

BA-3055
Overlea African American Survey District
Overlea, Baltimore County
1909-ca. 1990

Located in the Fourteenth District of Baltimore County, Overlea African American Survey District is located at the northeast edge of Baltimore City along Belair Road inside the Baltimore Beltway. Platted in 1909, Cherry Heights was developed as the first African American neighborhood in Overlea. The original developer was Daniel Murray, an African American, whom created 156 lots in the original Cherry Heights development.

Within the African American community of Overlea the area primarily consists of single-family and twin dwellings dating from the early- to mid-20th century. There are a total of 38 historic buildings and 23 non-historic buildings within the survey district. Architecturally, the community represents styles such as Queen Anne, Colonial Revival, and Craftsman. Forms seen throughout the district include Cape Cods, bungalows, T-plans, and L-plans. Typical features of the built fabric includes wood-frame or brick construction, interior brick chimneys, and one-story full-width porches. Very few examples of recent construction exist in this survey district. One African-American church exists within the boundaries of the Overlea African-American Survey District.

7. Description

Inventory No. BA-3055

Condition

<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> altered

Prepare both a one paragraph summary and a comprehensive description of the resource and its various elements as it exists today.

Overlea is a large African-American neighborhood located south of Carney, near the northeast Baltimore City line. It is a suburban area with two streets, Linden and Beech Avenues, running northeast to southwest with four smaller side streets; Hazel, Cherry, Apple, and First Streets. In the original plat of the neighborhood, Second and Third Street were south of First Street. However, Second and Third Streets are no longer in use and are blocked off by a sidewalk, vegetation, or a fence.

The area is comprised of wide paved streets, sidewalks, and large grassy lots, some of which have paved driveways. The dwellings stand close to the road with meager front yards and have paths and steps leading to the sidewalk. Within the African American community of Overlea the area primarily consists of single-family and twin dwellings dating from the early- to mid-20th century. Surrounding the community are residential areas as well as a small commercial area along Kenwood Avenue to the south and southeast, commercial properties along Bel Air Road to the west, and Fullerton School to the northeast.

Architecturally, the community represents styles such as Queen Anne, Colonial Revival, and Craftsman. Forms seen throughout the district include Cape Cods, bungalows, T-plans, and L-plans. Very few examples of recent construction exist in this survey district. However, what does exist from the last half of the 20th century includes several examples of split-level dwellings and ranch houses. Typical features of the built fabric includes wood-frame or brick construction, interior brick chimneys, and one-story full-width porches.

Dating from the mid- to late-19th century, the earliest building in the Overlea Survey District is a log house at 7401 Beech Avenue at the corner of 1st Street. Unlike other dwellings throughout the neighborhood this vernacular house is set back from road with a vast front yard. The building rises one-and-a-half stories and rests on a solid random-rubble stone foundation. Capped with a side-gable roof this dwelling lacks detailing linking it to a particular style. The replacement exterior-end chimney is made out of rock-faced concrete blocks. Covering the three bays on the first story is a shed-roof screened porch. This dwelling is neither depicted on the 1877 nor on the 1915 map. This suggests that this 19th century log dwelling was moved to its current location sometime after 1915.

Examples of the Queen Anne-style infused with Colonial Revival-style elements include a number of dwellings in the 7400 block of Linden Avenue. Several of these houses have been converted to multiple-family dwellings. The houses at 7408, and 7406 Linden Avenue are two examples of single-family houses converted to multiple-family dwellings. The house at 7406 Linden Avenue, dating circa 1920, is wood-frame construction and features an L-plan footprint. It is two-and-a-half stories high and measures four bays across with two single-leaf doors on the ends. It rests on a solid parged foundation and is re clad with vinyl siding. The house is covered with a cross-gable roof sheathed with asphalt shingles and features cornice returns and overhanging eaves. Rising above the roof is one interior brick chimney. The one-story wrap-around porch on the façade has been partially enclosed. Constructed circa 1920, the house at 7408 Linden Avenue is two-and-a-half-stories high, four bays wide, and rests on a rock-faced concrete-block foundation. It is constructed of wood-frame and clad with asbestos shingles. The front-gable roof is covered with asphalt shingles and features overhanging eaves and cornice returns. The house features a projecting canted bay with a front-gable roof and a wrap-around porch across the first story. The porch is supported with square wood posts and balusters and stands on a rock-faced concrete-block pier foundation.

An example of a Craftsman-style bungalow stands at 7412 Beech Avenue and dates to circa 1934. One-and-a-half-stories high this dwelling stands on a parged raised foundation and is clad with stucco. This house features a shed-roof porch across the full-width of the façade and overhanging eaves. The hipped roof has a large front-gable dormer on the façade and shed-roof dormers on the side elevations. The porch is supported with square posts and a solid balustrade.

One African-American church exists within the boundaries of the Overlea African-American Survey District. The Emmanuel Baptist Church, at 7400 Linden Avenue, was organized in 1930, and according to its cornerstone, was rebuilt in 1994. This

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concrete-block church has a long rectangular footprint with a vestibule and a small tower on the façade. This one story high building is three bays wide, clad with stucco, features brick rowlock sills and a raised brick foundation.

8. Significance

Inventory No. BA-3055

Period	Areas of Significance	Check and justify below		
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> health/medicine	<input type="checkbox"/> performing arts
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> invention	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-1999	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment/ recreation	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 2000-	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ethnic heritage	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/ settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> social history
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> community planning		<input type="checkbox"/> maritime industry	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation		<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other:

Specific dates	1909	Architect/Builder	Unknown
Construction dates	1909-ca. 1990		

Evaluation for:

National Register Maryland Register not evaluated

Prepare a one-paragraph summary statement of significance addressing applicable criteria, followed by a narrative discussion of the history of the resource and its context. (For compliance reports, complete evaluation on a DOE Form - see manual.)

HISTORY

Located in the Fourteenth District of Baltimore County, Overlea African American Survey District is located at the northeast edge of Baltimore City along Belair Road inside the Baltimore Beltway. It is bounded by Belair Road to the west, Fullerton Avenue to the north, and Kenwood Avenue to the south and east.

The Hopkins Atlas of 1877 depicts only five dwellings within the Overlea Survey District area. A total of eight tract owners are listed on the atlas including David Street, S. Ritter, G. Thomas, J. Morris, E. Walker, J. Germon, Joseph Fuller, and Neubauer. In 1877, none of the land had been platted for future development.(1)

The first growth of Overlea occurred in 1904 when the United Railway streetcar line was extended from Baltimore City along Belair Road to Overlea. The ease of transportation from the city to outlying areas provided people with an option to living outside of the city. A new neighborhood that contained larger lots and single-family dwellings was highly desirable to many of the city residents. Developers mostly looked to the area along Belair Road and to the environs west of it. This area was developed and built upon for white residents. The two main developers were the Kennard and Overlea Land Companies. By 1911, there were approximately 830 residents in Overlea.(2)

Platted in 1909, Cherry Heights was developed as the first African American neighborhood in Overlea. The plat for Cherry Heights was drawn by A. Bouldin and Company. The original developer was Daniel Murray, an African American, whom created 156 lots in the original Cherry Heights development.(3) This enclave is located immediately east of Belair Road. In 1915, only six dwellings were standing in Cherry Heights. Two other small developments within the African American survey district include Overlea Park and Mashacek.(4)

The Bromley Atlas of 1915 shows a scattering of dwellings within these three African American developments. No houses exist between Fullerton Avenue and the rear of the dwellings along Beech Avenue. Public and private institutions built by 1915 include St. Michael the Archangel Catholic Church at 2 Willow Avenue and Fullerton School along Belair Road. Much of the area is divided into plots with a total of seventy-five dwellings and two stables shown on the Bromley Atlas. Clearly denoted on the map, Linden and Beech Avenues are equally important to the area with twenty-one and twenty-six dwellings respectively.(5)

It appears on the atlas that some owners purchased more than one lot to build upon. For example, the property at the southwest corner of Beech Avenue and Elm Avenue consists of a total of eight lots. Unlike any of the other dwellings at this time, this house is sited at a cant towards the intersection.(6)

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The 1920 U.S. Census lists fourteen households on Linden Avenue all of which are African American. A few of the families include Earnest Jones, Alfred Baker, Louis Docking, James Newman, Arby Blackstone, Rebecca Lomaz, and Thomas Jackson. Three of the families had a female household head. The area maintained nearly an equal amount of property owners to property renters. Seven families owned (the majority of which were mortgaged) and six rented their properties. The majority of residents originated from Maryland with several born in Virginia. The wide variety of male occupations of the Overlea residents include laborers for supply companies, shipyards, cigar and other factories, carpenter, driver, waiter, photographer, porter, preacher, land seller, and elevator operator. Female occupations are not varied and remain in the domestic services such as cook, maid, and laundress.(7)

Large tracts of early 1950s twin dwellings stand just outside the survey district to east and northeast. This area along Willow Dale and Greenwood Avenues is strikingly different from the neighborhood to the west and northwest. The Ken Noll development has curvilinear streets and the brick Colonial Revival-style dwellings were obviously built by one developer.

ENDNOTES

1. Atlas of Baltimore County, Maryland. (Philadelphia: G.M.Hopkins, 1877).
 2. Neal A. Brooks and Eric G. Rockel, A History of Baltimore County (Towson, MD: Friends of the Towson Library, Inc., 1979), p. 325)
 3. John McGrain, June 12, 1990.
 4. Atlas of Baltimore County, Maryland. (Philadelphia: G.W. Bromley, 1915).
 5. Atlas of Baltimore County, Maryland. (Philadelphia: G.W. Bromley, 1915).
 6. Atlas of Baltimore County, Maryland. (Philadelphia: G.W. Bromley, 1915).
- U.S. Bureau of the Census, The Census of 1920, Baltimore County, Maryland. (National Archives).

9. Major Bibliographical References

Inventory No. BA-3051

See continuation sheet.

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of surveyed property 13.529 acres
Acreage of historical setting 13.529 acres
Quadrangle name Relay, MD Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

Verbal boundary description and justification

The Cowdensville Survey District is located in the Thirteenth District of Baltimore County. Arbutus Memorial Park is to the south, Shelbourne Road is to the northwest, Arbutus Middle School is to the north and northeast, and the southside of Garrett Road is the southeast boundary. This area has been considered Cowdensville since the mid-19th century and has historically been associated with tax map 108.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title	Kristie Baynard, Architectural Historian		
organization	E.H.T. Tracerics	dat	10/24/2002
street and number	1121 Fifth Street, NW	telephone	202/393-1199
city or town	Washington	state DC	zip code 20001

The Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties was officially created by an Act of the Maryland Legislature to be found in the Annotated Code of Maryland, Article 41, Section 181 KA, 1974 supplement.

The survey and inventory are being prepared for information and record purposes only and do not constitute any infringement of individual property rights.

return to: Maryland Historical Trust
DHCD/DHCP
100 Community Place
Crownsville MD 21032
410-514-7600

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Atlas of Baltimore County, Maryland. Philadelphia, PA: G. M. Hopkins, 1877.

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Bowler, Mike. Sowing the seeds of integration. The Sunday Sun. Baltimore: April 13, 1997.

Brooks, Neal A. and Eric G. Rockel. A History of Baltimore County. Towson, MD: Friends of the Towson Library, Inc., 1979.

Diggs, Louis S. In Our Voices: A Folk History in Legacy. Uptown Press, 1998.

Erlandson, Robert A. Residents of tiny Cowdensville seek to preserve historic black community. The Sun. Baltimore: September 23, 1991.

Map of Baltimore County. Philadelphia, PA: G. W. Bromley, 1915.

Scharf, J. Thomas. History of Baltimore City and County From the Earliest Period to the Present Day: Including Biographical Sketches of Their Representative Men. Philadelphia, PA: Louis H. Everts, 1881. Reprinted by Higginson Book Company, Salem, MA.

Sidney, J. C. Map of the City and County of Baltimore, Maryland, from Original Surveys. Baltimore, MD: James M. Stephens, 1850.















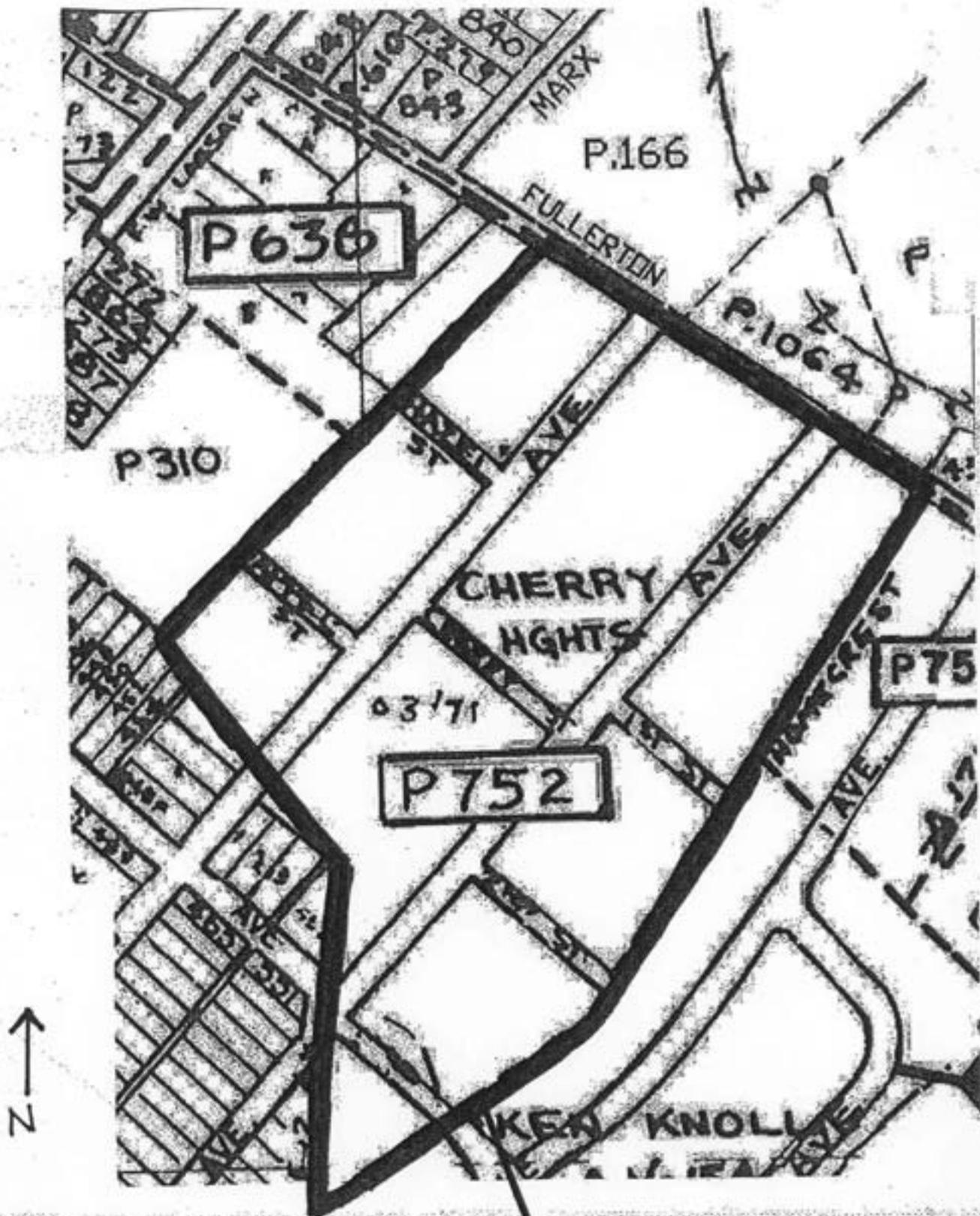




7404







BA-3055
OVERLEA AFRICAN AMERICAN
SURVEY DISTRICT
Overlea, Baltimore County
Baltimore County Base Map

BALTIMORE EAST QUADRANGLE
MARYLAND

7.5 MINUTE SERIES (TOPOGRAPHIC)

SE/4 BALTIMORE 19' QUADRANGLE

BEL AIR 15 MI

PERRY HALL 4 MI

5769 IV HW
WHITE MARSH

CARNEY 1.6 MI.

32°50"

768

INTERCHANGE 31 (MD. 147) 1.1 MI.

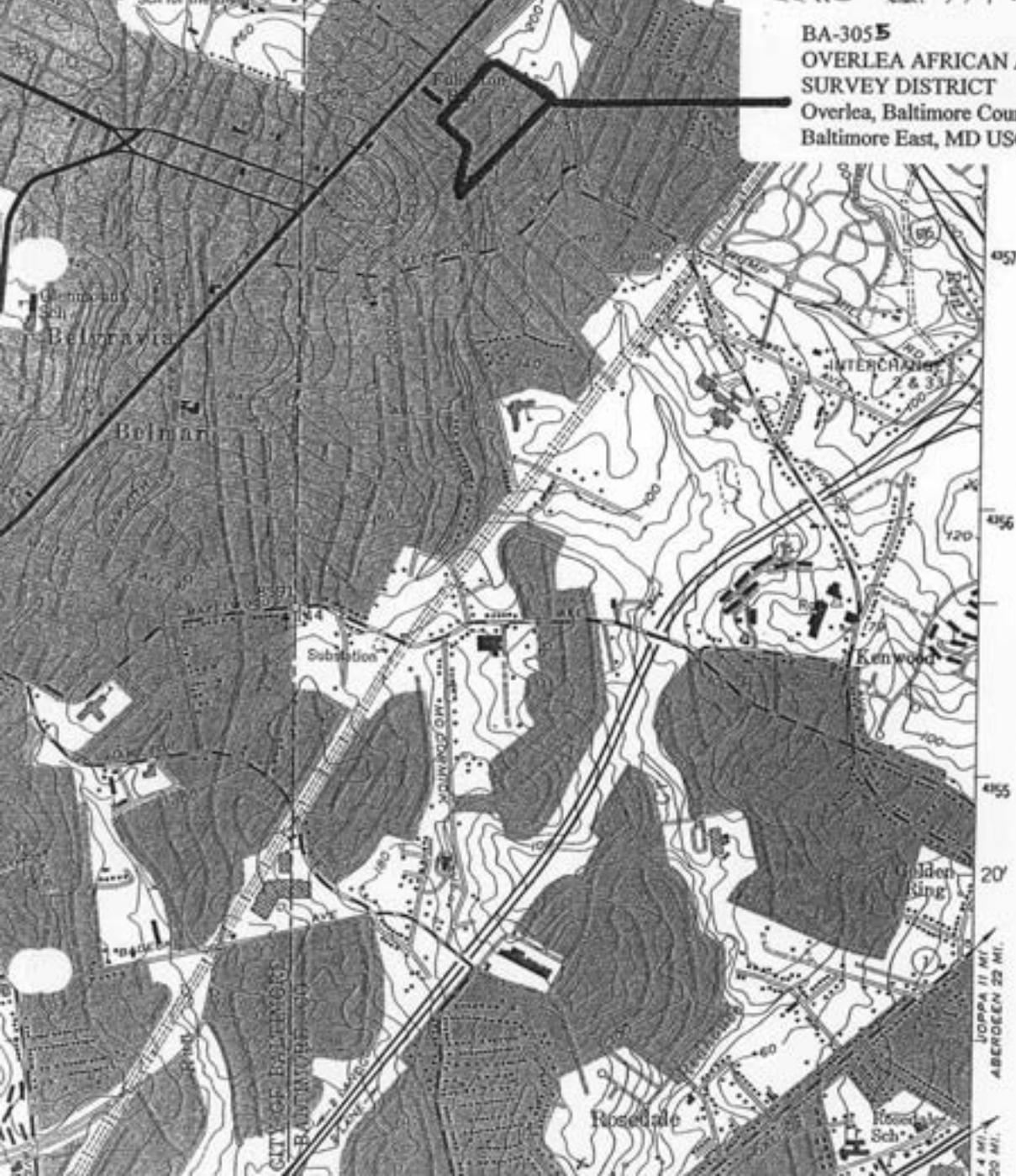
940 000 FEET

76°30'

39°22'30"



BA-305
**OVERLEA AFRICAN AMERICAN
SURVEY DISTRICT**
Overlea, Baltimore County
Baltimore East, MD USGS Map



457

456

455

20'

LOPPA 11 MI.
ABERDEEN 22 MI.

454