



Report on the Port of Deposit State Historical Park

**Submitted by:
Maryland Department of Natural Resources
Annapolis, Maryland 21401**

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I. Background

Senate Bill 541 of 2022 - Natural Resources - Maryland Park Service and State Parks - Alterations (Great Maryland Outdoors Act) mandates that the Maryland Department of Natural Resources (DNR) establish a “Port of Deposit State Historical Park” as a partnership park that seeks to “educate the public about and preserve and interpret the lives and experiences of black Americans both before and after the abolition of slavery.”

The bill further mandated that the park be held by the state as a state park and consist of a portion of the Bainbridge Naval Training Center site, measuring not less than 120 acres and not more than 150 acres. The Bainbridge Development Corporation (BDC) must transfer the property to DNR by June 1, 2023 including:

- (i) the Historic Tome School;
- (ii) the Snow Hill Archaeological Site; and
- (iii) the adjacent wooded conservation area

Bainbridge Development Corporation

BDC was established by the Maryland General Assembly in 1999 as a public instrumentality of the state (Chapter 494, Acts of 1999) to develop the former Bainbridge United States Naval Training Center (Bainbridge). BDC is managed by the Executive Director, and governed by a 15-member Board of Directors, composed of nine residents of Cecil County (volunteers) and complemented by representatives from applicable state agencies.

Bainbridge served as a training center from 1942 to 1976, and in 1988, a decommissioning process began. As part of the decommissioning process, the U.S. Navy identified several areas where previous on-site activities may have caused environmental contamination. This includes the Old Base Landfill, which was an unregulated, unlined solid waste landfill that operated from 1942 until base closure in 1976, and is known to contain asbestos and pesticide contamination. It also includes the Fire Training Area, which was utilized to train recruits in fire fighting techniques from the 1940s to the late 1960s by spraying buildings with oil and igniting them.

When Bainbridge was transferred to the State of Maryland in 2000, environmental review policies and standards had changed, so the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) requested that the BDC perform a Phase II Environmental Site Assessment (ESA). Results from the Phase II ESA suggested that elevated levels of certain polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs) and certain metals existed in certain portions of the property.

Historic Tome School for Boys

The historic Tome School for Boys was founded by Jacob Tome as a nonsectarian college preparatory school for boys. It opened for boarders and received its first students in 1894. It was

part of a system of schools that began with kindergarten and extending through high school that was collectively known as the Jacob Tome Institute.

Between 1898 and 1902 the Jacob Tome School for Boys built a series of granite buildings on the bluffs above Port Deposit, overlooking the Susquehanna River. Architects William Boring and Edward Lippincott Tilton designed the structures in the Beaux-Arts style. The 12 surviving buildings include Memorial Hall, three dormitories (Jackson, Madison, and Harrison), the Tome Inn dormitory and dining hall, the Headmaster's House, the Monroe Gymnasium, and five Master's cottages. Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr., served as consulting landscape architect for siting of the buildings on the property while Charles W. Leavitt, a prominent New York landscape architect, was chosen as landscape architect for the campus. Leavitt worked with architects Boring and Tilton to design the grounds, which included formal "Italian Gardens" and a number of interior roads. The outlines of the original gardens are still visible on the landscape. The Tome School for Boys Historic District was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1984.

Presently, the structures lie in varying stages of decay, deterioration and blight. Recent vandalism and fires have taken an even greater toll on the structures.



*Photo: Former building on the Tome School property that has been damaged by fire and vandalism as observed by the Advisory Committee. (Sept. 2022)
Snow Hill Archeological Site*

The Snow Hill Archeological Site (18CE158) was the location of a Free Black community, which was established in the Port Deposit area by the mid-1800s. The remains of several structures, a foundation and wall or floorboard, two in situ cast iron stoves, and concentrations of refuse were identified at the site by MHT archaeologists during a 1982 cultural resource survey of the Bainbridge Naval Training Center.

This site possesses significance in the contexts of historical archeology, Black history, and Maryland history, covering a period from 1800 to 1900. The significance centers on the establishment of a Free Black Community within a thriving white trading town prior to the Civil War and that remained intact until the end of the 19th century. The archeological record of this site can begin to illuminate the way of life for Free Blacks in this region during that period. The Snow Hill Archeological Site has been determined eligible for listing on the National Register due to the important history of the Free Black community that resided there.

Wooded Conservation Area

Although there is an adjacent wooded area between the Tome School and the Snow Hill Archeological Site, it is not placed in any formal conservation program.

II. Advisory Committee

The Great Maryland Outdoors Act directed DNR to establish a stakeholder Advisory Committee to advise the department on the scope and management of the “Port of Deposit State Historical Park.” The following members were appointed and participated in the meetings:

Voting Members:

Organization	Representative
Mayor and Town Council, Port Deposit	Vicky Rinkerman
Cecil County Delegation	Delegate Kevin Hornberger
Cecil County Delegation	Senator Jason Gallion
County Executive	Danielle Hornberger
Cecil County Council	President Bob Meffley
Cecil County NAACP	<i>Did not appoint a member*</i>
Historical Society of Cecil County	Paula Newton
Cecil County Parks and Recreation	Clyde Van Dyke

**All organizations identified in the legislation received mailed and emailed requests on April 15, 2022, and April 18, 2022 to provide representation to the Advisory Committee. Another email was sent to Cecil County Branch NAACP on June 2, 2022, and phone messages were left with the Executive Board members of the organization, but a response was never received. The County Executive of Cecil County also attempted to reach them unsuccessfully.*

Non-Voting Members:

Organization	Representative
DNR	Jeannie Haddaway-Riccio (staff: Carrie Cook, Bunky Luffman, and Kamil Williams)
Maryland Historical Trust	Elizabeth Hughes
Lower Susquehanna Heritage Greenway	Brigitte Carty
Cecil County Public Schools	Dr. Jeffrey Lawson
Cecil County Public Library	Morgan Miller
Cecil College	Dr. Mary Way Bolt

Additional Members Added by the Chair:

Maryland Department of Commerce	Brigitte Peters
Maryland Department of Planning	Robert S. McCord (staff: David Dahlstrom)
Maryland Department of the Environment	Horacio Tablada (staff: Tyler Abbott and Les Knapp)
Bainbridge Development Corporation	Toni Sprenkle
Maryland House of Delegates	Delegate Teresa Reilly

III. Advisory Committee Meetings

The Great Maryland Outdoors Act specified that on or before January 1, 2023, DNR must submit a report to the General Assembly on:

- (i) property that is suitable for inclusion in Port of Deposit State Historical Park;
- (ii) the funding needed to establish and promote a Port of Deposit State Historical Park.

The Advisory Committee held an organizational meeting in July 2022. Members received an overview of the legislation and these requirements. BDC provided a presentation on the Bainbridge development site. In August 2022, the Advisory Committee focused on the mandate to examine suitable lands and costs.

MDE provided background on the memorandums of agreement (MOAs) between the U.S. Navy, BDC, and MDE. The focus was on the MOA signed in 2020 as terms of the prior MOA (2018) do not govern the parcels of the land contemplated in the legislatively-mandated land transfer. MDE explained that it would be challenging for the Department to renegotiate the MOAs with the U.S. Navy since the intent of the MOAs was to restrict the redevelopment of the property to industrial or commercial use. Most of the land, not including the Tome School site itself, is included in the agreement to be placed into restrictive covenants for industrial or commercial use only.

MDE also shared information on other development sites in Maryland that have faced similar issues, including: IKEA industrial park, Ft. Meade, Springfield Hospital Center, and Annapolis Town Center. MDE also noted that the site (absent the Tome School and landfills) is remediated to industrial standards; however, this is not the same standard needed to allow for recreational activities. There is no requirement for the U.S. Navy to remediate the land to a recreational standard. If a recreational standard were to be achieved, the State would be responsible for a further site assessment to determine costs associated with remediation. In addition, MDE would need clarification on the type of recreation intended at the site, as various levels of cleanup would be required depending on the type of recreation, the location, and the duration of the recreation. For example, remediation standards are different for walking trails than they are for playgrounds, camping sites, or residential uses.

The Tome School property itself would need assessment and remediation work to be open to the public. In its current condition, the buildings would be considered a public health risk. The Archeological Site on the south portion of the property would also need further investigation to determine the location of archaeologically significant sites.

The Maryland Historical Trust (MHT) provided an overview of the history and significance of the Tome School property, and presented the results of studies prepared for the BDC by Fred Ward and Associates in 2020 and IMARK Builders, Inc., in 2021. These studies included recommendations for demolition or deconstruction of those buildings (Master's Cottages, Harrison House, Jackson House, and Tome Inn) most impacted by fire, vandalism and deterioration over time. The 2021 study projected demolition and deconstruction costs at approximately \$1.6 million. Stabilization of the remaining structures (Monroe House, Headmaster's House, Memorial Hall, and Madison House) was estimated to cost approximately \$367,000 in 2021. Rehabilitation of these buildings, all of which are expected to require lead and asbestos abatement, would require a major investment.

A US Department of Agriculture Rural Business Enterprise Grant (RBEG) study completed for BDC in 2016 estimated rehabilitation costs for the four remaining buildings totaling over \$48 million, a projection which is now out of date. MHT also referenced the 2020 report Advancing the Preservation and Reuse of Historic Government Complexes, which highlighted the Tome School as a case study and estimated that approximately \$40 million in investment would be needed to improve roads and infrastructure at the site. Lastly, MHT discussed comparable historic building rehabilitation projects that have been accomplished by private entities

leveraging state and federal rehabilitation tax credits, including the Hoen Lithograph and the Hebrew Orphan Asylum in Baltimore City, and the Phillips Packing Plant in Dorchester County. Although historic rehabilitation tax credits are not available for use by government agencies, this financial assistance tool is what is most commonly used to finance the adaptive reuse of large scale historic properties like the Tome School.



In September 2022, the Advisory Committee conducted a site visit of the property, discussed the challenges and opportunities associated with the property, and made recommendations, which are described below.

Photo: BDC Executive Director Toni Sprenkle discusses the history of the Tome School property during the Advisory Committee site visit (Sept. 2022).

Consensus Points

There was general consensus among the Advisory Committee that both the Tome School and the Snow Hill Archaeological Site held historical and cultural significance. They found that there was value in preserving and interpreting the history and the archeology at both sites, and that the public would benefit from some level of public access.

Challenges

Land Restrictions

The portions of the Brainbridge property mentioned in the new legislation are currently governed by an agreement that guarantees future use restrictions. Those restricted covenants will accompany the land in perpetuity and specify that the land may only be used for industrial or commercial activities. Any other outside use would require a deed amendment and a renegotiation of the MOA with the U.S. Navy.

Property Condition and Environmental Concerns

There are no requirements for the U.S. Navy to remediate the property to recreational or residential standards. Any efforts to remediate the property to such standards would be at the state's sole expense. Environmental studies needed to assess recreational use potential have not been completed on this portion of the property, so at this time, it is unclear how much remediation would be needed. Remediation to this extent would also require the state to

renegotiate the terms of the MOA with the U.S. Navy. It is unlikely that the U.S. Navy will be willing to take on this additional level of responsibility and liability.

Access

There are currently no access roads that lead to the property described in the legislation. An access off of Route 222 was at one time contemplated by the developer, however, the Town of Port Deposit is opposed to that because it would cause truck traffic on a very rural roadway.

There is also dense forest and steep slopes between the Tome School Site and the Snow Hill Archaeological Site, which would make it difficult to connect the two properties.

Security and Safety

Given the size of the property and the condition of the buildings on the property, many concerns were raised about security and safety. Demolition and stabilization would be needed on the Tome School Site and barriers or other safety features would need to be installed to keep visitors out of condemned buildings.

Concerns were also raised about the sensitive nature of the Snow Hill Archaeological Site and providing public access to the site before a full archaeological assessment could be conducted. Care would also need to be taken to prevent damage to and looting of the site.

Funding Needs



The last study conducted on the Tome School property indicated that major investments would be needed, ranging from \$10-100 million. This was due to deterioration in structures, interior framings, and windows. There are also hazardous materials and contamination, including lead paint and asbestos, which would need to be abated. Fires and vandalism over the years have exacerbated the situation. It was also estimated that approximately \$40 million in investment would also be needed for roads and infrastructure.

Photo: Harrison Hall building in need of stabilization. (Sept. 2022)



Photo Above: Historic photo of Harrison Hall (Courtesy BDC)

IV. Opportunities

Current Efforts Underway

BDC developed a 2-year plan for the Tome School property and has already applied for grants. The plan is consistent with the Town of Port Deposit's Comprehensive Plan.

The Town of Port Deposit also has efforts already underway for a trail on the south side of the property. The trail would span approximately two miles along the waterfront with connection to the Tome Campus. This is something the BDC has continued to support with the Town, MHT, and Lower Susquehanna Heritage Greenway.

Historic Significance

The Tome School Site was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1984. The Snow Hill Archeological Site has been determined eligible for listing on the National Register due to the important history of the Free Black community that resided there.

V. Recommendations

Reconsider the Deadline

Given the many challenges associated with the land restrictions and the outstanding questions regarding the environmental condition of the site, the Advisory Committee felt that more time was needed for due diligence. Therefore it is recommended that the Maryland General Assembly reconsider the mandate that was codified in the law to transfer the property by June 1, 2023. Removing or extending the deadline contingent on the discovery of more facts would give the time necessary to gather additional information. The General Assembly should also give due consideration to current efforts underway by the Town of Port Deposit to develop trails and interpret the history of the properties before requiring that it become a state park.

Reconsider the Land Description and Boundary

The exact boundaries of the Snow Hill Archeological Site are unknown and a survey is needed to determine the boundaries. The property, as defined in the legislation, is likely only partially included in the land that would be transferred to the state since the Archeological Site is only partially located within the Bainbridge footprint. It was also noted by the Advisory Committee that the original boundary of the Tome School was 76 acres, but for the purpose of development it was reduced to 50 acres. A metes-and-bounds was completed for the 50 acres when the campus was under development with Paul and Risk Associates in 2008-2010, yet the legislation requires 120-150 acres to be transferred. It is recommended that the General Assembly remove the reference to a specific acreage amount in the statute until a survey can be conducted.

Size and Scope of the Project

Given the size and scope of the project contemplated in the legislation and the differences between the two sites, the Advisory Committee recommends that the Tome School property and the Snow Hill Archaeological Site be separated into two distinct projects: a historic preservation project and an archeological study. The Advisory Committee further recommends that a stakeholder workgroup or a consultant determine how each project can be developed in phases and examine what level of public access would be safe and appropriate. This is particularly important given the need to preserve the integrity of the Archeological Site and to conduct surveys of the site before the public is allowed to access it. For example, developing an access point between the sites would require intense grading of the land; land that likely contains significant artifacts from the Freed Black community that resided there.

Funding Considerations

Maryland law governing the use of Program Open Space (POS) funds limits DNR to 10% of appraised value for demolition and stabilization of properties. Given that the Tome School Site and Snow Hill Archaeological Site will be transferred for no consideration, DNR's funding for demolition and stabilization would be capped at \$0. The Advisory Committee recommends that the Maryland General Assembly consider changing this policy to provide greater flexibility in the use of POS funds. This change would benefit a number of current and future projects.

Revenue Opportunities

The Advisory Committee recommends that portions of the Tome School property be considered for commercial use, which would provide a stream of revenue for capital needs and historic preservation. This could include a bed and breakfast and an event venue. It is recommended that public-private partnerships and curatorships also be explored.

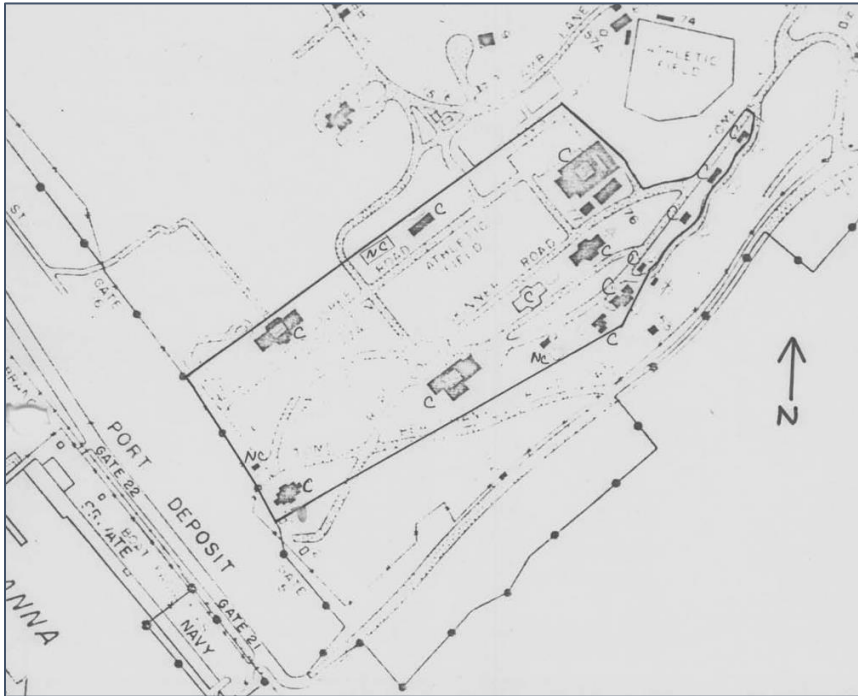
Existing Efforts

Since re-engaging negotiations with the U.S. Navy would likely be unfruitful, the Maryland General Assembly and local leaders should support existing efforts to provide access to the sites, including efforts already underway by the Town of Port Deposit to establish a trail on the south side of the property.

Conclusion

The Advisory Committee feels that there is value to having safe public access and interpretation at the Tome School and the Snow Hill Archaeological Site since both hold historical and cultural significance. However, more due diligence is needed to adequately determine the type and level of public access that *may* be possible or even practicable given the physical, environmental, archaeological, historical, and legal constraints on these sites. The deadlines and constraints codified in statute by the General Assembly, unaccompanied by a funding source, do not allow for that type of due diligence to occur. Allowing time and flexibility to conduct a more thorough planning process that includes robust stakeholder engagement at all levels is needed. This will present the best opportunity for developing a clear, common, shared vision for the future of the sites together with the identification of potential resources to achieve the shared vision. Such a process would yield much better results, and provide the greatest chance of achieving success for the community and the State of Maryland.

Appendix 1



Boundary of the National Register listed Tome School for Boys Historic District (CE-1285) showing contributing and non-contributing resources.

Image Source: Davis, Janet A. "Tome School for Boys Historic District." National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form. Maryland Historical Trust, Annapolis, June 1982.

Snow Hill Community Boundary based on 1858 Martenet Cecil County Map



The blue rectangle shows the approximate location of Snow Hill, a Free Black community established in the Port Deposit area by the mid-1800s which remained intact until the end of the nineteenth century. This archaeological site has been determined eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places.

Image Source: Maryland Historical Trust



Aerial view of Tome School Historic District. Structures marked with a red X indicate those properties that have suffered from arson. From left to right, those structures include: Memorial Hall (September 2014), Tome Inn (May 2020), Jackson House (condemned), and Harrison House (June 2020).

Image Source: Bainbridge Development Corporation

Appendix 2



The Masters' Cottages (CE-1269) are framed 2 ½ story structures with gable or hipped roofs located along Tome Road which were built to house teaching staff. Part of the original plan of the Tome School for Boys, the informal design of these buildings was a deliberate departure from the monumentality of the main school buildings both for the convenience of the masters' families and for the benefit of the students, who were encouraged to visit the masters' homes for a change of scene. Only 5 of the original 6 cottages survive and are in a very poor state of repair.

Image Source: Bainbridge Development Corporation



Harrison House (CE-1267) is one of the three dormitories of the Tome School for Boys which, with Monroe House gymnasium, formed the main quadrangle of the school.

Harrison House was severely damaged by fire in 2020 and is now a gutted masonry shell.

Image Source: Bainbridge Development Corporation



The Tome Inn (CE-1263) was built for use as guest housing and included individual rooms and suites as well as a dining room. It was designed in a shingled traditional style reminiscent of resort hotels of the period. The building was later renamed Van Buren House and served as the dormitory for younger boys at the school.



The structure was severely damaged by fire in 2020, resulting in a gutted masonry shell.

Image source: Bainbridge Development Corporation



Monroe House (CE-1268) was built as the dining hall for the Tome School and, with the three dormitories, formed the north end of the main quadrangle. In 1905, a new dining hall addition was added to the Tome Inn and Monroe House became the gymnasium with the addition of a swimming pool.

Monroe House is considered to be structurally sound with deterioration on the interior only.

Image source: Bainbridge Development Corporation





The Headmaster's House (CE-1264) served not only as the residence for the Director of the Tome School for Boys but also as an official social center for the school. The extensive lawn and spacious porch were used for garden parties and informal gatherings. The massive portico on the southeast facade was visible for miles and was as much a landmark of the school as Tome Memorial Hall tower.

A 2020 assessment by Fred Ward and Associates found the Headmaster's House to be structurally sound with deterioration occurring on the interior only.

Image source: Bainbridge Development Corporation





Memorial Hall (CE-1262) contained the school administrative offices, assembly hall, library, classrooms, and physics, chemistry and biology laboratories, and the manual training shops. The Hall's monumental character was intended to convey the serious purpose of the school and was the focal point of the formal entrance to the grounds from the public road (U.S. Route 222).

A 2020 assessment of Memorial Hall by Fred Ward and Associates found the front exterior façade of the building to be in generally good condition. The poor condition of the interior of the building is a result of the 2014 fire. The central portion of the building, including lobby and auditorium, would require extensive renovation and restoration, with a full structural rebuild

Image Source: Bainbridge Development Corporation



Madison House (CE-1265) served as a dormitory for the Tome School for Boys. A 2020 assessment by Fred Ward and Associates found the Madison House to be structurally sound with deterioration occurring on the interior only.

Image Source: Bainbridge Development Corporation

