

HO-1095

B. & O. Railroad Realignment

Patapsco Valley State Park, McKeldin Area, east of Marriottsville Road

Public and private

Description:

The B. & O. Railroad Realignment is located .6 miles east of Marriottsville in the Patapsco Valley State Park, McKeldin Area. It consists of the abandoned roadbed of part of the old Baltimore and Ohio Railroad main line, with the former riverbed, now diverted, to the north of the roadbed, the present roadbed north of the old river bed, and the current river bed north of the rail line. The current railroad bed includes a stone wall to divert the re-routed river and a stone culvert that is probably reused. The center of the wall consists of very large blocks of granite rubble that are roughly squared and stacked without any mortar. The northwest end of the wall has mostly collapsed, but the southeast end is intact. It is built of medium-sized granite ashlar set in mortar, and this wall passes behind the larger rubble stones. Near the southeast end of the realignment is a stone culvert for one of the streams, built of rock-faced granite ashlar, with wing walls that angle away from the embankment and step down. The top of the center wall is several large stones that have a rounded front face and are set slightly proud of the wall. There is a brick barrel vault, with stone voussoirs.

Significance:

The B. & O. Railroad Realignment was probably built in the early 1850s in order to straighten a loop of the old main line that swung south around a horseshoe turn in the Patapsco River. Rather than re-build two bridges across the river, the B. & O. built a new channel for the river bed and re-routed it. In order to protect the new track alignment, a low stone retaining wall was built paralleling the track where the river was turned into its new channel. This must have proved insufficient, and a new wall of larger stones was constructed in front of the older one. The old roadbed probably had two culverts for streams that it passed over, and these were apparently dug out, disassembled, and probably reused. The B. & O. Railroad Realignment is indicative of one aspect of the environmental degradation caused by the industrial revolution. Apparently, the railroad found it cheaper to move the river than to continue to bridge it with two structures in such a short span. No doubt, the old bridges had begun to deteriorate and/or were no longer sufficient for increasingly larger and heavier locomotives.

Maryland Historical Trust

Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties Form

Inventory No. HO-1095

1. Name of Property (indicate preferred name)

historic

other B. & O. Railroad Realignment

2. Location

street and number _____ not for publication

city, town Marriottsville vicinity

county Howard

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

name State of Maryland Dept. of Forests and Parks / CSX Transportation, Inc.

street and number 580 Taylor Avenue telephone _____

city, town Annapolis / Jacksonville state MD / FL zip code 21401 /

4. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Howard County Courthouse liber 292 folio 538

city, town Ellicott City tax map 5 tax parcel 15 tax ID number _____

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: _____

6. Classification

Category	Ownership	Current Function	Resource Count
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	Contributing
<input type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce/trade	Noncontributing
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> defense	0 buildings
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> site		<input type="checkbox"/> domestic	1 sites
<input type="checkbox"/> object		<input type="checkbox"/> education	2 structures
		<input type="checkbox"/> funerary	0 objects
		<input type="checkbox"/> government	3 Total
		<input type="checkbox"/> health care	
		<input type="checkbox"/> industry	
		<input type="checkbox"/> landscape	
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> recreation/culture	
		<input type="checkbox"/> religion	
		<input type="checkbox"/> social	
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> transportation	
		<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	
		<input type="checkbox"/> unknown	
		<input type="checkbox"/> vacant/not in use	
		<input type="checkbox"/> other:	
			Number of Contributing Resources previously listed in the Inventory
			0

7. Description

Inventory No. HO-1095

Condition

excellent deteriorated
 good ruins
 fair altered

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

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The old roadbed extends in an arc to the southwest of the current roadbed and is a flat grassy path with areas of excavated hillside with exposed granite on the south side. There are two small streams that bisect the old roadbed, where there must have been stone culverts, but there is no evidence of them today. To the north of the old roadbed, between it and the present roadbed, the ground slopes steeply down to a flat, marshy area. This is caused in part because the western-most spring does not pass under the present roadbed.

The present roadbed runs in a straight line northwest to southeast between either end of the old roadbed; this section of track is approximately .25 miles long and is built on a high embankment. At the northeastern end of the present roadbed is a low stone retaining wall that parallels the tracks and is set about 15 feet from them. The ends of the wall are angled away from the tracks. The center of the wall consists of very large blocks of granite rubble that are roughly squared and stacked without any mortar. The northwest end of the wall has mostly collapsed, but the southeast end is intact. It is built of medium-sized granite ashlar set in mortar, and this wall passes behind the larger rubble stones. The current river runs southwest toward this wall then turns to the southeast short of the wall and parallels the tracks for about .15 miles, passing through a man-made waterfall (McKeldin Falls) and into a broad shallows, where the river then turns to the north, away from the tracks.

Near the southeast end of the realignment is a stone culvert for one of the streams, built of rock-faced granite ashlar, with wing walls that angle away from the embankment and step down. The top of the center wall is several large stones that have a rounded front face and are set slightly proud of the wall. There is a brick barrel vault, with stone voussoirs.

8. Significance

Inventory No. HO-1095

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 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 checked="" 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 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> transportation
	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation		<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other: _____

Specific dates N/A Architect/Builder N/A

Construction dates c. early 1850s

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 projects, complete evaluation on a DOE Form – see manual.)

The B. & O. Railroad Realignment was probably built in the early 1850s in order to straighten a loop of the old main line that swung south around a horseshoe turn in the Patapsco River. Rather than re-build two bridges across the river, the B. & O. built a new channel for the river bed and re-routed it. No evidence of the original bridge abutments could be found, and they were likely dismantled and the stone reused. In order to protect the new track alignment, a low stone retaining wall was built paralleling the track where the river was turned into its new channel. This is one possible location for the stone of the old bridge abutments. This must have proved insufficient, and a new wall of larger stones was constructed in front of the older one. The old roadbed probably had two culverts for streams that it passed over, and these were apparently dug out, disassembled, and probably reused. Only one of them was possibly used in the new alignment, though doing so would have required a great deal of work to support the original tracks during the work. More likely, a new culvert was constructed and the others moved to unknown locations elsewhere on the line. The stones in this new culvert could have also come from old bridge abutments. Dave Hiteshow apparently found a cut stone at one of the sites where a stream crosses the old alignment that indicates the possibility of a culvert.¹

James Dilts' detailed history of the early construction of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad does not mention this realignment, and the earliest documentation of its existence is in an 1855 publication on the features of the B. & O. It notes that the old main line "follows the windings of the beautiful stream [the Patapsco] to the Forks, twenty-five miles from Baltimore, where, by a deep cut through a narrow neck, it turns the western branch of the river, and thus crosses its former channel twice without a bridge." Work on the book began in the fall of 1852, so it is possible that the realignment could predate that time.²

¹ Old Main Line website, <http://www.trainweb.org/oldmainline/omld6.htm#top>

² James D. Dilts, *The Great Road: The Building of the Baltimore & Ohio, the Nation's First Railroad, 1828-1853*. (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1993). Eli Bowen, *Rambles in the Path of the Steam Horse* (Philadelphia: W. Bromwell & Wm. White Smith, 1855): p. 165, noted in the Old Main Line website.

Maryland Historical Trust
Maryland Inventory of
Historic Properties Form

Inventory No. HO-1095

Name
Continuation Sheet

Number 8 Page 1

The B. & O. Railroad Realignment is indicative of one aspect of the environmental degradation caused by the industrial revolution. Apparently, the railroad found it cheaper to move the river than to continue to bridge it with two structures in such a short span. No doubt, the old bridges had begun to deteriorate and/or were no longer sufficient for increasingly larger and heavier locomotives.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Inventory No. HO-1095

See footnotes

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of surveyed property 12 A
Acreage of historical setting 25.9 A
Quadrangle name Sykesville Quadrangle scale: 1:24000

Verbal boundary description and justification

The boundaries are a rectangle consisting of two lines paralleling the railroad tracks, one set 50 feet northeast of the tracks and the other 500 feet southwest of the tracks, and running from one bend in the river to the other, with perpendicular lines to connect both sides. This encompasses all of the historic features on the site.

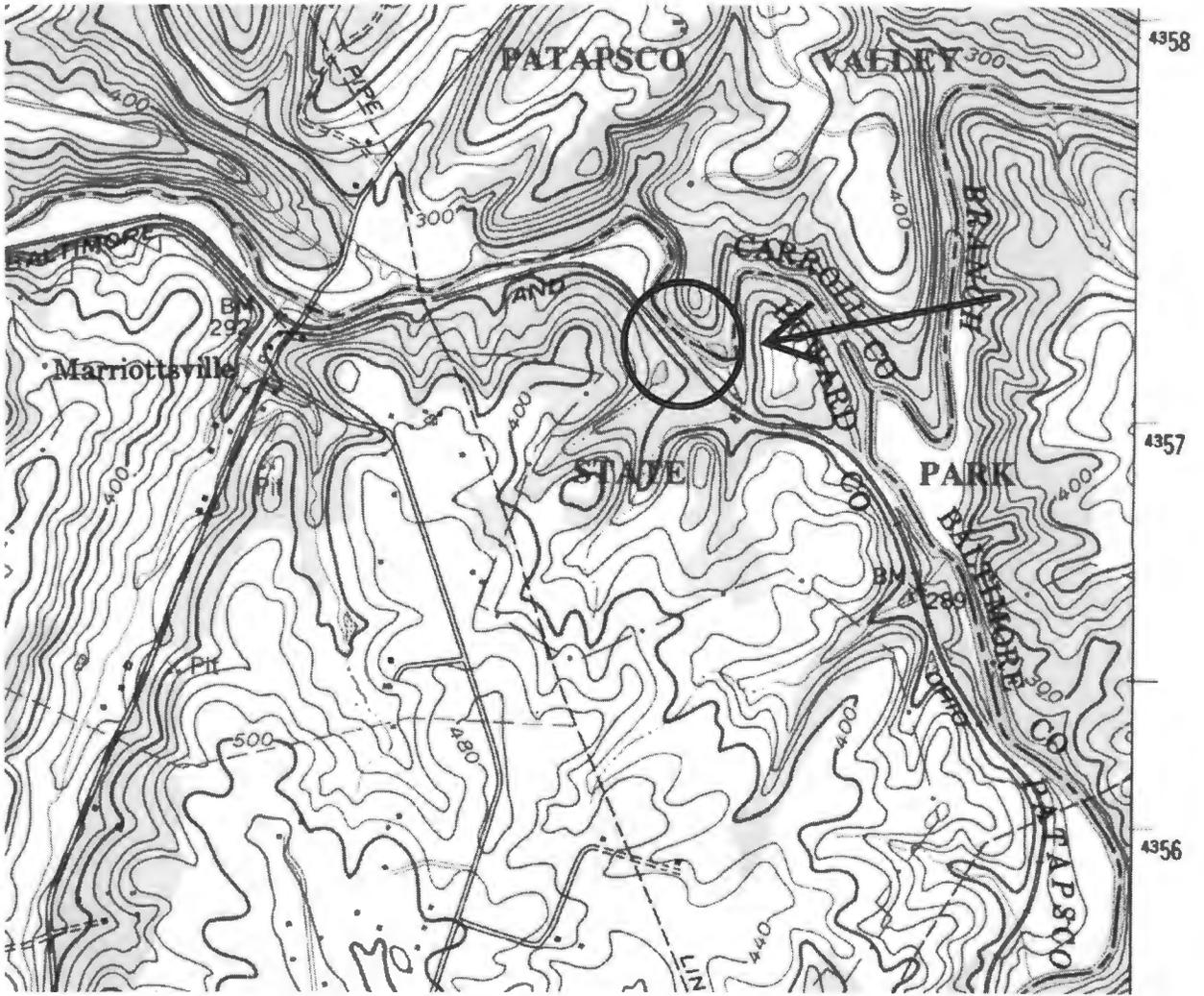
11. Form Prepared by

name/title	Ken Short		
organization	Howard County Department of Planning & Zoning	date	July 2012
street & number	3430 Courthouse Drive	telephone	410-313-4335
city or town	Ellicott City	state	MD

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 21032-2023
410-514-7600



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B. & O. Railroad Realignment
Patapsco Valley State Park, McKeldin Area, east of Marriottsville Road
Sykesville quad

HO-1095
B. & O. Railroad Realignment
Patapsco Valley State Park, McKeldin Area, east of Marriottsville Road
Howard County, Maryland
Ken Short, photographer

Photo Log

Nikon D-70 camera
Epson Premium paper
Epson Photo Black UltraChrome ink cartridge

HO-1095_2012-04-24_01
Diverted river, retaining wall, & realigned
track, vw. southeast from northwest end

HO-1095_2012-04-24_02
Retaining wall, vw. southeast

HO-1095_2012-04-24_03
Retaining wall, detail

HO-1095_2012-04-24_04
Retaining wall, southeast wing wall

HO-1095_2012-04-24_05
Culvert, northeast side

HO-1095_2012-04-24_06
Culvert, southwest side



HO-1095

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Patapsco Valley State Park, McKeldin
Area, east of Marriottsville Road

Howard County, Maryland

Ken Short

2012-04-24

MD SHPO

Diverted river, retaining wall, & realigned
1 of 6 track, vw. southeast from
northwest end



HO-1095

B.40. Railroad Realignment

Patapsco Valley State Park, McKeldin Area,
east of Marriottsville Road

Howard County, Maryland

Ken Short

2012-04-24

MD SHPO

Retaining wall, vw. southeast

2 of 6



HD-1095

B.40. Railroad Realignment

Potapscoc Valley State Park, McKeldin Area,
east of Marriottsville Road

Howard County, Maryland

Ken Short

2012-04-24

MD SHPO

Retaining wall, detail

3 of 6



HD-1095

B.+O. Railroad Realignment

Patapsco Valley State Park, McKeldin Area,
east of Marriottsville Road

Howard County, Maryland

Ken Short

2012-04-24

MD SHPO

Retaining wall, southeast wing wall

4 of 6



HO-1095

B. + O. Railroad Realignment

Patapsco Valley State Park, McKeldin Area,
east of Marriottsville Road

Howard County, Maryland

Ken Short

2012-04-24

MD SHPO

Culvert, northeast side

5 of 6



HO-1095
B.+O. Railroad Realignment
Patapsco Valley State Park, McKeldin Area,
east of Marriottsville Road

Howard County, Maryland

Ken Short

2012-04-24

MD SHPO

Culvert, southwest side

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