

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

F-3-231

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

(F-3-42)

Monocacy Battlefield)

Name of Property

Frederick County, MD

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bridge. A rope ferry operated at this older site from the 18th century and its location is marked on property boundaries, which show a notch to accommodate ownership of the crossing place (included in Thomas Farm resource count and detailed description).

The Frederick Junction, a triangular connection of the east-west Baltimore & Ohio (B&O) Railroad main line with the Frederick City spur line running north, is located on the north/west bank of the Monocacy River, within a horseshoe curve of the river. Still an active segment of the CSX Railroad, the tracks and right-of-way are well maintained. The main line of the B&O continues west, passing under a concrete overpass constructed for Maryland Route 355 (formerly the Georgetown Pike), turning southwest toward Harpers Ferry, West Virginia. Just east of the spur junction, the B&O main line crosses the Monocacy River, passing over a trestle bridge to the east bank of the river. The bridge is wide enough for two tracks, but carries just one. The bridge has stone piers and a steel span with wooden decking. Along the tracks in this area grew the small community most commonly known as Araby (included in Railside Properties resource count and description). The railroad is single tracked here, with a siding on the east side of the Monocacy River. There were blockhouses erected on each side of the river to protect the crossing during the Civil War; neither is still standing and the exact location of the blockhouse site on the west side of the river is yet unknown.

Resource Count:

4 contributing structures:

- Current bridge (1930)
- Current road (Rt. 355; 1828/1930 alignment)
- Concrete overpass
- Railroad trestle, railroad bed and tracks.

1 contributing site:

- Blockhouse site

The Best Farm (Hermitage): F-3-231

The Best Farm, or *Hermitage*, is located at the northwest side of the battlefield. Although the Monocacy National Battlefield calls this place the Best Farm for occupants at the time of the battle (and generations before and after), it was named *L'Hermitage* by the French family that assembled the tract in the 1790s, and has throughout its subsequent history been known as the Hermitage. The farm is located on Route 355, known historically as the Washington Road or Georgetown Pike, west of the Monocacy River and the B&O Railroad. The buildings are accessed by a lane leading in a westerly direction from Route 355 and are situated about ¼ mile

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west of the highway. The property, now containing 273.69 acres, came to the National Park Service in 1993, from the family that had owned it since 1835.

The buildings currently on the property include a multi-part stuccoed stone, brick and log house, the oldest intact part of which dates from the 1790s; a log and stone secondary dwelling dating from the late 18th century; a mid 20th century dairy barn; a 19th century frame wagon shed; a log outbuilding/smokehouse and various 20th century sheds and outbuildings. Set apart from this complex and to the west, is a hip roofed stone barn, dating from the late 18th century. The main house faces east, toward the Georgetown Pike. The stone lower story of the secondary dwelling was also oriented toward the east, however the log second story addition faces west toward the main house. To the west of the buildings is I-270. The interstate highway forms a visual and physical barrier for the property. However, the land that made up this farm historically extended beyond the interstate highway to the Buckeystown Pike (MD Route 85), and could be accessed from that road as well as the Georgetown Pike. Near the east edge of the property is the B&O Railroad and beyond that a flat area of flood plain along the west bank of the Monocacy River. The farm consists mostly of cropland on rich and fairly level bottomland nestled within a bend in the Monocacy River. Although most of the land lies west of Route 355, a portion is on the east side. Tree cover forms a band along the river, otherwise most of the land is open and used for hay and grain.

Main House: The main house of the Hermitage is a multi-part, L shaped stone, brick, log and frame building. The stone and brick portions are stuccoed and the log and frame sections are covered with various wood sidings, lapped or German. Stucco was applied to the house originally and the 1835 tax assessment described the house as roughcast. The current stuccoed surface dates from the mid 20th century. However, remnants of earlier stucco, smooth surfaced with regular struck lines to resemble cut block can be seen where later stucco is damaged.

The front or east elevation of the house has five bays with a central entrance. However, the southern three bays were built as a unit and are separate from the northern two bays. The northern two bays have windows set at a lower level, and the roof span is much broader, creating a break in the roofline particularly visible from the south and west. The house is constructed into a slight slope, which drops away to the south, causing the three southern bays to have a raised basement. There is also a prominent watertable at the top of the foundation of the south section. Windows in the south section have wide mortised and tenoned frames with pegged joints, ovalo trim and six over six-pane sash. The front door has six low relief panels and is hung beneath a four light transom. A gabled entrance porch, which appears to date from the mid 20th century, replaces the original entrance shelter. An unusual feature of the house is the chimney placement. For the south section, the chimney is centered in the west elevation, rising along the middle of the back wall. For the north portion, the chimney extends from the roof ridge, placed centrally in

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the width of the span. The roofing material is standing seam sheet metal, applied in 1998. Exterior architectural evidence (also affirmed by interior investigation) shows that the south section was constructed in the 1790s; the north section appears to have been reconstructed in the 1820s from some earlier stone structure. The present gables of the 1790s section were created in brick, probably at the time of the 1820s renovations. Architectural evidence indicates that the gables were constructed to replace an original hipped roof over the 1790s section.

The west elevation reveals the way in which the house grew over time with various additions and extensions. In the 1790s south section there are three windows, one in a stair landing midway between stories, and a door exiting from the first floor stair hall. The north section juts several feet to the west, extending beyond the back wall of the 1790s section. It has two south facing windows, one at each story. Both of these sections are of stone construction, fully covered with stucco.

Extending to the west from the back of the 1820s section are two wooden sections, the first a two story section of frame infill and the second, at the extreme west end, a one story log kitchen which was raised to two stories with frame construction. The frame infill section has a chimney extending up its south elevation, and the log part had an inside gable end chimney with an exposed brick back. Clues from the interiors of these back sections suggest that the frame infill section dates from the 1860s, and the log kitchen from the 1790s. The upper part of the log section, the framed second story, probably dates from the late 19th century.

Log Outbuilding/Smokehouse: Separated from the log section and to its west is a log outbuilding/smokehouse covered with vertical siding. This is a one-story gable roofed building. It was stabilized by NPS in 2003.

Secondary Dwelling: The second house on the *Hermitage* farm is one that has been called variously "slave quarters" and "frontier log cabin." At this stage of the research nearly all physical evidence as well as the archaeological record produced no features or artifacts dating from earlier than the 1790s. The secondary house with its stone-walled first story and its log upper level may well have been built in just one construction phase, or in a very tightly compressed time period. Original mortar in the stone wall and that surrounding the chinking of the logs appears to be the same, and joists from the attic floor and main floor appear to be the same. Only the stone chimney extended with brick and the first finish coat of plaster in the stone section suggest that the stone first level predated the log second floor. Documentary evidence on the other hand indicates that the plantation adjoining the ferry was inhabited early, perhaps as early as the 1740s. The current description addresses the secondary house as built in two phases, but in the final analysis, it may well be entirely a 1790s building.

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The secondary house is a two-part dwelling consisting of a one-story stone hall and parlor plan building measuring approximately 18x36 feet to which a log second story with two chambers was added in the 1790s. We have not yet determined how long it stood prior to construction of the log section, although it was a short time at most. There was a cellar under the south room, the parlor. The two-room house was built of local limestone laid in neat flat courses. It has a stone chimney in its north gable end, along with a window, no openings on the west elevation, a single window on the south elevation and two doors, one into each room on the east elevation. A partition divides the stone part into two rooms. Later, a brick chimney was added at this partition, giving each room a fireplace. The original fireplace in the stone chimney system has an arched opening, generally indicative of pre-1790 construction in central Maryland. Sometime after the stone section was completed, but also in the 18th century, a log second story was added. This addition was west-facing. The east elevation of the log section has two windows placed close together near the center of the wall. The south gable elevation has one window and another within the gable. The west elevation has two windows opposing those in the east wall, plus a door into the south room. There was also a second door in the west wall into the north room, which gave the west elevation a symmetrical door, window, window, door fenestration pattern. The north door was covered over with lath and plaster on the interior and with the current early 20th century narrow gauge siding on the exterior. A shed-roofed stoop or porch with stairs to provide access to the southern-most west side entrance appears in a ca. 1924 photograph. At the time the log second story was added, the stone chimney was extended with brick to accommodate the higher elevation and the central chimney and additional fireplaces were constructed. The interior of the log section contains two rooms, with separate access to the first floor and to the exterior.

The dwelling accommodated humans until the 1960s when it passed into decline, used for storage and to shelter farm animals, rabbits and chickens.¹ The building has been vacant since the 1990s when the National Park Service acquired it.

The Stone Barn: One of the most unusual features of this very extraordinary complex is the hipped roof stone barn set well behind the other buildings on the farm. It looks nothing like the barns that are common to the region, which typically had a ramp or bank at the back and a cantilevered forebay. These indigenous barns are generally assumed to be German in origin and are often referred to in contemporary records as "Swisser Barns." The *Hermitage* barn has no ramp, no forebay, and no upper threshing floor. It is a rectangular structure with its broad sides facing east and west. The front and rear stone walls are interrupted by broad openings that extend from the ground fully to the roof. These openings are centrally located in the east and west walls. The upper portions of these open areas are currently filled in with vertical board

¹ Monocacy National Battlefield, interview with Kenneth Wiles, 1999.

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siding. The siding infill may have been constructed like this originally, or there may have been doors across these openings at one or more levels. In the north end wall, there is a window, with a segmentally arched top. Seams in the stone work indicate that this north end opening was once a door and was partially enclosed. There are no windows or other openings in the south elevation.

Phase II archeological investigations completed in 2003 revealed "a mortared stone foundation with the same orientation and axis as the stone barn" extending southward from the south elevation and measuring 25' x 35'. The structure is interpreted as a "shed or dependency."² On the east elevation, there are two vertical vent slits. The walls are constructed of narrow flat courses of local stone with leveling courses at intervals. Stones protrude at intervals from the corners of the north elevation, which are possibly tie rocks for a proposed addition although there is no evidence (archeologically) that anything was ever constructed. The barn is set on a slightly raised flat area.

The barn until recently was used to shelter cattle. Its original use was more likely for crop storage. The overall form of the barn with the hipped roof and stone construction on leveled land is indicative of French traditions. It certainly dates from the Vincendiere occupation of the property, probably the 1790s, and is likely one of the improvements that made the 1798 tax assessment for the property so high in comparison with other assessments in that year. It is possibly the building that is referred to as the "old barn" in David Best's Civil War damage claim document.

Frame Wagon Shed: Situated approximately halfway between the house and the stone barn is a frame wagon shed and corncrib. A shed extension to the north side was removed in 2001. The wagon shed is of timber frame construction and rests on limestone foundation piers. Its gables are set east and west and are open at both ends allowing for an equipment drive-through. The shed is covered with vertical board siding with space between the boards to allow air circulation through the corncrib. The boards are more snugly placed at the gable ends and there are doors within the gable to allow access to the storage area within. This shed is typical of a once numerous outbuilding type on central Maryland farms and probably dates from the mid or late 19th century. The building was stabilized in 2001/2002.

Equipment Shed: A modern concrete block equipment shed is located between the Wagon Shed and Dairy Barn.

² The feature was designated as "Structure 1." Beasley, ed., "Archeological Overview and Assessment and Identification and Evaluation Study of the Best Farm," Monocacy National Battlefield, 2004 (draft).

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Dairy Barn: A concrete block dairy barn with a gambrel roof that dates from the 1930s or '40s. A concrete block milk house and concrete silo are attached to the barn.

Modern Well House: A small concrete block, shed-roofed well house stands over the well shaft.

Other Buildings: There was a frame bank barn that apparently replaced one that was destroyed during the Battle of Monocacy. According to NPS information, the barn blew down after 1991 but before the Park Service acquired the property in 1993. A large aluminum-sided pole barn was then erected in place of the bank barn.

Archeological Features: In addition to the stone barn shed dependency cited above, Phase II archeological investigations in 2003 located the remains of an icehouse just to the south of the pole barn/bank barn location, a cistern and a privy were found in the southwest house yard, and the indicated remains of the slave village (quarters) in the field (designated Field E) east of the main building complex.³ (Arch. Report, 2004 (draft), Chapters 8 and 18).

Resource Count:

5 contributing buildings:

- Main House
- Secondary House
- Log Outbuilding/smokehouse
- Wagon Shed
- Stone Barn

2 contributing sites:

- Civil war associated action site (Confederate and Union encampments on property in September, 1862 and Confederate occupation and artillery location July 1864)

Archeological features associated with the historic farmstead:

- Stone barn shed dependency
- Cistern
- Privy
- Icehouse
- Slave village

4 non-contributing buildings:

- Dairy Barn

³ Joy Beasley, ed., "Archeological Overview and Assessment and Identification and Evaluation Study of the Best Farm," Monocacy National Battlefield, 2004 (draft), Chapter 18.

See

Monocacy Battlefield
~~F-3-142~~ F-3-042
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 Catoctin Center for Regional Studies,
 Frederick Community College
 July 2009

Addendum

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In addition to the military history significance of Monocacy National Battlefield, the houses still extant on the battlefield grounds are also historically significant.

L'Hermitage (Best Farm) (F-3-231)

The 273.69-acre property known as the "Best Farm" is named not for its owner, but for the family which tenanted it for several generations before and after the battle. The property has been known at various times as the Hermitage or South Hermitage, Resurvey on Locust Level, and, originally, Locust Level. The farm complex currently includes a ca.-1790s multi-part stuccoed brick-and-log house with 9 rooms, an 18th-century log and stone secondary dwelling with 4 rooms, a 19th-century frame wagon shed, and a log smoke house. The farm at one time extended from the Buckeystown Pike to the west bank of the Monocacy River.

Rights to the area were originally acquired by Daniel Dulaney in 1740 as the land grant *Locust Level*. In 1795, he sold 457 acres of the property to Mademoiselle Victoire Pauline Marie Gabrielle Vincendiere, a nineteen-year-old refugee from San Domingo. She bought an additional 291 acres adjoining it in 1798 and named the farm *L'Hermitage*. According to Maryland law, importation of slaves was illegal, but French refugees were allowed to bring personal servants with them. The Frederick County Land Records holds several "Certifications of Negroes" filed by Vincendiere to allow her to keep her slaves, including one "named Saint Louis about fourteen years old whom I keep for my own service." By 1800, according to census records, there were 90 slaves living on the farm, likely owned largely by the many other French refugees offered a home there, including her parents and siblings. However, the number of African Americans living on the farm quickly decreased, to 48 slaves and 4 free blacks in 1820. According to local tradition, General Lafayette was a distant relative of the Vincendieres and visited *L'Hermitage* in 1824, along as well as the home of Col. John McPherson, who owned the *Araby* farm nearby. In 1827 Vincendiere sold the farm and moved into Frederick City, where the census records her with 6 slaves and 2 free blacks in 1830, 4 slaves in 1840, and 1 free black in 1850.

John Brien, who purchased L'Hermitage from Vincendiere, was a real estate developer and owned the adjoining plantation, *Arcadia*. He was dead by 1834, when his property was sold to John H. McElfresh. In the 1840 census, McElfresh is listed as owning two slaves. He died in

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1841, and the property was split between his four children; by 1852, his two sons had died, leaving the farm to his two married daughters, Mary Anna Kunkel and Ariana Trail.

The Trail family did not live on the property, but leased it out to David Best starting in 1852 or 1853. The 1850 census lists Best as owning 7 slaves: a 56-year-old male, a 25-year-old male, a 17-year-old male, a 14-year-old female, an 11-year-old male, a 9-year-old female, and a 6-year-old male. In 1860, he owned six slaves: a 20-year-old male, a 19-year-old female, an 18-year-old male, a 15-year-old male, a 15-year-old female, and a 4-year-old male. By 1870 Best was a retired farmer at 65. His son John T. Best is listed as a separate household on the same property, with one mulatto farmhand. After this, the Best family household was not listed with any black servants. They left the property by 1910, when ownership of *L'Hermitage* transferred from Charles E. Trail to his son, Charles B. Trail. The property remained in the Trail family until the National Park Service bought it in 1993.

Araby Farm

The *Araby* farm was known as the C. K. Thomas farm at the time of the battle. It includes a brick house, a frame "swisser" barn, a corncrib and wagon shed, and various other outbuildings. The house has a brick water table, indicating 18th-century construction. An 1856 sale bill also mentions a stone tenant house.

Araby consists of a land grant called *Wett Work* and part of the *Altogether* grant. James Marshall lived on *Wett Work* in the late 1700s and early 1800s. The 1800 census listed him as owning 16 slaves, and in his will, he wrote, "And Whereas I have sundry Negroes and other Personal Property, my will is that such Negroes and other Personal Property (except what is yet herein to be excepted) Shall be sold at Public Sale." He left a seven-year-old mulatto girl, Maria, to his daughter Mary Anne, to be freed once Maria reached the age of 25; Maria's mother Jane was freed and given twenty pounds, a bed and bedclothes, and a new suit of clothes. Marshall's son William inherited "one Negro named Joe;" his daughter Chloe inherited "a Negro boy named Jack;" and his daughter Eleanor inherited two slaves, Israel and Ned.

Colonel John McPherson had consolidated most of *Wett Work* and part of the *Altogether* property, owned by Maryland governor Thomas Johnson, by his death in 1829. His son John

F-3-4a

APPROXIMATE SITE PLAN

THE HERMITAGE (BEST FARM)

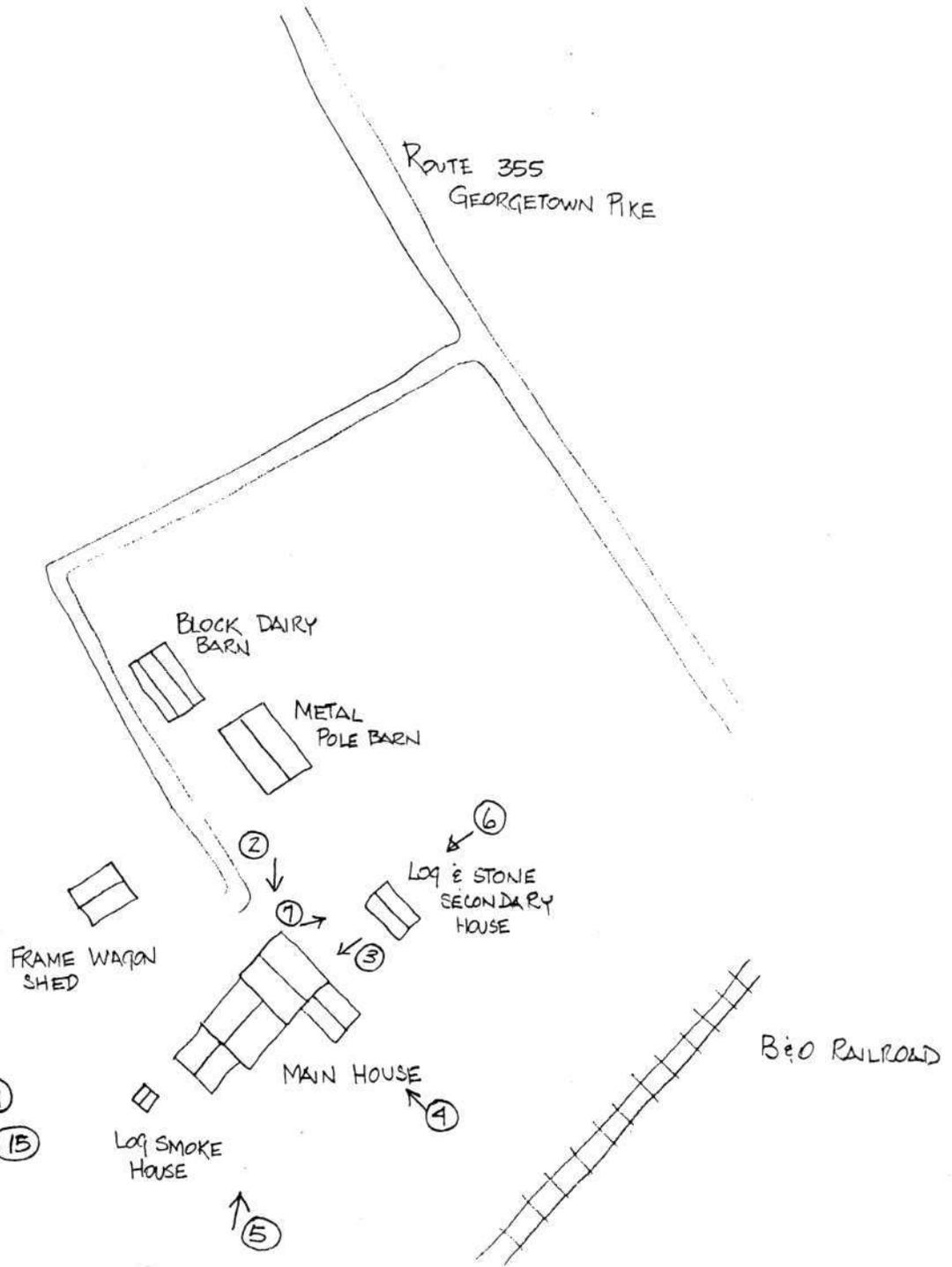
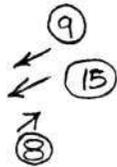
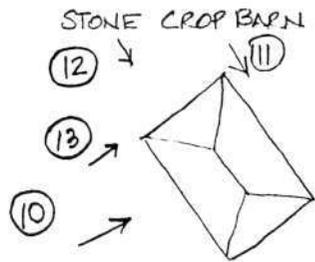
MONOCACY NATIONAL BATTLEFIELD



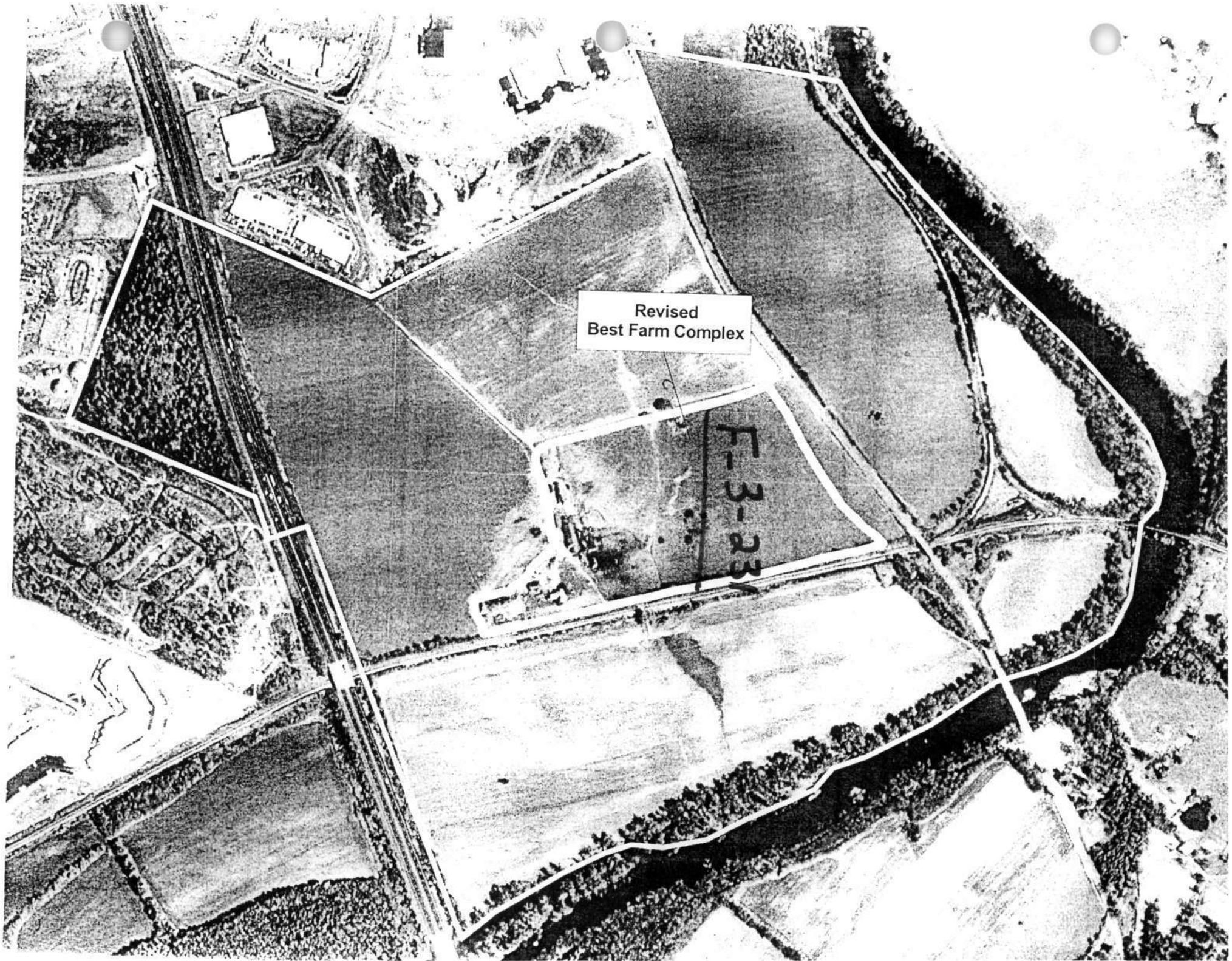
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NOT TO SCALE



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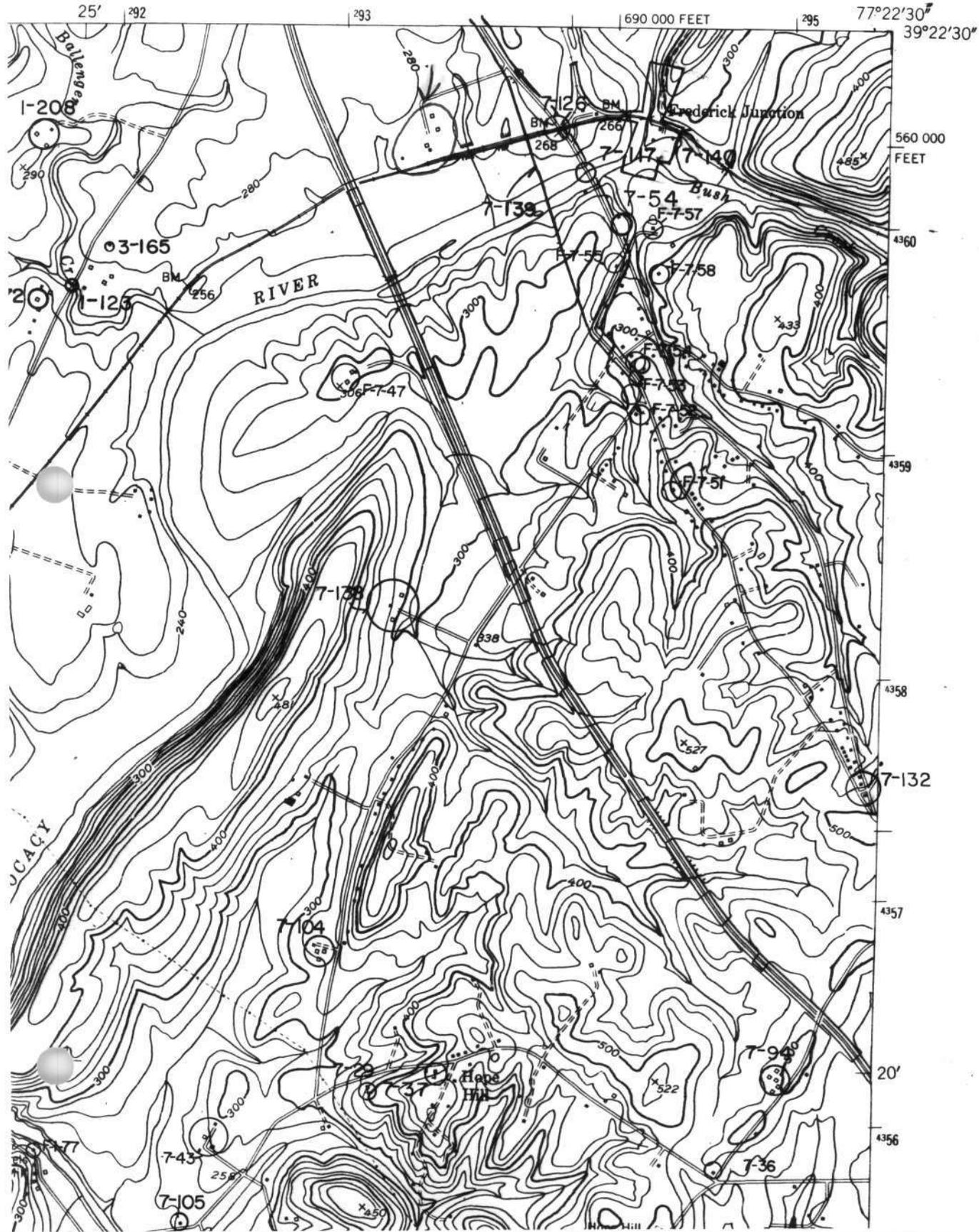
Revised
Best Farm Complex

F-3-23

COUNTY

BUCKEYSTOWN QUADRANGLE
MARYLAND-VIRGINIA
7.5 MINUTE SERIES (TOPOGRAPHIC)

5562 IV NE
(WALKERSVILLE)



26007



1 24 '97

BEST, J.T. / TRAIL, C.E., PROPERTY; LANE
FREDERICK CO.

F-3-231

J. FELDMAN

1/24/97

NPS/NCR

LOOKING SW

Roll 11/19



1 24 '97

BEST, J.T. / TRAIL, C.E., PROPERTY; HOUSE

FREDERICK CO.

J. FELDMAN

1/24/97

NPS/NCR

E FACADE

F-3-231

Roll 10/20



BEST, J.T. / TRAIL, C.E., PROPERTY; LOG HOUSE

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FREDERICK COUNTY

J. FELDMAN

2/10/97

NPS/NCR

LOGGING E/NE

Roll 13, #9



1 24 '97

BEST, J.T. / TRAIL, C.E., PROPERTY; STONE BARN

FREDERICK CO.

F-3-231

J. FELDMAN

1/24/97

NPS/NCR

E SIDE

Roll 9/22



BEST, J.T. / TRAIL, C.E., PROPERTY; WAGON SHED/
CORN CRIB

F-3-231

FREDERICK Co.

J. FELDMAN

2/10/97

NPS / NCR

W SIDE

Row 13/07



BEST, J.T./TRAIL, C.E., PROPERTY; SMOKEHOUSE

FREDERICK Co.

F-3-231

J. FELDMAN

1/24/97

NPS/UCR

N SIDE

Roll 10/12