

Survey # F-4-126  
Dahlgren Road (Old Hagerstown Road)  
Street Address: From Frostown Road to US Alternate 40  
Town, State: Middletown vicinity, MD  
private    , public X

Approximate date September 14, 1862

This property is included in the survey of resources associated with the Civil War Battle of South Mountain, which occurred on September 14, 1862. Dahlgren Road is a 1 1/2 lane gravel road which runs north from its intersection with U.S. Alt 40 just east of the crest of South Mountain at Turner's Gap. The road joins Frostown Road at the base of the mountain on the east side, approximately 1 mile north of U.S. Alt. 40. From intersection to intersection Dahlgren Road runs approximately 2 miles in length. Beginning at the intersection with Alternate 40, Dahlgren Rd. travels northeasterly along the eastern side of the mountain and passes the knoll upon which Confederate batteries were placed. The road then curves to the north and then sharply east again as it begins descending the mountain. As the road descends along an easterly projecting ridge, a ravine opens up on the left. Here Hooker's I Corps struggled up the steep sides of the ravine to overtake Confederate defenses along Dahlgren Road. The road is significant for the direct and primary role it played in the Civil War Battle of South Mountain. It was strategic to both the Confederate defense of Turners Gap and to the Union attempt to dislodge them. Beyond the gap to the west, the Confederate Army of Northern Virginia was divided and vulnerable to Union attack.

Photo Reference: Photo #

Form Prepared By: Paula S. Reed, PhD and Edith B. Wallace  
Woodward-Clyde  
200 Orchard Ridge Drive  
Gaithersburg, MD 20878

Date: February, 1998

# Maryland Historical Trust State Historic Sites Inventory Form

Survey No. F-4-126

Magi No.

DOE  yes  no

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

historic Old Hagerstown Road, Frostown Road

and/or common Dahlgren Road

## 2. Location

street & number From US Alternate 40 to Frostown  not for publicationcity, town Middletown  vicinity of congressional district 6

state Maryland county Frederick

## 3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
<input type="checkbox"/> district)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> park
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational	<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> transportation
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> not applicable	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other:

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

name Frederick County Roads Department

street &amp; number telephone no.:

city, town Frederick state and zip code MD 21701

## 5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Frederick County Courthouse Liber

street &amp; number 100 West Patrick Street Folio

city, town Frederick state MD

## 6. Representation in Existing Historical Surveys

title National Register Nomination Form, South Mountain Battlefields F-4-17, A,B,C

date February, 1986  federal  state  county  local

depository for survey records Maryland Historical Trust

city, town Crownsville state MD

## 7. Description

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Condition		Check one	Check one
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved      date of move _____
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		

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

Dahlgren Road is a 1 1/2 lane gravel road which runs north from its intersection with U.S. Alt 40 just east of the crest of South Mountain at Turner's Gap. The road joins Frostown Road at the base of the mountain on the east side, approximately 1 mile north of U.S. Alt. 40. From intersection to intersection Dahlgren Road runs approximately 2 miles in length.

Beginning at the intersection with Alternate 40, Dahlgren Rd. travels northeasterly along the eastern side of the mountain and passes the knoll upon which Confederate batteries were placed. The road then curves to the north and then sharply east again as it begins descending the mountain. As the road descends along an easterly projecting ridge, a ravine opens up on the left. Here Hooker's I Corps struggled up the steep sides of the ravine to overtake Confederate defenses along Dahlgren Road.

Mistakenly referred to as Old Hagerstown Road by various commanders in the Official Records of the Civil War, Dahlgren Rd. was originally a part of Frostown Road. Dahlgren Road was renamed when the county took on the maintenance of the road in the 1950s. Prior to that time the road was a dirt track/trail depending on which part of the road one was on. Dahlgren Road is now graded with fine gravel and is considered passable in all weather.

The road passes through woodland although, historically as it descended along the ravine, the landscape was open and farmed with fields demarcated with stone fences. Occasionally stone fences line the edge of the road as well. Historic properties such as the Rent, O'Neil and Haupt places were accessed from this road. Today, a few modern houses and summer places are reached from this road as well.

# 8. Significance

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Period	Areas of Significance	Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation	
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other(specify)	

Specific dates September 14, 1862

Builder/Architect

check: Applicable Criteria:  A  B  C  D  
and/or

Applicable Exceptions:  A  B  C  D  E  F  G

Level of Significance:  national  state  local

Prepare both a summary paragraph of significance and a general statement of history and support.

The Old Hagerstown Road is significant for the role it played in the Civil War Battle of South Mountain. The road was strategic to both the Confederate defense of Turners Gap and to the Union attempt to dislodge them. Beyond the gap to the west, the Confederate Army of Northern Virginia was divided and vulnerable to Union attack.

The Old Hagerstown Road (Dahlgren Road) was quickly recognized by the Confederate commanders to be essential to the defense of Turner's Gap. The road served as a source of cover, an artery for the movement of troops and artillery, and, in the end, as a line of retreat. For the Union commanders, the Old Hagerstown Road, from the east looking west, and the farm road (now Frostown Road) which looped north and west, were access to the left flank of the Confederate defense.

On September 13, 1862, under orders from General D.H. Hill, Colonel A.H. Colquitt arrived at Turner's Gap with his brigade and Captain Lane's battery. Seeing the movements of Pleasanton's Cavalry below and the infantry in the distance, Colquitt's artillery "were thrown rapidly into position at the most available points, and the infantry disposed upon the right and left of the road [somewhat downhill and east of the crest]. The enemy made no further efforts to advance, and at dark withdrew from my immediate front."<sup>1</sup> The following day the battle was imminent, this time Colquitt's "Twenty-third of Georgia and Twenty-eighth Georgia, were put in position on the left of the turnpike, under cover of a stone fence..."<sup>2</sup> (Colquitt's Stone Wall, F-4-130) They would face the fury of Gibbon's brigade approaching from the National Pike below later that day. Their position behind the stone fence would prove impossible to break, keeping the Old National Road open for the Confederate retreat during the night.<sup>3</sup>

Late in the afternoon of September 14, at the northeastern end of the Old Hagerstown Road, where Dahlgren Road now intersects Frostown Road, Union General Joseph Hooker's I Corps was arriving to prepare an attack on the left flank of Hill's line of defense. The rugged terrain ahead of them would be

<sup>1</sup>Jay Luvaas and Harold W. Nelson, eds., *The US Army War College Guide to the Battle of Antietam, The Maryland Campaign of 1862*, p. 48, and from O.R., Vol XIX, Part I, p.1052.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid. p. 1052.

<sup>3</sup>Stephen, W. Sears, *Landscape Turned Red*, New York: Ticknor and Fields, 1983, p. 142-3.

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their greatest disadvantage. While Hooker divided his men, General John P. Hatch on the left following the fields along the Old Hagerstown Road and General George G. Meade to the right, Hill's reinforcements were being funnelled down the Old Hagerstown Road from the Gap, to face the Union threat. The Alabama Brigade commanded by Brigadier General Rodes was sent to protect the hills divided by the ravine to the extreme left. Spread out along the fields in front of the Old Hagerstown Rd. paralleling the ridge were the brigades of Kemper, Garnett, Jenkins, and Evans.<sup>4</sup> (see map "Battles and Leaders, II, p.568) Brigadier General Richard B. Garnett stated, "I was sent, by a narrow lane bearing to the left, to a higher position...and forming my line of battle, which I did by filing my command to the right through an open field. My right rested in thick woods, which descended quite abruptly in front, and my left in a field of standing corn."<sup>5</sup>

The battle in the fields in front of the Old Hagerstown Road raged into darkness. While Hatch's forces pushed the Confederates back through the cornfields, the road remained protected from the woods behind, it was too late for the Federals to push on and take the Gap.<sup>6</sup> During the night of September 14, the Confederate defenders retreated back to the main road and on to Sharpsburg.

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<sup>4</sup>James V. Murfin, *The Glean of Bayonettes*, New York: Thomas Yoseloff, 1965, p. 178.

<sup>5</sup>War College Guide, p.55, from O.R., Vol XIX, Part I, pp.894-95.

<sup>6</sup>Sears, "Fire on the Mountain." p. 139.

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## HISTORICAL CONTEXT:

### MARYLAND COMPREHENSIVE PRESERVATION PLAN DATA

Geographic Organization: Piedmont

Chronological/Developmental Period(s):

Agricultural-Industrial Transition, A.D. 1815-1870

Prehistoric/Historic Period Theme(s):

Military

Resource Type:

Category: Structure

Historic Environment: Rural

Historic Function(s) and Use(s):

Transportation/Public Road

Known Design Source: None

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## 9. Major Bibliographical References

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### Books

- Hartwig, D. Scott, Civil War Regiments, A Journal of the American Civil War, Vol 5, #3, "Antietam, the Maryland Campaign of 1862". Article entitled "My God, Be Careful! The Morning Battle of Fox's Gap", Savas Publishing Co., Campbell, CA, 1997.
- Luvaas, Jay and Harold W. Nelson eds., The U.S. Army War College Guide to the Battle of Antietam, The Maryland Campaign of 1862, Harper Collins Publishers, Washington, 1987.
- Murfin, James V., The Gleam of Bayonets, The Battle of Antietam and Robert E. Lee's Maryland Campaign, September 1862, Thomas Yoseloff, New York, 1965.
- Roth, Dave, "The General's Tour of South Mountain", Blue & Gray Magazine, Dec-Jan, 1986-87.
- Sears, Stephen W., "Fire On The Mountain, The Battle of South Mountain September 14, 1862", Blue & Gray Magazine, Dec-Jan, 1986-87.
- Sears, Stephen W., Landscape Turned Red, The Battle of Antietam, Ticknor and Fields, New York, 1983.
- Swinton, William, Army of the Potomac, Smithmark Publisher, New York, 1995.
- U.S. War Department, The War of Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies, Series I, Vol XIX, Parts I and II, Government Printing Office, Washington, 1880-1901.

### Manuscripts

- Frye, Dennis, National Register Nomination Form, South Mountain Battlefields F-4-17-A,B,C, 1986.

### Maps

- The Official Military Atlas of the Civil War, Plate 27, Gramercy Books, New York, 1983.
- Engineers Maps, 1862, National Register Nomination, South Mountain Battlefields F-4-17-A,B,C, 1986.
- Macombe Map, 1861.



# TURNER'S GAP

(SEPTEMBER 14, 1862)

F-4-126 - Old Hagrestown Rd.

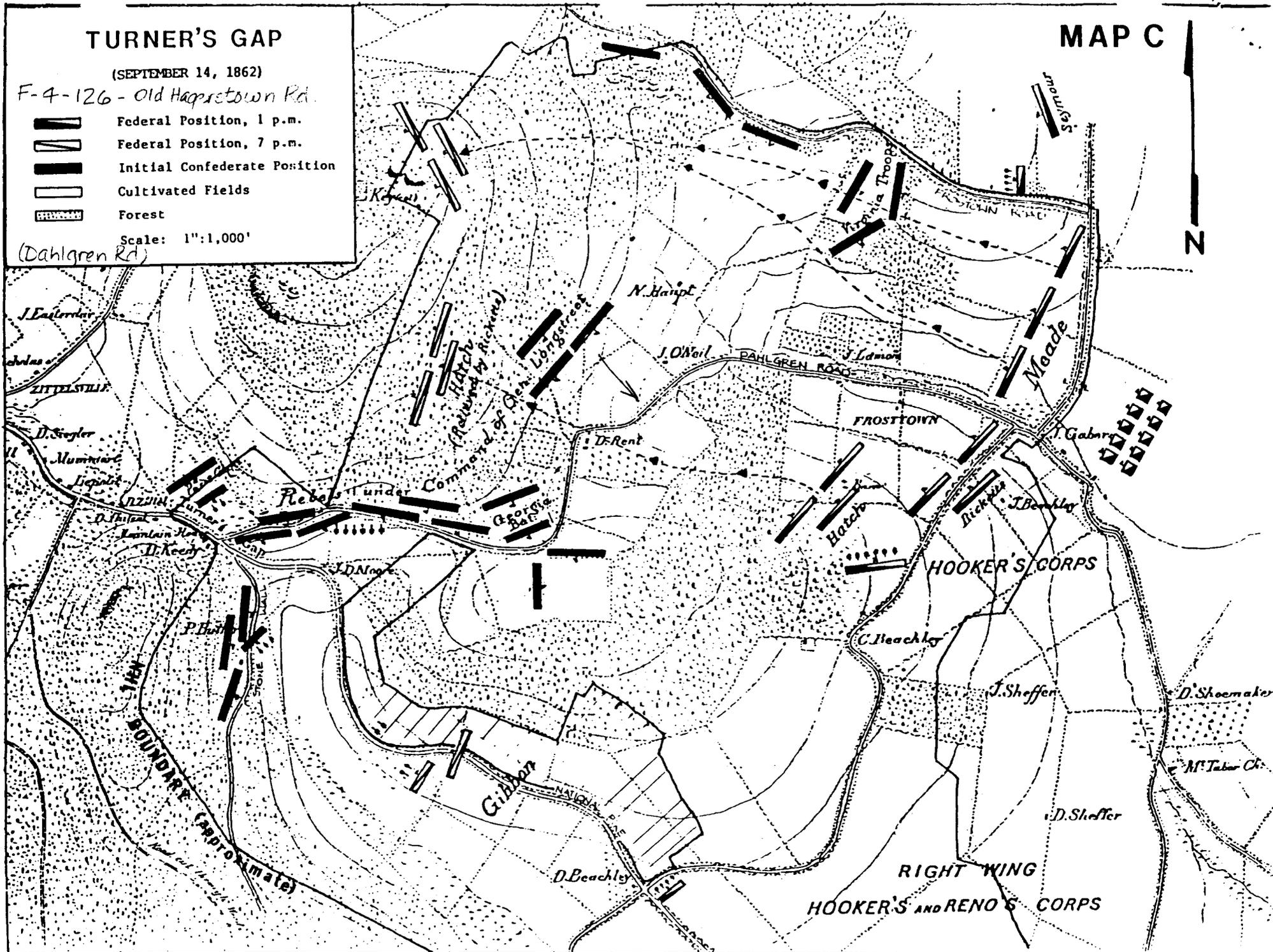
-  Federal Position, 1 p.m.
-  Federal Position, 7 p.m.
-  Initial Confederate Position
-  Cultivated Fields
-  Forest

Scale: 1"=1,000'

(Dahlgren Rd)

## MAP C

N



343 11 SW  
(FUNKSTOWN)

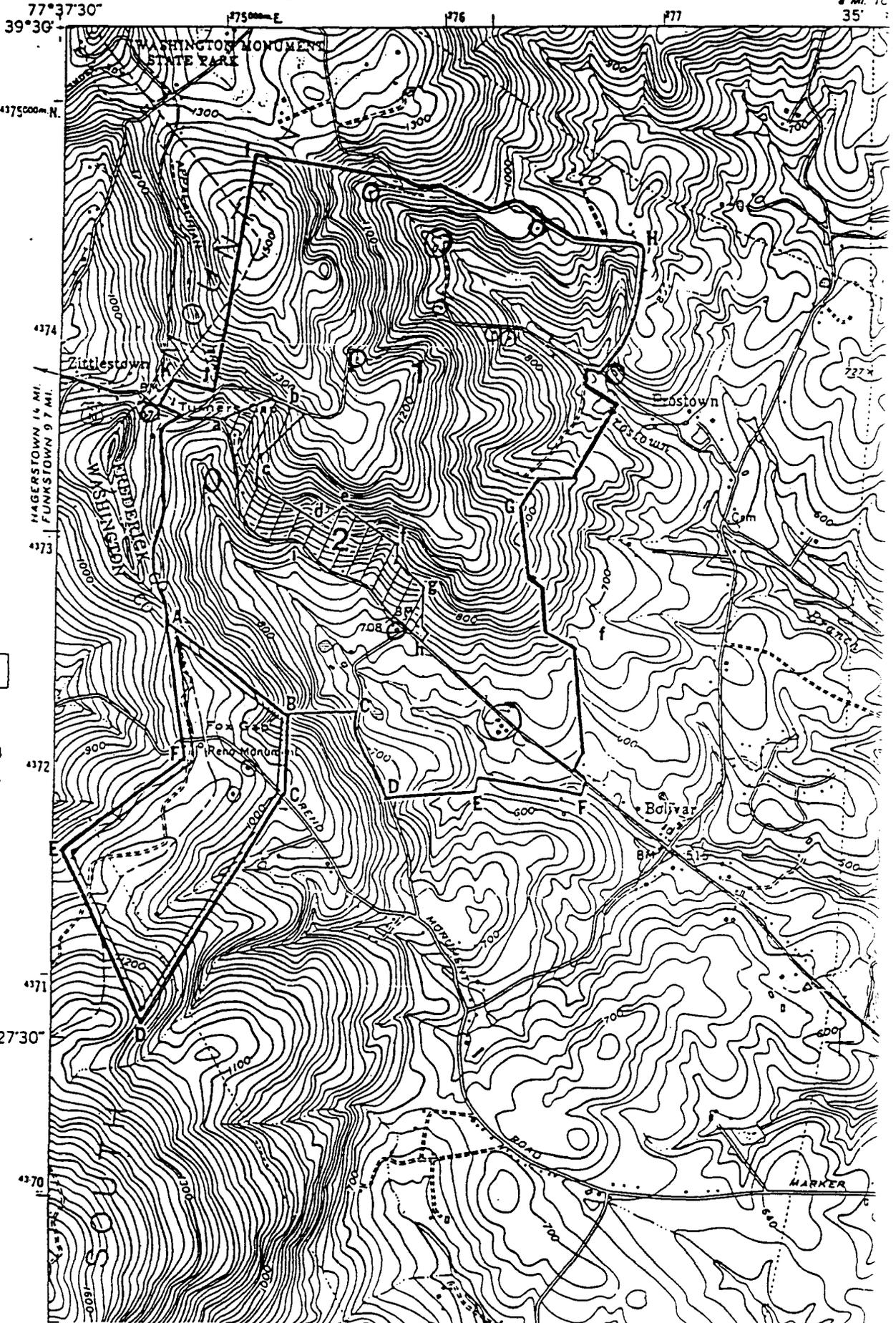
UNITED STATES  
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
GEOLOGICAL SURVEY



10-6

F-4-126

MA  
8 MI. TC  
35'



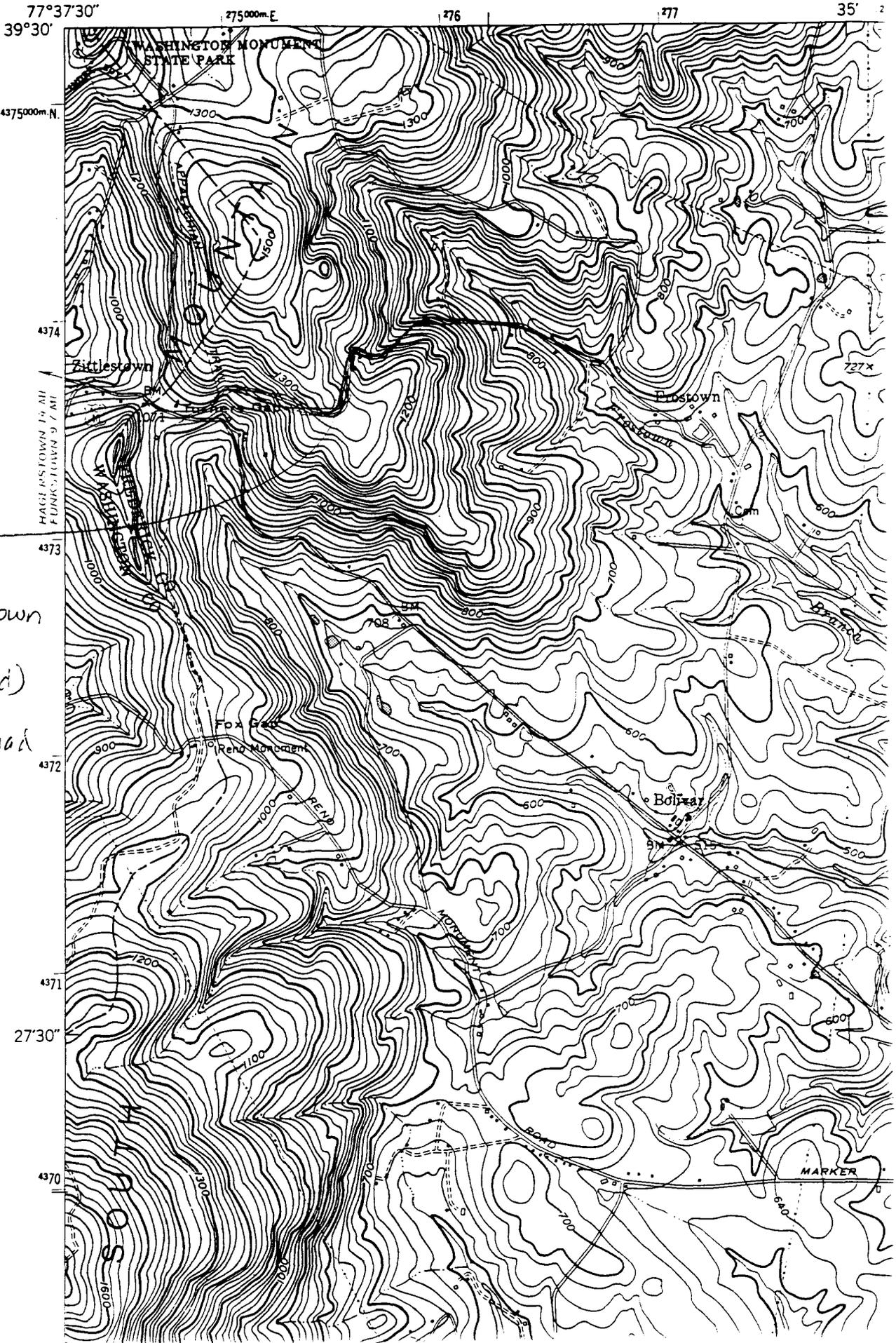
**FOX'S GAP**

UTM REFERENCES

- A: 18/274784/4372623
- B: 18/275333/4372196
- C: 18/274312/4371863
- D: 18/274662/4370813
- E: 18/274287/4371588
- F: 18/274875/4372000

43 11 SW  
UNKSTOWN

UNITED STATES  
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
GEOLOGICAL SURVEY



F-4-126  
Old Hagerstown  
Road  
(Dahlgren Rd)  
Middletown Quad



F-4-126

Dahlgren Rd. Viewshed (location of Batteries)

Frederick Co., Maryland

Edith B. Wallace

4 November 1997

Maryland SHPO

view south from Dahlgren Rd  
across Turner's Gap to Lambs Knoll at Fox's Gap

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F-4-126

Frederick Co., Maryland  
Edith B Wallace

4 November 1997

Maryland SHPO

view west on Dahlgren Rd toward Gap  
stone wall remnants on north side

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Dahlgren Rd, stone wall  
Frederick Co, Maryland

Edith B. Wallace

4 November 1997

Maryland SHPO

view west, near D. Rent House

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