

PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY  
HISTORIC SITE SUMMARY SHEET

Survey #: P.G. #87A-27 Building Date: ca. 1880's

Building Name: Downing-Richards House

Location: 16507 Milltown Landing Road, Brandywine

Private/Residence/Occupied/Good/Inaccessible

Description

The Downing-Richards house is a two-story, gable roof frame dwelling of three-by-two-bays. Originally ell-shaped, it has had the addition of a two-story gable roof wing, in-filling the ell; and the addition of a one-story, gable roof southwest kitchen wing. The house is situated 300 feet south of Milltown Landing Road. The three-bay north (main) facade faces Milltown Landing Road. Entrance is in the first bay. There is a two light transom and three light sidelights. Windows on the facade 6/6 sash with black-painted shutters. The first story is sheltered by a three-bay hip roof entrance porch with turned posts and jig sawn brackets. The house is covered with horizontal aluminum siding, which covers the original horizontal wood siding. It rests on a foundation of oyster-shell rock, and brick. There is a boxed aluminum cornice throughout. The wood shingle roof, covering the main block, porch and kitchen, was installed in 1975. The east and west gable ends are unfenestrated. The west gable end has a centered, exterior chimney, built since 1949. The south (rear) facade is dominated by the two south-facing gable wings. Both rest on a brick foundation and are covered with aluminum siding. The fenestration is irregular and was altered at first level after 1949. The one-story, two-by-one bay kitchen wing attached to the southwest corner of southwest wing rests on a cement block foundation, replacing an earlier brick foundation, and is covered with aluminum siding. The interior of the Downing-Richards house was rehabilitated after 1949. Entrance is into an east side stair hall. There is one west parlor. The stair has original details such as bracketed stair ends, turned balusters and a heavy, hexagonal newel post. The mantel on the west wall of the parlor is original. A large tobacco barn east of the house has a standing-seam metal gable roof and vertical board siding. Built during the 1920's, it was moved to its present location from a site closer to Milltown Landing Road in 1980.

Significance

The Downing-Richards house is significant for its vernacular architecture. Constructed in the late 19th century, it was inhabited by the Downing family through 1949. The house was built by John Z. Downing on a 153 acre farm inherited by his wife, Elizabeth Richardson Downing, from her father, James Richardson. The house, on parts of Tremont, Covington and Poplar Hills, was constructed by 1888. The house is typical of farm dwellings built in the County during the 1870's and 80's. Its side-hall and parlor, ell-shaped plan was augmented by the addition of a southeast wing and a kitchen wing early in its history. Old photographs show it having a boxed cornice with prominent cornice returns as well as its Victorian vernacular entrance porch, louvered shutters, and kitchen wing. Although altered by aluminum siding and interior rehabilitation, it retains its integrity and many original features.

Acreage: 29 acres

# Maryland Historical Trust

## State Historic Sites Inventory Form

### 1. Name (indicate preferred name)

historic Downing-Richards House

and/or common

### 2. Location

street & number 16507 Milltown Landing Road  not for publication

city, town Brandywine  vicinity of congressional district 4

state Maryland county Prince George's

### 3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational	<input checked="" 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 type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> not applicable	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other:

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

name Benjamin Richards

street & number 16507 Milltown Landing Road telephone no.:

city, town Brandywine, state and zip code Maryland 20613

### 5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Prince George's County Courthouse liber 837

street & number Main Street folio 1

city, town Upper Marlboro, state Maryland

### 6. Representation in Existing Historical Surveys

title n/a

state  federal  state  county  local

depository for survey records Historic Preservation Commission, Room 4010, CAB

city, town Upper Marlboro, state Maryland

# 7. Description

<b>Condition</b>		<b>Check one</b>	<b>Check one</b>
<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.

The Downing-Richards house is a two-story, gable roof frame dwelling of three-by-two-bays. Originally an ell-shaped dwelling, it has had the addition of a two-story gable roof wing, in-filling the ell; and the addition of a one-story, gable roof southwest kitchen wing. The house is situated approximately 300 feet south of Milltown Landing Road on 57 acres of land.

The three-bay north (main) facade faces Milltown Landing Road. Entrance is in the first bay through a door with three horizontal lower panels and six upper lights. There is a two light transom and three light sidelights. Windows on the facade 6/6 double-hung-sash with black-painted shutters. The first story is sheltered by a three-bay hip roof entrance porch with turned posts and jig sawn brackets. The base of the porch is brick with a poured cement surface.

The house is covered with horizontal aluminum siding, which covers the original horizontal wood siding. It rests on a foundation of locally available oyster-shell rock, and brick. There is a boxed aluminum cornice throughout the building. The wood shingle roof, covering the main block, porch and kitchen, was installed in 1975, replacing an old wood shingle roof.

The east and west gable ends are unfenestrated. The west gable end has a centered, exterior chimney, built since 1949. The south (rear) facade is dominated by the two south-facing gable wings. The southwest wing is probably the original ell wing. Both rest on a brick foundation and are covered with aluminum siding. The fenestration is irregular and was altered at first level by the present owners after 1949. There is a triple 6/6 sash at first level and two bays at second level, a small and a large 6/6 sash window.

The one-story, two-by-one bay kitchen wing is attached to the southwest corner of southwest wing. It rests on a cement block foundation, replacing an earlier brick foundation, and is covered with aluminum siding. A small 4/4 sash window is at loft level in its west-facing gable. Its south (rear) facade has a gable-roofed screened porch sheltering a rear entrance.

The interior of the Downing-Richards house was rehabilitated after 1949. Flooring was replaced and walls replastered, and the architrave molding around doors and windows replaced. Entrance is into an east side stair hall. There is one west parlor. The rear exit from the hall, through a four panel door, leads to a large room created from two small adjoining rooms in the rear wings by the present owners. The stair, rising

# 8. Significance

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other (specify)
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		Local History

**Specific dates** **Builder/Architect**

check: Applicable Criteria:  A  B  C  D  
 and/or  
 Applicable Exception:  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 Downing-Richards house is significant for its vernacular architecture. Constructed in the late 19th century, it was inhabited by the Downing family through 1949.

The house was built by John Z. Downing on a 153 acre farm inherited by his wife, Elizabeth Richardson Downing, from her father, James Richardson.<sup>1</sup> The house, on parts of Tremont, Covington and Poplar Hills, was constructed by 1888.<sup>2</sup> There is a Downing family tradition that the dwelling was constructed during the 1860's, but it does not appear on the 1878 G. M. Hopkins Atlas of Prince George's County, nor is John Z. Downing assessed for the property in 1876.<sup>3</sup>

The house is typical of vernacular farm dwellings built in the County during the 1870's and 80's. Its side-hall and parlor, ell-shaped plan was augmented by the addition of a southeast wing and a kitchen wing early in its history. Old photographs show it having a boxed cornice with prominent cornice returns as well as its Victorian vernacular entrance porch, louvered shutters, and kitchen wing.<sup>4</sup> Although altered by aluminum siding and interior rehabilitation, it retains its integrity and many original features. It is an important example of a house-type rapidly disappearing from the County.

Notes

- 1 Land Records of Prince George's County, F.S. 4:410 and Equity #839.
- 2 Tax Assessments, Prince George's County, 8th District, 1888, Elizabeth Downing.
- 3 Tax Assessments, 8th District, 1876.
- 4 Historic photographs of the house in the possession of David Duvall, Croom Road.



MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST  
STATE HISTORIC SITES INVENTORY FORM

Survey No. 96-87A-27

Description (continued)

Section 7 Page 2

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along the east wall of the building, has original details such as bracketed stair ends, turned balusters and a heavy, hexagonal newel post. The mantel on the west wall of the parlor is original, having a square hearth opening flanked by rectangular pilasters with decorative raised molding and chamfered edges. End brackets support the mantel shelf.

There is a shed roof, frame chicken coop on a cement block base, west of the house. A garage east of the house is a small gable roof building with vertical wood siding. A large tobacco barn east of the house has a standing-seam metal gable roof and vertical board siding. Its large section, measuring 40-by-40 feet, was built during the 1920's. It was moved to its present location from a site closer to Milltown Landing Road in 1980. A lower shed roof, west section was added to it at that time, and it was set on a cement block foundation. Its move was accomplished by rolling it on four telephone poles, pulled by a timber jack.

Chain of Title

Downing-Richards House  
P.G. #87A-27

837:1 18 May 1946 Deed	Robert R. Downing and John D. Downing to Benjamin and Virginia L. Richards. For \$9,625 grantors convey 2 parcels, 103 acres, Lots 1 and 3 in Equity #839 and 50 acres, Lots 2 and 3 of Poplar Hill. Previously conveyed May 1, 1928, 300:393.
300:393 5 Jan 1928 Deed	Bernard and Irene Downing, Dent and Mazie Downing, to Cora L. Downing and Margaret J. Downing as joint tentants. Grantors convey 103 acres, Lots 1 and 3 of Home and House tract and 50 acres, Lots 2 and 3 of Poplar Hill. Both described in Equity #839.
Equity #839 22 Nov 1876	John Z. Downing and Elizabeth Downing vs. George E. Orme. Awarded to Elizabeth Downing, heir of James Richardson, Lots 1 and 3 of House and Home Tract and Lots 2 and 3 of Poplar Hill, also 1/2 acre in Lot 4 containing family cemetery, a total of 153 acres. Earlier deed of partition fraudulent.
FS 4:410 2 March 1867 Deed of Partition	George E. Orme and John Z. and Elizabeth Downing. Whereas, James Richardson, deceased, devised 300 acres to John R. Richardson and Elizabeth Richardson (Downing), and George Orme purchased title from John R. Richardson. Now Orme and Elizabeth Downing own title and agree to partition. Elizabeth Downing receives 70 acres and \$100.

P/O P.9

CHARLES M. PEED  
5382 / 747  
59.92 A.  
P.7

O-S

CHARLES M. PEED  
2869/051  
25.64 A.  
P.42

ELSIE R. PEED, ETAL  
5660/721  
17.41A.  
P.44

BENJAMIN E. RICHARDS  
772/257,837/1 & 1169/349  
29.00A.  
P.16

87A-27

BENJAMIN E. RICHARDS  
1759 / 344  
17.04 A.  
P.17

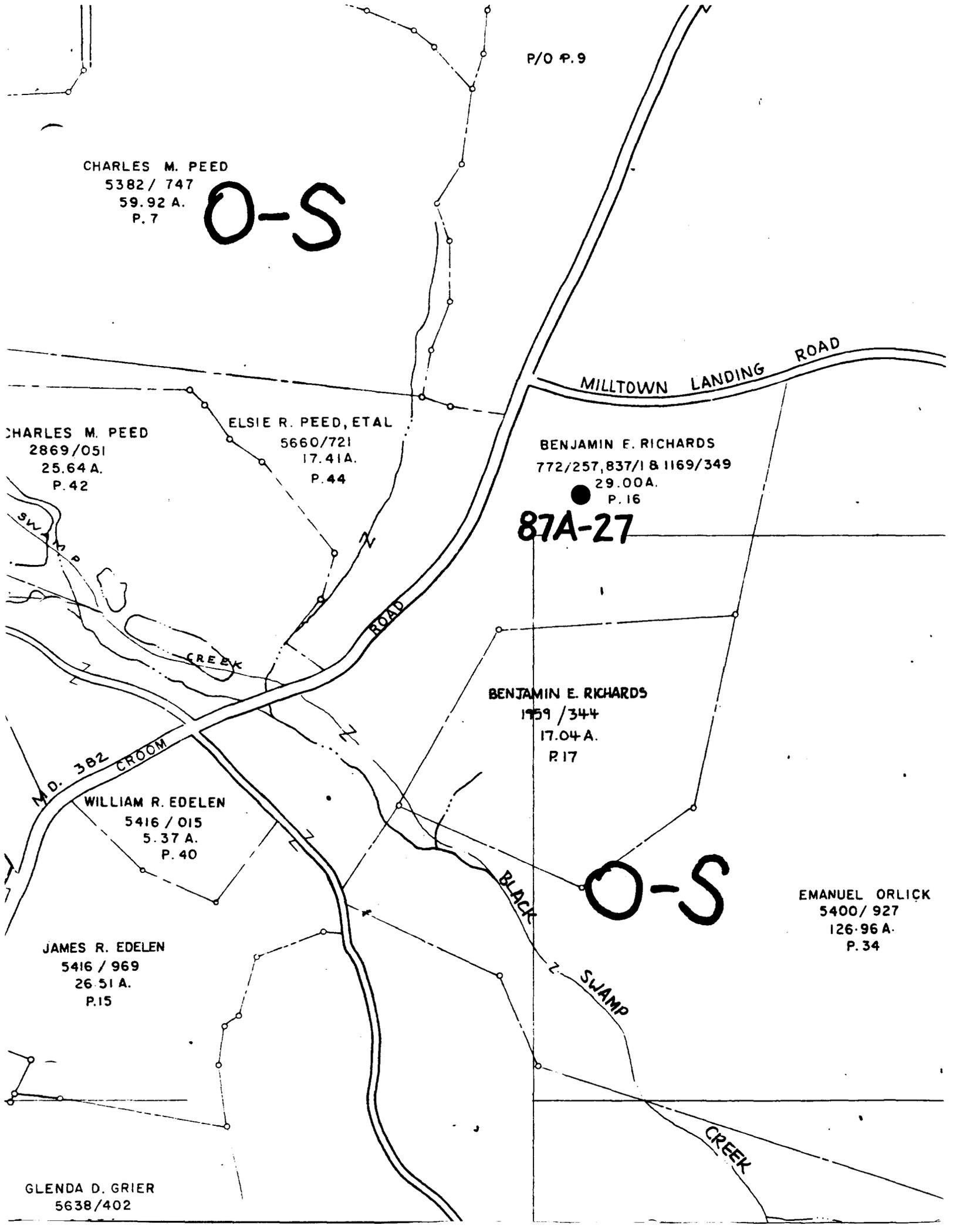
WILLIAM R. EDELEN  
5416 / 015  
5.37 A.  
P.40

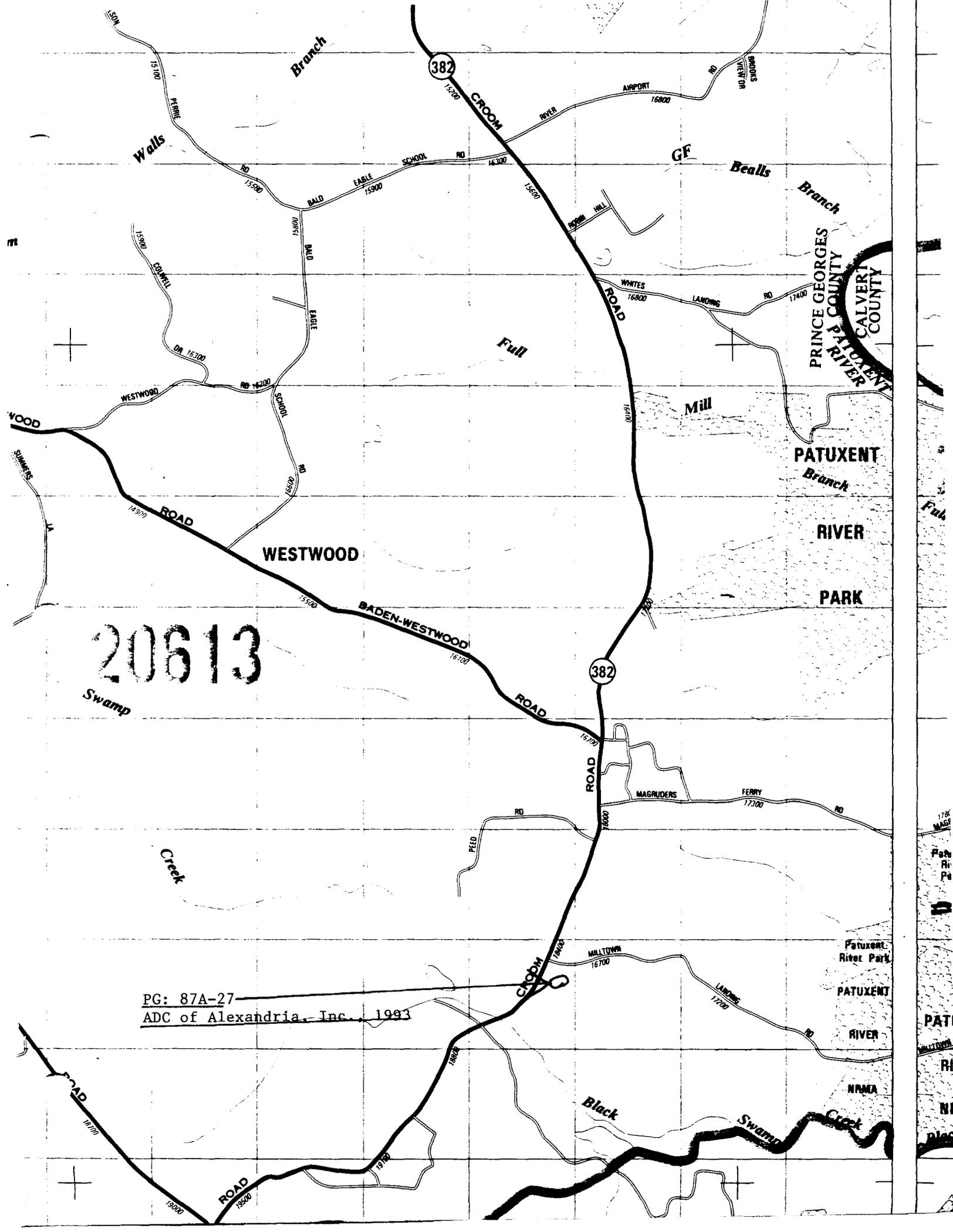
JAMES R. EDELEN  
5416 / 969  
26.51 A.  
P.15

GLEND A. D. GRIER  
5638/402

EMANUEL ORLICK  
5400 / 927  
126.96 A.  
P.34

O-S





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PG: 87A-27  
ADC of Alexandria, Inc. 1983

PRINCE GEORGES COUNTY  
CALVERT COUNTY

PATUXENT RIVER  
PARK

Black

Swamp

Creek

Mill

Beals

Branch

Walls

WESTWOOD

BADEN-WESTWOOD

CROOM

CROOM

Full

PATUXENT

PATUXENT

RIVER

NRMA

AIRPORT

FERRY

MAGRUDERS

MILLTOWN

EDWELL

WESTWOOD

ROAD

ROAD

ROAD

BALD

EAGLE

SCHOOL

RD

ON

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SCHOOL

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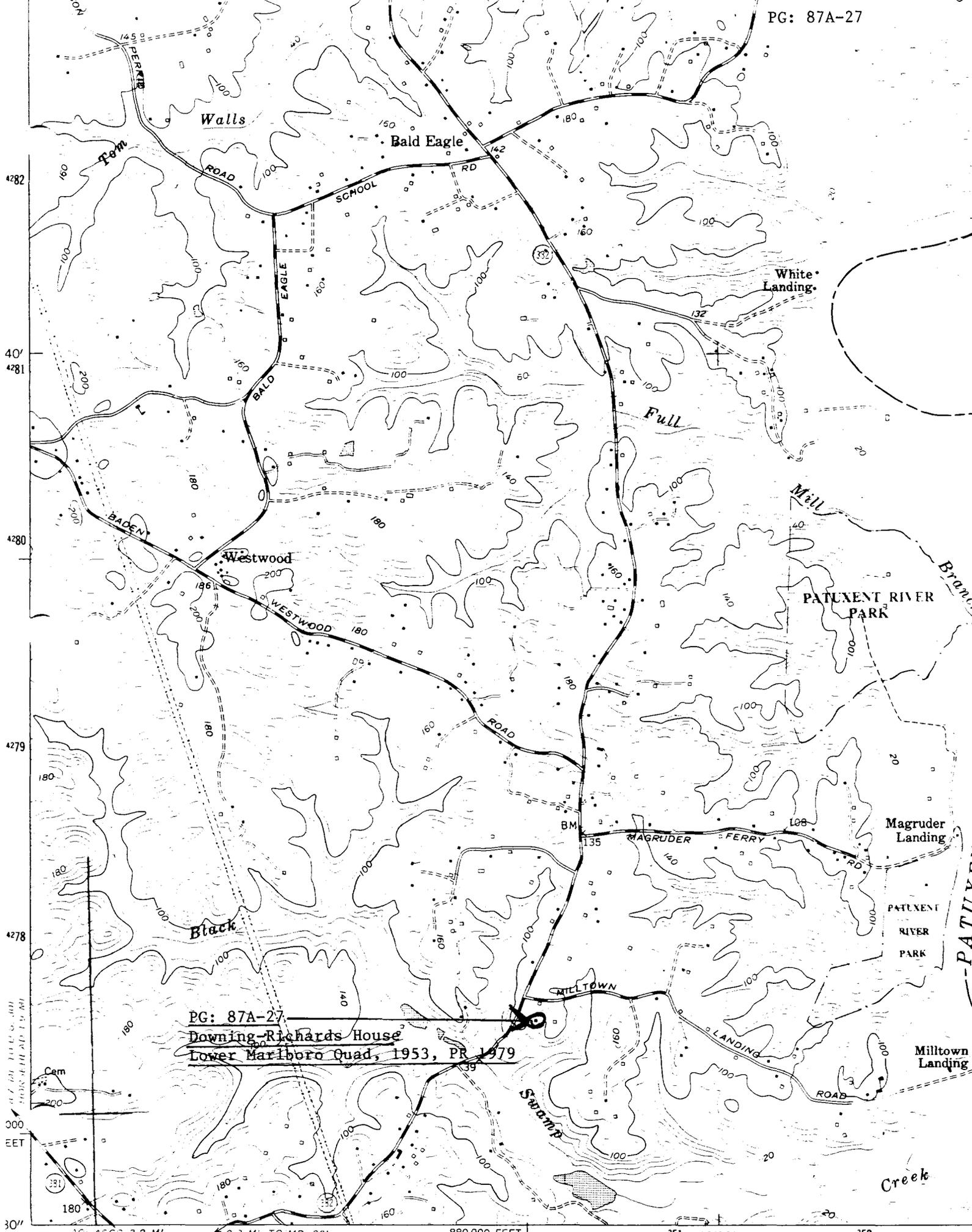
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PG: 87A-27  
 Downing-Richards House  
 Lower Marlboro Quad, 1953, PR 1979

4282  
 40'  
 4281  
 4280  
 4279  
 4278  
 000  
 EET  
 30''

76°45' AG-ASCO 3.2 MI. 0.3 MI TO MD. 381 880 000 FEET | 351 42'30" 352



P.G. # 87A-27

Downing-Richards House  
Prince George's County Maryland  
Marina King  
January 1987  
North Elevation  
Neg: Md. Hist. Trust, Annapolis, Md.



P.G. #87A-27

Downing-Richards House  
Prince George's County Maryland  
Marina King  
January 1987  
East Elevation  
Neg: Md. Hist. Trust, Annapolis, Md.



P. G. # 87A-27

Downing-Richards House  
Prince George's County Maryland  
Marina King  
January 1987  
South Elevation  
Neg: Md. Hist. Trust, Annapolis, Md.



P.G. #87A-27

Downing-Richards House  
Prince George's County Maryland  
Marina King  
January 1987  
West Elevation  
Neg: Md. Hist. Trust, Annapolis, Md.