County Courthouse and the Maryland State Archives, Annapolis, Maryland.

McAlester, Virginia and Lee. *A Field Guide to American Houses*. New York, NY: Alfred A. Knopf, 1985.

Rivoire, J. Richard. *Homeplaces: Traditional Domestic Architecture of Charles County, Maryland*. Crownsville, MD: Maryland Historical Trust, 1990.

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10. Geographical Data  
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Acreege of Property 4.618 acres

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

The property at 9030 Crain Highway is designated as Parcel 22, Grid 19 as indicated on Map 55.

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

The building at 9030 Crain Highway has historically been associated with Parcel 22 since its construction circa 1880.

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11. Form Prepared By  
=====

name/title R. Weidlich and C. Novelli, Architectural Historians  
organization EHT Traceries, Inc. date July 9, 1999  
street & number 5420 Western Avenue telephone 301/656-5283  
city or town Chevy Chase state MD zip code 20815  
=====

12. Property Owner  
=====

name George S. Thompson  
street & number P. O. Box 56 telephone \_\_\_\_\_  
city or town Bel Alton state MD zip code 20611-0056  
=====

MARYLAND INVENTORY OF HISTORIC PROPERTIES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

Inventory No. CH: 565

Section 7 Page 1

9030 Crain Highway  
name of property  
Charles County, Maryland  
county and state

=====

Located at 9030 Crain Highway, the wood frame I-house is set back from the road on a large grassy lot with scattered mature trees and a gravel driveway. Planting fields and vegetable gardens lie to the south of the house. The house is no longer occupied and two 1960s ranch houses lie to the north of the original building. Constructed in the 1880s, the two-story, three-bay I-house was built on a brick pier foundation. This was one of the only houses surveyed on the U.S. Route 301 Corridor with a brick pier foundation. It is clad in wood German siding and features 6/6 wood windows. An interior brick chimney with a corbeled cap rises from the standing seam metal, side gable roof. On the east side of the dwelling, there is a one-story attached kitchen. There are four historic outbuildings to the northeast of the dwelling, consisting of three barns and a shed.

**EXTERIOR DESCRIPTION:**

The façade or south elevation is three bays in width. Five 6/6 windows with square-edged wood surrounds pierce the frame walls. There is a one-story, one-bay portico above the single leaf panel-and-light door. The front gable roof of the portico is clad in standing seam metal and is supported by square, wood posts. A one-story, one-bay attached kitchen features wood German siding, a 6/6 window, a central brick chimney and a side gable roof.

The east elevation contains a 6/6 window at each story, both of which are framed by square-edged wood surrounds. On the east elevation of the attached kitchen, there is a single leaf panel-and-light door and a 6/6 window.

The rear or north elevation faces the current driveway. On this elevation, there is a one-and-a-half story gable bay with a central interior brick chimney and a 6/6 window at each story. The rear elevation also contains a 6/6 window at both the first and second stories. Square-edged wood surrounds frame the window openings. The attached kitchen contains a 6/6 window.

A 6/6 window pierces the west elevation of the gable ell, while the gable end of the main house has no openings.

MARYLAND INVENTORY OF HISTORIC PROPERTIES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

Inventory No. CH: 565

Section 7 Page 2

9030 Crain Highway  
name of property  
Charles County, Maryland  
county and state

=====

**SUPPORTING BUILDINGS:**

There are four historic outbuildings to the northeast of the dwelling, consisting of three barns and a shed. The three barns, dating to the turn of the twentieth century, are set on concrete block pier foundations and are clad in vertical board wood siding. They have single leaf vertical board wood doors and are covered by front gable roofs; two of which are standing seam metal and the third is corrugated metal. Two of the barns have half-hipped, wrap-around additions. The one-story, one-bay shed is clad in vertical board wood siding and has a single leaf, vertical board wood door. Constructed at the end of the nineteenth century, the shed has a front gable, standing seam metal roof.

The two single dwellings to the north of the house were constructed in the 1960s. The one-story, three-bay masonry house features brick laid in six-course American bond and a side gable, asphalt shingle roof. The other single dwelling is one story in height and two bays in width. It is clad in aluminum siding and is covered by a front gable, asphalt shingle roof.

MARYLAND INVENTORY OF HISTORIC PROPERTIES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

Inventory No. CH: 565

Section 8 Page 1

9030 Crain Highway  
name of property  
Charles County, Maryland  
county and state

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Built around 1880, this vernacular I-house illustrates late-19<sup>th</sup> century architectural trends in southern Maryland. The surviving agricultural outbuildings on the property reflect the continued importance of agriculture to the southern Maryland economy during the late-19<sup>th</sup> century. The dwelling and its outbuildings were erected for Philip Reed Wills, who owned the property from 1872 to 1938. Wills had inherited the land, historically part of Gilpin Hill, from his father, Francis R. Wills.

A prevalent 19th-century house type across the mid-Atlantic region, the I-house was one room deep, two stories high, and three or five bays wide, with a central entry. I-houses usually had a porch on the front elevation and a kitchen wing in the rear, due to the narrowness of the main core. On the interior, a central passage separated the two rooms on the first floor, while the second floor contained either two or four bedchambers.

Following the Civil War and the demise of the plantation system, farm sizes in Charles County slowly decreased while the number of farms increased. Tenant farming and sharecropping were also practiced, but the availability of credit placed a greater proportion of Maryland's farmland under independent ownership than in other former slave states. While tobacco continued to serve as a major cash crop, southern Maryland farmers, especially those nearer the urban markets of Washington and Baltimore, began diversifying and produced more crops, such as grains and potatoes, for consumption in the cities. The opening of the Baltimore and Potomac Railroad in 1873 revitalized the practice of agriculture in southern Maryland. Beginning in 1873, the railroad operated a freight train to Baltimore once a week to carry local produce. In the 1880s, land values in southern Maryland rose rapidly in response to increased profits from agriculture. The Baltimore and Potomac Railroad, therefore, was responsible for agricultural prosperity in southern Maryland during the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries.

MARYLAND INVENTORY OF HISTORIC PROPERTIES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

Inventory No. CH: 565

Section 8 Page 2

9030 Crain Highway  
name of property  
Charles County, Maryland  
county and state

=====  
National Register Evaluation:

The building at 9030 Crain Highway is not eligible due to the fact that it does not meet National Register Criteria A, B, C, or D. Preliminary research has not revealed any association between the building and events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history (Criterion A) or the lives of persons significant in our past (Criterion B). Although the building provides an example of vernacular rural architecture, it is neither unusual nor distinguished; it does not represent the work of a master or display high artistic merit (Criterion C). There is no evidence that the property is likely to yield information important in history or prehistory (Criterion D). Thus, the property is not National Register-eligible.

MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST	
Eligibility recommended _____	Not Recommended <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Comments: _____ _____ _____	
Review, OPS: <u>[Signature]</u>	Date: <u>11/3/99</u>
Reviewer, NR Program: _____	Date: _____

MARYLAND INVENTORY OF HISTORIC PROPERTIES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

Inventory No. CH: 565

9030 Crain Highway  
name of property  
Charles County, Maryland  
county and state

=====

**HISTORIC CONTEXT:**

**Geographic Organization:** Western Shore

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

Industrial/Urban Dominance (1870-1930)  
Modern Period (1930-present)

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

Architecture, Landscape, and  
Community Planning  
Agriculture

**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: 565

9030 Crain Highway  
name of property  
Charles County, Maryland  
county and state

=====  
**Chain of Title:**

- June, 1872: Francis R. Wills to Philip Reed Wills  
Will Records of Charles County  
Liber 17 Folio 493
- February 1938: P. Reed Wills to Safe Deposit and Trust Company  
of Baltimore, Trustee  
Will Records of Charles County  
Liber 22 Folio 114
- August 13, 1943: Safe Deposit and Trust Company of Baltimore to  
W. Ernest and Lucy M. Offutt  
Land Records of Charles County  
Liber 79 Folio 4
- August 17, 1954: W. Ernest Offutt to Offutt Properties, Inc.  
Land Records of Charles County  
Liber 113 Folio 136
- January 31, 1957: Offutt Properties, Inc. to William E. Offutt,  
Jr. and Thomas J. Offutt, Trustees  
Land Records of Charles County  
Liber 128 Folio 288

Parcel 1

- November 14, 1966: William Offutt, Jr. and Thomas J. Offutt,  
Trustees and Morris M. Aein and Oscar Lavine,  
Trustees to George Thompson  
Land Records of Charles County  
Liber 185 Folio 320

Parcel 2

- December 3, 1965: William E. Offutt, Jr. and Thomas J. Offutt,  
Trustees to Morris M. Aein and Oscar Lavine,  
Trustees  
Land Records of Charles County  
Liber 178 Folio 540

MARYLAND INVENTORY OF HISTORIC PROPERTIES  
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Inventory No. CH: 565

9030 Crain Highway  
name of property  
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November 7, 1967: Morris M. Aein and Oscar Lavine, Trustees to  
Charles H. and Kathelia Grimes  
Land Records of Charles County  
Liber 192 Folio 132

April 14, 1992: Kathelia T. and Charles H. Grimes to George  
Thompson  
Land Records of Charles County  
Liber 1645 Folio 37

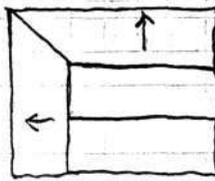
Parcels 1 and 2

April 22, 1997: George Thompson to George S. Thompson  
Land Records of Charles County  
Liber 2365 Folio 77

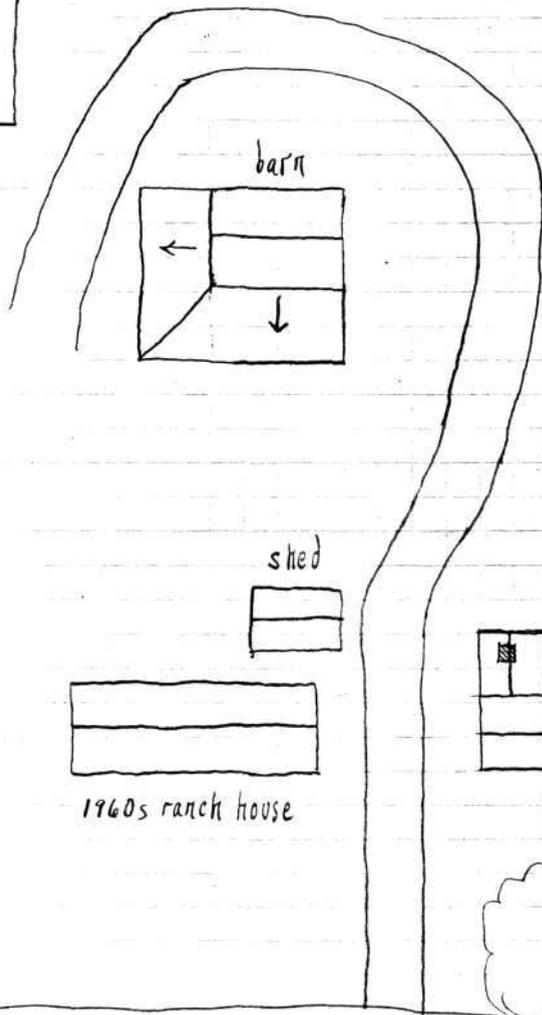
CH-565



1960s DWELLING



barn



barn

shed

1960s ranch house

Crain Highway

9030 Crain Highway CH: 565

Charles County  
Maryland

Resource Sketch Map Not Drawn to Scale 1999



CHARLES COUNTY FAIRGROUNDS  
CH-559

BEL ALTON SURVEY DISTRICT  
CH-560

9030 CRAIN HIGHWAY  
CH-565

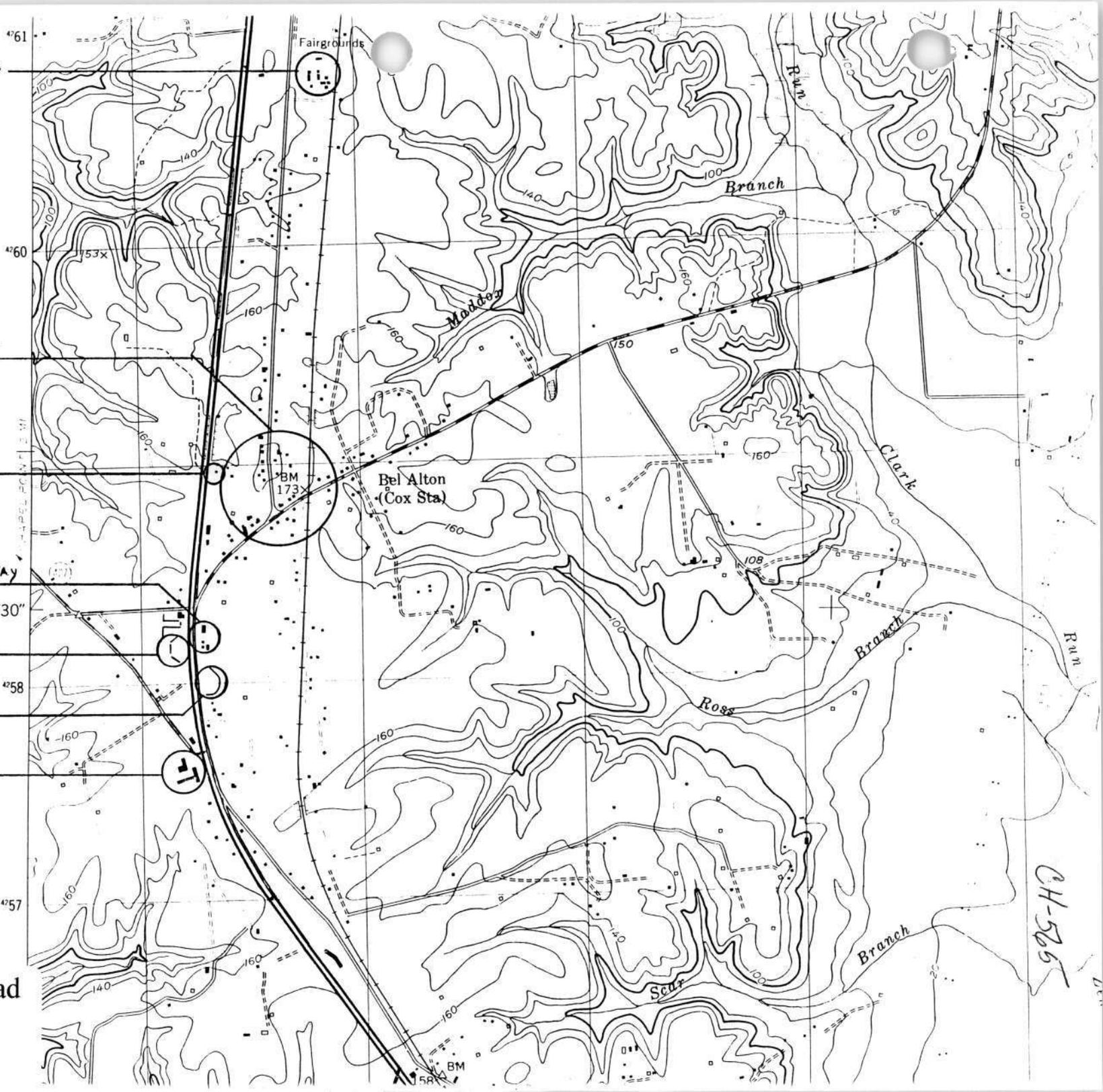
SERVICE STATION, CRAIN HIGHWAY  
CH-563

9295 CRAIN HIGHWAY  
CH-566

MOTEL, CRAIN HIGHWAY  
CH-561

BEL ALTON HIGH SCHOOL  
CH-562

Pope's Creek USGS Quad



CH-565



CH:565

9030 CRAIN HIGHWAY  
CHARLES COUNTY, MD  
TRAILERIES

JUNE 1999

MD SHPO

south elevation

1 of 7



CH: 565

9030 CRAIN HIGHWAY

CHARLES COUNTY, MD

TRACERIES

JUNE 1999

MD SHPO

*east elevation*

2 of 7



CH:565

9030 CRATH HIGHWAY  
CHARLES COUNTY, MD

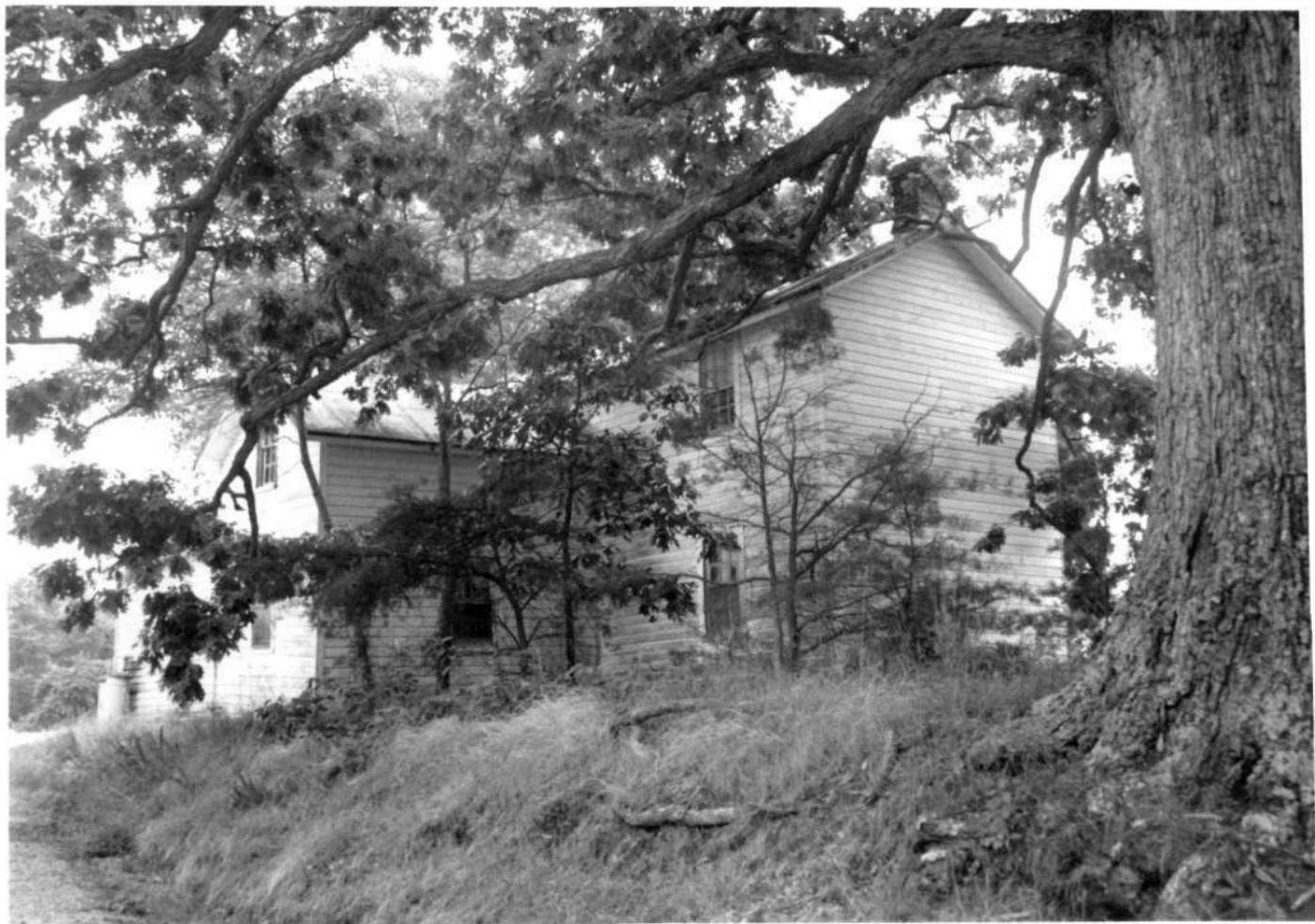
TRACERIES

JUNE 1999

MD SHPO

noth elevation

3 of 7



CH:565

9030 CRAIN HIGHWAY  
CHARLES COUNTY, MD

TRACERIES

JUNE 1999

MD SHPO

northwest corner

4 of 7



CH:565

9030 CRAIN HIGHWAY  
CHARLES COUNTY, MD

TRACERIES

JUNE 1999

MD SHPO

barns, looking north

5 of 7

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CH:565

9030 CRAIN HIGHWAY  
CHARLES COUNTY, MD  
TRACERIES  
JUNE 1999  
MD SHPO

barr

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CH:565

9030 CRAIN HIGHWAY  
CHARLES COUNTY, MD

TRACERIES

JUNE 1999

MD SHPO

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