

WI-357

1936 and later

Sharptown Firemen's Carnival Grounds

Sharptown

Private

One of the principal yearly events in northern Wicomico County is the opening of the Sharptown Firemen's Carnival, which has operated in this river town since 1926.

According to an article written in the *Salisbury Times* in 1958,

*Most Eastern Shore towns have had a carnival but Sharptown determined to have the best one. It was started in 1926, and grounds were purchased and permanent buildings erected in 1936 and onward. The fire company owns also all its own carnival equipment, such as rides and games. This elaborate set up soon became famous, and the Sharptown Carnival soon drew capacity crowds year in and year out.*

The carnival grounds mark the southern entrance into Sharptown. Standing at the front gate is a metal Ferris wheel. The complex of concrete block and frame buildings is dominated by a pair of distinctive octagonal pavilions. The east pavilion houses an antique carousel of carved wooden animals and painted panels. Rows of concrete block and frame concession stands are located on the north and south sides of these centrally sited structures.

MARYLAND HISTORIC PRESERVATION PLAN INFORMATION

RESOURCE NAME: Sharptown Firemen's Carnival Grounds

MHT INVENTORY NUMBER: WI-357

MARYLAND COMPREHENSIVE PLAN DATA

1. Historic Period Theme(s):     Architecture  
  Entertainment
  
2. Geographic Orientation:       Eastern Shore
  
3. Chronological/Development Period(s):   Modern Period   1930-
  
4. Resource Type(s):             Carnival complex

# Maryland Historical Trust State Historic Sites Inventory Form

MARYLAND INVENTORY OF  
HISTORIC PROPERTIES

Survey No. WI-357

Magi No.

DOE  yes  no

## 1. Name (indicate preferred name)

historic Sharptown Firemen's<sup>4</sup> Carnvial Grounds

and/or common

## 2. Location

street & number Main Street (MD 348) and Joe Morgan Road  not for publication

city, town Sharptown  vicinity of congressional district First

state Maryland county Wicomico

## 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 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" 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 type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other:

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

name Sharptown Fire Company

street & number Main Street telephone no.:

city, town Sharptown state and zip code Maryland 21861

## 5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Wicomico County Clerk of Court liber

street & number Wicomico County Courthouse folio

city, town Salisbury state MD 21801

## 6. Representation in Existing Historical Surveys

title

date  federal  state  county  local

depository for survey records

city, town state

# 7. Description

Survey No. WI-357

**Condition**

excellent

good

fair

deteriorated

ruins

unexposed

**Check one**

unaltered

altered

**Check one**

original site

moved

date of move \_\_\_\_\_

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

The Sharptown Firemen's Carnival Grounds are located on the east side of Main Street (MD 348) at the intersection of Joe Morgan Road at the south end of Sharptown, Wicomico County, Maryland.

The carnival grounds are distinguished by two large octagonal pavilions erected during the mid to late 1930s. Centrally positioned in the complex, the east pavilion houses a carousel while the west pavilion is used for games. Flanking the two pavilions on the north and south sides are ranges of single story frame and concrete block concession stands. Located at the entrance to the complex is a small Ferris wheel.

The two octagonal pavilions are supported on concrete block foundation and are sheathed with vertical board siding. On each face of the game pavilion a hinged door drops on bracket support to serve as a playing surface in front of wood benches that encircle the building. The octagonal shaped roof slopes upward toward an octagonal cupola also topped by an octagonal roof. There are louvered vents in each face of the octagonal cupola. The edges of the roof are finished with exposed rafter ends and open soffits.

The east pavilion houses an early twentieth century carousel of carved wooden animals resting on a wooden platform. The center pivot and drive mechanisms are hidden by an painted scenic panels. The ceiling is open to the cupola with an exposed rafter system.

On the north and south sides of the octagonal pavilions are orderly rows of single story frame and concrete block concession stands. Largely erected during the mid to late twentieth century, the concession stands are covered by low pitched gable roof sheathed with asphalt shingles. The roofs of the concessions stands have wide eaves that extend well beyond the frame or concrete walls. Hinged board doors or more recent metal tambour doors enclose the concession stands.

Distinguishing the Main Street entrance is a metal Ferris wheel.

# 8. Significance

Survey No. WI-357

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 type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other (specify) entertainment
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		

Specific dates	Builder/Architect
check: Applicable Criteria: <input type="checkbox"/> A <input type="checkbox"/> B <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> C <input type="checkbox"/> D and/or Applicable Exception: <input type="checkbox"/> A <input type="checkbox"/> B <input type="checkbox"/> C <input type="checkbox"/> D <input type="checkbox"/> E <input type="checkbox"/> F <input type="checkbox"/> G	
Level of Significance: <input type="checkbox"/> national <input type="checkbox"/> state <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> local	

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

One of the principal yearly events in northern Wicomico County is the opening of the Sharptown Firemen's Carnival, which has operated in this river town since 1926. According to an article written in the *Salisbury Times* in 1958,

*Most Eastern Shore towns have had a carnival but Sharptown determined to have the best one. It was started in 1926, and grounds were purchased and permanent buildings erected in 1936 and onward. The fire company owns also all its own carnival equipment, such as rides and games. This elaborate set up soon became famous, and the Sharptown Carnival soon drew capacity crowds year in and year out.<sup>1</sup>*

The carnival grounds mark the southern entrance into Sharptown. Standing at the front gate is a metal Ferris wheel. The complex of concrete block and frame buildings is dominated by a pair of distinctive octagonal pavilions. The east pavilion houses an antique carousel of carved wooden animals and painted panels. Rows of concrete block and frame concession stands are located on the north and south sides of these centrally sited structures.

Due to the architectural and historic merit of this complex it deserves listing in *Category A*.

<sup>1</sup> *The Salisbury Times*, Evening Edition, June 14, 1958.



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and buildings, to a point where  
good ambulance. Through a wise  
use of their funds they have housed  
industry for the town.

John R. Owens is president and  
assistant chief, and Charles Wick-  
er is chief. Mr. Owens said the  
growth of the company is not ac-  
cidental, but happened only through  
the dedication and hard work of  
its members. Belonging to the fire  
company has been a tradition in  
Sharptown since the memory of  
the oldest grandfather, but what  
really established the Sharptown  
company's strength was its carniva-  
l.

**MOST EASTERN** Shore towns  
have had a carnival, but Sharp-  
town determined to have the best  
one. It was started in 1926, and  
grounds were purchased and per-  
manent buildings erected in 1936  
and onward. The fire company  
owns also all its own carniva-  
l equipment, such as rides and  
games. This elaborate set-up soon  
became famous, and the Sharp-  
town Carnival soon drew capacity  
crowds year in and year out.

The carnival has brought the  
fire company about \$10,000 in an-  
nual revenue yearly. It has meant  
weeks of hard work for the mem-  
bers, but the firemen knew it has  
been worthwhile when they see  
what it has purchased.

The present company, buildings  
and equipment are worth about  
\$75,000, and the carnival grounds,  
buildings, and equipment could not  
be replaced for another \$75,000.  
When one starts to consider that  
the Wicomico County allowance  
per town for fire equipment is  
only \$2,000 yearly, it is under-  
standable why the Sharptown Fire  
Co. has pushed its carnival.

President Owens said that the  
Sharptown company could not  
maintain its present high stand-  
ard of operations without the in-  
come from this source. He brought  
up a recent controversy over bingo  
games and raffles and said that  
these games were the chief rev-  
enue producers of the carnival. He  
said, "Let the fire companies  
have their carnivals with their  
bingo games and raffles. If this  
money is not coming to us in this  
manner, it will have to come di-  
rectly in taxes, and directly out  
of the pockets of you taxpayers.  
It is unthinkable that our homes  
and our farms should be without  
modern fire protection, and we  
certainly can not provide this pro-  
tection on the present county al-  
lowance."

attract good personnel.

The Sharptown Fire Co. serves  
an area bounded on the west into  
Dorchester County, and into Gales-  
town on the north into Delaware  
toward Laurel, then halfway to  
Mardela, and on past Double Mills.  
It takes any member over 21 from  
that area.

The Sharptown Fire Co. has  
been as effective with its check  
book as it has with its pumbers  
in maintaining the well-being of  
the community. They erected the  
present building, occupied by the  
Hebron Mfg. Co., and purchased  
land to attract the pickle plant  
of Cross and Blackwell. They have  
purchased, and resold, considerable  
other local real estate in pass-  
ing years. They say that they are  
in complete agreement with the  
efforts of the Chamber of Com-  
merce and the local city govern-  
ment in attracting new industry,  
and have an open mind in work-



Sharptown Fire Co. has

## Sharptown Legion Po

The Sharptown Post of the all local and county do-  
American Legion is a vital grow- donations and personnel.  
ing organization with a member- About five dances a w

ship of 83 men and 65 in the Lad-  
ies Auxiliary. It is a rather new  
post, being organized in Decem-  
ber 1946, with 30 members under  
Cmdr. Garman Mann.

For the first five years of its  
existence the American Legion had  
no real home of its own, but in  
1951 it took the plunge and bought  
a large, comfortable frame home  
at the edge of town. This has been  
constantly remodeled, and in 1953  
a large addition was had on the  
rear of the property.

On the ground floor, the home  
has a game room with pool table,  
a large social room with tables  
and chairs and floor space ample  
for dancing, and a modern kitchen.

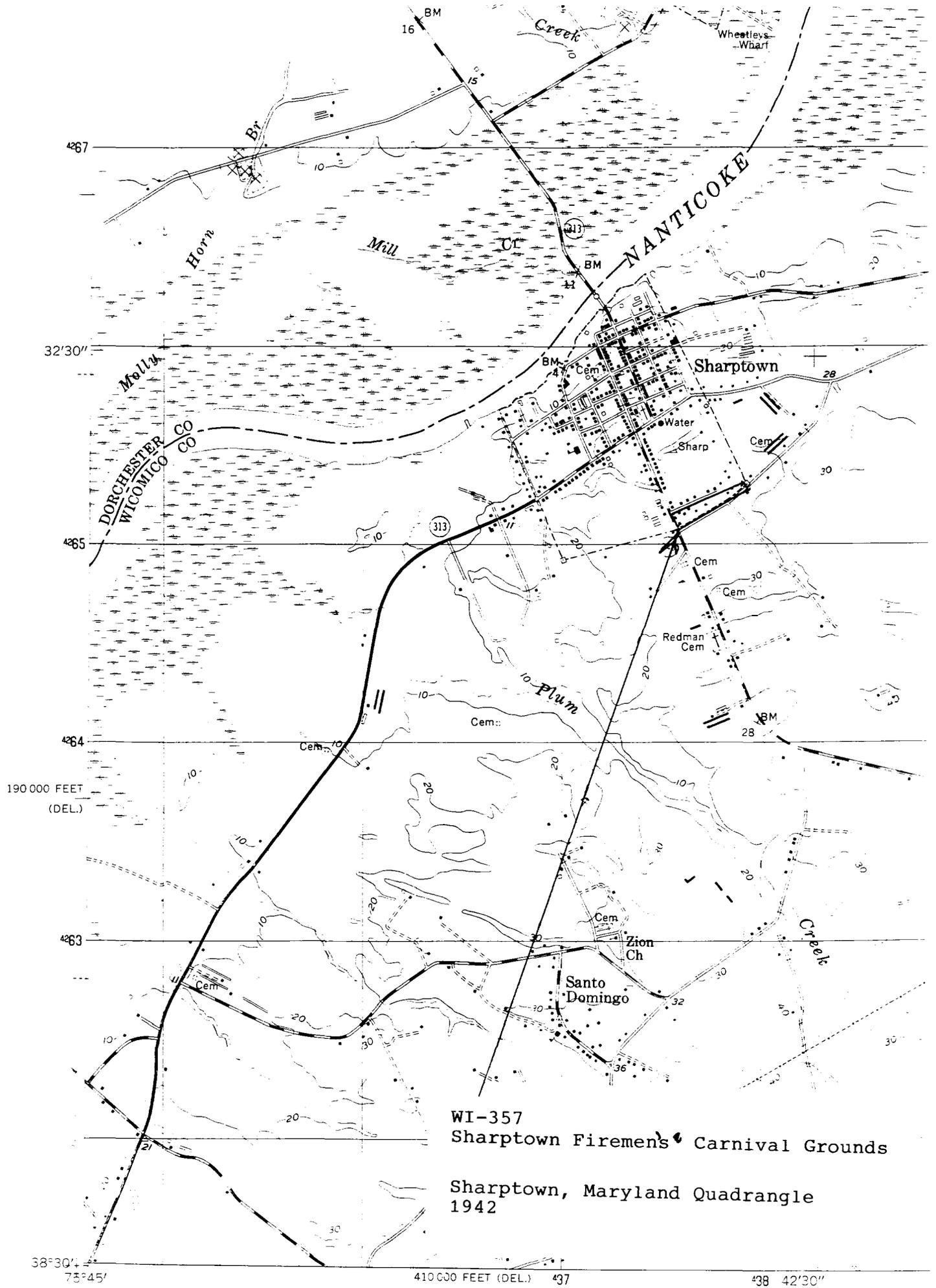
**THIS PROPERTY** is now com-  
pletely paid for.

Present officers are: Thomas  
Black, commander; Donald Kir-  
win, first vice commander; Rob-  
ert Bennett, second vice com-  
mander; Arthur Henry, president; and  
William Kinnery, treasurer.

The legion sponsors a boys  
baseball team in the Legion Amer-  
ican Legion Baseball League. Ac-  
tive for five years, the boys team is  
Eastern Shore champion since 1950.

The Legion also participates in





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Sharptown, Maryland Quadrangle  
 1942