

MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST

A.A. #236A

INVENTORY FORM FOR STATE HISTORIC SITES SURVEY

**1 NAME**

HISTORIC Slave Cabin at Essex Farm  
 AND/OR COMMON

**2 LOCATION**

STREET & NUMBER Route 461, west side of Route 468, about a mile south of its jct. with Mill Swamp Rd. and a half north of its Jct. with Cumberstone Rd.  
 CITY TOWN Cumberstone Edgewater  VICINITY OF CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT  
 STATE Maryland COUNTY Anne Arundel

**3 CLASSIFICATION**

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL <input type="checkbox"/> PARK
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input 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 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 type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL <input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER

**4 OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME Mr. John Lansdale Telephone #: 301-867-2896  
 STREET & NUMBER Essex Farm  
 CITY TOWN Harwood  VICINITY OF STATE, zip code Maryland

**5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. Liber #: Folio #:  
 STREET & NUMBER  
 CITY TOWN STATE

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE Maryland Historic Sites Inventory  
 DATE  
 FEDERAL  STATE  COUNTY  LOCAL  
 DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS Maryland Historic Trust  
 CITY TOWN Annapolis STATE Maryland

# 7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED DATE _____
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

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## DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The present owner of Essex is a direct descendant of the family who owned the plantation. When young, he learned from his family that this house had been a slave cabin and was built at the same time as the main house (in 1852). The evidence in the construction material does not repudiate this date. The present inhabitants of the house -- Mr. Henry Brent and his sister, Mrs. Martha Brent -- moved into the house fairly recently and are not acquainted with its history.

The structure itself is a one bay, frame dwelling, sheathed in board and batten, and measures 20' x 16' (to the nearest foot). The height of the first floor from the porch to the bottom of the cornice is 7'10" ; the height of the loft is the same.

The house is located about 100 yards behind the main house. There were other slave cabins on the plantation. They were not clustered together in a "slave quarter"; instead, they were scattered about the plantation near the fields at a greater distance from the main house. After they were abandoned, the present owner burned them down to keep out trespassers who were breaking into them.

The porch now on this dwelling is recent as evidenced by the newly cut 2" x 4" s used to support it and by the wire nails used throughout. The gingerbread trim on the railings was put on a few years ago, having been removed from the exterior of the main house. Although this porch is new, Mr. Lansdale said that the dwelling did have one fifty years ago, for he remembered that "when I was a boy, I loved to go down there to see James (the family servant) and we'd have lunch out on his porch." No evidence remains to show whether the structure had a porch when built.

The small room extending from the south side of the house was built recently as a bathroom.

Since the chimney had been freshly painted, an investigation could not be made to determine its age or extent of alteration. Mr. Lansdale did say, however, that it was original. The unpainted bricks underneath the house which supported the hearth were old and of irregular size and the bits of mortar contained clay, lime, and oyster shell fragments. These and the shape of the chimney tended to confirm what Mr. Lansdale said.

The house rests on 9"x7" hewn sills. The sleepers (the timbers which support the floorboards of the first floor) measured 4"x7" and were hewn on the tops and bottoms, while the sides of some were cut by a circular saw, others by an up and down saw. Thus, they were cut at different mills, and perhaps at different times. They may have been "extra" timbers not used when the main house was built, or removed from different structures. The sleepers with the circular saw marks do seem to be original so this would date the house as post-1850. They were saddle-notched onto the sills.

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

# 8 SIGNIFICANCE

RIOD		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 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 type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION		
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)		
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION				

SPECIFIC DATES

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Brick pilings supported the sills and stood 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ ' on the north side and 3' on the south, the house being built on a north to south slope. No angle braces reinforced the corners, and the structure showed no evidence of tilting.

The vertical boards that sheathe the first floor were cut by an up and down saw and measure 16" to 18" in width and 1" in thickness. The eaves boards are horizontal, overlapping clapboards.

The interior of the house is divided into two rooms. A partition was built creating a hallway running south from the front entrance to the stairway up to the loft. See the floor plan. The walls have been completely covered with sheet rock, thereby preventing examination of the original. The ceiling has also been covered, but in the hallway three hewn joists could be seen. According to the Brents, the joists had once been exposed in all downstairs rooms and were similar to these. The brick firebox has been covered over; a wood stove is in use.

The stairway up to the loft is less narrow and steep than the ones at the Collison Farm and Pindell slave cabins in Anne Arundel County. In the loft a railing of small planks was built alongside the open stairwell as at Cedar Park. The floorboards were narrow, tongue and grooved planks with a mixture of cut and wire nails; thus, this would be a replacement floor. The small windows were low to the floor, similar to the ones at Batchellor' Choice. The ceiling was completely covered by narrow, horizontal overlapping, clapboards, circular saw cut. There was no opening to reveal the rafters. This ceiling was a 20th century addition.

The original roof was wood shingled, according to both the owners and renters.

Although much of the interior cannot be seen due to renovation, its architecture, its exterior (sheathing and chimney), and foundations have not been substantially altered, thereby making this structure a noteworthy example of the kind of houses in which house servants in rural southern Maryland lived in the mid-19th century, and in which some have continued to live.

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

17-230-1

# 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

## 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY \_\_\_\_\_

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE COUNTY

STATE COUNTY

## 11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

George McDaniel

2/76

ORGANIZATION

Md. Commission on Afro-American and Indian History and Culture

DATE

STREET & NUMBER

12 West Madison Street

TELEPHONE

301-383-3648

CITY OR TOWN

Baltimore

STATE

Maryland

The Maryland Historic Sites Inventory 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  
The Shaw House, 21 State Circle  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401  
(301) 267-1438



Slave Horn at Essex Farm,

AA - 236 A

8 Wm

1/76

MHT in Annapolis

West Elevation



AA-236A

(map 26)

aa-34-S-6

"Martha's House"

at "Essex"

North Elevation

amb 12-79



AA-236A

aa-34-S-<sup>(map 26)</sup>~~b~~

"Martha's House"  
at "Essex"  
S.W. corner

Amh 12-74



Slave House at Essex  
Farm

AA - 236A

Burn

11/76

MHT, Burypolis

South Elevation