CH-810

Pope's Creek Branch of the Pennsylvania Railroad

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.

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Last Updated: 10-11-2011

MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST
DETERMINATION OF ELIGIBILITY FORM

NR Eligible: yes ___ no ___

Property Name: Pope's Creek Branch of the Pennsylvania Railroad Inventory Number: CH-810

Address: Vicinity of Billingsley Road, Old Washington Hghwy., and Robert Crain Highway east of U.S. Rt. 301 Historic district: ___ yes X no

City: Waldorf Zip Code: ___ County: Charles

USGS Quadrangle(s): LaPlata

Property Owner: CSX Transportation Tax Account ID Number: ___

Tax Map Parcel Number(s): ___ Tax Map Number: multiple

Project: Cove Point Expansion Project Agency: FERC

Agency Prepared By: GAI Consultants, Inc.

Preparer's Name: Matthew Hyland Date Prepared: 9/8/2004

Documentation is presented in: ___

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

Criteria: X 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 X no Name: ___ Date: ___

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

This linear resource consists of a single set of active rails, wood ties, and stone ballast. There are no structures or buildings associated with the railroad in the project's area of potential effect. The resource is not located within an existing historic district.

The railroad played an interesting role in the transportation and economic history of southern Maryland. For instance, the Maryland General Assembly granted the original charter for this line to the Baltimore & Potomac RR in 1853. Lack of sufficient funding and the Civil War delayed its construction. After the Civil War, the Baltimore & Potomac RR approached the Pennsylvania RR for funding to complete its infrastructure. As a means to compete with the Baltimore & Ohio RR for rail traffic in the Washington, D.C., market, the PRR took advantage of the opportunity to operate the line as a subsidiary in 1867. The PRR exploited a clause in the Baltimore & Potomac RR's charter that allowed for the construction of a branch line and the right to connect with the lines of existing and future railroads. The PRR completed the line between Pope's Creek and Bowie in 1873. From Pope's Creek, the railroad made a connection with the Richmond, Fredericksburg & Potomac RR via barge to Aquia Creek. In 1902, the Pope's Creek Branch was consolidated into the PRR's Philadelphia, Baltimore, & Washington RR. This branch line contributed to the economic development of southern Maryland as well as the development of American corporate capitalism as seen in the history of the PRR. Freight depots along the line developed into towns. For instance, La Plata, the Charles County seat,

MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST REVIEW

Eligibility recommended X **Eligibility not recommended** ___

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

MHT Comments:

Andrew Lewis 6/12/06
Reviewer, Office of Preservation Services **Date**

RKintz 6/8/06
Reviewer, National Register Program **Date**

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began as a small station and warehouse node along the line in 1873. The line allowed local farmers access to regional and national markets. In the last half of the twentieth century, the line served a PEPCO power plant at Morgantown by hauling coal to the plant (Goldsmith 2004).

This linear resource is recommended as eligible for NRHP listing under Criterion A for its association with events in the history of southern Maryland's economic development and the history of American corporate capitalism. It is not recommended for listing under Criterion B or Criterion C. It lacks distinctive engineering and an association with an individual of significance in history. Further directed historical research and field survey would support its nomination to the NRHP under Criterion A and establish a defensible NRHP boundary for this linear resource.

References

Goldsmith, D.
2004 "A Condensed History of the Pope's Creek Line," http://www.traingod.railfan.net/history.html, accessed 9 September 2004.

MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST REVIEW

Eligibility recommended _____ **Eligibility not recommended** _____

Criteria: ___A ___B ___C ___D **Considerations:** ___A ___B ___C ___D ___E ___F ___G

MHT Comments:

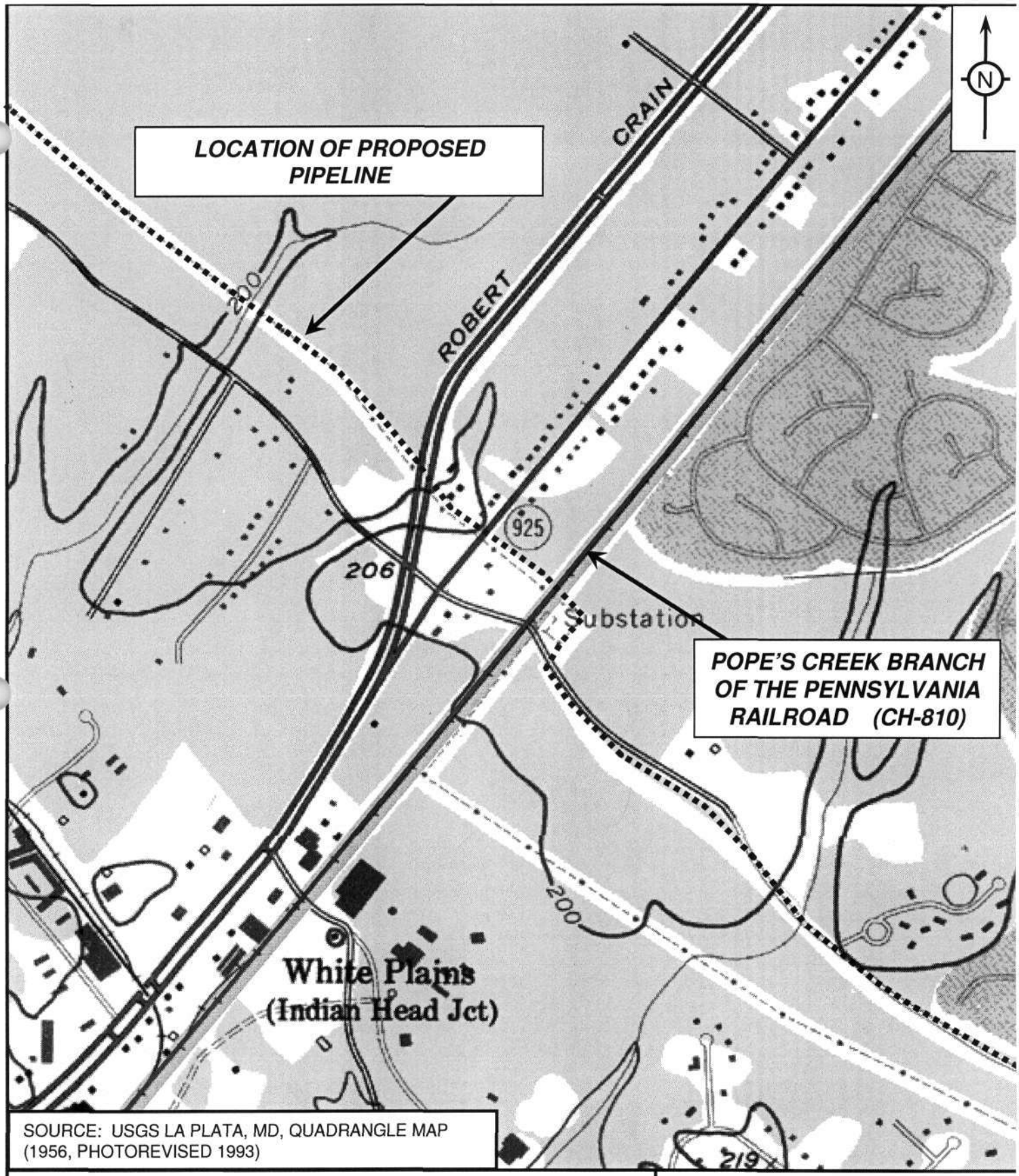
_____ _____

Reviewer, Office of Preservation Services **Date**

_____ _____

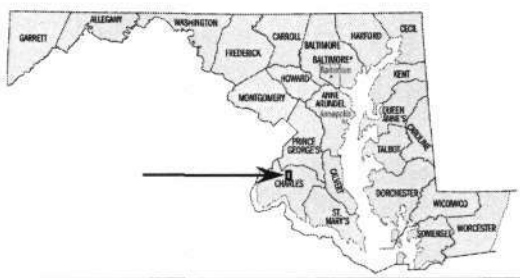
Reviewer, National Register Program **Date**

CH-810



SOURCE: USGS LA PLATA, MD, QUADRANGLE MAP
(1956, PHOTOREVISED 1993)

gai consultants



FIGURE

LOCATION OF POPE'S CREEK BRANCH OF THE PENNSYLVANIA RAILROAD (CH-810)

COVE POINT PIPELINE EXPANSION PROJECT



1/2 CH 810 Popes Creek Branch of PRR
Waldorf vicinity, Charles County
Matthew G. Hyland
GAI Consultants, Inc
Facing southwest
[illegible] 1984



2/2 CH 810 Popes Creek Branch PRR.

Waldorf vicinity, Charles County

Matthew G. Hyland

GAI Consultants, Inc.

Facing northeast

August 2004