

M-17-52  
M-222

Form 10300  
Rev. 6-72)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

### NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Type all entries complete applicable sections)

|                  |            |
|------------------|------------|
| STATE:           | Maryland   |
| COUNTY:          | Montgomery |
| FOR NPS USE ONLY |            |
| ENTRY DATE:      |            |

**1. NAME**

COMMON: Seneca Quarry

AND/OR HISTORIC: Potomac Red Sandstone Company; Seneca Stone Company

**2. LOCATION**

STREET AND NUMBER: Tschiffeley Mill Road

CITY OR TOWN: Seneca CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT: Eighth

STATE: Maryland CODE: 24 COUNTY: Montgomery CODE: 031

**3. CLASSIFICATION**

| CATEGORY<br>(Check One)  | OWNERSHIP                                 | STATUS  | ACCESSIBLE<br>TO THE PUBLIC            |
|--|---|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> District <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Building | <input type="checkbox"/> Public           | <input type="checkbox"/> Occupied                         | Yes:                                   |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Structure    | <input type="checkbox"/> Private          | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied            | <input type="checkbox"/> Restricted    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Object  | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Both  | <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work<br>in progress | <input type="checkbox"/> Unrestricted  |
|  | Public Acquisition:                       |   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No |
|  | <input type="checkbox"/> In Process       |   |  |
|  | <input type="checkbox"/> Being Considered |   |  |

PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

|  |                                     |  |  |                                   |
|--|-------------------------------------|--|--|-----------------------------------|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Agricultural | <input type="checkbox"/> Government | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Park   | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation  | <input type="checkbox"/> Comments |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial              | <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial | <input type="checkbox"/> Private Residence | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) |                                   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Educational             | <input type="checkbox"/> Military   | <input type="checkbox"/> Religious         |  |                                   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment           | <input type="checkbox"/> Museum     | <input type="checkbox"/> Scientific        |  |                                   |

**4. OWNER OF PROPERTY**

OWNER'S NAME: Multiple, Private and Public

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN: STATE: CODE:

**5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.: Montgomery County Courthouse

STREET AND NUMBER: E. Montgomery Avenue and N. Washington Street

CITY OR TOWN: STATE: CODE:

Rockville Maryland 24

**6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE OF SURVEY: Maryland Register of Historic Sites and Landmarks

DATE OF SURVEY: 1970

FEDERAL:  STATE:  COUNTY:  LOCAL:

RECORDING AGENCY: Maryland Historical Trust

STREET AND NUMBER: 2525 Riva Road

CITY OR TOWN: STATE: CODE:

Annapolis Maryland 24

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

STATE: Maryland  
COUNTY: Montgomery  
FOR NPS USE ONLY

7 DESCRIPTION

|           |                                    |   |                               |  |  |                                    |
|-----------|------------------------------------|---|-------------------------------|--|--|------------------------------------|
| CONDITION | (Check One)                        |   |                               |  | <input type="checkbox"/> Ruins         | <input type="checkbox"/> Unexposed |
|           | <input type="checkbox"/> Excellent | <input type="checkbox"/> Good                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Fair | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated |  |                                    |
|           | (Check One)                        |   |                               | (Check One)                                      |  |                                    |
|           | <input type="checkbox"/> Altered   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unaltered |                               | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Moved        | <input type="checkbox"/> Original Site |                                    |

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Seneca Quarry is located on the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal and the east bank of the Potomac River about twenty-five miles northwest of Washington, near the village of Seneca, Maryland. The north retaining wall of the canal, a culvert to conduct a small creek under the canal at the west end of the quarry, and the Seneca Aqueduct, which carries the canal over Seneca Creek, are constructed of the local Seneca stone.

Only two buildings stand in the designated area: the cutting building at the east side of the quarry, and a duplex on the hill overlooking the quarry and river. Both structures are in ruins and are constructed of Seneca stone.

The cutting building for "working" architectural blocks was built probably in the 1830's, and doubled in size to its present dimensions sometime later than 1830. The four exterior and center walls, of Seneca stone, are standing and are reasonably sound. There are no remains of the timber roof or other wood portions. From the gable (south) which faces the canal, the outline of a low-pitched roof can be traced. The stone is rough finished in rectangular blocks.

Probably dating from mid nineteenth century, the duplex on the hill is built of rough rubble stone laid in regular courses except at the corners, sills, and lintels. On the east facade, the latter are smooth finish, rectangular blocks. Some of the same smooth blocks were used as paving, leading to the two east doors. The two and one-half story structure had two rooms on each floor of each unit. A single fireplace was located in each west room. Most of the south gable has collapsed beneath the 'A' roof. One dormer on each side of the roof lights the attic chambers.

The major part of the quarry is located south and southwest of the duplex. Its red walls and rough floor are overgrown with an accumulation of vegetation and look as though they had never been disturbed.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

8. SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

|  |                                       |  |  |
|--|---------------------------------------|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pre-Columbian | <input type="checkbox"/> 16th Century | <input type="checkbox"/> 18th Century            | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 20th Century |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 15th Century  | <input type="checkbox"/> 17th Century | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 19th Century |  |

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known)

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

|   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal     | <input type="checkbox"/> Education              | <input type="checkbox"/> Political      | <input type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric    | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Engineering | <input type="checkbox"/> Religion Phil. | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Historic       | <input type="checkbox"/> Industry               | <input type="checkbox"/> Philosophy     | <u>quarries</u>                                     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture    | <input type="checkbox"/> Invention              | <input type="checkbox"/> Science        | _____   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Architecture   | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape              | <input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture      | _____   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Art            | <input type="checkbox"/> Architecture           | <input type="checkbox"/> Social Human-  | _____   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Commerce       | <input type="checkbox"/> Literature             | <input type="checkbox"/> itarian        | _____   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communications | <input type="checkbox"/> Military               | <input type="checkbox"/> Theater        | _____   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation   | <input type="checkbox"/> Music                  | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation | _____   |

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

The Seneca Quarry was a source of stone for two Potomac River Canals, the Potomac Company and the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal Company (1780's to 1820's), and for the Smithsonian Institution (1847-1848).

The initial major quarrying activities at Seneca occurred in 1785. The Potomac Company, whose first president was George Washington, had been incorporated to extend navigation upstream on the Potomac River. At Great Falls, the Company constructed five locks on the Virginia side of the river. The Company used Seneca stone for these locks which were a major contribution to the development of American engineering. Expensive maintenance, because of the vicissitudes of the Potomac Company, forced the firm to close the canal. The Seneca stone, however, has withstood the ravages of nature and is still in place along the ruins of the Potomac Company canal.

The second canal project on the Potomac River--the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal Company--used Seneca stone because of its durability and the proximity of the quarries to the canal route. The C & O Canal Company used Seneca stone on its canal around Great Falls, on the Maryland side of the Potomac. The C & O aqueduct across Seneca Creek was also built of Seneca stone. The Montgomery County stone proved its durability for it is still in good condition long after the Canal has ceased to function.

Seneca stone is obvious in James Renwick's building for the Smithsonian Institution on the Mall in Washington, D. C. (1847-1848). The building committee for the Smithsonian conducted a thorough investigation to uncover the most durable and practical building material. For several reasons, the committee chose stone from the Seneca quarries, then operated by John Peter. A large supply of the stone existed. The quarry was near the C & O Canal which assured easy transportation to Washington. Seneca stone, although malleable when first quarried, becomes extremely hard. It is able to resist damage from changes in the atmosphere and from mechanical assaults.

Renwick personally visited the quarry and selected the stone for the Smithsonian.

As the C & O Canal used Seneca stone for building, the Seneca quarries in turn used the Canal for transportation. After 1850 when the Seneca

[see continuation sheet]

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

|                      |      |
|----------------------|------|
| STATE<br>Maryland    |      |
| COUNTY<br>Montgomery |      |
| FOR NPS USE ONLY     |      |
| ENTRY NUMBER         | DATE |
|                      |      |

(Continuation Sheet)

(Number all entries)

Seneca Quarry

#8. SIGNIFICANCE continued

section of the Canal had been completed, the operators of the quarry used the water power from the canal to smooth, cut and polish stone blocks. A diversionary stream from the canal provided the power for the machinery used to finish the rough blocks.

In 1833, the Potomac Red Sandstone Company signed a lease with the C & O Canal Company for 1,250 inches of water at fifty cents per inch per annum. In 1893, the Seneca Stone Company paid \$853.33 for the use of water power from the canal.

By 1900, quarrying operations at the Seneca Quarry had stopped. The quality of the remaining stone had deteriorated beyond the point of usefulness.

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Douglas, Paul H. and William K. Jones. "Sandstone, Canals and the Smithsonian." The Smithsonian Journal of History. Vol. III. Spring 1968, 41-58.

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

| LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES<br>DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY |          |         |         | O<br>R  | LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES<br>DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY<br>OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES |         |         |         |         |
|--|----------|---------|---------|---------|---|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| CORNER   | LATITUDE |         |         |         | LONGITUDE   |         |         |         |         |
|  | Degrees  | Minutes | Seconds | Degrees | Minutes   | Seconds | Degrees | Minutes | Seconds |
| NW   | 39°      | 04      | 15      | 77°     | 21  | 05      |         |         |         |
| NE   | 39°      | 04      | 15      | 77°     | 20  | 26      |         |         |         |
| SE   | 39°      | 04      | 02.5    | 77°     | 20  | 26      |         |         |         |
| SW   | 39°      | 04      | 03      | 77°     | 21  | 04      |         |         |         |

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: 91.2 acres

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

| STATE | CODE | COUNTY | CODE |
|-------|------|--------|------|
|       |      |        |      |
|       |      |        |      |
|       |      |        |      |
|       |      |        |      |

11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE: Nancy Miller, Historian, and Michael Bourne, Field Surveyor

ORGANIZATION: Maryland Historical Trust

DATE: Sept. 26, 1972

STREET AND NUMBER: 2525 Riva Road

CITY OR TOWN: Annapolis

STATE: Maryland

CODE: 24

12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION

NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

As the designated State Liaison Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

National  State  Local

Name: Orlando Ridout IV

Title: State Liaison Officer for Maryland

Date: September 27, 1972

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

Director, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Fee

ATTEST:

Keeper of The National Register

Date

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

## ACHS SUMMARY FORM

M: 17-52

Name Seneca Quarry

2. Planning Area/Site Number P.A. 17  
17-523. MNCPPC Atlas Reference Map 13  
C-154. Address Tschiffeley Mill Road  
Seneca, Md.

5. Classification Summary

Category Site: buildingsOwnership Public and privatePublic Acquisition Status UnoccupiedAccessible Partly accessible as national parkPresent use Agriculture and park usePrevious Survey Recording Nat Register Federal x State x County x Local x  
M-NCPPC6. Date Quarry 17857. Original Owner Potomac Company, 1785Stone-cutting mill, 1830's8. Apparent Condition Overgrown with vegetation; quarry ruinousa. ruinousc. unalteredb. original site

## Description

This large and important quarry was connected by the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal to the growing city of Washington and became the source of much building stone used in the monumental buildings there 1835-1860. The quarry walls, stone cutting building, quarry master's house, canal basin for stone boats, despite their overgrown and ruinous condition, clearly depict this early industrial site.

## 10. Significance

The fine quality of Seneca sandstone was substantiated when architect James Renwick demanded one of the earliest chemical tests for building stone before specifying it for the Smithsonian Institution building on the Mall in Washington, D.C. (1847-48). Before and after that date the stone was widely used for canal construction (locks, viaducts, piers). Seneca quarry continued in operation until 1900 and today is one of the most complete illustrations of this form of industry, the subject of possible restoration and interpretation.

11. Date researched September 1972 National Register nominationNancy Miller, Michael Bourne12. Compiler Frederick Gutheim 13. Date Compiled 17 May 1978 14. Designation Approval 15. Acreage - 91.2 Acres

1603731216

1. Name of Landmark: Seneca sandstone quarries
2. Location: Just northwest of the southern end of the Tschiffley Mill Road, Seneca, Maryland. Near the C&O Canal and extending westerly, parallel with the canal about  $\frac{1}{2}$  mile to the eastern side of Bull Run Creek.
3. Present use: The quarries have not been worked since 1900 and are overgrown. The site is part of the C&O Canal National Historical Park.
4. Owner: Department of Natural Resources, State of Maryland.
5. Date or period built: The quarries were worked from around 1774 to 1900.
6. Architectural description: The red-brown sides of the quarries form bluffs 25-30 feet high, set back from the canal about 100 yards. Some large blocks of sandstone can be seen lying about the quarry.
7. Builder:
8. Original owner: The quarries are located on land first granted to Richard Brightwell on August 29, 1695. Ownership of the quarries changed hands several times. In 1837, Clement Smith sold them to John Parke Custis Peter and in 1850 the Seneca Sandstone Company worked the quarries. In 1867 the Potomac Red Sandstone Company assumed control of the quarries and after repeated setbacks of floods and court suits the quarries were sold to the Seneca Stone Company in 1891 and operated till 1900 when the operation ceased.
9. Historic association: The depth of the quarries testifies to the strength and ingenuity of the men who dug, drilled and blasted the sandstone loose in those early days. The quarries provided the stone used in building of public works such as the old Pawtomack Canal and the C&O Canal, in public buildings such as the Smithsonian, for sidewalks and cemetery stones in Williamsport, and for private homes in Georgetown and Washington, D.C. With the opening of the canal in 1833 it was possible to ship the stone to building sites in Washington. The quarries provided an important source of economic activity to the canal town of Seneca but as the quality of stone became inferior quarry operations ceased.
10. Bibliography:
  1. Baliff, Barbara. "Stone Quarrying in Montgomery, Maryland". Paper for a history course at the University of Maryland. 1968.
  2. Douglas, Paul and Jones, William. "Sandstones, Canals, and the Smithsonian". The Smithsonian Journal of History. Spring 1968.

3. Fradin, Morris. Hey-Ey-Ey, Lock!. See and Know Press. P.O. Box 226, Cabin John, Maryland. 1974.
4. Sween, Jane Chinn. "Seneca," Montgomery County Story. The Montgomery County Historical Society. November 1971.
5. Withington, C.F. "Geology - Its Role in the Development and Planning of Metropolitan Washington." Journal of the Washington Academy of Sciences. October 1967.

11. Researcher: Robert Kasperek  
13409 Oriental Street  
Rockville, Maryland 20853

SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION  
UNITED STATES NATIONAL MUSEUM  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20560

STONE CUTTING AND DRESSING BUILDING OF THE SENECA QUARRY

Seneca, Montgomery County, Maryland (77°21' W x 39°04' N)

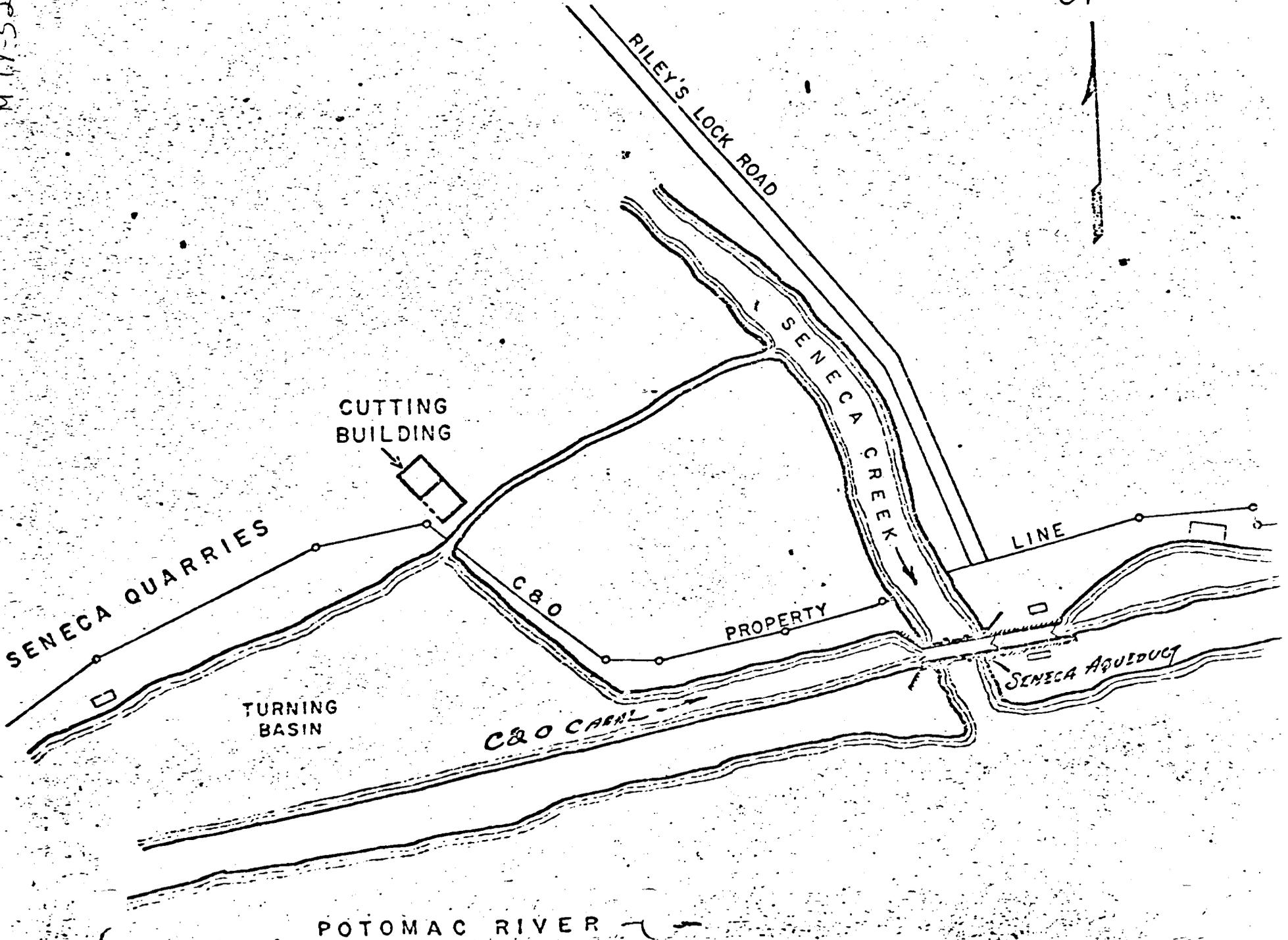
The Seneca quarries and the associated cutting and dressing building are located on the Chesapeake & Ohio Canal and the banks of the Potomac River about 25 miles northwest of Washington, near the town of Seneca. In the 1780s the red sand stone (or freestone) from the quarries was used in the construction of the locks of the skirting canal around the Great Falls of the Potomac on the Virginia side of the river; in the 1820s the C&O Canal's Seneca Aqueduct and a number of locks in the area were built of the stone; and in 1847-8 the Smithsonian Institution building was constructed of Seneca stone after a long and scientifically conducted search for the most durable stone in the Washington area.

The cutting building for working architectural blocks was built probably in the 1830s, doubled in size to its present dimensions sometime later. The finishing machinery was powered by water drawn from the Canal, dropping through a wheel or turbine into Seneca Creek at a lower level. The rough blocks were brought to the shed by mule cars on a narrow-gauge track and the finished stone was transported to Washington by the Canal. In addition to the Smithsonian building, Seneca stone is seen all over the Capital in buildings great and small as well as in fences, walls and other architectural features. The quarry ceased commercial operations in about 1900 as the veins of good stone ran out.

The property that includes the quarry ledges and the cutting shed is at present privately owned by Mrs. Harry Y. Pierpoint of Chevy Chase and Seneca. The shed is in essentially ruinous condition. The four exterior and center walls, of Seneca stone, are standing, reasonably sound. There are no remains of the timber roof, or other wood portions of the building. The only evidence of the operational features of the building is a longitudinal trench in the floor that contained the main drive shaft, and several foundation blocks for machinery.

The quarry was described by Paul H. Douglas & William K. Jones in Sandstone, Canals, and the Smithsonian, in the Smithsonian Journal of History, Spring, 1968, pp 41-58.

M 17-52



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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
PROPERTY MAP FORM

(Type all entries - attach to or enclose with map)

|                      |      |
|----------------------|------|
| STATE<br>Maryland    |      |
| COUNTY<br>Montgomery |      |
| FOR NPS USE ONLY     |      |
| ENTRY NUMBER         | DATE |
|                      |      |

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

|  |            |                       |             |
|--|------------|-----------------------|-------------|
| <b>1. NAME</b>   |            |                       |             |
| COMMON: Seneca Quarry  |            |                       |             |
| AND OR HISTORIC: Potomac Red Sandstone Company; Seneca Stone Company |            |                       |             |
| <b>2. LOCATION</b>   |            |                       |             |
| STREET AND NUMBER:<br>Tschiffeley Mill Road                          |            |                       |             |
| CITY OR TOWN:<br>Seneca  |            |                       |             |
| STATE:<br>Maryland   | CODE<br>24 | COUNTY:<br>Montgomery | CODE<br>051 |
| <b>3. MAP REFERENCE</b>  |            |                       |             |
| SOURCE:<br>U.S.G.S. 7.5 minute map; Seneca Quadrangle                |            |                       |             |
| SCALE:<br>1: 24,000  |            |                       |             |
| DATE:<br>1952  |            |                       |             |
| <b>4. REQUIREMENTS</b>   |            |                       |             |
| TO BE INCLUDED ON ALL MAPS   |            |                       |             |
| 1. Property boundaries where required.                               |            |                       |             |
| 2. North arrow.  |            |                       |             |
| 3. Latitude and longitude reference.                                 |            |                       |             |

VA-1

4332

4331

4330

4329

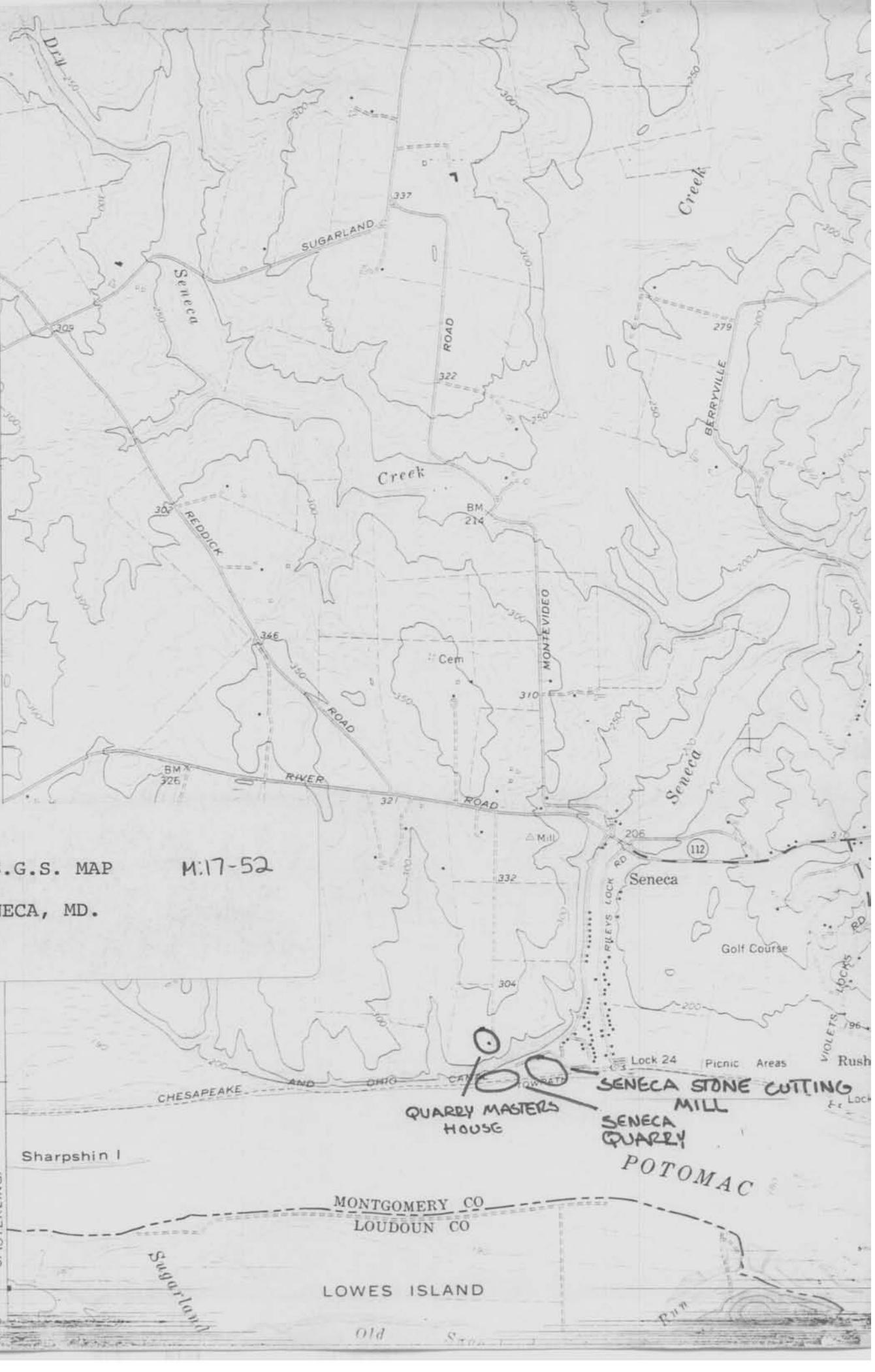
5'

U.S.G.S. MAP M:17-52  
SENECA, MD.

4327

4326

5562 III SW  
(STERLING)



Sharpshin I

MONTGOMERY CO  
LOUDOUN CO

LOWES ISLAND

QUARRY MASTERS  
HOUSE

SENECA STONE CUTTING  
MILL

SENECA  
QUARRY

POTOMAC

Old State



M:17-52

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SENECA QUARRY

MONTGOMERY CO., MD

C. MAZUREK

OCT 97

MD DEPT. OF NATURAL RESOURCES

EXTERIOR OF BUILDING

1 OF 11



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SENECA QUARRY

MONTGOMERY CO., MD

C. MAZUREK

OCT 97

MD DEPT. OF NATURAL RESOURCES

EXTERIOR OF BUILDING

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SENECA QUARRY  
MONTGOMERY CO., MD

C. MAZUREK

OCT 97

MD DEPT. OF NATURAL RESOURCES

EXTERIOR OF BUILDING

3 OF 11



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SENECA QUARRY

MONTGOMERY CO., MD

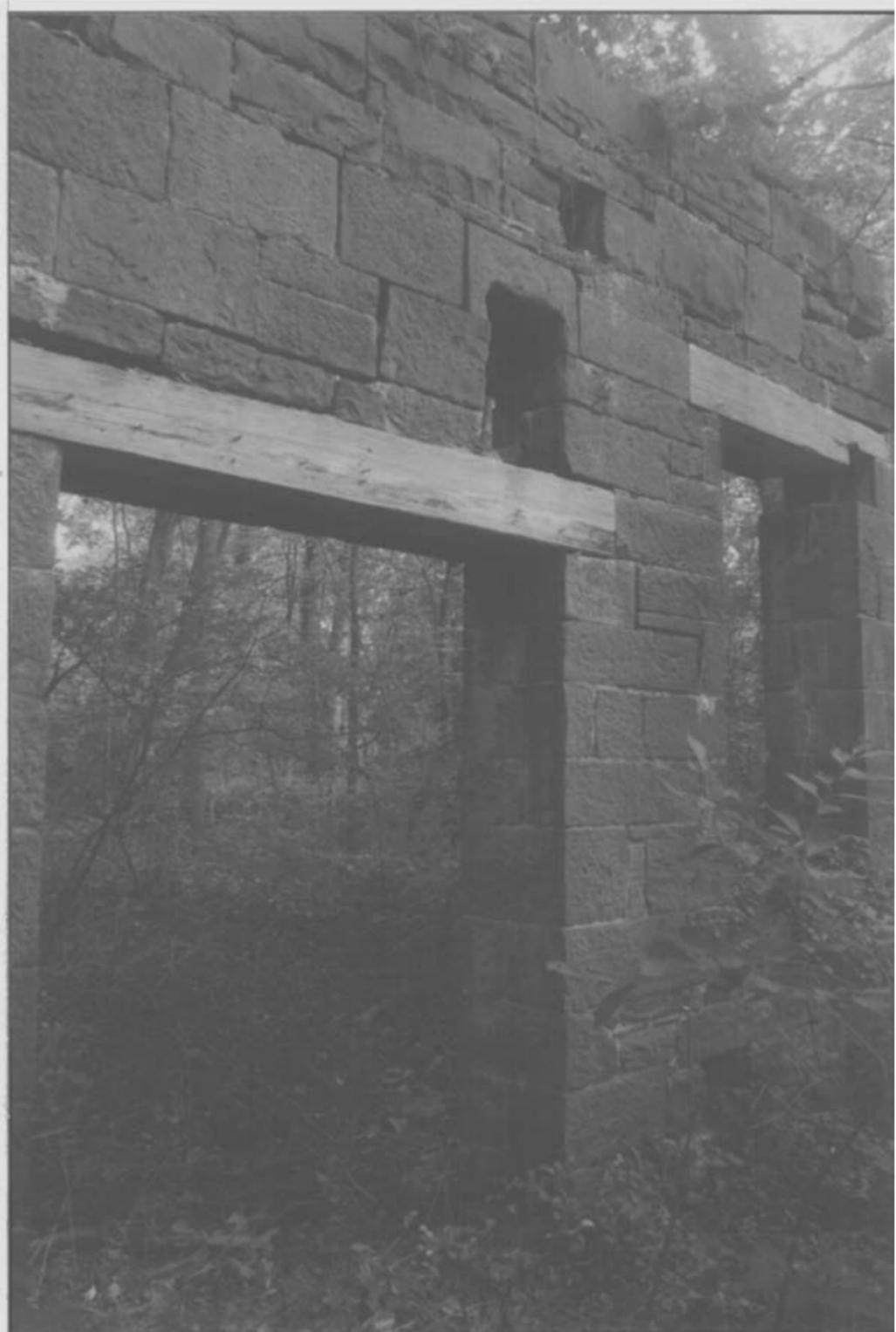
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OCT 97

MD DEPT. OF NATURAL RESOURCES

INTERIOR OF BUILDING

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SENECA QUARRY

MONTGOMERY CO., MD

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MD DEPT. OF NATURAL RESOURCES  
INTERIOR OF BUILDING

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SENECA QUARRY  
MONTGOMERY CO., MD  
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SENECA QUARRY

MONTGOMERY Co., MD

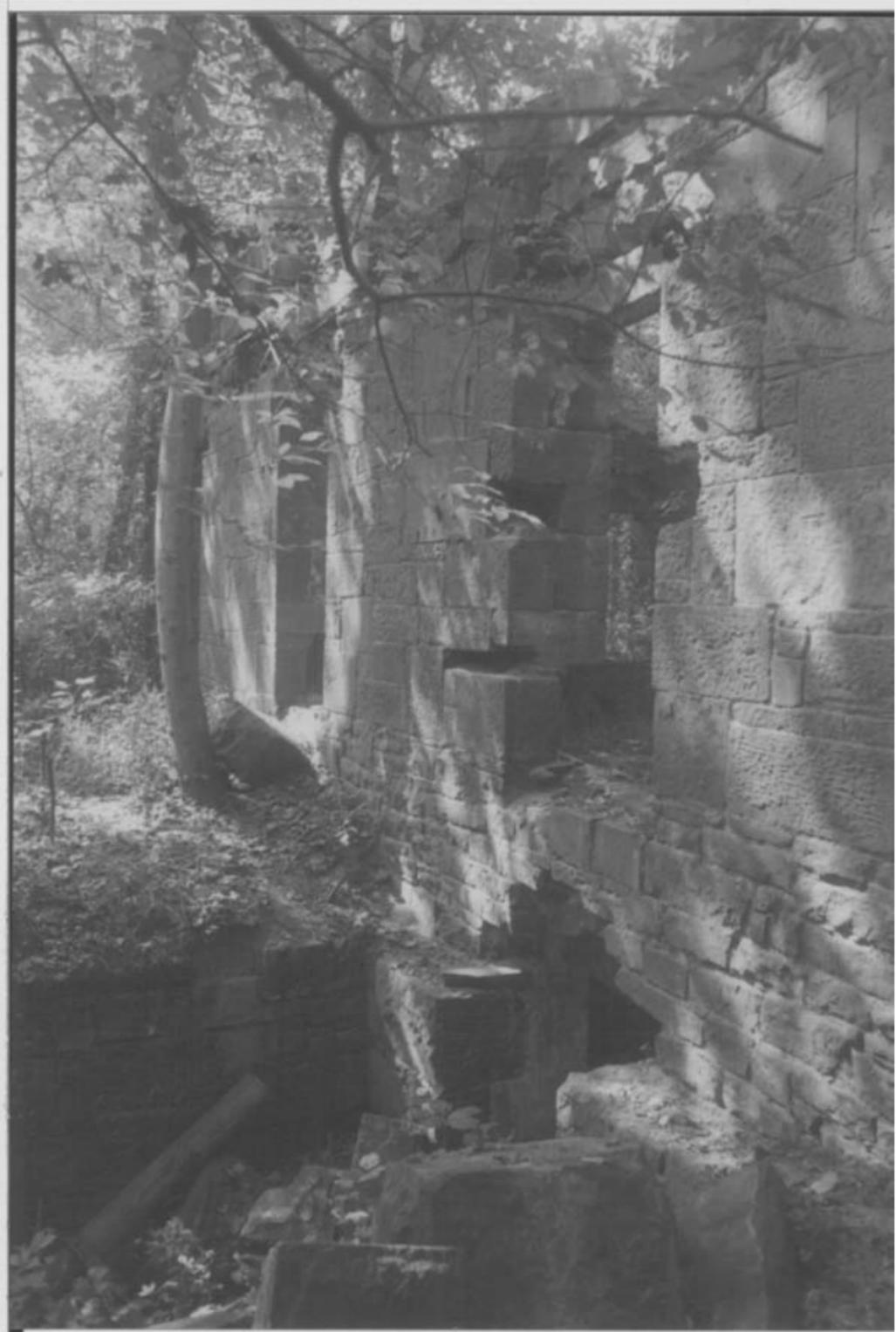
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MD DEPT. OF NATURAL RESOURCES

INTERIOR OF BUILDING

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SENECA QUARRY

MONTGOMERY CO., MD

C. MAZUREK

OCT 97

MD DEPT. OF NATURAL RESOURCES

INTERIOR OF BUILDING

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SENECA QUARRY

MONTGOMERY CO., MD

C. MAZUREK

OCT 97

MD DEPT. OF NATURAL RESOURCES

INTERIOR (MACHINE TROUGH)

9 OF 11



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SENECA QUARRY

MONTGOMERY CO., MD

C. MAZUREK

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MD DEPT. OF NATURAL RESOURCES

INTERIOR OF BUILDING

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