

MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST
DETERMINATION OF ELIGIBILITY FORM

NR Eligible: yes ___
no ___

Property Name: Henry Merrill Farm Inventory Number: WO-563
Address: 1337 Cypress Road Historic district: ___ yes no
City: Pocomoke City Zip Code: 21851 County: Worcester
USGS Quadrangle(s): Pocomoke City
Property Owner: Maryland Stone, Incorporated Tax Account ID Number: 008943
Tax Map Parcel Number(s): 36 Tax Map Number: 91
Project: Proposed Mining Activities Pocomoke Sand and Gravel Pit Agency: United States Army Corps of Engineers
Agency Prepared By: A.D. Marble & Company
Preparer's Name: Emma Young Date Prepared: 5/23/2007

Documentation is presented in: Maryland Department of Assessments and Taxation, Worcester County, Map 96-31, Snow Hill, Maryland.

Preparer's Eligibility Recommendation: ___ Eligibility recommended Eligibility not recommended

Criteria: ___ A ___ B ___ C ___ D Considerations: ___ A ___ B ___ C ___ D ___ E ___ F ___ G

Complete if the property is a contributing or non-contributing resource to a NR district/property:

Name of the District/Property: _____

Inventory Number: _____ Eligible: ___ yes Listed: ___ yes

Site visit by MHT Staff ___ yes no Name: _____ Date: _____

Description of Property and Justification: *(Please attach map and photo)*

Description:

The Henry Merrill Farm, located at 1337 Cypress Road, Pocomoke City, Worcester County, Maryland, is a late-nineteenth and early twentieth-century farm complex situated on a 219.60-acre tract. A long, paved-asphalt farm lane leads west from Cypress Road to the main dwelling and agricultural outbuildings that comprise the farm.

The Henry Merrill Farm contains circa-1875 dwelling, circa-1920 machine shed and tool shed, a circa-1930 poultry layer house, and two circa-1930 poultry houses. The property, vacant since circa 1997, continues under minimal agricultural use with cornfields surrounding the building cluster.

Dwelling

The dwelling, oriented on an east-west axis, is a two-and-a-half-story, frame, circa-1875, cross-gabled I house with a front block and a rear ell. The symmetrical façade faces east, perpendicular to the farm lane. Aluminum siding covers the exterior of the dwelling, which sits atop a full, brick foundation. All of the windows on the dwelling are six-over-six light, double-hung sash,

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MHT Comments:

Jonathan Sayers
Reviewer, Office of Preservation Services

6/11/07
Date

NA
Reviewer, National Register Program

Date

200701797

aluminum replacement types. The cross-gabled roof, sheathed in asphalt shingles, features a simple, boxed, wooden cornice with gable returns. Two interior, corbelled, brick chimneys protrude from the roof ridge on the front block and two interior, brick chimneys protrude from the rear ell.

The east (front) elevation measures three bays wide. A full-width, shed-roof, screened porch stretches across the first story of the elevation and shelters the main entry into the dwelling. The entry, situated in the center bay of the facade, consists of a single-leaf, wooden-paneled door capped by a four-light transom. The door is flanked by sidelight configurations that each contain two panes over a single panel. A two-light, aluminum storm door protects the entry. Single windows are located to the north and south of the entry. The second story contains three evenly spaced windows, and a single window is located in the cross gable. A set of inoperable, aluminum shutters flanks each window opening.

Dense mature vegetation conceals the majority of details on the south elevation. The one-bay front block contains a single window on each story. Inoperable, aluminum shutters flank the windows on the front block. A one-story, shed-roof, screened porch extends the width of the first story of the rear ell. Dense overgrown vegetation obscures any additional details of the rear ell.

The rear ell extends westward from the center bay of the west (rear) elevation of the front block. The west elevation of the front block contains a single window in each visible story to the north and south of the rear ell. The rear ell contains a single window on each story.

The north elevation of the front block contains a single window featuring inoperable, aluminum shutters, in each story. A one-story, partially enclosed, shed-roof porch extends across the north elevation of the rear ell. The porch sits atop a full brick foundation. Dense vegetation conceals any additional details of the north elevation.

Overall, the dwelling stands in fair condition. The immediate areas to the north, south, and west sides of the dwelling are extremely overgrown.

Poultry Layer House

A long, one-story, circa-1930, two-part layer house is located to the southwest of the dwelling. The building is currently vacant and is in poor condition. A shallow-pitched, front-gabled roof, clad in asphalt shingles, caps the eastern part of the building, which sits atop a concrete block foundation. A shorter, front-gabled section, the roof of which is clad in standing-seam metal, is appended directly to the west elevation of the building. The entire building is comprised of wooden lap siding that is painted red.

The east (front) elevation features a centrally located set of double-leaf, swinging, vertical-board doors. The remnants of two six-over-six light, double-hung sash, wooden windows, in poor condition, are located to the north and south of the entry. An entrance opening that does not retain a door occupies the northernmost bay of the east elevation.

The south elevation contains eight single-leaf, vertical-board doors, painted white and evenly spaced throughout the elevation. Seven sets of paired, four-over-four light, double-hung sash, wooden windows are also interspersed throughout the elevation.

The west (rear) elevation of the building contains three openings. A set of double-leaf, sliding, vertical-board doors attached to a metal track, occupy the center bay. A large square, window-like opening flanks each side of the entry.

Overgrown vegetation conceals the north elevation of the building.

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Date

Poultry House # 1

To the north of the layer house sits a one-story, circa-1930, frame, poultry house (poultry house # 1) in fair condition and currently vacant. Vertical-board siding, painted red, comprises the exterior of the building. A shed roof, sheathed in asphalt shingles, caps the building. The east (front) elevation features four openings. A large 24-light window, devoid of panes or screens, occupies the southernmost bay. Two single-leaf, board-and-batten doors and a single four-light, casement window are located at the northern end of the elevation. A large rectangular opening is situated on the west elevation. The north and south elevations are devoid of openings.

Tool Shed

A one-story, circa-1920, frame tool shed, currently vacant and in poor condition, is situated to the northwest of poultry house # 1. A shed-roof, clad in corrugated metal, caps the building and slopes downward from east to west. Vertical-board siding that is painted red covers the exterior. The north elevation features a one-bay entrance that does not retain a door. The east elevation features four openings. The northernmost and southernmost windows are two-over-two light, double-hung sash, wooden types. A square opening and a six-over-six light, double-hung sash, wooden window complete the elevation. The west and south elevations are devoid of openings.

Poultry House # 2

A one-story, circa-1930, frame, poultry house (poultry house # 2), currently in poor condition and vacant, is located to the northwest of the tool shed. A shallow-pitched, front-gabled roof, clad in standing-seam metal, caps the building, which sits atop a concrete block foundation. Wooden lap siding that is painted red covers the building.

The east (front) elevation contains a centrally located set of double-leaf, vertical-board doors, painted white. Three windows, the centers of which are concealed with a wooden panel, are situated to the north and south of the entry. Only one six-over-six light, double-hung sash, wooden window remains in the set. A single-leaf, vertical-board door that is painted white occupies the northernmost bay of the east elevation. A set of paired, six-light, hopper-sash windows is located in the gable.

The north and south elevations each contain four, evenly spaced, single-leaf, vertical-board doors that are painted white. Three sets of paired, four-light, hopper-sash windows, some devoid of panes, are interspersed throughout the elevations.

The west (rear) elevation contains a centrally placed entry consisting of a set of double-leaf, vertical-board, sliding doors on a metal track. Large square openings, both concealed with a wooden board, are situated to the north and south of the entry.

A metal grain storage bin and chute, approximately 15 feet tall, sits slightly to the west of the southeast corner of the building.

Machine Shed

A one-story, circa-1920, frame machine shed is located across the farm lane to the north of poultry house # 2. The building, currently vacant, is in fair condition. A shed roof, clad in corrugated metal, caps the building, which is covered in wooden lap siding, painted red. Three open bays, each divided by a simple wooden post, comprise the south (front) elevation. The north, east, and west elevations are devoid of openings.

Surrounding Landscape

Cultivated cornfields containing groves of mature deciduous trees surround the building cluster. A large working poultry farm, contemporary to the Henry Merrill Farm, is located to the southwest of the property. Late-twentieth-century dwellings are located to the east and southeast of the property.

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Historical Narrative:

Property History

The property located at 1337 Cypress Road began as part of a smaller tract of land containing approximately 140 acres. Throughout the mid-nineteenth century, the property belonged to Henry T. Merrill who presumably erected the dwelling during the latter part of his ownership of the property. The Lake, Griffing, and Stevenson Atlas of 1877 depicts "H. Merrill" as the owner of the farm complex. Upon Henry's death in 1895, his son, John T. Merrill, acquired the property and eventually erected the four extant agricultural outbuildings on the farm complex.

In 1950, John Merrill died intestate and the property descended by operation of law to his widow, Hattie Merrill, and his children, Ella M. Hirsch, Ruth M. Powell, Milton Merrill, I. Herman Merrill, C. Hargis Merrill, and Hazel M. Williams, who subsequently, on February 8, 1951, conveyed the land to Charlotte C. Dryden for \$1.00. That same day, Charlotte C. Dryden conveyed the land to John Merrill's son, C. Hargis Merrill and his wife, Bertie B. Merrill, also for a \$1.00.

The Merrills retained ownership of the land for almost 40 years. On June 29, 1990, C. Hargis Merrill conveyed the property, delineated as Parcel 1 and consisting of 219.60 acres, to The Arundel Corporation, both of which who subsequently conveyed the property to Blades Materials, Incorporated for a total of \$3 million. C. Hargis Merrill continued to live on the property for the next seven years until it was completely vacated 1997. Blades Materials, Incorporated, now known as Maryland Stone, Incorporated, retains ownership of the buildings, all of which remain vacant, and rents out the surrounding agricultural lands.

Agricultural Practices in Worcester County

By 1830, Worcester County, which was created in 1742, had emerged from a sparsely settled, densely wooded area to a prosperous agricultural county thriving on cash crops of corn, cypress wood, and wheat. Market surpluses in corn, wheat, oats, and potatoes and large supplies of leather, flax, and home-manufactured cloth, honey, and butter made for an increasingly diversified county economy (Touart 1992: 38). The national improvements in transportation, in combination with new roads and additional public boat landings in Worcester County, helped to facilitate the burgeoning vitality of agricultural practices throughout the county.

The Worcester County landscape remained mostly rural, comprised largely of small to medium-sized farms throughout the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. A long growing season permitted harvesting through mid-November and railroad and waterway access to the bay through the Pocomoke River enabled rapid shipment of produce. Corn, wheat, and potatoes, along with peas, beans, and tomatoes, occupied important positions in Worcester County agriculture, as did rows of fruit-bearing plants and trees (Touart 1994: 165). Herds of various types of livestock continued to have an important role in county agriculture with large numbers of swine, sheep, poultry, and cows. Chickens were raised principally for egg production during the early part of the century, and chickens themselves supplemented the farm family diet (Touart 1994: 165-166).

Today the landscape remains relatively similar to the areas of Worcester County that do not include the rapidly growing oceanfront community of Ocean City, Maryland. The economy of Worcester County continues to rely heavily on agricultural production, specifically crops such as corn, rye, soybeans, potatoes, tomatoes, beans, and strawberries, along with produce and poultry processing.

Cross-Gabled I House

From approximately 1870 through 1925, the cross-gabled I-house was one of the most common residential building types constructed throughout Maryland. I-houses, which measures two stories in height and one room in depth, descend from traditional British folk forms. The dwelling type is common in the United States, most notably in the Tidewater South, prior to circa 1890. However, the popularity of the form continued into the twentieth century, and examples, usually highly altered, are found

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throughout the eastern half of the country.

I-houses have consistent forms; they have side-facing gables and are one-room deep, two rooms wide, and two full stories in height (Noble 1984: 52). In the late-nineteenth century, the basic I-house form was distinguished by Italianate-style brackets, Eastlake-style porches, and a variety of other stylistic decorative elements (Noble 1984: 55). The exterior of the I-house was typically constructed out of timber frame and clad in horizontal clapboards. Varying patterns of porches, chimneys, and rear extensions are commonly seen in examples dating after circa 1890 (McAlester 2002: 96).

Significance Evaluation:

The Henry Merrill Farm, located at 1337 Cypress Road in the vicinity of Pocomoke City, Worcester County, Maryland, is not eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. The farm represents a typical late-nineteenth-century and early twentieth-century agricultural complex found throughout the county and larger region. In addition, the farm exhibits alterations and additions that detract from the property's ability to convey the period of construction (1875-1930). Better-preserved examples of late-nineteenth- and early twentieth-century farm complexes exist within the immediate vicinity.

The quality of significance in American history, architecture, archeology, engineering, and culture is present in districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects that possess integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association, and:

- A. that are associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of history; or
- B. that are associated with the lives of significant persons in our past; or
- C. that embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or that represent the work of a master, or that possess high artistic values, or that represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction; or
- D. that have yielded or may be likely to yield information important in history or prehistory.

The Henry Merrill Farm located at 1337 Cypress Road is not eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A. Although the property is associated with poultry farming, a significant agricultural trend in Worcester County, the property is not eligible under Criterion A due to a lack of integrity, and therefore, the property's inability to convey that association.

The Henry Merrill Farm is not eligible under Criterion B because it has no known association with the lives of individuals of historical importance. Although the individuals who owned and inhabited the property were of families prominent to the development of the area, the persons who lived on the site were not directly involved in any significant events or trends.

The Henry Merrill Farm is not eligible under Criterion C because the dwelling and associated outbuildings do not possess the architectural distinctiveness necessary to qualify them for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. The cross-gabled I house represents a common architectural type found throughout Worcester County and Maryland. The dwelling on the Henry Merrill Farm is not an exceptional or representative example of its type or form. None of the buildings on the property represent the work of a master, nor do they possess high artistic values.

The property was not evaluated for eligibility under Criterion D as part of the architectural survey and evaluation.

The Henry Merrill Farm possesses integrity of setting and location, retaining its location on the west side of Cypress Road surrounded by cornfields. The dwelling retains integrity of design, with the original cross-gabled I-house form intact. The dwelling

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contains replacement siding and windows, which compromise integrity of materials and workmanship. The addition of post-1957 dwellings adjacent to the property, in combination with the deterioration of the property caused by neglect, detracts from integrity of feeling and association. Furthermore, the neglect hinders the property's ability to convey its period of construction (circa 1875-1930). Due to a lack of integrity of materials, workmanship, association, and feeling, the Henry Merrill Farm does not retain a high degree of integrity.

References

Lake, Griffing, and Stevenson

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1951 Land Record Liber 46, Folio 148

1990 Land Record Liber 1661, Folio 441

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Henry Merrill Farm WO-563

1337 Cypress Road, Pocomoke City
Worcester County, Maryland



Map Source:
USGS 7.5' DRG: Kingston, MD; Pocomoke City, MD.

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WD-563

HENRY MERRILL FARM

Worcester County, Maryland

E. YOUNG

05, 2007

MD SHPO

Dwelling, east elevation, view to southwest

Photo # 3 of 21

0 00 M0 Y0 D-1 05/08/07



WD-563

HENRY MERRILL FARM

WORCESTER COUNTY, MARYLAND

C. YOUNG

05.2007

MD SHPO

Dwelling, east & south elevations, view to northwest

Photo # 4 of 21

2 00 10 00 00 05/08/07



W8-563

HENRY MERRILL FARM
WORCESTER COUNTY, MARYLAND

E. YOUNG

05.2007

MD SHPO

Dwelling, south elevation; view to north east

Photo # 5 of 21

5 00 10 00 0-1 05/08/07



NO-563

HENRY MERRILL FARM
WORCESTER COUNTY, MARYLAND

2100NG

05, 2007

MD SHPO

Dwelling, north elevation; view to southeast

Photo # 6 of 21

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23 00 M0 Y0 D0 05/08/07



ND-563

HENRY MERRILL FARM

WORCESTER COUNTY, MARYLAND

E. YOUNG

05.2007

MD SHPO

Dwellings, north & west elevations, view to southeast

photo # 7 of 21

17 00 10 40 0-2 05/08/07



W0-563

HENRY MERRILL FARM

WORCESTER COUNTY, MARYLAND

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MD SHPO

002511 22/27 (5R24 11)

DWELLING, west elevation, view to east

Photo # 8 of 21

21 00 M0 Y0 D-2 05/08/07



W0-563

HENRY MERRILL FARM
WORCESTER COUNTY, MARYLAND

e. YOUNG

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MD SHPO

view north to layer house, poultry house # 1 and dwellings

002511 8/27 <SR24 11>

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W0-563

HENRY MERRILL FARM
WORCESTER COUNTY, MARYLAND

R. YOUNG

05.2007

MD SHPO

002511 5/27 (5R24 11)

layer House, east elevation; view to southwest

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4 00 M0 Y0 D-1 05/08/07



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HENRY MERRILL FARM
WORCESTER COUNTY, MARYLAND

e. YOUNG

05, 2007

MD SHPO

Layer House, south elevation; view to northwest

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6 00 M0 Y0 D0 05/08/07



WD-563

HENRY MERRILL FARM

WORCESTER COUNTY, MARYLAND

E. YOUNG

05, 2007

MD SHPO

Layer House, north & west elevations; view to southeast

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11 00 00 Y0 D-1 05/08/07



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HENRY MERRILL FARM
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Poultry House # 1, east elevation, view to west

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W0-563

HENRY MERRILL FARM

WORCESTER COUNTY, MARYLAND

E. YOUNG

05, 2007

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TOOL SHED; north & east elevations; view to southwest

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18 00 M0 Y0 D0 05/06/07



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HENRY MERRILL FARM

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E. YOUNG

05, 2007

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TOOL SHED & POULTRY HOUSE # 2, east elevation; view to west

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002511 20/27 (5R24 11)
19 00 M0 Y0 D-3 05/08/07



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HENRY MERRILL FARM
WORCESTER COUNTY, MARYLAND
E. YOUNG
05, 2007
MD SHPO

POULTRY HOUSE # 2, east elevation, view to west
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20 00 M0 Y0 D-1 05/08/07



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HENRY MERRILL FARM

WORCESTER COUNTY, MARYLAND

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Poultry House # 2, north & east elevations; view to southwest

Photo # 17 of 21

15 00 M0 Y0 0-2 05/08/07



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MD SHPO

Bouvier House # 2, south & west elevations; view to northeast

Photo # 18 of 21

9 00 M0 Y0 D0 05/08/07



W0-563

HENRY MERRILL FARM

WORCESTER COUNTY, MARYLAND

E. YOUNG

05.2007

MD SHPO

BUCKY HOUSE #2, NORTH & WEST elevations; view to
southeast

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W0-563

HENRY MERRILL FARM

WORCESTER COUNTY, MARYLAND

R. YOUNG

05.2007

MD SHPO

Machine shed; south & west elevations; view to northeast

Photo # 20 of 21

13 00 M0 Y0 D0 05/08/07



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HENRY MERRILL FARM

WORCESTER COUNTY, MARYLAND

E. YOUNG

05, 2007

MD SHPO

MACHINE SHED; SOUTH & EAST ELEVATIONS; VIEW TO NORTHWEST

Photo # 21 of 21

002511 17/27 (SR24-11)

16 C0 M0 Y0 D0 05/08/07