

Woodville/Aquasco (87B-036)

Aquasco is a rural agricultural village located in southeastern Prince George's County. Aquasco Road (Maryland Route 381) serves as the major north-south transportation route in the community. The center of the village is marked by the intersection of Aquasco Road, St. Mary's Church Road, and Dr. Bowen Road. The majority of late-nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century-resources are located on both sides of Aquasco Road, which gives the village a linear feel. Aquasco was named for a nearby tract of land that was patented in 1650 and known by Native Americans as "Aquasake."¹ The village's location between the Patuxent River on the east and Swanson's Creek on the west creates a fertile area of farmland, primarily used to grow tobacco.

Historically, tobacco was an important commodity in the community. The area's close proximity to the Patuxent River not only contributed to the fertility of the land, but also allowed access for the shipment of goods in and out of the community. By 1746, the production of tobacco was significant enough that a tobacco inspection warehouse was proposed for construction close to the community at Trueman's Point. Although the inspection station was never established, the landing was integral to commerce and trade.²

In the eighteenth century, the area around Aquasco was divided into large tobacco plantations.³ By the end of the eighteenth century, Aquasco Road was established through the area, resulting in the formation of a small village known as Woodville.⁴ By the mid-nineteenth century, Martenet's map documents a grist mill, several stores, a tavern, blacksmith shop, several churches, and a wind mill.⁵ The Hopkins map of 1878 documented only a few changes, primarily the construction of new residences, an additional blacksmith shop, and an African-American church southwest of the village. The Hopkins map notes the village was called Aquasco for the post office located there.⁶

After the Civil War (1861-1865), some freed slaves who formerly worked on the tobacco plantations around the Woodville-Aquasco area remained in the area to work as tenant farmers. In 1867, a small school was built for African-American students and also served as a Methodist meeting place. Ten years later, another schoolhouse was constructed on the northern edge of the village. This schoolhouse was replaced in 1934 by the Woodville School. Woodville was also the site of the first chapel established for African-Americans in Prince George's County. St. Phillip's chapel was constructed circa 1878 and was one of only two Episcopalian chapels in Prince George's County for African-Americans. The chapel was destroyed by fire in 1976, but the cemetery associated with the church remains and is maintained by the congregation.⁷

In the early twentieth century, the village remained a small, closely-knit community. The Woodville Town Hall was constructed in the early 1900s as a social hall, which allowed families to interact during dances, meetings, and dinners.⁸ With the advent of the automobile, many children who grew up in

¹ Susan G. Pearl, *African-American Heritage Survey* (Upper Marlboro: M-NCPPC, 1996), 106.

² Pearl, *African-American Heritage Survey*, 106.

³ Mark Andrich, et al., "Aquasco Historic District (PG: 87B-36)," Maryland Historical Trust State Historic Sites Inventory Form (1984), 7:1.

⁴ Pearl, *African-American Heritage Survey*, 106.

⁵ Simon J. Martenet, "Atlas of Prince George's County, Maryland, 1861, Adapted from Martenet's Map of Prince George's County, Maryland" (Baltimore: Simon J. Martenet C.E., 1861).

⁶ G.M. Hopkins, "Atlas of Fifteen Miles Around Washington, Including the County of Prince George Maryland" (Philadelphia: G.M. Hopkins, C.E., 1878).

⁷ Pearl, *African-American Heritage Survey*, 106-109.

⁸ Traies Haydon Roe, "History of Institutions in Woodville (Aquasco, Maryland)," 1984, paper written for Dr. Richard Longstreth, George Washington University.

Aquasco left the community and settled elsewhere. Their families began to subdivide their farms and sold lots for residential development.⁹ Despite fewer families farming their land, the majority of land in the area continues to be used for farming and the community remains a rural agricultural village.

There are currently nine designated Historic Sites in Woodville/Aquasco:

- PG: 87B-036-05, J.E. Turner House, 16410 Saint Mary's Church Road
- PG: 87B-036-08a, Saint Mary's Rectory, 16305 Saint Mary's Church Road
- PG: 87B-036-13, Villa de Sales, 22410 Aquasco Road
- PG: 87B-036-14, William R. Barker House, 22600 Aquasco Road
- PG: 87B-036-15, Wood House, 22606 Aquasco Road
- PG: 87B-036-16, Grimes House, 22609 Aquasco Road
- PG: 87B-036-19, Adams-Bowen House, 16002 Dr. Bowen Road
- PG: 87B-036-20, P.A. Bowen Farmstead, 15701 Dr. Bowen Road
- PG: 87B-036-21, Sunnyside (Stone House), 16005 Dr. Bowen Road

There are currently eleven designated Historic Resources in Woodville/Aquasco:

- PG: 87B-036-07, Thomas House, 22109 Aquasco Road
- PG: 87B-036-08b, Saint Mary's Church & Cemetery, 22200 Aquasco Road
- PG: 87B-036-09, Hall's Store, 22208 Aquasco Road
- PG: 87B-036-10, Hall House, 22300 Aquasco Road
- PG: 87B-036-11, Scott Farmhouse, 16100 Saint Phillip's Road
- PG: 87B-036-12, Saint Phillip's Chapel Site & Cemetery, 16205 Saint Phillip's Road
- PG: 87B-036-17, Cochran's Store, 22609 Aquasco Road
- PG: 87B-036-18, Cochran House, 22075 Aquasco Road
- PG: 87B-036-23, Scott Cemetery, 16015 Saint Phillip's Road
- PG: 87B-036-35, Keech House, 22270 Aquasco Road

Windshield Survey

A windshield survey of Aquasco was conducted in November 2007. The survey area contains approximately 65 primary resources. The village contains a variety of buildings constructed from the early nineteenth century to the present. The majority of buildings in Aquasco date from the mid-nineteenth century to the turn of the twentieth century. Buildings from the nineteenth century are typically vernacular interpretations of popular styles such as Greek Revival, Italianate, Gothic Revival and Queen Anne. These buildings illustrate a variety of forms, including rectangular-shaped plans, hall-and-parlor, and I-houses. Twentieth-century buildings in Aquasco reflect popular styles such as Craftsman, Colonial Revival, and limited examples of the Modern Movement. Common twentieth-century building forms include Bungalow, Cape Cod, ranch houses and minimal traditional houses. The overwhelming majority of buildings in Aquasco are of wood-frame construction, although newer buildings are occasionally constructed of brick. There are numerous outbuildings in the survey area including barns, sheds, smokehouses, tobacco barns, and other domestic and agricultural outbuildings. Houses are typically clustered around the main thoroughfares and are sited close to the road, although setbacks vary from 10 feet to more than 500 feet from the road. The community includes several churches, a school converted for use as a fraternal/social hall, and several commercial buildings. The village is situated on

⁹ Andrich, "Aquasco Historic District," 8:9.

predominately flat terrain, however the land gently rolls as it slopes toward the water of the Patuxent River and Swanson's Creek.

There are several new residential subdivisions planned in Aquasco. Charleston Homes is developing land off St. Phillip's Road as a new community called "Cedar Farms." The development contains 14 lots that range in size from three to seven acres.¹⁰ The community features houses with four or five bedrooms and most have options to construct a three-car garage.¹¹ K&P Builders plans to develop a large parcel of land off of Dr. Bowen Road called "Garrett's Chance." It will feature 20 single-family houses on lots that range in size from three to 20 acres.¹²

Historic District Evaluation

A local Historic District nomination was prepared for the Aquasco Historic District in May 1984, but was tabled in 1985 due to the lack of community support.¹³ The recommended historic district included 53 contributing buildings and 20 non-contributing resources in an area that is approximately 680 acres.¹⁴ A Determination of Eligibility for the district has never been completed. Because of the "50-year rule," a number of structures listed as non-contributing resources in the 1984 nomination would now be considered contributing buildings in a historic district. During the 2007 survey of Aquasco, the survey area was expanded to include properties south of St. Phillip's Road. The new subdivisions along St. Phillip's Road and Dr. Bowen Road have been excluded from the recommended historic district boundaries.

Aquasco represents several Prince George's County Heritage Themes including Native Americans, Later Churches, Commerce, Agricultural Heritage, Landings & River Crossings, Black History, and Residential Architectural Styles. Aquasco meets the following Prince George's County criteria for designation as a historic district:

(1)(A)(i) and (iv) – Aquasco reflects the development and evolution of rural agricultural villages in Prince George's County. The variety of residential, commercial, agricultural, educational, and religious buildings that remain extant in Aquasco document the growth of rural villages in Prince George's County. The variety of extant outbuildings in Aquasco documents the agricultural history of the community and Prince George's County. Historic barns, sheds, smokehouses, tobacco barns, and other domestic and agricultural outbuildings remain extant in Aquasco. Because of these buildings, particularly the domestic outbuildings, these resources may yield information regarding the enslaved community of Prince George's County. The area was also known to be inhabited by Native Americans who lived on the banks of the Patuxent River and traveled through the area. Aquasco has the potential to yield information about the Native American population in Prince George's County.

¹⁰ "Cedar Farms," http://www.charlestonhomeslc.com/sub_cedar.htm, accessed 2 November 2007.

¹¹ "Cedar Farms, Community Information," <http://www.newhomedirectory.com/New-Homes/Maryland/Aquasco/15832/CommunityPlanDetail.aspx>, accessed 2 November 2007.

¹² "Garrett's Chance," <http://www.kandpbuilders.com/communities/community.asp?comm=Garretts+Chance>, accessed 2 November 2007.

¹³ Mark Andrich, et al., "Aquasco Historic District (PG: 87B-36)," Maryland Historical Trust State Historic Sites Inventory Form (1984); Sue Anne Pressley, "Aquasco Split Over Its Future: Opposes Developers," *The Washington Post* (16 March 1985); "County Council Actions," *The Washington Post* (13 June 1985); "County Council Actions," *The Washington Post* (1 August 1985).

¹⁴ Mark Andrich, et al. "Aquasco Historic District, 87B-36," National Register of Historic Places Inventory – Nomination Form (May 1984).

(2)(A)(i) – Aquasco is significant as one of the few communities that still retains its characteristics as a rural agricultural village, with its architectural integrity largely intact. The buildings in Aquasco date from the early nineteenth century to the present and reflect a variety of popular architectural styles and vernacular interpretations of these styles. The majority of buildings in Aquasco date from the nineteenth century.

(2)(A)(iv) – Aquasco merits recognition as a district whose buildings reflect the growth and development of a rural village in Prince George’s County. The cohesive village effectively conveys its significance as a rural agricultural village that developed from the early nineteenth century to the present.

Aquasco is also eligible as a National Register Historic District. The village meets the following criteria:

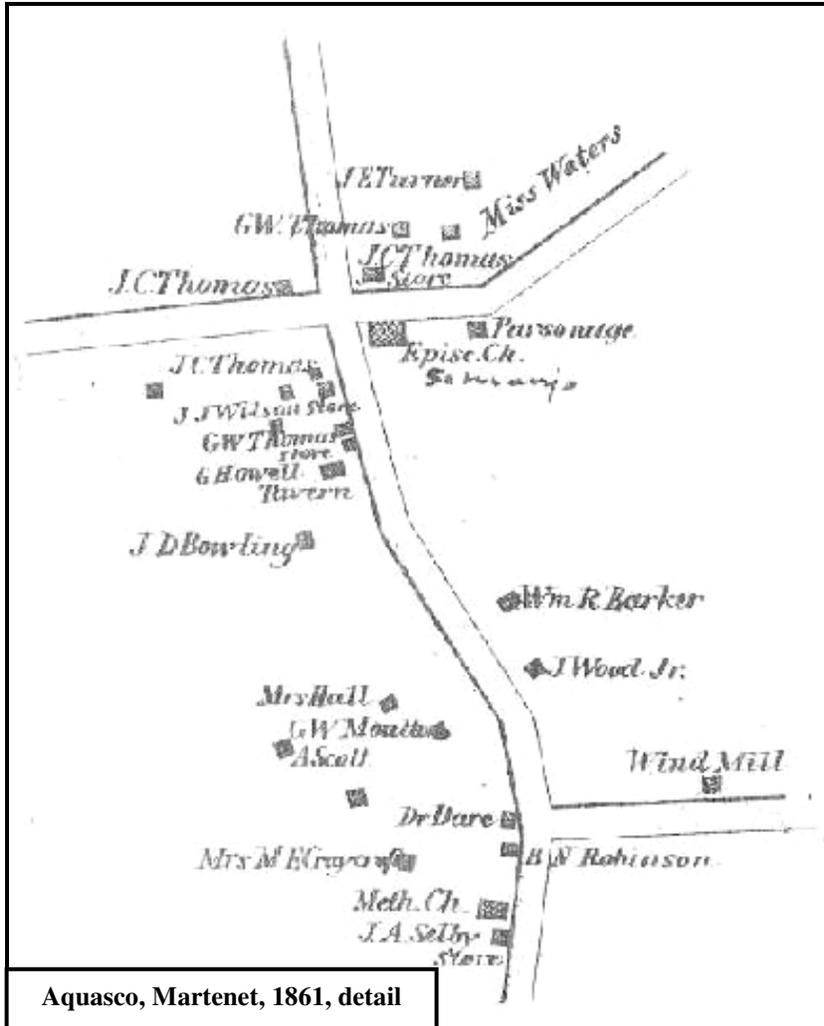
Criterion A – Aquasco reflects the development of rural agricultural villages in Prince George’s County from the early nineteenth to the mid-twentieth centuries. The variety of residential, commercial, agricultural, educational, and religious buildings that remain in Aquasco typify the growth of rural villages. Furthermore, the agricultural heritage of Prince George’s County is represented through the variety of outbuildings in Aquasco including barns, sheds, tobacco barns, smokehouses, and other domestic and agricultural outbuildings.

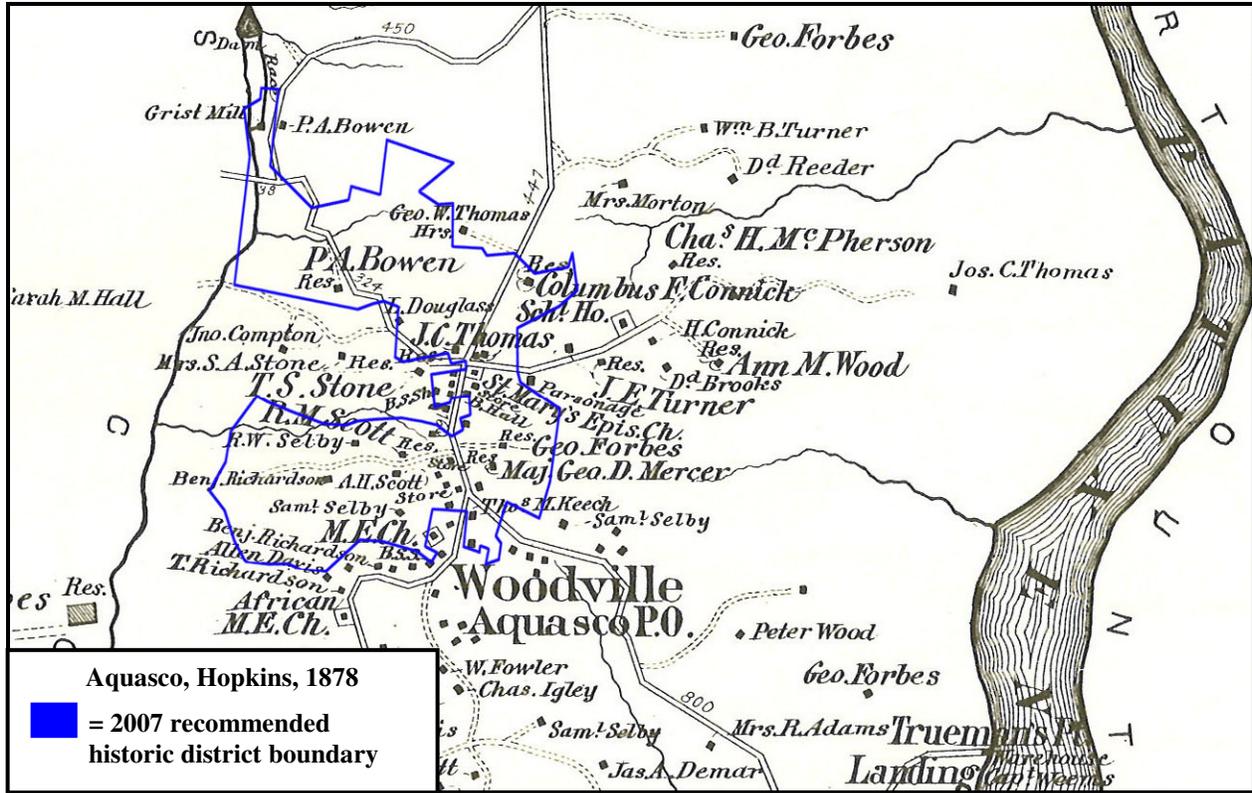
Criterion C – Aquasco is significant as one of the few communities that still retains its characteristics as a rural village, with its architecture largely intact. The buildings in Aquasco date from the early nineteenth century to the present and reflect a variety of popular architectural styles and vernacular interpretations of these styles. There has been limited infill in the small village, and it still remains a cohesive rural agricultural village.

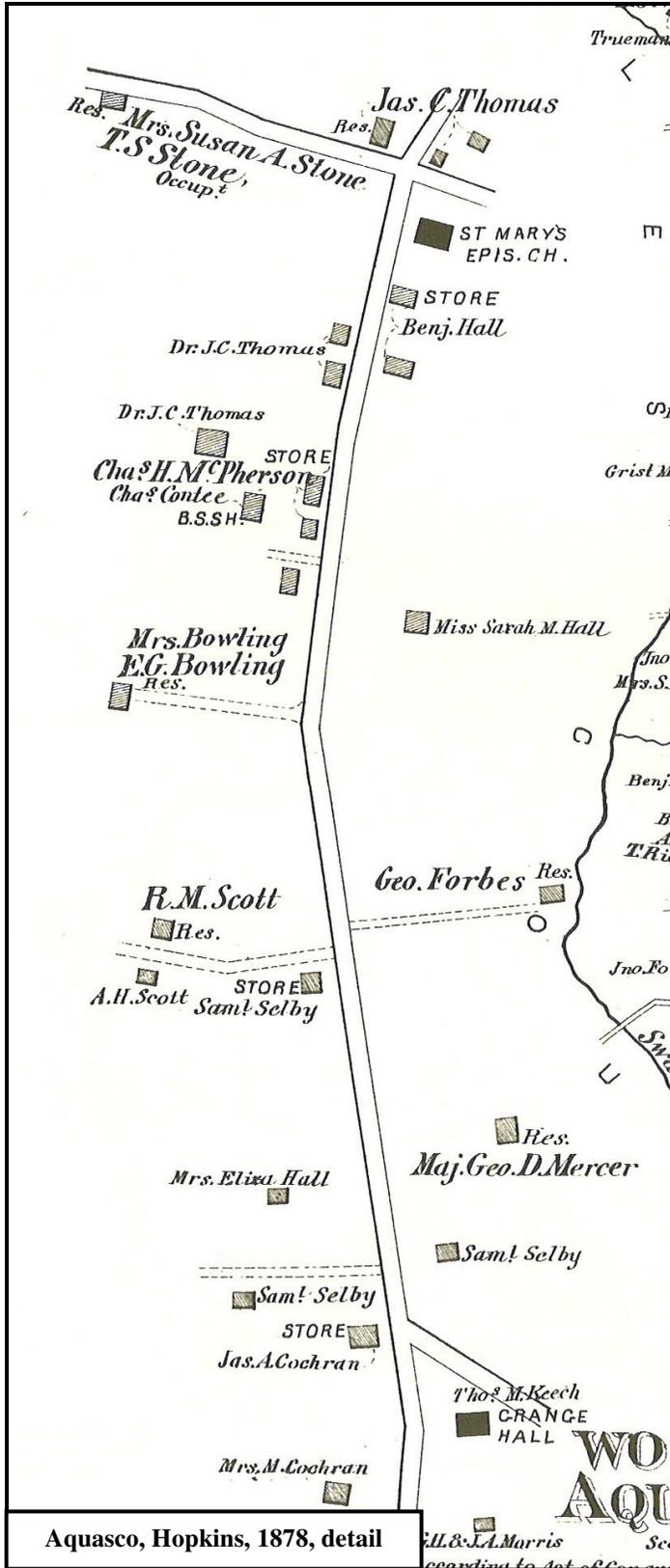
Criterion D – Because of the many outbuildings in Aquasco, particularly the domestic outbuildings, these resources may yield information regarding the enslaved community that lived in Prince George’s County. The farms in Aquasco may also yield information about tobacco farming in the late eighteenth- and early nineteenth centuries. Further, the area around Aquasco was known to be inhabited by Native Americans who lived on the banks of the Patuxent River and traveled through the area. The community also has the potential to yield information about the Native American population in Prince George’s County.

In addition to its historic significance, Aquasco has retained its integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association.

Prepared by EHT Tracerics, Inc.
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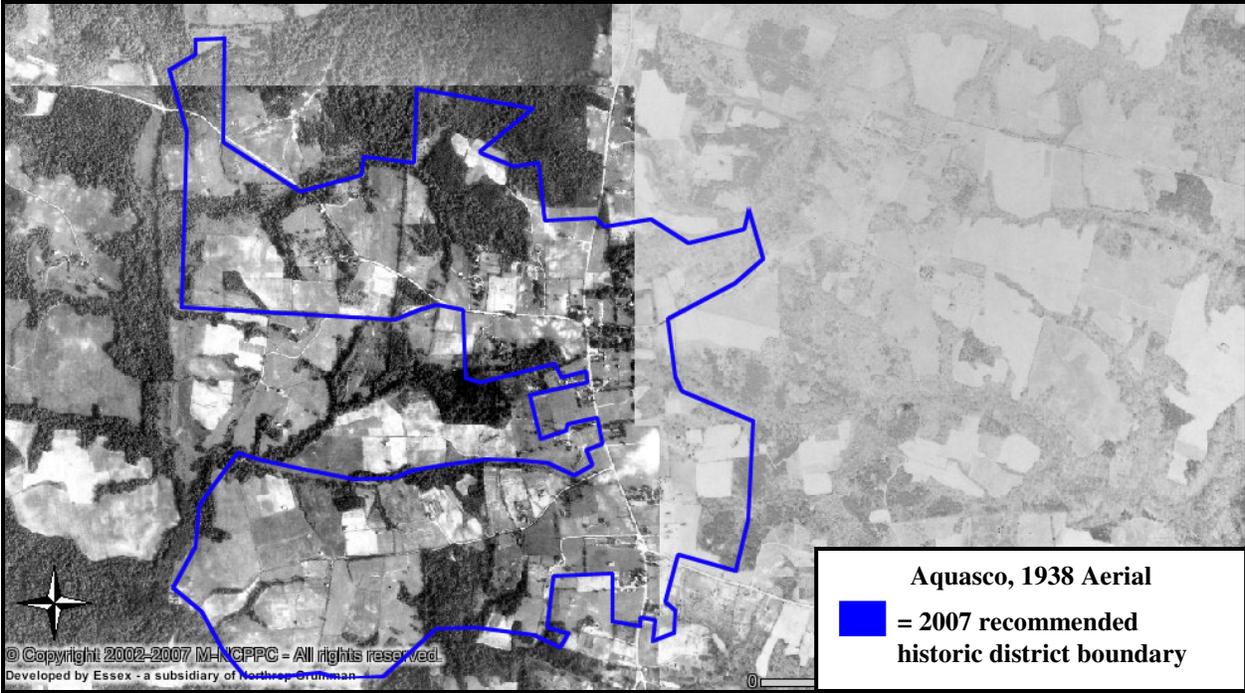






Aquasco, Hopkins, 1878, detail

W.L. & J.A. Marris, Sec
according to Act of Congress





Looking northeast, William R. Barker House (PG: 87B-036-14), 22600 Aquasco Road (*EHT Traceries*, 2007)



Looking east, Wood House (PG: 87B-036-15), 22606 Aquasco Road (*EHT Traceries*, 2007)



Looking northwest, James A. Cochrane Store (PG: 87B-036-17), 22609 Aquasco Road (*EHT Traceries, 2007*)



Looking west across cemetery, towards 22801 Aquasco Road (*EHT Traceries, 2007*)



Looking northeast, St. Dominic's Catholic Church, 22300 Aquasco Road (*EHT Traceries, 2007*)



Looking northeast, St. Mary's Church and Cemetery (PG: 87B-036-08b), 22200 Aquasco Road
(*EHT Traceries*, 2007)



Looking northeast towards the Thomas House (PG: 87B-036-07), 22109 Aquasco Road (*EHT Traceries, 2007*)



Looking south, St. Mary's Church Rectory (NR) (PG: 87B-036-08a), 16305 St. Mary's Church Road (*EHT Traceries*, 2007)



Looking north, J.E. Turner House (PG: 87B-036-05), 16410 St. Mary's Church Road (*EHT Traceries, 2007*)



Looking north, outbuildings at J.E. Turner House (PG: 87B-036-05), 16410 St. Mary's Church Road (*EHT Traceries*, 2007)



Looking west, Sunnyside (NR) (PG: 87B-033-21), 16005 Dr. Bowen Road (*EHT Traceries, 2007*)



Looking north, P.A. Bowen Farmstead (PG: 87B-036-20), 15701 Dr. Bowen Road (*EHT Traceries*, 2007)



Looking north, 15604 Dr. Bowen Road (*EHT Traceries, 2007*)



Looking north, Adams-Bowen House (PG: 87B-036-019), 16002 Dr. Bowen Road (*EHT Traceries, 2007*)



Looking west, 12909 Aquasco Road (*EHT Traceries*, 2007)



Looking east, Woodville School (PG: 87B-034), 21500 Aquasco Road (*EHT Traceries*, 2007)



Looking northwest, 16200 St. Phillips Road (*EHT Traceries*, 2007)



Looking northwest, Holland Tobacco Barns and the site of the Selby Tobacco Barn, 15900 St. Phillip's Road (*EHT Traceries*, 2007)



Looking northwest, 22501 Aquasco Road (*EHT Traceries, 2007*)