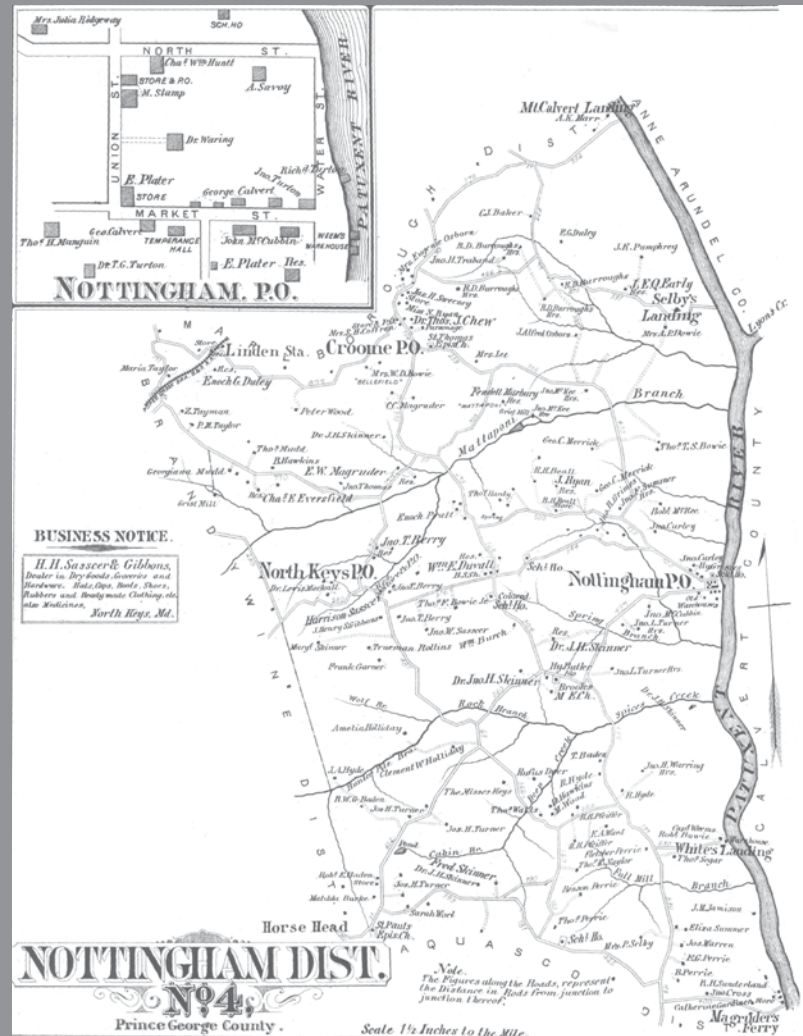


# Postbellum Archeological Resources in Prince George's County, Maryland

## A Historic Context and Research Guide



The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission  
Prince George's County Planning Department  
14741 Governor Oden Bowie Drive Upper Marlboro, MD 20772

[www.mncppc.org](http://www.mncppc.org)

# The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission

Royce Hanson, Chairman  
Samuel J. Parker, Jr., AICP, Vice Chairman

## Officers

Patricia Colihan Barney, Executive Director

Al Warfield, Acting Secretary-Treasurer

Adrian R. Gardner, General Counsel

The MarylandNational Capital Park and Planning Commission is a bicounty agency, created by the General Assembly of Maryland in 1927. The Commission's geographic authority extends to the great majority of Montgomery and Prince George's Counties: the Maryland-Washington Regional District (MNCPPC planning jurisdiction) comprises 1,001 square miles, while the Metropolitan District (parks) comprises 919 square miles, in the two counties.

The Commission has three major functions:

- The preparation, adoption, and, from time to time, amendment or extension of the General Plan for the physical development of the MarylandWashington Regional District;
- The acquisition, development, operation, and maintenance of a public park system; and
- In Prince George's County only, the operation of the entire county public recreation program.

The Commission operates in each county through a Planning Board appointed by and responsible to the county government. All local plans, recommendations on zoning amendments, administration of subdivision regulations, and general administration of parks are responsibilities of the Planning Boards.

The Prince George's County Department of Planning (MNCPPC):

- Our mission is to help preserve, protect and manage the county's resources by providing the highest quality planning services and growth management guidance and by facilitating effective intergovernmental and citizen involvement through education and technical assistance.
- Our vision is to be a model planning department of responsive and respected staff who provide superior planning and technical services and work cooperatively with decisionmakers, citizens and other agencies to continuously improve development quality and the environment and act as a catalyst for positive change.

Prince George's County Planning Board

Samuel J. Parker, Jr., AICP, Chairman

Sylvester J. Vaughns, Vice Chairman

Sarah Cavitt

Jesse Clark

John H. Squire

Montgomery County Planning Board

Royce Hanson, Chairman

Joseph Alfandre

Norman Dreyfuss

Amy Presley

Marye Wells-Harley

# Table of Contents

<b>List of Figures</b> . . . . .	v
<b>List of Tables</b> . . . . .	vi
<b>Summary</b> . . . . .	ix
<b>Chapter 1. Introduction</b> . . . . .	1
Project Methods . . . . .	3
<b>Chapter 2. Geographical and Historical Overview</b> . . . . .	7
Geographical Overview . . . . .	8
Exploration, Colonial, and Antebellum Periods: A Brief Overview . . . . .	12
War, Reconstruction, and Industrialization (circa 1860–circa 1890) . . . . .	15
Federal Growth and the Progressive Era (1890–1917) . . . . .	20
The World Wars and the Time Between (1917–1945) . . . . .	22
United States Hegemony and Early Cold War (1945–1958) . . . . .	24
Summary . . . . .	27
<b>Chapter 3. Agriculture</b> . . . . .	29
Introduction . . . . .	29
Postbellum Labor Practices . . . . .	31
Crops and Livestock . . . . .	36
Technological Change . . . . .	45
Farms and Their Organization . . . . .	46
Agricultural Property Types . . . . .	54
Research Topics and Questions . . . . .	58
<b>Chapter 4. Industry and Services</b> . . . . .	63
Muirkirk Furnace and Iron Mines . . . . .	68
Laurel Industries . . . . .	69
Mills . . . . .	71
Mining and Quarrying . . . . .	73
Blacksmiths . . . . .	74
Telecommunications . . . . .	75
Commercial Services . . . . .	76
Industry and Labor . . . . .	79
Research Questions . . . . .	80

<b>Chapter 5. Military Facilities</b> . . . . .	85
Pre-Civil War Facilities . . . . .	85
Civil War Facilities . . . . .	86
World War I Facilities . . . . .	89
World War II Facilities . . . . .	90
Research Questions and Topics . . . . .	92
<b>Chapter 6. The African-American Experience</b> . . . . .	95
Segregation and Jim Crow . . . . .	96
Churches and Benevolent Societies . . . . .	98
Communities . . . . .	101
Freedmen’s Bureau, Rosenwald Schools, and Public Education . . . . .	103
Research Questions and Topics . . . . .	106
<b>Chapter 7. Government Facilities</b> . . . . .	109
Beltsville Agricultural Research Center . . . . .	109
University of Maryland and Bowie State University . . . . .	110
Local Schools . . . . .	111
County Courthouse, Jail, and Alms House . . . . .	113
Research Questions and Topics . . . . .	114
<b>Chapter 8. Transportation</b> . . . . .	117
Wharves, Ferries, and Landings . . . . .	117
Roads . . . . .	121
Railroads . . . . .	123
Air Transport . . . . .	126
Research Questions and Topics . . . . .	129
<b>Chapter 9. Settlement</b> . . . . .	133
Settlement Patterns . . . . .	133
Suburbanization . . . . .	137
Rural Communities and Residences . . . . .	142
Public Health . . . . .	145
Public Utilities . . . . .	146
Research Questions and Topics . . . . .	147
<b>Chapter 10. Registration Requirements</b> . . . . .	149
Known Postbellum Archeological Sites in Prince George’s County . . . . .	149
Phase I Survey Investigations . . . . .	151
Phase II NRHP Evaluation Investigations . . . . .	152
Phase III Mitigation Data Recovery Investigations . . . . .	157
Significance Requirements . . . . .	157
The Future of Postbellum Archeological Sites in Prince George’s County . . . . .	161

**References Cited** . . . . . 165

**Appendix A. Archival and Library Repositories** . . . . . 189

**Appendix B. Postbellum Post Offices** . . . . . 205

**List of Figures**

1. Comparison of Prince George’s County  
by race between 1860 and 1950. . . . . 9

2. Modern configuration (2008) of Prince George’s County . . . . . 10

3. Historic chronology of Prince George’s County  
from 1570 to the Civil War. . . . . 13

4. Postbellum historic chronology of Prince George’s County  
from 1870 to the present . . . . . 16

5. Comparison of numbers of livestock species in Prince George’s County  
between 1860 and 1950 by ten-year increments . . . . . 42

6. Farmstead organization plans . . . . . 48

7. The Nancy Talbot farm in 1861 and 1878  
showing structural additions . . . . . 49

8. Farms discussed in text. . . . . 51

9. Site plans of Mackall and Montpelier of Moore’s Plains farms  
discussed in text . . . . . 52

10. Site plans of Suit/Joy’s Fortune and Dixon farms  
discussed in text . . . . . 53

11. Industrial and commercial sites discussed in text . . . . . 64

12. Laurel detail from 1861 Martenet map  
showing manufacturing facilities . . . . . 70

13. Horse Head detail from 1878 Hopkins map  
showing mill location. . . . . 72

14. Bladensburgh detail from 1878 Hopkins map  
showing local businesses . . . . . 77

15. Military sites discussed in text . . . . .	85
16. Detail of Fort Foote . . . . .	87
17. African-American churches and communities discussed in text . . . . .	99
18. African-American schools discussed in text . . . . .	103
19. Government facilities discussed in text . . . . .	109
20. Examples of wharves and landings in Prince George’s County from the 1878 Hopkins map . . . . .	118
21. Transportation facilities discussed in text . . . . .	119
22. Detail from 1878 Hopkins map showing Bowie Station. . . . .	124
23. Settlements discussed in text. . . . .	134
24. Detail of 1907 topographic maps showing rural settlement patterns . . . . .	136
25. 1939 Sanborn map showing suburbanization in Fairmount Heights. . . . .	140
26. Detail of community businesses near Glendale from 1878 Hopkins map . . . . .	144
27. Detail of Tee Bee from 1878 Hopkins map . . . . .	145

**List of Tables**

1. Population of Prince George’s County by race between 1860 and 1950. . . . .	9
2. Farm characteristics of Prince George’s County from 1860 to 1950. . . . .	30
3. Number of farms according to farm tenure (1880 and 1890 censuses) . . . . .	34
4. Number of farms according to farm tenure and race (1900–1930 and 1950 censuses) . . . . .	34
5. Crop production in Prince George’s County between 1860 and 1950. . . . .	39

6. Livestock production in Prince George’s County between 1860 and 1950. . . . .	41
7. Byproducts produced in Prince George’s County between 1860 and 1950. . . . .	42
8. Manufactures statistics for Prince George’s County between 1860 and 1930. . . . .	65
9. Types of manufactures in Prince George’s County between 1860 and 1950. . . . .	65
10. Occupations in the Town and District of Laurel between 1860 and 1880. . . . .	66
11. Occupations in the Upper Marlboro District between 1860 and 1920. . . . .	67
12. Occupations in the Piscataway District between 1860 and 1920. . . . .	67
13. School attendance by race in Prince George’s County between 1870 and 1950. . . . .	112
14. Airfields in Prince George’s County. . . . .	127
15. Selected attributes of 21 postbellum archeological site NRHP evaluation investigations . . . . .	154





# Summary

Prince George's County adopted regulations in 2005 that were intended to ensure that archeological sites deemed significant to understanding county history be identified as part of the subdivision review process. Historic sites dating to the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries (circa 1865–1950s) are one of the most common categories of resources identified in archeological surveys in the county, with over 300 examples in the Maryland Historical Trust site files as of October 2007. However, additional investigations are being recommended at few—if any—of these sites, by consulting archeologists. Still, this time period witnessed many changes, including the subdivision of large plantations, significant changes in the relations of production, establishment of African-American-owned farms and communities, new technologies, transportation enhancements, and the growth of suburbia. Nevertheless, the contribution of the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth-century archeological sites to the understanding of these changes in the county is either unknown or unappreciated.

In 2007 The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission (M-NCPPC), Prince George's County Planning Department engaged Greenhorne & O'Mara to compile this postbellum historic context and research guide for use by archeologists and county staff when investigating postbellum sites and evaluating their potential historical significance. The project was completed in March 2009. For the purposes of this study, the postbellum period was defined as beginning with the termination of the Civil War in 1865 (although events prior to this date are by necessity discussed) and ending in 1958, which equates with the "50-year rule" for National Register eligibility.

Seven themes or topics were identified as being most closely associated with postbellum archeological sites in the county: agriculture, industry and services, military facilities, the African-American experience in the county, nonmilitary government facilities, transportation, and settlement, including the rise of suburbia. This report is not intended to be a comprehensive overview of the postbellum history of the county but to concentrate on those seven topics that have been identified as having significant archeological signatures and, which can be informed by archeological investigations. An overview is provided to identify each topic's significance and provide avenues of further research. With these thoughts in mind, it is best to view this context as a concise and practical research guide for the public interested in aspects of the history of postbellum Prince George's County and archeologists confronted with evaluating the significance of particular postbellum archeological sites.

Chapter 10 of this report summarizes the current state of information available on postbellum archeological sites in the county and offers several

suggestions concerning the future treatment of archeological sites from this time period. Although it is county policy that all archaeological sites be registered with the Maryland Historical Trust, a review of archaeological survey reports indicates that this is not always done. Further, although 361 postbellum sites had been identified by 2007, approximately 20 had been evaluated by Phase II level investigations, and only one by Phase III level excavations. This confirms the impression that staff had concerning the treatment of postbellum sites in the county by the archeological consulting community and further highlights the need for this resource guide and context.

To aid both consulting archaeologists and staff, guidance on the operationalization of county significance requirements is offered. Nine recommendations are also made, centering on recognizing and registering postbellum sites, the use of significance requirements, with special emphasis on the concept of rarity, clearly stating investigation findings, expanding options for mitigation of development-related impacts, and expanding the number of sites investigated. Staff should then revisit the question of the ability of postbellum sites to provide information on the history of the county after an adequate period to determine whether the approach advocated in this document has proven useful. A list of useful archives and libraries, and a list of post offices that were in operation during the postbellum period in Prince George's County is provided.

While formulating this research guide and context, it became clear that the sensitive treatment of postbellum archeological sites presents a challenge to archeologists, the wider historic preservation community, and the people of the county. Many of the issues cited by archeologists concerning postbellum archeological sites lie at the center of this challenge: postbellum sites are numerous, they are recent in time, standing examples are often present, we lack the perspective of time regarding their historic importance, they are not the focus of attention for many academics, and they do present avenues of investigation and understanding outside of archeology. But just as clearly, many postbellum resources are valued by the people of the county. Such diverse postbellum standing properties as the Goddard Spacecraft Magnetic Test Facility, College Park Airport, the Greenbelt Center School, the Bowie Railroad buildings, and the Hyattsville Post Office have been recognized as locally significant historic resources.

At its best, historic preservation represents an ongoing dialogue within society regarding what is truly important and reflective of our past experience as a people. This dialogue incorporates many diverse peoples and voices: archeologists and historians, county officials, the business community, and most importantly, the citizens of the county. Each has a particular set of life experiences to offer to this dialogue, and it is a dialogue that has no right or wrong answers. This research guide and context on the postbellum sites of the county is offered as one aspect of that ongoing dialogue. Together, the citizens of the county will ultimately define the importance of these sites to its history.