

CH-620

## Reeves Chapel Site, Old St. Peter's Cemetery

### **Architectural Survey File**

This is the architectural survey file for this MIHP record. The survey file is organized reverse-chronological (that is, with the latest material on top). It contains all MIHP inventory forms, National Register nomination forms, determinations of eligibility (DOE) forms, and accompanying documentation such as photographs and maps.

Users should be aware that additional undigitized material about this property may be found in on-site architectural reports, copies of HABS/HAER or other documentation, drawings, and the “vertical files” at the MHT Library in Crownsville. The vertical files may include newspaper clippings, field notes, draft versions of forms and architectural reports, photographs, maps, and drawings. Researchers who need a thorough understanding of this property should plan to visit the MHT Library as part of their research project; look at the MHT web site ([mht.maryland.gov](http://mht.maryland.gov)) for details about how to make an appointment.

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***Last Updated: 11-21-2003***

**Old St. Peter's Cemetery**  
**CH-620**  
**Waldorf vic.**  
**Public**

**1825-1941**

The old cemetery of St. Peter's Church, located a short distance to the east of the present church, is significant in its association with the long history of Catholicism in southern Maryland. The cemetery, containing 50-100 gravestones, stands on a site which once included a frame place of worship known as "Reeves Chapel." The chapel was built in 1860 on land donated to the Catholic Church by Thomas Reeves, and was used by the congregation until 1941. The church site and cemetery are part of Upper Zachia Parish established in 1700, and located at and around the headwaters of Zachia Swamp.

# Maryland Historical Trust

## Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties Form

Inventory No. CH-620

### 1. Name of Property (indicate preferred name)

historic Old St. Peter's Cemetery (preferred)  
 other Reeves Chapel site

### 2. Location

street and number SE corner Gardiner Road & Poplar Hill Road  not for publication  
 city, town Waldorf  vicinity  
 county Charles

### 3. Owner of Property (give names and mailing addresses of all owners)

name St. Peter's Church  
 street and number 3320 St. Peter's Church Road telephone 301-843-2839  
 city, town Waldorf state MD zip code 20601

### 4. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Charles County Courthouse tax map and parcel: 16-9-120  
 city, town LaPlata liber 34 folio 492

### 5. Primary Location of Additional Data

- Contributing Resource in National Register District  
 Contributing Resource in Local Historic District  
 Determined Eligible for the National Register/Maryland Register  
 Determined Ineligible for the National Register/Maryland Register  
 Recorded by HABS/HAER  
 Historic Structure Report or Research Report at MHT  
 Other: See CH-20 St. Mary's Church

### 6. Classification

Category	Ownership	Current Function	Resource Count			
			Contributing	Noncontributing		
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	1	0		
<input type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce/trade				
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> defense				
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> site		<input type="checkbox"/> domestic				
<input type="checkbox"/> object		<input type="checkbox"/> education				
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> funerary				
		<input type="checkbox"/> government				
		<input type="checkbox"/> health care				
		<input type="checkbox"/> industry				
		<input type="checkbox"/> landscape				
		<input type="checkbox"/> recreation/culture				
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> religion				
		<input type="checkbox"/> social				
		<input type="checkbox"/> transportation				
		<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress				
		<input type="checkbox"/> unknown				
		<input type="checkbox"/> vacant/not in use				
		<input type="checkbox"/> other:				
			<b>Number of Contributing Resources previously listed in the Inventory</b>			
			0			

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## 7. Description

Inventory No. CH-620

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### Condition

<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated
<input type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> altered

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Prepare both a one paragraph summary and a comprehensive description of the resource and its various elements as it exists today.

Old St. Peter's Cemetery is located on the southeast corner of Gardiner Road and Poplar Hill Road in the northeastern section of the Charles County. Currently, the site consists of approximately three and one half acres of open, level grassy terrain containing 50-100 graves. While the north and west sides of the site are bordered by public roads, the south and east are bordered by forested land. The graves have a somewhat sprawling appearance and are not enclosed by either fence or hedge. Most gravestones consists of marble slabs with a few obelisk monuments scattered throughout.

## 8. Significance

Inventory No. CH-620

Period	Areas of Significance	Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> health/medicine	<input type="checkbox"/> performing arts	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> invention	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-1999	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment/ recreation	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> religion	
<input type="checkbox"/> 2000-	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> ethnic heritage	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science	
	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/ settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> social history	
	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning		<input type="checkbox"/> maritime history	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation	
	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation		<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other:	

<b>Specific dates</b>	1825-1941	<b>Architect</b>	Unknown
<b>Construction dates</b>	1825-1941	<b>Builder</b>	Unknown

Evaluation for:

National Register

Maryland Register

not evaluated

Prepare a one-paragraph summary statement of significance addressing applicable criteria, followed by a narrative discussion of the history of the resource and its context. (For compliance reports, complete evaluation on a DOE Form - see manual.)

The Old St. Peter's Cemetery, located a short distance to the east of the present church is significant in its association with the early history of Catholicism in southern Maryland. The cemetery, containing 50-100 gravestones, stands on a site which once included a frame place of worship known as "Reeves Chapel" which was built in 1860 and used by the congregation until 1941 when the new church was completed. The church site and cemetery are part of Upper Zachia Parish established in 1700, and located at and around the headwaters of Zachia Swamp.

Charles and St. Mary's Counties are considered the cradle of Catholicism in the United States. In 1634, the first permanent European settlers in Maryland arrived on the Ark and Dove at St. Clement's Island (St. Mary's County). Consisting primarily of Roman Catholic's seeking religious freedom, they came ashore and conducted Mass which today is commemorated annually at the Blessing of the Fleet. It was in St. Mary's that Governor Lord Calvert, himself a Catholic, established the first refuge of religious freedom in the United States.

Southern Maryland continued to attract Catholics throughout the colonial period despite growing religious intolerance. Upper Zachia was the third parish to be established in Charles County. It's formation in 1700 is noteworthy in that just eight year's earlier, in 1692 Maryland officially barred Catholics from all civil rights and established the Church of England as its official religion. Despite this, many Catholics remained in the area and continued to worship in small, private chapels or in private homes. Religious freedom was not secured until the Maryland Constitution of 1775.

During the 18th and early 19th centuries the congregation of Upper Zachia parish was served by the Jesuit Fathers from St. Thomas Manor (CH-6) and later by Piscataway Parish. As the congregation grew, the need for a larger place of worship became evident. Far-sighted parishioner Thomas Reeves, who had no direct heirs, deeded his property to the Catholic Church. In 1860, "Reeves Chapel" was built at the present site (see historic photo) located on the north side of Poplar Hill Road. The Reeves residence was for some time used as a Rectory. Reeves, who died in 1825, is buried in the old cemetery.

Old St. Peter's Cemetery was finally closed in 1941 and replaced by the current cemetery attached to the new church lot.

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## 9. Major Bibliographical References

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Inventory No. CH-620

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## 10. Geographical Data

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Acreage of surveyed property 3.67  
Acreage of historical setting 3.67  
Quadrangle name Hughesville Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

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### Verbal boundary description and justification

The property is and has historically been associated with Charles County Property Tax Map 16, Grid 9, Parcel 217

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## 11. Form Prepared By

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name/title	Cathy Currey/Historic Site Surveyor		
organization	Charles County Planning Department	date	10/11/2000
street and number	200 Baltimore Street	telephone	301-396-581
city or town	LaPlata	state MD	zipcode 20646

The Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties was officially created by an Act of the Maryland Legislature to be found in the Annotated Code of Maryland, Article 41, Section 181 KA, 1974 supplement.

The survey and inventory are being prepared for information and record purposes only and do not constitute any infringement of individual property rights.

return to: Maryland Historical Trust  
DHCD/DHCP  
100 Community Place  
Crownsville MD 21032  
410-514-7600

MARYLAND INVENTORY OF HISTORIC PROPERTIES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

Inventory No. CH-620

Section 9 Page 1

Old St. Peter's Cemetery  
name of property  
Charles County, MD  
county and state

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**Major Bibliographic References:**

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

Charles County Land Records, Charles County Courthouse, LaPlata, Maryland.

Klapthor, Margaret Brown. The History of Charles County, Maryland.  
Charles County Tercentenary, Inc., LaPlata, MD. 1958.

RESOURCE SKETCH MAP

Date: 11/12/99

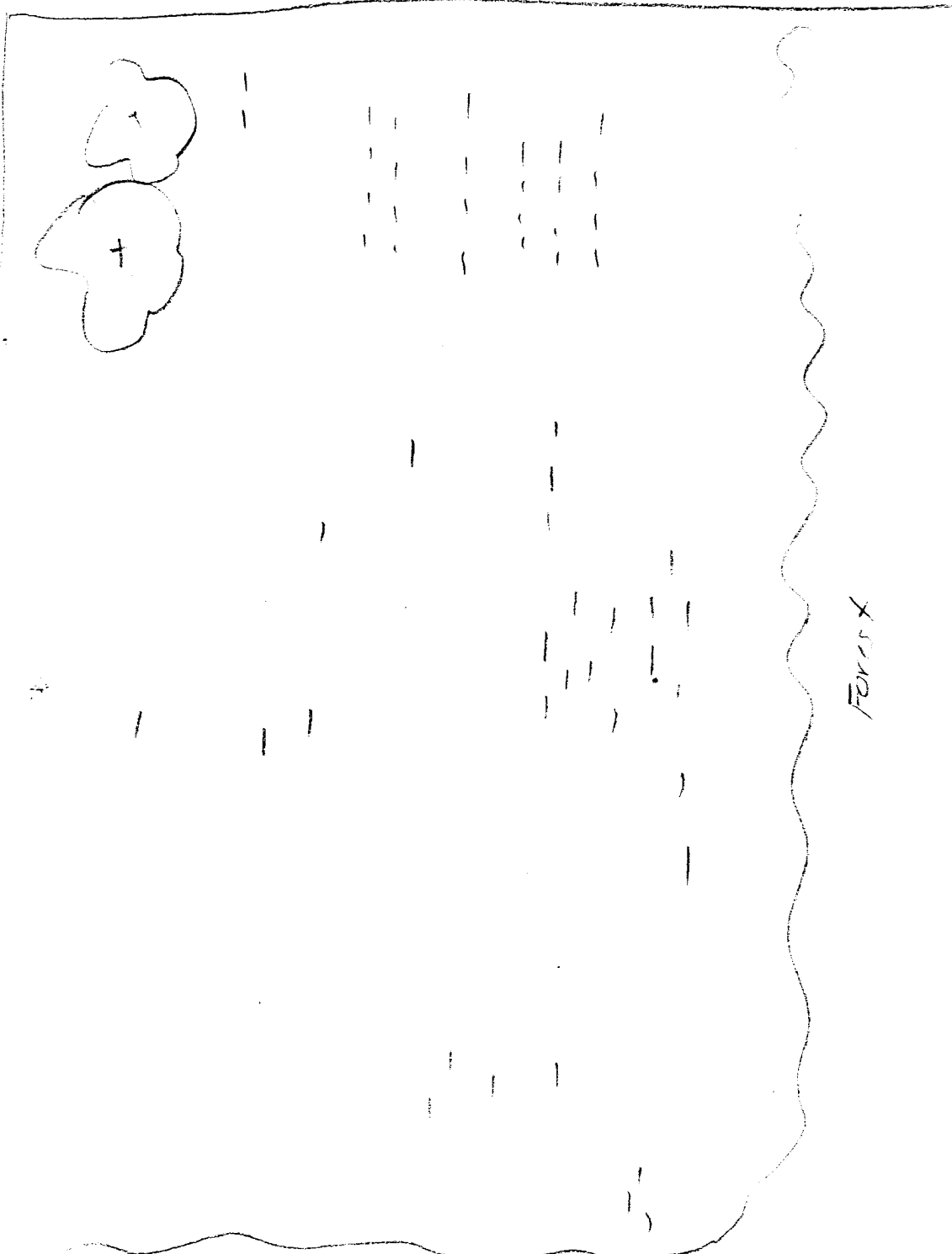
North arrow:



Name: Old St. Peter's Cemetery  
Address: SE Corner Poplar Hill & Gardiner Rd  
CH - 620  
Charles County, Maryland

POPLAR HILL ROAD

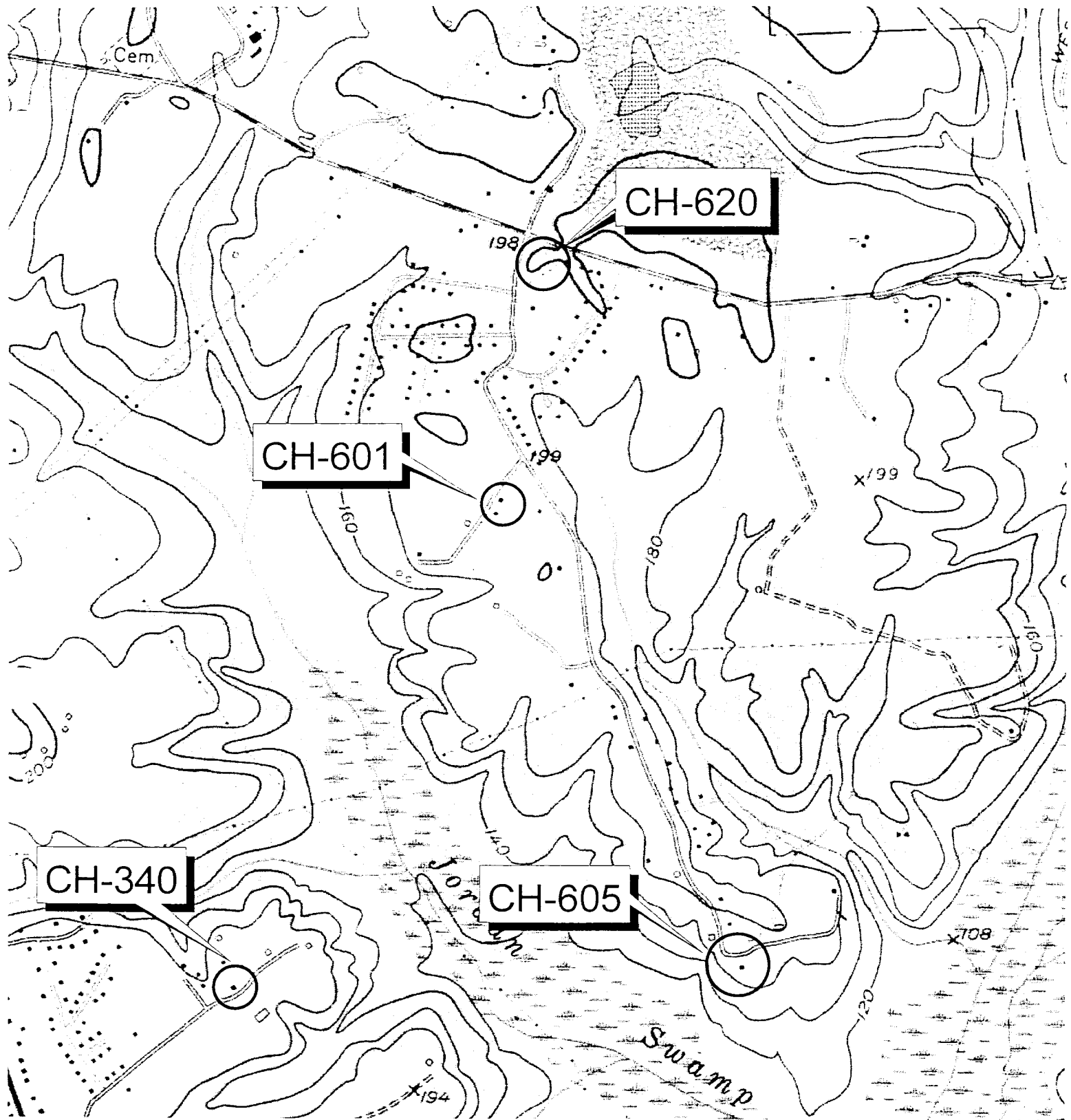
GARDINER ROAD



Forest

Not drawn to scale





Old St. Peter's Cemetery (Reeves Chapel Site)  
CH-620  
Charles County, MD  
Hughesville, MD Quad





CH-620  
OLD ST. PETER'S CHURCH CEMETERY  
CHARLES COUNTY, MD  
K.G. SMITH  
11/99  
MARYLAND SHPO  
LOOKING NE  
1 OF 3



CH-620

OLD ST. PETERS CHURCH CEMETERY  
CHARLES COUNTY, MD

K.G. SMITH

11/99

MARYLAND SITPO  
LOOKING EAST

2 OF 3



CH - 620

OLD ST PETER'S CHURCH CEMETERY  
CHARLES COUNTY, MD

K. G. SMITH

11/99

MARYLAND SHPO

HISTORICAL PAINTING OF ST. PETER'S CHURCH 1860-1972

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