

CH-560

Bel Alton Historic District

Architectural Survey File

This is the architectural survey file for this MIHP record. The survey file is organized reverse-chronological (that is, with the latest material on top). It contains all MIHP inventory forms, National Register nomination forms, determinations of eligibility (DOE) forms, and accompanying documentation such as photographs and maps.

Users should be aware that additional undigitized material about this property may be found in on-site architectural reports, copies of HABS/HAER or other documentation, drawings, and the “vertical files” at the MHT Library in Crownsville. The vertical files may include newspaper clippings, field notes, draft versions of forms and architectural reports, photographs, maps, and drawings. Researchers who need a thorough understanding of this property should plan to visit the MHT Library as part of their research project; look at the MHT web site (mht.maryland.gov) for details about how to make an appointment.

All material is property of the Maryland Historical Trust.

Last Updated: 12-18-2012

CH-560

1880-1951

Bel Alton Historic District

Bel Alton, MD

Private/Public

Bel Alton Historic District is an important example of a rural Victorian village that developed during the era of railroad transportation in Charles County. Established in 1873, and originally known as Cox's Station, it is one of the largest and the best preserved railroad villages remaining in Charles County. Like other rural turn-of-the-century villages in Charles County, Bel Alton is characterized by relatively simple, unadorned one and two-story frame cottages standing on irregularly shaped lots and setbacks. Generally, the buildings are clustered near the road with small farm lots and outbuildings to the rear of the dwellings. While predominantly residential, several important commercial and public structures survive including the Bel Alton Store and Post Office (CH-760), a circa 1920 gas station at 9759 Bel Alton-Newtown Road, and a two-room schoolhouse at 9780 Bel Alton-Newtown Road.

Maryland Historical Trust

Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties Form

Inventory No. CH-560

1. Name of Property (indicate preferred name)

historic Bel Alton Historic District

other

2. Location

street and number Fairgrounds Rd, Bel Alton-Newtown Rd, Wills Ave not for publication

city, town Bel Alton vicinity

county Charles

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

name Multiple ownership

street and number telephone

city, town state zip code

4. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Charles County Courthouse tax map and parcel:

city, town La Plata 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
- Other

6. Classification

Category	Ownership	Current Function	Resource Count
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> district	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	Contributing Noncontributing
<input type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commerce/trade	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> defense	26 1
<input type="checkbox"/> site		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> domestic	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> object		<input type="checkbox"/> education	_____
		<input type="checkbox"/> funerary	_____
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> government	26 1
		<input type="checkbox"/> health care	_____
		<input type="checkbox"/> industry	_____
		<input type="checkbox"/> landscape	_____
		<input type="checkbox"/> recreation/culture	_____
		<input type="checkbox"/> religion	_____
		<input type="checkbox"/> social	_____
		<input type="checkbox"/> transportation	_____
		<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	_____
		<input type="checkbox"/> unknown	_____
		<input type="checkbox"/> vacant/not in use	_____
		<input type="checkbox"/> other:	_____
			Number of Contributing Resources previously listed in the Inventory 0

7. Description

Inventory No. CH-560

Condition

- | | |
|--|---------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> excellent | <input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated |
| <input type="checkbox"/> good | <input type="checkbox"/> ruins |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> fair | <input type="checkbox"/> altered |

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

Bel Alton is a rural village that developed as a result of the construction of the Popes Creek Branch of the Baltimore and Potomac Railroad in 1874. The village lies south of La Plata at the intersection of the railroad tracks and Bel-Alton Newtown Road. Also included in the district boundaries are portions of Fairgrounds Road and Wills Avenue which are adjacent to the railroad tracks. US 301 and adjacent properties form the western border. Like other rural turn-of-the-century villages in Charles County, Bel Alton is characterized by relatively simple, unadorned one and two-story frame cottages standing on irregularly shaped lots and setbacks. Generally, the buildings are clustered near the road with small farm lots and outbuildings to the rear of the dwellings. While predominantly residential, several important commercial and public structures survive including the Bel Alton Store and Post Office (CH-760), a circa 1920 gas station at 9759 Bel Alton-Newtown Road, and a two-room schoolhouse at 9780 Bel Alton-Newtown Road. Surviving architecture spans from 1880 to 1951 and includes one non-contributing 1971 brick Ranch-style dwelling within the district boundaries at 8990 Fairgrounds Road.

Some of the earliest structures, erected during the village's first decade, include 9635 and 9795 Bel Alton-Newtown Road. The former is a large two-story, five bay, double-pile frame structure with Italianate brackets at the cornice. The latter is an altered two-story frame Victorian. The majority of dwellings are two-story, side-gable examples with decorative center gables common throughout Charles County during the first quarter of the 20th century. Examples include 8995 Fairgrounds Road built in 1900, 9035 Fairgrounds Road built in 1900, 9300, 9715 and 9705 Bel Alton-Newtown Road. Three and five bay examples were common with the entrance door located at either the center, offset center, or end bay of the principal elevation. 9815 Wills Avenue is the most well-preserved example I-House in the village.

In the second decade of the 20th century, Victorian-inspired architecture gave way to one and two-story mail-order homes. 1 1/2 story examples include simple cottages such as 9030 Fairgrounds Road (c. 1900), 9005 Fairgrounds Road (1942), and 8935 Fairgrounds Road (1930). 9750 Bel Alton-Newtown Road is a stucco example. Brick examples include the one-story front-gable and wing 9143 Wills Avenue and 9055 Fairgrounds Road. Bel Alton includes a high concentration of historic resources. Many are unrestored or have been restored with modern materials. Several have been torn down in recent years.

8. Significance

Inventory No. CH-560

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

Specific dates 1873-1945 **Architect/Builder** n/a

Construction dates 1873-1945

Evaluation for:

National Register Maryland Register 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.)

Bel Alton Historic District is an important example of a rural Victorian village that developed during the era of railroad transportation in Charles County. Established in 1873, and originally known as Cox's Station, it is the one of the largest and the best-preserved railroad villages remaining in Charles County. Bel Alton was one of the principal stops along the Popes Creek Branch of the Baltimore and Potomac Railroad. Chartered in 1853, construction was delayed due to the outbreak of the Civil War. Construction began in 1868 and the first trains ran in 1873. Cox's Station, later renamed Bel Alton, was the first stop along the line during an inaugural run.

The railroad promised to boost the agricultural economy of Southern Maryland which had gradually been losing business to the larger farms of the mid-west since the opening Baltimore and Ohio Railroad in 1830. Prior to the railroad, goods were shipped via steamboats on the many landings that dotted the shorelines of the Potomac, Patuxent and Wicomico Rivers. Poor roads, often susceptible to weather made it difficult for inland farms to get their products to market.

Bel Alton was established on land belonging to Samuel Cox of nearby Rich Hill (CH-177 NR). As a noted Southern sympathizer, Cox was involved in providing aid to John Wilkes Booth during his escape through Southern Maryland after the assassination of Abraham Lincoln. At the beginning of the Civil War, His home was searched after he was accused of stockpiling weapons for the Confederate cause. In December 1872, Samuel Cox greeted a carload of railroad officials and guests who had participated in a trial run of the line. The group was entertained by Cox at Rich Hill where they stayed the night, returning to Baltimore the next morning. On January 1st, daily passenger service began running from Cox's Station to Bowie.

As part of an ambitious development plan, Cox's Station was renamed Bel Alton after the property was acquired by Robert D. Wills. Wills subdivided the property into over 200, 50 x 150ft lots and laid out First through Seventh Streets. 3 1/2 acres were set aside for the existing depot grounds which included a station and post office. Other structures at the time, as noted on the circa 1900 survey included a hotel, livery stables, store machine shop and adjacent to the tracks, the stores of J.R. Hancock, A.E. Lancaster and E.J. Collis. The railroad station was closed in Bel Alton in 1937. The town continued to be a local commercial center into the 1970's when the general store closed. A post office still operates in the town today.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Inventory No. CH-560

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of surveyed property n/a

Acreage of historical setting n/a

Quadrangle name Popes Creek

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

Verbal boundary description and justification

District boundary reflects the highest concentration of historic resources. Open space within boundary is reduced to a minimum while protecting significant viewsheds within the district.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Cathy Hardy/ Historic Sites Surveyor

organization Charles County Planning

dat 10/31/2003

street and number 200 Baltimore Street

telephone 301-396-5815

city or town La Plata

stat MD zip code 20646

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

MARYLAND INVENTORY OF HISTORIC PROPERTIES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Inventory No. CH-560

Section 9 Page 1

Bel Alton Historic District
name of property
Charles County, MD
county and state

Major Bibliographic References:

Brown, Jack D., et al. *Charles County, Maryland, A History*.
Charles County Bicentennial Committee, 1976.

Charles County Land Records, Charles County Courthouse, LaPlata, Maryland.

Hardy, Cathy Currey. "Phase III Final Report Charles County Historic Sites Survey."
Charles County Planning. July 2002.

KCI Technologies, Inc. *Draft--Historic Context For the U.S. 301 Southern Corridor
Transportation Study*. August 1996.

Klapthor, Margaret Brown. *The History of Charles County, Maryland*.
LaPlata, MD: Charles County Tercentenary, Inc., 1958.

Lewis, J. Frank & Company. *The Maryland Directory*. 1880. Baltimore

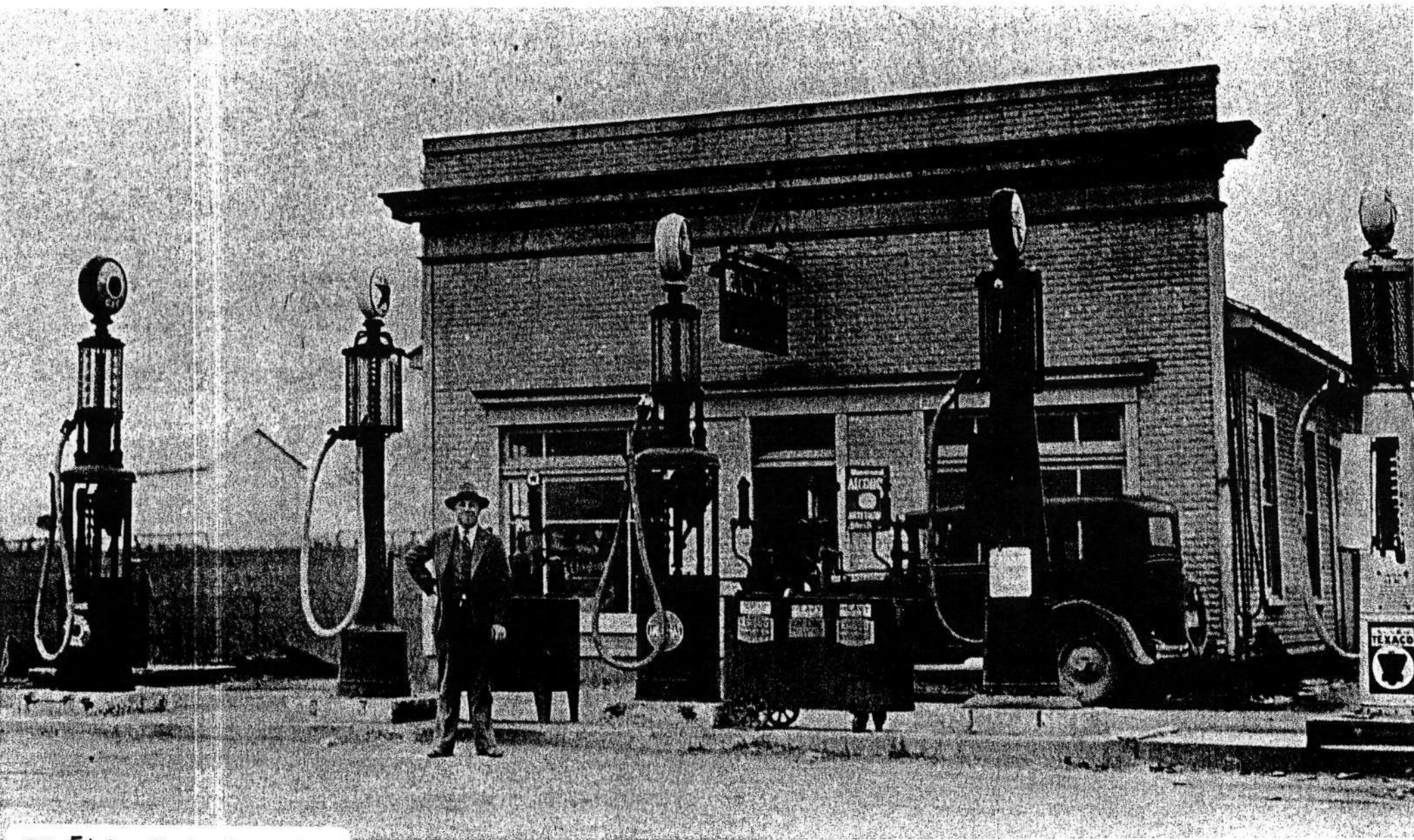
McGrath, Sally V. and Patricia J. McGuire, eds. *The Money Crop: Tobacco Culture in Calvert County,
Maryland*. Crownsville, MD: Maryland Historical and Cultural Publications, 1992.

Wearmouth, John M. "Baltimore and Potomac Railroad, The Popes Creek Branch." Baltimore and
Washington Chapters, National Railway Historical Society, Inc. 1986.

Maps

Griffith, Dennis. *Map of the State of Maryland Laid down from an actual Survey of all the
principal Waters, public Roads, and Divisions of the Counties therein....* Philadelphia, PA: J.
Tallance, Engraver, June 6, 1795.

Martenet, Simon J. *Martenet's Map of Maryland and the District of Columbia*. Baltimore, MD:
Simon J. Martenet, C.E., 1865; revised 1885.



CH- 560 Charles County, MD
Name: BEL ALTON
Location: _____
Quad: POPE'S CREEK

Photo: So MD oil 1996 calendar
Copy - Ch. Co planning office

Bel Alton Garage in the 1920's.

Walter Rice

Walter Mudd



Photo: Coll. of Southern Md.
Southern Md. Spindus-Center

Spindus-Center

Shop

Old Hotel

Old Store House

CH-560 Charles County, MD
 Name: BELMONT HIST DIST
 Location: BELMONT
 Quad: POPE'S CREEK

PLAT OF
BEL ALTON

Charles County
MARYLAND



CH-560 Charles County, MD

Name: BEL ALTON

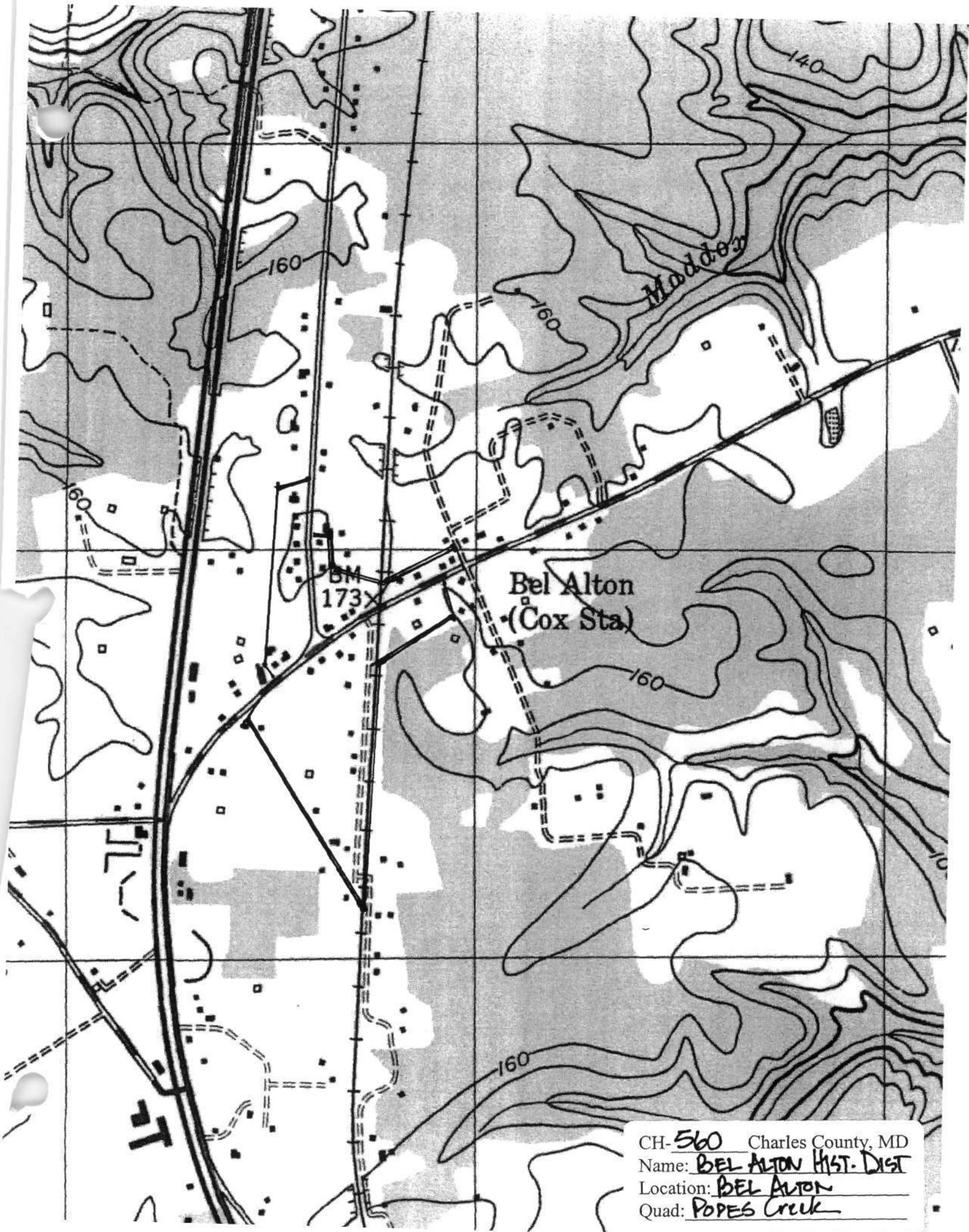
Location: Bel Alton

Quad: POPES CREEK



This property owned and for sale
by
The Southern Maryland Development Co.
Lots 50 ft. x 150 ft.

Charles County Plat —
Book T.S.T. 4 — Folio 618
Plat of Bel Alton



CH-560 Charles County, MD
Name: BEL ALTON HIST. DIST
Location: BEL ALTON
Quad: POPES Creek



PLUMBING & HEATING
COMMERCIAL-RESIDENTIAL-REMODELING
24 Hr. EMERGENCY SERVICE
301-934-0000-301-934-4444-301-752-2847

CH-560

BEL ALTON HISTORIC DIST

BEL ALTON MD

11/2003

C. HARDY

MD SHPO

9759 BEL ALTON NEWDOWN ROAD; GARAGE

10-19



CH 360

BEL ALTON HISTORIC DIST.

BEL ALTON, MO

11/2003

C. HARRY

MO SHPO

COTTAGE, 9159 BEL ALTON - NEWPOWN RD.

2 OF 19



CH-560

BEL ALTON HISTORIC DIST.

BEL ALTON, MD

11/2003

C. HARDY

MD SHPO

BEL ALTON-NEWTOWN RD. N SIDE; LOOKING E

30 of 19



CH-560

BEL ALTON HISTORIC DIST

BEL ALTON, MD

11/2003

C. HARRY

MD SHPO

BEL ALTON NEWTOWN ROAD, N SIDE, LOOKING W

40 of 19



CH-560
BEL ALTON HISTORIC DIST

BEL ALTON, MD

MD 3400

C. HARDY

11/2003

BEL ALTON NEWTOWN ROAD, LOOKING W; N. SIDE

9655; 9635

SOP 19



CH-560

BEL MON HISTORIC DISTRICT

BEL ALTON, MD

MD SHPO

11/2003

C. HARRY

9633 BEL ALTON - NEWTOWN, LOOKING W

60P19



CH-560

BEL ALTON HISTORIC DISTRICT

BEL ALTON, MD

11/2003 C. HARDY

MD SHPO

9625 BEL-ALTON - NEWTOWN RD LOOKING NW

TOP 19



CH 360

BEL ALTON - HISTORIC DIST

BEL ALTON, MD

C. HARDY

11/2003

MD SHPO

TWIN OAKS, LOOKING NW

8 of 19



CH 560

BEL ALTON HIST DIST.

BEL ALTON, MD

11/2003

C. HARDY

MD 3400

TWIN OAKS LOOKING NE

90P19



CH 560

BEL ALTON HIST DIST.

BEL ALTON, MD

C. HARDY

11/2003

MD SHPO

9630 BEL ALTON - NEWTOWN RD, LOOKING SE

10 of 19



CH-560

BEL ALTON HISTORIC DIST.

BEL ALTON

C. WARDY

11/2003

MD 34PO

9330 BEL ALTON - NEWTOWN RD, LOOKING NE

11-05-19



OH 560
BEL ALTON HISTORIC DISTRICT
BEL ALTON, MO
C. HARDY
11/2003
MO SAPO
SCHOOLHOUSE, LOOKING SW
2019



OH-560

BEL ALTON HISTORIC DIST.

BEL ALTON, MD

11/2003

G. HARDY

MD SHPO

FAIRGROUND ROAD, E SIDE at 9055

13 of 19



CH-560

BEL ALDN HISTORIC DIST

BEL ALTON, MD

11/2003

C. HARDY

MD SHPO

FAIRGROUND ROAD, E SIDE AT 9045 LOOKING N

14 OF 19



CH 560
BEL ALTON HISTORIC DIST
BEL ALTON, MD

11/2003

MD 5410

C. HADDY

8995 FAIRGROUND ROAD

15 of 19



CH-560

BEL ALTON HISTORIC DIST.

BEL ALTON, MD

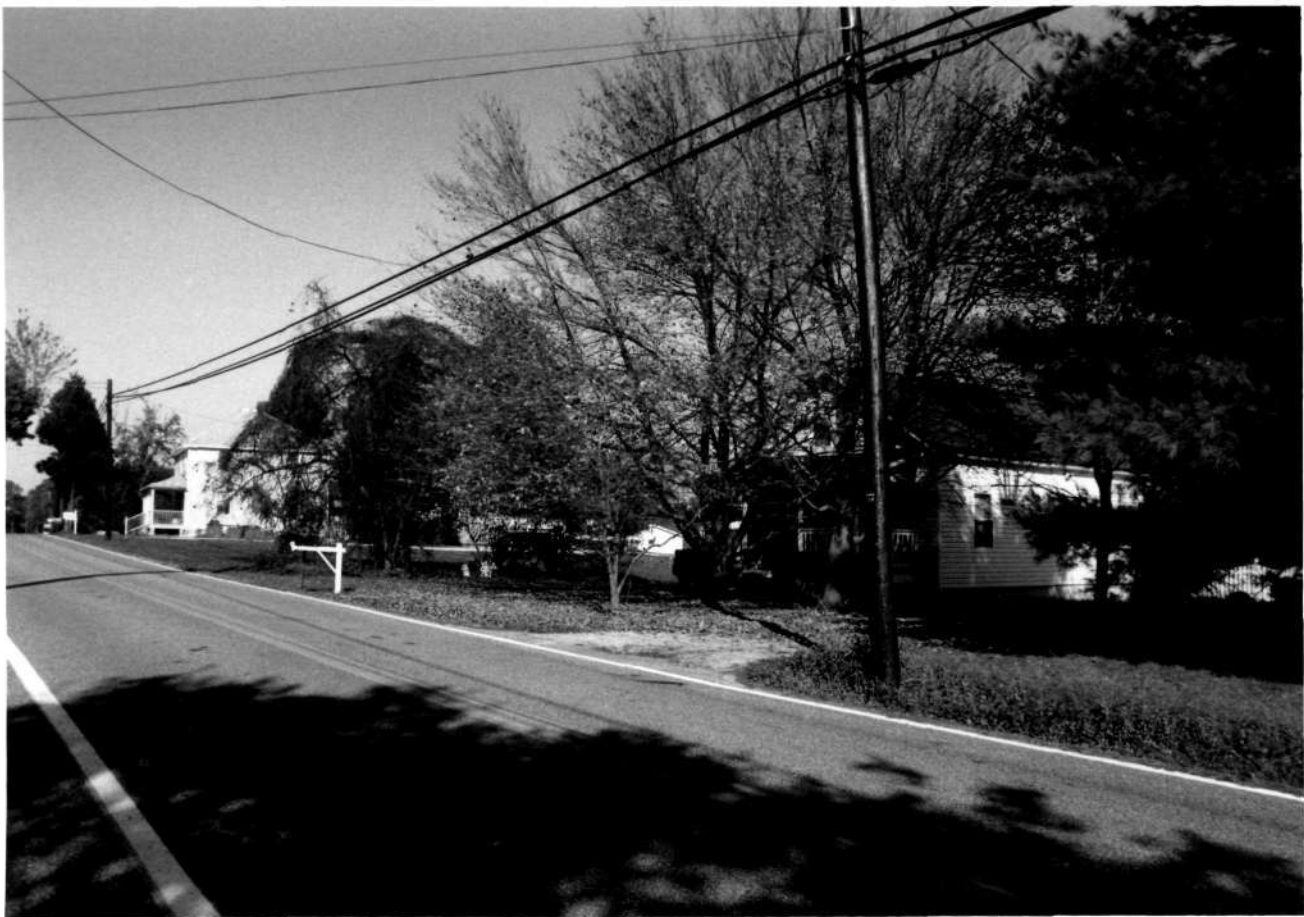
11/2003

MD SHPO

C. KARP

9005 FAIRGROUND ROAD

16 OF 19



CH-560

BEL ALTON HISTORIC DIST

BEL ALTON, MD

11/2003

MD SHPO

C. HARDY

W SIDE FAIRGROUND RD, LOOKING N

170F19

156



CH-560

BEL ALPN HISTORIC DIST

BEL ALPN, MD

4/2003

MD 5470

C. HARRY

9020 FAIRGROUND ROAD

18 OF 19



CH-560

BEL ALTON HISTORIC DIST

BEL ALTON, MD

11/2003

MD SUPD

C. HARDY

9185 WILSON RD; E SIDE

19 OF 19

CAPSULE SUMMARY
Bel Alton Survey District (CH: 560)
Bel Alton Newton Road and Fairgrounds Road
Charles County, Maryland

The Bel Alton Survey District, historically known as Cox's Station, is significant as the area where John Wilkes Booth and his accomplice, David Herold, hid after President Abraham Lincoln's assassination in 1865. The District is located along the Baltimore and Potomac rail line, and illustrates trends in community development that characterized southern Maryland during the late-19th century.

The Bel Alton survey district, located at the junction of Bel Alton Newtown Road and Fairgrounds Road, consists of fourteen buildings that were constructed between the last quarter of the 19th century and the first quarter of the 20th century. The Baltimore and Potomac Railroad, Wills Road, Doctor Spencer Road, and 5th Street intersect Bel Alton Newtown Road in the survey area. The buildings are set close to the road on grassy lots with mature trees and bushes and gravel or asphalt driveways. Comprised primarily of single dwellings, the small crossroads town also includes a commercial building, a post office, and historic barns. Of the ten single dwellings surveyed, the majority of the houses represent variations on the vernacular I-house. However, there is an example of a Colonial Revival style house and a Craftsman bungalow. Of the remaining buildings in the survey group, there are two barns that are purely vernacular in style, and a post office and commercial building which feature some elements of the Colonial Revival style.

MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST
MD INVENTORY OF HISTORIC PROPERTIES

Inventory No. CH: 560

=====

1. Name of Property

=====

historic name _____
common/other name Bel Alton Survey District

=====

2. Location

=====

street & number 9615, 9759, 9705, 9300, 9635, 9685 Bel Alton
Newtown Road, and 9035, 8995, 9055, 9045 Fairgrounds Road
not for publication _____ city or town Bel Alton vicinity X
state Maryland code MD county Charles code 17 zip code _____

=====

3. State/Federal Agency Certification N/A

=====

4. National Park Service Certification N/A

=====

5. Classification

=====

Ownership of Property (Check all that apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

Category of Property (Check only one box)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing		Noncontributing	
<u>14</u>	<u>0</u>		buildings
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>		sites
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>		structures
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>		objects
<u>14</u>	<u>0</u>		Total

Is this property listed in the National Register?

Yes _____ Name of Listing _____
No X

=====
6. Function or Use
=====

Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: <u>DOMESTIC</u>	Sub: <u>Single Dwelling</u>
<u>COMMERCE/TRADE</u>	<u>Specialty Store</u>
<u>GOVERNMENT</u>	<u>Post Office</u>
<u>AGRICULTURAL/SUBSISTENCE</u>	<u>Agricultural</u>
	<u>Outbuilding</u>

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: <u>DOMESTIC</u>	Sub: <u>Single Dwelling</u>
<u>COMMERCE/TRADE</u>	<u>Specialty Store</u>
<u>GOVERNMENT</u>	<u>Post Office</u>
<u>AGRICULTURAL/SUBSISTENCE</u>	<u>Agricultural</u>
	<u>Outbuilding</u>

=====
7. Description
=====

Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)

Colonial Revival
Craftsman
Vernacular

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)

Foundation Solid
Roof Gable: Asphalt Shingle
Gable: Standing Seam Metal
Walls Masonry: Brick Stretcher Bond
Frame: Vertical Board, Pressed Metal,
Aluminum Siding, Vinyl Siding,
Composition Board
other _____

Narrative Description (Describe the historic and current condition of the property.)

See Continuation Sheet No. 7-1

=====
8. Statement of Significance
=====

Applicable National Register Criteria (Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing)

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

Criteria Considerations (Mark "X" in all the boxes that apply.)

- A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B removed from its original location.
- C a birthplace or a grave.
- D a cemetery.
- E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F a commemorative property.
- G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties
Survey District, Bel Alton
Bel Alton Newtown Road and Fairgrounds Road
Charles County, Maryland

Inventory No. CH: 560
Page 4

=====
Areas of Significance (Enter categories from instructions)

Architecture
Community Planning and Development

Period of Significance 1880-1950

Significant Dates 1880
1920

Significant Person (Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

Cultural Affiliation Undefined

Architect/Builder Unknown

Narrative Statement of Significance (Explain the significance of the property.)

See Continuation Sheet No. 8-1

Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties
Survey District, Bel Alton
Bel Alton Newtown Road and Fairgrounds Road
Charles County, Maryland

Inventory No. CH: 560
Page 5

=====
9. Major Bibliographical References
=====

(Cite the books, articles, legal records, and other sources used in preparing this form.)

Carley, Rachel. *The Visual Dictionary of American Domestic Architecture*. New York, NY: Henry Holt and Company, 1994.

Charles County Land and Will Records. Charles County Courthouse and the Maryland State Archives, Annapolis, Maryland.

McAlester, Virginia and Lee. *A Field Guide to American Houses*. New York, NY: Alfred A. Knopf, 1985.

Rivoire, J. Richard. *Homeplaces: Traditional Domestic Architecture of Charles County, Maryland*. Crownsville, MD: Maryland Historical Trust, 1990.

=====
10. Geographical Data
=====

Acreage of Property Approximately 10 acres

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

The properties at the crossroads of Bel Alton Newtown Road and Fairgrounds Road are designated as Parcels 5, 56, 204, 60, 25, 10, 86, 79, 106, 100, 10, and 137, Grid 20 as indicated on Map 55.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The properties at the crossroads of Bel Alton Newtown Road and Fairgrounds Road have historically been associated with Parcels 5, 56, 204, 60, 25, 10, 86, 79, 106, 100, 10, and 137 since the buildings' construction in the last quarter of the 19th century and the first quarter of the 20th century.

=====
11. Form Prepared By
=====

name/title R. Weidlich and C. Novelli, Architectural Historians
organization EHT Traceries, Inc. date July 20, 1999
street & number 5420 Western Avenue telephone 301/656-5283
city or town Chevy Chase state MD zip code 20815

=====
12. Property Owner
=====

name _____
street & number _____ telephone _____
city or town _____ state MD zip code _____

MARYLAND INVENTORY OF HISTORIC PROPERTIES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Inventory No. CH: 560

Section 7 Page 1

Bel Alton Survey District
name of property
Charles County, Maryland
county and state

=====

The Bel Alton survey district, located at the junction of Bel Alton Newtown Road and Fairgrounds Road, consists of fourteen buildings that were constructed between the last quarter of the 19th century and the first quarter of the 20th century. The Baltimore and Potomac Railroad, Wills Road, Doctor Spencer Road, and 5th Street intersect Bel Alton Newtown Road in the survey area. The buildings are set close to the road on grassy lots with mature trees and bushes and gravel or asphalt driveways. Comprised primarily of single dwellings, the small crossroads town also includes a commercial building, a post office, and historic barns. Of the ten single dwellings surveyed, the majority of the houses represent variations on the vernacular I-house. However, there is an example of a Colonial Revival style house and a Craftsman bungalow. Of the remaining buildings in the survey group, there are two barns that are purely vernacular in style, and a post office and commercial building which feature some elements of the Colonial Revival style.

Like many I-houses of the late-19th and early-20th centuries, most of the I-houses in the survey group feature wood frame construction, standing seam metal, gable roofs, and front porches. The buildings have been re-clad and feature a variety of exterior materials, including asphalt sheeting, aluminum siding, vinyl siding, and composition board siding. A few of the houses retain their original 2/2 or 6/6 wood windows, but most have been replaced with 1/1, 4/4, 6/1, and 6/6 aluminum windows. For the most part, the houses are devoid of decorative architectural elements. However, one house has a Queen Anne influenced bargeboard and another features Italianate style brackets at the eaves.

The Colonial Revival style house is typical of those built in the first quarter of the 20th century. Constructed of brick laid in stretcher bond, the two-story, three-bay house features a one-story side wing, 6/6 windows with rowlock sills, and a front gable portico. The Craftsman style bungalow is characteristic of the type. Influenced by the Arts and Crafts Movement, bungalows of this period are often one-and-a-half stories in height with wide, overhanging roofs and deep porches.

Currently housing the Gragan & Sons Glass Company, the one-story, three bay wide commercial building is clad in pressed tin siding that resembles brick facing. A parapet wall fronts the front gable, standing seam metal roof. Fixed one-light windows flank the centered entry and a continuous molded wood lintel caps the three

MARYLAND INVENTORY OF HISTORIC PROPERTIES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Inventory No. CH: 560

Section 7 Page 2

Bel Alton Survey District
name of property
Charles County, Maryland
county and state

=====
openings. Influenced by the Colonial Revival style, a dentil-
molded wood cornice runs along the top of the parapet wall. The
post office appears to have been constructed in three separate
phases. The center section is the earliest and features a front
gable roof with cornice returns, a centered entry, and 2/2 wood
windows. The side gable addition was built as part of the second
phase and features wood frame construction and 3/1 wood windows.

Last, the flat roof masonry addition with casement windows was
constructed along the east elevation.

The two barns in the Bel Alton survey group represent the
agricultural history of the area. One-story in height, the wood
frame barns are clad in vertical board siding that is painted red.

The gable roofs are clad in standing seam metal and one features
a half-hipped wrap-around addition. The barns are typical of those
built in Charles County during the early-20th century.

MARYLAND INVENTORY OF HISTORIC PROPERTIES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Inventory No. CH: 560

Section 8 Page 1

Bel Alton Survey District
name of property
Charles County, Maryland
county and state

=====
The Bel Alton Survey District, historically known as Cox's Station, is significant as the area where John Wilkes Booth and his accomplice, David Herold, hid after President Abraham Lincoln's assassination in 1865. The District is located along the Baltimore and Potomac rail line, and illustrates trends in community development that characterized southern Maryland during the late-19th century. The buildings also reflect traditional vernacular domestic and commercial forms.

According to historical markers, after President Lincoln's assassination in 1865, John Wilkes Booth and his accomplice David Herold hid in a nearby pine thicket from April 16th to April 21st, while Union troops searched for them. Aided by Thomas A. Jones who brought them food and newspapers, Booth and Herold escaped to Virginia.

Following the Civil War, railroads made the greatest impact upon community development in southern Maryland, particularly the completion of the Baltimore and Potomac Railroad's (B & P) main line from Bowie in Prince George's County to Pope's Creek in Charles County in 1872. Small towns, such as Cox's Station, grew when they became regular stops on the B & P line, and developed as service centers for the surrounding rural areas. In 1887, Cox's Station contained 60 residents. The Southern Maryland Development Company proceeded to plat the town in 1891, dividing it into 50-foot by 150-foot lots which were put up for sale. Running in a north/south direction, the land was divided by First through Seventh Streets. Intersecting these roads in an east/west direction were Fir Street, Elm Street, Chestnut Street Beach Street, Ash Street, Potomac Street, and Hickory Street. However, it appears as if this subdivision and the introduction of new roads never occurred, as Fifth Street is the only one of this group that exists.

Architecturally, the buildings display common vernacular residential, commercial, and agricultural types: predominantly the I-house, or I-house variations, the front-gabled general store - with and without the parapet, or false front, and the barn. A recent addition to the housing stock includes the dwelling at 9055, which reflects the popularity of the Colonial Revival style during the mid-20th century.

MARYLAND INVENTORY OF HISTORIC PROPERTIES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Inventory No. CH: 560

Section 8 Page 2

Bel Alton Survey District
name of property
Charles County, Maryland
county and state

=====
A prevalent 19th-century vernacular house type across the mid-Atlantic region, the I-house was one room deep, two stories in height, and three or five bays wide, with a central entry. I-houses usually had a porch on the front elevation and a kitchen wing in the rear, due to the narrowness of the main core. On the interior, a central passage separated the two rooms on the first floor, while the second floor contained either two or four bedchambers. During the mid- and late-19th century, pre-cut ornamental detailing was commonly added to the traditional I-house, as seen on the house at 9685 Bel Alton Newtown Road. The three houses in this survey district which are variations on the I-house form are two bays deep, instead of the standard one-bay depth.

Cross-road general stores were commonly frame structures sheathed in clapboards; they served as a place where farmers could purchase groceries, feed supplies, and hardware. These buildings usually had front-gable or parapeted roofs and typically featured large display windows and a sign prominently featured over the entrance.

Decorative features were few, predominantly limited to a transom over the door and decorative signs over the entrance or in front of the store. These establishments were in many ways the focal point of rural communities, serving as the post office, the community social center, and a place to exchange news well into the 20th century. The store at 9579 Bel Alton Newtown Road and the Bel Alton Post Office on the same road are excellent examples of this type. The residence at 9705 Bel Alton Newtown Road, with its front gable, may have also originally been a commercial building.

The two barns at the corner of Bel Alton Newtown Road and Dr. Spencer Road are typical of those built in Charles County during the early-20th century. The barn was the principal building erected on a farm which provided space for cows, horses, equipment, and hay, straw, or tobacco storage. Throughout the 19th century, barns increased in size or were newly built to include space for smaller animals, such as poultry and pigs, and as a place for the threshing and storage of grain. Their size also increased during the 19th century as the introduction of improved equipment led to more efficient and profitable operations, and consequently, to an increased need for storage facilities. Typically, livestock was housed on the lower level, while the upper level was reserved for the storage of hay and straw, and the threshing and storage of feed grains.

MARYLAND INVENTORY OF HISTORIC PROPERTIES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Inventory No. CH: 560

Section 8 Page 3

Bel Alton Survey District
name of property
Charles County, Maryland
county and state

=====

National Register Eligibility:

The Bel Alton Survey District is not eligible due to the fact that it does not meet National Register Criteria A, B, C, or D. Preliminary research has not revealed any association between the buildings and events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history (Criterion A) or the lives of persons significant in our past (Criterion B). Although the buildings provides an example of vernacular rural architecture, they are neither unusual nor distinguished; they do not represent the work of a master or display high artistic merit (Criterion C). There is no evidence that the properties are likely to yield information important in history or prehistory (Criterion D). Thus, the survey district is not National Register-eligible.

MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST

Eligibility recommended _____ Not Recommended X

Comments:

Review, OPS: *[Signature]* Date: 11/3/99

Reviewer, NR Program: _____ Date: _____

MARYLAND INVENTORY OF HISTORIC PROPERTIES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Inventory No. CH: 560

Bel Alton Survey District
name of property
Charles County, Maryland
county and state

=====

HISTORIC CONTEXT:

Geographic Organization: Western Shore

Chronological/Development Period (s):

Industrial/Urban Dominance (1870-1930)
Modern Period (1930-present)

Prehistoric/Historic Period Theme (s):

Architecture, Landscape, and
Community Planning

RESOURCE TYPE(S)

Category: District

Historic Environment: Rural

Historic Function (s): DOMESTIC/Single Dwelling
COMMERCE/TRADE/Specialty Store
GOVERNMENT/Post Office
AGRICULTURAL/SUBSISTENCE/Agricultural
Outbuilding

Known Design Source: Unknown

CHARLES COUNTY FAIRGROUNDS
CH-559



BEL ALTON SURVEY DISTRICT
CH-560

9030 CRAIN HIGHWAY
CH-565

SERVICE STATION, CRAIN HIGHWAY
CH-563

9295 CRAIN HIGHWAY
CH-566

MOTEL, CRAIN HIGHWAY
CH-561

BEL ALTON HIGH SCHOOL
CH-562

Pope's Creek USGS Quad



CH-520



CH: 560

BEL ALTON SURVEY DISTRICT
9759 BEL ALTON NEWTOWN ROAD
CHARLES COUNTY, MD

TRACERIE C

JUNE 1999

MD SHPO

south corner

1 of 18



CH:560

BEL ALTON SURVEY DISTRICT

9700 BLOCK, BEL ALTON NEWTOWN ROAD
CHARLES COUNTY, MD

TRAZERIES

JUNE 1999

MD SHPO

southeast elevation

2 of 18



CH:560

BEL ALTON SURVEY DISTRICT
9300 BEL ALTON NEWTOWN ROAD
CHARLES COUNTY, MD
TRACERIES

JUNE 1999

MD SHPO
northwest elevation

3 of 18



CH:560

BEL ALTON SURVEY DISTRICT
CHARLES COUNTY, MD

TRAZERIES

JUNE 1999

MD SHPD

view to the north

4 of 18



CH:560

BEL ALTON SURVEY DISTRICT
9705 BEL ALTON NEWTOWN ROAD
CHARLES COUNTY, MD
TRAZERIES
JUNE 1999
MD SHPO

north corner

5 of 8



CH: 560

BEL ALTON SURVEY DISTRICT
BEL ALTON NEWTOWN ROAD
CHARLES COUNTY, MD

TRACERIES

JUNE 1999
MD SHPO

South corner

6 of 18



CH:560

BEL ALTON SURVEY DISTRICT
9685 BEL ALTON NEWTOWN ROAD
CHARLES COUNTY, MD

TRACERIES

JUNE 1999

MD SHPO

south corner

7 of 18



CH:560

BEL ALTON SURVEY DISTRICT
9035 BEL ALTON NEWTOWN ROAD
CHARLES COUNTY, MD

TRACERIES

JUNE 1999

MD SHPO

southeast elevation

8 of 18



CH: 560

BEL ALTON SURVEY DISTRICT
9015 BEL ALTON NEWTOWN ROAD
CHARLES COUNTY, MD

TRACERIES

JUNE 1999

MD SHPO

south corner

9 of 18



CH:560

BEL ALTON SURVEY DISTRICT
9500 - 9600 BLOCK, BEL ALTON HEWITOWN ROAD
CHARLES COUNTY, MD

TRACERIES

JUNE 1999

MD SHPO

barns, south corners

10 of 18



CH:560

BEL ALTON SURVEY GROUP
CHARLES COUNTY, MD
TRACERIES

JUNE 1999

MD SHPO

view to the south

11 of 18



CH:560

BEL ALTON SURVEY DISTRICT

GOSS FAIRGROUNDS ROAD

CHARLES COUNTY, MD

TRACERIES

JUNE 1999

MD SHPO

east elevation

12 of 18



CH:560

BEL ALTON SURVEY DISTRICT
9045 FAIRGROUNDS ROAD
CHARLES COUNTY, MD

TRACERIES

JUNE 1999

MD SHPO

southeast corner

13 of 18



CH:560

BEL ALTON SURVEY DISTRICT

9035 FAIRGROUNDS ROAD

CHARLES COUNTY, MD

TRACEZIES

JUNE 1999

MD SHPO

southeast corner

14 of 18



CH:560

BEL ALTON SURVEY DISTRICT
8995 FAIRGROUNDS ROAD
CHARLES COUNTY, MD
TRACERIES

JUNE 1999

MD SHPO

northeast corner

15 of 18



CH: 560

BEL ALTON SURVEY DISTRICT
CHARLES COUNTY, MD

TRACERIES

JUNE 1999

MD SHPO

view to the northwest

16 of 18



RAIL CROSSING
CROSS ROAD

WILLS

STOP

JOHN WILKES BOOTH
AND
DAVID HEROLD
REMANED HERE FROM APRIL 24
TO 25 1865 IN A HIDEOUT FOR
THEIR FUGITIVE FROM FUGITIVE
REARMS FOR JOHN FORD &
THE NEWSPAPER

EA:560

Bel Alton Survey District

Charles County, MD

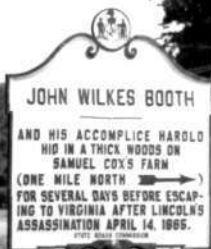
Traceries

June 1999

MD SHPO

view of marker looking northeast

17 of 18



JOHN WILKES BOOTH

AND HIS ACCOMPLICE HAROLO
HID IN A THICK WOODS ON
SAMUEL COX'S FARM
(ONE MILE NORTH →)
FOR SEVERAL DAYS BEFORE ESCAP-
ING TO VIRGINIA AFTER LINCOLN'S
ASSASSINATION APRIL 14, 1865.

STATE HISTORICAL COMMISSION

CH: 560

Bel Alton Survey District

Charles County, MD

Traceries

June 1999

MD SHPO

view of marker looking northwest

18 of 18