Transportation

Transportation-related facilities have been intimately tied with growth and development in Prince George's County with many major trends, such as changes in agriculture, suburbanization and settlement, and the influence of the federal government. The earliest settlement tended to be along navigable rivers and streams, and several towns were established during the early-eighteenth century along waterways such as the Potomac and Patuxent Rivers and their tributary streams. As population increased and spread westward, roads were established that linked the towns to one another and to the rural hinterland. These roads became important for the transport of agricultural produce, especially tobacco, to market.

In the 1830s, with the advent of rail transportation, a railway linking Baltimore and Washington, D.C., ran through the western part of the county. Additional railroads were constructed after the Civil War, and these, along with streetcars, began a process of suburbanization that continues to this day. However, recent suburbanization is associated with the spread of the automobile, made possible by the improved roads constructed during the twentieth century. Finally, Prince George's County was the site of the first military airfield in the United States, and to this day includes Andrews Air Force Base, an important military facility in the defense of Washington, D.C.

Wharves, Ferries, and Landings

Wharves and landings, as well as ports, were the initial nodes of transportation in Prince George's County, and were located on the Potomac and Patuxent Rivers or on tributaries of these two waterways (Pearl 1991b:21). An overview of these topics can be found in Tilp (1978), while Holly (1991) documents the steamboat trade of one of the major companies on the Potomac and Patuxent Rivers, the Weems Line and its successors. The earliest towns in the county were established between 1683 and 1742, and all were located on waterways: Charles Town, Queen Anne, Mill Town, and Nottingham on the Patuxent River; Upper Marlboro on Western Branch; Aire on Broad Creek; Piscataway on Piscataway Creek; and Bladensburg on Northeast Branch (Pearl 1991a:1). Most of these towns have ceased to exist, with the exception of Bladensburg and Upper Marlboro and, to a lesser extent, Piscataway.

A review of the 1861 Martenet map and the 1878 Hopkins map identifies a number of river-based transportation facilities, including landings, wharves, and ferries, in Prince George's County (Figure 20). A landing was
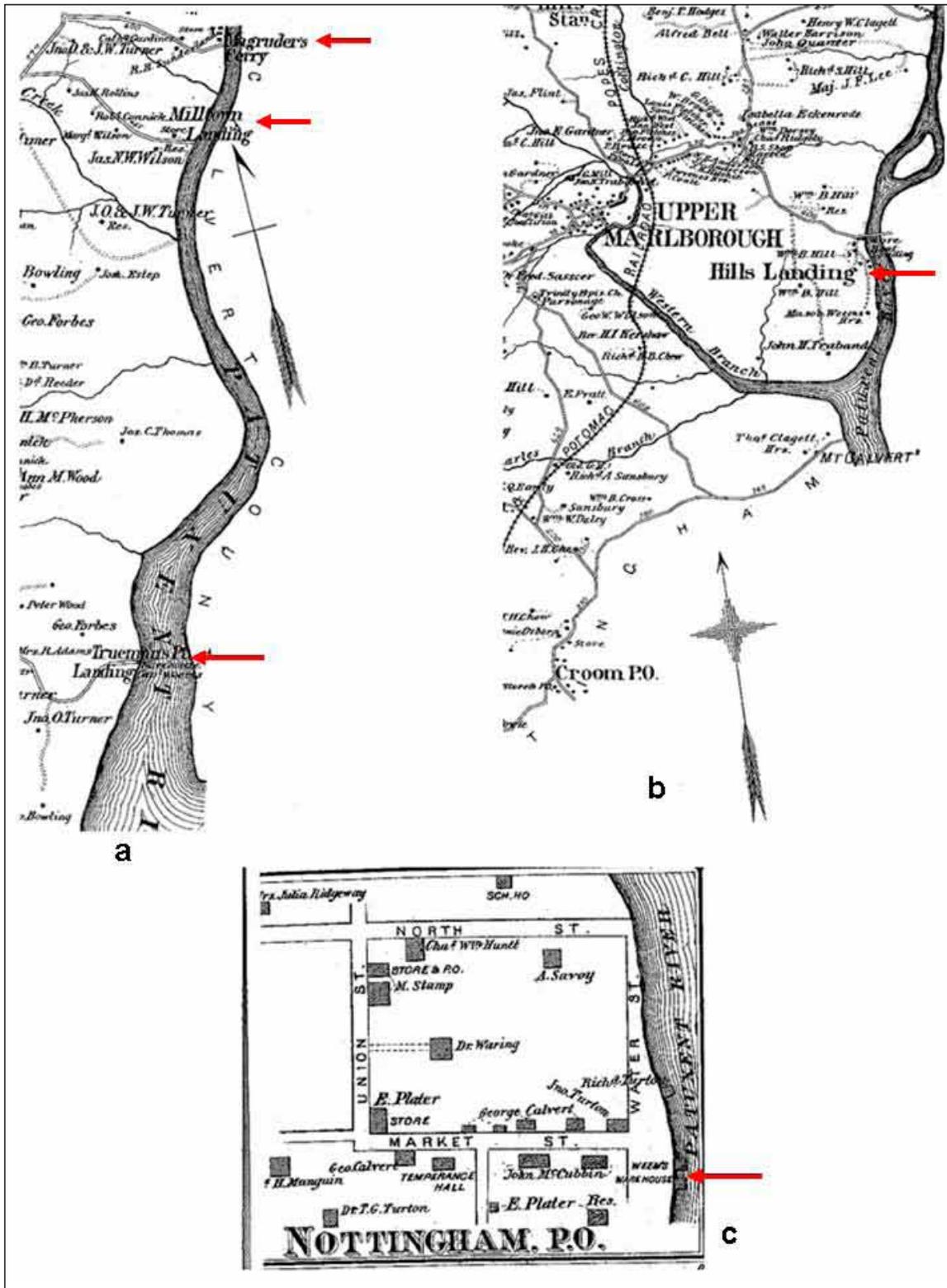
Figure 20: Examples of wharves and landings in Prince George's County from the 1878 Hopkins map.

typically a small docking facility at which passengers and cargo were discharged or taken onto a vessel. Wharves were typically larger structures built along a shore so that ships could dock. In 1861 there were 11 landings, 1 wharf, and 3 ferries depicted on the Martenet map. One ferry (Mount Pleasant) was located along the Patuxent River east of Upper Marlboro while the other, Magruder's Ferry, also along the Patuxent River, was south of Nottingham (Figure 20). The third ferry, along the Potomac River, was north of Piscataway and serviced a route to Alexandria, Virginia. The one wharf was located on the Patuxent River. Known as the Burlington Wharf, it was located southeast of Upper Marlboro. Many of the landings depicted on this map appear as a single unidentified structure.

The 1878 Hopkins map evidences 12 landings, including such named landings as Milltown, Trueman's, Clagett's, Hill's, and White's Landing, all on the Patuxent River between its confluence with the Potomac River and Upper Marlboro (Figures 20 and 21). In contrast to the 1861 map depictions, many of these landings included several residences and, in instances, a store or warehouse. A single wharf was present at Farmington near the confluence of the Potomac and Patuxent Rivers and the same three ferries as depicted on the 1861 map were present. The Burlington Wharf was now described as a landing, called Hill's Landing (Figure 21). The Farmington Landing was the site of a ferry between that landing and Alexandria, which operated from 1854 through 1910 (Tilp 1978:223).

All of these landings and wharves were stops in steamboat lines, including the Weems Line, and were passenger terminals as well as locations where produce and goods were dropped off and loaded (Holly 1991:261–263; Figure 21 illustrates the location of a Weem's warehouse in Nottingham). Steamboat lines began in the area shortly after the War of 1812 and continued until their disruption during the Civil War (Tilp 1978:55, 57). At that time, many steamboats were impressed by the

Figure 21: Transportation facilities discussed in text.

federal government, and others were prohibited from landing in Virginia (Tilp 1978:57–58).

Wharves, ferries, and landings increasingly became anachronisms in Prince George's County after the 1870s. The next 30 to 40 years saw increased access to, and reliance upon, the railroads to ship produce and transport people (Holly 1991; Tilp 1978). Many of the railways spanned the Patuxent River in Prince George's County and the Potomac River in Washington, D.C., eliminating the need for ferries, landings, and wharves. Automobiles and trucks, and the associated construction of improved roads and bridges, further eliminated the need for these facilities during the twentieth century.

Trueman's Point Landing (PG: 87B-28).

One of the more complete discussions of the history of landings on the Patuxent River concerns Trueman's Point Landing (MIHP PG:87B-28). In 1974, the landing consisted of the remains of pilings of a steamboat dock. Historically, it is known to have had a barn-like warehouse near its end where tobacco and merchandise could be stored. Trueman's Point Landing operated as a river port for the planters and farmers of the Aquasco area from the eighteenth through twentieth centuries. It was acquired by George Weems in 1817 when Weems established the Weems Steamboat Company of Baltimore (Figure 20). The steamboat line was sold to the Maryland, Delaware, and Virginia Railroad Company in 1905 and to the Baltimore and Virginia Steamboat Company in 1926. Steamboat service ceased in 1932 when this company went bankrupt. Another, Hill's Landing, was located on the Woodland plantation and was the location of a store and several tenant structures (Figure 21; MIHP PG:82B-1). This landing was used as a fishing and boat landing.

Commercial fisherman also used many of the landings during the initial portion of the postbellum period, especially those landings along the Potomac River (Tilp 1978). Prince George's County had 206 fishermen in 1897 and 76 vessels. By 1929 only 42 were employed in the county (Fairbanks 1932), and their catch represented less than one percent of the value of the fishery in Maryland. Tilp (1978:19) attributes the decline to over fishing early in the twentieth century.

Related Wharves, Ferries, and Landings Properties
• Warehouses

• Stores

- Residences

- Docks and wharves

Roads

Pearl (1991b) has provided an overview of the development of roads in Prince George's County through 1900. She also presents a context on the Baltimore and Washington Turnpike, constructed in 1812 and now generally coincident with US 1 (Pearl 1991f). Road construction was tied to the need for greater communication as population grew and, perhaps more importantly, for the ease of transport of tobacco and other produce from the interior to the tobacco inspection stations and port towns.

During the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, Prince George's County regularly ordered road surveys and construction to link the newly established towns with rural hinterlands. An 1828 road survey, ordered by the Maryland General Assembly, and the 1861 Martenet map provide a glimpse of the state of the road transportation network in Prince George's County on the eve of the Civil War. Many of the roads and road segments discussed by Pearl (1991b:22–25) as being constructed during the eighteenth or early-nineteenth century became important roads in twentieth-century Prince George's County, including Maryland State Routes 373, 223, 381, 382, and 193, and Ritchie-Marlboro Road.

Spero and Berger (1995:25) describe the roadways in Prince George's County prior to the 1880s as being unimproved dirt roads, dusty when dry and muddy and impassable after rainy periods. The roads were often neglected and severely rutted from use by wagons when wet. Prior to 1890, road development and construction in the county have been characterized as being gradual, based on a system of county roads that linked population centers, importantly the tobacco inspection stations and ports, and providing the rural community with access to goods and services and outlets for their produce. Access to individual farms and factories was provided by private roads (Spero and Berger 1995:25). Perhaps the most important of these early roads was the Baltimore and Washington Turnpike that ran along the western portion of Prince George's County, through Laurel southward toward Washington, D.C.

By the 1890s, however, calls for the reform of the road network were raised throughout Maryland. These calls led to the formation of county-based engineering departments, the supervision of state road construction by the Maryland Geological Survey, and the creation of the Maryland State Roads Commission (Spero and Berger 1995:26). The timing of this reform movement proved fortunate, with the subsequent development of automobiles and trucks.

The increasingly wide-scale use of automobiles and trucks through the twentieth century caused a revolution in the road network, not only throughout the county but in the surrounding state and nation as well. The unimproved

dirt roads constructed during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries in Prince George's County were often macadamized to create easily passable all-weather roadways (Spero and Berger 1995:28). One of the most important of these projects was the paving of the Baltimore and Washington Turnpike, to be known as US 1, between Laurel and Washington, D.C., (Figure 2). Between 1906 and 1915 approximately 30 miles of this route was improved, and it was later widened during World Wars I and II to accommodate increased traffic flow (Spero and Berger 1995:29).

Subsequently, several other important road developments were undertaken. Three of the more important projects were undertaken during the 1920s. Crain Highway, now US 301, was constructed through a portion of eastern Prince George's County (Figure 2). This roadway was the first major road built entirely in a new location in the State of Maryland (Spero and Berger 1995). Importantly, this highway provided one of the earliest improved transportation routes between Baltimore and rural areas of southern Maryland. Crossing the county east-to-west was a second major highway, known as the Defense Highway, between Annapolis and Washington, D.C. Now known as US 50, the twentieth-century development of Bowie (which lies approximately midway between Washington, D.C., and Annapolis) is in part due to its proximity to this route (Figure 2). Finally, Maryland 416, now known as Maryland 2/4, was constructed during the 1920s between Upper Marlboro and Calvert County (Spero and Berger 1995). This route in part provided access to residents of Washington, D.C., to the Chesapeake Bay resorts located within Calvert County (Figure 2).

Other major roadways were constructed during the 1940s and 1950s. The Suitland Parkway, constructed in 1942, was designed to provide wartime access to the newly constructed Camp Springs/Andrews Field (MIHP PG:69-26). Also constructed through the county in 1942 was the Indian Head Highway, designed to link the Navy Yard with the munitions plant at Indian Head (Aberg in TCGC 1992:95). The Baltimore-Washington Parkway, paralleling US 1 to the east, was constructed in 1954 (MIHP PG:69-26) (Figure 2). Finally, several important roadways were conceived during the 1950s but their actual completion was not until the 1960s. These include I-95, which parallels US 1 to the west, and I-495, also known as the Capital Beltway, which rings Washington, D.C., and traverses the central portion of Prince George's County (Figure 2).

Related Road Properties
- Road beds

- Bridges and culverts

- Construction staging areas

Railroads

> ...the face of Prince George's County was dramatically changed by the construction and implementation of a new form of transportation, the railroad (Pearl 1991c).

Pearl (1991c) describes the impact of the railroad in Prince George's County as allowing urbanization to predominate over the formerly rural and agricultural past of the county. The B&O Railroad was the first railroad line constructed through the county. Begun in 1833 and known as the Washington Branch, this line began in Baltimore and paralleled the Washington-Baltimore Turnpike through Prince George's County (Figure 21). The B&O held a monopoly on railroad transit in the county and to Washington, D.C., through the Civil War. Planters from southern Maryland began to champion an additional railroad that would allow ease of transport for their produce, principally tobacco, to the Baltimore market. Plans for this second line began as early as 1853, although the oncoming Civil War halted the project.

In 1867, the Pennsylvania Railroad funded the construction of the second line, known as the B&P Railroad Popes Creek line, in an attempt to break the B&O monopoly on rail transport to Washington, D.C., (Pearl 1991c) (Figure 21). A clause in the state charter allowed the construction of branch lines up to 20 miles in length from the main Popes Creek line. The B&P established the Washington Branch from the area now called Bowie to Washington, D.C., and completed the branch in 1872. Originally known as Huntington City, Bowie was platted as a railroad community at the junction of the two lines (Figure 22). The Popes Creek line began operation in 1873. With both lines open, numerous small communities sprang up along the tracks as new stations were established. The communities, discussed in greater detail in Chapter 9, often consisted of a station, general store, post office, and a few residences. Through time, many of these small railroad communities developed into larger bedroom suburbs of Washington, D.C.

The next railroad to develop in Prince George's County was the Southern Maryland Railroad, originating in Brandywine and continuing to St. Mary's County (Pearl 1991c). Begun in 1880, the company went bankrupt in 1886 but continued to be operated as various companies purchased and sold its right-of-way. A third railway, the Chesapeake Beach Railway, was begun in 1897 to link Washington, D.C., with resort areas to the east along Chesapeake Bay. Line was laid through the central portion of the county, and service began as early as 1898. However, the company disbanded in 1899, although the rail line continued under new management. Debt forced the company to close in 1935, and the rails were removed in that year. Today, the track bed remains in many areas of the county.

A final line, the Washington, Baltimore and Annapolis Electric Railway, was a high speed, inter-urban line designed to link these three cities. Twelve
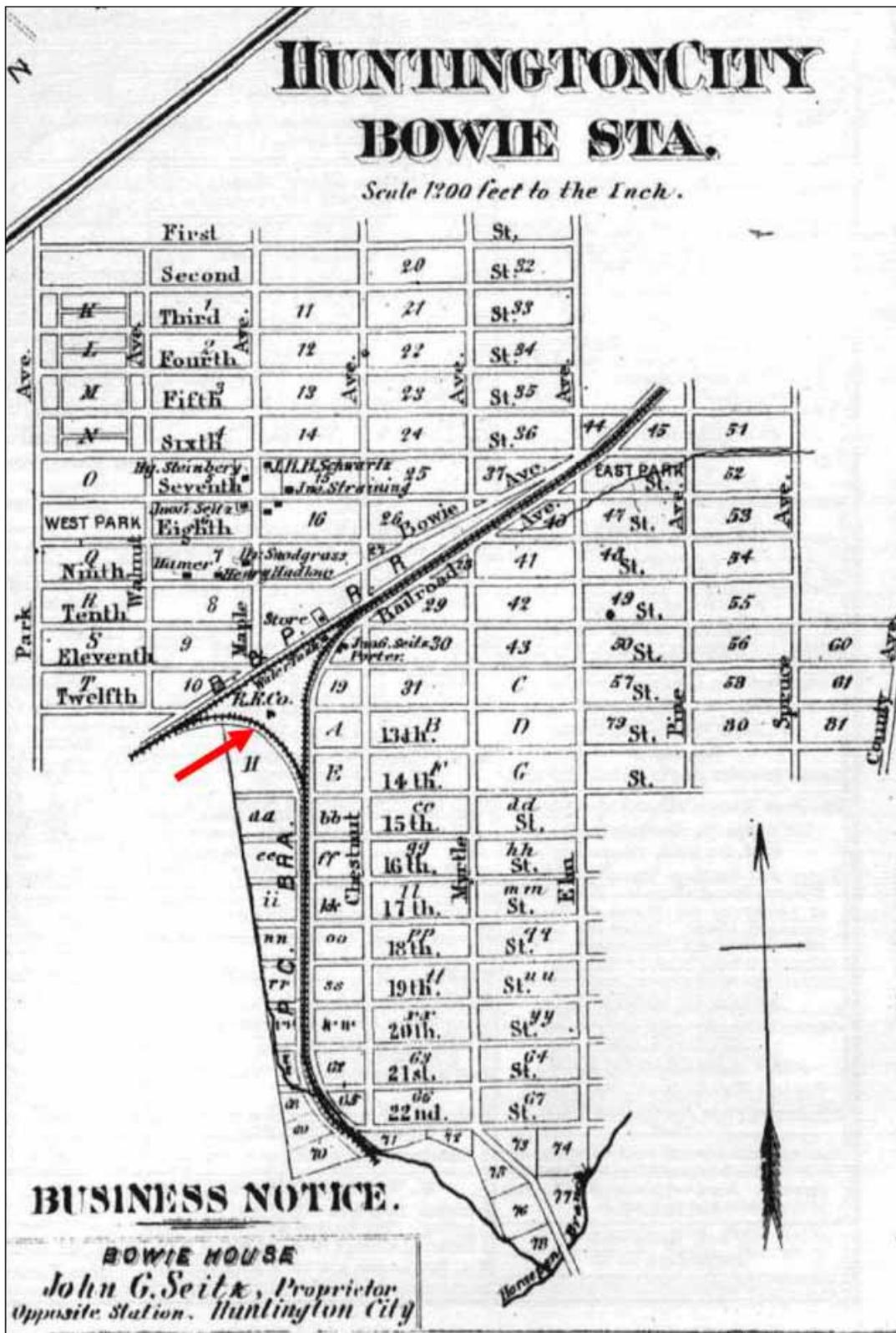
Figure 22: Detail from 1878 Hopkins map showing Bowie Station

miles of track were laid between Baltimore and Washington, D.C., through Prince George's County from Seat Pleasant to just east of Bowie. The line opened in 1908 and continued to 1935. The effects of the depression caused the business to fail, and the tracks were dismantled. Pearl (1991c) indicates that the southwest six miles of the line are now under Maryland 704, while the rest is under power lines. All of these lines had the effect of linking rural areas to urban markets and, perhaps more importantly, establishing numerous stations. These stations, like those on the B&P lines, became the nucleus of a number of bedroom suburbs. The rise of these suburbs and the contribution of the railroads and streetcar lines to this trend are discussed in greater detail in Chapter 9.

Laurel Railroad Station

Railroad-related structures range in size from small to large, the most common being freight and passenger stations (Figure 21). Most created by the B&O and B&P Railroads were small, one-story, unadorned frame buildings. The Croom Station (built in 1875) along the B&P Railroad was an example of this style of structure (MIHP PG:82A-30), as was the B&O station at Beltsville (MIHP PG:61-8). A somewhat similar structure was a waiting room constructed by the Chesapeake Beach Railroad and located at Mount Calvert (MIHP PG:82B-21). This structure, with tin siding over a wood frame, was built between 1897 and 1898. The Laurel Railroad Station, built in 1884, is an example of a more substantial (brick) and more ornate structure (MIHP PG:LAU-6).

Bowie Railroad Buildings (PG: 71B-2-9).

Additional railroad-related structures, aside from the passenger stations discussed above, were constructed in Prince George's County. A B&O switching tower stands in Hyattsville (MIHP PG:68-8), and a B&P control tower and waiting station is still present in Landover (MIHP PG:72-1). A possible maintenance facility built in 1900 and associated with the Washington, Baltimore & Annapolis Electric Railway is also located in Landover (MIHP PG:72-3). Lastly, a Chesapeake Beach Railroad engine house had been present in Capitol Heights (MIHP PG:72-12). Often resembling industrial buildings, similar railroad-related structures may be present and unrecognized in the county or may have been demolished and are now represented only by associated subsurface remains. Examples of a B&P signal tower, passenger waiting station, and freight/ticket shed in Bowie,

dating to the early 1900s, were moved from their original location during the 1990s (MIHP PG:71B-2-9) and are now part of Huntington Railroad Museum. Archeological remains could include the following:

- Tracks and beds

- Bridges

- Stations (passenger and freight)

- Offices

- Warehouses

- General stores and post offices

- Water tanks

- Coal bins

- Engine house

- Switching towers

- Service/maintenance buildings

- Construction camps

Air Transport

King (1991b:55) states that "Prince George's County has played a unique role in the history of aviation." Beginning with the advent of the twentieth century, there have been 18 airfields, both military and civilian, in existence within the county, five of which were in operation when King wrote her 1991 overview. However, several have reportedly been closed for security reasons after the 9/11 terrorist attacks in 2001. King (1991b) provides a list of the 18 airfields that have been in operation in Prince George's County (Table 14). The county was also home to the Engineering and Research Corporation, an early manufacturer of private planes.

The Engineering and Research Corporation (ERCO) of Riverdale, founded by Henry Berliner, had as its mission to design and build a low-cost and simple-to-fly plane (King 1991b; Virta 1991). A factory and airfield was operational by 1940, and a few planes were produced by 1941, when the advent of World War II interrupted production (King 1991b; Virta 1991). An airfield was built on the same Riverdale property as the company factory by 1943 and is described as an unpaved runway, although by 1947 three runways were in existence (Figure 21). Through 1945, ERCO produced parts for military planes including gun turrets, antenna sets, propeller blades, and rocket launching pylons for the

Table 14. Airfields in Prince George's County.

Name	Dates of Operation	Comments
Bower	1957–1965	Short, private paved landing strip, built for use of Bowers family; small hangers present; destroyed by housing development in early 2000s
Beltsville	1933–1965	Developed as emergency runway by Dept. of Commerce, originally sod field with beacon light; WWII field constructed in 1942 or 1943, used to train National Guard and Naval Reserve pilots, also tested experimental planes; 1946 described as having a single runway; land transferred to Dept. of Agriculture and abandoned in 1947; 1949 described as having single hard-surface runway; 1951 as having two runways, evidently used by government aircraft; 1960 may have had an associated hanger; hanger and parts of runways still exist
Capitol	1933–1941 1945–1947	First field located near Bladensburg; 1936 described as having two runways, 1 hanger; 1941 runways described as gravel, 2 hangers; closed in WWII; now destroyed by development; reopened near College Park, a grass field and hanger; closed within 3 years; now a golf course
Cheltenham	1944	Depicted on 1944 Washington Sectional Chart as a Navy Auxiliary Field; configuration is unknown; may never have existed
Curtis	1946–1965	No information found
Columbia Air Center	1941–1956	First African-American owned and operated airfield in the United States; WWII Navy used to train pilots; 1946, had 7 grass runways, two hangers, office building; 5 runways by 1956, when lease ended. M-NCPPC now owns as a park
Earnshaw	1942	No information found
Hyde Field	1940–2005	1940 opened as a sod field commercial facility; WWII used by Civilian Air Patrol and to train Navy pilots, expands to three runways; 1947 described as having 28 hangers; 1951 described as having two hard-surfaced runways
Mattaponi	1946–1950	No information found
Queens Chapel	1940–1955	Originally grass field; 1941 described as 2 sod runways, 2 hangers; closed in WWII; 1944 described as a single sod runway; 1950 had 3 hangers; now destroyed by development
Schrom	1944–1953	Private field started in 1928, trained pilots; 1941 described as 2 gravel & dirt runways, 3 hangers; closed in WWII, reopens in 1944; 1950 had single paved runway, office, 3 buildings; only traces of runway remained in 1993 due to development

F7F fighter bomber (War Records Division 1951:466–467). ERCO also made production machinery that was used throughout the aircraft industry during the war. The war efforts of ERCO necessitated expansion of the company's facilities, including a new building. To accommodate this growth, ERCO constructed temporary housing for its employees quite close to the airfield (18PR260).

With the end of World War II government contracts were terminated, and the company returned to manufacturing its civilian plane known as the ERCOUPE. Poor sales forced the company to suspend the manufacture of planes in 1947 (King 1991b). In 1947, ERCO Field became a general aviation field with 11 hangers and an office. The field appears to have been closed in 1957, and portions of the area have been destroyed by redevelopment of the area by the University of Maryland.

The College Park Airport, now owned by M-NCPPC, is the world's oldest continually operating airport and has contributed significantly to the development of both military and civilian air transport (King 1991b) (Figure 21). In 1908, the Wright Brothers contracted with the US Army to provide two airplanes and flight instruction for two officers. The Army leased 160 acres and established a training school at what is now College Park Airport. Wilbur Wright arrived in October 1909 to begin instructions for the Army Signal Corps. Although the training school was closed in 1913, the airfield continued in civilian use thereafter. In 1918, the field was the Washington, D.C., terminus for commercial air mail service, and between 1927 and 1934, the US Bureau of Standards tested radio navigational aids at the field. A 1930s description of the airfield indicates the presence of two sod runways and associated hangers, although by 1950 there were hangers and an administration building in addition to the sod runways. By 1960 only a single sod runway remained, and by 1969 this runway had been paved. A new runway was added during the early 1980s, and the older paved runway was closed. Currently, owned by M-NCPPC, the airfield is listed in the NRHP, and the original air mail hanger, dating from 1918, still stands. The second military airfield in Prince George's County, Andrews Air Force Base, was discussed in Chapter 5: Military Facilities.

Similar to the College Park Airport, many of the other small airfields in Prince George's County have a history of both civilian and military use, with the military use centered on the World War II period. Table 14 provides a brief overview of the information garnered on these smaller airfields. Four fields, Freeway, Hammett, Rose Valley, and Suburban, postdate the 1958 terminus for this context and are not included in the table. Freeman (2007) provides a history and photographs and maps of many of these historic airfields.

One of the more interesting of the airfields is the Columbia Air Center located near Croom (Pearl 1996:136). Now owned by M-NCPPC and operated as a park, the Columbia Air Center was the only African-American owned and

operated air facility in Prince George's County during the period of segregation. The Cloud Club, an early African-American flying club organized by John W. Greene, Jr., leased the Air Center land. During World War II it was used to train Navy pilots. After the war, facilities were increased and flying classes were offered. A decrease in use forced the field to close in 1958. What is evident from the information presented here and in Table 14 is that Prince George's County has lost many of its early airfields in the last 20 years due to development.

Related Airfield Properties
• Landing strips (paved and unpaved)

• Taxiways (paved and unpaved)

• Plane parking areas

• Hangers (T and larger)

• Offices

• Fuel areas

• Beacons and lighting

• ERCO factory buildings

• ERCO temporary housing

Research Questions and Topics

• How were the wharves and docks constructed? How did they change through time? What was their physical and spatial layout?

• Did wharves differ from landings?

• What are the nature, function, and spatial layout of associated terrestrial structures?

• Are any specialized activity areas associated with wharfs, landings, and ferries? If so, what was their function?

• Did the lifeways of associated residents differ from residents of the county located away from waterways? Did they have access to different types of material culture or food?

• How did the demise of water-based transport affect the residents, communities, and facilities?

• What construction techniques and materials were used on the early roads? How does this compare with engineering plans? If they differ, why?

- What construction techniques and materials were used on the early railroads and their associated bridges? How does this compare with engineering plans? If they differ, why?

- Chapter 4 lists research questions that can be applied to railroad facilities and railroad laborers, especially at laborers houses, communal centers, and places of work.

- Can associated deposits at warehouses be used to identify typical goods stored in these facilities? If so, do the goods change through time?

- Is there archeological evidence of segregation at railroad facilities? Class structure?

- What construction techniques and materials were used at the airports? How does this compare with engineering plans? If they differ, why?

- Can archeological investigations be used to define structures and site organization at airports?

- Can such evidence be used to determine the types of planes that typically used the facilities?

- Do the facilities and associated artifacts at the Columbia Air Center, an African-American facility, differ from those at other facilities?

- Chapter 4 lists research questions that can be applied to the ERCO plant and its laborers, especially at the temporary houses and places of work.

Data Requirements

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

Primary Documentary Sources: Census, government records; tax assessment; probate; newspapers; vital statistics and legal records; personal papers; oral histories; photographs; financial records (lease, rent, chattel mortgage); maps; various business records (especially railroad and steamship company records)

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

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

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

Postbellum Archeological Resources in Prince George's County, Maryland