

Compton Bassett



Balancing Preservation and Change A Cultural Landscape Report

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Executive Summary

Situated along the Patuxent River in eastern Prince George's County, Maryland, Compton Bassett is a former plantation site now owned by the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission (M-NCPPC). The site began as a tobacco plantation in 1699, before broadening into wider agricultural use in the nineteenth century. After the Civil War, the site was shaped by the transition from enslaved to free labor, and in the twentieth century by the decline of the region's large-scale tobacco cultivation. Throughout its history, relationships between natural and cultural resources have shaped the site.

This report seeks to understand these connections, which have defined the Compton Bassett landscape. In order to accomplish this we employed a cultural landscape approach. We researched the history of the site and conducted an inventory of existing conditions, including physical resources on the site, demographics, and the planning and regulatory framework. From this research, we developed site themes, rethought the statement of significance, and developed recommendations for the site's immediate and long term future. Our hope is that this report will inform future stewardship of the property.

Contents

Acknowledgements	2
Executive Summary	4
List of Figures and Tables	8
Introduction	10
Part One: Assessment	12
Documentation	14
Defining a Cultural Landscape	14
Methodology	14
Sources and Documentation	14
Physical Documentation	15
Project Boundaries	16
Temporal Boundaries	16
Central Patuxent Riverway	16
Compton Bassett Property Boundary	19
Inventory of Existing Conditions	20
Regulatory and Planning Framework	20
Resource Inventory	26
Natural Systems and Features	26
Topography	27
Spatial Organization	30
Circulation	33
Land Use	35
Vegetation	40
Structures	43
Views and Vistas	58
Small Scale Features	60
Potential Archaeological Resources	62
Landscape Themes	64
Prehistoric Land Use	64
Paleo-Indian	64
Archaic	66
Woodland	66
Agriculture	69
Colonial and Antebellum Agriculture (1620-1860)	69
Post-Civil War Agriculture	73
Catholicism	78
War of 1812	80
African Americans	80
Transportation	85
Environmental and Cultural Stewardship	89
Part Two: Recommendations	92
Site Values and Significance	94
Recommendations	100
Management Philosophy	100
Primary Treatment Approach	101

Treatment Actions	102
Site Clean-Up and Public Access	108
Archaeology	108
Moving Forward: Possible Models for Compton Bassett's Future	108
Interpretive Model	109
Stakeholder Partnerships	110
Public/Private Partnership Model	110
Sustainable Farm Model	112
Conclusion	114
Appendix 1: Chronological History	116
Appendix 2: Demographic Conditions	118
Appendix 3: National Register Statement of Significance	120
Appendix 4: Annotated Bibliography	123

List of Figures and Tables

Figure 1: Map of Compton Bassett and the Central Patuxent Riverway in relation to the broader region	17
Figure 2: Map defining the limits of the Central Patuxent Riverway	18
Figure 3: Map depicting the boundaries of the Compton Bassett site, as well as site resources	19
Figure 4: Map identifying the planned development tiers in Prince George's County, MD	21
Figure 5: Map depicting the Green Infrastructure Network	23
Figure 6: Map showing the boundaries of the Chesapeake Bay Critical Area	24
Figure 7: Numbered site features on Compton Bassett property	25
Figure 8: Map showing the topography of the site	29
Figure 9: Map showing Compton Bassett's plantation plan	31
Figure 10: Map depicting soil distribution on the Compton Bassett site	36
Figure 11: Map showing the average age of trees on Compton Bassett site	38
Figure 12: Map showing the wetland, slope, and drainage on Compton Bassett site	39
Figure 13: Map showing the location and age of historic trees near the Main House and Agricultural Complex	41
Figure 14: Map depicting the location of boxwood on the Compton Bassett site	42
Figure 15: Image of the first floor plan of the Main House as found in the Compton Bassett National Register form	46
Figure 16: Paleo-Indian land use patterns	65
Figure 17: Archaic land use patterns	67
Figure 18: Woodland land use patterns	68
Figure 19: John Smith's 1607 Map of the Chesapeake Bay	68
Figure 20: Dennis Griffith's 1794 map of Prince George's County, MD	69
Figure 21: Colonial and Antebellum agriculture settlement in the Central Patuxent Riverway	71
Figure 22: Colonial and Antebellum agriculture at Compton Bassett	72
Figure 23: The boundaries of Woodland Plantation in the context of the Central Patuxent Riverway	74

Figure 24: Post-Civil War agriculture on the Compton Bassett site	75
Figure 25: Post-Civil War agriculture in the Central Patuxent Riverway	76
Figure 26: 1861 Martinet Map of Prince George's County, MD	77
Figure 27: Catholic plantations and churches in the Central Patuxent Riverway	79
Figure 28: War of 1812 events in the Central Patuxent Riverway	81
Figure 29: African American presence on the Compton Bassett site	83
Figure 30: African American presence in the Central Patuxent Riverway	84
Figure 31: Transportation routes in the Central Patuxent Riverway	86
Table 1: Values-based assessment of Compton Bassett cultural landscape	95
Table 2: Relationship between site features and areas of significance	99

Introduction

The focus of this document is the Compton Bassett plantation, which is located in Greater Upper Marlboro, Maryland. Established as a tobacco plantation in 1699, Compton Bassett has experienced over three hundred years of continuous agricultural use. The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission (M-NCPPC) assumed ownership of the site in 2010, looking to connect the parcel to the adjacent Patuxent Watershed Park. M-NCPPC has sought the assistance of the University of Maryland's School of Architecture, Planning, and Preservation's Historic Preservation Program in determining how best to interpret the myriad of cultural and natural resources on the site.

This report takes a cultural landscape approach to understanding the site, exploring the profound connections that exist between the site's environmental and cultural elements. We also consider Compton Bassett as part of a wider cultural landscape, the Central Patuxent Riverway, which consists of integrated historical, cultural, and environmental resources. This methodology engages both the history of the Central Patuxent Riverway and Compton Bassett's current conditions to understand the relationships between existing resources and derive additional meaning for the site. We employ a values-centered approach to our recommendations for the site, which broadens notions of Compton Bassett's significance and enables us to conceive of a viable and appropriate future for this landscape.

This document results from collaboration between the Maryland-National Capitol Park and Planning Commission and the University of Maryland's School of Architecture, Planning, and Preservation's Historic Preservation program. Produced by Derek Anderson, Caitlin Black, John Gentry, Caitlin Herrstadt, Lori Murphy, Michael Robb, and Daniel Tana, all of whom are Master of Historic Preservation candidates, this report represents efforts to apply our historic preservation knowledge in the professional world.



Part One: Assessment

Documentation

Defining a Cultural Landscape

There is no agreed upon definition of a cultural landscape, as every scholar fashions his or her own. Accordingly, we found it imperative to articulate our own definition of this concept. For the purpose of this report, a cultural landscape is defined as:

The dynamic intersection of human actions, nature, and artifacts in a geographic area over a period of time. A cultural landscape is not static; it is constantly changing.

We created this definition after considering and cultural landscape definitions of scholars such as Randall Mason, Paul Groth, Pierce Lewis, and D.W. Meinig. We also took into account the National Park Service's definition of a cultural landscape.¹

Our definition serves as the basis of our report on Compton Bassett, influencing how we interpreted the site and determined meaning on the landscape. This definition prompts us to consider all of the landscape's features equally, not privileging one type of resource or historical era over another. Additionally, this definition enables us to both engage with the past and project into the future, as we recognize that the cultural landscape of the site has changed even during the brief period in which we investigated it.

Methodology

Our cultural landscape definition has influenced our methodology, affecting both the scope of work and the kinds of sources consulted for this report. After settling upon our definition of a cultural landscape, we then established a fixed set of boundaries for the landscape we would be investigating. Next, we undertook an assessment of the conditions within our boundaries, looking at the demographics, stakeholders, and regulatory framework in place within those boundaries. Additionally, we explored and documented the physical condition of elements within our landscape's boundaries and researched the history of the landscape. From this assessment, we generated a series of themes that assimilated the contents of our research into various thematic categories. Finally, we used our previous documentation and assessment to inform recommendations for the site.

Sources and Documentation

Our analysis of Compton Bassett draws on a combination of primary and secondary historical sources, on-site documentation, maps, and relevant planning and regulatory documents. Collectively, these tools allow us to map past and present conditions of Compton Bassett and enable us to undertake a thorough cultural landscape study of the property.

¹ See Appendix 4 for a more detailed discussion of how this scholarship informed our cultural landscape definition.

Primary and Secondary Sources

Primary and secondary historical sources form a core element of our approach to understanding Compton Bassett as a cultural landscape. These resources provide insight into the documented history of the site as well as the importance of various site elements. Primary sources include:

United States Census Data	Tax Assessment Records
Historical and Environmental Maps	Newspaper Articles
Maryland Inventory of Historic Property Forms	Deeds
National Register Nomination Forms	Probate Records

Collectively, these resources illuminate both changes that have occurred on the landscape over time and important continuities on the site.

We used secondary sources to enhance our understanding of Compton Bassett's history and resources. Secondary sources centered on (1) agriculture, plantation life, and tobacco cultivation, (2) slavery and the experiences of the enslaved, (3) environmental history of the Chesapeake Bay and Patuxent River, (4) prehistoric people and culture in the area, and (5) architectural history.² The information we obtained through use of these primary and secondary sources impacted our analysis and findings and helped us to develop relevant themes for interpreting the site.

Physical Documentation

We used a combination of existing maps and on-site documentation to understand the evolution of the property's current conditions. Recognizing that there were no existing maps that illustrated the full range of cultural and environmental features on the site, we first sought to create a site plan that visually represented Compton Bassett as a cultural landscape. This process primarily involved taking rough measurements of each structure on the site in addition to photographing these structures and features. We also used United States Geological Survey Quadrangle Maps and aerial photography to build our understanding of the relationship between Compton Bassett's cultural and environmental features. The map resulting from these efforts serves as a visual guide throughout this report.

We also attempted to track significant changes in Compton Bassett's structures and environmental features over time. To understand the site's evolution, we used Historic American Building Survey documentation to trace the changes evident in various structures. We also looked at guides for measuring tree age and environmental maps relating slope, drainage, elevation, soil type, which helped us to understand environmental changes around Compton Bassett over time.

Planning Documents

Since one of the articulated goals of this report is to provide guidance for Compton Bassett's stewardship and preservation, we analyzed existing planning and regulatory frameworks to understand the regulations that may impact proposed changes to Compton Bassett. The two

² See Appendix 4 for an expanded discussion of the sources used in this report.

most important documents are the “Approved Historic Sites and Districts Plan for Prince George’s County, Maryland, June 2010” which conveys M-NCPPC and the Prince George’s County Planning Department’s goals for acquiring, interpreting, and promoting historic sites within the county, and the “Preliminary Subregion 6 Master Plan and Proposed Sectional Map Amendment,” which articulates demographic information, county planning tools, and regulations designed to protect historic and environmental resources.

Project Boundaries

This section articulates the physical and temporal boundaries used in our analysis of the Compton Bassett cultural landscape. The constraints of any cultural landscape are subjectively constructed, as there is always a wider context to consider. For the purpose of this study, we will use a two-tiered approach, looking at both the greater historical landscape, which we refer to as the Central Patuxent Riverway, and the contemporary legal boundaries of the Compton Bassett site.

Temporal Boundaries

We consider a temporal period extending from the earliest evidence of human occupation (c. 10,000 B.C.E.) to the present. This range allows us to consider the entire temporal length of the cultural landscape, resulting in new areas of significance and allowing us to understand how early history impacted later events. Additionally, by extending our temporal boundaries into the present, we were able to project elements of our cultural landscape into the future.

Central Patuxent Riverway

The larger tier of the landscape’s boundary encompasses an area of approximately thirty-seven square miles, or approximately 23,680 acres, including land in both Prince George’s and Anne Arundel Counties (Figure 1). Extending from the Queen Anne Bridge to the north, to Jug Bay in the south, and from Upper Marlboro in the west, to the western coast of Anne Arundel County in the east, the Central Patuxent Riverway encompasses portions of the Patuxent River Park and Greater Upper Marlboro.

We selected the limits of this boundary because the enclosed area forms the local element of the tobacco economy to which Compton Bassett belonged. The landscape’s northern boundary is the Queen Anne Bridge, the furthest navigable point on the Patuxent River by a seafaring vessel in the eighteenth century. The western boundary extends directly west of Upper Marlboro, the nearest city and an important tobacco trading center from the eighteenth to twentieth century. The southern boundary ends at the southern tip of Jug Bay and thereby includes the Western Branch, a tributary of the Patuxent River and part of the waterway that historically connected Compton Bassett and Upper Marlboro. The southern boundary falls below both Billingsley and Mount Calvert, the two plantations directly south of Compton Bassett, enabling us to look at Compton Bassett in the context of nearby plantation sites. The eastern boundary extends along the eastern bank of the Patuxent River, incorporating the full contours of the river and the immediately adjacent land. The bounded area encompassed the full extent of the local tobacco economy, including transportation routes, plantations, and venues for selling and inspecting tobacco.

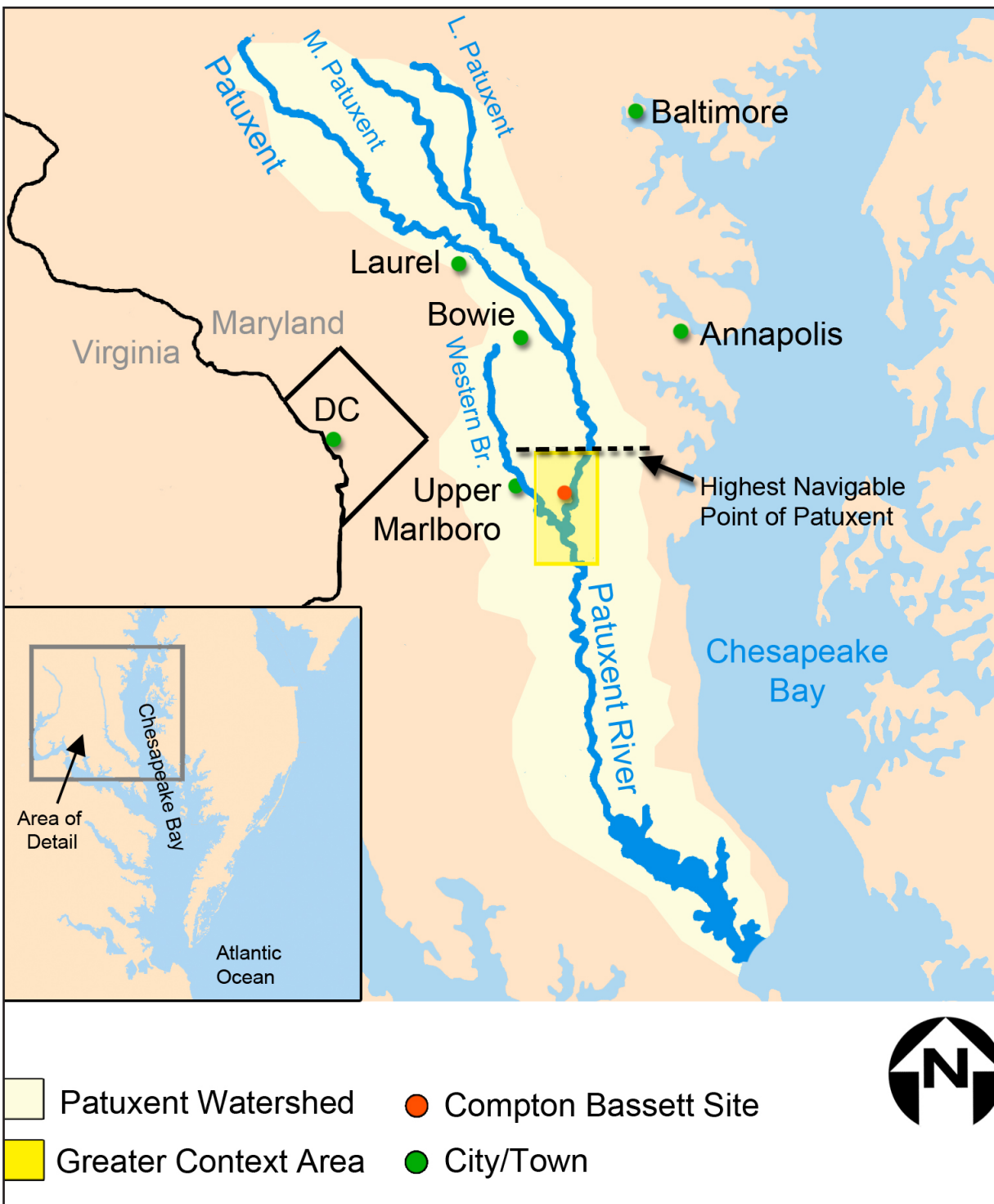


Figure 1: Location of Compton Bassett and the Central Patuxent Riverway in relation to the broader region, (modeled after map of the Patuxent River by Kmusser, web address <http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/1/1e/Patuxentrivernmap.png>).

It is important to note that, as with any cultural landscape, the limits of these boundaries are not firm: events outside these boundaries influenced occurrences within them, and, conversely, actions that occurred within these boundaries continued outside of them as well. For example, the tobacco trade extended well beyond the boundaries of this cultural landscape and into Europe. Additionally, modern legislation aimed to protect the natural and cultural resources within this boundary reaches well beyond this small defined area.

Although the boundaries established for this area result from a particular time frame, they are appropriate for the entire time-span considered in this project. Since this area developed as the result of similar processes and circumstances surrounding the local tobacco economy, it underwent similar changes in the ensuing centuries, giving these boundaries meaning into the present. Additionally, despite the fact that these boundaries were not chosen to speak to the Prehistoric era, they do allow for an adequate glimpse into the type of settlement and activities occurring within the area.

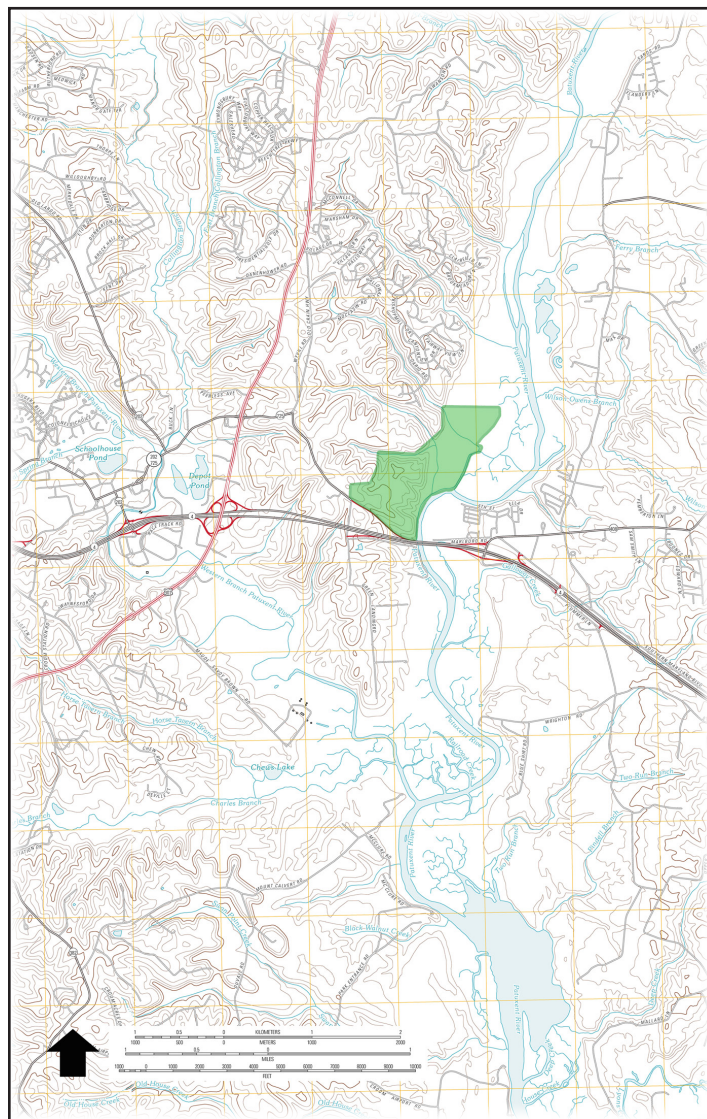


Figure 2: The limits of the Central Patuxent Riverway, the wider cultural landscape considered in this report. Compton Bassett's legal boundaries are highlighted in green (map source United States Geological Survey).

Compton Bassett Property Boundary

The second tier of our cultural landscape is far smaller, approximately 252 acres (0.3935 square miles), and encompasses the present legal boundaries of Compton Bassett (Figure 2). The Patuxent River and its tributaries geographically bind the property in the east, and Old Marlboro Pike binds it to the south. The northern and western boundaries correspond to the legal boundaries of the property. Located within the site are numerous structures, paths, roads, fields, forests, and wildlife that comprise the cultural landscape. The recommendations put forth in this report will focus primarily on the landscape elements within these boundaries.

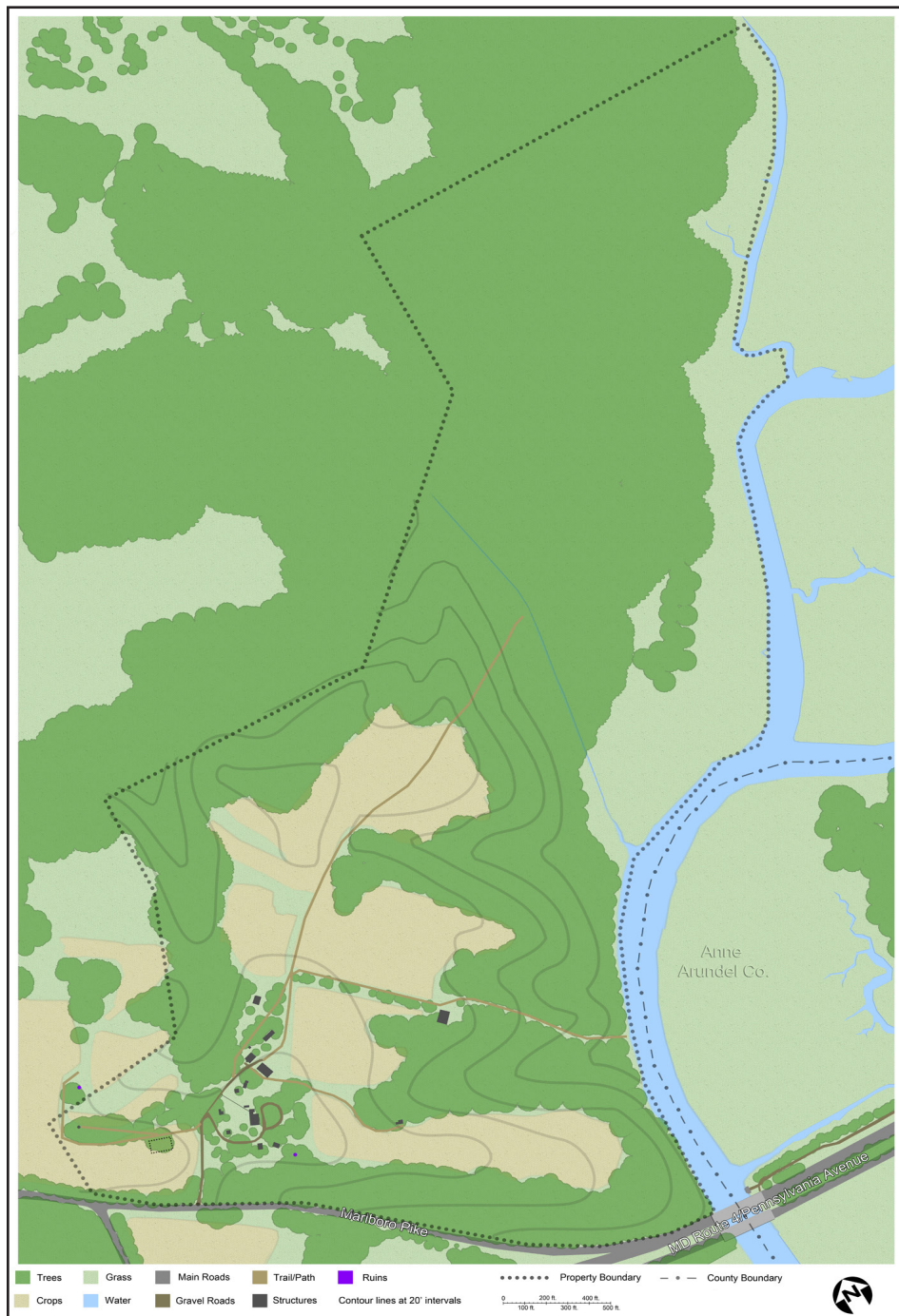


Figure 3:
Boundaries of the
Compton Bassett
site shown with site
resources, (created
by combining
information from
the United States
Geological Survey,
the Maryland-
National Capital
Park and Planning
Commission,
satellite imagery,
and field survey by
the authors).

Inventory of Existing Conditions

This section of the report examines Compton Bassett as it appears in the present, looking at the planning and regulatory framework surrounding the site, and the physical and environmental features on the site. Collectively, these categories account for the presence of humans, artifacts, and natural features on the landscape. The analysis of the demographics and planning and regulatory framework utilize the larger Central Patuxent Riverway boundaries. The inventory of physical structures and environmental features is limited to the legal boundaries of the Compton Bassett property.

Regulatory and Planning Framework

The regulatory and planning framework in place for Compton Bassett provides another key component of the existing conditions on the site, affecting the kinds of changes that can take place on the site. Prince George's County has implemented a multi-faceted regulatory and planning framework that extends protection to Compton Bassett's significant cultural and natural resources. This framework includes the county's historic preservation ordinance, environmental laws, and zoning overlays. Understanding which laws and planning tools apply to Compton Bassett is an important part of the landscape assessment process and a necessary step towards developing recommendations for the property.

Prince George's County Inventory of Historic Sites

Compton Bassett is listed on the Prince George's County Inventory of Historic Sites. As a result of this designation, any proposed changes or modifications to the site's structures or environmental setting are subject to review under the county's preservation ordinance, Subtitle 29 of the County Code. A Historic Area Work Permit (HAWP) must be obtained prior to any work on the exterior of nominated structures.

National Register of Historic Places

Compton Bassett is also listed in the National Register of Historic Places. Though this designation does not afford the site any direct protection, it does raise the possibility that the site could receive additional protection under a preservation easement or be eligible for various kinds of funding.³

Growth Management Policy Areas

Much of the area along the Patuxent River in eastern Prince George's County has maintained its historic, rural character, despite an increase in residential and commercial development in other parts of the county. This is due in part to effective planning and the implementation of "smart growth" policies, which have helped protect these heritage resources. The Prince George's County Planning Department has divided the county into three growth management "policy areas," known as the Developed, Developing, and Rural Tiers (Figure 4). Compton Bassett falls within

³ M-NCPPC and the Prince George's County Planning Department, *Approved Historic Sites and Districts Plan*, June 2010, 14,143.

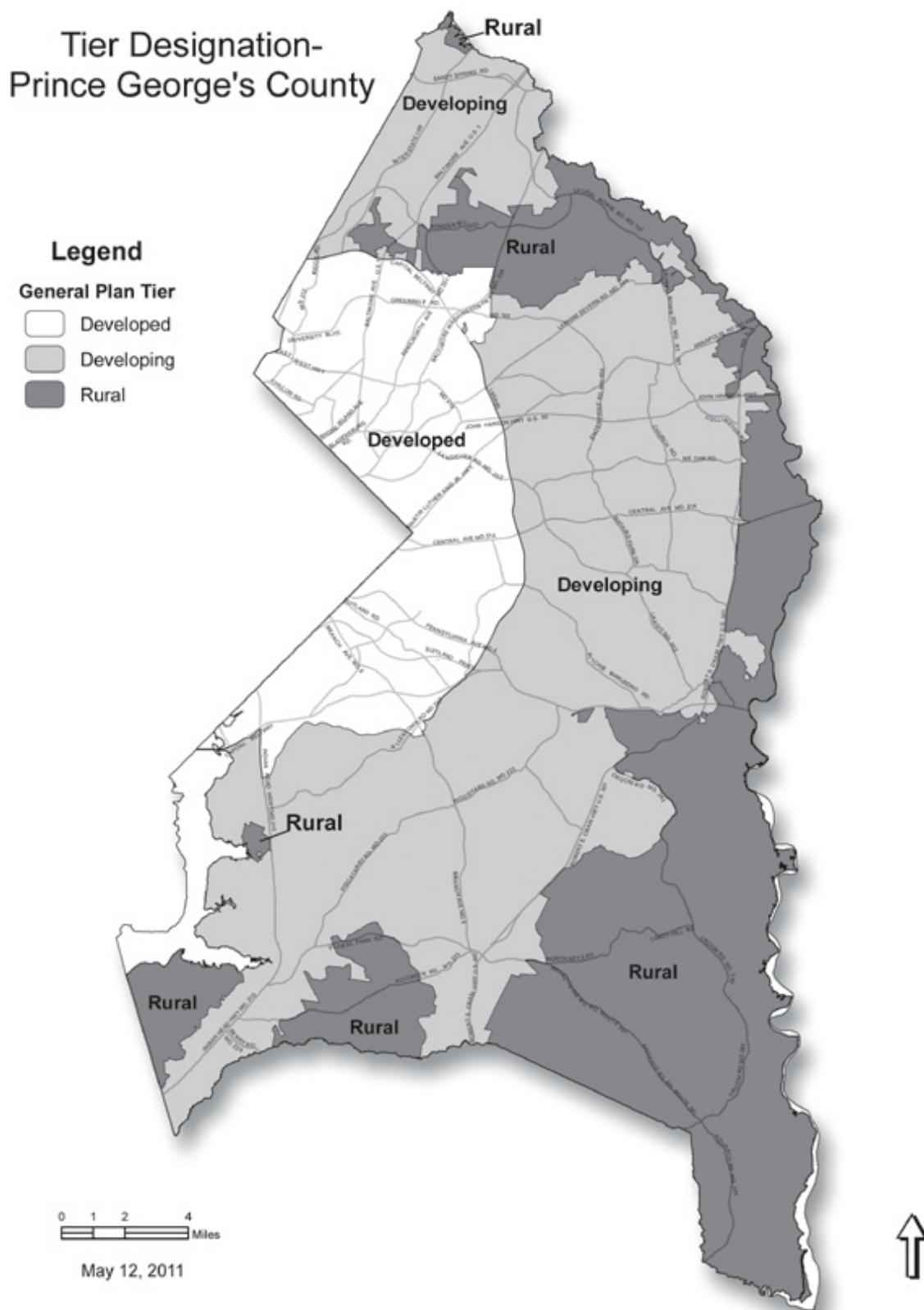


Figure 4: This map identifies the location of the Developed, Developing, and Rural Tiers in Prince George's County, MD; Compton Bassett is located within the Rural Tier. Maryland-National Capital Parks and Planning Commission and the Prince George's County Planning Department, *Priority Preservation Area Functional Master Plan*, M-NCPPC (Upper Marlboro, MD, 2009), 8.

the Rural Tier, an area primarily located in the eastern part of the county. Over the next twenty-five years, growth objectives for the Rural Tier limit the number of dwelling units constructed within this designated area to less than 1% of the countywide total. Through programs such as the State of Maryland's Rural Legacy Program, M-NCPPC has been active in acquiring and protecting agricultural, woodland, and historic resources, such as Compton Bassett, within the Patuxent River Rural Legacy Area.⁴

Green Infrastructure Network

The Green Infrastructure Network, a planning framework established in 2005, preserves and protects sensitive natural areas in Prince George's County. The Network designates parts of the county into Regulated Areas, Evaluation Areas, and unprotected areas called Network Gaps (Figure 5). Regulated Areas within the network, which include the Compton Bassett property, have been identified as having significant environmental traits and features that are in need of protection.

One of the most effective implementation tools for the Green Infrastructure Plan is a development review process. The Planning Board reviews applications for certain categories of development, such as subdivisions, to ensure that they are not encroaching upon, or negatively impacting, regulated areas within the network.⁵

Chesapeake Bay Critical Area Law

Because of its location along the Patuxent River, Compton Bassett is also covered by regulations designed to protect regional water quality and marine life. In 1984, the state passed the Chesapeake Bay Critical Area Law to protect the environmental resources of the bay region. The law requires each county within the Critical Bay Area to develop a Critical Area Plan. In Prince George's County, the Critical Bay Area extends 1000 feet inland from the mean high tide mark of the Patuxent River and includes the Compton Bassett property (Figure 6). Regulations for this area are enforced at the county level through the Chesapeake Bay Critical Overlay Zone, which is divided into subcategories. Compton Bassett falls within the Resource Conservation Overlay Zone subcategory, which limits residential density to 0.5 dwelling units per acre. In addition, development plans involving property within the Critical Area are subject to review by the Planning Board.⁶

4 M-NCPPC, *Prince George's County Approved General Plan*, October 2002, 3-6, 27, http://www.pgplanning.org/Resources/Publications/General_Plan_Publication.htm, (accessed October 31, 2012).

5 M-NCPPC and Prince George's County Planning Department, *Preliminary Subregion 6 Master Plan and Proposed Sectional Map Amendment*, January 2009, 64-66.; M-NCPPC, "A Green Infrastructure Functional Master Plan: Countywide Green Infrastructure Planning and Implementation in Prince George's County, Maryland," in *A Sustainable Chesapeake: Better Models for Conservation*, edited by David G. Burke and Joel E. Dunn (Arlington, VA: The Conservation Fund, 2010), 89-94, http://www.conservationfund.org/sites/default/files/The_Conservation_Fund_Chesapeake_Bay_Better_Models_for_Conservation_Chapt3_GI_Planning_PG_County.pdf (accessed October 31, 2010).

6 Ibid., 74.; Prince George's County Maryland Zoning Ordinance, Subtitle 27 of the County Code, Sections 107.1, and 109., <http://lis.princegeorgescountymd.gov/lis/default.asp?File=&Type=TOC> (accessed September 26, 2012).; Prince George's County Planning Department, "Overlay Zones," <http://www>.

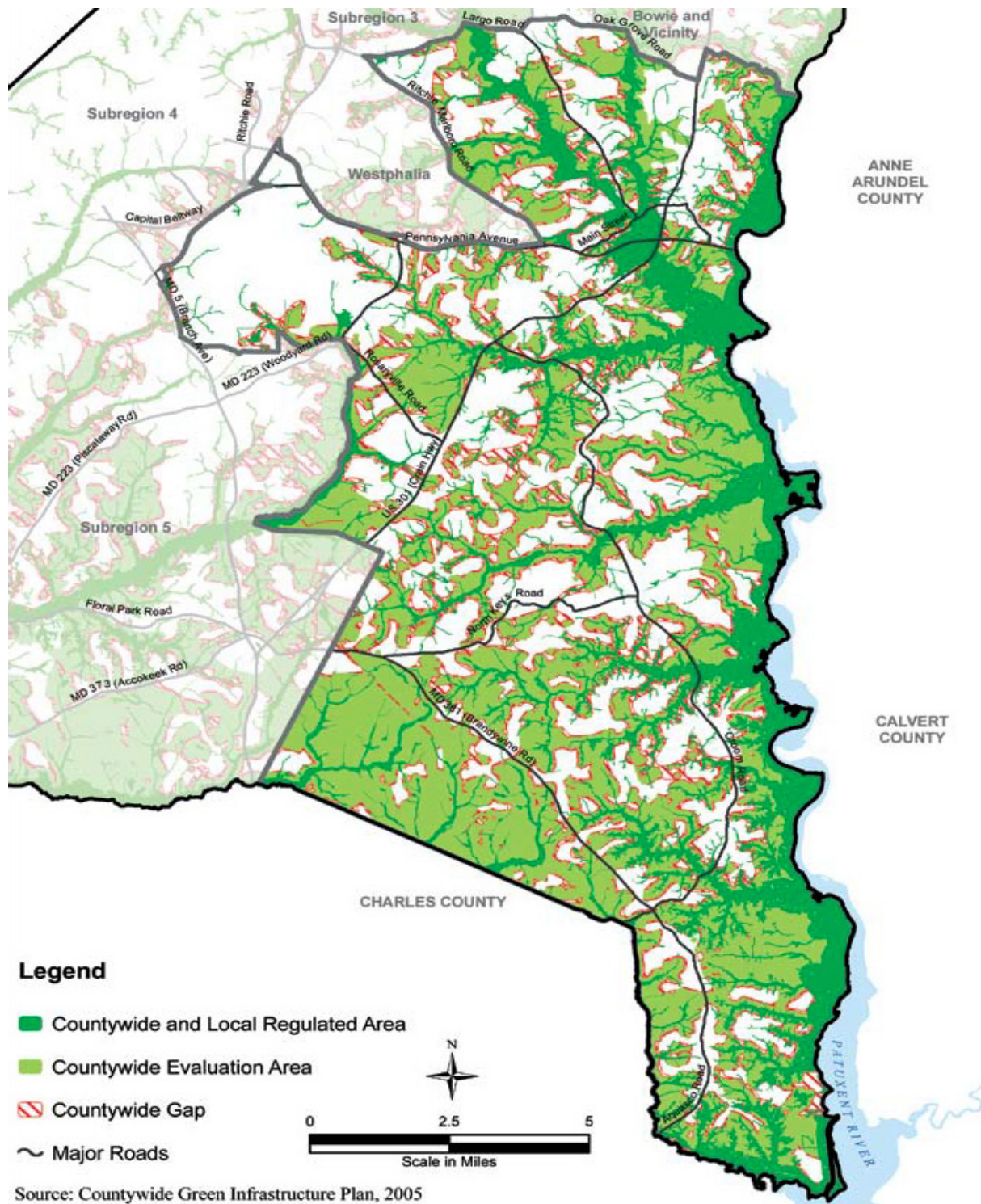


Figure 5: This map illustrates the location of areas covered under the Green Infrastructure Network. Compton Bassett is located within the dark green Countywide and Local Regulated Area. Maryland-National Capital Parks and Planning Commission and the Prince George's County Planning Department, *Preliminary Subregion 6 Master Plan and Proposed Sectional Map Amendment*, M-NCPPC (Upper Marlboro, MD, 2009), 28.

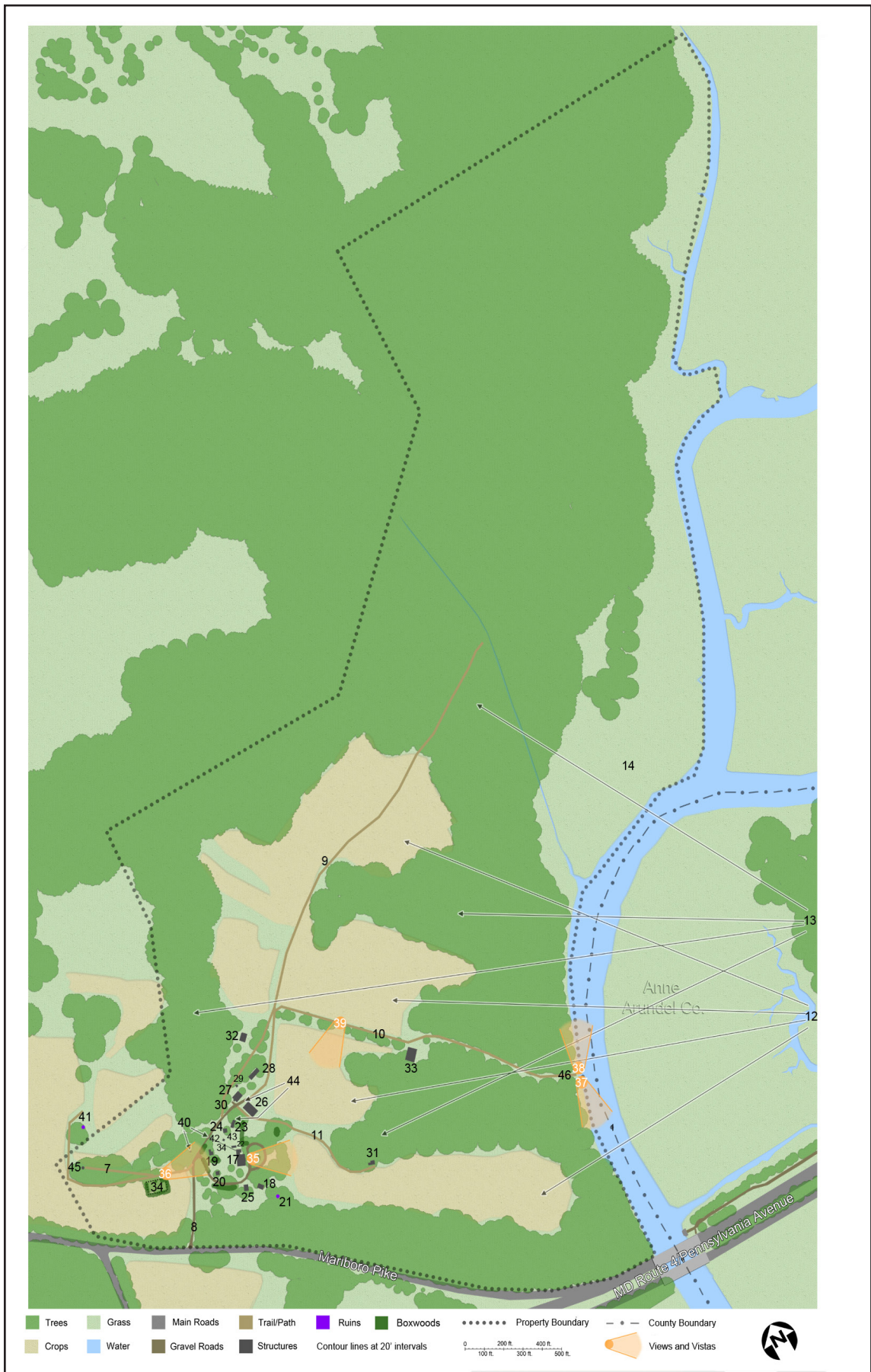


Through these regulatory and planning tools, the county has identified resource rich areas and implemented measures to preserve historic sites, rural land, and natural areas along the Patuxent River. The county's Historic Preservation Ordinance, Subtitle 29, Prince George's County Code, prevents inappropriate alterations to designated sites, such as Compton Bassett, through a work permit review process. Effective planning frameworks, such as the Tier system, and the Green Infrastructure network, have identified agricultural lands and natural areas and, through implementation measures, have sought to protect these resources from development. Finally, Compton Bassett is protected through state laws and local zoning regulations which foster stream and wetland conservation within the Chesapeake Bay region.

Figure 6: This map articulates the boundaries of the Chesapeake Bay Critical Area. Compton Bassett is located within this zone, Maryland-National Capital Parks and Planning Commission and the Prince George's County Planning Department, *Preliminary Subregion 6 Master Plan and Proposed Sectional Map Amendment*, M-NCPPC (Upper Marlboro, MD, 2009), 75.

pgplanning.org/Resources/Guide_to_Zoning_Categories/Overlay_Zones.htm (accessed November 1, 2012).

Figure 7:
Numbered
site features
on Compton
Bassett, (created
by combining
information
from the
United States
Geological
Survey,
M-NCPPC,
satellite imagery,
and field survey
by the authors).



Resource Inventory

The following section explores both the natural and cultural elements of Compton Bassett, documenting buildings, landscape features, and environmental resources, exploring their uses, and documenting their current conditions (Figure 7). The discussion of these resources is organized into nine categories: natural systems and features, spatial organization, circulation, topography, vegetation, land use, structures, views and vistas, and small-scale features. Each of these elements has been numbered and located on the map to the left.

Natural Systems and Features

1. The Patuxent River

The Patuxent River forms the eastern boundary of the property and separates eastern Prince George's County from western Anne Arundel County. The Patuxent River feeds into the Chesapeake Bay and is the largest river located entirely within the State of Maryland. The Patuxent River flows from the Piedmont region of Maryland into the Chesapeake Bay, which is approximately fifty miles downstream from Compton Bassett.



Above: The Patuxent River, a defining feature of Compton Bassett's landscape, as it appears from the Compton Bassett river landing.

At present, the river is navigable by recreational boats up to the site of the old Queen Anne Bridge, near Bowie, Maryland.

Historically, the Patuxent River linked Compton Bassett to the broader region. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries it facilitated the transatlantic tobacco trade and served as an important theater in the War of 1812. In fact, the remains of Commodore Joshua Barney's scuttled flotilla are located just north of Compton Bassett. Currently, the river provides recreational opportunities and a natural habitat for various species of aquatic life and birds including Great Blue Herons, White Egrets, and Loons to name a few.

Despite recent efforts by the Natural and Historical Resources Division of M-NCPPC (NHRD), the river's ecosystem remains in poor condition. Many invasive species have been removed or

culled, and NHRD has replanted native wild rice species along the river's banks, improving the river's ecosystem. Erosion remains a significant problem and has likely resulted from a combination of damaging historical agricultural practices and modern development. State and county level reports have continued to evaluate the river's conditions in order to implement restoration and protection plans to manage this important resource.

Topography

2. Natural Topography

Compton Bassett's topography reflects both natural and man-made features (Figure 8). The site's topography rises sharply from the banks of the Patuxent River before flattening out near the center of the property, which is where agricultural fields are currently located. West of this large, flat area, the elevation rises steeply towards the house, forming a plateau in the area where the Main House, Dairy, Smokehouse, and Chapel are located. West of this collection of buildings, the elevation continues to rise gradually, forming a small hill. Two large ravines extend from the banks of the river to the center of the property, accentuating the steep rise in elevation from the river. A third ravine extends from north to south on the western portion of the property. At its most northern point, the site's topography declines slightly from south to north before becoming flat.

The distinct and varied topography of the site has influenced the location of both cultural and natural resources. The Main House and its dependencies are situated at one of the highest points of the property. The agricultural fields are located in areas characterized by natural stepped plateaus, while forests tend to be located where the topography is rolling and uneven. These ravines serve as drainage for the river and contain muddy soil. The northeastern panhandle of the property is very flat and is dominated by wetlands.



Above: Patuxent River near Compton Bassett, looking north.

3. Intentional Leveling

While many of the site's topographic features are naturally occurring, humans have impacted several areas. The land upon which the Main House, Smokehouse, Dairy, and Chapel are positioned is extremely flat; although the land may have been naturally more level than the surrounding area, and therefore more suitable for building, the distinct lack of any significant change in elevation in this area suggests that the land was likely leveled intentionally so that structures could be more easily built on it. Similarly, the land upon which buildings in the Agricultural Complex were built is also extremely flat, suggesting again that this area was intentionally leveled.

4. Terraces

The site also contains two collections of terraces, which again reflect how inhabitants have altered the topography. To the east of the Main House there is a multilevel terraced garden. There are also several terraces south of the Chapel which may date to an even earlier period of construction. Both collections of terraces are in excellent condition, remaining well defined, and lacking any significant erosion, and do not require immediate maintenance.



Above: Terraces located to the north of the Main House.

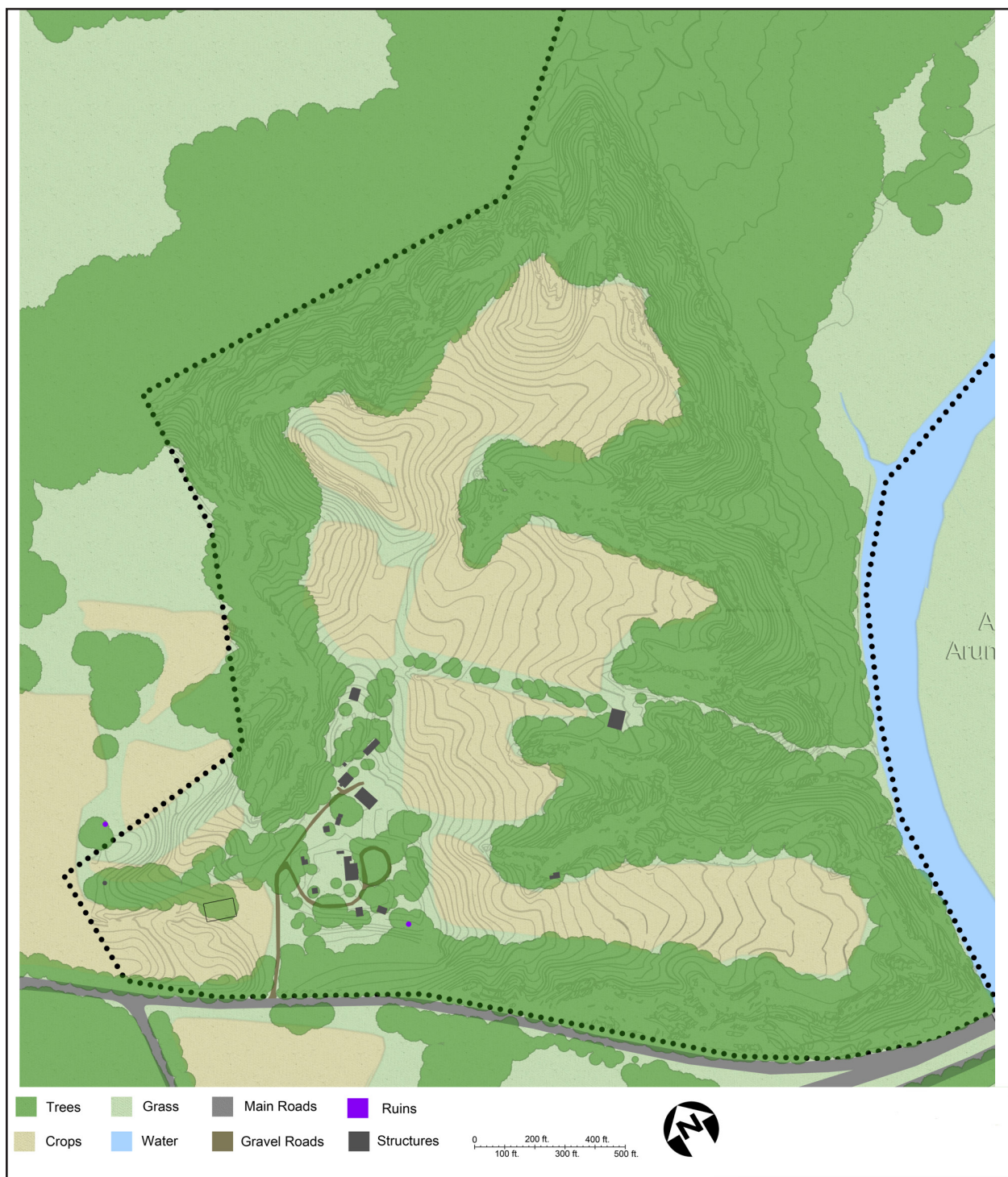


Figure 8: Site plan with topographic overlay, (created by combining information from M-NCPPC, Satellite imagery, and field survey).

Spatial Organization

5. Plantation Plan

Following Clement Hill's acquisition of the property in 1699, the first element of spatial organization that emerged was the plantation plan. Since the current Main House was predated by an earlier structure, the configuration of this plan may have changed over time. In spite of this, the plantation plan that was laid out in the late eighteenth remains largely intact (Figure 9).

A Federal-style plantation house serves as the center of the plantation plan with dependencies located in three of house's four corners. In addition to a still-extant Smokehouse, Dairy, and Chapel, evidence suggests that a warehouse was once located at the northeastern corner of the Main House as well.⁷ The location of these dependencies reflects the importance of symmetry in Federal-style site planning. These structures were oriented towards the Patuxent River, with entrances leading to these buildings from both the river and Old Marlboro Pike. This collection of structures was also positioned at one of the highest elevations on the property, and the Main House in particular provides views of the fields and agricultural buildings below.

Terraces, lawns, and vegetation contributed to the spatial organization within the plantation plan. The terraces located to the northeast of the Main House augment the rise in elevation between the bottom of the terraces and Main House and lengthen the approach from the river, reinforcing the authority of the Hill family in the plantation landscape. These terraces also serve as an example of human control over the environment, which was accelerated following European colonization.

Lawns demonstrate another designed aspect of the plantation landscape. There are two prominent lawns on the site, one positioned between the Main House, Smokehouse, and Dairy and a second located between the Main House and agricultural buildings. Although slaves likely used these lawns as places of work, these features served as a place of transition on the landscape and reinforced the social separation between the Hill family and their slaves.

Vegetation, especially intentionally planted trees and boxwoods, functions within the design of the plantation plan. Trees in front of the Main House were planted symmetrically, adding to the symmetrical layout of the plantation plan. Similarly, boxwoods provide boundaries and control access to different parts of this core collection of structures.

The plantation plan remains evident on the landscape; however, twentieth century structures, including the kitchen addition, porches, Concrete Garage, Small Shed, and the wooden fence, have encroached on this design, compromising the clarity of the plantation plan landscape.

⁷ National Register of Historic Places, Compton Bassett, Upper Marlboro, Prince George's County, National Register #83002959.

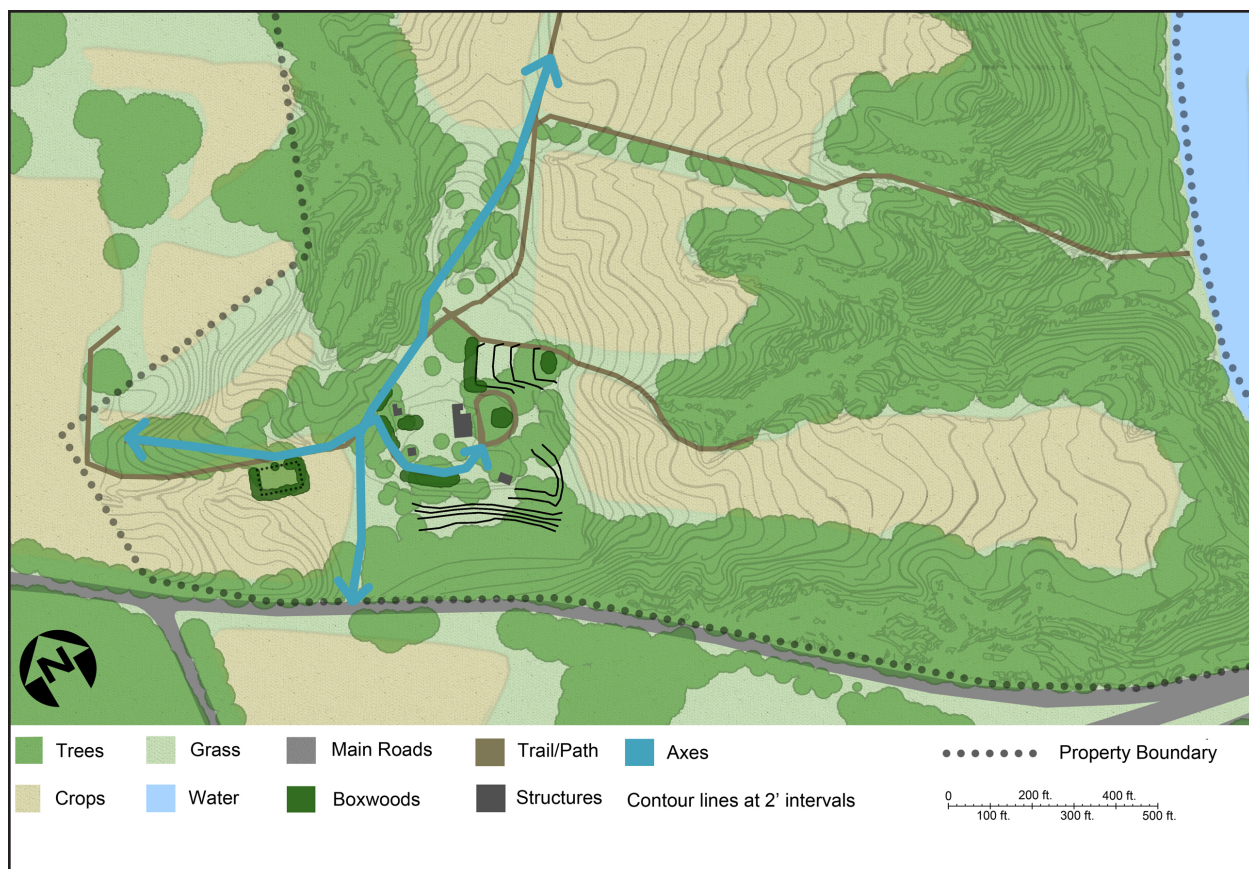


Figure 9: The plantation plan elements of Compton Bassett, (created by combining information from M-NCPPC, satellite imagery, and field survey).



Left: Two trees framing the façade of the Main House, which act as components of the historic plantation plan. Top Right: Lawn separating the Main House from the Smokehouse and Dairy. Bottom Right: Boxwood that line the cemetery and create a boundary to the feature.

6. Agricultural Complex

Barns, sheds, and other agricultural buildings are primarily clustered in an area just north of the Main House. The location of these buildings is notable for their position on the landscape more so than their relationship to each other. Much like the structures in the plantation plan, these buildings are located on a patch of land that is uncharacteristically flat and was likely intentionally leveled. These structures are also situated along a roadbed that runs from north to south on the property near the intersection of the road that leads down towards the Patuxent River. These buildings are also located near the middle of all of the agricultural fields on the property. Collectively, the relationship of these buildings to roads and fields gives them a high degree of functionality. It also suggests that this area of the property has historically been the location of agricultural buildings, housing barns and other structures that predate those currently on the site. The spatial organization of the Agricultural Complex has evolved over time, with vegetative growth currently preventing access to some of these structures as well as to a portion of one of the historic roadbeds that would have serviced these buildings.



Above: View of the Agricultural Complex.

Circulation

7. Historic Entrance Road

The historic entrance road to the site would have run west to east from Old Marlboro Pike to the Main House. The entrance would have proceeded past the cemetery and hand-dug well and intersected the North-South Farm Road near the Main House. A series of concrete gateposts mark this road on both sides of the North-South Farm Road. Presently, this historic entrance is covered with thick vegetation, though the roadbed remains traversable by foot.

8. Current Main Entrance Road

The current main entrance to the site extends from north to south, joining Old Marlboro Pike with the North-South Farm Road. This entryway curves behind the Dairy and Smokehouse towards the Main House, eventually terminating in a circle in front of the Main House. This road is still in use today.



Left: Road to the river. Top Right: Portion of the North-South Farm Road in the northern panhandle. Bottom Right: Portion of the North-South Farm Road, which forms part of the contemporarily used road system within the property.

9. North-South Farm Road

The North-South Farm Road is the longest continuous road on the property. It is a continuation of the main entrance road and extends behind the Smokehouse and Dairy, past the Agricultural Complex, through the fields, and into the forests at the northern panhandle of the property. The location of this road near the agricultural buildings appears to have been relocated to the east in recent years, as satellite imagery shows an alternate iteration of this road in use in the early 2000s. This road is composed of pressed gravel near the plantation plan and Agricultural Complex but becomes dirt as it progresses towards the agricultural fields. As this road approaches the woods, it becomes less defined. Several yards into the forest, though, a roadbed that is clearly a continuation of the North-South Farm Road is articulated in the topography of the landscape.

10. Road to the River

The Road to the River forks off from the North-South Farm Road and heads southeast towards the river. This path passes through the agricultural fields and near the Horse Barn, before entering into forested area and declining steeply towards the river. The path ends at what is believed to be the historic river landing. This path is well maintained and clearly articulated through the woods on a moderate downward slope.



Top Left: Remains of the historic entrance to Compton Bassett. Bottom Left: Portion of the North-South Farm Road cutting through the fields. Right: Portion of the North-South Farm Road in the northern portion of the property.

11. Tenant House Trail

A small trail extends to the southeast of the North-South Farm Road near the Agricultural Complex, ending at the Tenant House with Brick Nogging. This trail is traversable, though only roughly articulated, as it extends along one of the agricultural fields. This path has likely existed as long as a structure has been located where the current tenant house is, as it provides access from this structure to the rest of the Compton Bassett site.

Land Use

12. Agriculture

Much of the land within the contemporary legal boundaries of Compton Bassett is used for agriculture. The location of these fields was influenced by a combination of topography and soil, suggesting that fields have generally been located in the same places since the creation of the plantation. In terms of topography, fields are located on large expanses of flat or gradually sloping land at higher elevations, which would have protected them from flooding and erosion.

Agricultural fields are also located in places with soil that supports agriculture. The two cropland-appropriate soil complexes—Collington-Wist and Marr-Dodon—compose a combined 64% of the total land of the property. Soils in the Collington-Wist Complex drain well, and are moderately permeable, making them suitable as cropland. According to the United States Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service (USDA NRCS), Collington-Wist soils were, “historically cleared and used for corn, wheat, soybeans, hay, pasture, fruits, vegetables, and nursery.” The Marr-Dodon Complex (Mn) soil is also typically used as cropland due to its good drainage and permeability. Notably, the Marr soil type has “been farmed for



Above: View of one of the site's agricultural fields.

nearly 300 years... [and] the most important crop is tobacco.” Other crops of that can be grown on this soil complex are soybeans, hay, and corn (Figure 10).

Although a variety of crops—including tobacco, wheat, and corn—have been grown on the site, the agricultural fields are currently planted with feed corn. The corn significantly impacts the appearance of the landscape, resulting in different views when the corn is at its tallest and when it is harvested: before harvest, the corn hides entire elevations of structures and obfuscates many landscape contours, both of which become more visible in the winter and spring following the harvesting of corn.

13. Forests

Forests compose another significant portion of Compton Bassett’s landscape (Figure 11). Forests are typically located in areas with steep terrain and poor soil for agriculture. As with the site’s agricultural land, it is likely that some portions of land have been forest since the plantation was

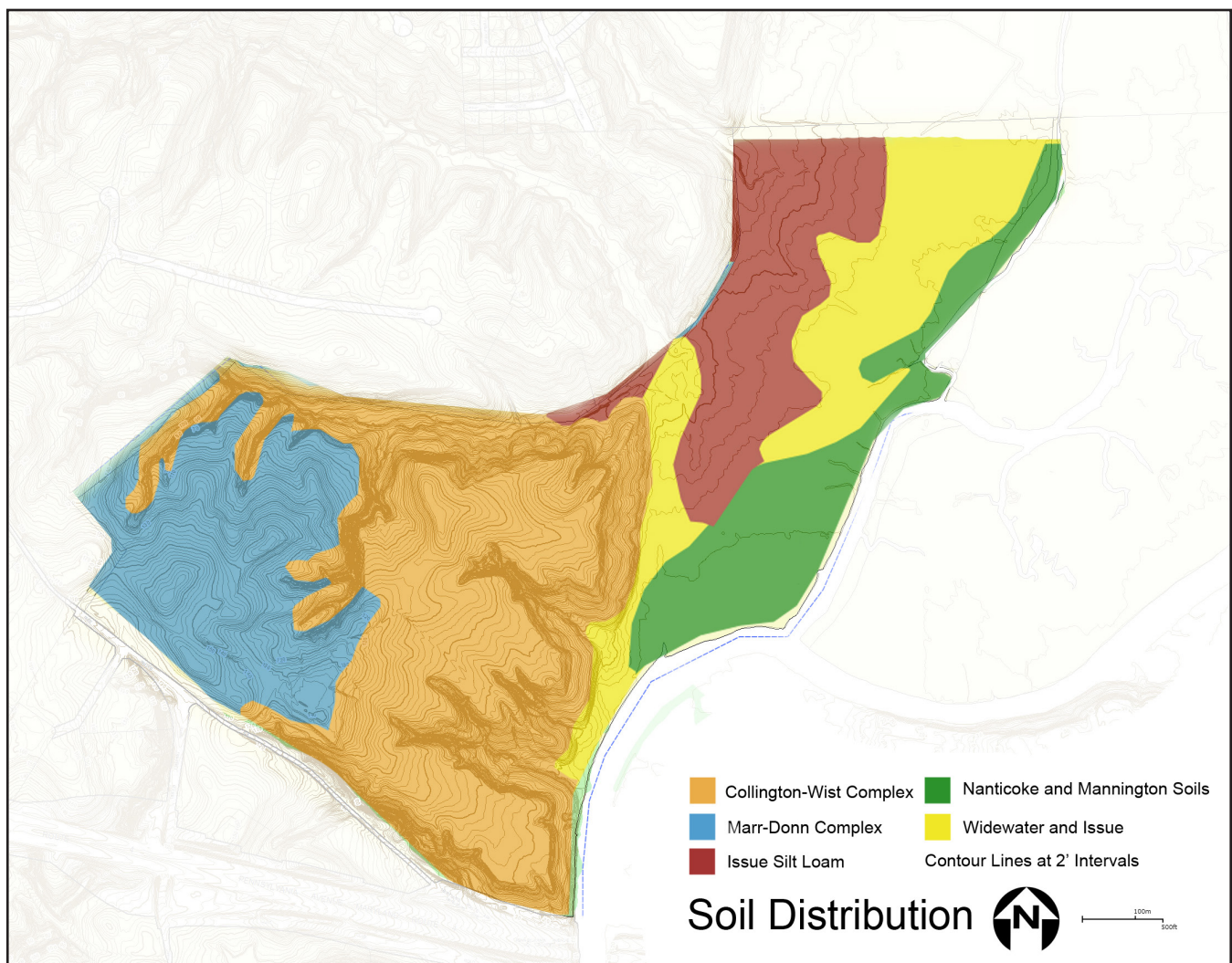


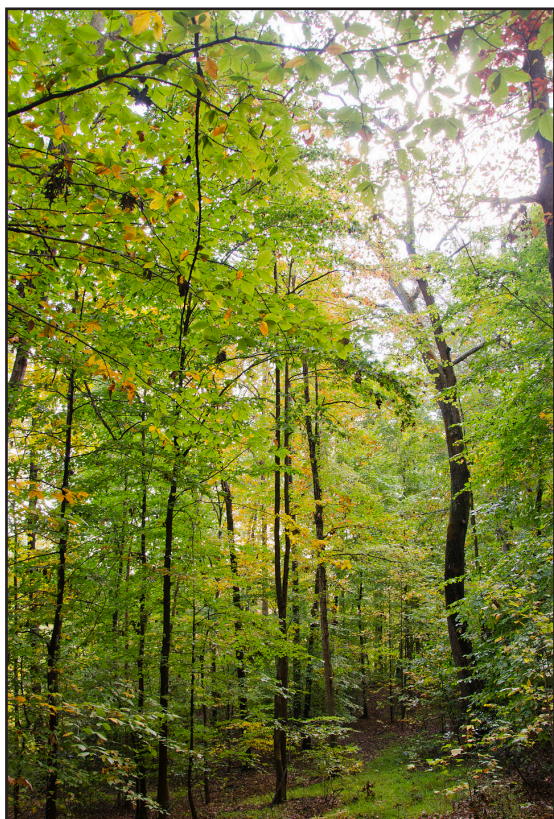
Figure 10: Soil distribution on the Compton Bassett site, (created by combining information from the United States Department of Agriculture and M-NCPPC).

established. In fact, most of the site's oldest trees are located in the ravines running east to west between the Horse Barn and the Tenant House with Brick Nogging and from north to south toward the Tenant House with Asbestos Siding. It is likely that these trees were never cut down because of the inarable nature of the terrain.

Additionally, the soil in the forested areas of the site is ill-suited for other land uses. Widewater and Issue (WE) soils constitute approximately 17% of the total soils of the landscape. Due to their poor drainage, slow permeability, and low elevation, these soil types are prone to frequent flooding. As such their primary use is as a wooded wildlife habitat. Issue Silt Loam (Is) makes up approximately 10% of the total landscape soil. This soil has "somewhat" poor drainage characteristics, but can be used as pasture or woodland.

The wooded areas on the Compton Bassett site contain several different species of trees that vary in age.⁸ The large number of saplings and younger trees in the forests indicate that the woods were not clear-cut in the past; however, several older trees remain within these woods, having survived over two hundred years, suggesting that there have always been forested areas on the property. The most common tree species include the American Beech (*Fagus grandifolia*), Tulip or Yellow Poplar (*Liriodendron tulipifera*), White Oak (*Quercus alba*), Red Oak (*Quercus rubra*), and Red Maple (*Acer rubrum*).

⁸ Trees were dated using a method of measuring the tree diameter measurement and then multiplying it by a species-specific growth factor. While this method only produces an approximate age, it is the most accurate way to date a tree without taking a core-sample from the tree.



Left: View of the forest at Compton Bassett. Right: View of a ravine; an area on the site that tended to contain the oldest trees.

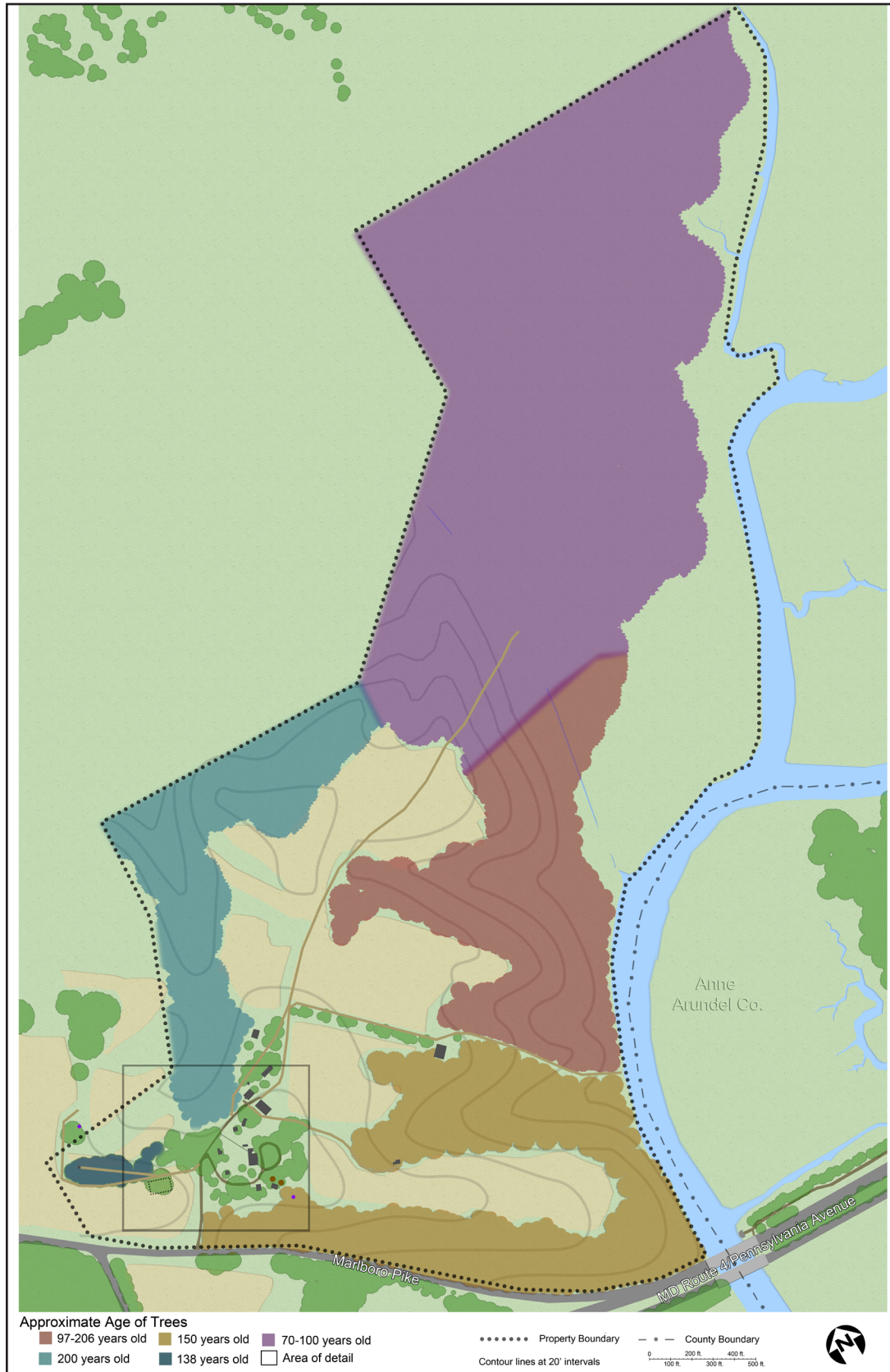


Figure 11: Average age of trees on Compton Bassett site, (created by combining information from USGS, M-NCP-PC, satellite imagery, and field survey). Detailed map of highlighted area shown in Figure 13.

The forests contain vines, grasses, and additional forms of vegetation growing with no human interference, making them dense and impassable in many places. These areas are home to a variety of animals, including White-Tailed Deer, Canada Geese, Great Blue Heron, and the Eastern Box Turtle. Deer form a particularly noticeable part of the landscape, and are a major target for hunters. The Eastern Box Turtle is also very visible on the landscape, appearing in both the agricultural fields and forests.

14. Wetland

A large portion of the Compton Bassett property adjacent to the Patuxent River is wetland (Figure 12). This area of the property floods frequently and is poorly suited for other uses. This land is at the lowest elevation on the site. As with other areas of land-use, the presence of wetlands is reflected in the area's soil type. Nanticoke and Mannington soils (NM) have very poor drainage, moderately slow permeability, and are found at low elevations. These soils are prone to frequent flooding, and their primary usage is as a wetland wildlife habitat.

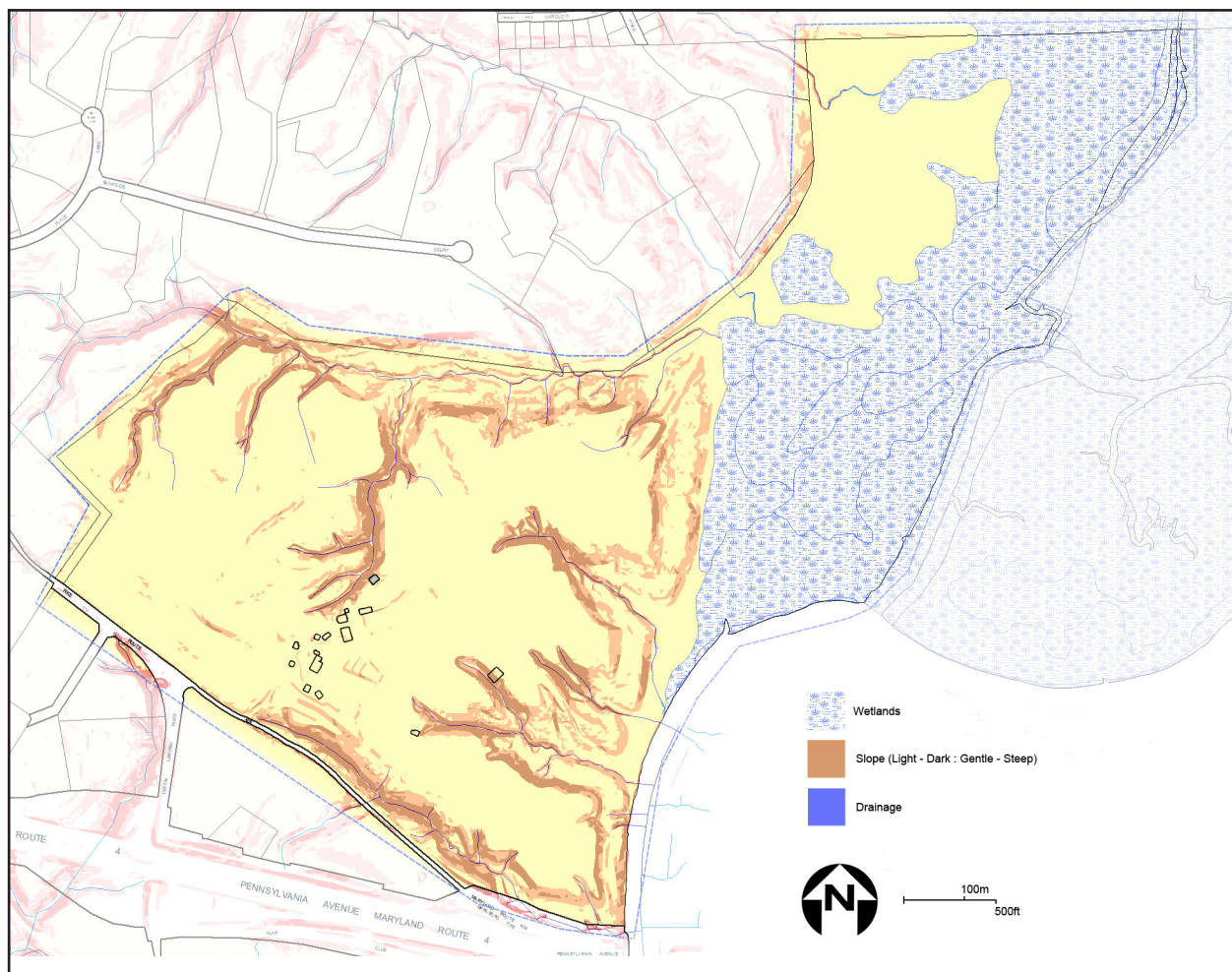


Figure 12: Wetland, slope, and drainage on Compton Bassett site, (created using data from M-NCPPC).

Vegetation

15. Historic Trees

The Compton Bassett site includes a number of trees within the formal plantation plan of the landscape (Figure 13). The land in the vicinity of the Main House and farm outbuildings contains the oldest known surviving trees within the contemporary legal boundaries of the property. The oldest tree, a 320 year old White Oak located behind the Dairy would have been present since the late seventeenth century and would have been large enough to provide shade to the Dairy by the late eighteenth century. The second oldest tree is an American Beech located near the Concrete Garage and is approximately 298 years old. Two Red Oaks, both just under 200 years old, frame the view of the front of the Main House. Additionally, there are two large tree stumps—sixty and sixty-eight inches in diameter—located near the Chapel. Although difficult to date, the age of similarly sized trees likely of the same species suggests that these trees were over 300 years old when they were cut down. M-NCPPC removed these trees approximately three years ago as a means of removing the foliage and limbs overhanging the Chapel.



Left: The c. 320 year old White Oak near the Dairy. Right: The c. 298 year old American Beech located near the Concrete Garage.

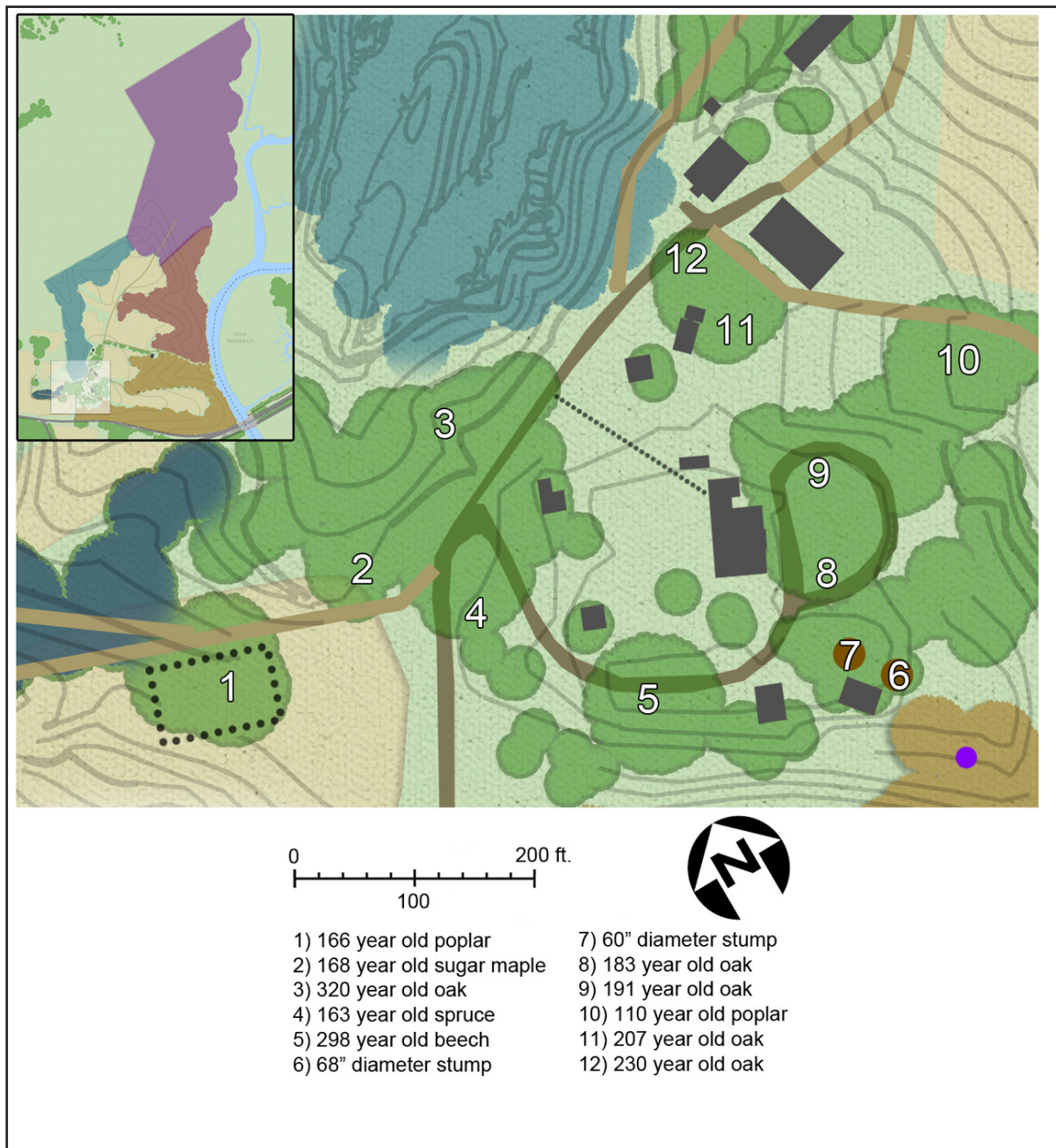


Figure 13: Location and age of historic trees near the Main House and plantation elements; detail from Figure 11, (created using data from M-NCPPC, satellite imagery, and field survey by the authors).

16. Boxwood

Aside from trees, one of the most noticeable vegetative elements of the landscape is the collections of boxwood which are part of the formal plantation design (Figure 14). These features represent the introduction of a non-native plant species onto the site, and were probably planted and renewed at various times through the life of the site. There are several boxwood plantings located near the Main House: one collection sits in the center of the circular driveway in front of the façade of the Main House, while another collection is located between the Dairy and Smokehouse. A line of boxwood also extends at the top of the terraces north of the Main House;



Left: Boxwood in rear of the Main House that form important decorative landscape elements.
Right: Collection of boxwood near the Main House.

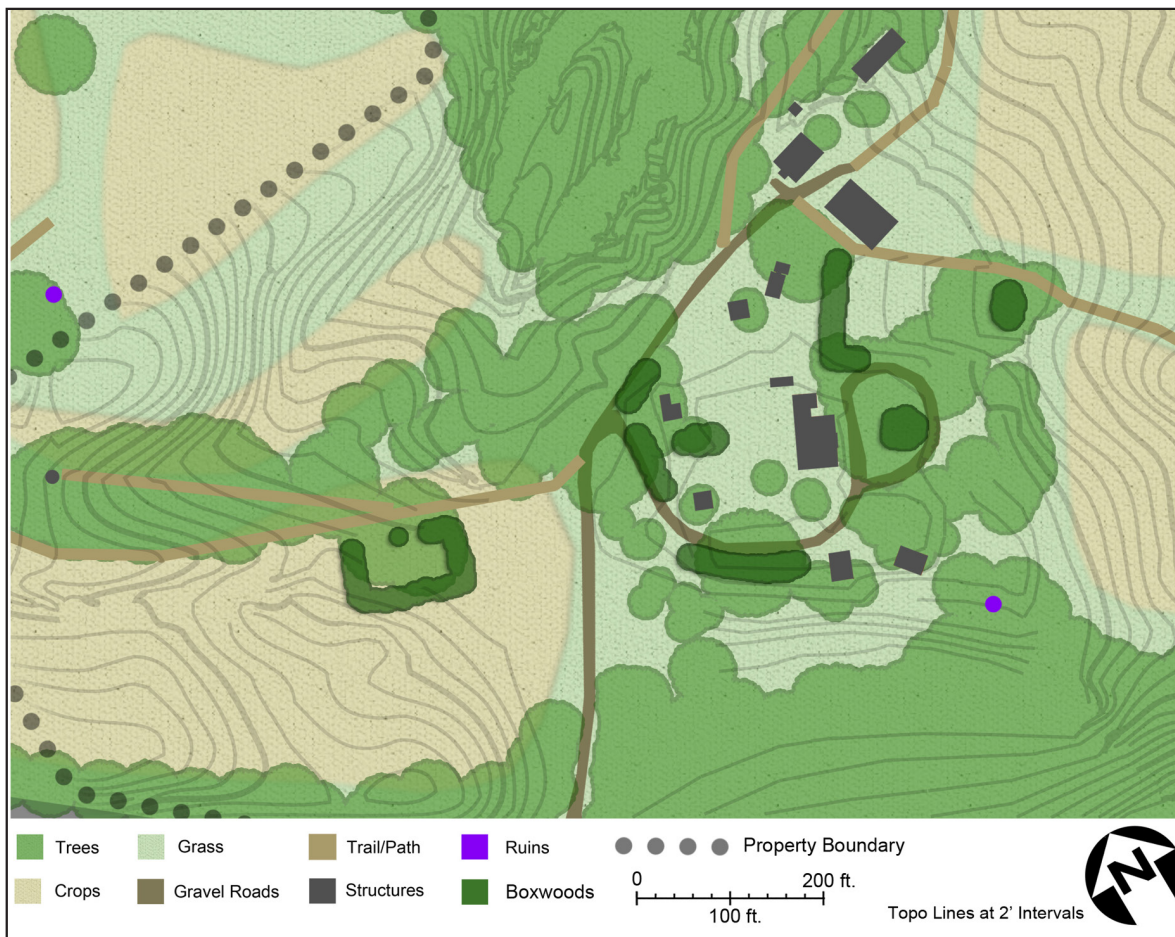


Figure 14: Location of boxwood on Compton Bassett site, (created by combining data from M-NCP-PC, satellite imagery, and field survey).

additional boxwood plantings are located at the bottom of the former terraced gardens. Several rows of boxwood are located along various sections of the current main entrance and North-South Farm Road: these fragments suggest that a longer line of boxwood may have once extended along portions of these roads. Boxwood also provide boundaries for the cemetery. The boxwood that remain are generally in good condition, although an overgrowth of other vegetation within them has damaged the health of the boxwood surrounding the cemetery.

Structures

17. Main House (c. 1783)

The Main House on the Compton Bassett property is a large two-story brick dwelling laid in Flemish bond and covered in cream colored pebble-dash stucco. Constructed c. 1783, this Federal style house replaced an earlier post-in-ground structure. The house is five bays wide, two piles deep, and features a two-story kitchen addition on the northeast elevation that was built in 1928. The remnants of a brick foundation beneath the kitchen addition suggestion that an earlier addition or ell of some sort may have existed prior to the current one. The hipped roof is pierced by two interior end chimneys aligned with the second and fourth bays. The roof of the Main House is covered with asphalt shingles and the kitchen addition roof is covered with slate. The original block of the house measures approximately 50 feet by 40 feet and is positioned with the façade of the house facing southeast towards the Patuxent River. The central bay of the façade projects outward from the main plane of the house and is capped by a triangular pediment that interrupts the cornice line and features a fan light detail. In 1940, a large porch with a low-pitched hipped roof was added to the rear elevation of the house. During the same period a small porch with a flat roof was added to the façade spanning only the width of the projecting central bay. The basement level of the house is distinguished by a decorative water table, under which the stucco has been finished smoothly and scored to give the effect of large blocks of stone. The bricks below the water table were laid in English bond, rather than Flemish bond, suggesting that this lower portion has always been covered by a decorative treatment.

The plan of the house includes a central-passage with a hall and parlor on each side (Figure 15). The left rear parlor on the ground floor was used as Dr. Robert Sasscer's doctor's office in the mid-twentieth century, and the corresponding ground level window was converted into a doorway to allow for access directly into this room. The central passage is divided midway by an elegant cross arch with a large fan light, supported by two reeded and fluted pilasters. On the second floor, an added wall divides the central passage into two rooms. Unlike the partition in the central passage of the first floor, the central passage way partition found on the second floor is not original. The Main House faces a number of maintenance and structural issues, which were exacerbated by the August 25, 2011 earthquake. Prior to the earthquake, the Main House exhibited masonry, wood, and plaster deterioration, partially resulting from repairs using inappropriate materials and partially from neglect. During the earthquake, the house suffered significant structural damage and is now in need of immediate stabilization. Differential settlement, coupled with earthquake damage, has caused many of the brick keys that bind the masonry walls to fracture or pull apart, allowing the walls of the house to move independently from one another. The house continues to deteriorate rapidly, and the present structural issues have become increasingly severe.



Above: Façade of the Main House.



Below: Rear elevation of the Main House.



Top: Staircase on the first floor of the Main House. Bottom Left: Archway in the central passage way of the Main House. Bottom Right: Detail of the woodwork on the archway pilaster.

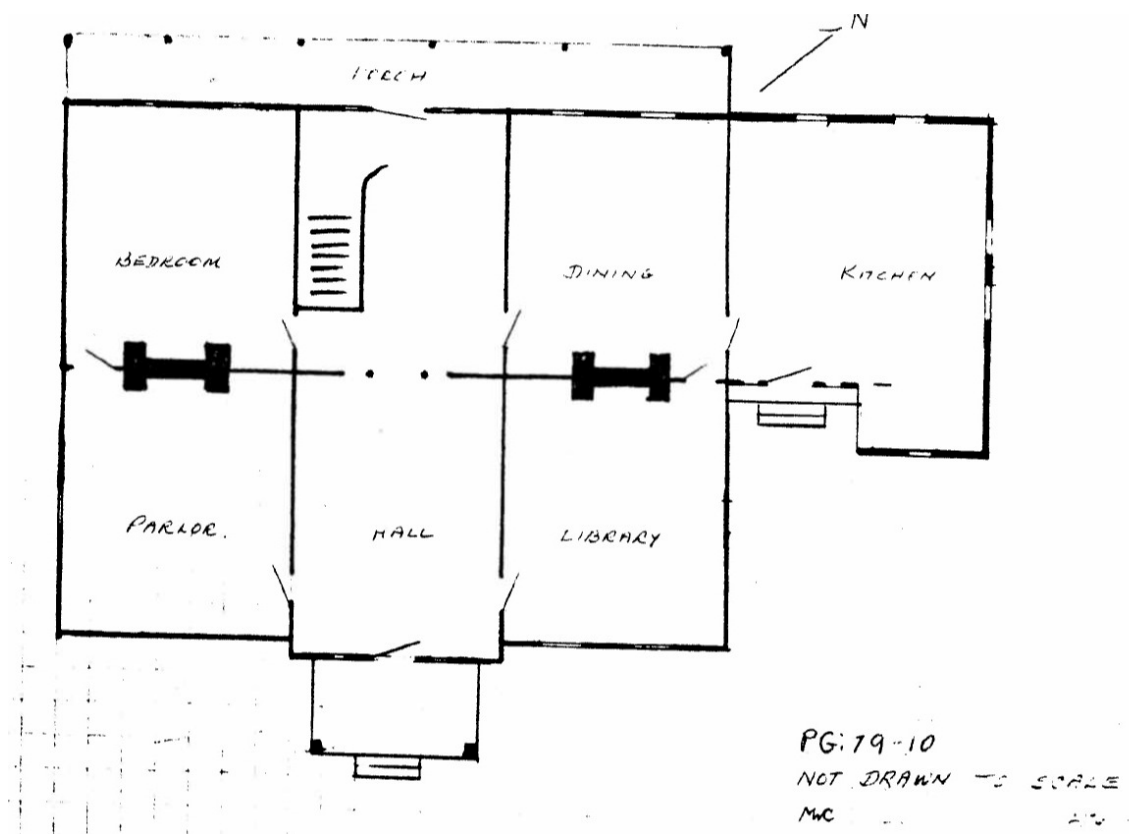


Figure 15: First floor floor plan of the Main House, (found in the Compton Bassett National Register form).

18. Chapel (c. 1779)

One of the most unique structures found on the Compton Bassett estate is an Roman Catholic chapel. The Chapel is located to the south of the Main House and is positioned on an east-west axis. The Chapel is three bays wide, one and a half stories in height, one pile deep, and includes both a finished garret and cellar space with a brick herringbone floor. The building measures approximately 26 feet wide by 18 feet deep. The Chapel is constructed of structural brick laid in a variety of bonds and features randomly placed glazed headers; the differing brick bonds are indicative of multiple build periods and later repairs made to the building. An exterior gable end chimney anchors the southeastern gable end of the building. The northern elevation, which features the entryway and serves as the façade of the building, is three bays wide with windows in the left and center bays. The door is located in the right-hand bay and is crowned by a four-light fanlight. The entryway to the cellar is located on the northwestern gable end, opposite the chimney. The Chapel's roof is covered with wooden shake shingles. Riven lath and early cut nails are visible in the stairwell walls leading to the garret, which differ from the sawn lath found throughout parts of the main floor and garret.

The Chapel has a number of structural and maintenance issues. The roof has failed completely and as a result the entire structure is now covered by a large white tarp in an attempt to prevent additional deterioration. While it is effective in keeping out water, the tarp is potentially causing



Above: Early twentieth century Historic American Buildings Survey photograph of the Chapel.



Above: Chapel cellar as it appears today.

further harm by trapping moisture inside the building and making the structure support the substantial weight of the tarp itself. The failures in the roof have in turn caused the floor and ceiling of the Chapel to fall through in multiple places. Additionally, a boxwood hedge along the southern elevation was planted too close to the chapel and had grown too large. The plants which has recently been removed were holding moisture against the building that resulted in damage to the foundation and brickwork.

19. Dairy (eighteenth century)

A brick dairy is located immediately behind the Main House. The Dairy was laid in Flemish bond with glazed headers and features segmental arches above the doorway and three window openings. The Dairy measures approximately 14 feet by 16 feet and is positioned with the front-facing gable elevation towards the Main House. The Dairy features a brick chimney positioned in the center of the steeply pitched gable roof; however, the lower portion of this chimney has been removed, and a metal jack currently holds up the upper portion of the chimney stack. A twentieth century wood addition has been built onto the right-hand, northern elevation of the building. This addition has a gable roof with wooden shingles and is clad in board-and-batten siding. The addition was built on top of a hand dug well, which is still extant beneath the addition and was operational at last inspection.

The interior of the Dairy shows evidence of twentieth century alterations, as it features sawn lath and modern plaster. These materials look similar to the sawn lath and modern plaster found within the Chapel, and it is possible that the two buildings were renovated simultaneously in the early twentieth century. The poured concrete floor, which contains a rear exiting drain, conceals any evidence of the Dairy's original floor. Despite having been remodeled, a few remaining pieces of riven lath indicate that the dairy featured a finished ceiling in its original state. Remaining features on the interior of the structure, such as the riven lath, hewn timber roof framing, and Flemish bond brick, suggest that the Dairy was constructed sometime in the eighteenth century.



Above: The Dairy in rear of the Main House with wood addition to the structure.

The Dairy has several structural issues. A brick repointing job using improper mortar was completed at an earlier date and has damaged many of the structure's historic bricks. The damaged chimney also requires repair, or possible removal, so that the metal jack can be removed from the interior. Lastly, the wooden addition is in poor condition, and a decision must be made about whether or not to retain it.

20. Smokehouse (nineteenth century)

A brick smokehouse is located to the northwest of the Main House, approximately 50 feet to the southwest of the Dairy. The Smokehouse was laid in one-over-five Common brick bond, which differs from the bond of the Main House and the Dairy. The different brick bond indicates that the Smokehouse was built at a later date than the Dairy and Main House. The Smokehouse measures approximately 12 feet by 16 feet and has a steeply pitched, front facing gable roof. The rake boards are missing from the façade, which has allowed water to infiltrate the building. A jack arch supports the entryway to the Smokehouse, another construction difference from the Dairy that speaks to the building's later construction date. While there are no windows in the Smokehouse, there are decorative brick gable openings built into the upper portion of gables, which provides ventilation to the building. What appears to be the original brick floor remains intact inside the Smokehouse.

The Smokehouse is in poor condition and in danger of further deterioration or collapse. The brickwork was repointed using a Portland cement based mortar during the twentieth century, and



Above: Façade of the Smokehouse located behind the Main House at Compton Bassett.

this inappropriate mortar has caused significant brick spalling; the August 25, 2011 earthquake furthered this deterioration. Countless bricks have fallen out of their bond or have deteriorated completely into powder. While the wood framing supporting the roof appears to be in good condition, further investigation is needed to be certain.

21. Tenant House Ruins behind Chapel (nineteenth century)

Northeast of the Chapel there are the ruins of a structure believed to have been a tenant house of wood and masonry construction. All that remains of this structure are the base of a brick chimney, which stands approximately 10 feet tall, and the remnants of the structure's brick foundation. An iron crane and cooking pot chain are still present in the chimney. Judging from the bricks that comprise the chimney, and the bricks scattered around the site, the structure appears to have been constructed in the mid-to-late nineteenth century. The decorative brick belt course on the chimney suggests that it may be the dilapidated board-and-batten tenant house visible in a HABS photograph from the 1930s. The site is overgrown with brush, but appears to be in stable condition.



Left: Tenant House Ruins behind Chapel. Right: A twentieth century Historic American Buildings Survey image, which may show the more complete tenant house now evidenced only by a chimney.

22. Small Shed Near Kitchen Addition (nineteenth century)

Near the rear corner of the two-story kitchen addition to the Main House sits a small wooden shed covered by a standing seam metal shed roof. The shed is clad in vertical siding boards and reaches a height of approximately 8 feet. Currently, the shed stores firewood and yard supplies. Though an unassuming structure, the shed appears quite old and looks to be structurally sound.

23. Chicken Coop (twentieth century)

Located in the side yard, north of the Main House, the Chicken Coop is constructed of cinder blocks and covered with a standing seam metal shed roof. The structure measures approximately 51 feet wide by 13 feet deep and includes a mismatched wooden frame addition on the northeastern end of the structure. The main cinder block form is structurally sound, however its plywood floor is rotten; the roof appears to be in good condition. The wooden frame addition, which is connected to the cinder block portion via an elevated breezeway, exhibits rot in some areas and needs to be inspected closely in order to determine whether it should be retained.

24. Wooden Shed on Brick Piers (twentieth century)

Located approximately 30 feet to the west of the Chicken Coop is a wooden shed, which stands approximately 2 feet above the ground on a system of brick piers. The shed measures 18 feet by 19 feet, is clad in wooden clapboard siding, and is covered by a standing seam metal roof; this shed was constructed in the twentieth century. Other than minor cosmetic repairs, the Wooden Shed appears to be in excellent condition. Branches from a nearby tree are encroaching on the shed and could potentially damage the structure if left unaddressed.



Top Left: The shed located near the kitchen addition of the Main House.

Bottom Left: Chicken Coop located within the Agricultural Complex.

Right: The Wooden Shed located within Agricultural Complex.

25. Concrete Garage (1926)

Southwest of the Main House stands a twentieth century concrete garage with a wooden frame roof and stamped metal shingles. The walls of the garage are concrete and appear to have been poured in place. The gable end of the garage faces the Main House and features a set of large sliding doors clad in wainscoting plywood. These doors are rotten and in poor condition. The inscription “1926” appears near the peak of the front gable and is likely the year of construction. Though generally in sound condition, the garage is severely overgrown with vines, which, if left unaddressed, will cause damage to the building.

26. International Barn (twentieth century)

The International Barn is a wooden barn located to the northeast of the Main House. A 1946 International flatbed truck was formerly parked within this barn, giving rise to the structure’s name and providing evidence of the kinds of artifacts used on the farm throughout the twentieth century. The barn exhibits multiple periods of construction: it appears that the central portion of the barn, which seems to have functioned as a corn crib, was constructed first, possibly standing alone as an independent structure. The section features widely spaced vertical slats indicative of a corncrib. Presently, this initial section, along with the later additions, has now been incorporated into barn as it exists presently. A shed addition extends off of the northern elevation while a shed addition carport is positioned on the southern elevation of the building. This barn is in excellent condition and appears to need little work.



Left: The twentieth century Concrete Garage located near the Chapel. Photographic inset reveals the date, 1926, inscribed in the building, likely the date of construction. Right: A wooden barn, referred to as the International Barn, located among the agricultural buildings.

27. Gambrel-Roofed Barn (twentieth century)

A large concrete gambrel-roofed barn stands forty feet north of the International Barn. The poured concrete construction, stamped metal shingle roof, and wooden sash windows are similar to those found in the Concrete Garage near the Chapel, which suggest these structures were built in the same time period. Despite its somewhat dilapidated appearance, this barn remains structurally sound, excepting the roof, which has rotted through completely. If left unaddressed, the collapsed roof will cause the building's masonry to deteriorate resulting in a structurally compromised building. The barn features a second floor hayloft with a projecting hayloft door and crane system, while the first floor was designed to serve as a workshop.

28. Long Barn (twentieth century)

The Long Barn is a narrow, wooden barn located east of the Gambrel-Roofed Barn. It is of twentieth century construction, framed entirely in wood, and measures approximately 88 feet long by 15 feet deep. The Long Barn is covered by a gable roof with standing seam metal roofing; the barn itself is clad in vertical board and batten siding. The barn is divided into a multiple sections, including a portion at the eastern end where the front of the barn is open, similar to a carport. The Long Barn appears to be structurally sound, but it is almost entirely covered in vines and undergrowth. If these vines remain unaddressed they will begin to deteriorate the Long Barn and could potentially cause structural issues by trapping moisture against the building and adding weight to the structure.



Left: Gambrel-Roofed Barn located among the collection of twentieth-century agricultural buildings.
Right: The Long Barn located among the site's agricultural building.

29. Plywood Shed (late-twentieth century)

To the right of the Gambrel-Roofed Barn is a twentieth century wooden shed clad in T1-11 plywood siding. This structure measures approximately 7 feet by 7 feet square. The shed is flimsy in construction and is covered by a disproportionately large gable roof featuring standard 3-tab asphalt shingles and an exaggerated overhang. The Plywood Shed was constructed poorly and may have structural damage. The shed has been left open to the elements for an undetermined amount of time, and the floor has deteriorated. In addition to this, the Plywood Shed is severely overgrown with vegetation.

30. Wooden Lean-To (twentieth century)

Immediately adjacent, to the left of the Gambrel-Roofed Barn, stands a small wooden lean-to structure. This structure measures approximately 12 feet wide by 8 feet deep. It appears to be structurally sound.

31. Board and Batten Tenant House with Brick Nogging (nineteenth century)

A board and batten tenant house with brick nogging sits on the edge of a cornfield southeast of the Main House. Referred to as the “Month Hand’s” house in past accounts, this tenant house dates to the mid-nineteenth century. It consists of a main block measuring approximately 22 feet wide by 18 feet deep, and a later ell addition on the western gable end of the structure measuring approximately 14 feet square. The tenant house is a wooden frame structure with brick nogging between the framing members, and has also been covered with multiple layers of board-and-batten siding. Both cut and wire nails can be found throughout the house, providing evidence of the structure’s early construction and continued occupancy into the twentieth century. The structure is in ruinous condition, the roof, floors, and walls all having collapsed in multiple areas.



Left: The Plywood Shed located near the Gambrel-Roofed Barn. Right: Wooden lean-to located next to Gambrel-Roofed Barn.

32. Tenant House with Asbestos Siding (twentieth century)

East of the Long Barn exists the remains of another tenant house. This structure dates to the twentieth century and is in ruinous condition. The house measures approximately 40 feet wide by 24 feet deep, features a standard gable roof with 3-tab asphalt shingles, and is clad in asbestos siding. The tenant house is in ruinous condition. The roof has fallen through in multiple areas and the rear of the building is entirely open to the elements. If left in place the structure will soon collapse, spreading asbestos siding dust into the immediate environment.

33. Horse Barn (nineteenth century)

Named for the presence of livestock stalls within the structure, this large wooden barn is situated on the pathway leading towards the river landing. The structure measures approximately 47 feet wide by 60 feet deep and is covered by a large standing seam metal gable roof. Closer inspection has revealed that the building was constructed in at least two phases. The main section was built first and measures 31 feet wide by 60 feet deep. A shed addition was later attached to the southern side of the building and the roof expanded to cover this addition. The building features a large hayloft on the second floor and is clad in board-and-batten siding. The rear portion of the northern wall has partially collapsed, leaving the large, hand-hewn second-floor joists unattached to the exterior wall. If left unaddressed further collapse could result.



Left: Brick Nogging Tenant House. Right: Asbestos Siding Tenant House.

The Horse Barn exhibits evidence of multiple periods of construction. Hand-hewn framing timbers featuring mortise-and-tenon joints were likely reused from an earlier structure on the property. Both cut nails dating to the nineteenth century and wire nails dating to the twentieth century are found throughout the barn. Most interestingly, wrought nails, possibly dating to the eighteenth century, are present in one of the hayloft doors. This door also features wrought strap hinges, again possibly dating to the eighteenth century. As with the hand hewn framing members, this door was possibly salvaged and repurposed from an earlier structure. These building elements suggest that the Horse Barn was constructed in the nineteenth century, possibly using materials salvaged from earlier structures.

Despite some issues that require immediate attention, the Horse Barn is in good condition. In addition to the partially collapsed northern wall, powderpost beetle holes are visible in certain framing members; however, these holes might date to an earlier infestation.



Above: Horse Barn located on the road leading to the Patuxent River.

34. Hill Family Cemetery (nineteenth century)

A small family cemetery is located approximately 300 feet west of the Main House. This cemetery is situated along the historic entryway to the property. This cemetery contains almost exclusively Hill family members and dates primarily to the nineteenth century—twenty of the twenty-two graves date to the nineteenth century. Family history suggests that the cemetery also contains a number of unmarked graves dating to the eighteenth century, including those of Clement Hill Jr. and Ann Darnall, the first residents of Compton Bassett.

The cemetery contains several broken headstones and is in poor condition. In recent years, the undergrowth was left to grow freely and consumed nearly the entire cemetery; several trees had fallen and seriously damaged headstones. M-NCPPC grounds keepers have removed much of this undergrowth, however, the cemetery still remains slightly overgrown and need further maintenance. The broken headstones and grave shafts risk further deterioration if left unaddressed.



Above: Various images of the Hill Family Cemetery located on the Compton Bassett site.

Views and Vistas

35. Standing in front of the Main House and looking to the east, one experiences a stunning view of Compton Bassett's agricultural fields. This view would have been important historically as it would have provided the Hill family with a clear view of the plantation fields, which were the source of their wealth.



36. Standing on the historic entrance to the site facing the Main House, one encounters a highly symmetrical view of the Main House, Dairy, and Smokehouse. This view was likely intentionally created with the placement of the path, as this is the first impression of the Main House that would have greeted guests arriving via the historic land entrance to the site.



37. Looking south from the historic river landing, down the Patuxent River, one sees a view of both the river and the Route 4 Bridge. Historically, this location would have provided a view of Hill's Bridge and Hill's Landing. Although this view was not designed—it was the result of the natural shape of the river—this view would still have been an important element of the landscape, affording views of incoming ship traffic and activity on the southern extensions of the Compton Bassett property.



38. Looking north from the historic river landing, one finds another important view up the Patuxent River. This view is another natural element of the landscape. This spot would have historically provided a view of ship traffic north of Compton Bassett.



39. Standing on the road leading from the fields looking southwest towards the Main House, one experiences the historic view that visitors to the site would have experienced in the eighteenth century as they approached the Main House from the river. This view shows the Main House behind the northern section of terraces and several trees and boxwoods. One also experiences this view from a lower elevation than that of the Main House, forcing one to look up at the structure, which magnifies its grandeur.



Small Scale Features

40. Entryway Gateposts (twentieth century)

Three gateposts remain on the site. The first post is oriented in relation to the historic entryway to the plantation. An additional set of matching posts stands approximately 100 yards further along the farm road near the Agricultural Complex. These posts are of poured concrete construction and likely date to the twentieth century. The posts are in good condition.

41. Tobacco Barn Ruins (twentieth century)

Ruins of an early twentieth century tobacco barn sit on the opposite side of the historic entryway from the Hill Family Cemetery. This barn appears to have been constructed using salvaged building materials from an earlier outbuilding, evidenced by the hand-hewn timbers with mortise-and-tenon joints and the late nineteenth century bricks comprising the foundation. Vines and undergrowth largely obscure these ruins.

42. Wooden Fence near Main House (twentieth century)

To the north of the Main House, extending from the northwest corner of the deck that is attached to the twentieth century kitchen addition is a wooden privacy fence. The fence extends from the Main House towards the farm driveway and ties into the concrete gate post near the Wooden Shed on Brick Piers. The fence is upright at present, but is covered almost entirely by vines and overgrowth. It is in very poor condition.



Left: Entryway gatepost. Top Right: Tobacco Barn ruins. Bottom Right: Other gateposts.

43. Brick Fire Pit (twentieth century)

A small brick fire pit or barbecue measuring approximately 3 feet by 3 feet square, and approximately 4 feet in height is located in the side yard of the Main House near the Agricultural Complex. This structure appears to have functioned as a cooking facility. The date of construction is twentieth century, although it is comprised of bricks reused from an earlier date. The feature is charred with soot and suffers from deteriorating brickwork and masonry.

44. Trash Piles and Debris

There are several piles of scrap and building debris scattered throughout the property, but primarily concentrated in the vicinity of the Agricultural Complex. This debris includes a collection of barrels and paint cans that potentially contain hazardous material, a pile of decoy ducks used for hunting, piles of scrap wood and metal, and two Ford pickup trucks. These items present potential environmental problems for the property.

45. Hand Dug Well (date unknown)

A hand dug well lined with handmade bricks is located approximately 300 feet west of the Main House along the historic entryway to the site. It has been capped with a twentieth century concrete cover with a raised portion featuring an access hole in the top. This cover allows for well access and use but keeps the well free of debris. This well does not exhibit obvious evidence of deterioration.



Top Left: Brick Fire Pit. Bottom Left: River Landing. Right: Cement cover on the hand-dug well near the historic entryway to the property.

46. River Landing (date unknown)

Due east from the Main House, located immediately on the banks of the Patuxent River, there is what is likely the historic river landing for the Compton Bassett property. The flat topography found in this area appears to have been kept cleared, leveled, and maintained in order to allow for river access. Stones were placed along the shore in this area in order to prevent erosion; the bank appears to be in stable condition at this time. Following M-NCPPC's acquisition of the property the plant life in the area has been allowed to grow more freely and now presents problems for visitors to the river landing. In addition to this, multiple chairs, concrete blocks, and an old barbecue grill lay in the grass near the river landing.

Potential Archaeological Resources

Potential archaeological resources form an important element of Compton Bassett's cultural landscape. This section considers the prehistoric archaeological resources that have been discovered in from the Queen Anne Bridge to the southern point of Jug Bay, and one half mile on either side of the Patuxent River from 10,000 B.C.E. until European contact in the 1600s. Consequently, this information reveals the potential for the presence of archaeological resources on the Compton Bassett property.⁹

Paleo-Indian (10,000-8,000 B.C.E.)

Of all prehistoric periods, the Paleo-Indian period has the fewest identified archaeological sites in the study area. The three sites identified in the study area are base camps, which residential sites that would have been occupied for long portions of the year by the semi-nomadic groups present in the region. Two of these base camps are located at approximately one hundred feet AMSL and the third is located at an elevation of between twenty and forty feet. One of these base camps is located over one mile (approximately 6000 feet) from the current water source, one is located approximately one-third of a mile (1,660 feet) from the nearest creek, and the third is approximately eight hundred feet from the Patuxent River.

Archaic (8000-1200 B.C.E.)

Approximately thirty Archaic period archaeological sites have been identified within the study area. Of these sites, twelve are base camps. These base camps are almost all located at elevations of approximately twenty feet and within two hundred feet of the Patuxent River or a drainage creek. There is one notable outlier that is categorized as a base camp/village and appears to be much larger than the rest of the base camp sites. This site is located on a terrace at approximately one hundred feet AMSL. The site is less than one hundred feet from a creek and approximately six hundred feet from the Patuxent River.

⁹ Due to the confidential nature of the archaeological data furnished by the Maryland Historical Trust for analysis in this report, we are unable to include maps or other specific information that could identify the locations of known archaeological resources.

Additionally, approximately eleven resource procurement sites have been identified in the study area. These sites represent places where Native Americans would have stayed for short periods of time to attain a particular resource. The majority of these sites are located at an approximate elevation of twenty feet and within four hundred feet of a water source. There are, however, several outliers that are located between 700 and 800 feet from a water source.

Woodland (1200 B.C.E.-1600 C.E.)

Approximately twenty-seven Woodland period archaeological sites have been identified within the study area. Ten of these sites have been identified as resource procurement sites. These sites are predominantly located at elevations between zero and one hundred feet, and found within one hundred feet from a source of water. There is one outlier site that is located approximately one third of one mile (2000 feet) from a water source, and there are several sites that are located at elevations between forty and sixty feet. There are also six base camps that have been identified from this time period. Five of these are located within two hundred feet of a source of water, and all of them are located at elevations between zero and forty feet, with the majority located at an elevation of twenty feet.

Of these Woodland Period sites, four have been identified as contact, or possible contact, sites. All but one of these sites are base camps. One base camp is on the site of an eighteenth century plantation. These contact period sites are situated in the same ranges of elevation and distance to water as other Woodland Period base camp sites.

Based on the prehistoric archaeology that has been conducted in the study area, one can make several predictions about the potential locations of archaeological resources on Compton Bassett. The most likely places for archaeological resources are at locations with low to moderate elevation (between zero and forty feet) and within two hundred feet of a source of water. Larger settlements would be found on larger areas of level terrain and at higher elevations. In particular, the aforementioned contact period site located on the same site as an eighteenth century plantation may have implications for Compton Bassett, as it too may share its location with a former prehistoric site.

Landscape Themes

Previous studies of Compton Bassett have focused primarily on the architecture of the Main House and the lives of prominent members of the Hill and Sasscer families. A cultural landscape approach reveals, however, that the site represents a multi-layered history that extends back thousands of years. This section explores key elements of the site's history thematically, demonstrating important changes and continuities on the landscape, as well as how Compton Bassett relates to its larger context. The themes to be considered are:

- Prehistoric Land Use
- Agriculture
- Catholicism
- War of 1812
- African Americans
- Transportation
- Environmental and Cultural Stewardship: 1961 - Present

Prehistoric Land Use

Cultural imprints on the Compton Bassett property likely extend into the earliest period of prehistoric settlement in the region. The general patterns of settlement in the area surrounding Compton Bassett suggest that the property's land may contain evidence of prehistoric sites. Early human history has been divided into three periods: Paleo-Indian (10,000 B.C.E.- 8,000 B.C.E.), Archaic (8,000 B.C.E.-1,200 B.C.E.), and Woodland (1,200 B.C.E.- 1,600 C.E./European contact). Dramatic shifts in the environment occurred over the course of these periods; as humans adapted to these changes, their settlements and culture changed as well.

Paleo-Indian: 10,000 B.C.E. - 8000 B.C.E.

Of the three prehistoric periods, archaeologists have uncovered the least amount of information about the Paleo-Indian period; they have, however, established general patterns of settlement and lifestyle. During the Paleo-Indian period, humans were hunter-gatherers: they moved in small familial bands over large areas for most of the year, following resources such as the White-Tailed deer and elk (Figure 16). These groups occupied larger residential bases during the winter, which were located near homogeneous resources, such as small varieties of plants. Throughout the rest of the year, they would engage in a semi-nomadic lifestyle, establishing small camps located near less predictable faunal resources, known as locations, which they would use for short periods of time. As previously noted, several Paleo-Indian residential base camps have been identified in Central Patuxent Riverway, demonstrating that the general settlement patterns present in this period occurred on or near Compton Bassett as well.¹⁰

10 Richard Dent, *Chesapeake Prehistory, Old Traditions, New Directions*, (New York: Plenum Press, 1995), 135-160.

Paleo-Indian Land Use Patterns 10,000-8,000 BCE

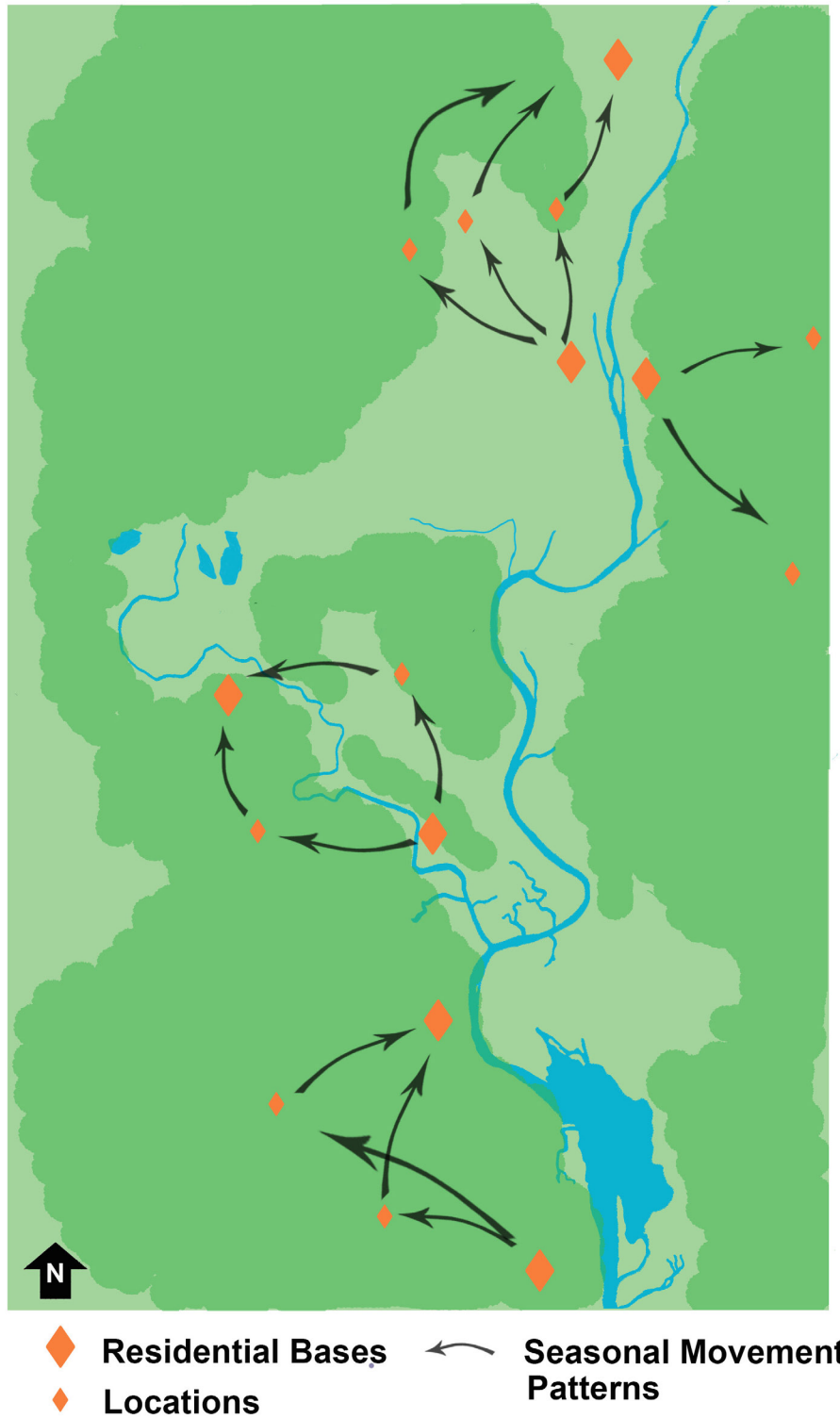


Figure 16: Paleo-Indian land use patterns, conjectural based on information in *Chesapeake Prehistory, Old Traditions, New Directions*.

Archaic: 8000 B.C.E. - 1200 B.C.E.

Significant environmental changes occurred during the Archaic Period, triggered by the last glacial retreat north of the Chesapeake. Following this event, and the rising sea flooded the ancestral Susquehanna River, initiating the formation of the Chesapeake Bay. This drastically altered the ecosystem, including the flora and fauna, and consequently impacted human settlement and resource procurement. The ecosystem became more temperate and estuarine, offering new resources such as edible greens, tubers, and berries, and increasing faunal populations, such as the White-Tailed Deer. Additionally, as sea level rise lessened, more stable estuarine conditions emerged. This facilitated the development of widespread, dependable aquatic resources like transient waterfowl and the Atlantic Blue Crab.

Although this is a period of dramatic shifts, it is important to bear in mind that climatic shifts and human lifestyle changes occurred gradually (Figure 17). In the early Archaic period, humans continued their hunter-gatherer lifestyle. Over time, as the climate became warmer and drier, and new resources emerged, humans could predict resources seasonally and tended to return to specific areas leading to a greater re-occupation of sites than in the Paleo-Indian period. Additionally, the presence of dependable aquatic resources made areas of brackish water, such as the Patuxent River, preferable for base camps. The presence of a dozen known Archaic base camp sites in the Central Patuxent Riverway underscores the growing importance of the land along the river to prehistoric people.¹¹

Woodland: 1200 B.C.E. - 1600 C.E.

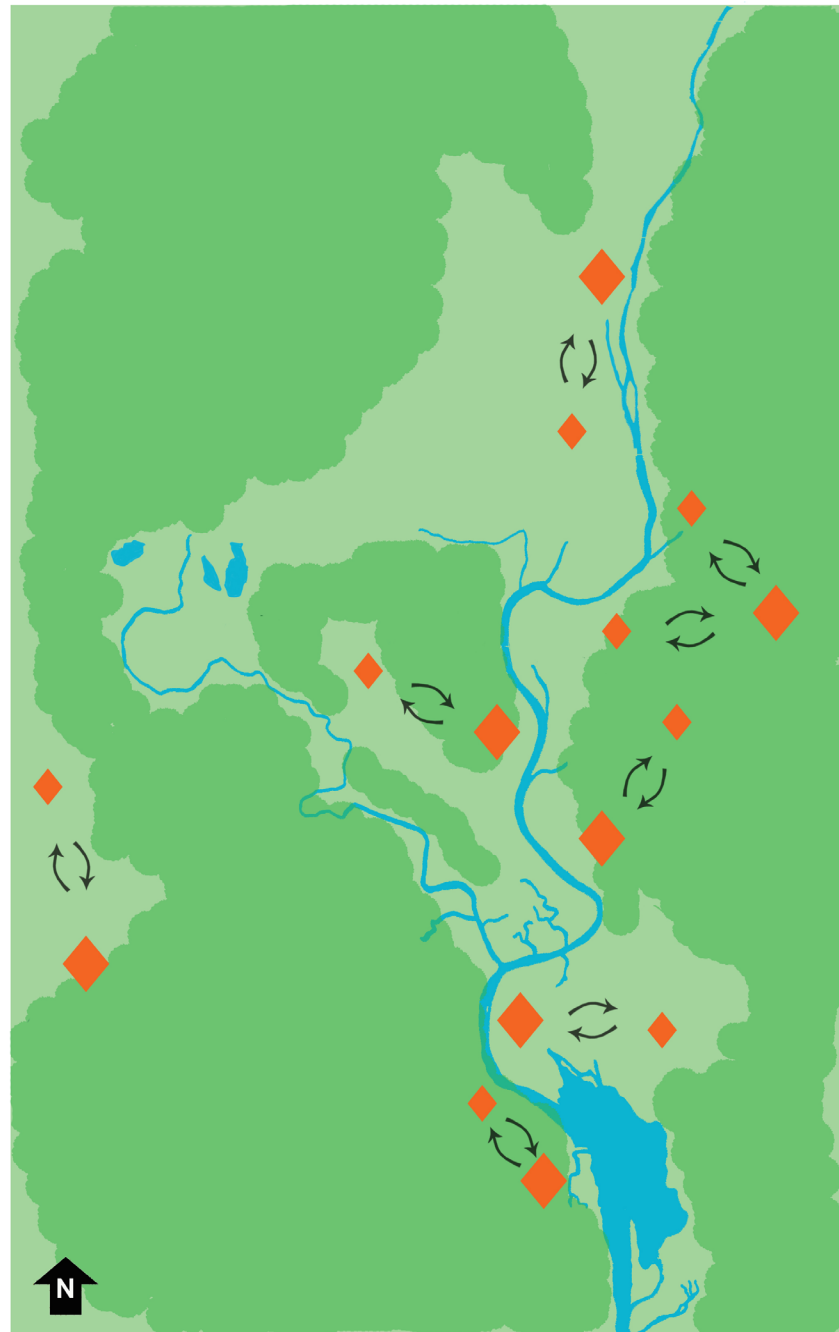
During the Woodland period, larger sites developed in the area (Figure 18). These sites eventually transformed into permanent villages, as indicated on John Smith's 1607 map of the Chesapeake Bay (Figure 19). The development of a system of agriculture enabled the establishment of these permanent settlements, as Native Americans could exercise a greater control over their food sources than in the past. In order to clear land for growing food, Native Americans utilized the slash and burn method, clearing small patches at a time. Native Americans continued to use resource procurement sites, like hunting grounds, but they discontinued seasonal migration to these sites, as they could attain the majority of resources needed for sustenance within a short distance of their established villages.

Villages were also organized in political groups known as chiefdoms. This provided a new layer of organization not present in earlier prehistoric periods. Chiefdoms were led by a chief, and typically included a number of sub-leaders, such as sub-chiefs, religious authorities, and councilors. The two most prevalent chiefdoms in the area near Compton Bassett were the Patuxent and the Piscataway, with the latter located on the western shore of the Patuxent River and the former located on the river's eastern shore. These chiefdoms developed distinct cultures and, eventually, independent relationships with European settlers.¹²

¹¹ Dent, *Chesapeake Prehistory*, 165-190.

¹² Dent, *Chesapeake Prehistory*, 240-270.

Archaic Land Use Patterns 8,000-1,000 BCE



- ◆ Small Seasonal Settlements
- ◆ Medium Seasonal Settlements
- ↻ Seasonal Cyclical Movement Patterns

Figure 17: Archaic land use patterns, conjectural, based on information in *Chesapeake Prehistory, Old Traditions, New Directions*.

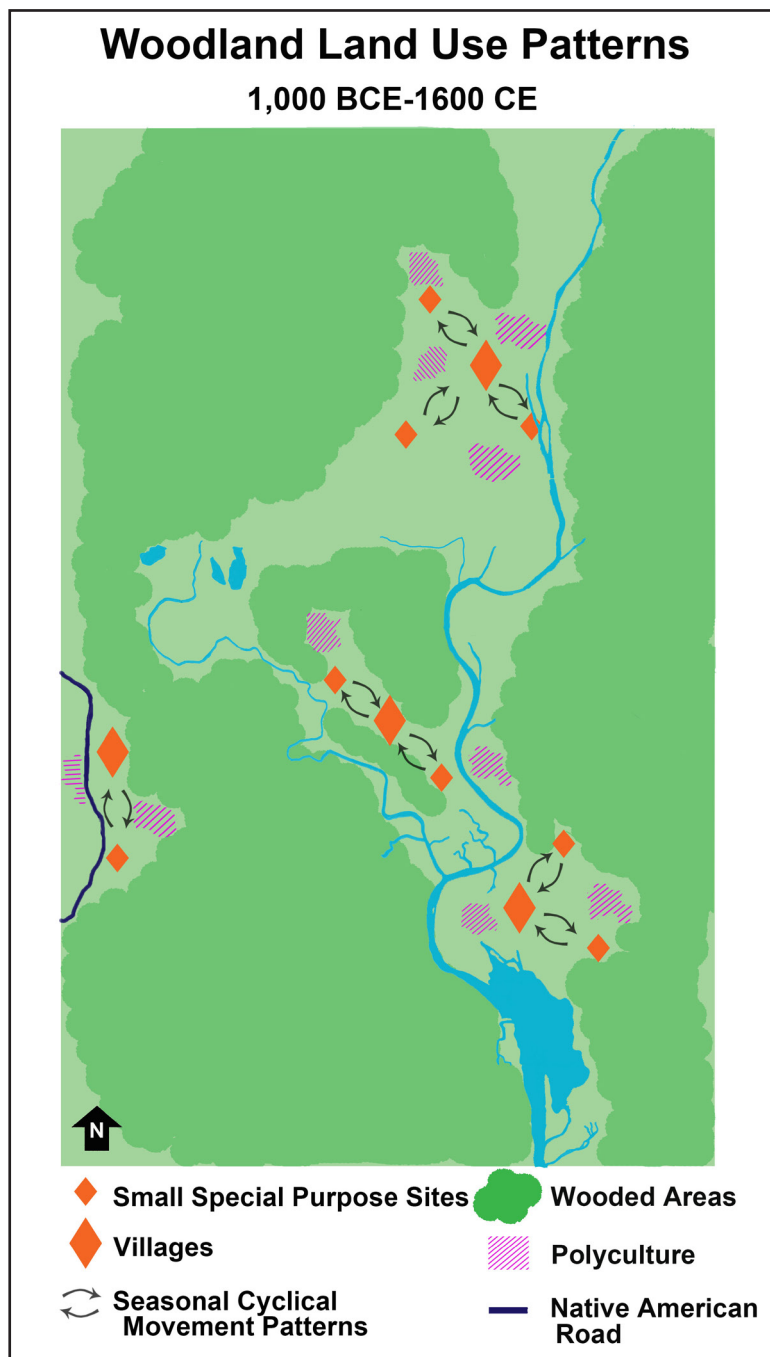


Figure 18: Woodland land use patterns conjectural, based on information in *Chesapeake Prehistory, Old Traditions, New Directions*.

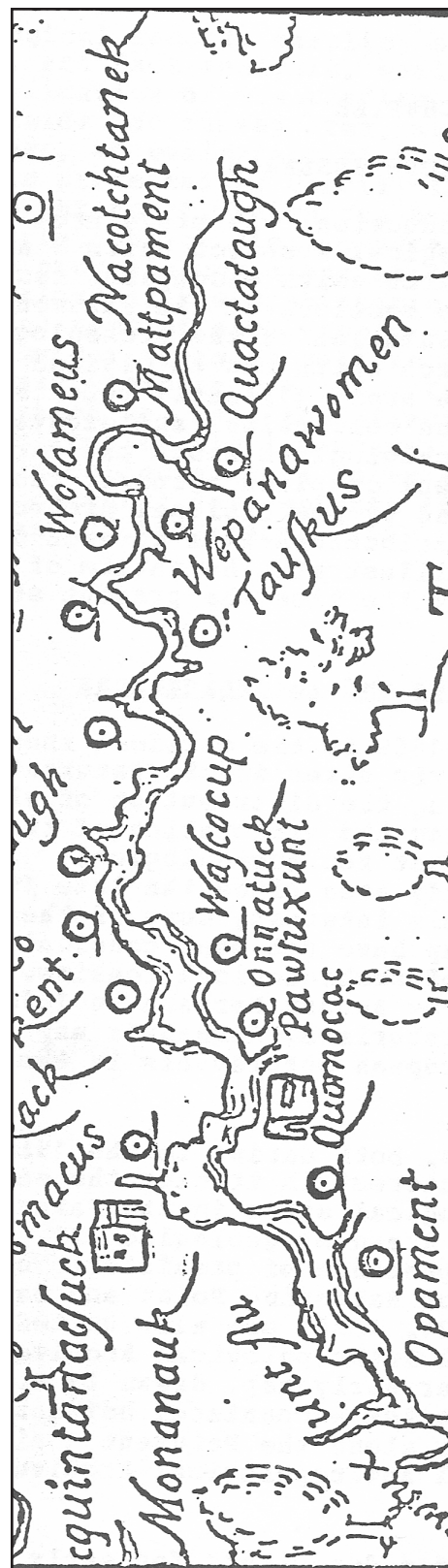


Figure 19: John Smith's 1607 Map of the Chesapeake Bay, close-up of the Patuxent River.

Agriculture

Crop cultivation emerged in the area surrounding Compton Bassett during the Woodland period. After European contact, western farming practices transformed agriculture from simply a source of sustenance into an economic mechanism and generator of enormous wealth. This transition would have a profound impact on the lives of landowners and their enslaved workers, as well as on the land itself, dramatically altering the landscape of the Central Patuxent Riverway (Figure 20).

Colonial and Antebellum Agriculture (1620-1860)

Compton Bassett was one of many plantations that developed across Prince George's County from the mid-seventeenth century onward (Figure 21). By the time plantations emerged in the Central Patuxent Riverway, planters in the Virginia Tidewater had already discovered that tobacco cultivation was a profitable endeavor. This success motivated settlers to establish plantations further north and influenced their desire to select land particularly well-suited—in terms of soil content, elevation, and irrigation—for tobacco cultivation. It is for this reason that plantations, including Billingsley (patented 1662), Mount Calvert (c. 1780), and Compton Bassett (1699), abutted the Patuxent River and thereby contained the sandy soils necessary for tobacco cultivation.¹³ While these sandy soils were abundant in the southeastern portion of Prince George's County, the extensive system of waterways that comprised the Patuxent River and its branches made this area particularly suitable. This system of waterways facilitated the shipment of tobacco and other goods outside of the region.

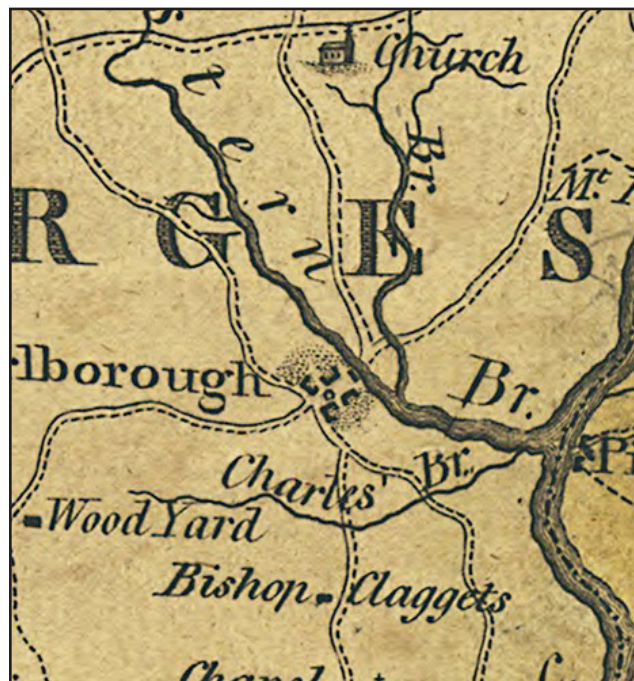


Figure 20: Dennis Griffith's 1794 map of Prince George's County, MD shows the establishment of plantations and other institutions in the Central Patuxent Riverway by the late-eighteenth century.

13 M-NCPPC and the Prince George's County Planning Department, *Antebellum Plantations in Prince George's County, Maryland: A Historic Context and Research Guide* (Upper Marlboro, MD: M-NCPPC, 2009).

Resources that Native Americans already valued, such as the area's water sources and rich agricultural soils, became important to European settlers for different reasons. The water and soil that had previously allowed Native Americans to sustain themselves facilitated the rise of the plantation system in Prince George's County and the accumulation of great wealth for families like the Hills. This change marks an important departure from the use of the land for subsistence to its exploitation for profit.

Labor and economic growth would have occurred gradually in the earliest decades of Compton Bassett. When starting a plantation, landowners generally acquired more land than they had labor to cultivate. As profits increased, plantation owners could afford additional labor to farm more land and increase their profits further.¹⁴ It is likely that Clement Hill used slave or indentured servant labor from the time that Compton Bassett was established, but they were probably few in number. In fact, in 1700 there were only about 300 African slaves in Prince George's County; the number rose dramatically throughout the eighteenth century, increasing from 1,202 in 1712 to almost 9,000 by 1783¹⁵.

By the first quarter of the eighteenth century, tobacco dominated the economy of southern Maryland. Records indicate that planters also grew wheat and corn, but the value of tobacco was generally seven to eight times greater than that of other crops.¹⁶ Tobacco's high market price, and steady demand throughout Europe, meant that landholders like the Hills could increase their wealth, landholdings, and slave population.

While tobacco could generally garner a higher market value than corn or wheat, it also required a longer growing season. In fact, the tobacco cultivation process was nearly a year-round endeavor. Work began in March or April, when tobacco seeds were planted in seedbeds. In May or June, the plants were moved from the seedbeds to the fields; this process could only occur when the weather was wet and the soil damp. By mid-summer, tobacco plants were topped, preventing them from growing additional leaves and allowing the existing leaves to grow larger. Workers would also sucker and prime the plants occasionally, removing small shoots and low-quality leaves. Once the plants were about four to seven feet tall and the leaves had thickened, workers would cut the plants at the base and leave them in the fields to wilt. Workers would then move the plants to tobacco barns, which were designed with vertical slats that allowed air to circulate. The plants would cure for a period of three to six weeks, depending on the kind of tobacco. Next, the stalks would be taken down and allowed to sweat, which made the leaves less brittle. Finally, the leaves would be tied together into a bundle called a hand. The hands were then put into a hogshead, a wooden barrel used for shipping. The hogsheads would then be taken to the nearest shipping port or tobacco inspection station. Given the weight of the hogsheads, which could be over 1000 pounds, and the fragility of the tobacco leaves, plantation owners and slaves alike preferred transporting them over water, as it was easier and gentler on the leaves.¹⁷

Throughout the mid-eighteenth century, planters engaged in farming practices that had minimal

14 Lorena S. Walsh, "Land Use, Settlement Patterns, and the Impact of European Agriculture, 1620-1820," in *Discovering the Chesapeake: The History of an Ecosystem*, edited by Philip D. Curtin, Grace Brush, and George Fisher, (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001), 222.

15 M-NCPPC, *Antebellum Plantations*, 55.

16 M-NCPPC, *Antebellum Plantations*, 39.

17 Arthur Pierce Middleton, *Tobacco Coast: A Maritime history of Chesapeake Bay in the Colonial Era*, (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1984).

impact on the environment, using hoes and cultivating small portions of land at a time. Planters generally utilized a six to eight year rotation cycle, planting tobacco in a field for three to four years, then planting corn in the field for three to four years, and finally allowing fields to lie fallow for up to twenty years.¹⁸

In the second half of the eighteenth century, the price of tobacco began to fluctuate dramatically, leading planters to grow more wheat and corn. The cultivation of these crops meant laborers needed to clear more land and engage in more intensive farming practices like plowing. The

¹⁸ Walsh, "Land Use," 238.

Colonial and Antebellum Agriculture 1600-1865

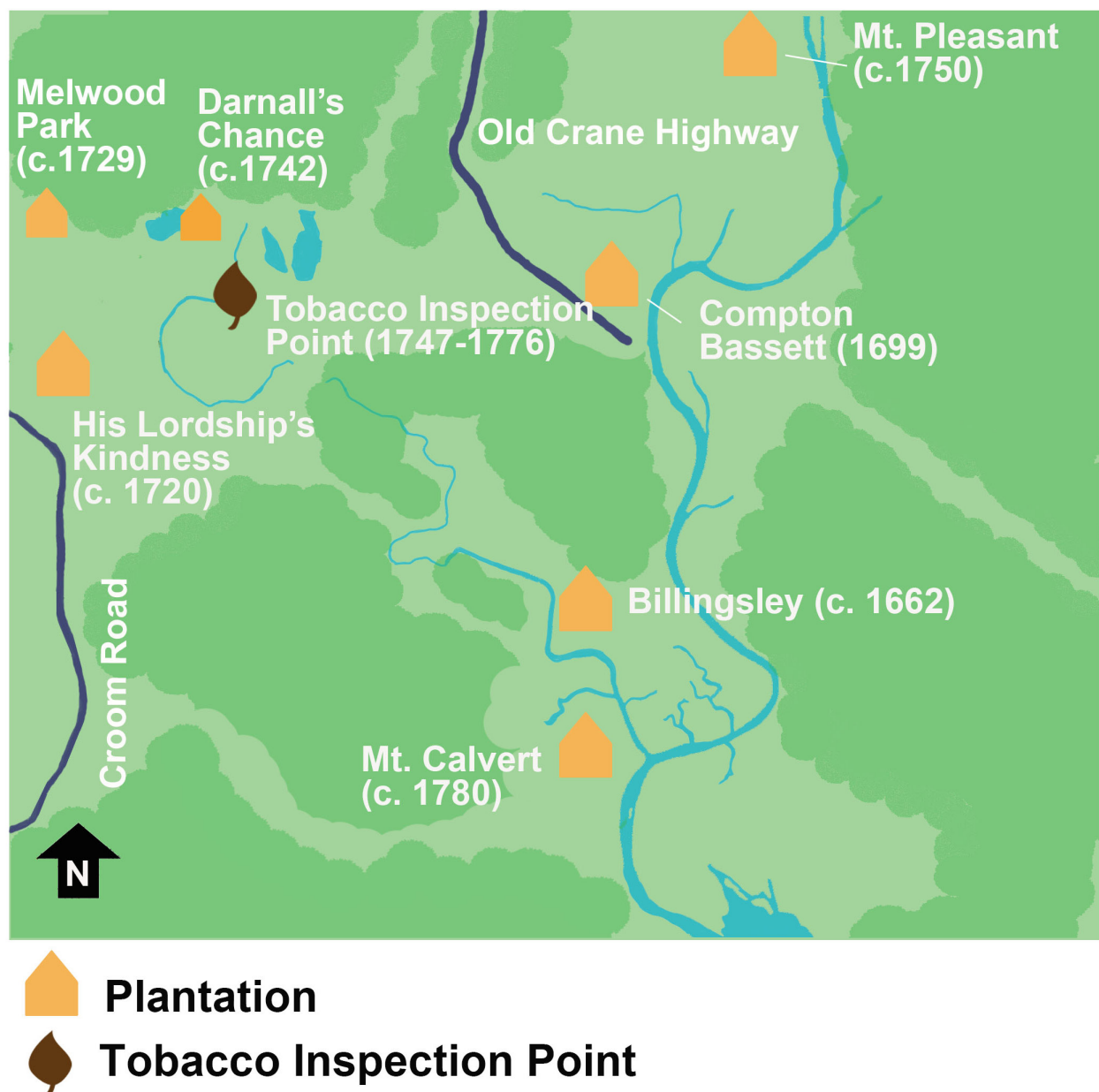


Figure 21: Colonial and Antebellum Agriculture settlement in the Central Patuxent Riverway.

gradual shift from the hoe to the plow resulted in widespread soil depletion and erosion.¹⁹ Additionally, planters abandoned the use of fallow periods, further depleting and eroding the soil. The shift from tobacco to corn and wheat also meant that planters needed to acquire more land in order to produce enough crops to maintain their wealth; Compton Bassett grew from 700 acres in 1699 to 1900 acres in 1798.²⁰ By 1828, the Hills owned 2200 acres (Figure 22).²¹

The Hill family's wealth and power manifests in both their growing landholdings and the organization and style of the Compton Bassett plantation (Figure 23). The Main House is on one of the highest points on the site with its façade oriented towards the water. This was a typical arrangement, as it showcased the importance of the owner by placing him at the center of the formal landscape.²² This plantation design occurs at Billingsley and Mt. Calvert, as well, pointing to its seventeenth and eighteenth century recognition as a statement of status. Additionally, Compton Bassett's high style Federal house, brick outbuildings, and well-articulated plantation plan also point to the family's great wealth. These physical elements would have allowed others to identify Compton Bassett as an important and productive plantation in the eighteenth century and continue to mark the site's agricultural character.

The profitability of tobacco peaked in the early-nineteenth century, propelling the Hill family into a prolonged quest to reconcile their vast wealth and the new reality of agriculture's decreasing profitability. William Beanes Hill and other nearby planters formed an agricultural society in response to the decrease in agricultural profitability, hoping to establish best practices and a return to economic viability.²³ In 1836, William B. Hill subdivided his landholdings, now over

19 Ibid, 242.

20 1798 Federal Direct Tax Assessment, Prince George's County Maryland, Maryland State Archives.

21 1828 Federal Direct Tax Assessment, Prince George's County Maryland, Maryland State Archives.

22 Dell Upton, "White and Black Landscapes in Eighteenth-Century Virginia," *Places*, 2, no 2, (Fall 1984).

23 John Peter Thompson lecture (September 27, 2012).

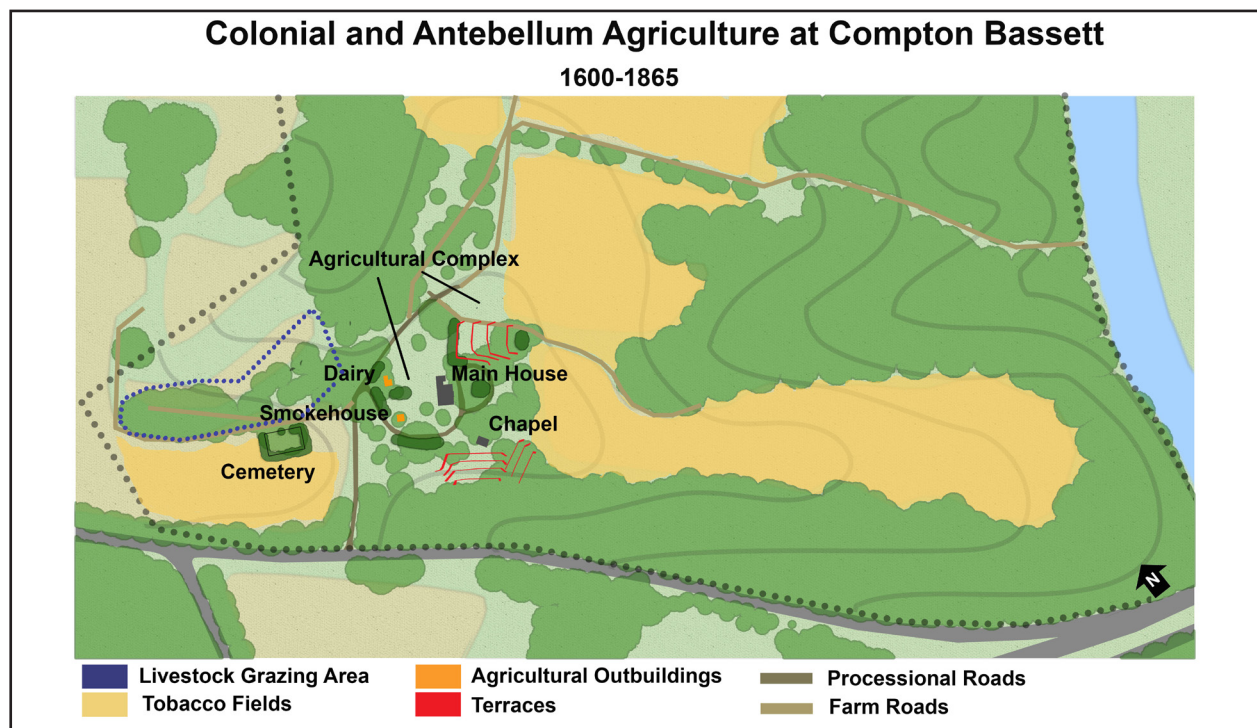


Figure 22: Colonial and Antebellum Agriculture at Compton Bassett.

2,000 acres, between his children, demonstrating the decline in the profitability of agriculture and the decreasing need to maintain extensive landholdings. Though these social and economic changes began in the Antebellum period, they would become more apparent in the years following the Civil War.

Post-Civil War Agriculture

Following the Civil War, plantations, including Compton Bassett, entered a period of vast reorganization and rearticulation, best understood as the transition from plantation to farm (Figure 24). The culmination of the Civil War meant that the Hill family could no longer depend on slave labor for the planting and cultivation of crops (Figure 25). In place of enslaved laborers, the Hills turned to African American tenant farmers who worked for wages. While it is unclear if the tenant farmers working on the site were former Compton Bassett slaves, an African American family listed on the site in the 1870 United States Census with the last name “Hillman” implies that at least some of Compton Bassett’s former slaves remained on the property as tenant farmers. Three tenant houses remain on the site as a testament to this practice, pointing to the large number of workers needed for a farm like Compton Bassett to function.

In addition to witnessing a change in the type of labor working on the site, the post-Civil War period saw an increased change in the kinds of crops grown on the site as tobacco continued to decrease in profitability. As previously mentioned, crop diversification became prominent in the late eighteenth century, and this practice increased throughout the nineteenth century. In 1880, for example, Compton Bassett harvested 50,000 pounds of tobacco, 2,850 bushels of wheat, and 2,500 bushels of corn; while the tobacco output remained constant from what was produced in 1850, both the wheat and corn output nearly doubled. The site also acquired 180 sheep—having none in the previous two decades—which represents a continued effort to diversify the farm’s production and assure profitability.²⁴

Much as the rise of the plantation plan and increase in landholdings marked the rise and growing wealth of Compton Bassett in the Antebellum period, changes in the structures and size of the plantation in the Post-Civil War period also signified the site’s changing use and waning profitability. The size of the plantation continued to decrease in size, following the division of land between William Hill’s children in 1836.

As the Hill family’s landholdings decreased, their mark on the landscape increased in other forms. The Maryland General Assembly granted William Hill permission to start the Hills Landing and Turnpike Company in 1870, which led to the creation of Hill’s Turnpike and Hills Bridge. The turnpike ran through Compton Bassett, opening up the previously private road to the public and allowing William Hill to charge tolls for use of the road. The act also allowed for the creation of Hill’s Bridge, which extended over the Patuxent River and provided access between Prince George’s and Anne Arundel Counties. Additionally, in 1886, William Hill became one of the charter members of the Farmers’ and Planters’ Bank of Prince George’s County, located in Upper Marlboro.²⁵ Both the Hill’s Landing and Turnpike Company and the Farmers’ and Planters’ Bank illustrate the continued importance of the Hill family as well as their efforts to expand their influence beyond agriculture.

²⁴ Maryland Historical Trust, NR-Eligibility Review Form, Woodland Historic District Upper, Marlboro, Prince George’s County, Maryland, Inventory Number PG: 79-63.“

²⁵ Ibid.

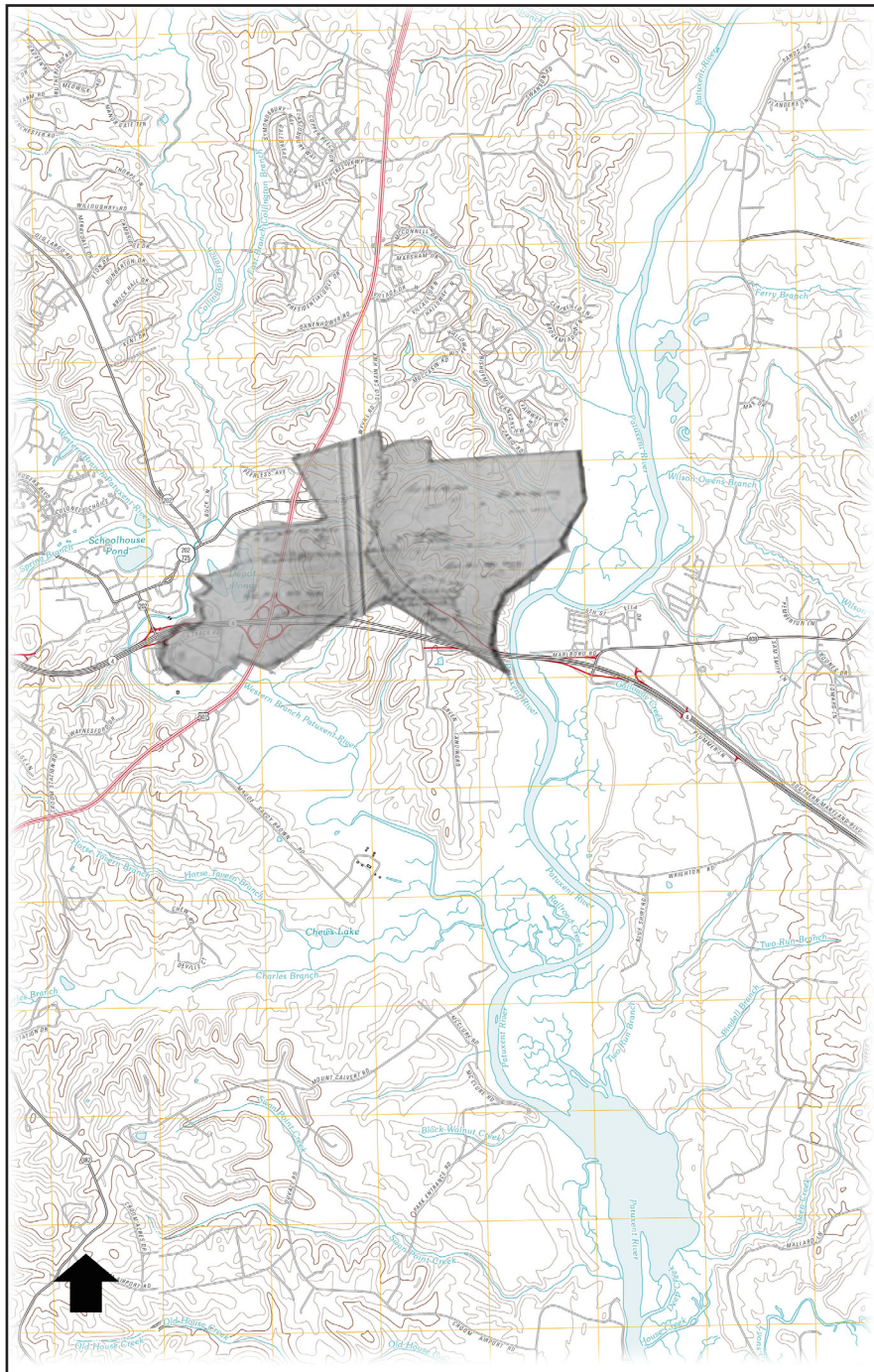


Figure 23: Boundaries of Woodland in the context of the Central Patuxent Riverway. These boundaries represent the greatest historical extent of the Hill family's landholdings.

The twentieth century barns and agricultural buildings at Compton Bassett show the continued role of agriculture on the site into the present. As the twentieth century progressed, Compton Bassett continued to be used for agriculture; ultimately though, agriculture became a secondary consideration. Dr. Reverdy Sasscer, who owned the property in the early twentieth century after marrying into the Hill family, was active in the local Patuxent Planters Club and assured that the land continued to be farmed, however his primary occupation was a physician. Reverdy's son, Robert Sasscer, was also a physician, converting one of the first-floor rooms in Compton Bassett into his doctor's office. This period of ownership points to the diminishing importance and profitability of agriculture within the region, while reinforcing the continued importance of the Hill and Sasscer families to the community.

Post-Civil War Agriculture at Compton Bassett

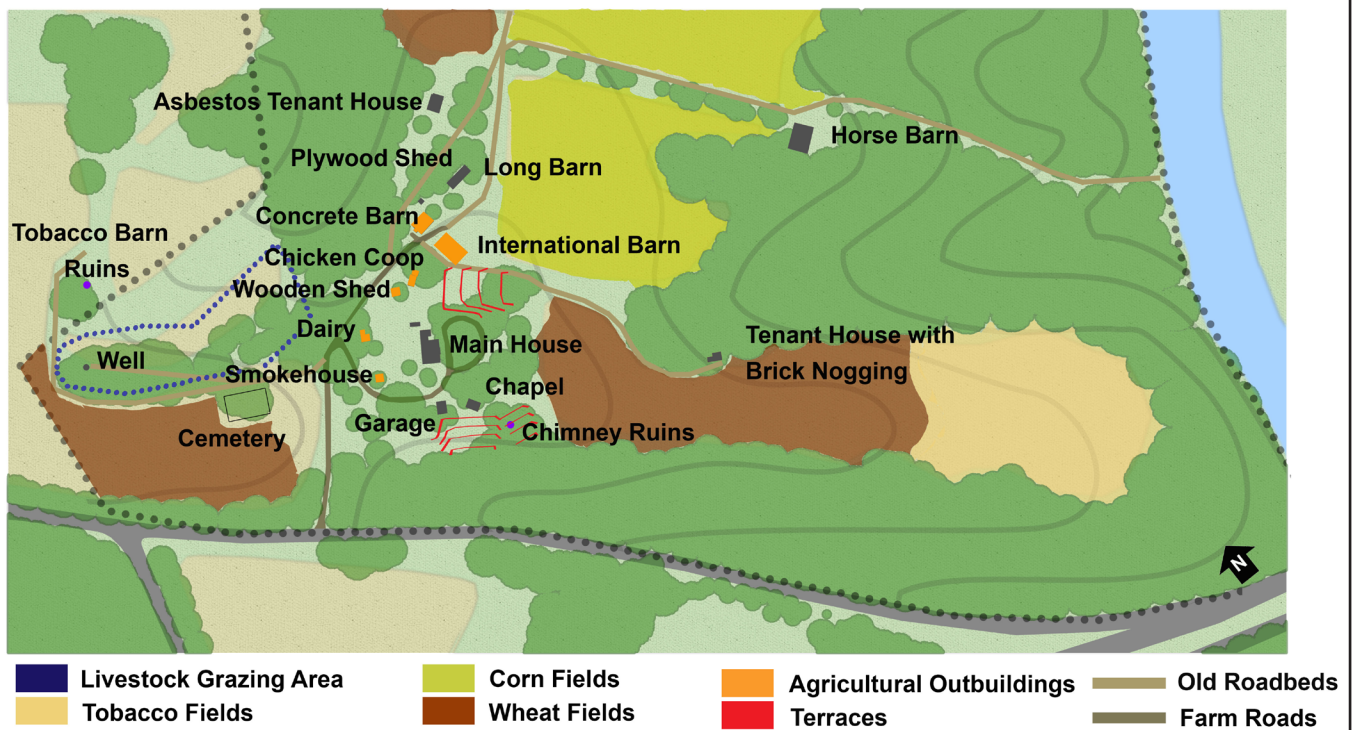


Figure 24: Post-Civil War agriculture on the Compton Bassett site.

Post-Civil War Agriculture

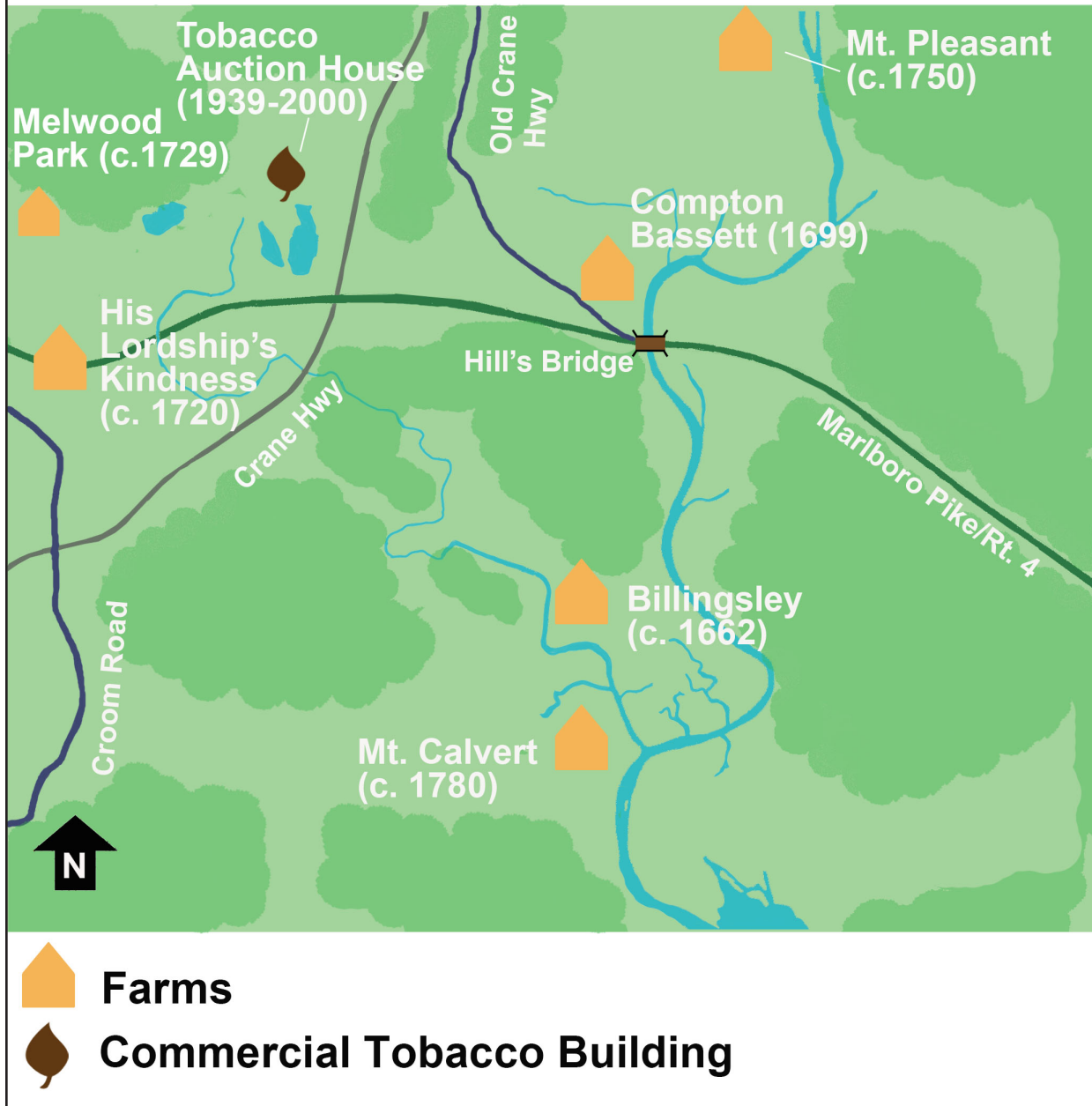


Figure 25: Post-Civil War agriculture in the Central Patuxent Riverway.

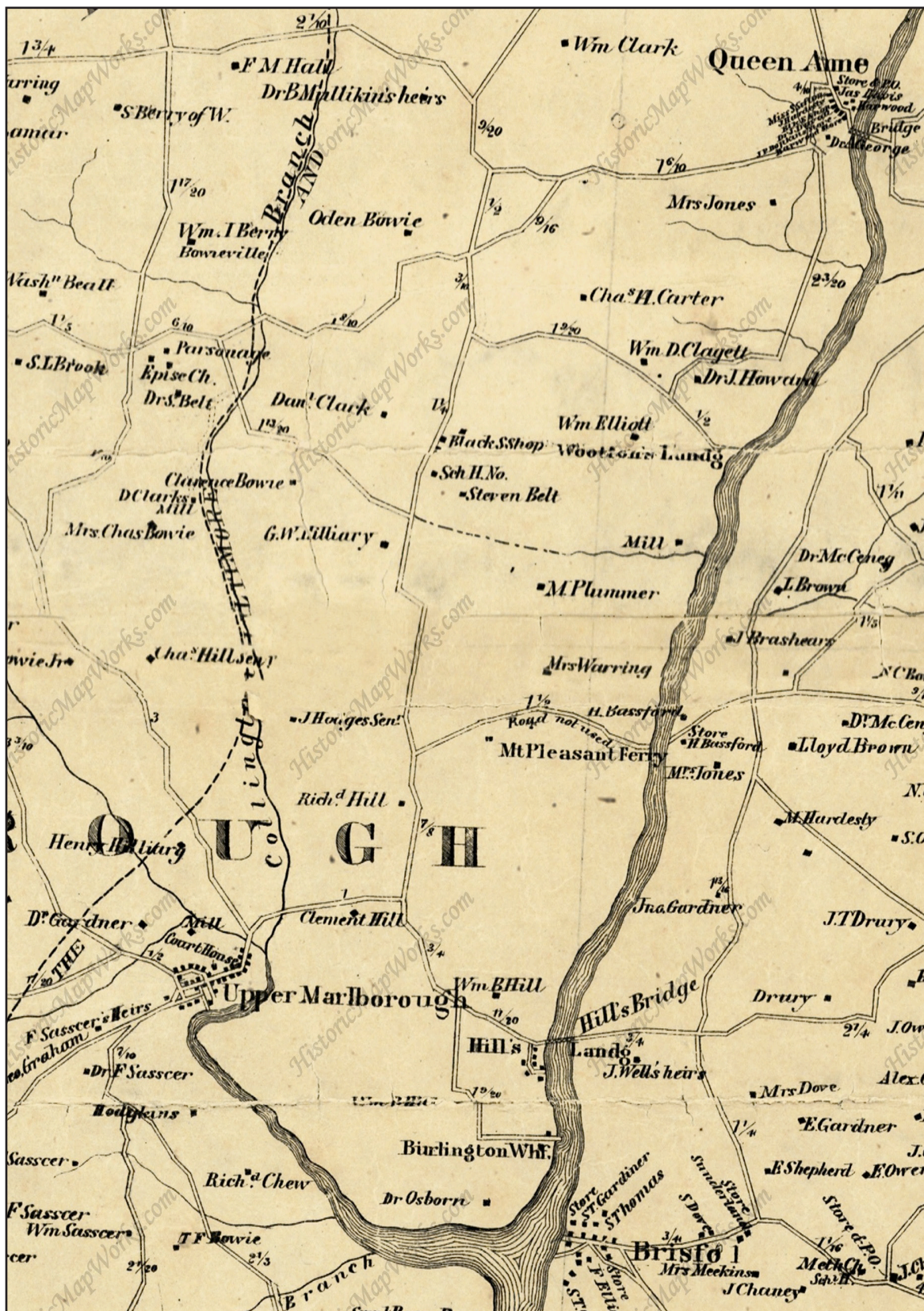


Figure 26: 1861 Martinet Map of Prince George's County, MD.

Catholicism

Compton Bassett's private Roman Catholic Chapel, located to the southeast of the Main House, distinguishes the plantation from others in the area. Few, if any, examples remain of this rare resource. The Chapel provides a visible reminder of the efforts of Catholic families to exercise their religion in early Maryland. It also points to the connections that existed between the Hills and other nearby Roman Catholic families, and is suggestive of the religious practices of the Hill's enslaved workers (Figure 27).

Although, George Calvert, the Proprietor of the Maryland colony, was a Catholic, Maryland was not officially a Catholic colony. Rather, religious tolerance was promoted. In 1634, St. Mary's City was established, becoming home to the first Catholic Church in Maryland. In 1649 the Maryland General Assembly passed the "Act of Toleration," which guaranteed freedom of religious worship to everyone who recognized Jesus Christ. Catholics established churches and schools, practicing their faith openly in all aspects of their life. Despite this, anti-Catholic sentiment threatened to undermine both the practice of religion and the political authority of the colony's Catholics.

Throughout the second half of the seventeenth century, Catholics and Protestants fought over power in the colony. In 1654, Protestants overthrew the proprietary government and repealed the Act of Toleration, making Catholicism illegal in Maryland. Shortly thereafter, the Calverts reasserted their power, and in 1658 they reinstituted the Act of Toleration. Following the Glorious Revolution in England (1688-1689) harsh anti-Catholic laws were enacted in Maryland. In 1692, Anglicanism was declared the official religion in Maryland. In 1704, "An Act to Prevent the Growth of Popery within this Province" was passed, barring Jesuits from performing masses and baptisms. Further legislation prohibited Catholics from practicing law or teaching children; in 1718, Catholics were stripped of the right to vote. Over the course of half a century Maryland transformed from a Catholic haven to a hostile, anti-Catholic environment.²⁶

These colony-wide efforts to erode the power and culture of Catholics necessitated the construction of private family chapels. Although it is unclear exactly when it came into service, the chapel at Compton Bassett is a testament to this time. The one-and-a-half story structure includes space for visiting priests to stay. The Chapel contains a substantially sized sanctuary space and nave for religious services, making it possible for families to worship with nearby friends.²⁷ As a result of this, the Hills maintained strong social bonds with neighboring Catholic families. Two owners of Compton Bassett married women from locally prominent Catholic families, the Darnalls and the Digges, which emphasizes the ties that developed between Maryland's wealthy Catholic families. In this regard the Chapel illuminates both the efforts the Hill family took to practice their religion in the face of persecution, as well as the intimate social ties that developed as a result of this.

The cemetery at Compton Bassett also reflects the family's Catholic background. Though it was not uncommon for wealthy families to have private burial grounds on their property, Catholic

26 B. F. Brown, *Early Religious History of Maryland*, (Baltimore: Innes and Co., Book Printers, 1876).

27 Department of the Interior, National Park Service, Historic American Building Survey, "Compton Bassett Chapel," Prints and Photographs Division, Washington, DC, http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/D?hh:1:/temp/~ammem_92Qo:: (accessed November 15, 2012).

Catholicism in the Central Patuxent Riverway

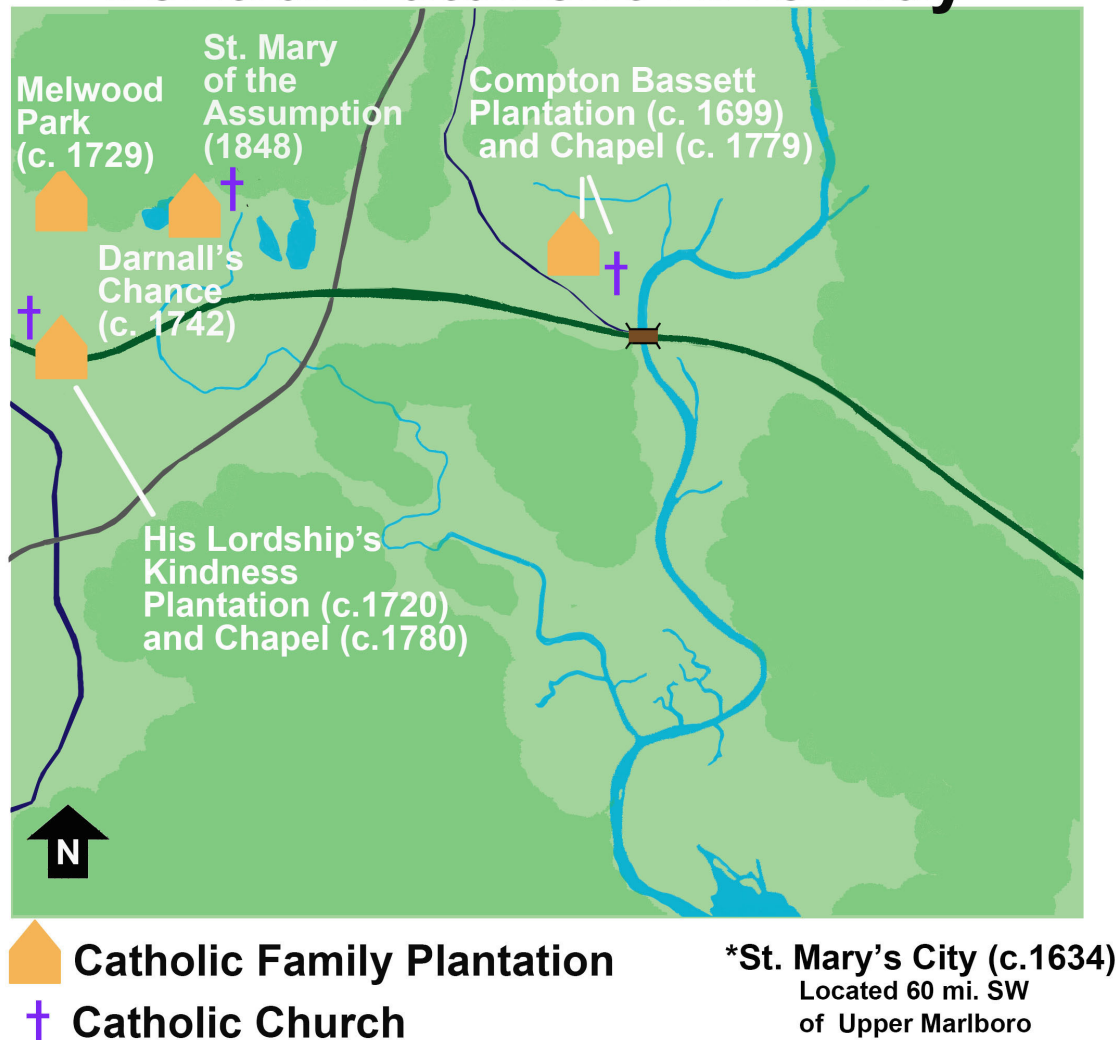


Figure 27: Catholic plantations and churches in the Central Patuxent Riverway.

rites would have been used during the funeral service and internment of the deceased. Following the American Revolution and subsequent passage of the First Amendment, Catholics could again worship freely. Esther Hill's funeral service in 1900 was held in the Chapel, and the family cemetery continued to be used into the twentieth century.²⁸ In fact, Catholicism remains the widest practiced religion in the area around Compton Bassett today.

Upper Marlboro contained a documented population of Catholic African Americans throughout the nineteenth century, suggesting that many slaves owned by Catholic families were subject to missionary work and ultimately adhered to the faith of their owners. St. Mary's, Upper Marlboro's Catholic Church, had a black congregation in the early nineteenth century, which established a

²⁸ "Death of Miss Esther Graham Hill," *Baltimore Sun*, September 26, 1900, <http://search.proquest.com.proxy-um.researchport.umd.edu/hnpbaltimoresun/docview/536237721/13BDE4E6D523093A01/110?accountid=14696>. (accessed November 11, 2012).

benevolent society following the Civil War to serve newly freed congregates.²⁹ This anecdotal evidence suggests that Catholicism may have been important to not only the Hill family but their slaves as well.

The presence of a Catholic chapel at Compton Bassett is a unique feature that connects the site to wider religious and political issues in the region throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The structure also points to the social relationships between prominent Catholic families around Upper Marlboro, and to the presence of a Catholic African American community.

War of 1812

Events associated with the War of 1812 unfolded in close proximity to Compton Bassett, impacting both the owners of the property and the site itself, and ultimately linking the site to an important national event (Figure 28). In 1814, Dr. William Hill, the owner of Compton Bassett at the time, was captured by British troops along with Dr. William Beanes. This episode culminated in Francis Scott Key's writing of the Star Spangled Banner, a moment of American history that still resonates today.³⁰ There are also reports that British troops occupied Compton Bassett, living in the Main House and forcing the family to relocate to the garret of their chapel.³¹

Compton Bassett was in the thick of hostilities, as British troops burned Upper Marlboro both British and American troops traversed the local roads and waterways. In fact, Commodore Joshua Barney scuttled his flotilla in the Patuxent River prior to marching his troops to Bladensburg in an effort to avoid capture from the British. This event occurred just north of Compton Bassett, and the Scorpion, Barney's flagship, remains submerged there today. These events profoundly impacted the lives of everyone at Compton Bassett, including both slaves and the Hill family.

African Americans

African Americans have been present on Compton Bassett both as enslaved and free people; their connection to the site beginning with the initial patent of the land in 1699 (Figure 29). The first recorded evidence of slaves at Compton Bassett emerges in the eighteenth century: in 1744 the Hill family owned 37 slaves, and by 1776 they owned 36 adults and 41 children. The number of slaves at Compton Bassett declined over the first half of the 19th century from 90 slaves in 1807 to 33 in 1860.³² Throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the majority of slaves in America could be found on large plantations with a large number of slaves.

Enslaved African Americans would have been involved in nearly every aspect of plantation life. Given the size of the fields at Compton Bassett in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries as well as tobacco's labor-intensive cultivation process, it is likely that the majority of the Hill's slaves would have been field hands. These slaves would have worked in the fields at Compton Bassett

29 M-NCPPC, *African American Historic and Cultural Resources*, (Upper Marlboro, MD: M-NCPPC, 2012), 167-170.

30 M-NCPPC, "Compton Bassett," nd.

31 Special Dispatch to the Sun. "Death of Miss Esther Graham Hill."

32 "Hill," Inventory of Slaves, 1744, 1776, 1807, 1860, Prince George's County Historical Society, Greenbelt Maryland.

War of 1812 in the Central Patuxent Riverway

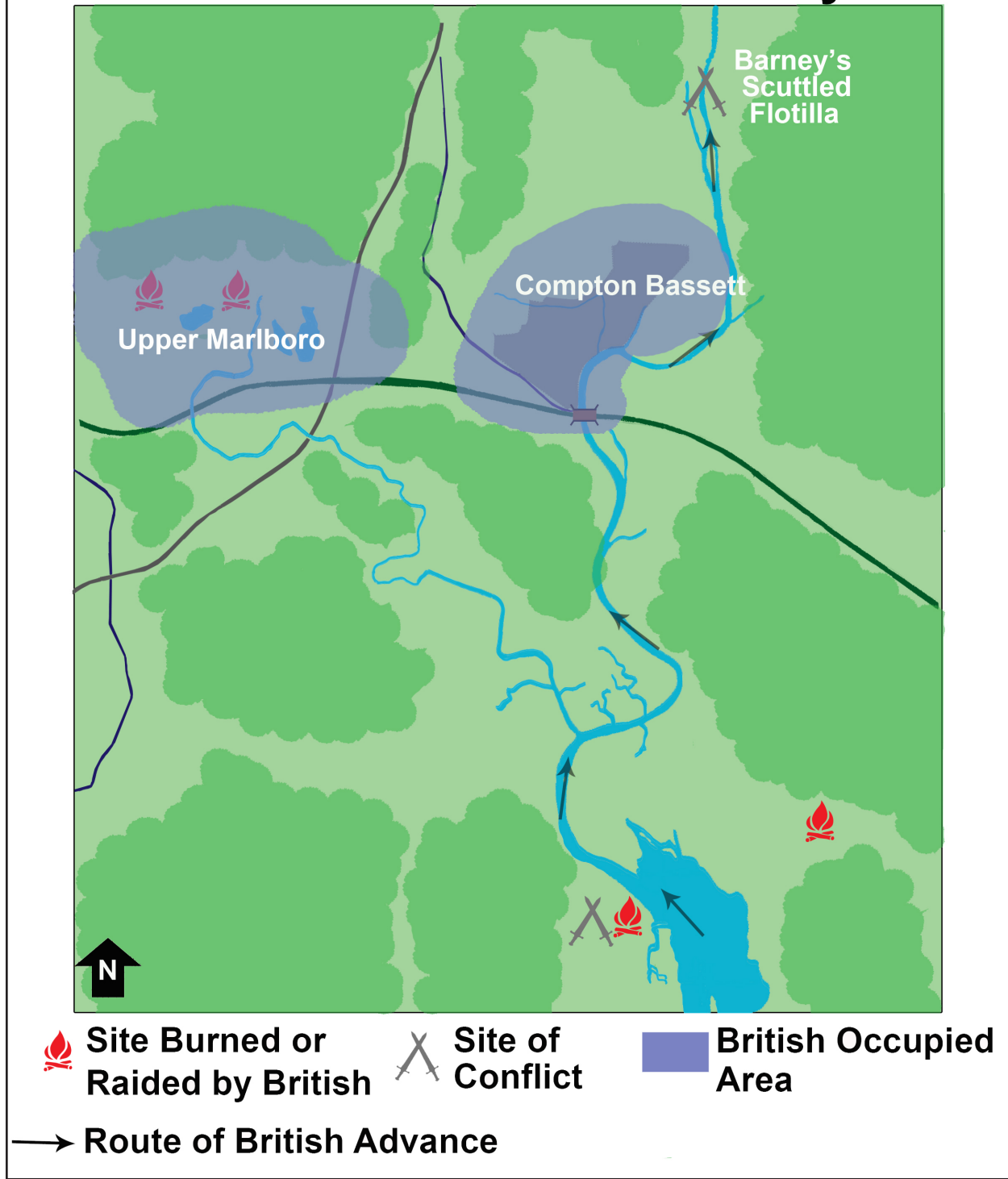


Figure 28: War of 1812 events in the Central Patuxent Riverway.

as well as at nearby plantations owned by the Hills; two examples are Turners and Trueman's Choice.³³ In addition to working in the fields, slaves would likely have been responsible for loading hogsheads onto barges to send to the inspection station in Upper Marlboro or to market to sell. These tasks would have required them to use various barns and agricultural buildings on the property, and to frequent the fields, forest, and river landing on the site. Other slaves, predominately women, would have handled tasks like food preparation, cleaning, and childcare. These tasks would have occurred primarily in the Main House, Dairy, Smokehouse, and terrace gardens. Slaves would have also been responsible for building the various structures on the Compton Bassett property.

The experience and impact of enslaved African Americans on the Compton Bassett site is reflected not only in their tasks on the plantation, but also in the ways they likely engaged with each other and with the site independently. Slaves may have fished in the Patuxent River or hunted in the woods surrounding the property to supplement their diets. They likely traveled the historic roads on the property to visit family or friends on neighboring plantations. They may have tended small gardens near their quarters or pursued forms of entertainment—like singing, dancing, or storytelling—during the evenings.

Slave culture at Compton Bassett would have centered on the slave cabins. While there is no conclusive evidence pointing to the location of slave housing on the site, these three tenant houses, still present on the property, could have housed slaves, or may be situated on the footprints of earlier slave quarters. The 1798 Federal Direct Tax describes “3 negro houses 20 by 16 feet each” at Compton Basset, which may correspond to the location of the three current tenant houses on the site. The tenant houses are in close proximity to the Main House and the fields.³⁴

Given the wide range of areas on the plantation where the Hill family utilized slave labor, it is evident that slaves would have traversed nearly every aspect of Compton Bassett. Domestic slaves would have moved through the rooms of the house, cleaning, cooking, and assisting the Hill family. They would have crossed the open space behind the house to the Dairy to make cheese and entered into the Smokehouse to cure meats. Slaves would have also been well acquainted with the various pathways, forested areas, and river landing at Compton Bassett, likely covering more physical space on the site than any one member of the Hill family. They also would have traversed areas of the site unavailable to white visitors, indicating the different kinds of boundaries present on the landscape for African Americans and whites.³⁵

Although the enslaved African American experience at Compton Bassett may seem very insular, it would have been influenced by a number of outside factors, not the least of which were various state and federal laws. In 1715, the Maryland General assembly declared all slaves entering Maryland and their descendants to be slaves for life. This ensured that the Hill family, and other slaveholders, would have a continuous workforce or the foreseeable future. By 1796, Maryland law prohibited the importation of slaves for sale and allowed for the voluntary emancipation of

33 1828 Tax Assessment, Prince George's County Historical Society, Greenbelt, Maryland.

34 1798 Federal Direct Tax, Prince George's County Historical Society, Greenbelt, Maryland. The asbestos tenant house currently standing at Compton Bassett is roughly 40 x 24 feet, much larger than the slave cabins once located on the property.

35 Upton, “White and Black Landscapes.”

slaves; this mirrored laws put into place in 1794 and 1796 at the federal level. In 1850, the Fugitive Slave Act was passed, countering previous efforts to weaken fugitive slave laws and providing slave-owners more power to reclaim runaway slaves. These laws, and the slave-holding culture they facilitated, influenced the Hill family's ability to own and retain slaves, and possibly their attitudes towards their slaves as well.

It is not clear when the Hill family manumitted its slaves, but they could have done so over time or waited until 1865 when manumission laws were mandatory. Census records indicate that free African Americans continued to live and work on Compton Bassett after 1865.³⁶ Compton Bassett continued as a working farm and would have required workers, while newly freed African Americans needed work and a place to live. Tenant farming, a system where a tenant would receive a place to stay in return for farming and giving cash, or a percentage of the crops the harvested, to the land owner, allowed both needs to be served; although this arrangement ultimately favored the landowner. It is likely that tenant farming at Compton Bassett would have followed these general contours, though specific details of Compton Bassett's tenants and their lifestyle remain generally undocumented.

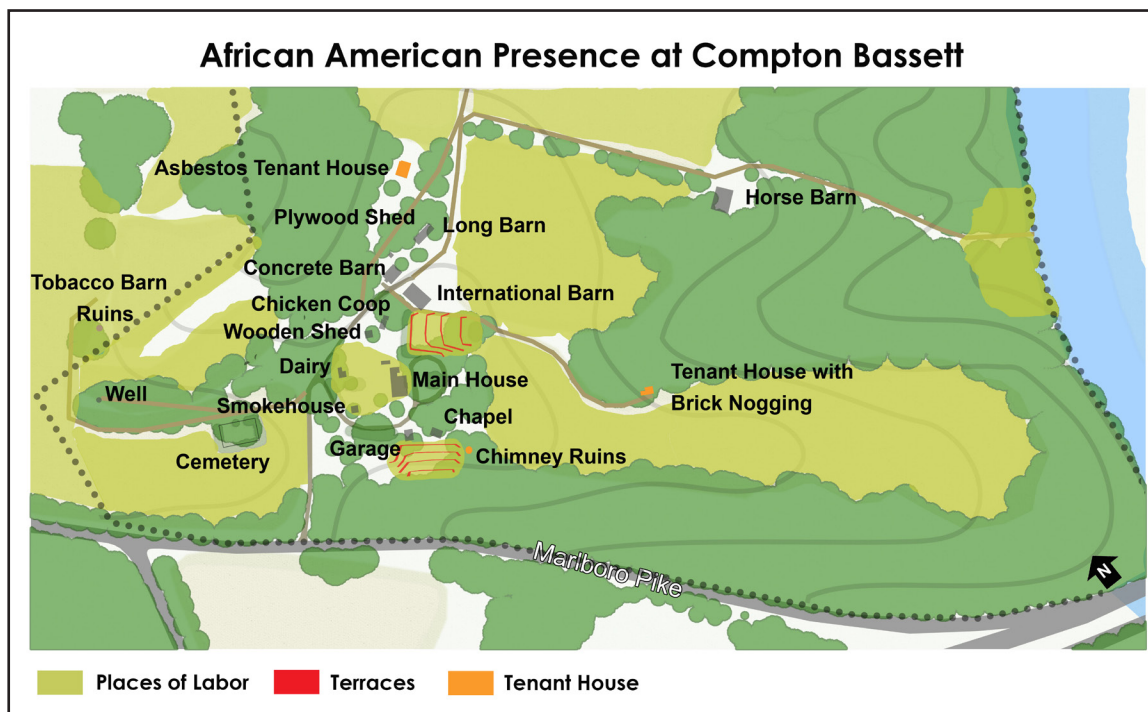


Figure 29: African American presence on the Compton Bassett Site.

While there remains uncertainty about the presence and condition of African Americans on Compton Bassett after the Civil War, their history is well documented in the area surrounding Compton Bassett (Figure 30). Although Upper Marlboro had maintained a free African American population since the eighteenth century, this population expanded dramatically following the Civil War. Resources like the Freedman's Bureau and Freedman's Bureau School emerged shortly after the Civil War, providing the assistance and education that newly freed African Americans required, serving as important centers of community in Upper Marlboro. Similarly, benevolent societies, like St. Mary's Beneficial Society Hall, emerged in the late nineteenth century, providing financial assistance and death benefits and eventually becoming

³⁶ M-NCPPC. "Sasscer Property and Compton Bassett (Clement Hill IV House)."

African American Presence in the Central Patuxent Riverway

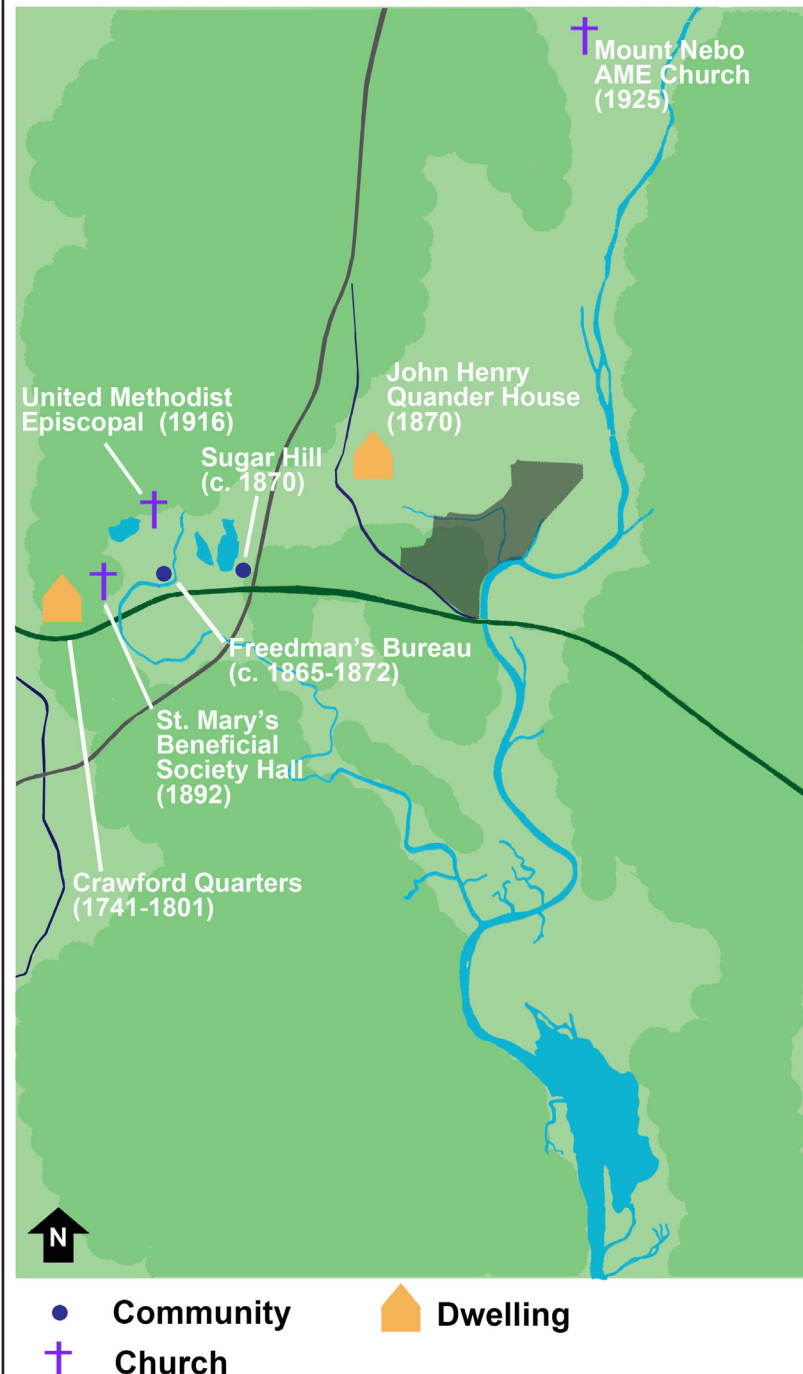


Figure 30: African American presence in the Central Patuxent Riverway.

important social and cultural centers. Additionally, an African American community known as Sugar Hill emerged on Marlboro Pike in the late nineteenth century. The area consisted of the families of African American men working on the railroad between 1868 and 1873.³⁷

In order to fully understand the experiences of African Americans at Compton Bassett, some additional questions must be answered. For example: where were the Hill's slaves buried? It is highly probable that there are burial grounds on the property, but their location is a mystery. What were the names of the Hill's slaves? Were any of the free African Americans listed as tenants at Compton Bassett after the Civil War former slaves of the Hill family? In answering these questions, the public's knowledge of a group of people integral to Compton Bassett's growth and history can be increased.

Transportation

The area surrounding Compton Bassett can be seen as a microcosm of the changes in transportation that have occurred from prehistoric times into the twentieth century (Figure 31). One of the most notable features of the area is its system of waterways, which proved integral to the development of prehistoric settlements, and later the emergence of a successful tobacco economy in southern Prince George's County. Woodland period settlement locations were influenced by proximity to water because it served as a source of sustenance and transportation.

When Europeans arrived and began establishing plantations in this area, the Patuxent River remained an important waterway for transportation and trade. Tobacco from Compton Bassett could be transported along the Patuxent River and Western Branch to the inspection station in Upper Marlboro. The river would have been accessed by a landing on the property and by Hills Landing, a wharf south of the current property boundaries that featured a collection of warehouses, stores, and a house for a ship captain.³⁸ The river remained an important transportation artery into the late-nineteenth century, as steamships traveled between Baltimore and Hill's Landing weekly until around 1887.³⁹ Although the buildings at Hill's Landing are no longer extant, the remains of the steamship landing are still visible in the water.

The river gradually declined in importance as a transportation artery into the twentieth century as heavy land cultivation led to large amounts of erosion and soil runoff; this silted the river making it largely unnavigable. Today the river is used primarily for recreation, open to canoes, kayaks, and small motorized watercraft. Presently, its use as a transportation artery is largely symbolic.

In the late nineteenth century, planters in southern Maryland recognized the need for a transportation route that would connect their farms to markets in both Baltimore and Washington D.C., and lobbied for a railroad line to connect Baltimore and the Potomac River.⁴⁰

37 M-NCPPC, *African American Historic and Cultural Resources*, 167-171.

38 Maryland Historical Trust, "PG County Historic Site Summary Sheet, Hill's Bridge," August 2000.

39 "Improvement of the Patuxent," *Baltimore Sun*, October 27, 1887, <http://search.proquest.com.proxy-um.researchport.umd.edu/hnpbaltimoresun/docview/535016042/13BDE6A12D94E012186/1?accountid=14696> (accessed November 11, 2012).

40 Robert Edward Scott, "The History and Construction of the Pope's Creek Branch of the Pennsylvania Railroad," unpublished research paper dated January 13, 1933, Records of Phi Mu, Special Collections,

Transportation in the Central Patuxent Riverway

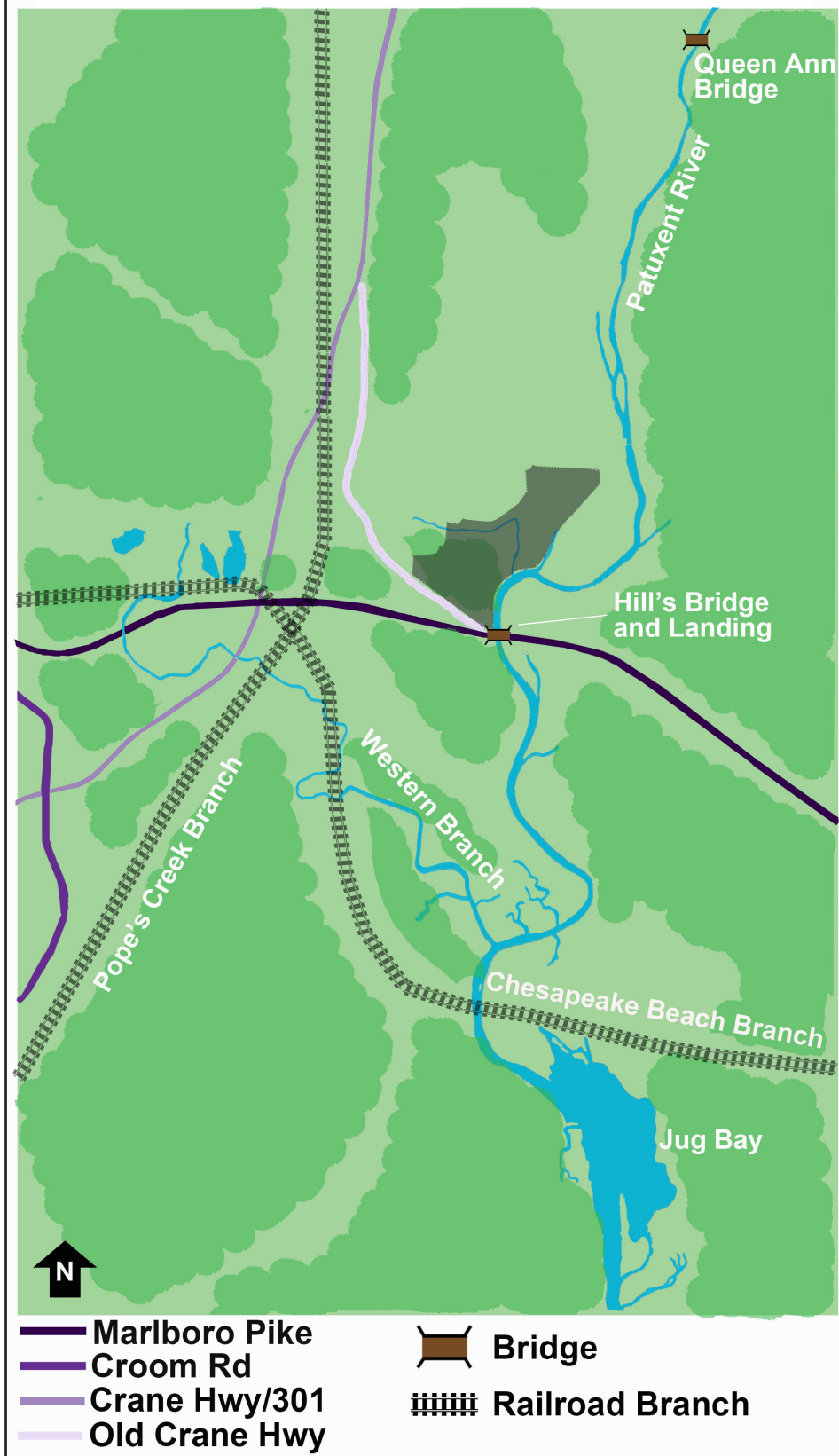


Figure 31: Transportation routes in the Central Patuxent Riverway.



Above: Historic photograph of the crossing of the Pope's Creek Branch and Chesapeake Railroad from Robert Scott's text.



Above: Image showing the likely former location of Hill's Landing.

Though the construction of the railroad line was delayed by the Civil War, the Pope Creek Branch finally opened in 1874. This railroad line enabled planters to transport goods efficiently. It also assumed the earlier function of the Patuxent River, enabling speedy connections between southern Maryland farms and the region's largest markets. Several freight and passenger trains operated on this line daily in the late-nineteenth century. By the 1930s, only one train a day, carrying both passengers and freight, operated on the Pope Creek Branch each day, as cars and trucks minimized the need for railroad transportation.⁴¹

Railroad lines also opened up opportunities for recreation: In the early 20th century, the Chesapeake Railroad was constructed to carry passengers from Washington D.C. to Chesapeake Beach, a resort enclave on the bay. The Chesapeake Railroad line passed directly south of Compton Bassett and in front of Mount Calvert. Although the railroad was supplanted by the growth and dominance of the automobile, the turnstile for the Chesapeake Railroad line remains visible in the Patuxent River. The emergence of the railroad points to changes in the speed and function of transportation over time, and undoubtedly influenced the connectivity of Compton Bassett to the rest of the region.

Roadways have also been important in the area surrounding Compton Bassett. Evidence suggests that some roads, including Croom Road, follow early Woodland-period Native American trails. Foot paths would have provided an important transportation network for Native Americans traveling between villages or to hunting grounds. Europeans settlers would have used these roads as well, and overtime expanded this early system of trails with the creation of post roads and roads connecting major towns. By 1739, there were about fifty roads in Prince George's County.⁴² These roads would have enabled the Hills to travel to nearby plantations.

The development of roadways affected Compton Bassett specifically with the creation of Hill's Turnpike and Hill's Bridge. In 1854, the Maryland General Assembly granted William Beanes Hill permission to construct a bridge—later called Hill's Bridge—over the Patuxent River, creating an important connection between Prince George's and Anne Arundel Counties. The base of the bridge on the Prince George's County side was located near Hill's Landing, and was accessed by a toll road maintained by William B. Hill. Following William B. Hill's death in 1892, Prince George's County bought the rights to Hill's Bridge and changed it from a toll road into a free public road. In 1932, the older wooden bridge was replaced by a steel truss bridge; the present Route 4 was completed in the 1960's.⁴³

Later developments in roadways included the creation of Route 301 west of Compton Bassett and the expansion of Route 4 directly south of the property. These changes point to the emergence of the automobile-dominated landscape, as the creation of additional roadways and wider roads dominated development plans, and the automobile became an ever-present feature of the landscape. Although Route 4 is not visible from the Main House or immediate grounds, the sound from traffic is ever present on the landscape. Additionally, airplane traffic is audible on the property on a regular basis due to its close proximity to Joint Base Andrews.

Hornbake Library, University of Maryland, College Park, MD.

41 Ibid.

42 M-NCPPC, "Prince George's County History," Prince George's County Historical Society, Greenbelt, Maryland.

43 Maryland Historical Trust, "PG County Historic Site Summary Sheet, Hill's Bridge," August 2000.

Environmental and Cultural Stewardship: 1961 - Present

The intense exploitation of the environment that occurred following European settlement took its toll on the area's natural resources. Agricultural production, which intensified after 1750, led to excessive soil erosion. Steamships and factories discharged large amounts of pollutants into the waterways. Twentieth century population growth forced the development of rural areas and contributed to the spread of pollutants into the Patuxent River. These stresses have not only diminished the water quality of the river, affecting humans and wildlife alike, but have also threatened the area's rural character. The Patuxent River Watershed Act was created in 1961 in response to a growing awareness that human activity was having a negative impact on the region's natural resources.⁴⁴ The Act initiated the development of a conservation ethic over the past several decades. Environmental protection and stewardship, as well as rural heritage preservation, have become important values expressed by individuals and government bodies alike.

The Patuxent River Watershed Act of 1961 recognized the importance of the river as a natural resource worthy of protection. This state legislation declared that "flood prevention, land conservation, erosion control and protection from urban development within the watershed is a public benefit and conducive to the public health, safety and welfare." Following the designation of the river as a Maryland Scenic River in 1968, M-NCPPC drafted a master plan for the river and its resources.⁴⁵ Since then, M-NCPPC has acquired over 7,000 acres of parkland along the river through Maryland's Program Open Space; this includes the Compton Bassett property. Many additional initiatives aimed at conserving the area's rich environmental resources have developed throughout the late twentieth century.

On a county level, Prince George's County has developed Special Conservation Areas (SCAs), areas of "countywide significance," that work in conjunction with the previously discussed Green Infrastructure Network. Compton Bassett falls within the Patuxent River Corridor, the largest of these SCAs. Another SCA, the Jug Bay Complex, lies approximately two miles south of the site and protects the largest freshwater tidal marsh in the state.

In addition to efforts to conserve the area's environmental resources, the county and state have also enacted measures to protect the area's rural character. Compton Bassett falls within the county's Priority Preservation Area, which contains productive agricultural land that is protected from developmental encroachment. Additionally, The Woodland Conservation and Tree Preservation Ordinance works to mitigate the impact of development activity on the county's forestland.⁴⁶ These measures recognize the importance of protecting the rural character of the landscape in the Central Patuxent Riverway, and the preservation of Compton Bassett's current land use contributes to this vision.

This preservation ethic has also emerged through measures to protect the area's cultural resources. State and county-level legislation has afforded protection to the area's historic sites. Additionally,

44 Adapted from William Cronon, "Reading the Palimpsest," in *Discovering the Chesapeake: History of an Ecosystem*, edited by Philip D. Curtin, Grace S. Brush, and George W. Fisher (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001).

45 Prince George's County Department of Parks and Recreation, "Patuxent River Park," <http://www.pg-parks.com/page332.aspx> (accessed November 15, 2012)..

46 M-NCPPC, *Subregion 6 Preliminary Master Plan*, 44-47.

governmental and private entities have purchased some of the area's important cultural resources and made them available to the public. M-NCPPC acquired Billingsley and Mount Calvert in the late-twentieth century, and then the Compton Bassett property in two parcels in 2002 and 2010. His Lordship's Kindness, owned by a private foundation, has been preserved and opened for private use. This conservation mind set has also allowed countless other resources in the Central Patuxent Riverway, like the Beneficial Society Hall and Quander House, to be recognized on a state and national level for their historic importance and has enabled their preservation.

Compton Bassett is part of a larger environmental and cultural setting that contains not only the Patuxent River, but also forests, agricultural land, streams, wetlands, and a myriad of cultural resources. This region continues to provide habitat for a variety of bird, animal, and marine species as well as recreational opportunities for residents. Reflecting this conservation ethic, the state of Maryland, M-NCPPC, Prince George's County, and a number of non-profit environmental and preservation organizations have worked to protect and maintain these important environmental and cultural resources. Just as we have disturbed the balance in the area's ecosystem in the past, we can now work in positive ways to protect the river, trees, wildlife, and cultural resources that are of great value to us.



Part Two: Recommendations

Site Values and Significance

The Secretary of the Interior defines seven aspects of integrity, that when taken together, supposedly indicate the ability of a site to project significance: location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. The discussion of Compton Bassett and the surrounding area provided in Part One of this report emphasizes change, demonstrating that the site's significance manifests from the changes it has undergone over time. In place of the traditional discussion of integrity, a consideration of site values provides deeper insight into site significance and how it should be treated in the future.

Compton Bassett represents several values, which point to the site's importance in the present and potential in the future. As [Table 1](#) demonstrates, these values illuminate various stakeholder groups and related uses for the site. Aside from the site's obvious historic value, Compton Bassett also possesses scenic and aesthetic qualities, evident in its views, landscape features, and architectural elements. Situated along the Patuxent River, the landscape's varied topography and ecological diversity provide a setting conducive to recreational activities. In addition, to this Compton Bassett falls within a broader natural setting that is currently protected by state and local environmental and planning regulations, and these efforts reflect the conservation ethic held by many institutions and Maryland residents. The property also continues to function agriculturally and reflects the history of farming in the county. The site's archaeological value lies in its potential to add to our understanding of past life-ways. Along with preservation, archaeology enhances Compton Bassett's educational, cultural, and interpretive value.

This consideration of values brings new meaning to Compton Bassett's historical role and potential for the future; the site carries a range of meanings and only through the consideration of these meanings can the full significance be understood. It is clear that by uniting the history of the landscape with present-day values and potential uses, distinct and viable solutions for the landscape's future emerge.

When Compton Bassett was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1976, its significance derived from its architecture, connection the Hill family, eighteenth-century agricultural use, and private Roman Catholic chapel. Additionally, its listed period of significance spanned only from 1700-1799. The inventory and themes detailed in Part One along with the previous discussion of Compton Bassett's values demonstrate that the current statement of significance, provided in Appendix 3, is no longer adequate. Compton Bassett's significance spans a greater period than what is provided in its National Register listing, maintaining significance into the present. Furthermore, the site manifests additional areas of significance, providing insight into the African Americans, transportation, nineteenth and twentieth century agriculture, the War of 1812, and the current conservation ethos. As a supplement to the National Register statement of significance, we propose the following statement, which evaluates the site as a dynamic cultural landscape in possession of values meaningful to the community in the present, and capable of propelling the site into the future:

Throughout its history, Compton Bassett has reflected changing economic systems, aesthetics, and values. In addition to its architecture, and its association with early Catholicism in Prince George's County, Compton Bassett is significant for its relationship to the War of 1812, its connection to African American history, and its place within the history of agriculture in the region.

The significance of the landscape also reflects a range of values, which have shifted over time. Compton Bassett reflects changing land use values: it was possibly valued as a base camp or resource procurement site in prehistoric times, functioned as a large scale plantation during the Antebellum and Colonial periods, and manifests current efforts to preserve cultural resources and protect the environment.

Table 1: Values-Based Assessment of Compton Bassett

Values	Related Landscape Elements	Interested Stakeholders	Stakeholder Concerns	Related Uses
Historical	Contributing buildings, cemetery, plantation plan	NPS, MHT, P.G. County HPC, historical societies, scholars, public	Preservation, significance, integrity, education	Historic site with interpretive programs
Scenic and Aesthetic	Entire landscape-views, natural features, architecture	P.G. County Parks and Recreation, P.G. County Conference and Visitor's Bureau, Public (boaters, hikers, cyclists)	Access, safety, cleanliness	Park
Recreational	Trails, river access, forests, buildings	P.G. County Parks and Recreation, P.G. County Conference and Visitor's Bureau, public (boaters, hikers, cyclists)	Access, facilities, safety, cleanliness, activities,	Park, horseback riding area, campground, boating/kayak rental facility
Conservation	Forests, river/streams, open space, flora and fauna	Federal, state, and local governments, Maryland Environmental Trust, environmentalists, P.G. County Planning, public	Protection, sustainability, education	Nature preserve with interpretive programming
Archaeological	Potentially associated with all buildings and historic site elements, site areas with potential for buried prehistoric features	MHT, NHRD, Archaeologists, Universities	Site location and context, access, security	Archaeological investigations, public Archaeology
Interpretive and Educational	Agricultural fields, barns and other out-buildings, farm roads	NPS, MHT, P.G. County HPC, historical societies, heritage groups, P.G. County schools, Board of Education, public	Significance, integrity, access, safety, cleanliness, communication, technology	Walking tours, interpretive programs, lesson plans, website/apps
Agricultural	Agricultural fields, barns and other outbuildings, farm roads	PG County Extension Office, PGSCD, PG County Farm Bureau, PG County Planning, Agricultural Preservation Work Group, UMD	Acreage, slope, drainage, soil quality, sustainability, preservation, access	Agricultural lease, interpretive farm, non-profit farm and farmer's market/restaurant

The following expands upon the categories detailed in the revised statement of significance:

- **Architecture:**

The site's eighteenth century buildings—the Main House, Dairy, Chapel, and terraces—as well as the plantation plan remain largely intact. Furthermore, the architecture of the Main House reflects the defining characteristics of Federal-style architecture and landscape design. There is an emphasis on symmetry in the architecture of Main House and positioning of out-buildings. Details in the Main House include a pedimented, projecting central pavilion on the façade, a decorative pediment, fan-light transom lights, and decorative door surrounds on both the front and rear entryways; and arches and plasterwork on interior of house enhance the house's architectural character. The site also embodies the social-spatial elements of the eighteenth century plantation system. The separation of work and leisure space is still apparent on the landscape: the Dairy, Smokehouse, and Agricultural Complex remain separate from the terraced gardens on the northern side of the main house. Additionally, both the plantation's symmetry and processional routes suggest the efforts taken to proclaim the full extent of the Hill family's wealth and power; these elements were typical of high-style plantation plans.

- **Hill and Sasscer Families:**

In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, many of Compton Bassett's owners earned prestigious titles and were involved in important events. Clement Hill Jr., who surveyed and established Compton Bassett, served as Surveyor General of the Western Shore in the early eighteenth century, creating property lines and boundaries still reflected in the landscape today. His descendant, Dr. William Hill, rose to prominence when he was captured along with Dr. William Beanes by the British in an event that would lead to Francis Scott Key's writing of the Star Spangled Banner. William Beanes Hill served as Judge of the Orphans Court for twenty-five years, a state senator in 1877, and Secretary of the State of Maryland. He was also an original stockholder in the Maryland Agricultural College, now the University of Maryland, and founded the Hill's Turnpike and Bridge Company in 1884. In the twentieth century, the site also gained significance for its connections to the Sasscer family. Both Reverdy and Robert Sasscer worked as physicians in the community. Robert Sasscer even practiced in the house itself, running a doctor's office with the assistance of his wife.

- **Catholicism:**

Since any Catholic families were drawn to Maryland for its initial religious tolerance, persecution of Catholics in the eighteenth century forced thousands of Catholics to find alternative means of practicing their religion. Private chapels, such as the one at Compton Bassett, serve as evidence of the larger social and cultural difficulties facing Catholics in Maryland. Compton Bassett's chapel is the only known detached extant private Catholic chapel in Maryland, reflecting both the importance and rarity of this structure. The building provides a look into the development and culture of Catholicism early Maryland, reflecting Compton Bassett's distinct religious significance.

- War of 1812:

Compton Bassett's connections to the War of 1812 contribute to the site's significance as well. The site is directly linked to two important war events: the writing of the Star Spangled Banner and the scuttling of Commodore Joshua Barney's flotilla. The site also provides evidence into the ways that this war impacted families, as British troops occupied the Main House, forcing the Hill family to live in the Chapel during the war.

- African Americans:

Since the contours of the landscape remain largely unchanged, the site reflects both enslaved and free African American culture. There was an enslaved population on the site since early-eighteenth century, and likely a free black population on the site into the early twentieth century. Though unknown, these individuals played the largest role in physically shaping the site of any group. Their labor built the Main House, Chapel, Dairy, Smokehouse, and possibly the tenant houses and outbuildings on the site. They also impacted the site's natural elements, felling trees, working the land, and building many of the site's structures. Tenant farmers who remained on the site following the Civil War also point to the changes newly freed African Americans experienced as they tried to carve out new lives for themselves.

- Native Americans:

Situated on land that has been valued and used since prehistoric times, Compton Bassett contains potential associations with Native Americans, which may be revealed through archaeological evidence on the site. Compton Bassett's topography, soil, and nearness to the Patuxent River suggest that the site likely contains data pertaining to Native cultures. In fact, similarly situated sites like Mount Calvert have yielded significant archaeological information. Any information yielded from archaeology would help to further illuminate the cultures of prehistoric settlements from the Paleo-Indian, Archaic, and Woodland periods.

- Agriculture:

Compton Bassett also provides insight into developments in agriculture from the eighteenth to twentieth century. Over the course of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, it became one of the largest, most successful tobacco plantations in the Upper Marlboro area. Though the Hills eventually moved away from tobacco, Compton Bassett remained in agricultural use. William Hill's efforts to consider best practices in agriculture, including his eventual role in founding the University of Maryland, point to the site's continued value as a key agricultural resource. Following the Civil War, the site transitioned from plantation to farm, relying on tenant rather than enslaved labor. The fields and extant twentieth century farm buildings point to the continued importance of agriculture.

- Modern Conservation and Preservation:

The site reflects the modern conservation and preservation ethos that presently shapes the region. Beginning with the establishment of the Patuxent River Watershed Act in 1961, the community has demonstrated a sustained value and appreciation for resources in the area around Compton Bassett, including forest resources, open space, and wetlands that provide bird habitat and contribute to regional water quality. While the Patuxent River Watershed Act established the Patuxent River Park and assured conservation of this important environmental resource, the preservation of sites like Billingsley, Mount Calvert, and His Lordship's Kindness represent efforts to preserve cultural resources as well. Regulatory efforts also reflect this mind-set. Efforts to preserve the Rural Tier, the Green Infrastructure Network, Chesapeake Bay Critical Area, and the Prince George's County Historic Preservation Ordinance reflect legal efforts to preserve the area's cultural and natural resources.

Table 2: Relationship Between Site Features and Areas of Significance

Characteristic	Feature	Areas of Significance
Natural Systems and Features	Patuxent River	Prehistoric, Agriculture, War of 1812, African American, Transportation
Topography	Natural Topography	Prehistoric, Agriculture
	Intentional Leveling	Agriculture, African American
	Terraces	Agriculture, African American
Spatial Organization	Plantation Plan	Agriculture,
	Agricultural Complex	Agriculture, African American
Circulation	Historic Entrance Road	Transportation, Agriculture, African American
	Current Main Entrance Road	Transportation, Agriculture, African American
	North-South Road	Transportation, Agriculture, African American
	Road to River	Transportation, Agriculture, African American
	Tenant House Trail	Transportation, Agriculture, African American
Land Use	Agriculture	Agriculture, African American
	Forests	Prehistoric, Conservation
	Wetlands	Prehistoric, Conservation
Vegetation	Historic Trees	Agriculture, Conservation
	Boxwoods	Agriculture, Conservation
Structures	Main House	Agriculture, African Americans, Catholicism, War of 1812, Conservation
	Chapel	Catholicism, War of 1812, Conservation
	Dairy	Agriculture, War of 1812, Conservation
	Smokehouse	Agriculture, War of 1812, Conservation
	Tenant House behind Chapel	Agriculture, African American, Conservation
	Small Shed	Agriculture
	Chicken Coop	Agriculture
	Wooden Shed on Brick Piers	Agriculture
	Concrete Garage	Agriculture
	International Barn	Agriculture
	Concrete Gambrel Roofed Barn	Agriculture
	Long Barn	Agriculture
	Plywood Shed	Agriculture
	Wooden Lean-To	Agriculture
	Brick Nogging Tenant House	Agriculture, African American
	Tenant House with Asbestos Siding	Agriculture, African American
	Horse Barn	Agriculture
	Cemetery	Agriculture, Catholicism, Conservation
Views and Vistas	Main House looking east	Agriculture, African American
	Historic entrance looking east	Agriculture, Transportation
	River landing looking north	Agriculture, War of 1812, Transportation
	River landing looking south	Agriculture, War of 1812, Transportation
	Road from the river looking southwest	Agriculture
Small Scale Features	Entryway Gateposts	Transportation
	Tobacco Barn Ruins	Agriculture
	Wooden Fence	
	Brick Fire Pit	
	Trash Piles and Debris	
	Hand-Dug Well	Agriculture
	River Landing	Agriculture, War of 1812, Transportation

Recommendations

This section articulates a preservation strategy for Compton Bassett, providing a management philosophy for the property, recommending a primary treatment approach, and outlining specific treatment actions. Based on the landscape analysis contained in Part One of this report, this overall strategy seeks to preserve the cultural and natural elements that contribute to the significance and integrity of the site. In formulating a plan for preserving these key landscape elements, these recommendations reflect contemporary values, and address issues such as site maintenance and the identification of archaeological features. Lastly, these recommendations suggest several partnership-based models for possible future uses of the property.

Management Philosophy

Compton Bassett is a highly significant cultural landscape whose significance is derived from its various contributing site elements and values. Preserving these features and characteristics is an essential first step in facilitating interpretive, educational, and archaeological programs at the site. Moving forward, future programs and uses should be in alignment with the values held by area stakeholders, potential partners, and the public.

While Compton Bassett retains a great deal of historic fabric, the landscape has become increasingly threatened by the deteriorated condition of its principal contributing structures. Future plans for site management must prioritize conservation and include both short and long-term maintenance activities that ensure a safe, attractive environment. The Antebellum period elements, along with the cemetery and various environmental resources, should form the focus of preservation and treatment activity at the site. In addition, Compton Bassett's Post-Civil War elements, which include barns and outbuildings dating to the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, should also be preserved, as they reflect the evolution of agricultural activity on the site.

To ensure the continued integrity of the landscape, a long-term preservation-oriented management plan is needed. Such a plan would prioritize important site elements, maintain and protect this valuable cultural landscape, fulfill the requirements of the county historic preservation ordinance, and support state and county planning goals regarding the retention and protection of historic resources, agricultural landscapes, and natural areas in the Patuxent River and Chesapeake region.

In addition to maintaining and preserving these site elements, it is important that the management of Compton Bassett involve partnerships with local organizations and stakeholders. Future outreach, archaeology, interpretation, and ultimately the use of the site must correspond with the values held by these groups. Area heritage groups and organizations should contribute to ongoing research efforts, the planning of interpretive programs, and discussions about future uses for Compton Bassett. Outreach to local and national African American groups is especially important given the demographic composition of Prince George's county and the site's thematic links to regional African American history.

Long-term management plans should emphasize the identification and preservation of archaeological resources on the property. Compton Bassett is potentially rich in archaeological resources, and archaeology promises to add to our understanding of this historic landscape as

well as the broader context of early plantations in Prince George's County. While archaeological investigations could enhance the understanding and interpretation of the site, management of Compton Bassett should strive to preserve the majority of Compton Bassett's archaeological components in place.

Compton Bassett holds enormous potential as an educational resource. Considering this, management planning should involve the creation of interpretive programs for the site. Interpretive programs should highlight the themes associated with key landscape elements and should also highlight thematic connections to other sites in the county. Programs should use technology, such as websites and applications for mobile devices, as a way of educating the public; these efforts enhance the visibility of historic resources in the county and raise awareness of historic preservation. As values held by visitors to historic sites, public access and security should be key components to any future interpretive program or use for the site, and management plans should address site maintenance responsibilities to ensure a clean, safe environment for visitors. Future use and interpretation of the site must also meet the chief goals of conservation and preservation. This ethos pertains to both the cultural and environmental resources on site, which should be seen as part of a single, integrated structure. Stewardship of the property's natural features, such as its forests, streams, and marshes, heightens its interpretive potential, is in accordance with state environmental laws and county planning goals, and reflects contemporary values regarding sustainable management and the protection of the environment.

Primary Treatment Approach

The management, interpretation, and use of Compton Bassett requires a primary treatment approach to the site's resources. The accepted set of guidelines in formulating such an approach is the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties, which outlines four treatment philosophies: Preservation, Rehabilitation, Restoration, and Reconstruction. A preservation approach places emphasis on maintaining as much of the original building fabric as possible, while simultaneously considering the physical alterations, additions, and other changes that have occurred at a building or site over time as contributing to its overall narrative as a historic property. Rehabilitation, in contrast, is designed to adapt a landscape for a new use and could include modifications or the replacement of building elements that have degraded beyond repair. A Restoration approach returns a site to a specific period, dictating what is retained and what is eliminated. Finally, Reconstruction, intended for historic sites where key structures have been lost, involves the reconstruction of structures that are no longer extant based on historical evidence.⁴⁷

In the short term, a preservation-oriented treatment approach is appropriate for Compton Bassett on several levels. There is currently no management plan in place for the property, and preservation provides a sound approach that addresses the decline in existing site conditions, while allowing for future uses and the development of interpretive programs. Also, preservation protects the significance and integrity of the site, which is critical given Compton Bassett's designation on both the National Register of Historic Places and the Prince George's County

⁴⁷ National Park Service, The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties, "Introduction to Standards and Guidelines," http://www.nps.gov/hps/tps/standguide/overview/choose_treat.htm (accessed November 5, 2012).

Inventory of Historic Sites. Compton Bassett's core contributing landscape elements retain a high level of integrity, and this approach retains that historic fabric while maintaining the design intent of the site's eighteenth century plan.

Several key benefits emerge from a preservation approach to the site. First, funding can be targeted to the buildings and aspects of the landscape that most directly reflect Compton Bassett's significance. This targeted approach to funding also responds to the requirements of the Prince George's County Historic Preservation Ordinance.

A preservation-oriented treatment approach also balances the needs of the site's cultural and natural components. Treatment actions focus on the repair and protection of existing site elements with no additional reconstruction activity that could negatively impact the water quality of the Patuxent River, or degrade the site's environmental resources. The approach therefore conforms to the Chesapeake Critical Area zoning overlay that applies to the property. It also supports Prince George's County Planning Department objectives to preserve green infrastructure and the historic, agricultural character of the Rural Tier.

Lastly, a preservation-based approach allows flexibility in site planning and the development of future interpretive programs. Following the immediate stabilization and conservation of site features, selected structures could subsequently be rehabilitated without conflicting with the primary treatment approach to the site. If future site planning includes restoration, this could be achieved with minimal alteration or additional cost due to the high level of integrity inherent in many of the site's structures. This approach facilitates the stabilization and repair of the site's key structures, laying the foundation for future interpretive programs, and making it possible for the public to visit the site safely.

Treatment Actions

From the management philosophy and primary treatment approach previously articulated, a number of specific actions must be addressed. These actions center on several main categories: (1) the deterioration of Compton Bassett's core contributing elements, (2) clean-up and preparation of the site for public access, and (3) the potential for archaeology on the site.

Site Deterioration

- **Historic Structures Report**

The Main House, Chapel, Smokehouse, and Dairy are in an advanced state of deterioration, requiring immediate action to preserve them. The preparation of a Historic Structures Report (HSR) must be a top priority for all Compton Bassett's structures, especially its Antebellum period buildings.⁴⁸ If prepared by a qualified historic preservation professional, this document will provide a detailed assessment of existing conditions, needed repairs, and estimated costs. An HSR will prioritize stabilization and repairs based on urgency. While an HSR is a necessary first step before any repairs are undertaken, it is important to consider the issues facing the buildings on site so that the site's deterioration can be fully understood.

⁴⁸ The county has commissioned multiple short stabilization reports, however, these documents are now outdated and lacking in thoroughness.

- **Main House**

Of the site's structures, the Main House requires the most work. It must be evaluated by a structural engineer, and based on that assessment, measures should be taken to stabilize it. Even without this assessment it is evident that the building suffers from water infiltration, masonry problems, and damaged plasterwork. An inspection of the house reveals that the building needs adequate gutters and downspouts installed to prevent further deterioration of the masonry at each corner of the house; where the brick bond has almost entirely separated in these areas. Additionally, the structure's deteriorated mortar and brick should be evaluated and repaired by a professional contractor who specializes in historic masonry. On the interior, a qualified professional must stabilize the house's damaged plasterwork, which involves the repair of cracks, and the possible replacement of degraded and previously removed wooden lathe, plaster keys, and molding that has fallen from the walls and ceilings.

Delayed action with regard to structural problems will not only lead to increased repair costs, but could potentially result in the total loss of the Main House. There are immediate steps that can be taken to halt these problems: for example, the installation of appropriate gutters and downspouts that direct water away from the structure and its foundation would prevent further water infiltration. At all times, emphasis should be placed on retaining original building fabric, as the removal of these elements will decrease the integrity of this important contributing structure.

- **Chapel**

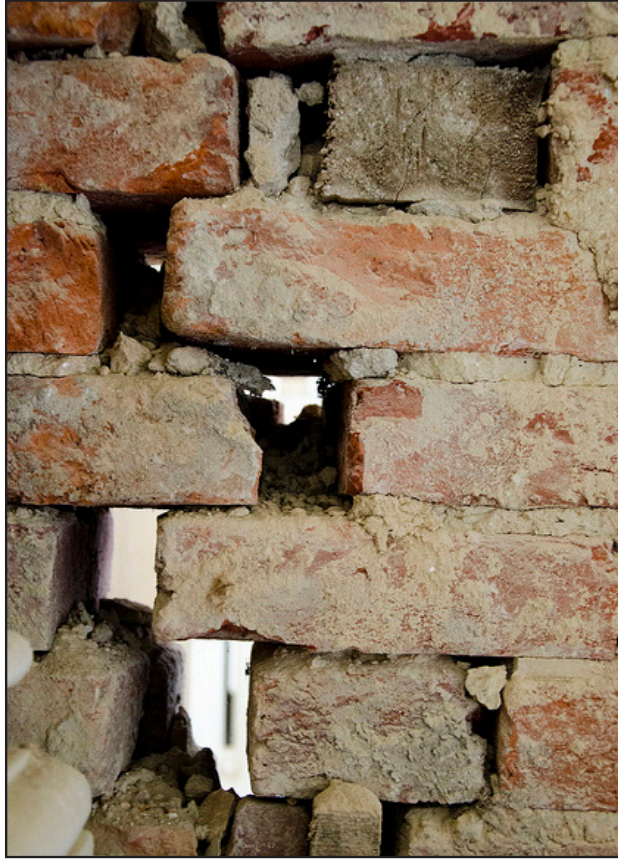
The Chapel, another key contributing structure, is also in poor condition. The failed roof needs to be replaced in order to prevent further water infiltration into the building. The large tarp placed over the building as a remedy to the falling roof has the potential to negatively impact the structure by preventing trapped moisture from escaping the building and by adding weight to the Chapel. The potential for damage caused by the tarp underscores the need to replace the roof and prevent additional issues from arising in the structure. Masonry restoration must be undertaken in order to repair deteriorating mortar joints and replace spalling brick that has resulted from improper mortar replacement and rising damp. On the interior, the Chapel's floors and plasterwork need to be conserved repaired, as they have faced substantial damage as a result of the failed roof. As part of this work, all wooden elements of the chapel must be inspected thoroughly to ensure that they are structurally sound and able to be retained. As with the Main House, care should be taken to retain as much historic fabric as possible.

- **Smokehouse**

The Smokehouse also requires some immediate attention. The gable end rake boards of the Smokehouse need to be replaced in order to prevent water from infiltration the building. The structure also requires extensive masonry work to repair deteriorating brick and mortar and remove inappropriate cement pointing. Lastly, the door must be addressed in order to adequately secure the building.

- **Dairy**

While in slightly less critical condition, the Dairy requires immediate conservation efforts as well. First, the building's chimney stack requires either removal or a more permanent form of support than the temporary steel jack that is currently holding it in place and preventing the failure of the Dairy's interior ceiling. Also, the Dairy's masonry is failing in several places,



Top Left: Severely deteriorated masonry in the Main House. Top Right: Damaged brickwork on the Chapel.
Bottom: The poor structural condition of the Chapel's interior.



Top Left: The temporary jack supporting the Dairy's chimney. Top Right: The damaged masonry on the Smokehouse.
 Bottom Left: The damaged roof of the Gambrel-Roofed Barn. Bottom Right: Damage to the second floor of the
 Horse Barn, which requires stabilization.

partially as a result of improper mortar replacement. The twentieth century wooden pump house requires considerable attention; it either needs to be repaired in a historically appropriate manner or removed.

- **Cemetery**

The historic cemetery, located to the north of the cluster of core eighteenth century buildings, also requires immediate treatment. Overgrown plants and vines must continue to be removed to prevent further damage to the headstones. Following this, a conservator specializing in historic gravestone repair should be contacted so that cracked headstones and open graves can be properly repaired.

- **Barns**

The wooden International Barn, located to the northeast of the Main House, requires minor cleanup only. The concrete Gambrel-Roofed Barn, also located to the northeast of the Main House, contains tools, various materials, and a pick-up truck that need to be removed. The barn's roof, which has partially collapsed, also needs to be replaced. The wooden Long Barn, situated to the northeast of these two structures, needs to be cleaned of vegetative growth in order to prevent deterioration and allow for a proper conditions assessment. The Horse Barn, located to the east of the Main House also requires general cleanup and the removal of vegetative growth from around the structure. The stability of the structure needs to be evaluated, given visible damage caused by powderpost beetles in some of the framing members. In addition to this, the rear portion of the barn's north wall needs to be stabilized to prevent further collapse, as the joists have separated entirely from the wall.

- **Concrete Garage**

Immediate attention must be given to the vegetative growth that covers much of the Concrete Garage, constructed in 1926, and located to the west of the Main House. If left unaddressed, this growth will begin to deteriorate the garage leading to increased repair costs. Additionally, the large sliding doors should be repaired so that the garage can be secured in order to protect it from vandalism, natural elements, animals and the like.

- **Ruins**

There are several ruins on the Compton Bassett property that require action. The remains of the board-and-batten Tenant House with Brick Nogging, located to the southeast of the Main House, should remain intact for interpretation. Despite its condition, the structure contains historic fabric that represents the materials and techniques employed in the construction of this early type of dwelling. The undergrowth should be controlled around the building, any dangerous objects must be removed, and an unobtrusive barrier of some sort should be erected in order to keep visitors from actually entering the structurally unstable house. Similarly, a brick chimney stack of unknown date, and associated masonry rubble located to the west of the Main House, should be investigated, cleaned-up, and maintained for possible future interpretive use.

The ruins of a tobacco barn, possibly dating from the early twentieth century, are located to the northwest of the Main House. Because of its condition, the ruins must either be roped-off to prevent visitors from injuring themselves, or be cleaned up entirely. Considering the dangerous nature of the debris at this site, it is recommended that the site be cleaned up entirely and

the debris removed from the site. Usable wood and/or brick from the foundation should be salvaged and reused elsewhere if needed. Leaving the debris in its current state serves minimal educational purposes, and might actually contribute negatively to the property. During the cleanup process, materials should be studied as the site is deconstructed. Doing so allows for the possibility of learning important information about the construction of the barn and increase general knowledge of the site.

- **Hand-Dug Well**

The hand-dug well, located to the northwest of the Main House, should be investigated by a professional in order to attain a more accurate date of construction. Depending on the results of this investigation, a period-appropriate well cover should be designed and installed; if the concrete cover currently in place is period appropriate, or has historical significance itself, it should be left in place. The area around the well should be cleared of brush so that it can remain undamaged and accessed by visitors.

- **Non-Contributing Outbuildings and Resources**

In addition, there are multiple non-contributing outbuildings and resources that must be addressed as well. Three of these resources should be removed due to their extremely poor condition, the presence of hazardous materials within them, and their lack of significance or interpretive value. These include the modern Plywood Shed located near the Concrete Gambrel-Roofed Barn, the Tenant House with Asbestos Siding, and the Brick Fire Pit located in the Agricultural Complex. Particular care should be taken when removing the Tenant House with Asbestos Siding due to the presence of asbestos. The wooden fence located to the north of the Main House is a good candidate for removal as well due to its extremely dilapidated condition and the fact that it obscures the visibility of the original plantation plan.

- **Environmental**

Compton Bassett's natural and environmental features have generally fared better than the site's cultural resources, but efforts must also be made to preserve and protect these elements from further harm. First, a team of landscape professionals - a landscape architect specializing in historic landscapes; an ecologist; an arborist; and others - should assess the site in order to identify priorities and develop an appropriate treatment approach for Compton Bassett's contributing environmental features. The site includes several historic trees in the vicinity of the core contributing structures. These historic trees, as well as the boxwood hedges framing many of the central site elements, contribute to the landscape's significance and, where possible, should be maintained.

Land use on the site should also be preserved and protected: the location of forests and configuration of Compton Bassett's agricultural fields contribute to the site's plantation character and form many of the property's historic viewsheds. Furthermore, the site's forests and wetlands provide habitat for birds and animals and acts as a buffer to help maintain the water quality of the Patuxent. These features should be preserved in accordance with county zoning requirements and planning objectives.

Site Clean-Up and Public Access

The accumulation of garbage and debris has also contributed to the general deterioration of the landscape. Accordingly, a cleanup effort must be undertaken in order to assure the preservation of the site and prepare Compton Bassett for public access. Throughout the property, but primarily concentrated in the vicinity of the twentieth century agricultural complex, several piles of trash, scrap metal, and building debris have accumulated. This includes a barrels and cans potentially containing hazardous materials, piles of scrap wood and metal, hunting decoys, and much more. The ongoing efforts to remove this trash should continue. These trash piles are not only hazardous to visitors, but are potentially hazardous to the environment and could attract negative attention to the site if left unaddressed.

As these clean-up efforts take place, though, it is important that items of significance be retained when possible. There are a number of historic documents, such as family bills and twentieth century ledgers, located in structures on the site, including the Horse Barn and International Barn. Any historic agricultural tools on the site should not be discarded if they are in salvageable condition. These elements are important to the development of the site and could be used for future interpretation or research.

Archaeology

The Compton Bassett landscape has a long history of occupation and is situated within a broader geographic and historical context. Archaeological investigations within the Patuxent drainage have contributed much to our understanding of Prince George's County, from prehistory to the plantation era. Compton Bassett likely contains rich archaeological resources that should be appropriately investigated. Archaeology should begin with a Phase I survey, using shovel test pits, to identify the location of possible significant buried features at the site. This initial survey should also utilize square test units near the site's structures.

The results of this initial Phase I survey should dictate future archaeology on the site. Buried features that emerge from this survey should be protected from disturbance, and in most cases, should be preserved in place. In other instances, where excavation could greatly enhance the content of interpretive programs at Compton Bassett, or provide insight into earlier structures and uses on the property, additional investigation is recommended.

Moving Forward: Possible Models for Compton Bassett's Future

While an in-depth use and feasibility study is outside of the scope of this cultural landscape report, this section offers a discussion of several models for future uses of the Compton Bassett property. These models flow directly from the analysis contained in part one of this report, and from the resulting statement of significance and management philosophy derived from that analysis. As a result, they reflect the values of potential site users and stakeholders, and incorporate preservation, sustainability, archaeology, interpretation, education, and recreation.

Interpretive Model

The historical themes discussed in Part One of this report should figure prominently into the development of interpretive programs at Compton Bassett. The site provides ample opportunities for exploring key themes in the area that have not or cannot be addressed on other sites. The preservation of the Chapel, for example, offers the opportunity to interpret the spiritual and social dimensions of Catholicism in early Prince George's County, an issue that cannot be explored in many other areas due to the rarity of still standing, private family chapels. Ongoing University of Maryland work with the chapel is helping ensure that these interpretive possibilities come to fruition. Additionally, Compton Bassett's long association with agriculture, and its numerous farm buildings, provides opportunities for interpreting the history and development of farming in the county – potentially from the late Woodland period to the twentieth century. Few, if any, historic sites in the area explore twentieth century agriculture and the movement away from the plantation system; the high concentration of twentieth century agricultural buildings and three tenant houses at Compton Bassett put the site in a prime position to address this portion of history. In focusing on the attributes that distinguish Compton Bassett from other sites, a portion of the interpretation can center on providing a new perspective and insight into the area as a whole.

The site's interpretation should also reflect larger efforts in the area, especially in terms of its War of 1812 connections. M-NCPPC should work with the National Park Service to explore the possibility of incorporating the site into the Star Spangled Banner National Historic Trail. The trail's current path runs within close proximity to the site through nearby Upper Marlboro, and to the southwest of the site along Croom Road. Connecting Compton Bassett into this larger network will facilitate a broader interpretation of the site where it is viewed within its historic context.

At their core, interpretive programs should seek to educate the public, and should promote historic sites and their ecological context. Technology is a valuable tool that can enhance interpretive programs, and websites and social media outlets should figure prominently into the promotion and interpretation of the site. These tools draw in a wider audience, can be easily updated, and require little maintenance, making them good but minimal investments. For example, the development of downloadable applications, such as the National Park Service's Chesapeake Explorer, can add another dimension to site visits and possible walking tours by placing Compton Bassett within a broader historical context that includes related local sites and themes. Downloadable applications also allow interpretive programs to be user driven, providing visitors the flexibility to explore the landscape and make connections between site features on their own.

An interpretive approach was developed as a historic preservation thesis project in 2012 by Carissa Demore at the University of Maryland. Demore designed a walking tour for the Montpelier Mansion, an M-NPPC-owned historic site located near Laurel, Maryland. This self-guided walking tour, which has since been implemented, is structured around eight prominent locations on the property that illustrate changes in the landscape over time. Stops on the tour include the plantation's orchard, historic entrance, fields, river viewshed, woods, outbuildings, garden, and mansion. Demore's interpretive framework integrates the site's cultural and environmental history into a narrative that highlights Montpelier's changing inhabitants, ecology,

and spatial layout for each period of its occupation, beginning in prehistory and extending into the twentieth century.⁴⁹

Interpretive programs at Compton Bassett should tell the story of the people who once lived and worked on the property, and should also provide visitors with a sense of how the historical interaction between nature and humans contributed to the development of the landscape we see today. One good example of a historic site that is successfully interpreting this interplay between culture and the environment is Somerset Place, a historic plantation site located on the edge of Lake Phelps in Washington County North Carolina. Between 1785 and 1865, this large plantation produced a variety of agricultural crops, as well as lumber from its sawmill. At this state owned and operated historic site, the landscape is interpreted through the lens of former inhabitants, presenting multiple racial, social, gender, and temporal perspectives.⁵⁰

Like Compton Bassett, the landscape consists of a variety of inter-related cultural and natural elements. Outbuildings on the site include slave cabins, as well as a chapel, dairy, and smokehouse, and these structures serve as locations where visitors can engage in the hands-on exploration of nineteenth century farm technology, crafts, and life-ways. The interpretive program at Somerset Place also explores the ways in which the site's inhabitants interacted with and shaped the natural landscape, from formal gardens, to canals and rice fields that were created from the site's swampy, lakeside environment.

Stakeholder Partnerships

Another central concept within these models is the need for partnerships. Partnerships expand the possibilities for funding future uses, while bringing in outside expertise and knowledge. While all of the models discussed here presume partnerships with various groups, building partnerships with area stakeholders is a key step in maintaining and using the site. These relationships can add to the depth and quality of interpretive programs at the site by bringing new ideas and perspectives into the planning process. In addition to partnering with the National Park Service, M-NCPPC should explore partnerships with the Maryland Historical Trust, Preservation Maryland, Prince George's County Historical Society, and the African American Heritage Group, in developing interpretive programs. Additionally, area youth groups, such as 4-H organizations, Scouts, and Future Farmers of America, could serve as useful partners in clean-up activities at the site and the development of educational programs that involve environmental conservation and agriculture. The incorporation of these stakeholder groups could buttress community support and appreciation for Compton Bassett, assuring its preservation into the future.

Public/Private Partnership Model

In addition to working with area stakeholders, a public/private partnership provides a model for implementing the extensive and costly stabilization and treatment actions that many of Compton Bassett's structures require, as well as the development of interpretive programs. Many sites have

49 Carissa Demore, *Listening to the Land: History and Interpretation of Montpelier's Cultural Landscape*, MA thesis, University of Maryland, 2012, <http://drum.lib.umd.edu/handle/1903/12504> (accessed December 6, 2012).

50 North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources, "Somerset Place," <http://www.nchistoricsites.org/somerset/somerset.htm> (accessed December 1, 2012).

undertaken this approach with highly successful results, including the Jay Estate in New York State and Historic London Town in Anne Arundel County.

The restoration of the Jay Estate in Westchester County, New York has been facilitated by a public/private partnership. A National Historic Landmark, the main house was constructed in 1838 by the son of statesman and patriot John Jay, and is set within a multi-layered cultural landscape that, like Compton Bassett, contains significant cultural and natural features. The twenty-three acre property is located on a historic roadway, and along with its elegant Greek Revival house, contains associated landscape elements that include a historic garden design and stone walls, as well as scenic meadows and views of Long Island Sound. Similar to Compton Bassett, the Jay Estate property is adjacent to a county park and nature preserve that contains forests, saltwater marshes, and a diverse array of plant and animal species.

Recently, a public/private partnership has led to the restoration of the Jay Estate property. Under the ownership of the Westchester County Park System, the main house had deteriorated over time. In 2012, the county entered into a license agreement that transferred oversight for the upkeep of the estate, as well as fundraising and capital investment, to the Jay Heritage Center, a private 501 (c) 3 non-profit organization. Currently, the state and county jointly own 21.5 acres of the estate, while the Heritage Center owns the 1.5-acre parcel containing the house. In addition to grant funding, this arrangement has enabled tax-deductible individual and corporate donations, which have helped pay for restoration activity and the development of interpretive programs at the site. This relationship has also resulted in a range of interpretive measures, including efforts to interpret twentieth century landscape elements to show the evolution of the property over time. Educational programs also speak to the site's historical ties to African American heritage, as well as landscape conservation and environmental stewardship.⁵¹

Historic London Town and Gardens, located on the South River in Edgewater, Maryland, provides another public/private partnership-based model for operating and interpreting Compton Bassett. This park property is owned by Anne Arundel County but is managed and interpreted through a partnership with the London Town Foundation, a 501 (c) 3 non-profit organization. Predating the founding of nearby Annapolis, London Town was a prominent late seventeenth century settlement and tobacco port, until the mid-eighteenth century when the town began to diminish in stature and economic relevance. Today, Historic London Town's interpretive experience centers on public archaeology and educational programs run by Anne Arundel County in conjunction with the Anne Arundel County Trust for Preservation, Inc., and the London Town Foundation. Similar to the Jay Estate, this partnership has enhanced funding and donations to the site, assuring that the site's buildings and grounds remain in excellent condition. Additionally, this relationship has facilitated the introduction of creative programs like candlelit tours, teas, dinners, and crafting events that draw in new audiences and do not figure into traditional use and interpretation of historic sites. As these two models demonstrate, by considering a public/private partnership with a 501(c)3 specifically dedicated to Compton Bassett, M-NCPPC could open the site up to new funding sources and a wider range of interpretive possibilities.

⁵¹ Westchester County Parks, "The Jay Property," <http://parks.westchestergov.com/historic-sites/jay-property> (accessed November 18, 2012).; The Cultural Landscape Foundation, "Public/Private Partnership Brings New Hope to the Jay Estate," <http://tclf.org/landslides/public-private-partnership-brings-new-hope-jay-estate> (accessed November 18, 2012).; The Jay Heritage Center, "About Us," http://www.jaycenter.org/About_us.html (accessed November 18, 2012).

As seen in the Jay Estate and Historic London Town models, a public/private partnership could allow for both the privately funded preservation of the site's structures, and the public operation of the site as part of the Patuxent River Park. Compton Bassett's historical and natural features, its existing trails and paths, and its proximity to both Marlboro Pike and the Patuxent River, provide the elements needed for linking the landscape into the network of nearby county-managed recreational facilities. With future land acquisition efforts, the property's farm roads and paths could be converted into a network of park trails that could be connected to the existing trail system of the Jug Bay Natural Area, located approximately two miles to the south of Compton Bassett. Upgrading the property's landing could also allow Compton Bassett to be linked into the Patuxent Water Trail, a self-guided paddling tour of the river that allows kayakers and canoeists to explore the parks and historic sites located along the river. The development of trails and a landing at Compton Bassett could also facilitate the expansion of Chesapeake Bay Critical Area tours currently focused on Jug Bay and the Merkle Wildlife Sanctuary.⁵² Educational programs associated with this effort could interpret the synergy that has historically existed at Compton Bassett between human culture, the Patuxent River, and the wider Chesapeake region.

Sustainable Farm Model

Agriculture has traditionally played an important role in the history of Compton Bassett, as well as Prince George's County. Currently, acreage on the site is leased for the growing of feed corn. Other possible agricultural uses could extend and interpret the tradition of farming on the property, educate the public, and provide a destination for locally produced, sustainable food.

One possible model for the operation of a sustainable interpretive farm at Compton Bassett is the National Colonial Farm. The farm is located in Piscataway Park, a National Park Service site along the Potomac River near Accokeek, Maryland. The farm is operated through a partnership between the NPS, and the Accokeek Foundation, a non-profit land trust organization committed to education, historic preservation, land conservation, and sustainable agriculture. The two hundred acre "living" interpretive farm features a variety of educational programs involving local history, agriculture, and the environment and is a part of the Potomac Heritage National Scenic Trail. Through outreach to local farmers, the Accokeek Foundation promotes sustainable farming practices that balance agriculture with the environmental stewardship of the Chesapeake – both of which are themes that feature prominently at Compton Bassett. In addition to the farm, Piscataway Park features boardwalks, trails, and a public fishing pier.

Projects by the Alice Ferguson Foundation and Engaged Community Offshoots also serve as models that combine public/private partnerships and sustainable farming - compatible efforts that could be explored at Compton Bassett. The Alice Ferguson Foundation's Hard Bargain Farm is located in Piscataway Park. The stated mission of this non-profit organization, founded in 1954, is to "connect people to the natural world, sustainable agricultural practices, and the cultural heritage of their local watershed through education, stewardship and advocacy."⁵³ In addition to functioning as a working farm, whose produce is sold to the public, the property

⁵² Prince George's County Department of Parks and Recreation, "Patuxent River Park," <http://www.pg-parks.com/page332.aspx> (accessed November 18, 2012).

⁵³ Alice Ferguson Foundation, "About AFF," <http://fergusonfoundation.org/additional-resources/about-aff/> (accessed November 18, 2012).

contains a number of adaptively reused historic buildings, including the historic main house, barns, various outbuildings, and a lodge available for rentals. Also, a small amphitheater, built in the 1930's, serves as a performance space for concerts and plays. Like Compton Bassett, this cultural landscape also features rolling terrain, forests, and wetlands, which the Foundation has been active in protecting.

Engaged Community Offshoots, also known as ECO City Farms, provides a similar model. This non-profit organization, based in Prince George's County, is dedicated to education, environmentally friendly farming practices, and social equity in the form of "sustainable incomes" for farmers, and access to affordable healthy food for under-served populations. Eco-City's "flagship" farm is located in Edmonston, Maryland, and involves intensive, no-till, organic farming contained in low-cost greenhouses powered by solar and geothermal energy. The idea of "community farming" and sustainability are two of the key ideological principles underlying the group's efforts, which involve local volunteers in producing food that is then offered for sale at a regularly held farmer's market located at historic Riverdale Park.⁵⁴

Compton Bassett is a historically significant, ecologically diverse cultural landscape. In the near term, a preservation-oriented approach, and associated treatment actions, will stabilize, repair, and protect the site's contributing buildings, landscape features, and natural elements. Guided by the management philosophy, these efforts lay the foundation for future uses of the property. Going forward, this rich landscape offers many possibilities for use and interpretation. Public outreach and the development of partnerships with key stakeholders are central to future planning and reflect the ongoing evolution of modern preservation theory and practice. While the preservation, maintenance, and interpretation of the site must remain key goals, a values-centered approach reveals that there are a range of uses for the site that correspond to contemporary values.

54 ECO City Farms, "About Us," and "Our Edmondston Farm," <http://www.ecoffshoots.org> (accessed November 18, 2012).

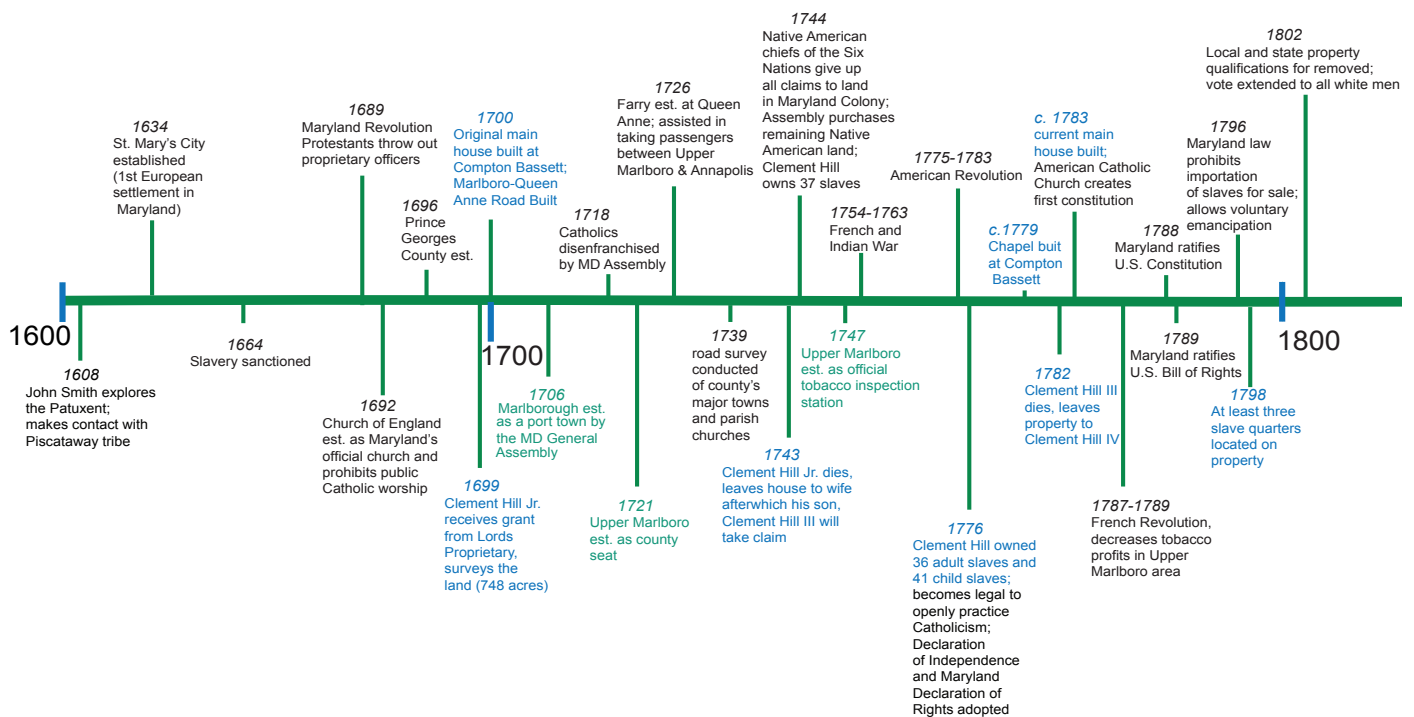
Conclusion

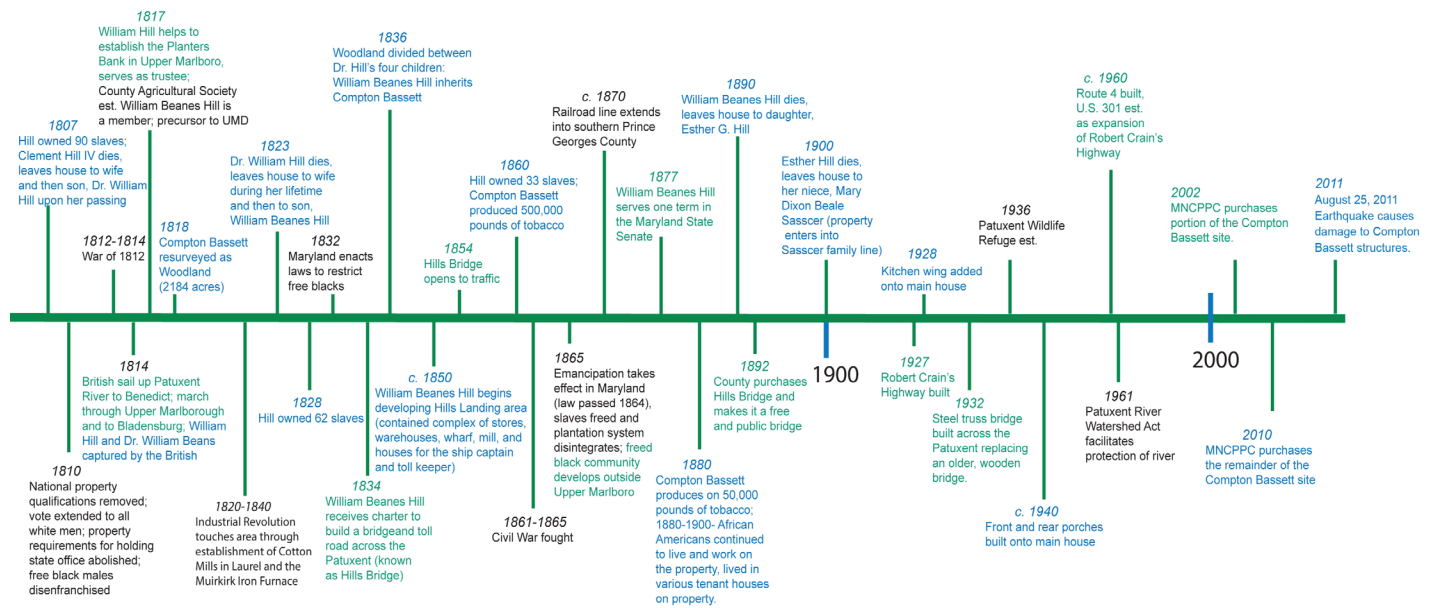
This report utilized both a cultural landscape and a values-centered approach to integrate Compton Bassett's cultural and natural resources into a comprehensive interpretation, and to develop recommendations for the site's management and future use. The information provided in this report illustrates that Compton Bassett contains an increasingly rare combination of natural and cultural elements. Significantly, the cultural landscape and values centered approaches provided in this document demonstrate the interdependence of Compton Bassett's resources. Successful future interpretation must acknowledge this symbiotic relationship.

We conducted an inventory of resources, as well as historic research, which enabled us to develop site themes and broaden Compton Bassett's significance beyond structures and political boundaries. These efforts resulted in a plan for a holistic interpretation of the site. In addition, we have provided M-NCPPC with a broader, interconnected resource base that can be incorporated into future planning for Compton Bassett.

Compton Bassett's future stands at an important juncture: for the past three hundred years the site was owned by a singular family and used for one purpose. Compton Bassett's value to the area has always derived from its agricultural productivity. When M-NCPPC purchased the site they did so for its value as an environmental conservation resource. These values, both old and new, must be balanced with the site's rich cultural history in order to ensure that Compton Bassett's multivocality remains intact far into the future.

Appendix 1: Chronological History





Appendix 2: Demographic Conditions

The demographics of the area in which Compton Bassett is located form a key component of the site's existing conditions. We have considered the area's demographics on three different levels, all within the boundaries of our site's greater historic landscape: (1) the Town of Upper Marlboro, (2) the Greater Upper Marlboro Area, including Harwood, the town directly across the Patuxent River from Compton Bassett, and (3) the immediate surroundings of Compton Bassett.

The area has an African American presence that exceeds both state and national levels. While African Americans comprise 30% of the state population, in the town of Upper Marlboro, African Americans account for 57.5% of the population.⁵⁵ In Greater Upper Marlboro, excluding Harwood, 76.1 % of the population identifies as African American, and in the immediate neighborhood of Compton Bassett, African Americans comprise 63.6% of the population (Figure 3). In each instance, whites comprise the next largest segment of the population. In Harwood, the town located directly across the Patuxent River from Compton Bassett, whites comprise 83% of the population and people that identify as black make up 13%, a clear distinction from the racial composition of Upper Marlboro. It is important to note that the immediate area surrounding Compton Bassett has a higher population of people identifying as white than the surrounding area, though it is evident that African Americans comprise the area's largest ethnic demographic.

The area also has a large Roman Catholic population. Of those who identify as religious, the largest percentage, 32%, identify as Catholic in both Upper Marlboro and the Greater Upper Marlboro area (Figure 4).⁵⁶ At the national level, only 23.9% of those self-identifying as religious identify as Catholic.⁵⁷

The population is generally growing slowly and not transient. The county's Planning Department has imposed measures to maintain a slow level of growth in order to preserve the area's rural character.⁵⁸ For example, the population in Compton Bassett's neighborhood is only expected to increase 0.3% in the next five years (Figure 5).⁵⁹ Additionally, in the Town of Upper Marlboro, 80% of houses are owner occupied. The figure increases to 89.7% in the Greater Upper Marlboro area and 91% in Compton Bassett's neighborhood.⁶⁰ These figures suggest that the majority of residents intend to remain in the area for the foreseeable future. Collectively, these figures point to a population that has remained relatively constant over time.

The area is also comprised primarily of families. Nearly 70% of households in Greater Upper Marlboro identify as a family household. The Census Bureau defines families as households containing two or more people related by birth, marriage, or adoption. In Compton Bassett's neighborhood, 80% of households contain a family.

55 33.1% of the population identifies as white alone, 4.1% identify as Hispanic, 3.8% as two or more races, 1.1% as Asian, and less than 1% identify as either native American or other race alone, "Upper Marlboro," last modified 2012, <http://www.city-data.com/city/Upper-Marlboro-Maryland.html>.

56 In Compton Bassett's neighborhood, 25.8% identify as white, 4.1% identify as Hispanic, 3.0% as two or more races, and 2.4% as other races, "Upper Marlboro."

57 "Upper Marlboro."

58 "Prince George's Planning Department, Research," last modified 2010, www.pgplanning.org/About-Planning/Our_Divisions/Countywide_Planning/Research/Facts_and_Figures/Demographics/2010_Census_Data.htm.

59 "Housing Intelligence," last modified 2012, <http://pro.housingintelligence.com>.

60 "Upper Marlboro."

Lastly, the area's median income provides important evidence into the population's characteristics. Upper Marlboro's median income, \$76,617, is 9.5% higher than the median income for the State of Maryland. In Greater Upper Marlboro, the median income is \$95, 522, nearly 20% higher than the Town of Upper Marlboro. In Compton Bassett's neighborhood, the median income is \$89,164, between that of both Upper Marlboro and Greater Upper Marlboro.⁶¹

This demographic information provides important insights into the people in and around our cultural landscape, informing us that most households consists of upper-middle class families and that African Americans and Catholics are well represented.⁶²

61 "American FactFinder," last modified 2012, <http://factfinder2.census.gov/faces/nav/jsf/pages/index.html>.

62 We have characterized the area as middle class because of its median income compared to national averages.

Appendix 3: National Register Statement of Significance

8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD		AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW				
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> RELIGION		
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE		
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE		
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER		
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION		
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)	local history	
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION				

SPECIFIC DATES after 1783

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

According to Henry Chandlee Forman in his Early Manor and Plantation Houses of Maryland, "the symmetrical Georgian house is the rule in Prince George's County." (p.83). Compton Bassett is one very fine example of this style. The symmetrical, three-part facade; palladian motif in the first and second stories of the pavilion; symmetrical site plan of house and dependencies, as well as the well-executed interior woodwork all are characteristic of Georgian architecture in the second half of the 18th century. The house and its setting have remained largely untouched to the present day.

Compton Bassett has been the seat of Clement Hill, Jr. and his descendants since 1700.¹ For 276 years, at least a part of the original patent has been in the occupancy of direct descendants of the patentee. The social status of Compton Bassett's early owners was reflected in their marriages with the most prominent Roman Catholic families in the Province. The many similarities in design between Compton Bassett and His Lordship's Kindness (National Register, Prince George's County) are well-known and should not be considered coincidental when the close kinship of their early owners is taken into account. Primarily engaged in agriculture, each generation of the family has actively served its church, state and community.

Clement Hill, Jr. (1670-1743) came to Maryland in 1693. He lived with his uncle, Clement Hill, Sr., until 1696 when he married Ann Darnall, daughter of Col. Henry Darnall of The Woodyard. Hill lived at the latter place until the summer of 1699 when Col. Darnall returned from England bringing to his son-in-law a commission from Lord Baltimore as Surveyor General of the Western Shore.² It is recorded in the Rent Rolls that Clement Hill, Jr. had Compton Bassett, 748 acres, surveyed July 19, 1699.³ Within a year he had completed the construction of a hime that he named after a house he had known in his native England.⁴ No description of that house built in 1700 is known to exist. The 1743 Inventory of Clement Hill's estate was made room-by-room and lists "Chamber over the Great Roome..., Chamber over the Little Roome..., Chamber over the Hall..., Dining Roome..., Hall..., Hall Closett..., Great Roome..., Little Roome..., Store..., Kitchen..., and Passage...."

Clement Hill, Jr.'s will gave his house and dwelling plantation to his wife during her lifetime and then to their son, Clement, (1707-1782) who had married Mary Digges, a daughter of Charles of Warburton Manor.⁵

See Continuation Sheet #3

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

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DATE ENTERED

Compton Bassett
Prince George's County,
Maryland

CONTINUATION SHEET ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE 3

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE (continued)

It was this Clement Hill who donated supplies to the support of the patriot army in 1788.⁶ Perhaps due to the stress of the times, the original mansion house, which according to family records burned in 1771, was not rebuilt until after the Revolutionary War.

Clement Hill (1743-1807), only son and heir of his father, was left the responsibility of replacing the family dwelling house. The builder he employed is not known. "A. L. Gosnell" was scratched into wet plaster over the dormer on the southeast facade. His identity has not been established. The present house and dependencies are described in the Federal Direct Tax Assessment of 1798, with 1896 acres of adjoining land.⁷ (See Addendum)

Whether or not this house resembles the 1700 structure is unknown. Smoke-stained bricks are found in the present structure. It is believed the present house was covered with pebble dash to hide the stained bricks. The White House architect, James Hoban, came to Compton Bassett in March of 1822 for consultation concerning certain improvements to the mansion, including pebble dash for the exterior. Receipts for Hoban's services and building materials appear in Dr. William Hill's accounts.

County Court records show that Clement Hill was appointed a Commissioner of Tax in 1792 and again in 1803.⁹ His 1807 will gave the dwelling house to his wife, Eleanor, during her lifetime and then to their son, William. Eleanor Brent Hill was the daughter of William Brent of Virginia. Her mother was a sister of Daniel Carroll, signer of the Federal Constitution, and of John Carroll, the first American Archbishop of the Roman Catholic Church.¹⁰

Dr. William Hill (1783-1823), who married Anne Smith, daughter of Dr. Clement Smith, Jr., inherited Compton Bassett by terms of his father's will. By 1818 he had acquired additional land to total the 2,182 acres that he had resurveyed as Woodland.¹¹ In 1814, when Dr. William Beanes of Upper Marlboro was captured by the British, an episode which culminated in Francis Scott Key's creation of our National Anthem, Dr. Hill, a close friend of Beanes, was also taken but gained an early release from his captors.¹² Dr. Hill was one of the organizers of Planter's Bank in Marlborough in 1817.¹³ When he died in 1823, he gave life rights to his dwelling plantation to his wife, then to his son, William Beanes Hill.

William Beanes Hill (1813-1890), Judge of the Orphan's Court for 25

See Continuation Sheet #4

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

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Compton Bassett
Prince George's County,
Maryland

CONTINUATION SHEET Maryland ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE 4

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE (continued)

years, State Senator in 1877 and Secretary of the State of Maryland, was a graduate of St. Mary's College at Emmitsburg, Maryland, and one of the leading planters in the state. He married Catherine Beall Smith, daughter of Richard of Georgetown. Judge Hill was one of the original stockholders in the Maryland Agricultural College (now the University of Maryland) in 1856.¹⁴ In 1884 he founded the Woodland Bridge Company, Inc. to operate a toll facility across the Patuxent River near Hill's Landing. An undated drawing, entitled "Hill's Landing," shows the bridge, a stern-wheeler steamer and a brick kiln at the water's edge.¹⁵ This establishment was located just south of the present day Maryland Route 4 bridge. The Landing, as such, is no longer in existence.

Judge Hill willed his dwelling house to his eldest daughter, Esther G. Hill. It was she who gave the religious articles in the family chapel to St. Mary's Roman Catholic Church in Upper Marlboro in 1895.¹⁶ Incidentally, no record has been found to show deconsecration of the chapel. It may still be a Roman Catholic Church. Esther G. Hill died in 1900, giving the family home to her niece, Mary Dixon Beale, who had married Reverdy Sasscer, M.D. Two of their sons, Henry S. Sasscer and Dr. Robert B. Sasscer, are currently the owners and occupants of the mansion. The surrounding acreage is still a working farm.

¹Bowie, Effie Gwynn, Across the Years in Prince George's County. (Richmond: Garrett and Massie, 1947) p. 427

²Bowie, p. 426

³Rent Rolls #4:324, Hall of Records, Annapolis, Maryland

⁴Bowie, p. 426

⁵Bowie, p. 249

⁶Red Books, Part 2, items 1604-1605, Hall of Records, Annapolis, Maryland

⁷Federal Direct Tax, 1798, Patuxent Hundred, Prince George's County, Maryland. Particular lists of dwellings and of land.

⁸Hill Papers, unpublished. Dr William Hill letter to Hoban, 14 March 1822. William Hill Accounts, 20 March 1822, paid \$20.00 to James Hoban and \$6.00 to William Gallaway for "gig and horse" to transport Hoban for two days.

Appendix 4: Annotated Bibliography

Interviews/Meetings

Beesley, Elizabeth, interview by Michael Robb. Conversation With Elizabeth Beesley-PG Historical Society (October 31, 2012).

Elizabeth Beesley is a local historian and board member of the Prince George's County Historical Society

Chance, Cindy, interview by Michael Robb. Conversation With Cindy Chance-NPS (November 6, 2012).

Cindy Chance is a Management Assistant for the National Park Service Chesapeake Bay Office

Demore, Carissa, interview by HISP 650 Studio. HISP 650 Consultations with Carissa Demore-Landscape Architect (September- December 2012).

Carissa Demore is a Landscape Architect and Professional Preservationist

Kearns, Greg - M-NCPPC Parks, interview by HISP 650 Studio. Patuxent River Ecology Boat Tour (September 20, 2012).

Greg Kearns is a naturalist/biologist employed by M-NCPPC.

Vallen, Michael, interview by Michael Robb. Interview With Michael Vallen (November 16, 2012).

Michael Vallen is a local Architect and potential tenant on the property.

Tutman, Fred - Patuxent Riverkeeper, interview by Michael Robb. Interview with the Riverkeeper (November 3, 2012).

Fred Tutman is the director of the Patuxent Riverkeeper Alliance.

Thompson, John Peter - Chairman, PG County HPC, interview by HISP 650 Studio. HISP 650 Ecology Lecture with John Peter Thompson (September 27, 2012).

John Peter Thompson lives in the area and is the Chairman of the Prince George's County Historic Preservation Commission.

Pearl, Susan - PG County Historical Society, interview by Michael Robb. Interview with Susan Pearl (November 6, 2012).

Susan Pearl is the director of the Prince George's County Historical Society.

Lucas, Michael - M-NCPPC Archaeology, interview by HISP 650 Studio. Meeting With Michael Lucas (October 2, 2012).

Michael Lucas is an Archaeologist with M-NCPPC who provided consultation regarding archaeological resources.

Linebaugh, Donald - Director, School of Preservation University of Maryland, College Park, interview by HISP 650 Studio. Consultations with Donald Linebaugh (September-December 2012).

Donald Linebaugh is the director of the Historic Preservation Program at the University of Maryland.

Upper Marlboro Historical Society, interview by Michael Robb. Upper Marlboro Historical Society - Meeting (November 17, 2012).

The Upper Marlboro Historical Society is a new heritage organization for Upper Marlboro, MD that formed in November of 2012.

Maps

Martinet. "Martinet Map of Prince George's County from 1861." Baltimore: Martinet, 1861. These are late 19th century survey maps that highlighted the holding of advertisers.

United States Geological Survey. "2011 7.5 Minute Maps." usgs.gov. 2012.
[http://store.usgs.gov/b2c_usgs/usgs/maplocator/](http://store.usgs.gov/b2c_usgs/usgs/maplocator/(isQuery=yes&layout=6_1_61_58&uiarea=2&ctype=catalogQuery&carearea=%24ROOT)/.do)
[http://store.usgs.gov/b2c_usgs/usgs/maplocator/\(isQuery=yes&layout=6_1_61_58&uiarea=2&ctype=catalogQuery&carearea=%24ROOT\)/.do](http://store.usgs.gov/b2c_usgs/usgs/maplocator/(isQuery=yes&layout=6_1_61_58&uiarea=2&ctype=catalogQuery&carearea=%24ROOT)/.do) (accessed September 12, 2012).

This is a source for twenty-foot contour lines as used on larger views of site plan. It is also a source for maps that were combined and used for greater contextual landscape base map.

Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission. "PGAtlas: Advanced Mapping." 2012.
<http://www.pgatlas.com/#/Advanced> (accessed September 12, 2012).

This is a source for information regarding slope, drainage, two-foot contours, and wetland locations on the property.

—. Topographic Survey at Former Sasscer Tract by Rick Mooreland. Landover Hills, MD: M-NCPPC, January 31, 2012.

Referenced as a source for one-foot contour lines within the immediate area surrounding the core buildings (Smokehouse, Dairy, Main House, Garage, Chapel) on the property.

United States Department of Agriculture; Natural Resources Conservation Service. "Web Soil Survey." usda. gov. 2012. <http://websoilsurvey.nrcs.usda.gov/app/WebSoilSurvey.aspx> (accessed October 26, 2012).

This is a source for information regarding types of soils found within property boundary, and their percentage of the total soil in the property.

Primary and Archival Documents

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Provides gender and age of slaves owned by the Hill family at various times.

William B. Hill. "William B. Hill's Will from August 28, 1890." Maryland Register of Wills for Prince George's County, August 28, 1890.

This will provides information on the transfer of property at Compton Bassett.

United States Department of Commerce. "Census data from William/Clement Hill Family from 1880 to 1940." US Census Bureau, n.d.

Census data indicates who lived on the property and when, in addition to their occupation and heritage.

Special Dispatch to the Sun. "Death of Miss Esther Graham Hill." Baltimore Sun. ProQuest Historical Newspapers: The Baltimore Sun (1837-1986), September 5, 1900.

This obituary of Esther Hill provides some information about Compton Bassett including British occupation during the War of 1812.

—. "Improvement of the Patuxent." Baltimore Sun. ProQuest Historical Newspapers: The Baltimore Sun (1837-1986), October 27, 1887.

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Deed records can indicate who and what was on the property over time.

IV, Nicholas Snowden Hill. "Genealogy of the Hill Family of Compton Bassett Vol.1." Lineage Report, n.d.

This is a family history written by a member of the Hill family.

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United States Department of Agriculture; Natural Resources Conservation Service. "Official Soil Series Descriptions." usda.gov. 2012. <http://soils.usda.gov/technical/classification/osd/index.html> (accessed November 26, 2012).

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Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission Prince George's County Planning Department. *Preliminary Subregion 6 Master Plan and Proposed Sectional Map Amendment*. Planning Document, Upper Marlboro: M-NCPPC, 2009.

This is the 2009 Master Plan for Sub Region 6 in Prince George's County. This document provides extensive demographic analysis, background information on county environmental conservation and historic preservation programs, public archaeology programs, and recreational facilities.

—. *Prince George's County Approved General Plan*. Planning Document, Upper Marlboro: M-NCPPC, 2002.

This 2002 General Plan for Prince George's County outlines goals and implementation measures designed to maintain agricultural lands, historic resources, and environmentally sensitive areas within the county.

—. *Priority Preservation Area Functional Master Plan*. Planning Document, Upper Marlboro: M-NCPPC, 2011.

This document provides the vision and goals of agricultural preservation in Prince George's County.

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This publication by the county covers plantation development between the mid-sixteenth century and 1860, focusing heavily on slavery and land use.

—. *Approved Historic Sites and Districts Plan*. Planning Document, Upper Marlboro: M-NCPPC, 2010.

This is the 2010 historic preservation plan for Prince George's county, which includes a list of designated historic sites and resources in the county.

—. *History: Billingsley House*. 2012. http://www.pgparcs.com/places/eleganthistoric/billingsley_history.html (accessed 2012).

This website gives a summary of the history of Billingsley House, a neighbor of Compton Bassett on the Patuxent River.

—. *Mount Calvert Historical and Archaeological Park*. 2012. http://www.pgparcs.com/Things_To_Do/Nature/Mount_Calvert_Historical_and_Archaeological_Park.htm (accessed 2012). This webpage presents an overview of the history of Mt. Calvert, another neighbor of Compton Bassett.

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