Government Facilities

This chapter details facilities constructed and used by various levels of government—from federal to local—that were not overtly associated with the military. The chapter therefore covers a diversity of facilities. Several are large federal facilities that comprise thousands of acres and hundreds of buildings, with most dating to the twentieth century. Usually of a smaller scale are state and local facilities, with the exception of the state-operated University of Maryland and Bowie State University. These smaller facilities include such disparate uses as post offices, fire departments, and public schools, among others.

Beltsville Agricultural Research Center

The Beltsville Agricultural Research Center (BARC), located near Beltsville, has been documented in MIHP PG:62-14 and determined eligible for listing in the NRHP (Figure 19). A number of office buildings and farm research-related buildings were constructed at BARC after 1910 (see MIHP PG:62-14 for a review of the structures).

First established in 1910, the property was greatly expanded in the 1930s and 1940s and today comprises 6,582 acres divided into five areas, known as farms. The original land purchased for the research center consisted of 475 acres and was mainly focused on animal husbandry and dairy farming research (Virta 1991:232). Land was purchased through the decades, and the research center became a unified facility in 1934. During the period of the Great Depression, Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) and WPA laborers constructed roads, bridges, parking areas, sidewalks, and buildings within BARC (Benson et al. 2003:125). The

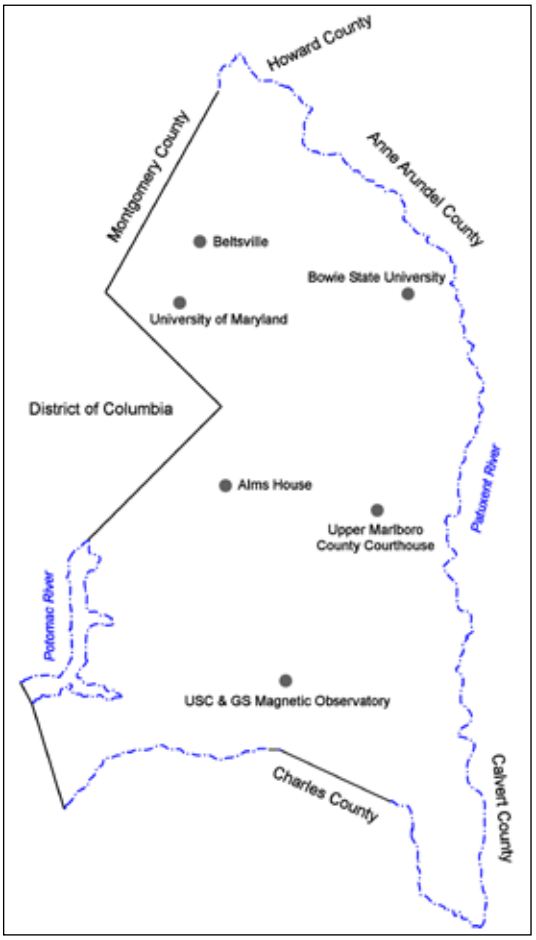

Figure 19: Government facilities discussed in text.

current visitors' center is one of the buildings constructed by WPA and CCC laborers. Currently, BARC consists of land spanning the area from US 29 on the west to significantly east of the Baltimore-Washington Parkway. It is one of the largest agricultural research facilities in the United States, and the scientific research conducted at the center has influenced many aspects of twentieth-century farming.

University of Maryland and Bowie State University

The University of Maryland began as a private entity in 1856 as the Maryland Agricultural College and was originally established on a portion of the Riversdale plantation owned by Charles Benedict Calvert (Virta 1991:150) (Figure 19). In 1864 the General Assembly of Maryland accepted a federal land grant (part of the Merrill Land Grant Act of 1862), and it was appropriated to the Maryland Agricultural College in 1867. With this appropriation, the State of Maryland assumed half ownership of the college (Silvester and Patterson 1903:3). In 1864 the college closed due to lack of funds, but with the new state funding, it was reopened in 1867.

Early facilities on campus included the Rossborough Inn (MIHP PG:66-2) and a building known as the Barracks. The Barracks was a combined dormitory, classroom, library, and administration building that continued in use through 1912 when it was destroyed by fire (Virta 1991:151). In 1887 the State of Maryland established an experimental farm at the college, which was separated from the institution in 1892. The experiment station included numerous fields as well as buildings and outbuildings (Silvester and Patterson 1903:3-6). Otherwise, the college grew slowly during its initial 40 years. The 1861 Martenet map depicts a single structure at the college (likely the Barracks) while the 1878 Hopkins map depicts three buildings. An 1894 Hopkins map appears to depict approximately five buildings at the college, including one labeled as residence of the president. Virta (1991:151) indicates that during this initial 40-year period, only 100 graduates matriculated at the college, indicating that the student body was small at any one time.

It was during the late 1890s that additional buildings began to be constructed; by 1898 chemistry and mechanical engineering buildings had been constructed (Virta 1991:151). The 1912 fire, mentioned above, destroyed many classroom and office buildings. The campus rebuilt and increased greatly in size in 1916 when the State of Maryland gained full control of the institution. The school was reorganized, renamed first Maryland State College and later the University of Maryland, and several Baltimore area schools were integrated into the campus. Between 1926 and 1935, 13 buildings and additional acreage were added to the school, and between 1935 and 1945, additional residence halls and classrooms were constructed. During that period, enrollment increased from 2,000 to 5,000. Building construction increased once again after World War II to accommodate continually increasing levels of enrollment. The oldest building that remains on campus, Morrill Hall, was constructed in 1898 (MIHP PG:66-35; University of Maryland 2007).

Bowie State University began as the Baltimore Colored Normal School shortly after the Civil War. By 1911 the Maryland State Board of Education had purchased 187 acres near Bowie and constructed a three-story brick building to house the newly transferred Bowie Normal School for the Training of Colored Youth (Figure 19). Education encompassed the high school grades, and the institution was intended to accommodate 40 individuals. The brick building housed classrooms, offices, and dormitories (Thornton and Gooden 1997:202). The normal school expanded, with a new administration building built in 1924, and by 1928, its curriculum was changed to that of a three-year college, with the high school courses being dropped. In 1934, a basic curriculum was instituted that would allow students to graduate and become teachers, and the Bowie Normal School, a demonstration elementary school, was opened. The college became a four-year institution in 1939, and it was during the 1950s when an expansion of programs and facilities accelerated (MIHP PG:71A-21; Thornton and Gooden 1997:207).

Few of the structures associated with the early history of this institution remain standing. The Don S.S. Goodloe House, built in 1916, is an exception. This house is the residence of the first principal of the newly transferred school. Goodloe constructed the house, which is privately owned, to accommodate his family as well as school students, as the state would not provide funding for student housing (MIHP PG:71A-30).

Local Schools

Another government service provided in Prince George's County during the postbellum period was public education. As discussed in Chapter 6 with respect to African-Americans, education was strictly segregated during this period, and aspects of African-American education were discussed in that chapter. Prior to the Civil War, education was not a government-sponsored activity. However, the School Act of 1865 provided the basis for the post-Civil War education system throughout the state (Virta 1991). Prince George's County established a school board in 1865, and at that time the system consisted of 43 primary schools, no high schools having been established. Until 1872, the Freedmen's Bureau, as discussed in Chapter 6, organized the educational system for black children, after which the county assumed control. An 1886 inventory of school facilities enumerates 68 frame buildings and 1 brick building, all of which had blackboards, and 63 with unnamed outbuildings (perhaps privies). Teachers totaled 79 (just over 1 teacher per school), including both African-American and white male and female teachers (Meder and Aberg in TCGC 1992:93). The number of students served increased steadily during the postbellum period, with some of the largest increases occurring after World War II (Table 13).

The system expanded through time to accommodate the rise in students, with 112 schools established by 1908 (73 for whites, 39 for blacks). The first high school was established in 1899 in Laurel. High schools in Upper Marlboro and Surratsville were opened during the 1900s and in Baden, Brandywine,

Table 13. School attendance by race in Prince George's County between 1870 and 1950.

Census year	Total	White	Non-White
1870	1,639	1,491	148
1890	4,724	2,737	1,987
1910	7,103		
1920	8,616		
1930	12,967		
1940	19,649		
1950	42,190		

Note: Blank fields indicate no data are available from compiled census statistics.
Source: USCB (2007).

and Hyattsville in the 1910s. The first high schools for blacks were opened in Lakeland and Upper Marlboro during the 1920s. Although many new schools were being constructed during the post-World War I period throughout the county, Virta (1991:218) notes that most of those located outside of suburban areas, in rural areas, continued to be one- and two-room schoolhouses until the 1950s. In the 1950s the use of buses led to school consolidation, and many of the small rural schoolhouses were closed.

Several school buildings (used by white children) from both the immediate period after the Civil War and the early 1900s are present in Prince George's County and have been documented on MIHP forms. The heavily remodeled Bladensburg Public School #1, built in 1873–1874, was present through 1984 (MIHP PG:69-15). This school had been a 1.5-story, wood-frame, one-room schoolhouse. The Bald Hill School, dating to 1860, is similar but has been moved from its original location (MIHP PG:70-9). These structures indicate that both rural and urban schoolhouses dating to the initial period after the Civil War tended to be small, wood-frame, one-room structures. Several structures also document the transition to larger schools constructed in suburban areas during the 1900s. The Bowie School, constructed in 1912 to replace an earlier and smaller wood-frame schoolhouse, was a two-story brick structure with four classrooms (MIHP PG:71B-2-7). The Berwyn Heights schoolhouse, built in 1922, was smaller, consisting of two classrooms, and was built of combined masonry and wood-frame construction (MIHP PG:67-7). Laurel High School, the first high school in the county, dates to 1899. This structure

Seabrook School (PG: 70-13).

Greenbelt Center School (PG: 67-4-1).

is 2.5 stories and of brick construction, containing a number of classrooms, a library, and a teachers room (MIHP PG:LAU-5). It was common that additions were made to both the earlier and later schoolhouses in the county.

Also present in the county during the postbellum period was the state-funded Maryland House of Reformation and Instruction of Colored Children. The Maryland legislature incorporated the school for boys in 1870 near Cheltenham. Now the Boys Village of Maryland, this facility was constructed on 800 acres of land donated by Enoch Pratt of Baltimore. The school taught trades to the children, who also worked on an associated farm and were housed in dormitories (Virta 1991:177; see also MIHP PG:82A-19). A cemetery is also associated with the school. As of 1974, all buildings associated with this facility dated to the 1900s and were of brick-box school design (MIHP PG:82A-19). Also associated was the Cheltenham Magnetic Observatory of the US Coast and Geodetic Survey, operated by the federal government (Figure 19). This facility was constructed in 1901 on the grounds of the Maryland House of Reformation and Instruction of Colored Children and continued in operation through 1956 (Virta 1991:176).

County Courthouse, Jail, and Alms House

With the designation of Upper Marlboro as the county seat in 1721, a wood-frame courthouse was constructed between 1718 and 1721, to be replaced by a brick structure in 1801 (MIHP PG:79-42). This second courthouse continued in use through 1880, when a new courthouse was constructed at the site of the present courthouse. The present courthouse incorporates a portion of the 1881 structure within the building. The 1801 courthouse, located at a square on Main Street (as depicted on the 1861 Martenet and 1878 Hopkins maps), was northeast of the present facility and was demolished in the 1890s. The old county jail was constructed in 1721 and was replaced by a brick structure in 1800. This second county jail remained in use through 1927, when the current facility was constructed (MIHP PG:79-42; MIHP PG:79-53) (Figure 19).

An Alms House, or home for the poor, was also operated by Prince George's County during the postbellum period, and was situated on 100 acres of land near Forestville (Figure 19). The original Alms House, constructed during the Colonial period, was replaced by a brick structure in 1870, and it is this structure that stood at the location of the facility as of 1979 (MIHP PG:75A-4; see also Tricentennial Community Associations History Committee 1996:84). The Alms House was organized to care for up to 35 residents who worked on an associated farm. The facility included a number of outbuildings, at least some of which were used for agricultural purposes, including tobacco barns. A large orchard, corn fields, and likely tobacco fields were present, and livestock was raised, with the proceeds used to fund the facility. The Alms House is also associated with a cemetery. The County Commissioners closed the Alms House in April 1965. A two-volume set of associated records has been published (Prince George's County Genealogical Society 2004).

Research Questions and Topics

Similar to the Military Facilities chapter, it is difficult to identify relevant research questions that can be addressed by archeological investigations for nonmilitary government facilities, especially those post-1900 properties. In part, this is due to the fact that many of the resources continue to be in use to this day. As noted previously, trash disposal changed greatly during the early 1900s, eliminating one important source of archeological data. Many of the twentieth-century resources likely consist of structure remains and the cultural landscape formed by the spatial distribution of the remains, although post-World War II demolition can be quite efficient at removing most traces of structural remains.

- A few postbellum post offices were not located in general stores or taverns. Archeological investigations of these structures can determine their size, material composition, and construction techniques used. Associated material culture can be used to identify the nature of associated activities at these sites.

- Can the material culture at the post offices located in general stores or taverns be associated with the postal function of these structures? If so, can the material culture reveal activities associated with the rural post offices?

- Can deposits associated with segregated white schools be used to better understand the social activities that were engaged in?

- Are there differences in terms of material culture between segregated white rural, suburban, and urban schools? In terms of spatial organization, settlement, foodways, or consumer choice?

- Archeology can provide information on the nature of public structures, materials used, and construction techniques. This information may be used to infer structure function and associated activities.

- Can material culture be used to understand living conditions at the county jail? The county Alms House? Foodways at these two institutions?
- Can material culture be used to understand jail discipline? Issues of segregation?
- To what material culture did inmates have access? The Alms House residents?
- Did this material culture differ from that of the staff? Did living conditions differ between staff and inmates/residents?
- What level of self-sufficiency did the Alms House attain? How is this reflected in the material culture?
- What types of interactions did staff, inmates at the county jail, and residents at the Alms House have with the outside world?
- Are special activity areas present at the jail or Alms House? If so, what can archeology reveal about those activities?

Data Requirements

Archeological: Features with depositional integrity and a wide variety of identifiable associations, inclusive of structural remains; deposits with sufficient quantity and variety of materials to support statistically valid analyses; features such as foundations indicating spatial organization or sheet refuse indicative of activity areas; specialized activity areas such as may be found at jails, schools, or the alms house

Primary Documentary Sources: Government records; Alms House records; newspapers; legal records; personal papers; oral histories; photographs; financial records (lease, rent); maps; various business records

Contextual Sources: Social history; contract reports on similar property type; relevant historical and anthropological literature; oral history

Artifacts: A range of artifacts attributable to modified South (1977) categories from identifiable contexts (feature or midden); an adequate quantity of distinctive artifacts to support interpretations

Ecofacts: Faunal analysis: wild versus domestic species; preference in species or meat cuts; floral analysis: botanical remains (seeds, pits, pollen, kernels) indicative of diet