

**United States Department of the Interior  
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*  
Type all entries—complete applicable sections



**1. Name**

historic Lonaconing  
and/or common  Lonaconing Historic District

**2. Location**

MD 36 MD 657 and Douglas Ave, Church, E. Main  
and Railroad Sts. and other locations.  
street & number Multiple N/A not for publication  
city, town Lonaconing vicinity of \_\_\_\_\_ congressional district Sixth  
state Maryland code 24 county Allegany code 001

**3. Classification**

<b>Category</b>	<b>Ownership</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>Present Use</b>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture <input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commercial <input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government <input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> industrial <input type="checkbox"/> transportation
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N/A	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military <input type="checkbox"/> other:

**4. Owner of Property**

name Multiple Public and Private (approximately 220 parcels, most with multiple ownership)

street & number \_\_\_\_\_

city, town \_\_\_\_\_ vicinity of \_\_\_\_\_ state \_\_\_\_\_

**5. Location of Legal Description**

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Allegany County Courthouse

street & number 30 Washington Street

city, town Cumberland state Maryland 21502

**6. Representation in Existing Surveys**

title Maryland Historical Trust  
Historic Sites Inventory has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no

date 1976-1981  federal  state  county  local

depository for survey records Maryland Historical Trust, 21 State Circle

city, town Annapolis, state Maryland 21401

# 7. Description

AL-VI-B-113

<b>Condition</b>		<b>Check one</b>	<b>Check one</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved    date _____
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		

## Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

GENERAL DESCRIPTION (for DESCRIPTION SUMMARY, see Continuation Sheet #17)

Lonaconing is located approximately fourteen miles southwest of Cumberland, Allegany County, Maryland, on Route 36. George's Creek, a tributary of the Potomac River, runs in a southerly direction through the town. The town is laid out along Main Street which runs nearly parallel to the creek. The boundaries of the historic district intersect this central artery approximately one block west of West Main Street's intersection with Union Street and to the east along Main Street even with the intersection of Sioux Place and Rockville Street. The district includes the core of commercial buildings which form the geographic and social center of the town (roughly along Main Street between Union Street and Park Street and south to Railroad Avenue), and the surrounding residential streets (largely to the north of Main Street on either side of Church Street (photo 4), then east (32) past Douglas Avenue, Scotch Hill, and including the westernmost portions of Dutch Row and Furnace Street parallel to Main Street).

Though Lonaconing was incorporated as a town some thirty years earlier in the century, most of the commercial buildings in the center of town date from 1881-1900 owing to a major fire which eviscerated the downtown in 1881. The concentration of high quality commercial buildings which were constructed in the ensuing two or more decades ranges along Main Street from the Brady Hotel (2), (3), (9) eastward to the intersection of East Main and Scotch Hill (also known as Koontz Run) and south from the intersection of Union and West Main Streets (1) along Union Street across the railroad tracks continuing south on Jackson until the intrusion of a group of modern residences coincident with a decaying, abandoned frame store which bridges a stream offshoot of George's Creek. This core of commercial buildings represents about 40 structures, including a hotel, a bank, three dry goods merchants (one of which remains in operation), a bakery, a 5&10, a general store (with warehouse beside the railroad tracks), and numerous warehouses and shops--some retaining their original functions, some partially closed up but still accommodating a bar or small store. In general, the alterations to these structures are cosmetic but retrievable, or strictly functional (modern signs or first story shop fronts (13-16\*). Since many of the significant buildings (described below) remain almost untouched, the completely convincing impression downtown Lonaconing conveys is that of a turn of the century, industrial-based town.

Further to the east of this solid collection of commercial buildings is the most visible and impressive evidence of Lonaconing's industry: George's Creek Coal and Iron Company's Furnace No. 1 (listed on the National Register, constructed circa 1840). The Furnace is now the centerpiece for a town park and playground whose parking lot replaces the Central High School (c. 1920, AL-VI-B-096) which sat on the north side of East Main Street between the Furnace and the road. Also constructed by the George's Creek Coal and Iron Company is a brick office building (AL-VI-B-086) (photo 6), constructed circa 1840 at the nearby corner of Park Street as it branches off Main.

The other major industrial structure in Lonaconing, located southeast of the Furnace, is the Klots Throwing Company (AL-VI-B-087) (8), built in 1906 and expanded in 1918 and 1946. The Klots plant was one of two silk mills in Allegany County, employing mainly women whose husbands worked in the mines. The Klots operation processed raw silk into the thread necessary for fabric.

\*more description on north side of Main Street.

# 8. Significance

AL-VI-B-113

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 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 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 type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		

<b>Specific dates</b>	Late 19th and early 20th centuries	<b>Builder/Architect</b>	N/A
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**Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)**

Applicable Criteria: A, C

Summary of Significance:

The Lonaconing Historic District is a 19th and early 20th century urban area, featuring commercial structures, which developed along the town's major transportation route (Md. Rte. 36), Union Street, and a surrounding residential area incorporating most of the town as it evolved during the 19th century. Situated in westernmost Allegany County about 14 miles southwest of the county seat of Cumberland, the district is significant for its wide variety of 19th and 20th century architectural styles reflecting the town's growth and prosperity as a center of Maryland's expanding coal and iron industry. Its buildings, ranging in size and complexity from simple vernacular one-and-two-family log cabins to elaborate Victorian structures in frame and brick, are enhanced by their crowded placement on Lonaconing's closely parallel streets, which correspond in their cuts to the steeply rising mountains surrounding the town to the north and south. The result of these man-made accommodations to the rugged natural environment of George's Creek Valley and to a once burgeoning industrial economy is exemplified and largely intact in the present-day Lonaconing Historic District.

History and Support:

Lonaconing did not exist as a distinct village or town before 1837. Prior to that year, the George's Creek, a distance of 16 miles from Frostburg to Westernport, was one continuous forest, with only scattered settlement throughout the area. Early 19th century geologic surveys of the area had noted that there were large deposits of coal and iron, which were relatively close to the surface for easy mining, and the area was soon to change as entrepreneurs began to export those resources. (1)

# 9. Major Bibliographical Reference

AL-VI-B-113

See Continuation Sheet No. 15

# 10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property approximately 125 acres

Quadrangle name Lonaconing, MD - W.VA

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

### UMT References

A	<u>1 8</u>	<u>6 7 4 2 2 0</u>	<u>4 3 8 2 3 6 0</u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing

B	<u>1 8</u>	<u>6 7 3 5 7 0</u>	<u>4 3 8 0 9 8 0</u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing

C	<u>1 8</u>	<u>6 7 2 9 6 0</u>	<u>4 3 8 1 8 6 0</u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing

D			
	Zone	Easting	Northing

E			
	Zone	Easting	Northing

F			
	Zone	Easting	Northing

G			
	Zone	Easting	Northing

H			
	Zone	Easting	Northing

**Verbal boundary description and justification** Boundaries are indicated on the attached map, and consist mainly of the rear property lines of the properties and curb lines of the streets indicated. For BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION, see Continuation Sheet #16.

### List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	<u>N/A</u>	code	county	code
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state		code	county	code
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# 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Mark R. Edwards, Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer, and Ellen K. Coxe

organization Maryland Historical Trust

date October, 1981

street & number 21 State Circle, Shaw House

telephone (301) 269-2438

city or town Annapolis,

state Maryland 21401

# 12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national  state  local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

8-11-83

title STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER

date

For HCRS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

Entered in the National Register

date

9/15/83

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

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The residential sections of the Lonaconing district occur mostly north of Main Street, along Church Street (until it forks), along Douglas Avenue (until its intersection with a side street to the east), up Scotch Hill and Foch Drive (along Koontz Run and branching eastward on Castle Hill Street and Furnace Street), on Dutch Row which parallels a residential stretch of East Main Street (32), and continuing along East Main Street (including houses on the north and south sides of the street), through the fork of Park Street and including the houses on "D" Street and St. Peter's Place. These areas include approximately 110 homes and churches, and these neighborhoods focus on the Korean War Memorial/World War I monument and surrounding town green below the Presbyterian Church on East Main Street at its intersection with Scotch Hill (also known as Koontz Run).

The houses included in these areas date from the mid 19th to the early 20th centuries. Large numbers of houses such as log houses, frame duplexes, and Italianate brick houses predate the 1881 fire which had little effect on Lonaconing's dwellings. Post 1881, as the town was rebuilt and the population increased, Lonaconing acquired a few prosperous-looking Queen Anne revival houses, many more two story frame I-houses, and a couple of Victorian-eclectic houses with random detailing.

Adherence to the hilly topography (24) invests these streets (Douglas, Church and Scotch Hill) with a terraced appearance; houses are perched close to one another facing the street in steep succession. Particularly along Douglas Street (20), where porches--whether added later or part of the original design--shelter nearly every entrance, there is a uniform, ascending streetscape unbroken except for the rare, modern replacement houses.

The churches remaining in the district are: First Presbyterian (30) on East Main Street (built in 1867 on land purchased from George's Creek Coal and Iron Company); St. Peter's Episcopal Church on St. Peter's Place (built in 1859, but unfortunately altered and sheathed in aluminum siding in the 1970s); and the Methodist Church (29) on Church Street, another product of the third quarter of the 19th century with truncated entrance tower and fine lancet stained glass windows. First Presbyterian is a simple frame structure with projecting pedimented entrance and louvered west end belfry. St. Peter's is a simpler single story frame building, also with projecting pedimented portal topped by a truncated steeple. The Methodist Church, subsequently resheathed in narrow horizontal clapboards, is noticeably the largest and most elaborately decorated of the three.

Of the residential buildings, chronologically the first important type is the two-room log house of the type built by the George's Creek Coal and Iron Company during the first half of the 19th century. An excellent surviving example of this form is the one story, two bay wide Hamilton Log House (AL-VI-B-114) on Dutch Row. This house measures 15 x 15 and features V-notching, hewn logs and chinking composed of mud and pebbles. Though the east gable is clapboarded, the west possesses its original exterior stone chimney. The Company produced log cabins such as this for workers in the 1830s at a cost of \$40 to \$50 with an additional \$18 charged for the chimney.\*

\*AL-VI-B-114

SEE CONTINUATION SHEET Page 2

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In the mid 19th century, log was also used to construct duplexes, additional Company housing for workers in the mining and iron industries. These log duplexes, exemplified by #11 and #12 East Railroad Street (34 and 35), were sheathed in board and batten as were frame versions of these multiple family residences which became prevalent in the 1850s. The Railroad Street duplexes are two stories high and four bays wide with two entrance doors, one at each corner of the facade. The original sash is 6/6 double hung, and the gable ends are one bay wide with one window at each story.

The frame, board and batten double house is exemplified by a duplex on Beechwood St. (28); it, too, is two stories tall, four bays wide with corner entrances, but its gable ends are two bays wide with 6/6 double hung sash at first and second story levels. This building is typical of mid century company housing, usually providing three or four rooms and sometimes a shed kitchen for each occupant. Double houses constructed in 1856 cost approximately \$400.\*

The late 1860s and 1870s produced some individual expressions of prosperity which continue to contrast with the more regular mass produced housing characteristic of Lonaconing. Three brick houses in the Italianate mode are the McCormick House (AL-VI-B-085) (27) at 86 East Main Street; the Bennett House (AL-VI-B-098) (26) at 12 Church Street; and the Francis House (AL-VI-B-099) on Church Street. The McCormick House is a two story, four bay wide structure, characterized by two, two story projecting tripartite bays flanked by recessed corner entrances. Windows on the first floor are topped by semicircular arches while those on the second story are surmounted by flat jack arches. The entrances feature original doors and hardware as well as two story porches supported by chamfered columns. Two original, corbeled brick chimneys pierce the ridge of the roof. Small ventilators made of glazed headers are located in the gable ends. The house was probably constructed as a mining superintendent's house.

The Bennett House (AL-VI-B-098) (26) was constructed around 1872 on land purchased from George's Creek Coal and Iron Company by David Sloan. This L-shaped dwelling is two stories high, three bays wide, and the brick is laid in common bond. The house's most distinctive feature is the two story polygonal bay projecting from the northwest wing of the house and possessing five narrow windows at each story. These windows, like other openings in the building, are topped by bracketed lintels with zigzag frieze. A deep bracketed cornice and nearly flat roof further distinguish this high style (for Lonaconing) structure.

The Francis House (AL-VI-B-099) also dates from around 1872 and is shaped like the then-popular cube with Italianate decoration, characterized by deeply projecting roof atop large scrolled brackets. The house is two stories high, three bays wide and constructed of brick laid in common bond.

Church and Douglas Streets are probably the two most consistently fine residential streets in Lonaconing. As described above, they feature houses, often with porches facing the street, dating from different periods of the 19th century, but collectively forming a uniform streetscape. On these streets there are particularly good embodiments

\*Harvey, p. 83.

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of periods or styles such as some described above and some anomalies such as a c. 1870s two story frame, gable roofed house on Church Street (25). This six bay by two bay section is appended to the front of another gable roofed portion whose ridge is parallel. The facade of the six by two bay portion which faces the street is distinguished by some especially elaborate late 19th century decoration for Lonaconing. For example, a turret is created on one southwestern end of the building by a pyramidal roof which rises above the sixth bay. The windows on the gable ends are multi-paned "Queen Anne" style with small squares on the top sash and clear panes on the bottom. On the first floor, four jib doors are flanked at each corner by two doorways which are themselves elaborated by paneled surrounds (lozenge shaped above diagonal designs on intermediate horizontal panels and vertical panels at base). Some of the openings are further elaborated by pairs of paneled shutters and some by curved lintels. Six Tuscan columns echo the six bay division of the facade.

Another fine example of vernacular Queen Anne, constructed of frame, is the house on Furnace Street (23), its gable end entrance facing the street and sheltered by a four bay one story porch decked with turned balusters and spoolwork. On the west side, a 2½ story turret with conical roof emerges from a rear ell with adjoining twin gables. "Queen Anne" windows of the type described above appear throughout the house which is characterized by an irregular fenestration scheme and a lively pattern of sawtooth shingling on the second stories and various gables above.

Similar distinctive ornamentation, specifically the sawtooth shingles and the multi-paned window occur in the clipped gable of a 1½ story cottage facing Douglas Avenue (21). This more modest late 19th century dwelling features a two bay gable entrance facade and German sided exterior.

Another typical German sided frame house of the same period is located across the street at 7 Douglas Street (22) and possesses a three bay wide gable end entrance of two story height, distinguished by lacy gingerbread ornament under the bed moldings of the cornice and in the diamond lozenge shaped attic window and by the recessed paneled railing of the one story Tuscan columned porch. (This type of porch recurs on Douglas Street sheltering several of the duplex doorways, some of which were built a couple of decades earlier.)

Porches (20 and 24) such as this contribute to virtually continuous streetscapes throughout Lonaconing. On Douglas Street, a Tuscan columned porch with recessed paneled railing exists alongside the same type of porch only with recessed paneled piers. Further up the street a five bay, one story porch is articulated by five slender chamfered columns with openwork slats dominating the railing. These porch variations continue up the street, elaborating the facades of last quarter of the 19th century duplexes, most of which are two stories high and four bays wide across their street facades with corner (end) bay entrances. (The more modest examples are one bay wide on their gable ends while others are two bays deep.) These double houses may differ in their exterior treatment (most are clapboarded or German sided, with some asphalt shingled or subsequently victimized by aluminum siding), but the form and layouts are generally the same (with occasional one bay enlargements).

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Similarly, these double houses are characterized by at least some simple decoration such as the variety of surrounds found on Douglas Avenue (19 and 20), pedimented lintels, beaded fascias, beaded surrounds, lintels coinciding with cornices, double and single light transoms, etc.

Lonaconing features, in addition, its share of late 19th century anomalies such as a German sided, white frame double house on Douglas Avenue (18) which could correctly be dubbed a house of seven gables. The house consists of the intersection of two gable roofed units, at right angles to one another with the longitudinal side of one smaller serving as the street facade. This four bay wide street facade has its first story sheltered by a porch with turned posts and fretwork brackets while its second story features three equal sized gables above the second story fenestration making the windows appear as false dormers.

Duplexes along the railroad track and Railroad Avenue (34 and 35) date from the middle to the late (end of the third quarter) of the 19th century and while original board and batten exteriors are often sheathed in asphalt brick or other recently applied siding, they retain their original configurations if not their original detailing. That is, most are four bays wide, with first and second story openings aligned and doors at the corners with the longitudinal entrance facade parallel to the street. Gable ends are usually one bay wide and feature overhanging eaves, some with bracketed cornices and end chimneys. Some of these duplexes retain their 6/6 sash; some have shed additions on the rear, long facade.

Generally, larger mid-century double houses were built on the streets ascending the hillsides, such as a board and batten one on Furnace Street (33) featuring a one story porch on its entrance facade, 6/6 sash, two bay wide gable end, molded cornice with returns and a gable roofed "L" addition to the rear.

Other board and batten dwellings dating from the late 19th century are more modest double houses of one story with attic, overhanging roof sheltering a front porch and a rear shed addition.

Some prosperous early 20th century houses (17) exist at the northeastern edge of town and include a good example of the neo-rationalistic, boxy house with equilateral hip roof. A central double windowed dormer enlivens the entrance facade, and a four bay, one story porch shelters one entrance. Two over one, and 3/1 sash characterize the windows. To the north (east) of this dwelling is a massive, gambrel roofed house employing numerous forms characteristic of the 20th century colonial revival style. These include semicircular windows in the gable, pents on the gable ends, substantially sized pedimented dormer windows, and a central Palladian window (in the middle of the five bays) on the second story of the principal entrance facade.

The commercial district of Lonaconing contains some exemplary mid and late 19th century buildings, most notably the furnace itself, the First National Bank (AL-VI-B-104) on Main Street, and the George's Creek Coal and Iron Company offices (AL-VI-B-094) on Park Street. The First National Bank, constructed c. 1897 as the Miners and Merchants Bank, is a one-story, two bay wide brick structure exemplifying a prosperous small town's adaptation of the Romanesque Revival style: round arch motifs, multiple



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decorative treatments (varied brick surfaces, stained glass, terra cotta ornamentation), and an unusual angled facade which both conforms to and dramatizes the course of Main Street.

The George's Creek Coal and Iron Company (5 and 6), built by the company in the early years of its operation, c. 1840, is a large L-shaped brick building on a stone foundation distinguished by elaborate brick arched door and window surrounds encompassing recessed panels and ordinary 6/6 sash. A corbeled beltcourse separates first from second story, and in addition plain brick pilasters occur at the corner and bordering the corner bay of the building.

Other architecturally noteworthy structures define the nearly uninterrupted late 19th century townscape of the central business district such as Ternent & Sons Department Store (AL-VI-B-107) on Jackson Street. Still operating as a general merchandise store under the ownership of the original owner's grandsons, Ternent's twelve bay wide Jackson Street facade is enlivened by recessed longitudinal panels beneath a dentiled cornice and segmental arched window lintels above slightly recessed 2/2 sash on the second story. The taller three bay section on the corner features segmental arched openings on the first story; the middle six bay section contains three medium store windows and a modern door while the three bay southeast corner section possesses round arched openings on the first and second stories.

Rosenbaum's Dry Goods Store (AL-VI-B-109) and Eisenberg's Clothing Store (AL-VI-B-108), both located across Jackson Street from Ternent's fared less well than their aforementioned neighbor in terms of subsequent, largely mid 20th century alterations. Ternent's, and most of commercial Lonaconing, were built of brick in the decade following the devastating 1881 fire. Eisenberg's (11 and 12) is a two story, four bay wide building with a ground level facade now partially obscured by modern vertical board sheathing. A two story brick (late 19th century) addition to the west of this is similarly obscured on the first story, but features four segmentally arched window lintels on the second story topped by five recessed long-federal panels in the frieze and a dentil brick cornice above. The 1882 original section possesses a fine iron cornice with Eastlavian incised corner brackets and grooved decoration, and a central pediment emblazoned with the building's construction date. In addition, brick drip molds with keystones enliven openings on first and second stories.

Rosenbaum's is a two story, three bay wide brick building with a modernized first story but still sporting a dentiled tin cornice between first and second stories and above, two handsome archheaded windows (with stone keystones and sills) separated by a tripartite oriel window. The whole composition is then surmounted by an even larger bracketed tin cornice with crown moldings and architrave and the same consoles at each end as below.

The Brady Hotel (AL-VI-B-106) (7), located at 2 Union Street, is a three story, seven bay wide brick hotel with a colonnaded one story porch facing Main Street. A fine late 19th century varnished wood bar with leaded glass cabinets and pictures of native son Pitcher Lefty Grove distinguish the interior of this still functioning hostelry.

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Among the commercial facades on Main Street which deserve extra attention are the Lonaconing Bakery (AL-VI-B-102) and the F.W. Weber Company (AL-VI-B-103), also products of the c. 1890 building boom. The bakery, a two story, three bay wide brick building with first floor storefront, is notable for its jack arch windows under three recessed panels topped by a bracketed cornice with central gable and stylized scallop shell frieze. The F.W. Weber Company is also two story, three bay wide with first floor storefront but is a frame structure rendered special by retention of its original facade complete with large wooden sign, shop windows decorated by bead and reel molding, and original brass hardware on the main entrance. Additionally, the interior has retained its original oak and glass cases and pressed tin ceilings.

The commercial buildings of Lonaconing, in short, are of relatively high quality and stylistic differentiation for a small late 19th century mining community. However utilitarian, these buildings are usually elaborated by some bit of enlivening ornament. In the case of the store with the warehouse on the west side of Union Street just north of Railroad Avenue (37 and 38), it is a series of three parapet walls parallel to the street; the storefront facade is marked by three "panels" of horizontal bricks laid at angles and a kind of matriculation created by stepped bricks at the cornice level. Arched drip moldings top the Railroad Avenue warehouse facade windows and large loading doorway.

In conclusion, to complement this commercial unity, there are stretches of workers duplexes, built together in the mid 19th century such as the streetscape presented by Rockville Row (AL-VI-B-082).

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Two such entrepreneurs, John Alexander, an Annapolis merchant, and Philip T. Tyson, a businessman trained in geology and chemistry, purchased a tract known as "Commonwealth" in 1833, which contained 3817 acres along George's Creek at what is now Lonaconing. (2) In 1836, they petitioned the Maryland Legislature for a corporate charter which would permit them to raise further capital for their proposed operations through the sale of shares. Later that year, the Maryland General Assembly granted the right to form a corporation, and the George's Creek Mining Company was formed, given the authority "to open and work such mines of coal, iron and other minerals as may exist on the tract of land on George's Creek known as Commonwealth, now owned by them..." and to "erect and carry on mills and manufactories of iron". (3) A supplementary act was passed on June 1, 1836, which changed the company's name to George's Creek Coal and Iron Company. Capital for the company was provided in part by Baltimore and London investors, and raised through the sale of 3000 shares at \$100 each. (4)

During the next six months, Alexander and Tyson acquired additional acreage in "Beatty's Plain", a tract southwest of "Commonwealth". (5) This purchase boosted the company's holdings to more than 11,000 acres in the valley of George's Creek and Savage Mountain. Earlier geologic surveys had indicated that iron and coal existed in vast quantities, as well as sandstone, limestone and clay. Therefore, it was unnecessary to go off company lands to find the raw materials necessary to construct an iron furnace and manufacture iron. In addition, many stands of white pine, oak, maple, walnut, hickory, locust, ash, and poplar would furnish lumber for industrial buildings, tramroads, and workers' housing. (6)

By 1837, adequate capital had been raised to begin construction of the iron furnace and its related buildings. While Tyson and Alexander wanted work to begin immediately, they soon discovered that their difficulties were more physical than financial. The narrow valley of George's Creek, surrounded by sizable mountains in the densely timbered region, with few if any roads, provided an immediate challenge to the builders. (7) Tyson wrote:

At such a distance...from the seaboard, and in a strange and thinly inhabited district, it was...very difficult to produce the force

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necessary for carrying (the works) on with the the speed commensurate with our desires. Residences for the workmen had to be built, and neither the climate of that region nor its industrial products allowed for their being erected on the same temporary character and materials used on public works in milder latitudes are allowable and usual. So far, too, as the materials for our purposes were concerned, though not distant, they were as yet inaccessible until roads and avenues could be cut to carry them. (8)

The company depended on its own contractors who hired men needed for constructing various parts of the furnace complex, as well as dwelling houses, a store, church, sawmill and other buildings which made up the original village. A Baltimore contractor, for example, was hired to manufacture brick for the operation. He was "required to dig his own clay and provide his own firewood", and was paid \$4.25-\$4.50 per 1000 bricks. By late summer of 1837, approximately 8000 bricks a day were fired on site. (9) Limestone was also quarried on site and burned to provide mortar for construction purposes.

While housing was being erected in the village, many of the men rented dwellings outside the boundaries of the mining estate where they existed nearby. The company also bought some houses and operated them as boardinghouses at a set charge of \$3/week for food and lodging. (10) Records indicate that three types of log dwellings were erected by the company for its employees:

- 1) Simple single family log cabins. These generally consisted in plan of one room dorm and a garret above. They cost roughly \$40-\$50 each, and were erected without chimneys. These could be added for an additional \$18, or built by the occupant for \$6 credit. (11) (see photo #50 as example)
- 2) Double cabins, called "shantees". These were generally 32' square buildings, 1½ stories tall, with roofed porch across the front. Although these had no cellar,

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they were constructed on stone foundations, with mortised and tenoned frame, and were weatherboarded. The inside was to be plastered and painted; the outside whitewashed. In plan, each unit consisted of 3 rooms on the first floor, 1 on the second, with a central chimney serving both units. Ceilings were 9 feet tall on the first floor, 7 feet tall on the second. They contained 12 windows including dormers, and were usually finished by company carpenters. They had good carpenter locks and "good, serviceable hardware", (12) (see photo #33 as example)

- 3) Larger double houses, called "blocks". These structures were erected beginning in the 1850's, and were usually of frame construction, two stories high. Each unit provided two rooms and hall on the first floor, two rooms upstairs. A shed roofed kitchen was attached to the back of the structure, giving the building a distinctive "salt box" profile. (see photo #28 for example) (13)

By 1839, the company had established a village of 700 people in the hopes that the iron furnace, which was the first furnace in the country to manufacture iron using coke, (which was, in turn, produced from bituminous coal), would dominate Maryland's iron industry. (14) The village was known as the "Lonaconing Residency" and purportedly was named for Lonacona, the chief of a group of Indians who once resided on the site. (15) Unlike other company towns in George's Creek, Lonaconing was strictly controlled by the company's superintendents. Each worker had to comply with the rules of the Lonaconing Residency, or face expulsion. This system of total company domination did not end until the 1860's, when the company began to sell off its sizable land holdings.

When the George's Creek Coal and Iron Company first began operations in Lonaconing, it was assumed that the C&O Canal would be completed by the late 1830's and thus provide a transportation artery for shipping iron produced at the plant. Unfortunately, the canal was not complete by 1840 and the company, hampered by unfinished turnpikes and lack of railroad links, began to cut the amount of iron produced. Financial panics and credit crises also

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hindered the proposed expansion of the plant and severely cut English investment in the operation. The furnace continued functioning under leases to different operators, but blew out for the last time in 1856. From this time to the end of the century, Lonaconing would be a town devoted primarily to coal mining.

Although the iron production of the George's Creek Company had ceased, the company's coal mining operations expanded during the 1850's and 1860's. To meet the demand for skilled miners and laborers, immigration increased throughout the period, bringing workers from Germany, England, Scotland and Wales. Eventually, to move the increased amounts of coal being mined in Lonaconing and the surrounding area, railroad lines were built. In 1857, the Cumberland-Mt. Savage Railroad reached the town. In 1864, the Cumberland and Pennsylvania Railroad, owned by another powerful company, the Consolidation Coal Company, purchased the railroad between Piedmont, West Virginia, and Cumberland via Mount Savage. This action, and construction and consolidation of other railroad lines in the late 19th century, made Lonaconing and its surrounding towns what one historian has called "one continuous street and town". (16)

During the period 1870-80, the town continued to grow and prosper. From a population of 800 in 1865, the town had mushroomed to 2,808 people in 1878, and was regarded as the largest and most prominent mining town in George's Creek. The town's business district, which expanded along Main Street and Jackson Street, boomed. So did residential development, up Church Street and Douglas Avenue, and surrounding the commercial district to the south. The town boasted a large general store, two hotels, an opera house, a variety of churches serving different ethnic groups, banks, many civic organizations and two newspapers. (17) The town continued to grow during the 1880's, and an 1887 Maryland business directory noted its population at 4,600. (18)

The last decades of the 19th century were a time of great upheaval for Lonaconing. Disaster struck the town on September 7, 1881, when a fire destroyed 53 buildings in town in three hours. The fire destroyed all of the business district along Main and Union Streets to George's Creek, and burned much housing from the Maryland Hotel to Koontz Run, up Douglas Avenue. (19)

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Three years later in 1884, the most extensive flood to hit the town destroyed many buildings along George's Creek. Many bridges of the Cumberland and Pennsylvania Railroad were washed out, and one bridge of note - a single span bowstring arch bridge - was completely destroyed (see photo #43 for picture of bridge before flood).

Faced with adversity, the town took immediate steps to strengthen and reconstruct the community. In 1882, a volunteer fire company was organized, and much rebuilding was undertaken around the surviving buildings. In 1890, the town officially incorporated, and began laying permanent sidewalks in stone, brick, and concrete. In 1892, a water works was constructed to provide pure water to the town - which solved the problem of a previously impure water supply which had plagued the town in the past and led to numerous typhoid and other epidemics. Other buildings - banks, businesses, shops, and residences - soon were erected as well.

At the turn of the century, Lonaconing had grown even larger, with a population of approximately 7,000. A new industry, the Klots Throwing Company, commenced operations in 1907 at its plant along East Railroad Street. The plant, built for \$100,000, provided the town with a stable employer through the 20th century, processing silk into thread and dyeing various fabric products. During this period, the plant employed 300 people, the majority of whom were women and the wives of miners. (20) In 1914, the Lonaconing Glass Company began manufacturing automobile glass, and the Meyer Brothers Ice Plant manufactured 20 tons of ice per day for sale via the Cumberland and Pennsylvania Railroad. (21) James W. Thomas and T.J.C. Williams, Allegany County historians in the early 20th century, described the town as containing "fifty well established business houses, all doing a successful business, including six department stores, eight general merchants, three meat markets, three confectioners, two druggists, two hotels, two restaurants, six grocers, one book and news store, three garages, five billiard rooms, one wagon builder, one smithy, two banks, and two picture houses". (22)

Although Lonaconing had grown to the largest size in its history at the turn of the century, ominous changes in the coal industry in the George's Creek region would soon severely affect Lonaconing's viability as an economic center. Maryland's peak year

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of coal production occurred in 1907, and production began declining steadily over the next eleven years. Although production increased during the war years, 1920 marked the last year of overall economic health for the region as a whole.

From the 1920's to the present day, coal production has continuously decreased, corresponding with the general recession of the bituminous coal industry as a whole. With production and prices dropping during the 1920's, profits evaporated. Many companies, incurring large losses, went out of business in price wars which dropped prices even further.

The Depression had an especially hard impact on Lonaconing, as it did on the other Western Maryland towns whose economics centered on coal production. Because of severe competition with West Virginia and Pennsylvania, few profits were made. Some companies continued in operation, selling coal at less than cost, through reduced wages and operations. The balance of the operators, though, simply stopped production, as the economy of the Country grew even worse. One the eve of the New Deal, one Maryland miner wrote, "Conditions here are deplorable, with no future prospects". (23) In Lonaconing, the general population reflected the prevailing severe economic conditions, dropping to a level of 2,426. While the 1933 National Industrial Recovery Act did result in most mines operating nearly every day, profits were unsatisfactory. The greatest physical impact of WPA programs in Lonaconing resulted in construction of stone retaining walls for flood control along George's Creek.

Even though economic recovery was eventually realized in the county as a whole after the Depression, Lonaconing's coal mining industry never fully recovered. Production in Pennsylvania and West Virginia increased tremendously from 1937-1945, and from this point in time it became clear that Maryland would never assume its competitive position.

Though Lonaconing has continued to shrink in population, it has stabilized through limited mining operations and a small group of businesses that continues to serve the community. Today, Lonaconing exemplifies the character of a late 19th-early 20th century mining town, unique to the George's Creek area and Allegany County, because of its cohesive collection of buildings which



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reflect the economic growth of this region of the state. At one time the largest and most important mining town in Maryland's coal region, it remains today an excellent example of a turn-of-the-century industrial community.

FOOTNOTES:

- 1) James W. Thomas and T.J.C. Williams, History of Allegany County, Maryland, Vol. I, (Cumberland: L.R. Titsworth and Co., 1923), pg. 536.
- 2) Katherine Harvey, ed., The Lonaconing Journals: The Founding of a Coal and Iron Community 1837-1840, Transactions of the American Philosophical Society, Vol. 67, Part II (Philadelphia: The American Philosophical Society, 1977), p. 536, records the purchase in the Allegany County Land Records, liber T, folio 298.
- 3) Harvey, Lonaconing Journals, pg. 9, references the incorporation from Maryland Laws, 1835, ch. 328.
- 4) Ibid.
- 5) Allegany County Land Records, liber T, folio 327.
- 6) Harvey, Lonaconing Journals, pg. 10.
- 7) Michael D. Thompson, The Iron Industry in Western Maryland (Hagerstown: Washington County Advisory Committee, 1976), pg. 114.
- 8) George's Creek Coal and Iron Company, unittled report of directors, 1839, pg. 6.
- 9) Katherine Harvey, "Building a Frontier Ironworks: Problems of Transport and Supply", Maryland Historical Magazine, Vol. 70, No. 2 (Summer, 1975): pp. 154-155
- 10) Katherine Harvey, The Best Dressed Miners (Ithica: Cornell University Press, 1969), pg. 77.

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Footnotes (continued)

- 11) Harvey, Lonaconing Journals, pp. 18, 25, 47 note entries in unpublished George's Creek Coal and Iron Company journals, for following dates: September 18, 1837; January 18, 1838; and; March 4, 1839.
- 12) Harvey, Best Dressed Miners, pp. 78-82.
- 13) Ibid., pg. 83.
- 14) The Lonaconing Iron Furnace was listed separately in the National Register of Historic Places on June 19, 1973.
- 15) J. Thomas Scharf, History of Western Maryland, Vol. II (Philadelphia: L.J. Everts, 1882), pg. 1499. See also Fred T. Bowden, Jr. "Brief History of Lonaconing", n.d., n.p.
- 16) Harry I. Stegmaier, Jr. and David M. Dean, Gordon E. Kershaw, John B. Wiseman, Allegany County: A History (Parsons, W.Va.: McClain Printing Company, 1976), pg. 142.
- 17) Thomas and Williams, History of Allegany County, pg. 540; Stegmaier et al., Allegany County: A History, pg. 133.
- 18) The Maryland Directory and State Gazeteer: 1887 (Baltimore: The Baltimore Publishing Company, 1887), pg. 29.
- 19) Thomas and Williams, History of Allegany County, pg. 542.
- 20) Ibid., pg. 545. See also tape recording of oral interview of Charles Wesley Duckworth, "Lonaconing Silk Mill", Appalachian Regional Collection of the Allegany Community College, April 22, 1977. The plant is significant as only one of two silk mills ever built in Allegany County. It still contains the majority of its original equipment.
- 21) Thomas and Williams, History of Allegany County, pg. 545.
- 22) Ibid., pg. 544.
- 23) Harvey, Best Dressed Miners, pg. 368.

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National Register nomination form for Lonaconing Iron Furnace, Annapolis, Maryland.

Oral Tape Recording, Charles Wesley Duckworth. "Lonaconing Silk Mill". Appalachian Regional Collection of the Allegany Community College. Taped by Tim Cooper, April 22, 1977.

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Hagerstown: Washington County Advisory Committee, 1976.

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

The boundaries of the Lonaconing Historic District were drawn to encompass the greatest concentration of historic resources within Lonaconing which retain integrity of form, materials, location, feeling, and association. Steeply rising topography defines the northern and western boundaries. The areas to the southwest, east and southeast, outside the district, are characterized by resources of date and type similar to those included in the district; however, these buildings are excluded because their integrity has been severely compromised by incompatible recent alterations and infill construction.

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DESCRIPTION SUMMARY

The Lonaconing Historic District comprises 278 buildings and structures within the town of Lonaconing, located approximately 14 miles southwest of the county seat of Cumberland in Allegany County, Maryland. The district contains a variety of 19th and early 20th century commercial, industrial, and residential buildings which attest to the development of Lonaconing as a center of the iron, coal, and silk industries in the George's Creek valley of Western Maryland. The focus of the district is a group of 40 late 19th and early 20th century commercial structures lining Main Street and intersecting streets. These commercial resources include a hotel, bank, three dry goods stores, and numerous other shops and warehouses, mostly constructed in the aftermath of a fire which devastated downtown Lonaconing in 1881. These brick or frame, generally two-story buildings have undergone remarkably little alteration and in most cases retain their original storefronts, cornices, and other decorative detailing intact. Also included within the District are structures related to the industrial development of Lonaconing such as the ca. 1840 brick office building of the George's Creek Coal and Iron Company, and their Furnace No. 1. The Klots silk throwing mill, a long, two-story brick industrial building constructed in 1906 and expanded in 1918 and 1946, employed the wives of miners. Houses in the district include worker's housing built by the George's Creek Coal and Iron Company in various materials and configurations from the mid- through late 19th century. The earliest of these houses are of log construction, either two-room cabins with stone chimneys which accommodated a single family, or duplexes. Double houses were often sheathed in board and batten siding, whether of log construction or, beginning in the 1880's, of frame. Still later duplexes are of frame construction, sheathed in German siding, with simple Victorian ornament. Other individual houses in the District, constructed of frame or brick, reflect Italianate, Queen Anne, and Colonial Revival influences. Of the 278 buildings within the District, 231 or 83% contribute to its significance.

LONACONING HISTORIC DISTRICT  
Allegany County, Maryland  
October 1981

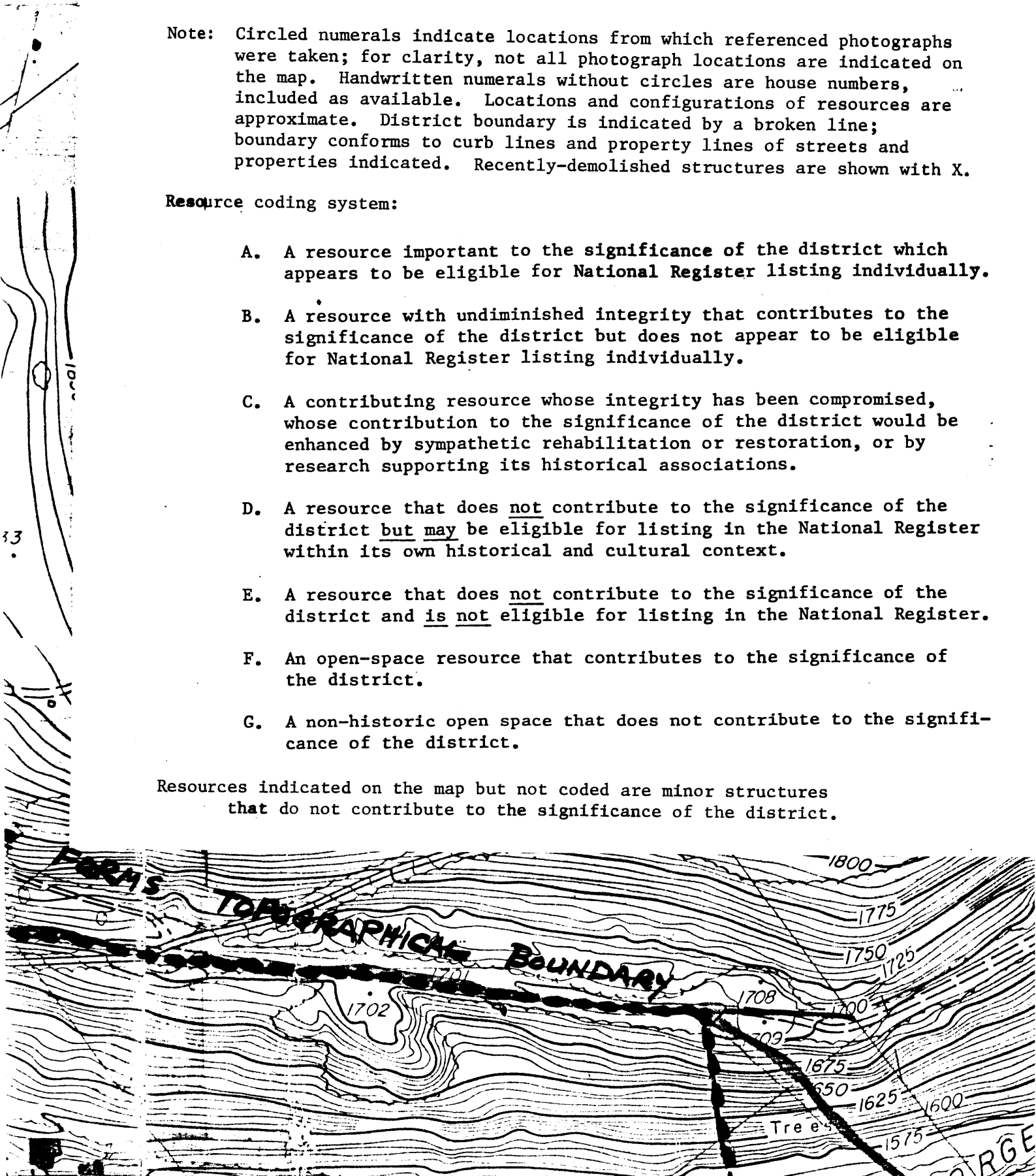
Scale: 1"=200'

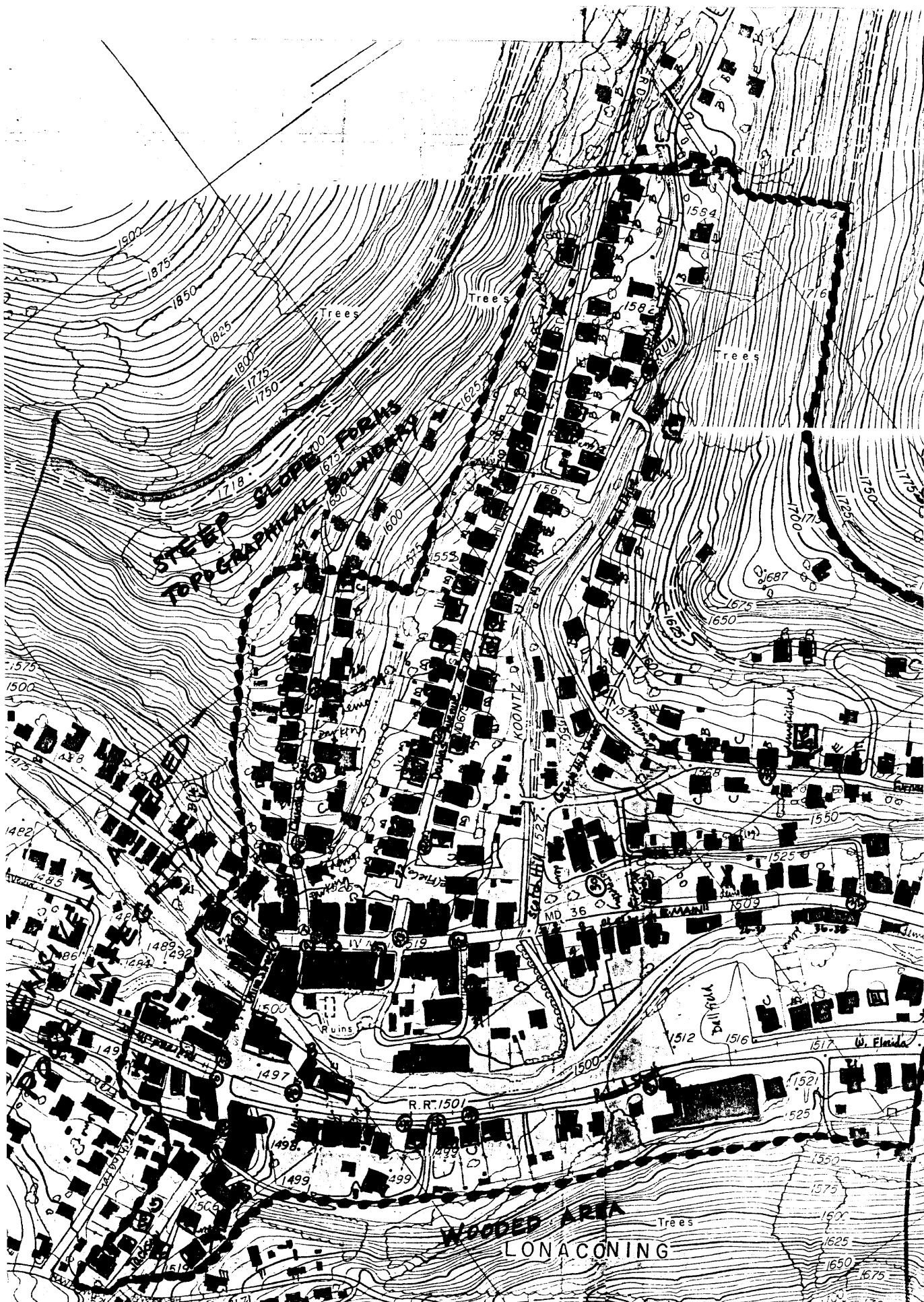
Note: Circled numerals indicate locations from which referenced photographs were taken; for clarity, not all photograph locations are indicated on the map. Handwritten numerals without circles are house numbers, included as available. Locations and configurations of resources are approximate. District boundary is indicated by a broken line; boundary conforms to curb lines and property lines of streets and properties indicated. Recently-demolished structures are shown with X.

Resource coding system:

- A. A resource important to the significance of the district which appears to be eligible for National Register listing individually.
- B. A resource with undiminished integrity that contributes to the significance of the district but does not appear to be eligible for National Register listing individually.
- C. A contributing resource whose integrity has been compromised, whose contribution to the significance of the district would be enhanced by sympathetic rehabilitation or restoration, or by research supporting its historical associations.
- D. A resource that does not contribute to the significance of the district but may be eligible for listing in the National Register within its own historical and cultural context.
- E. A resource that does not contribute to the significance of the district and is not eligible for listing in the National Register.
- F. An open-space resource that contributes to the significance of the district.
- G. A non-historic open space that does not contribute to the significance of the district.

Resources indicated on the map but not coded are minor structures that do not contribute to the significance of the district.





Scale: 1"=200'

Note: Circled numerals indicate locations from which re-  
 were taken; for clarity, not all photograph locati  
 the map. Handwritten numerals without circles ar  
 included as available. Locations and configurati  
 approximate. District boundary is indicated by a  
 boundary conforms to curb lines and property line  
 properties indicated. Recently-demolished struct

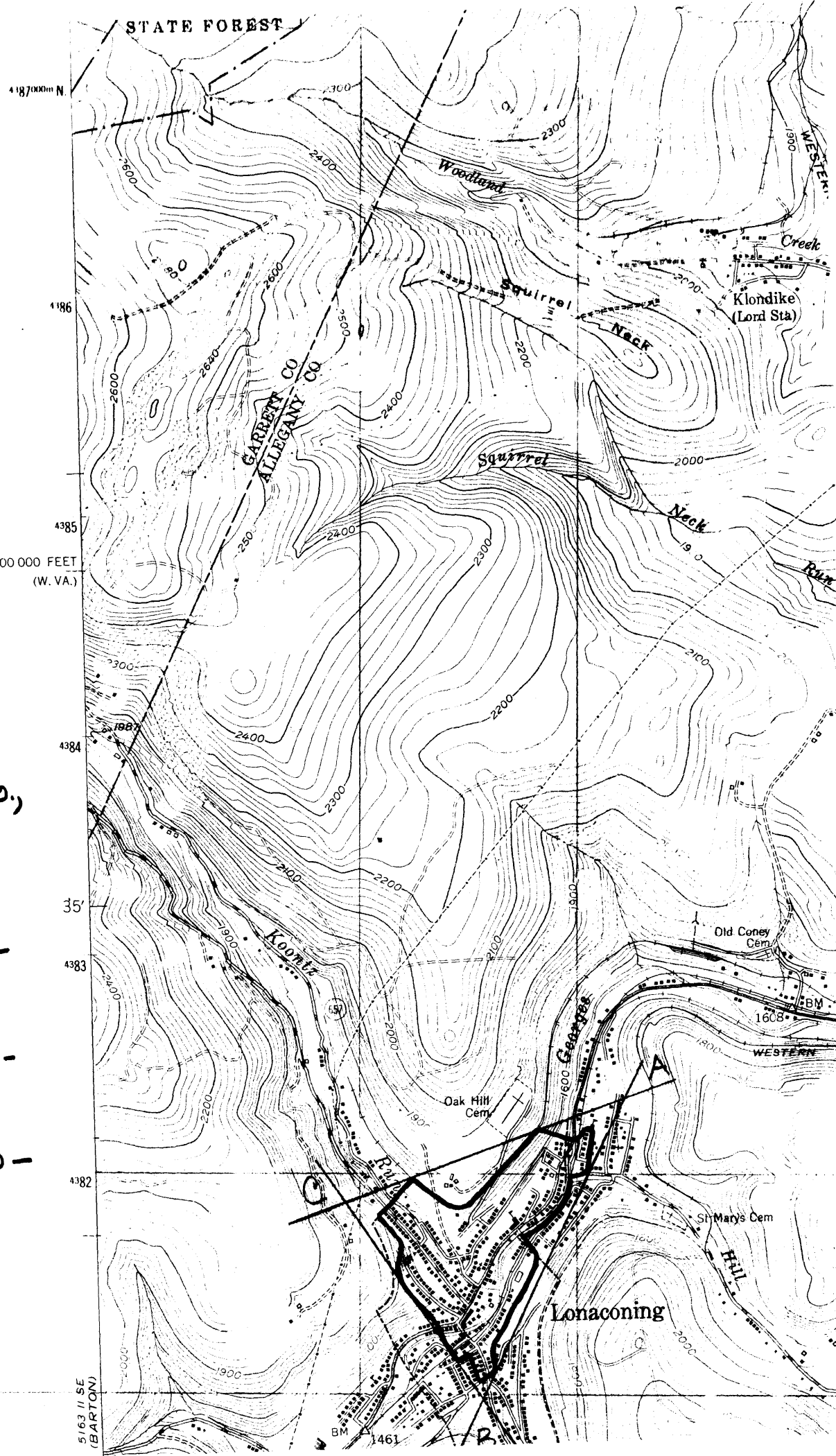
Resource coding system:

- A. A resource important to the significance of  
 appears to be eligible for National Register
- B. A resource with undiminished integrity that  
 significance of the district but does not a  
 for National Register listing individually.
- C. A contributing resource whose integrity has  
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- D. A resource that does not contribute to the  
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- E. A resource that does not contribute to the  
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- F. An open-space resource that contributes to  
 the district.
- G. A non-historic open space that does not con  
 cance of the district.

Resources indicated on the map but not coded are minor st:  
 that do not contribute to the significance of the







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LONACONING  
HISTORIC  
DISTRICT

ALLEGANY CO.,  
MARYLAND

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4382360

B: 18-673570-  
4380980

C: 18-672960-  
4381860