

WI-504
Willards
Private and Public

19th and 20th centuries

The village of Willards is the most recently established town in eastern Wicomico County having been developed during the last years of the nineteenth century as an additional stop on the railroad line between Salisbury and Berlin, which was operated by the Baltimore, Chesapeake & Atlantic Railroad after its 1894 purchase of the assets of the Baltimore and Eastern Shore Railroad Company. The town took its name from Captain Willard Thomson, superintendent of Harlan and Hollingsworth, a steamboat builder located in Wilmington, Delaware. Captain Thomson was later appointed to a position in Salisbury in the offices of the Baltimore and Eastern Shore Railroad, and continued on with the B. C. & A. until his death in 1917.

In an article written for *The Wicomico News* on January 19, 1922, a detailed profile of the town was printed. The article stated that:

Just twenty five years ago, where the present site of Willards is now located, was field and forest. Look at it today. We have a thriving, prosperous little town located on the B. C. & A. R. R. and slightly touching the stone road leading from Baltimore to Ocean City. We have seven stores in Willards all doing a splendid business, two large crate and basket factories, a very large shirt factory, and one tomato cannery. These are our industrial activities, which furnish employment to more than 300 men, women, and children with a monthly pay roll of more than \$4,000.00 a month. Willards enjoys also a big mine prop business, and just now hundreds and hundreds of telephone poles are being brought in and shipped to various points, which is another big activity that employs lots of labor. It would be an easy matter to rent twenty five houses right now to the people who are desirous of locating in an industrial center.

The construction of the Ocean City Road in 1913-14 did encourage additional development along its path, and construction in Willards continued steadily through the

1920s until the Depression. Not until the past twenty years have new houses appeared along town streets.

Maryland Historical Trust

Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties Form

Inventory No. W I-504

1. Name of Property (indicate preferred name)

historic Willards
 other Willards Survey District

2. Location

street and number _____ not for publication _____
 city, town _____ vicinity _____
 county _____

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

name Various owners
 street and number _____ telephone _____
 city, town Willards state MD zip code 21874

4. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Wicomico County Clerk of Court tax map and parcel Map, P.
 city, town Salisbury, Maryland liber _____ folio _____

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	
			Contributing	Noncontributing
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> district	public	agriculture	<u>50</u>	buildings
building(s)	private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commerce/trade		
structure	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> both	defense	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> religion	structures
site		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> domestic	social	
object		education	transportation	Total
		funerary	work in progress	
		government	unknown	Number of Contributing Resources previously listed in the Inventory
		health care	vacant/not in use	
		industry	other:	

Name Willards Survey District
Continuation Sheet

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7. Description

Condition

	excellent	deteriorated
<u>x</u>	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.

The village of Willards is located along MD 346 (Old Ocean City Road) approximately ten (10) miles east of the City of Salisbury in Wicomico County, Maryland. The main road access is provided by way of Old Ocean City Road from the east and west and the Willards-Whiton Road to the south and the Bethel Road to the north. A modest grid of streets, located between MD 346 and the old railroad right-of-way, define the town limits related to its years of principal growth from the 1890s through the first decades of the twentieth century. During the second half of the twentieth century development has exceeded these limits to include the land located between MD 346 and US Route 50, which essentially borders the south edge of the village.

The historic structures that define the village of Willards largely date to the last decades of the nineteenth century and the first half of the twentieth century. Approximately fifty (50) standing structures line the primary roads and a few side streets of the village. Principal among the historic properties is the Eden Methodist Church (WI-506), one of the oldest dated structures in the village. A particularly distinctive building in the center of the community is the old Willards Ticket Office (WI-505). The construction of the Ocean City Road in 1913-14 provided a new avenue along which a host of new dwellings were erected in Colonial Revival, four-square and bungalow styles.

The majority of the structures in Willards, however, are modest two-story or single-story frame dwellings with side hall/parlor or center hall/single-pile plans. Resting on low brick or concrete block foundations, the houses are generally covered with asbestos shingles, aluminum, or later vinyl siding, and the medium to steeply pitched roofs are covered with asphalt shingles. Most of the houses have been reworked with replacement sash, although some houses retain original two-over-two or single pane sash windows. There are a number of structures, principally houses, that date to the first half of the twentieth century and follow popular four-square and bungalow forms. In many instances the main block is extended to the rear by a modest single story or two-story service wing.

Name Willards Survey District

Continuation SheetNumber 8 Page 1**8. Significance**

Period	Areas of Significance	Check and justify below		
1600-1699	agriculture	economics	health/medicine	performing arts
1700-1799	archeology	education	industry	philosophy
<u>x</u> 1800-1899	<u>x</u> architecture	engineering	invention	politics/government
<u>x</u> 1900-1999	art	entertainment/ recreation	landscape architecture	religion
2000-	commerce	ethnic heritage	law	science
	communications	exploration/ settlement	literature	social history
	community planning		maritime history	transportation
	conservation		military	other:

Significance dates**Architect****Specific dates****Builder**

Evaluation for:

National Register

 Maryland Register x 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 reports, complete evaluation on a DOE Form – see manual.)

The village of Willards is the most recently established town in eastern Wicomico County having been developed during the last years of the nineteenth century as an additional stop on the railroad line between Salisbury and Berlin, which at the time was operated by the Baltimore and Eastern Shore Railroad, and after 1894, the Baltimore, Chesapeake, & Atlantic Railroad Company. The town took its name from Captain Willard Thomson, superintendent of Harlan and Hollingsworth, a steamboat builder located in Wilmington, Delaware.¹ Captain Thomson was later appointed to a position in Salisbury in the offices of the Baltimore & Eastern Shore Railroad.

In an article written for *The Wicomico News* on January 19, 1922 a detailed profile for the town was printed. The article stated that:

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¹ John C. Hayman, *Rails Along the Chesapeake: A History of Railroad on the Delmarva Peninsula, 1827-1978*, Marvadel Publishers, 1979, p. 93.

Name Willards Survey District

Continuation Sheet

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basket factories, a very large shirt factory. and one tomato cannery. These are our industrial activities, which furnish employment to more that 300 men, women, and children with a monthly pay roll of more than \$4,000.00 a month. Willards also enjoys a big mine prop business, and just now hundreds and hundreds of telephone poles are being brought in and shipped to various points, which is another big activity which employs lots of labor. It would be an easy matter to rent twenty five houses right now to the people who are desirous of locating in an industrial center.²

² *The Wicomico News*, January 19, 1922.

9. Major Bibliographical References

WI-504

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of project area

Acreage surveyed approximately 75 acres

Quadrangle name Whaleyville, Maryland

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

Verbal boundary description and justification

The boundary established for this district is drawn to include the historic structures that contribute to the significance of the town. The boundary lines follow principal streets or right-of-ways inherent in the town grid.

11. Form Prepared by

name/title Paul B. Touart, Architectural Historian

organization Private Consultant

street & number P. O. Box 5

date 10/23/00

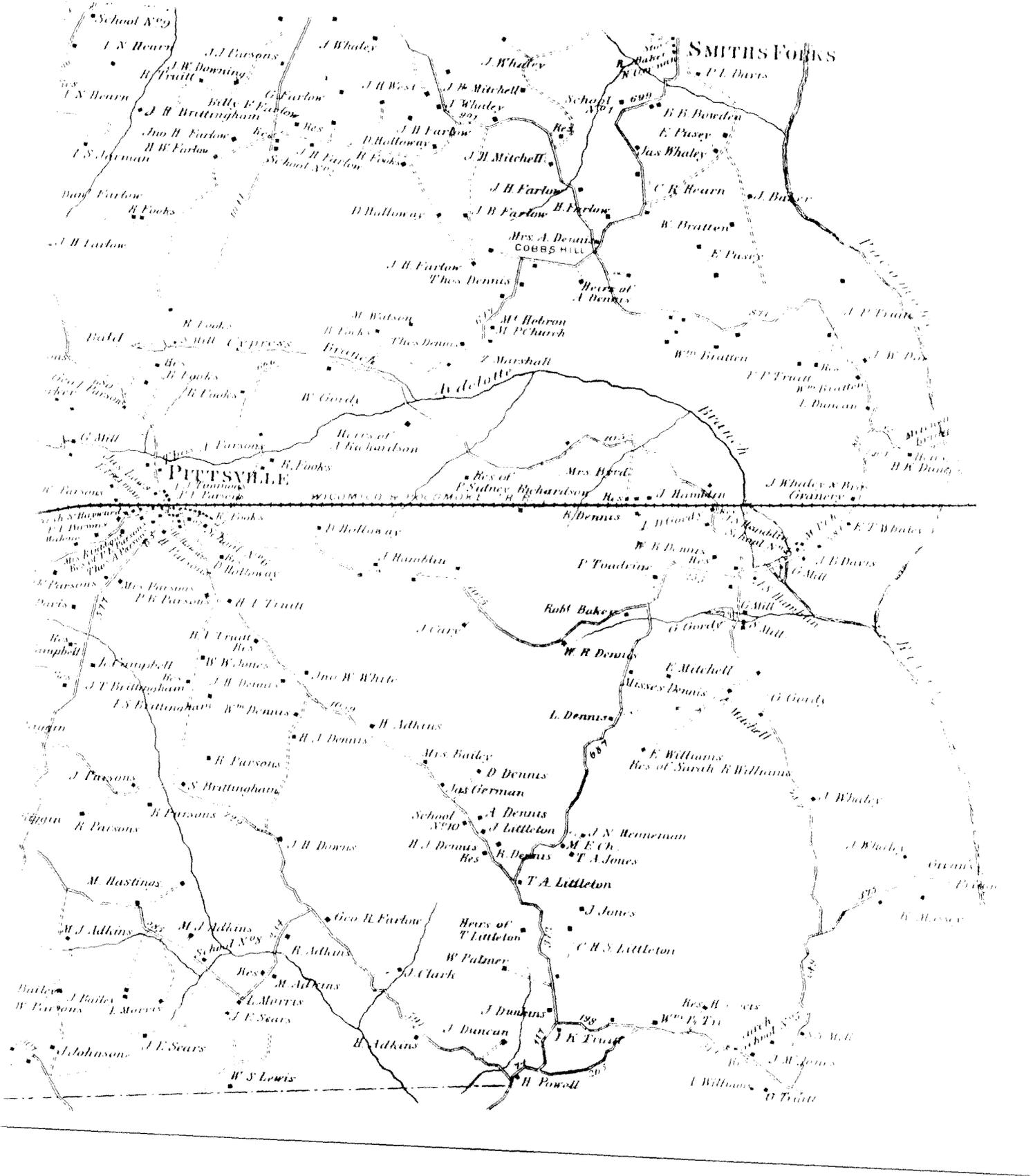
city or town Westover, Maryland 21871

phone 410-651-1094

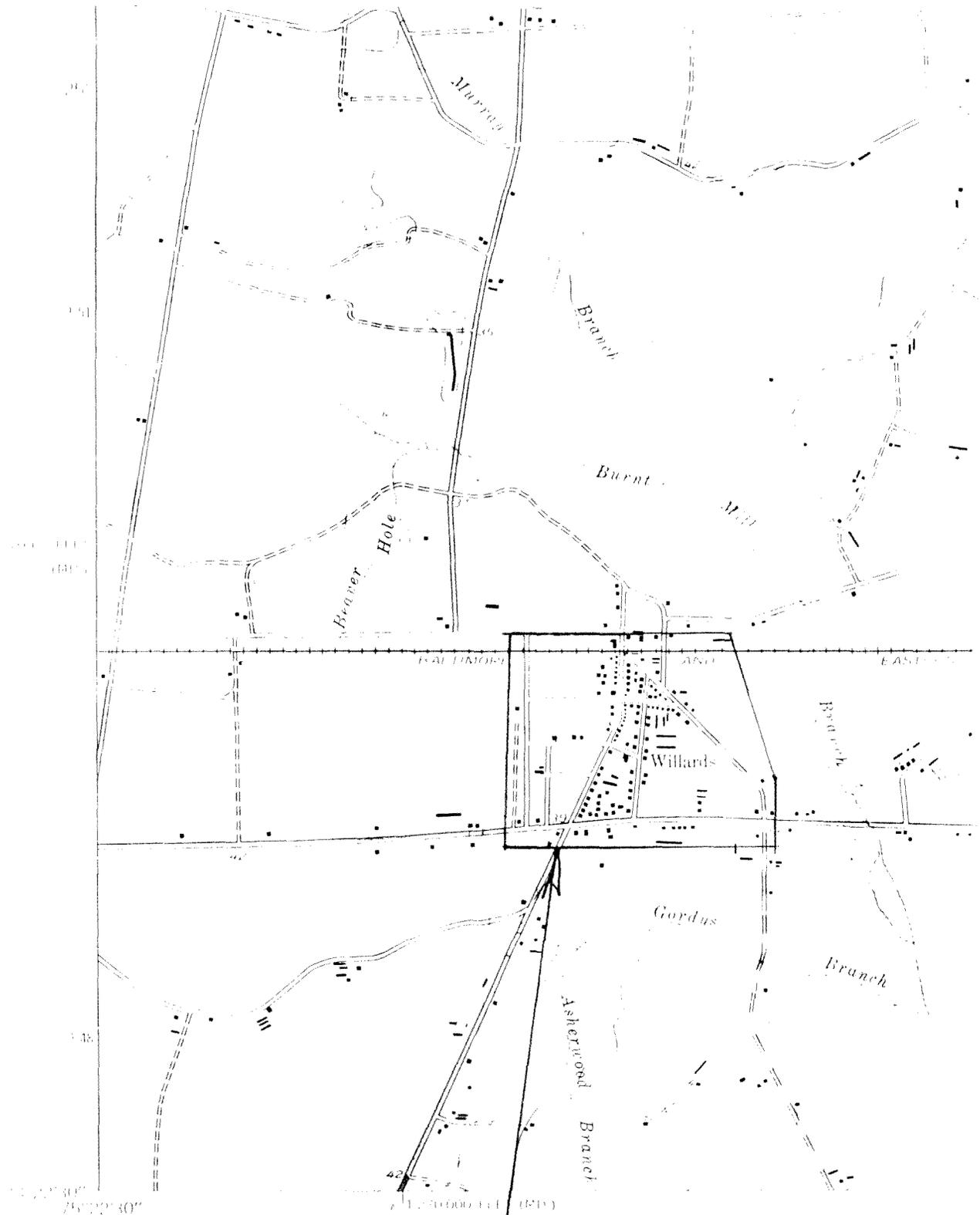
The Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties was officially created by an Act of the Maryland Legislature to be found in the Annotated Code of Maryland, Article 41, Section 181 KA, 1974 supplement.

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
410-514-7600



WI-504
 Willards Survey District
 Lake, Griffing and Stevenson Atlas
 1877



Copyright
1942

Mapped by the Army Map Service
Published for civil use by the Geological
Contract DD-865

Topography by photogrammetric method; from
taken 1942 and planimetric surveys 1942

Projection: 100% North American and
10,000 foot grid based on Maryland coordinate
and Delaware coordinate system

1000 meter Universal Transverse Mercator grid,
zone 18, shown in blue

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Willards Survey District

Whaleyville, Maryland Quadrangle
1942

Scale 1:50,000