MA-942

Historic American Buildings Survey

Hilsmere Farm Manor House
(The Key School Manse)

Location: The Key School, 534 Hillsmere Drive, Annapolis, Maryland. The Hilsmere Farm Manor House sits atop a slight rise approximately300 feet west of Hillsmere Drive.

Present Owner and Occupant: The Key School.

Present Use: The Manor House, has been called The Manse since 1962. The Manse houses the Lower School's offices, library, and class rooms for grades one, two and three.

Significance: The Manor House was built in 1915 as the main building on Hilsmere, the 521 acre estate of Martin H. Smith of New York and Annapolis. The Manor House - constructed to replace an earlier structure, the Hilsmere Clubhouse, which was destroyed in a fire on November 27, 1914 - was designed by architect, Cyrus Y. Bissel, to provide a place of summer residence for the Smith family and as a place of lodging and entertainment for parties of guests on the combination gentleman's farm and private hunting resort. The Manor House, with its accompanying three summer houses - called gazebos since 1962 - is an important example of an American Country House designed in an eclectic/Queen Anne style. In addition, as the principal structure on one of Annapolis's largest and most prominent estates - referred to as "one of the show places of the state of Maryland" [1] - the Manor House preserves an important example of the region's early twentieth century architecture. In its present use, the Manse and its accompanying gazebos are important, distinguishing features of The Key School campus.

Historians: Charles Flanagan and Juliet Thompson.

Part I. Historical Information:

Local context for the Hilsmere Manor House

The Hilsmere Clubhouse belongs to the era in which, "The traditional Sunday outing evolved into the "excursion" as railroad magnets, turning the times to profit, created attractive recreation parks and elaborately appointed hotels ... catering to the national enthusiasm for vacationing on a scale never before possible. [2] The 1879 purchase of Talley Point by the Bay Ridge company for the purpose of creating a resort, [3] had a great impact on land use in the regions near Bay Ridge. (See Figure 1)

The growing sea side resort florished throughout the eighties, culminating in theJuly 1886 opening of a railroad from Annapolis to Bay Ridge.[4] This service was augmented in March 1887 by completion of the Baltimore Shortline Railroad, providing direct, one hour and a half, service from Camden Station to Annapolis.[5] The rail connection, in conjunction with regular steamship service by the Weems Line helped establish the 387 acre amusement park and hotel on Bay Ridge as "The Queen Resort of the Chesapeake" drawing as many as 4000 visitors a day by train and steamship[6] "from Annapolis, Baltimore, Washington, D.C., the Eastern Shore, Pennsylvania, Delaware, and even New York."[7] (See Figure 2)

Along with improvements in rail and water routes to Bay Ridge, the middle years of the decade saw a direct road link from Annapolis to the point.[8] Later improvements to the route, saw it redirected to pass near the road leading to Hill's Delight. The transformation of Bay Ridge in the mid eighties, also gave an economically depressed region an infusion of new capital. The economy of the port, described as oyster dependant in the early eighties could now profit from catering to excursionists. As Annapolis historian Elmer M. Jackson put it, "The city had the finest transportation in the state and beaches began to pay dividends."[9]

Though much more research on the origins of the Hilsmere Clubhouse remains, the structure of the building along with its position on the property and its age, all suggest that it might have been constructed as a small hotel in this era. While approximately three miles from Bay Ridge, the Clubhouse, is sited on what was previously farm land on a slight ridge providing easy access to the shore at a location featuring a spectacular view of the South River. Its wooded surroundings and nearby coastal marshes also offer superb sites for hunting. Its proximity, within a mile of the property boundary to the rail line to Bay Ridge further the hypothesis that this property might have been developed as a lodge by Alice Hay in the decade of Bay Ridge's first popularity. This burst of tourism, in fact provides the only plausible explanation for the construction of a thirteen bedroom house with extensive porches by an unmarried woman from out of town - Wilmington Delaware - on what was a family farm.

Bachelor, Martin Henry Smith, in purchasing this property in 1903, was acquiring a lodge for the use of his hunting friends. In the period of his ownership, the estate was enlarged and beautified through Mr. Smith's pursuit of his avocation for farming. The improvements in the property made by Mr. Smith distinguish this estate from any other in the vicinity. Under his ownership, the farm became a model of scientific agriculture served by a small village of well constructed buildings. The principal building on the estate, the Manor House, was constructed by Mr. Smith after his marriage and served as a summer residence for his family until 1952. The Manor House is not unlike other large residences in the Annapolis region constructed in its era; nor in its use as a summer home. Neither is the Hilsmere Farm of a scale which sets it apart. The distinguishing feature of the Hilsmere Farm, and its Manor House is that the Manor House and its remaining outbuildings are remnants of a gentleman farmer's country ideal, a property set apart from it surrounding community and shaped and refined to almost utopian ends. While the adjacent property, Julian Harris' "Laurel Bank" - now Quiet Waters Park - is almost as large, and many other local houses are more ornate, the Hilsmere Farm and its buildings are part of a small number of estates, nationally,in which the Country House ideal of independence and self sustainence were achieved with such a measure of success.

B. Hilsmere Farm as an " American Country House."

The development of Hilsmere Farm qualifies Martin H. Smith's property to be described as an American Country House as defined by Clive Astlet in his book, The American Country House: "The reference here to the estate is important. The American Country house stands on its own land, beyond the suburbs and other planned developments, out of sight of other houses, possessing at least the appearance of an independent, possible self-sufficient, landed life, even though the money that supported it never came from the land." [10] Mr. Smith's purchases during the period between 1903 and 1921 left him the proprietor of a large tract of land approximately three miles from Annapolis. His development of this property can be likened to George Vanderbilt's Biltmore and Thomas and Lucy Carnegie's Dungeness estates in type, though it was smaller in scale, by virtue of its being a potentially self-sustaining, place of residence shaped in accord with the owner's ideal. [11] From its name, the Manor House alludes to the same baronial pretensions indulged by Vanderbilt and Carnegie in their estate plans. [12] Again, while the scale of wealth displayed by Smith appears to have been significantly less than either of the earlier figures, the Hilsmere farm in its subsequent development was expanded and refined to a manicured state-captured in aerial photos during the 1920's - of a large scale scientist-gentleman farmer's estate.

Mr. Smith's acquisitions of property and the development of his estate manifest a pattern of conscious choices to construct a residential property separate from Annapolis' urban or suburban areas. Smith had grown up in Annapolis, the son of a local baker. After college, upon making a large fortune as a chemical

manufacturer and druggist, he returned to Annapolis as a thirty-seven year old bachelor outdoorsman. Mr. Smith began acquiring property for Hilsmere, his Annapolis estate in October 1903, when while apparently in town to attend the wedding of a family friend, Juliet Stahorn, [13] he purchased a two hundred and thirty acre farm, "Hill's Delight" from Alice Hay of Delaware for $5000.[14] Zacharia Smith had originally patented the land around 1646, in 1651 he sold part of his patent to John Hill which became known as "Hill's Delight" and "The Level". (See Figure 3) Around 1800 the Thomas family came into possession of the land and held on to it for several generations. In 1880 John H. Thomas divided his land between his sister Caroline Duvall and his nephew James K. Thomas. (See Figure 4) Thomas', will, an estate inventory, and a plat map done of the property just after his death represent his holdings as being 230 acres with a house and barn located approximately one half mile north of the clubhouse site. The 1880 survey is detailed, showing structures such as a tenant house on the western boundary of the farm, but shows no structures in the vicinity of the clubhouse site. [15] Ezra R. W. Shekell acquired the land in 1884 and sold it to Alice Hay in 1890. In addition to the Alice Hay purchase in 1903, Mr Smith purchased ten more tracts of land (See Figures 5 and 6).

Photographs demonstrate the development of the estate and bear testimony to Smith's intentions. The earliest extant photos are of the original main house (called the Clubhouse), and the nearby house (called the farm manager's house). Family members believe that the clubhouse was standing when Smith bought the property in 1903.[16] (See Figures 7 and 8)

Structural details of the clubhouse are worth noting in that Smith's stated intention in 1914 was to recapture the best features of this building in an improved replacement structure. The clubhouse was a symmetrical, shingle style structure made of perpendicular gable ended sections, six-bay ground floor wing running roughly north-south and the eight bay second floor wing running east-west each ending with a small balcony. Each second floor wing extended over the porch of the lower floor supported by shingled columns. The ground floor porch was expansive, surrounding the cross-shaped building on three sides.

Subsequent to Mr. Smith's purchase of Hill's Delight in 1903, the farm began to assume the look and function ascribed to Astle to an American country house. In reconstructing his progress toward this goal, one can assume his having started with a rural property containing the clubhouse, the nearby farm manager's house, at least four barns (the background of photos depict a large tobacco-type barn and two small sheds just to the north of the clubhouse, and what appears to be a stable just to the northwest of the clubhouse) and the former John H. Thomas house and barn standing approximately one half mile to the north.

Throughout the period of the estate's development, Mr Smith continued to operate his chemical manufacturing business and drug store in New York and spent

six months of the year in residence in Manhattan (In 1930, his address was reported as 88 Central Park West. [17]) In this era, Hilsmere Farm was operated by a year-round staff.

Pre 1914 photos document the removal of the old tobacco-type barn, noted above, construction of or significant enlargement of the stable, and the planting of vines and shrubs around the perimeter of the Clubhouse porch and its circular drive. In this era, photographic evidence depicts the construction of the large main barn in two stages. In a photo of the first configuration of the main barn, a stationary engine is shown powering a silage blower, suggesting a pre 1910 date of construction. (See Figure 9) In this early photo the upper walls of the barn are sided in board and batten, and the basement is of granite. The barn is built into a hillside with two stories are on the northern three on the south. A one and a half story wing extends to the east with granite walls and a pitched shingled roof. A photo in the background of an, approximately, 1914 photo of the Clubhouse the same barn is shown in an expanded configuration with large cupola-like vent structures on the apex of the roof. (See Figure 10 and 11 for this expanded configuration, photographed in 1930 and Figure 12 for a 1990 view)

The latest pre 1914 photo - dated relative to others by evaluation of shrubby growth and the presence of a raised third floor on the clubhouse - depicts the estate in a more developed state. The oyster shell circular drive to the clubhouse appears more sharply defined. A three rail board fence runs along an oyster shell driveway adjacent to the farm manager's house. A row of poplars - saplings in earlier photos appear to be twenty to twenty five feet tall.

On November 27, 1914 the Hilsmere Clubhouse was destroyed by a fire of unknown origin, though it was suggested by the Evening Capital to be the work of thieves retaliating against farm manager G.W. Thomas' having engaged a detective to capture them . The family believes the fire to have been accidental, caused by the spontaneous combustion of an oily rag carelessly left in the basement by a employee.[18] In a page one account of the fire a writer for the Capital newspaper reported that the "demon" fire began at about 11 P.M. and reduced the house to ashes in a short time. The fire was said to have consumed hunting trophies, "relics from all over the world" including "rugs, rare tapestries, armor, musical instruments of all kinds" as well as the house's furnishings.[19] and an example of a Robert Staley armour. [20] A page one follow up story on November 30 described the estate as having been one of Anne Arundel County's finest, and termed it "a commodious and elegant residence". [21] To prevent future loss, the Manor House was decorated in a simple way and equipped with a fire alarm system with bells in several rooms. Also, basement windows in the new house were barred and large granite fence posts supporting a substantial gate and a no trespassing sign were installed at the end of the farm road, approximately one and a half mile from the Manor House. [22] These attentions to deterring contact were subtle reinforcements of the separation from neighborhood community central to the County House ideal.

The Clubhouse, as its name implies, had the look of a hunting lodge adapted to family ownership. Photos from its era show largely wooded backgrounds suggesting that the primary activity on the estate was hunting, and in this context, the Clubhouse had a simple mission of communicating a spirit of relaxation. The Manor House, on the other hand, was studied in every detail to channel the actions of family, visitors and staff along paths designed to enhance the family and visitor's appreciation of the farm's beauty . White-painted, stuccoed surfaces on buildings associated with the Manor House combined with straight white roads and white board fences throughout the estate to represent a break with the former atmosphere of the estate.

The Manor House, as the centerpiece to an estate with far more cleared land, where intensive cultivation takes place in an extensive set of irrigated beds, and where subsidiary farm houses and accompanying barns serve extensive farming operations spread throughout the estate communicates its capstone position in the hierarchy of buildings on the property, as well as a more clearly defined distinction between cultivated lands and woods on the property, demonstrating the elevation of farming to an equal, and perhaps dominant, activity on the estate.

The Manor House, however, echoes features of the building it was designed to replace. First, the Manor House was sited on virtually the same ground as the Clubhouse. In fact a strong case can be made that the concrete foundation walls of the excavated portion of the Manor House's basement are the foundation walls of the original structure. This assertion can be supported by comparing the alignment of the south wall of the clubhouse, as depicted in photographs, with the circular drive way with the alignment of the Manor House's south basement wall with the same point. (See Figure 13) It can be supported by noting the space beneath the living room is not excavated deeper than a minimal crawl space accessed through small unglazed windows. Siting the new house in the foundation of the old might have sped construction, but also preserved the view enjoyed from the old house, minimizing the loss. Additionally, there is evidence of scored and refinished concrete walls in this section of the basement.

A second structural echo is the presence of the porte cochere and extended porch wrapped about the Manor House from the north east to south west walls. This preserves, in the family spaces, the sense of the Clubhouse's encircling porches.

A third structural echo is the strong sense of cross perpendicular wings expressed by the north-south wing (the library, den, gun room and passage), intersecting the east-west wing (dining room, entrance hall, and living room). Viewed from the south the Manor House presents a "L" shaped expanse of porch on the first floor and a roof line evoking the former house's cross-winged roof line.

The third structural echo is strengthened through the use of a jerk roof on the Manor House's south-facing, third floor dormer. At some date just prior to 1914, the Clubhouse was raised to have a third story. This rectangular addition, "containing a large sun parlor and a children's playroom" [23] had a hipped roof. The dormer in the Manor House alludes to this roof via its shape. The overall effect of looking at the Manor House from the south is strongly reminiscent of the most pleasing visual qualities of the older structure. Yet, the new house is larger, its proportions far more graceful, and its porch supported on graceful concrete Doric columns is far more open and suggestive of summer comfort than the older house's shrubbery obscured, shingled columns. (See Figures 14 and 15 for views of the 1914 Clubhouse; See Figures 16 and 17 for the same views of the Manor House)

A fourth structural echo is the use of truncated corners. Photos of the Clubhouse depict a large bay window at the southeast corner of the north-south wing. These fenestrated, forty-five degree walls improve ventilation, lighting, open additional view planes, and lend an octagonal effect to an otherwise rectangular space. In the Manor House, this same effect is achieved via truncated room corners. They are present in the major south-facing rooms on the first and second floors and in the northwest corners of the living room, dining room and library. Interestingly, no room has a truncated northeast corner. Considered from the exterior, the effect of this design feature, is to soften the otherwise box-like shape of the first floor, and to improve sight lines and movement for porch users. Considered from the interior, the repetition of this feature in second floor south-facing bedrooms enhances lighting, ventilation, and views as noted above. Its use in the northwest corner of the library improves that space by affording advantageous placement of the fireplace .

A description of the estate in 1930 [24] would include the following buildings in an east-west sweep. (See Figure 18) Closest to Smith's Creek stood a 150 x 75 foot rectangular hay barn. 130 feet further west stood the former main house of the Alexander Hart farm (called the Duvall House on the 1930 Phenix Fire Insurance 6 map). [25] 300 feet to the northwest between the legs of a divided drive were a series of irrigated ponds for aquatic gardens. 225 feet to the west, at the intersection of the Hart Farm road and the Hilsmere farm road stood a stone pump house to supply water to the aquatic gardens. (See Figure 19)

To the west of the Hilsmere Farm road stood the farm manager's house - a two story, shingle style house (stuccoed at a date between 1914 and 1924). Near it were a small garage and a shed. Approximately 550 feet west of the Hilsmere Farm road, beyond a tennis court and a larger garage, stood the Manor House (about 75 feet south of a line of buildings running due west from the farm manager's house).

Continuing on the line west were a two story laundry building, a two story house for staff, a small estate office, a two story gardener's house - resembling the Hart - Duvall Farmhouse in construction. 100 feet north of the laundry stood a glass

walled 75 foot by 25 foot glass walled greenhouse with and attached 25 foot by 12 foot office. Approximately 900 feet west of the Hilsmere Farm road stood the three story, approximately, 180 by 60 foot main barn. In a row to the north of this barn stood a line of irrigated gardens approximately 1000 feet north - south by 200 feet east - west. These gardens were bordered by a road on the west lined with eight sheds, each approximately 75 feet long by 15 feet wide. To the west of the main barn were three chicken coops, a duck house, a kennel, a machine shed, blacksmith shop, wagon shed and a 75 by 30 foot maternity barn. In addition, the buildings, irrigated gardens, and fields were served by a system of water mains supplied from wells powered by windmills with elevated tanks to provide pressure.

Refining the estate was considered to be a lifelong project for Mr. Smith whose plans to intall a swan pond near the aquatic gardens were not actuallized due to his untimely death. In fact, it was while overseeing reconstruction of fire damaged buildings on the estate in April 1930 that Mr. Smith contracted pneumonia which proved fatal. With the death of Mr. Smith the development of Hilsmere Farm ceased. The property remained in family possession and served as a summer house until 1952. In that year, the Hillsmere Estate Co. purchased the 521 acre estate and subdivided it for suburban housing. (See Figure 21) All Hilsmere Farm structures with the exception of those immediately adjacent to the Manor House and main barn were removed. Further, the platting scheme obscured all traces of land use in the Smith era. In 1962 The Key School, Inc. purchased the Manor House, main barn and the surrounding nine acres. Since that date, the Manor House and barn have been used as classroom buildings. The farm manager's house was purchased by the school in 1990 and has been used for office space. (See Figures 11 and 12 to compare the land use in 1930 with that of 1990)

Manor House Design:

A. Architect:

Cyrus Y. Bissell was born on June 6, 1886 in Hoboken, New Jersey and received his Bachelor of Science degree in architecture from Columbia University in 1907. Following travel in Europe, he began working for the New York architectural firm of Delano and Aldrich. At a date between 1915 and 1920, he left Delano and Aldrich and moved to Montreal where he was employed by the architectural firm of Brown and Valence. In 1920, Mr. Bissell became a partner in the Minneapolis architectural firm of Stubbins, Huxby and Bissell. In 1934 the firm became known as Huxby and Bissell. In 1945 it became Huxby, Bissell and Belaire. In 1956 the firm of Bissell and Belaire was formed. Mr. Bissell married in 1918 and had four children. [26]

B. The Architectural Context of Cyrus Bissell's Manor House Design:

Delano and Aldrich, a well known firm, was said to have "inherited the

mantle" of McKim Meade and White as the foremost designers of American country houses in the years between 1904 and 1915. [27] Mr. Bissell's plan for the Hilsmere Farm Manor is characteristic of the work of the New York firm in four ways.

Its preeminent feature is its siting. As the Delano and Aldrich designs for Bronson Winthrop, W. A. Delano, and W.G. Borland, [28] the Manor House is oriented to achieve the optimal visual and ventilation potential of its location, but additionally, it is decorated and located to communicate an idealized image of the lifestyle of the outdoorsman-gentleman farmer. As was remarked in regard to the Borland house design, "It shows the alertness of the architects in their quick grasp of the unusual opportunities of the site." [29] With its open porches, large windows and French doors, the Hilsmere Manor House makes the best possible use of the visual and climatic opportunities offered on the estate.

Facing the east and south, the house is placed in the path of afternoon breezes, an important consideration given its Chesapeake location. This attention to the access of cool air is repeated in the fenestration of the principal family rooms. The triple French doors on the living room's south wall, corresponding to double French doors on its north wall open a wide path to the core of the house. This air-way is continued by double doors on the south wall of the library and a wide casement window with casement sidelights on the library's east wall providing a strong potential for cross-ventilation. Room descriptions, presented below, spell out the design's attention to maximizing ventilation throughout the house. In addition, a fresh air ventilation system serves the central stairhall on both floor levels.

The second characteristic of Aldrich and Delano work evident in Bissell's design is the degree to which exterior appearance of the Manor House echos that of other designs by the firm as well as the way in which architectural eclecticism is used throughout the house to achieve functional ends . In the spirit noted by Walter Kidney in his work The Architecture of Choice, "eclecticism, is learnedly if selectively imitative of historic architecture in all aspects of its appearance, and using the historic styles as expressions of various cultural institutions". [30] The Manor House has several missions and achieves each through the use of distinct styles in separate spaces.

The Manor House's Queen Anne styling and stuccoed exterior walls represent a major break from the Hilsmere Clubhouse. The low, wide, shingle style Clubhouse spoke of the rustic charm of a hunting retreat. As depicted in photographs (See Figure 14 and 15), its open porches and dark siding blend into the woods and fields of its largely undeveloped setting. The 1915 Manor House (See Figure 16 and 17), a far more imposing structure, rises above the fields, and its siding and white painted concrete porch columns echo the clean lines of straight, oyster shell-paved roads throughout the estate matching their visual, bounding

contrast with the fields, lawns, and forest. This effect was enhanced by the presence of white-washed three board wooden fences after 1915, as well as by the stuccoing of the farm manager's house, laundry, staff house, and main barn in the same period. Together, the sharp-edged white surfaces communicate the order of a scrupulously tended, almost manicured garden, an estate developed into a model of order and efficiency.

The large stucco-sided building's third-floor Queen Anne detailing and gables are bold assertions of style in a principal facade whose apparent proportions strongly resemble those of W. A. Delano's Brookville, L.I. home as well as the previously mentioned Winthrop and Borland homes. [31] In the Manor House, the Queen Anne features are allusions with no structural connections. The gables, particularly those on the east facade, are the visual signature of the building and dominate the first impression of a visitor approaching from the estate drive, with Queen Anne styling expressed through false purlins - built up six eight inch lengths of 2 X 10 board applied to the external walls of the house at the roof soffit - and enhanced through the use of imitation half timbering on the small gable over the entrance hall. Similarly, the lighting of dormers in the north and east roofs, attic space above the stairhall and the south front with eight light casement windows, as the use of a round topped sash window and a narrow rectangular light on the east front, are not integral to the house's use or structure.

The presence of these visual details, however, is part of a larger pattern of eclecticism throughout the design. For example, the central stairhall lends the house a concentric flow-pattern which is octagonalized by parallel cut- corners throughout the first floor which contribute to the blending of circular and rectangular space effected in a house design. Additionally, the eclectic quality of the design allows the Manor House to echo several characteristics of the shingle style building it replaced (see analysis below).

Its Delano and Aldrich third characteristic is the design's attention to separating family and service spaces. While the separation of leisure and work spaces is characteristic of many architect's work in the early twentieth century, the combination of this feature, with the attention to siting and room positioning noted above, can be likened to the efficient functionality of the other Delano and Aldrich designs and seems to be well expressed in C.E. Hooper's 1915 advice on planning a country house, "Make your plan simple and the rooms in natural relation to one another, and don't have to go through a room of a somewhat retired character to find one of a more public nature; as for instance through the library into the living room. When one is obliged to encroach on any one function to perform another it is bad planning." [32]

The separation of leisure and work spaces was also effected by a sharp division of both outdoor and indoor areas of the estate. Outdoors, the farm and service buildings were located to the north and west of the family spaces in the

Manor House. A number of side roads provide access to these areas insuring that deliveries and farm activity could be carried out away from the sight, hearing and smell of the family and guests. Aerial photos of the estate demonstrate that the outdoor spaces to the south and east of the Manor House were pastures providing open vistas and a few grazing cattle. [33]

This pastoral quality was enhanced in the 1920's by construction of a pergola - planted with rambling rose along the drive to the manor house - which served as the visual boundary between service and family space. A second pergola set in the view plane between the Manor House and the staff house to its northwest, screened the service buildings and activities of the service area from visitors using the south lawn. In addition to the effective obscuring of work scenes from those enjoying leisure, these constructions enhanced the separation of spheres on the estate.

In this same decade, Mr. Smith had five summerhouses built. They were, at the same time, oversized garden ornaments and manifestations of the concept of pastoral tranquility in their repitition of the structural properties of the Manor House porch at a variety of outlying locations throughout the "leisure" portion of the estate. [34]

Indoors, this separation was achieved by the presence of separate servant passages through out the house. The intention of separating these spaces was indicated by Bissel's note, "servant portion of house begins here" on the original first floor blue-print at the intersection of passage "A" and passage "B". [35] His note is borne out in the relatively undecorated quality of the passages, that of the north stairway, and the other service areas of the kitchen wing.

Passages "A" and "B" are far less attractive than the main entrance leading from the front door past the principal family rooms. Passage "A" is narrow and windowless for much of its length in sharp contrast to virtually every family and guest space. Though alteration subsequent the Key School's purchase of the manor house opened passage "A" to the main entrance hall, in the Smith era, a wall separated this space. Discrete servant activity was facilitated by a door to the central stairhall from passage "A", described below. As the description of this space's use, below, indicates, the flooring in this corridor reflects its possible secondary use as an informal access to the house for returning outsdoorsmen. This possibility mediates the starkness of the space. This mediation is also supported by the existence of a a large washroom to the west of the passage and a decorative brass handrail on the concrete steps leading to the north-opening door at the end of the passage.

By contrast, passage "B", which connects the kitchen wing to passage "A" ,is a starkly functional space lowered to accommodate placement of small rectangular windows in the living room's north wall. Using passage "B" requires servants to step down three stairs from the kitchen and three steps back up to passage "A". The floor of passage "B" is concrete. It has three small windows in its north wall, but

they offer little in terms of either view or ventilation.

The Manor House's fourth design feature characteristic of the work of Delano and Aldrich is the presence of a separate laundry facility just to the north of the Manor House. Reminiscent of the laundry designed by Delano and Aldrich for the Rockefeller, Pocantilo Hills estate, Kykuit, [35] This two-story stuccoed building enabled laundering to take place out of sight and hearing of family and guests and accommodated a permanent staff. The building was designed in with three parallel, south-facing entrance doors providing space for the laundry as well as preserving fruit section and housing for its staff. Unlike other buildings on the estate, the laundry was built with a high foundation, placing the first floor approximately four feet above ground level, and required workers to carry loads up and down outside steps. In this structural detail, the building is far less efficient than other work or living spaces on the Hilsmere estate.

Cyrus Bissell's design for the Manor House demonstrated his skill in that he proved able to craft a beautiful, functional house which achieved almost paradoxical goals. It lent the imposing iconography of an English manor house to the estate, utilized the natural beauty of its site to both aesthetic and climatic ends, and - despite its beauty- was a plain summer residence which could be left unoccupied for a portion of the year. The design of the Manor House, a product of his early years, demonstrates his skilled use of decorative and spatial elements. Further research might trace the development of Bissell's designs to determine how the Manor House fits into the context of a long career.

Part II Details of Construction

Structural details of the Manor House reiniforce the assertion that the building is an excellent example of an eclectic, functional design whose beauty and ease serve as a microcosm of the larger order of the estate.

A. External structural details not previously included:

The Manor House is a wooden, western frame building on a poured concrete foundation which is sided in stucco over wood sheething. The orininal roofing matererial was slate shingles; these were replaced with asphalt shingles in 1990. Roof edges are fitted with copper gutters and down-spouts. Along the roof ends, overhangs are enclosed with pine facia and wainscot soffits but rafter ends are exposed . All gables have false purlins. The east facing gable over the entrance door and south facing gable have pine, immitation half timbering applied ot the siding.

Aside from the false purlins and imitation half-timbering, the house has few exterior decorative features, although photographs reveal the 1920's presence of a square sectioned trellis applied to the north end of the east facade of the library wing and the south-west facade of kitchen wing.

An important structural and visual feature of the building was achieved by the use of poured concrete columns to support the porch roof running along the east and south facades. The columns were assembled vertically of two joined four foot longsections. They were spaced in intervals of nine feet ornamenting the facades while augmenting the open quality of the design. The twelve-foot deep open-air porch was floored in rectangular quarry tile and edged with a one foot wide cement band (a design feature echoed in the nearby gazebos). Though not visible from a distance, from a close view, the use of red quarry tile as porch flooring established a strong chromatic variation which relieved the house's expanses of white surface.

The 13′ x 13′ porte cochere extended diagonally to the north east of the main entrance and bridged the circular drive on concrete columns matching which those of the porch. The roof over this structure matched the porch roof in structure and had a wainscotted soffit.

B. Interior structural details not previously included:

1. Overview of first floor family spaces:

The Manor House appears to be asymmetrical in its floor plan, and it seems to ramble with rooms oriented solely in consideration to their function. A study of the blueprint presents the house as if seen from above and reveals the importance of the central circular stairhall in the design. (See Figure 22 and 23) The Manor House is designed in a series of projections growing off this cylindrical column. On the blueprint this centrality is reinforced by the presence of cross axis which meet dead center in the stairhall and which orient the rest of the building. Bissell's design is not so much symmetrical as it is concentric with all movement through the house taking place in relation to this central space.

The vertical axis on Cyrus Bissell's blueprint is oriented from approximately 80° East to 260° West. It bisects the entrance hall and main entrance vestibule, but runs just inside of the southern wall of the dining room. The vestibule and entrance hall open the house to visitors all the way to the stair hall. These rooms , in effect the public areas of the house, are open yet divided from each other by French doors. The dining room oriented in such a manner that it suggests, rather than displays its presence to the visitor.

The kitchen wing, containing the pantry, kitchen, servants' dining room and receiving room reinforces the hierarchy of view planes and segregation of space mentioned above. The kitchen wing extends from the northwest corner of the dining room at approximately a forty five degree angle to the vertical axis of Bissell's design. The effect of this siting is to render the kitchen invisible from any window in the family or public areas of the house and to place the activities of food

preparation as far as possible from the living room and porch.

In addition to the distinction of public and private spaces, there is a hierarchy of intimacy in family spaces The hierarchy of intimacy is achieved in progression from open to increasingly small closed spaces. The eastern and southern walls of the Manor House contain the main porch. This is the most open family space. The wide porch is just two steps above the level of the lawn serving as an informal buffer between the outdoors and indoors and as a passage between the front door, living room and dining room.

Situated to the north of the entrance hall from the living room, the library is smaller, more private space. Its northwest wall contains a carved stone fireplace which suggests comfort in less seasonable times.

Double French doors open from the library into a still smaller family space, the den. The division of these family rooms by the entrance hall suggests a possible gender division in principal usage. The living room might serve as social space for female members of the household. The library and den might have been most often used by men with the den serving as a lounge and an office. This gender division is reinforced by the presence of a large gun room adjacent to the den - though not directly accessible from it. One hypothesis pictures hunters returning to the house, entering by a side passage, detailed below, depositing guns, and relaxing over a drink in the den or library.

2. Dimensions and detailing of first floor family spaces:

Walls and ceilings throughout the house are plastered and were painted white. Ceilings throughout the first floor are 10' high. The first floor has the following moldings and trim: a 2" flat, rectangular molding paired with a 1.5"bead molding at the ceiling level; 5.75" rectangular molding which frames all doors and window openings in the house, a six inch base board molding, and architraving in the entrance hall, library, and receiving room. In each room, however, a distinctive pattern of fenestration captures the beauty of the house's surroundings. Decoration, in effect, is achieved by arranging French doors, large sash windows, second floor balconies, and access to the porch to direct the attention of the viewer to the outdoors.

a. Front door and vestibule

The 3'5" X 6'11.5" front door (door no longer extant) opens to a 7'X4'10" vestibule. 11.5X 6'11.5" sidelights of square panes. There is a 6' wide X 14.5" high, non-opening transom above the door. The north and south walls of the vestibule are decorated with 12" raised panel architriving standing 24" above floor level. The vestibule has plaster walls and ceiling. The room has 1.5" tongue in groove hard pine flooring. Four board rectangular framing is achieved in the floor by laying the

four end grain boards perpendicular to the rest of the floor.

b. Entrance hall and receiving room:

The entrance hall of the Manor House opens from the east facade of the house and runs 21' west to the central stair hall. The flooring in the entrance hall is of 1.5" tongue in groove hard pine. The same four board rectangular framing is achieved in the floor by the use of perpendicular planks at each end of the hall. A framed 5' X 6'11.5" opening leads to the vestibule. On either side of this opening stand coat closets. The doors to the closets are of 2" thick hard pine one panel doors 6'4.5" by 23".

Just inside the opening from the vestibule to the entrance hall is a 10'2" X 7'10" receiving room. This room is separated from the entrance hall by a 2'7" X 6'8" 2" two panel pine door. It is floored with 1.5" tongue in groove hard pine flooring with the same end grain framing noted in regard to the entrance hall. A 42" X 24" radiator stands under a north facing 3'4" X 5'6" six over one sash window.

c. Library, den and gun room:

To the north of the hall and west of the receiving room is the 16'10" X 18'3" library. 6'3" walls cut the south west and north west corners of the room. The north west corner contains a 4'10" wide X 4'3" high fireplace. The surrounds and mantle front of this fireplace are of stone carved with bas-relief fruit and urn ornamentation. The opening to the fireplace is 3'1" square. The east wall of the library is pierced with a 3'3" X 5'5" six over one sash window with 14" X 5'5" one over one sash window sidelights. A 43" X 24" radiator is located under this window. The original flooring in the library, den and gun room is obscured by wall to wall carpeting, but safe assumption is that the house was floored with 1.5 " tongue in groove hard pine and covered by rugs throughout the family spaces of the first floor. [24]

To the north of the library is the 13'3" X 11' den. This room has two windows, a north facing 2'9" X 1'2" one over one sash window and a east facing 3'5" X 5'5" six over one sash window.

To the north of the den is the 10' x 9'8" gun room. This room has one north facing 2'9" X 4'10" six over one sash window. A 33" X 24" radiator is located under this window.

d. Living room:

The 21' X 32' living room is the largest room in the house. It is fenestrated with 52" x 58", eight over one sash windows facing the east, south east and

southwest The south wall of the room is dominated by three sets of 57" x 81" ten light French doors hung in 28.5" pairs with a four light 12" transom above. Located under each sash window is a 42" X 24" radiator. Its west wall contains a carved stone fireplace whose designs depict stylized duck heads, fruits and leafs.

e. Dining room:

Immediately west of the stair hall is the 20' X 22'2" dining room. The dining room's south wall is almost entirely composed of 9'10" X 7'10" French door leading to the porch. This door is flanked by 2'3" X 7'10" non-opening French door- sidelights. It is topped by a 14.5" X 9'10" transom. Anecdotal evidence from a family member, supported by photographs, suggest that the area immediately outside the dining room was screened and used to house macaws and love birds for the amusement of diners.[25] Immediately west of the large French door, the truncated south west corner of the dining room is pierced with a 37" X 58" six over one casement window with a three light 14" x 37" transom. Inches away, the room's west wall has an identical window. The dining room wall surfaces which face the South River are, then, largely glass. The walls of the room which front less advantageous sights, a pasture to the west and the service buildings to the north have, by contrast few windows, and none at eye level. Aside from the sash window mentioned, the west wall of the room is unfenestrated. The north wall has four 26" X 20" four light casement windows standing 7'1" above floor level. The dining room is heated by a 48" X 24" radiator under the west window and a 23" X 24" radiator under the north windows. An interesting feature of the dining room was the presence of two service call buttons, one located as in other first floor rooms on the left side of the service door molding, but the other is unique in the house, being placed near the center of the floor facilitating summoning from the table.

f. Stair hall:

To the west of the entrance hall is the 17'2" in diameter circular central stair hall. From the foot of the stairs and moving in a clockwise manner, openings for passage "A", entrance hall, living room, porch, and dining room are equally spaced. The stair hall is floored in 1.5" hard pine. A 24" square fresh air ventillation grate is in the center of the floor, and a 48" X 48" grill to cover a radiator is on the south wall. The stairway is hung along the curve north west wall. The stairway has no supporting members between it and the floor and its underside is a plastered soffit. It has 19 steps with 7" risers and depths of 14" at the wall end narrowing to 7" at the rail end. The 2'6" high stair rail is supported on three turned wooden balusters per step. The ogee molding faced cap rail is 2.75" high X 2.75" wide. The stair treads are pine.

3. Dimensions and detailing of first floor servant spaces:

a. Passages "A" and "B":

Parallel to and just east of the horizontal axis on Bissell's design is 6'6" X 37'6" - corridor, passage "A". This corridor leads from a side entrance past side doors to the gun room, den and library on the east and a washroom and servant "passage B" on the west. The corridor is far narrower than the entrance hallway and its strongest visual impact is of unbroken white plaster walls. The corridor connects to the stair hall through a narrow doorway a the foot of the stairs. One segment of circular stair hall obscures this corridor from one entering via the entrance hall and another blocks the view from the stair hall down the length of passage "A". Subtly located across the stair hall from the door to passage "A" is a servant door to the living room.

Passage "A" is a service corridor which links the kitchen passage (passage "B") to the gun room, den, library and living room. In addition, it leads to servant stairways to the basement, second and third floors. The passage is lighted by a west facing 2'10" X 4'9" six over one sash window, and is heated by a 36" X 24" radiator beneath the window. At the north end of the hall, a 5'10" X 5' vestibule leads to the north facing 2'10" X 7' entrance door. The north vestibule has paired east and west facing 2'3" X 4'9" six over one sash windows. The south end of passage "A" opens to the central stair hall via a 39" X 72.5" door. The wash room on passage "A" measures 11' X 3.5' ; it has a ceramic tile floor and an 8' high ceiling. The washroom is lit by a 30" X 46" six over one sash window.

The starkly utilitarian passage "B" is roughly perpendicular to passage "A" and runs from passage "A" to the kitchen wing. The 3'7" X 27' corridor stands 24" below the main floor level, and is accessed down four steps from passage "A" and the pantry. The passage has a concrete floor and four 23" X 29" two over two sash windows spaced 52" apart. The passage is heated by a 27" x 24" radiator on the south wall.

b. Pantry, kitchen, servants' dining room and receiving room:

Immediately to the north west of the dining room is the irregularly shaped pantry - roughly rectangular with an intrusion by the dining room from the south east. This east end of this space contains the four steps leading to passage" B". Just north of the intersection of the pantry and passage "B" were, no longer extant, steps leading to the kitchen wing section of the basement. The pantry bears no signs of its original use; it is currently a large alcove.

To the north west of the pantry is the kitchen, receiving area and servants dining area. All partitions in the 20' x 36'2" wing have been removed; however, paint remnants on the kitchen chimney suggest that the kitchen occupied approximately 14' . The north east corner of the kitchen was dominated by a common bond, brick hearth 6' X 4'7" with an opening 5'6" X 4'7". The kitchen floor is of rectangular quarry tile.

A later addition to the original plan, suggested by photographs to have been added in the 1920's is a small 72" X 96" "breakfast area" attached to the west wall of the kitchen. This small room has three glass walls composed of sash windows. The north west and south east walls are fenestrated with two 27" X 57" six over one windows each. The west wall contains two 37" X 57" six over one sash windows. All three walls have 14" tall transoms. The room is heated by a 66" X 24" radiator on the north wall.

4. Second floor rooms:

The second floor of the manor House, as the first, is oriented around the central stairway. At the second floor landing, immediately to the south of the top step, a 4'6" X 5'5" high double French door looking out over the porch roof balcony and the South River. Each half of this double door is of eight lights. There is an semi-circular transom above the door which is 2'3" high X 4'6" wide; it is radially divided into five triangular sections each sub divided at half its radius. Outside of this casement door is a copper, umbrella shaped, awning fabricated of eight triangular sections. The awning is 2' in depth, 5' wide and 2'6" in height. Just south east of the casement door is the 48" X 48" radiator grate. Flooring on the second floor is also of 1.5" tongue in groove hard pine. Two doorways open from the central stair hall. One 2'6 " X 6'8" door with a 16" high transom above opens into the owners' bed chanber. This door is oriented so that one rising up the stairs would enter it without turning. Located in the north west corner of the bed room, however, the door provides access but no immediate sight-line into the room. A second door of identical dimension opens onto an east to west running hall which provides access to the other seven bedrooms on the second floor.

The second floor bedrooms are oriented and fenestrated according to a strongly asserted hierarchy of view. The owner's and owner's daughters' chambers are above the living room and have large six over one sash windows looking out, respectively, to the south and east to the South River and the Chesapeake Bay. Two guest rooms above the library and den have sash windows providing a view to the east. Two guest rooms above the kitchen wing have sash windows providing a view to the south west.

The owners' bed chamber, the owners' daughters' room, and the bathroom in between have been combined and reconfigured into a large school room, 36' X 21' with a 10' wide rectangle subtracted from the north east corner. Windows and radiatiors give some indication of the original view planes and heating plans however. Each bedroom has a south facing 3'10" x 4'9" six over one sash window, a 26.5" X 4'9" facing south west and south east, respecitvely, six over one sash window, and a 2'6.5" X 4'9" facing west and east respectively, six over one sash window. The former bathroom has a 1'10" X 3'7" south facing two over one sash window. The rooms were heated by 30" X 24" radiators under the south east and

south west facing windows. and a 17" x 24" radiator under the bathroom window.

A portion of the daughters' bed chamber and the nurse's room just to the north have been combined as a second large, irregularly shaped school room with a perimeter pictured as a 22'6" X 35' rectangle intruded by a roughly 7' X 25' rectangle subtracted from the south west corner. The room has north and east facing 2'6.5" X 4'9" six over one sash, 2'6 " X 6'8" door with a 16" transom above.

Bed chambers four and five are located over the library wing. Again this space is a 21' X 30' rectangular with a 12' x 8' rectangular interruption in the north west corner to accommodate the servant stairway. The former bed chamber 5 at the north end of the wing has a north facing 2'6" X 4'9" six over one sash window. Each room has an east facing 3'2" X 4'9" six over one sash window. The former servant hall to the west of these rooms and the landing of the servant stairway each have west facing 2'10" X 4'9" six over one sash windows. The former bathroom between bed chambers four and five has an east facing 1'10" X 3'7" two over one sash window. The rooms are heated by 26" X 24" radiators under the east facing windows. The bathroom was heated by a 12" X 24" radiator under the window.

To the west of bed chamber four and running from it to the bedrooms over the kitchen wing is a 38'6" X 6'6" passage which is accessed from the central stair hall via a 2'6 " X 6'8" door with a 16" transom above. The passage way has one window - 2'9" X 4'9" six over one sash - on its north wall at the midpoint. The passage has a 30" X 24" radiator on the north wall at the west end. Currently a 5'4" x 6'9" exit accessing a stairway has been located in the north wall of the passageway near the west end.

On the south wall of the second floor east west passage is the 12'9" X 10'9" , remnant of the reconfigured bed chamber six which now serves as the Lower School Head's office. This room has two large windows which look out over the porch room to the South River. The south facing window is the largest on the second floor, a 3'11" X 4'9" six over one sash window. Just around the unusual 90 degree south west corner (in fact, the only south west corner in any room of the first two floors) is a west facing 2'9" X 4'9" six over one sash window. Bed chamber six is heated by a 38" x 24" radiator under the west facing window (the largest on the first two floors). The room, in a curious partial continuation of a theme manifested throughout the first two floors, has a cut off north west corner. A bathroom stands to the east of this room, and although it has been reconfigured, one wall preserves a medicine cabinet, sink, window and radiator.

Bed chambers seven and eight were located in the wing over the kitchen. This area included a trunk room to the north of the bed chambers and a servant passage along the east wall has been opened into one large school room, 21'6" X 36'10". A south west facing 3' 8" X 4'9" six over one sash windows opened views to the South River from each of these rooms. The former bathroom between the

rooms had a 1'10" X 3'7" two over one sash window. The rooms were heated by 36" X 24" radiators located under the windows.

The former servant hallway had one north east facing 2'9" X 4'9" six over one sash window. It was heated by a 3'10 X 24" radiator.

The former trunk room, a sloped ceilinged (8' at chimney to 5' at dormer window) alcove under the jerk roof end of the wing, is 10'6" X 21'6". The trunk room is lighted with south west and north east facing 3'4" X 2' double 4 light casement windows. A five foot square alcove under a dormer in the north west facing jerk roof is lit by an identical window.

5. Third floor rooms:

The third floor rooms of the Manor House are small, relatively closed and not well ventilated or lit. The stairway to the third floor is a winding, utilitarian extension of the servant stairway suggesting that the area was intended to house staff members. Family members assert, however, that staff never lived in the house, but that the third floor was used as guest rooms and a children's play area. The southern-most third floor room reinforces its use as a play area through small, low windows, low closets on the east wall and an oversized radiator on the south wall. The room measures 32'7" X 11'10". It has three sets of south facing 2'9"" X 2'6.25"" eight light casement windows and an east facing 2'8" X 3'8"" six over one sash window with a round top. A larger room at the top of the stairhall column is said to have been a play area for larger children. The room measures 17' along each of its full walls, but is octagonalized on the southwest corner. It is fenestrated with three sets of small eight light casement windows, which lend a castle-tower air. A small rectangular room with walls formed by the roof slope is located above the dining room wing and accessed through a long narrow corridor paralleling the castle-tower like room just described. This room was said to be a guest room, but its closed space and small dormer windows suggest it would be unbearably hot in the Maryland summer. This dark 15' X 8" room is lit by a set of 2'8" X 3'8" six light casement windows. The furthest north third floor room is the 8' X 8' square room at the top of the stairs which is lit by a north facing 3' 8" X 4'9" six over one sash window. The third floor hallway is 8' X 28' and runs from roughly north to south from the the servant stairway to the play room.

6. Basement:

The basement of the Manor House is large, deep - approximately nine feet - concrete floored, and divided into three spaces. A remnant of green-painted asphalt over the cement near the north wall of the library wing reinforces the family accounts of this portion of the basement's having been a game area for shuffleboard and billiards. This room is accessed by a stairway from passage "A" just outside the

door to the den. A wainscotted partition with windows separates this space from the boiler room and coal chute in located under the stairhall and dining room. Under the kitchen wing, a third space separated by a wainscoated partition was used for the storage of preserved fruit and other food products from the estate. This room was accessed by a stairway from the pantry.

7. Mechanical equipment:

The Manor House was heated with coal fired steam heat with radiators in all rooms. The original piping and radiators are intact, though the boiler has been replaced with an oil fired steam boiler. 12" X 12" metal grates serving a no longer extant fresh air ventillation system remain in the living room and ground floor central stair hall.

The house was served by a central vacuum cleaning system. Each room and hallway has two inch in diamater outlet closed by flaps in the baseboard molding. The system was driven by a Arco Air Wand brand vacuum pump which, though no longer operative, remains in the basement.

The house had running water in the kitchen and six bathrooms served by an electric-pumped well and water pressure tower located just north of the house. Five windmills were located throughout the estate. A pump, [26]in a small stone building located just across the farm road from the estate manager's house served the aquatic gardens. The house was served with municipal electricity and electric lights and a low voltage servant annunciator system throughout. Many oringinal two buton light switches are in service throughout the house, and several original light fixtures are in place on the third floor. Though no loger functioning, the door-jamb mounted annunciator buttons are in place throughout the house as is the basement wiring and central bell.

C. Alterations and renovations not previously mentioned:

Since being purchased by The Key School in 1962, the Hilsmere Manor house has been altered significantly. These changes have reflected the change in building use from residence to school building, and they have transformed the way internal spaces are configured and used as well as transforming the way the building is viewed and eliminating the blending of interior and exterior spaces.

A major alteration which has affected the building's visual appeal and its use is the closing-in of the porte cochere and porch. In achieving this enclosure wooden partitions containing single light, non-opening windows have been placed outside the cement porch columns. The porch enclosure was accomplished in two stages. In 1962 the section of porch immediately outside of the dining room was enclosed. This renovation maintained the open visual quality of the building's primary

facade and echoed the use of French doors by terminating the enclosure toward the front of the house with a central French door flanked by matching side panels.

A subsequent enlargement of this enclosure in the late 1960's completed the alteration of the building's primary facade. The remaining section of porch and the porte cochere were enclosed creating space for a classroom and the school office, respectively. With this change, vehicle access to the front of the building was terminated. Primary access to the building was achieved from the north via a door into the school office in the former porte cochere area.

A lesser number of viewers approached the building by crossing the playing field between the principal facade and Hillsmere Drive, but the enclosure of the porch rendered this a far less evocative view, having eliminated the building's sense of openness and blending of interior and exterior space. In addition, The Key School renovation of the former service buildings of the Hilsmere estate into a campus altered the flow of visitors throughout the property. The formerly principal facades of the Manor House were relegated to secondary facades of the Manse. What were formerly secondary facades face the center of the school campus. This shift in traffic, along with the various enclosures served to obscure the visual impact of the building.

Interior spaces have also been significantly altered since 1962. On the first floor, the library has been expanded, by removing the walls between it and the former den and gun room, and it continues to be used as a library. The living room has been equipped with book cases and chalkboards, but maintains its former shape in its current use as a classroom. Both it and the library, however, are no longer accessed from the entrance hall via French doors with side lights. Instead, a single solid wooden door opens to each room. The former entrance spaces are blocked with plywood. Passage "A" remains though it no longer opens into the central stair hall but directly into the entrance hall. This provides more direct movement from the entrance hall to the former servant passage.

The second floor has been extensively altered in the transformation from dwelling to school. Most of the original interior walls and closets have been removed and partitions have been inserted to redivide the space. In the original configuration, each wing contained two bedrooms with a bathroom between. As a school, the space above the living room and entrance hall has been divided into a larger and a smaller classroom space. The space above the library, den and gun room has been reconfigured as one large classroom, The space above the dining room has been reconfigured in a way which enlarges the original bathroom and adds a second next to it. The bedroom between the original bath on this wing and the end of the wing has been preserved as an office. The space above the kitchen wing has been opened and the passages formerly along its northeastern side have been incorporated into the classroom space. Similarly, the partition between the northern-most bedroom and the trunk room has been eliminated and this space has

been incorporated into the classroom as well. The third floor has been altered very little. As a result, it preserves examples of the house's original electrical and plumbing fixtures along with examples of original finishes. One room on this floor has been modified to serve as a faculty work-room, but all other spaces retain original fenestration and walls.

Notes:

1. Quintal, Muriel Smith. Interview with Juliet Thompson December 20, 1994.

2. McWilliams, Jane Wilson and Carol Cushard Patterson. Bay Ridge on the Chesapeake. (Annapolis, Brighton Editions, 1986) p. 39.

3. McWilliams. p. 40.

4. McWilliams. p. 40.

5. Jackson, Elmer M., Jr. Annapolis: Three Centuries of Glamour. (Annapolis: Capital Gazette Press, 1936). p. 100.

6. McWilliams. p. 40.

7. McWilliams. p. 40.

8. McWilliams. p. 45.

9. Jackson. p. 99.

10. Aslet, Clive. The American Country House. (New Haven: Yale Univeristy Press, 1990) p. vi.

11. Aslet, pp. 3 - 17 & 260 - 261.

12. Aslet, pp. 3 - 17 & 260 - 261.

13. The Evening Capital, Annapolis, Maryland, October 14, 1903.

14. Deed, Liber 664, p147 - 156, Anne Arundel Circuit Court, Land Records. Grantor: Smith Family, Grantee: Hillsmere Estates Inc.

15. MSA No: C 72 Anne Arundel County Circuit Court (Equity Papers, Plats) John H. Thomas' Real Estate, 13 August 1880, "Hills Delight" [MdHR 40, 227-47, 1-2-6-3].

16. Quintal, Muriel Smith. Interview with Juliet Thompson November 20, 1994.

17. The New York Times, New York April 10, 1930.

18. Quintal, Muriel Smith. Interview with Juliet Thompson November 27, 1994.

19. The Evening Capital, Annapolis, Maryland, November 28, 1914.

20. Quintal, Muriel Smith. Interview with Juliet Thompson November 20, 1994.

21. The Evening Capital, Annapolis, Maryland, November 28, 1914.

22. Quintal, Muriel Smith. Interview with Juliet Thompson December 20, 1994. The large gate, one and half miles from the house was imposing but never locked and always open. Inside the gate was another sign - "Speed Limit 15 - 20 mph - NOT 21 mph" implying that he expected outsiders to enter.

23. The Evening Capital, Annapolis, Maryland, November 27, 1914.

24. Map Showing Water Lines at Hilsmere Farm, Anne Arundel County. Martin H. Smith, owner. Charles E. Miller, Civil Engineer, Eastport, Maryland. February, 1929. Key School Archives.

25. "Mrs. Martin Henry Smith 'Hilsmere Farm' Annapolis, Anne Arundel County, Maryland". Surveyed for Julian Brewer and Son by Fidelity-Phenix Fire Insurance Company, May 1, 1930 - V. Kurbyweit (corrected Sept 1936 by R.W.M. S/A" Map located in the archives of The Key School.

26. Information from the biographical file on American Architects at the American Institute of Architects, Washington, D.C; received via telephone interview with a librarian at the librry on 11/29/94.

27. Aslet. p. 52 A contrasting view of this firm's significance is evident by its lack of inclusion in a 1919 review article on the American Country House. Further research might reveal a decline in the prominence of Delano and Aldrich within the genre of the Country House by that date. If so, Mr. Bissell's having left the firm in the those years might gain significance. Kimball, Fiske. "The Americn Country House". The Architectural Record. (Vol. XLVI, No. IV, October, 1919) pp. 291 - 400.

28. Howe, Samuel. American Country Houses of Today. (New York: The Architectural Book Publishing Company, 1913) pp. 5, 15, & 21. See also "A House at Mount Kisco". The Architectural Record. (Vol. 30, July - December 1911) pp.352 - 355.

29. Howe, p. 21.

30. Kidney, Walter C. The Architecture of Choice: Eclecticism in America 1880 - 1930. (New York, George Braziller, 1974)p. viii See also Pierce, J.H. "A Recent Country House on Long Island: The GarverResidence at Oyster Bay". The Architectural Record. (Vol. XXXV, No. III, pp. 181 - 196 for a discussion of the popularity of eclecticism in Country House design.

31. Howe pp. 5, 15, & 21.

32. Hooper, Charles Edward. The Country House: A Practical Manual of the Planning and Construction of the American Country House and its Surroundings. (New York: Doubleday, Page and Company, 1913) p. 28.

33. Quintal, Muriel Smith. Interview with Juliet Thompson December 4, 1994. Mrs Quintal reported that the number of cattle was never above six or seven.

34. One summer house was located at each end of the drive and a third just to the west of the manor house, one near Hill's Point, and one south east of the Duvall house . Three summer houses constructed in the vicinity of the Manor House in the 1920's echo floor, column, and roof design features of the main house's proch. Each summer house is an isolated, open-air structure constructed of an ogee-curved, domed wooden roof supported by six tapering Doric columns standing on a circular quarry-tiled eighteen-foot diameter concrete base. Twenty-four rafters sawn in an ogee-curved pattern along their length meeting in a series of rabbeted terminus joints at the center of the roof are supported on a hollow, circular wooden plate centered on the tops of the columns. Each roof is sheathed in tongue-in-groove board (The fifth might predate this era - standing on land acquired from C. Milton Duvall and have served as a model for the others.)

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Bissell, Cyrus Y. Manor House Plans: Ground Floor
Located in the archives of The Key School, 534 Hillsmere Drive Annapolis, Md 21403

Deed, Liber 664, p147 - 156, Anne Arundel Circuit Court, Land Records.

Grantor: Smith Family, Grantee: Hillsmere Estates Inc.

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"A House at Mount Kisco". The Architectural Record. (Vol. 30, July - December 1911)

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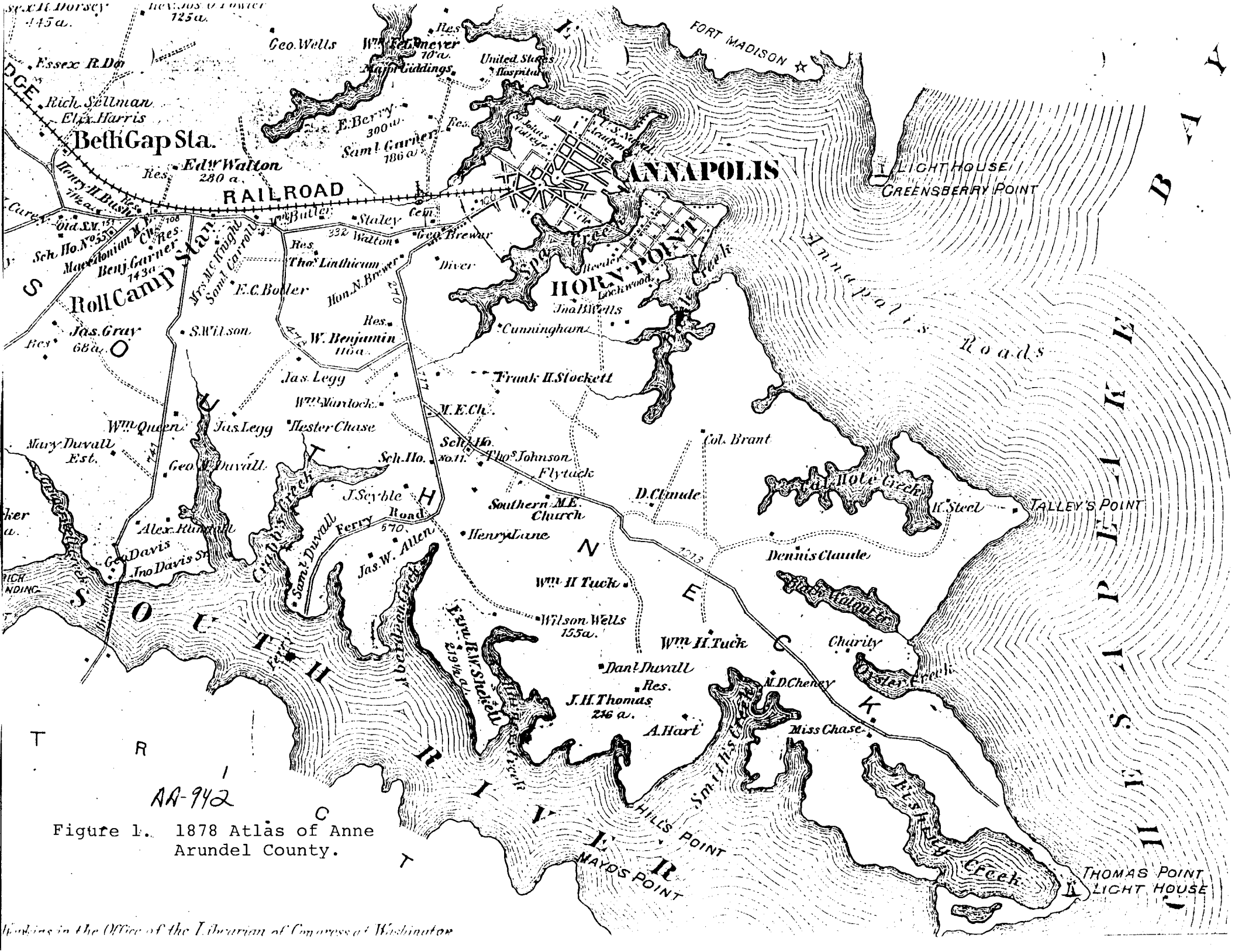
The New York Times

Pierce, J.H. "A Recent Country House on Long Island: The GarverResidence at Oyster Bay". The Architectural Record. (Vol. XXXV, No. III, pp. 181 - 196)

Mrs. Martin Henry Smith 'Hilsmere Farm' Annapolis, Anne Arundel County, Maryland". Surveyed for Julian Brewer and Son by Fidelity-Phenix Fire Insuance Company, May 1, 1930 - V. Kurbyweit (corrected Sept 1936 by R.W.M. S/A Map located in the archives of The Key School

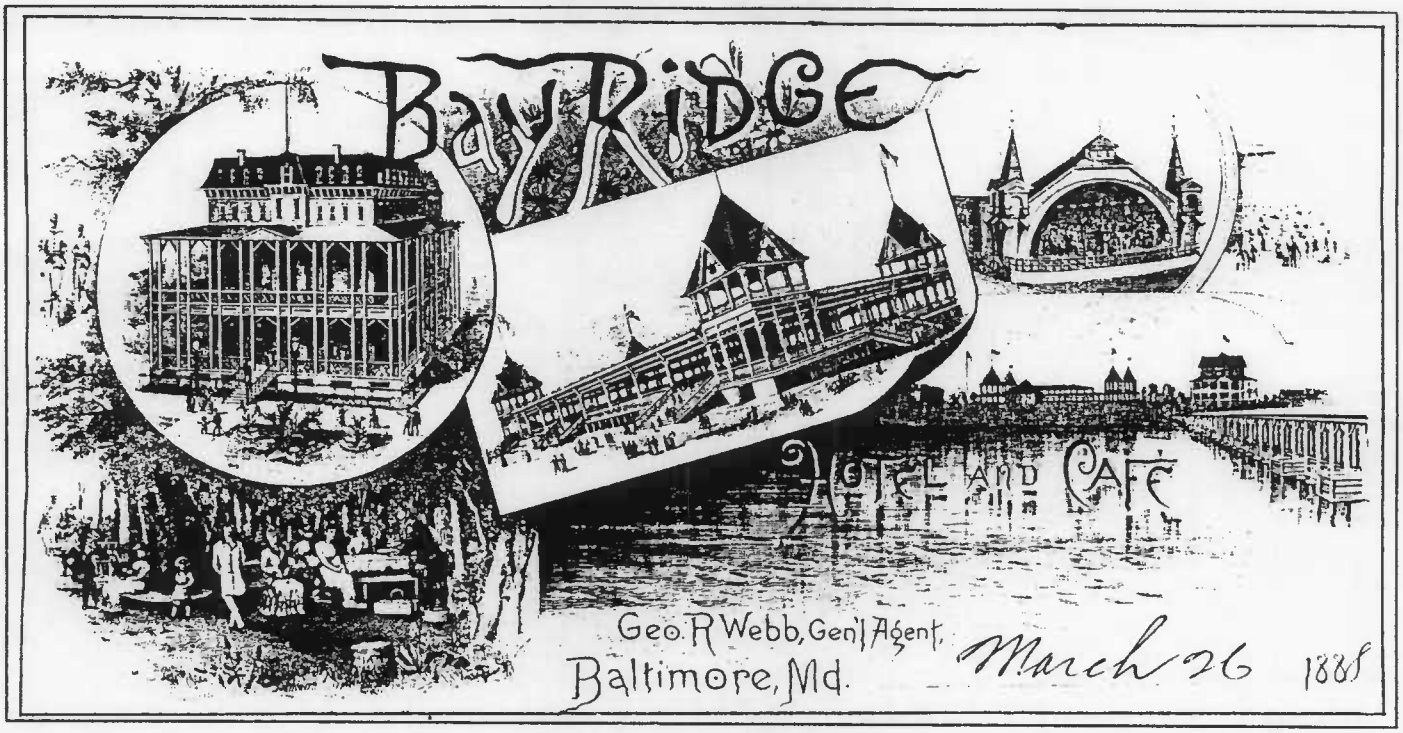
Topographical Survey: Key School Property. Richard W. Walker and Associates, Incorporated, Annapolis Maryland. April, 1989.



AA-942

Figure 1. 1878 Atlas of Anne Arundel County.

Working in the Office of the Librarian of Congress at Washington



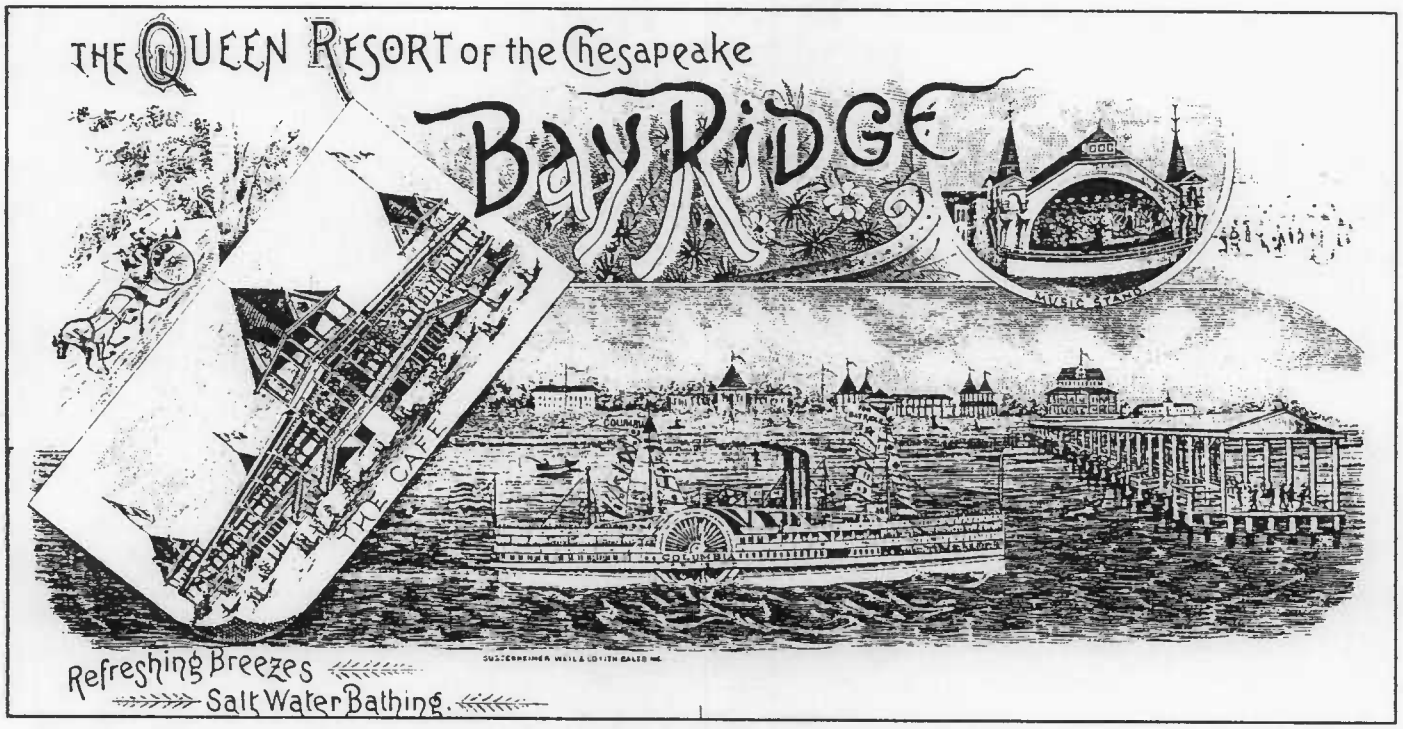


Figure 2. Advertisement for Bay Ridge on the Chesapeake, 1888. (for citation see Footnote 2)

AA-942

AA-942

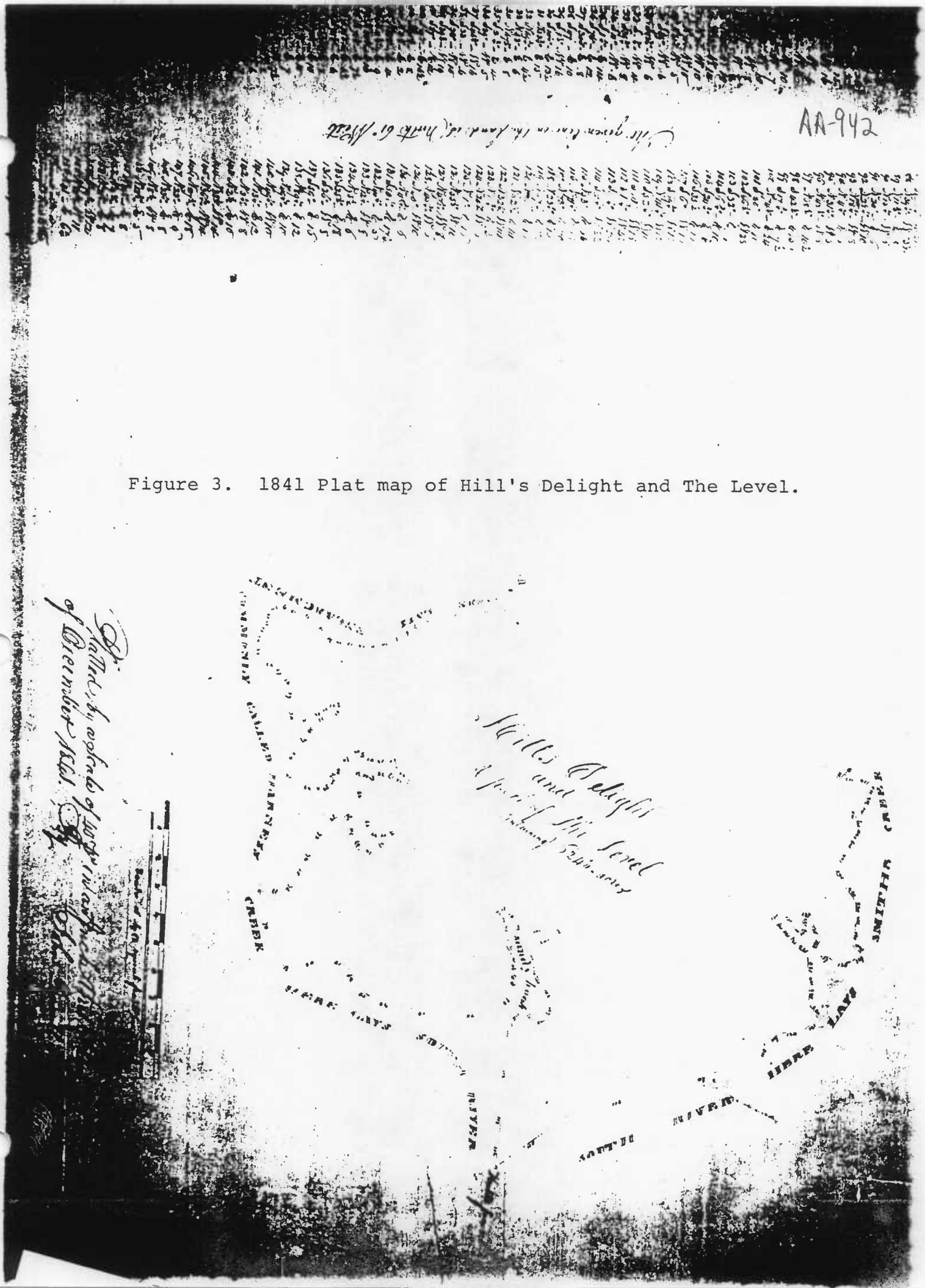


Figure 3. 1841 Plat map of Hill's Delight and The Level.

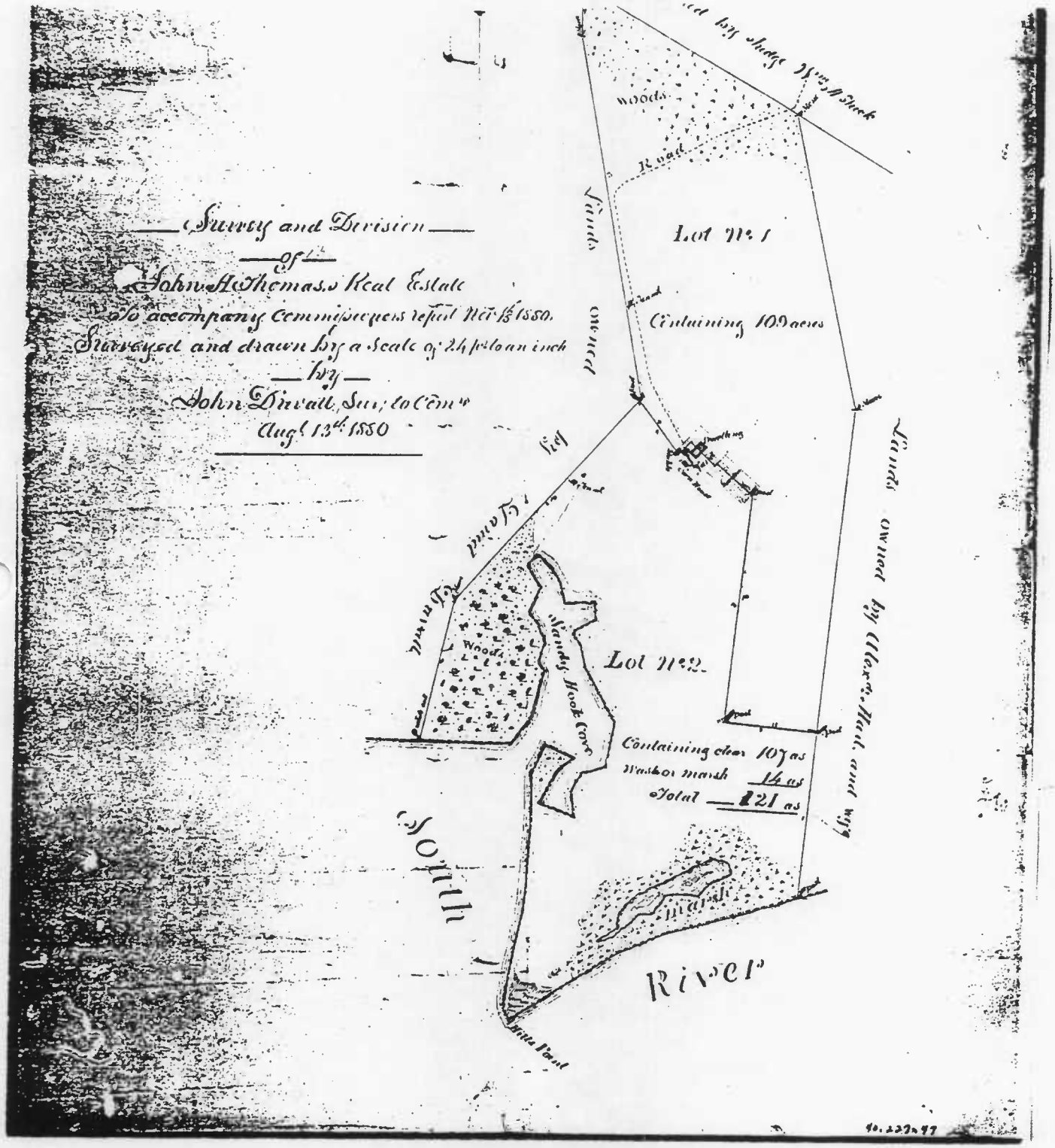
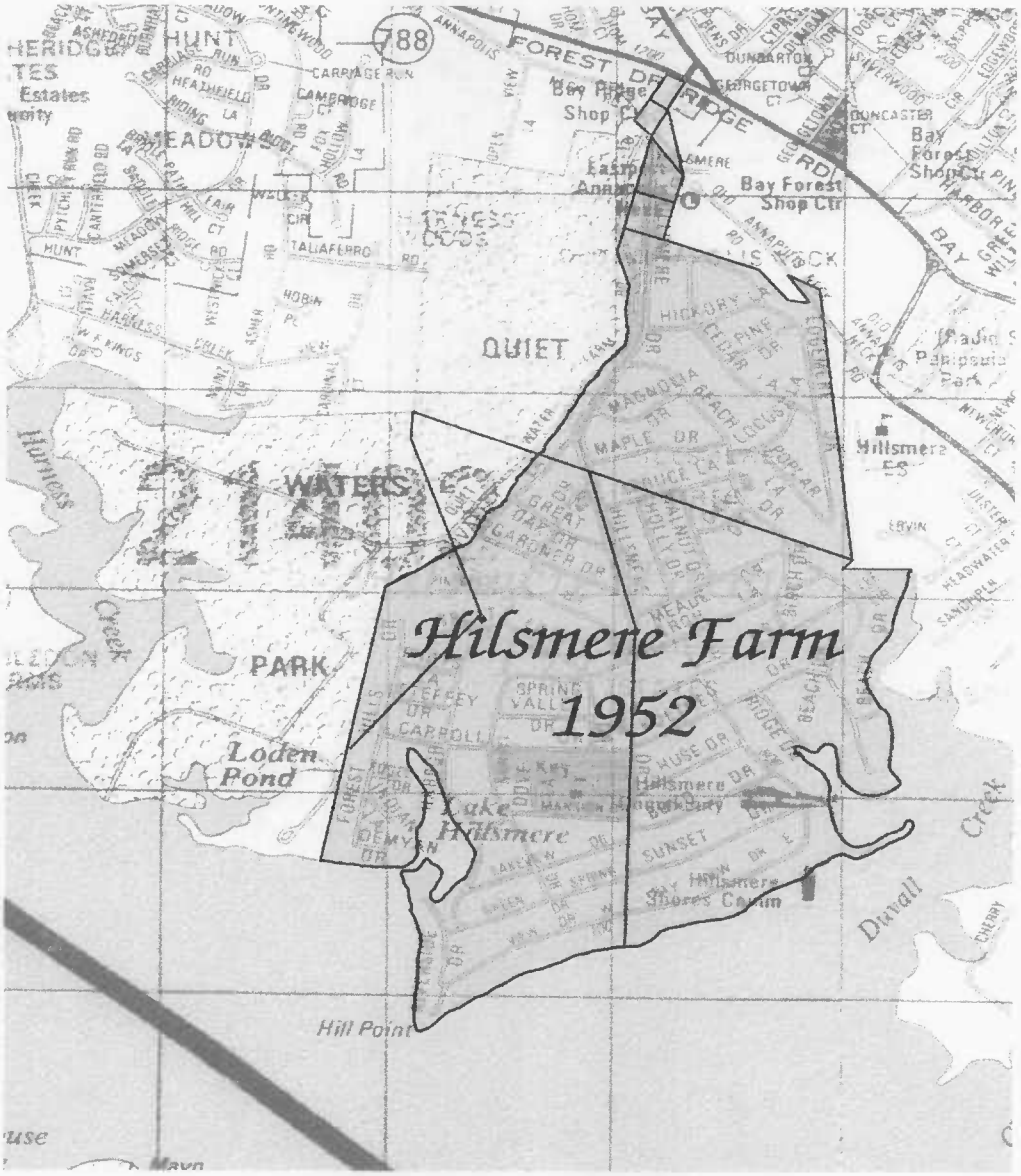


Figure 4. 1880 Plat map for John H. Thomas.

AA-942



1903	October 12	230 acres	Alice Hay	$5000
1906	December 26	182 acres	C. Milton Duvall	$7000
1908	May 23	2 acres	Rachel E. Stewart	$125
1908	June 5	2.25 acres	London Pinkney	
1908	September 23	123.2 acres	Phil H. Tuck	$1478.40
1917	June 29	2 acres	Walter H. Hart	$200
1919	September 17	3.85 acres	W. Meade Holladay	
1920	November 17	21.88 acres	Julian H. Harris	
1921	January 27	2.12 acres	Thomas E. Stevens	
1921	April 23	9.13 acres	W. Meade Holladay	
1922	January 30	21 acres	Julian H. Harris	

Figure 5. Martin H. Smith 's aquisitions from 1903 to 1922.

AA-942

AA-942

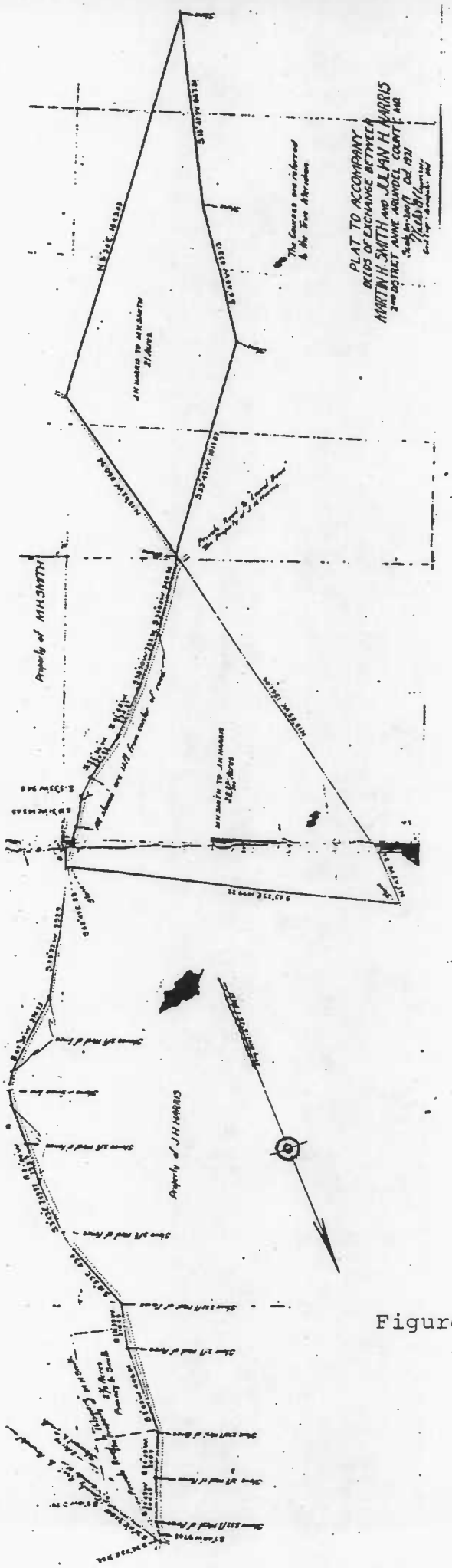


Figure 6. 1921 Plat map.

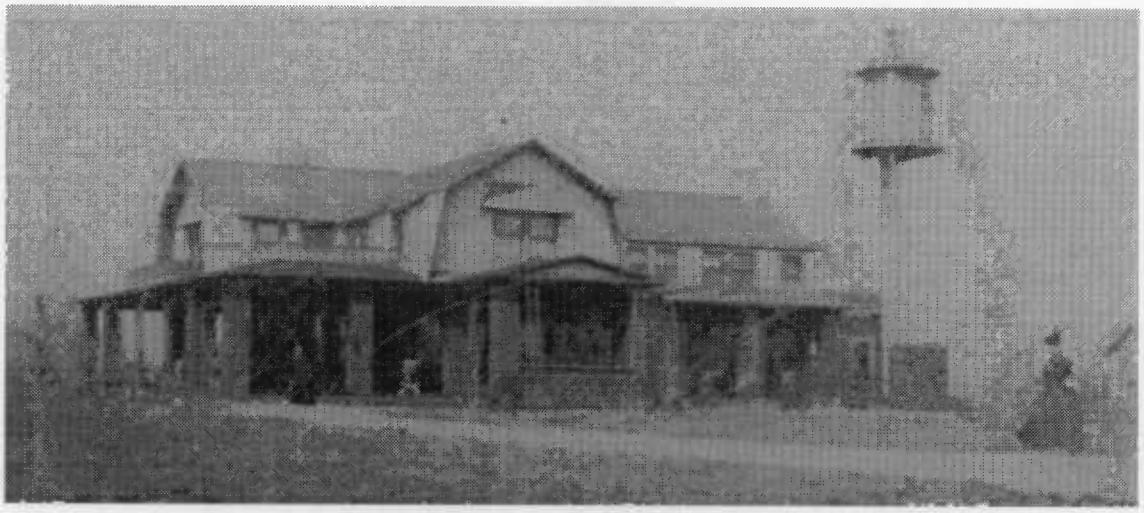


Figure 7. East facade of the Hilsmere Clubhouse; woman's dress in foreground suggests a pre 1900 date.

Figure 8. South facade of the Hilsmere Clubhouse, 1900 - 1914; this shot was taken prior to the addition of the third floor. Note the stuffed alligator in the foreground - Mr. Smith was an avid hunter - the staff house in the left background, and the farm manager's house in the right background.

Figure 9 A view of the Main Barn looking east (1903 - 1910).

Figure 10 Aerial view of the Main Barn (approximately 1930)

AA-942

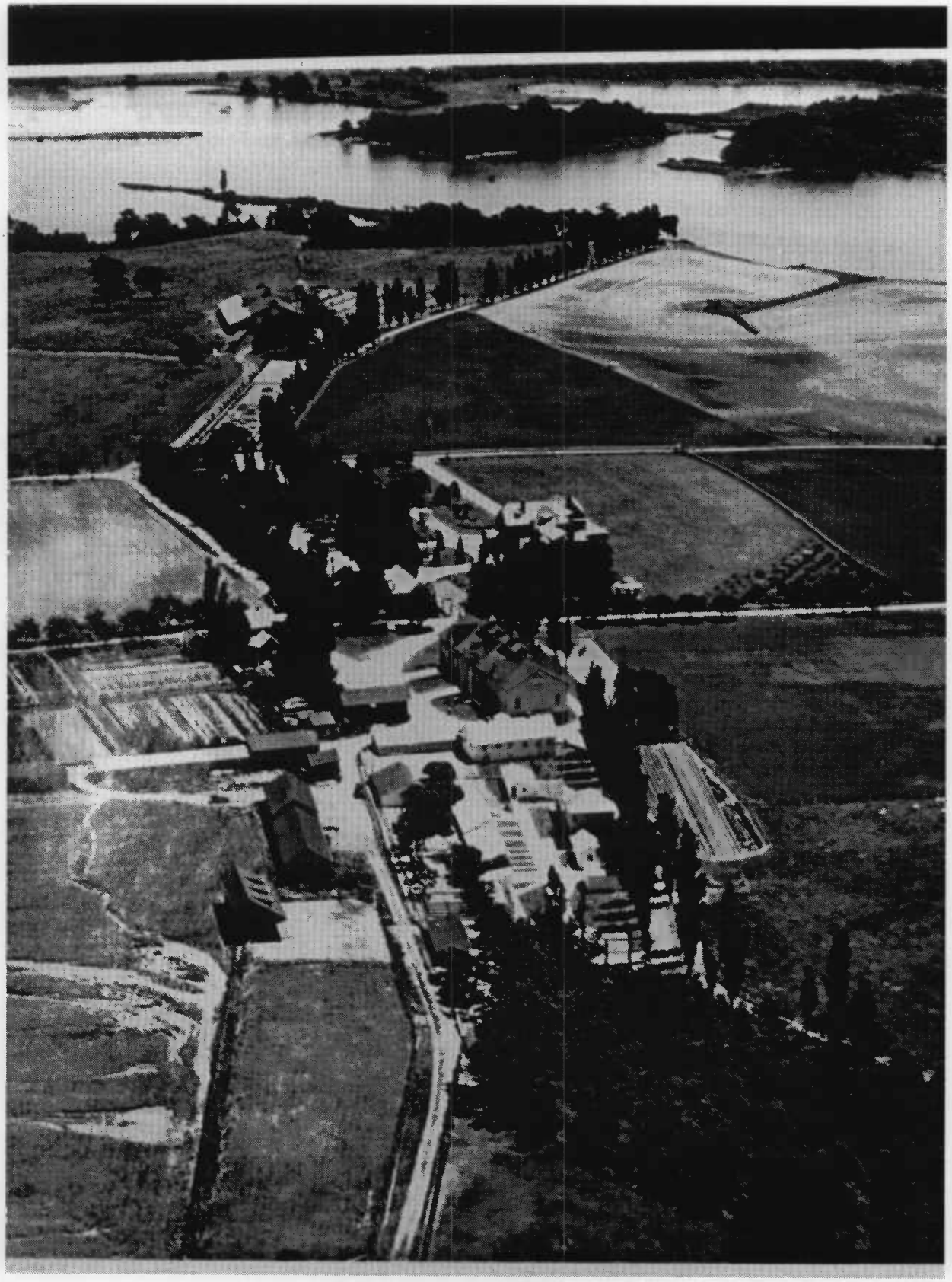


Figure 11 Aerial view of Hilsmere Farm looking east (approximately 1930)

AA-942

Figure 12. Aerial view of Key School looking east (1991).

Figure 13. 1915 Manor House showing original driveway (1991).

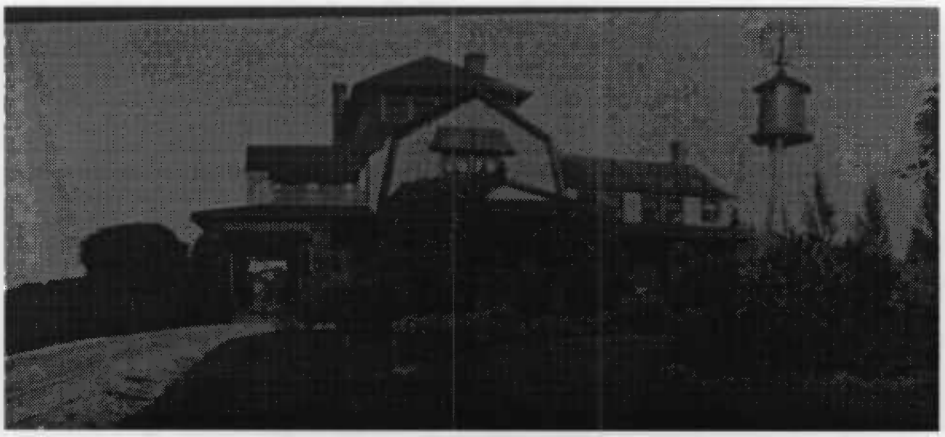


Figure 14.

A view of the east facade of the Hilsmere Clubhouse just prior to the 1914 fire

Figure 15.

A view of the south facade of the Hilsmere Clubhouse just prior to the 1914 fire.

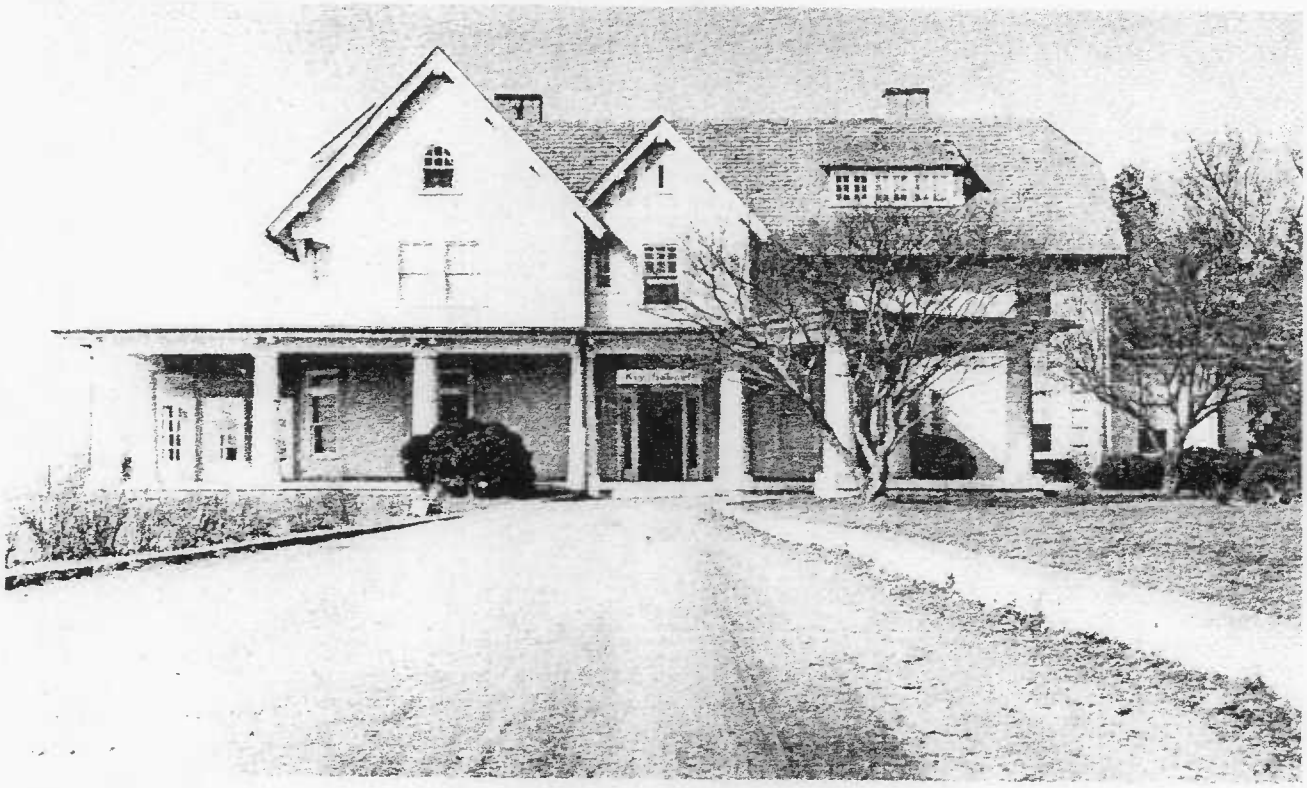


Figure 16The east facade of the Hilsmere Manor House as The Key School, approximately 1962

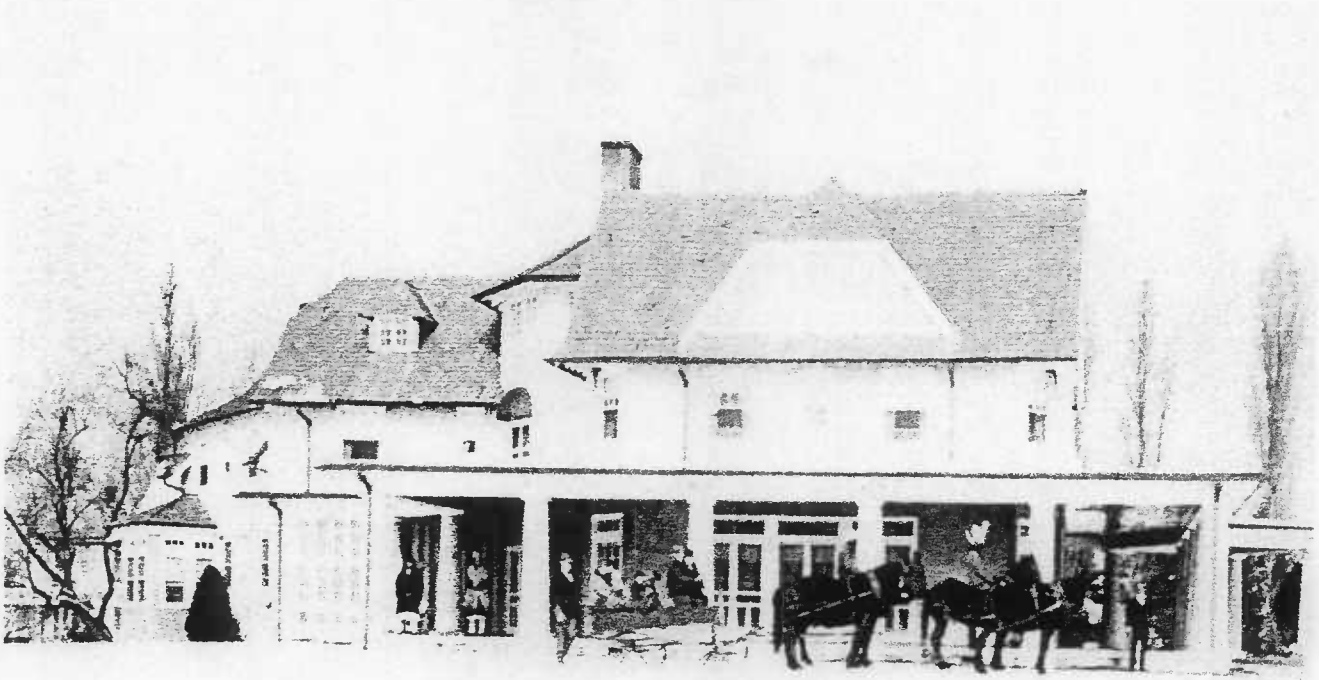
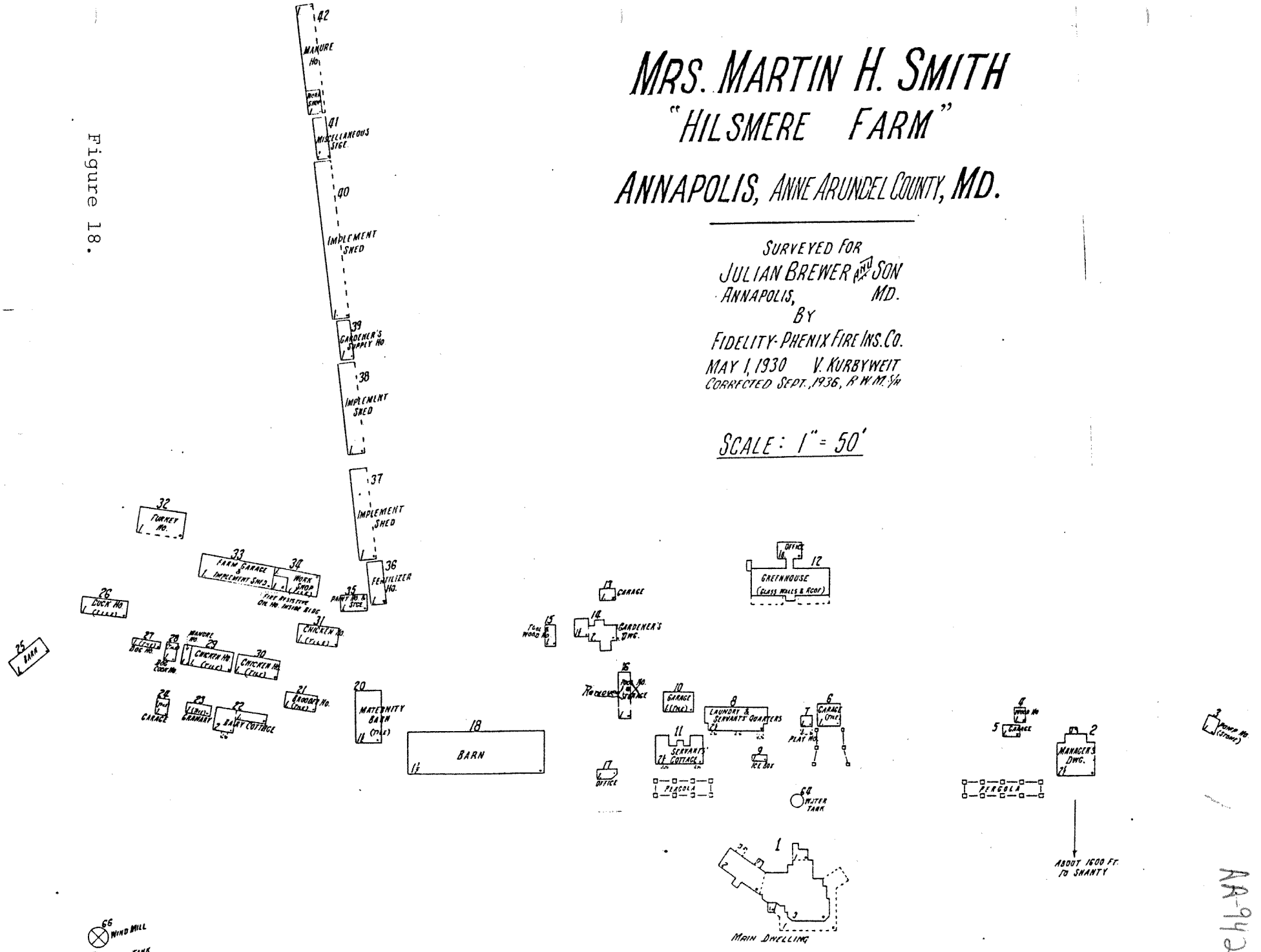


Figure 17. The south facade of the Hilsmere Manor House, 1924 - 1930

Figure 18.



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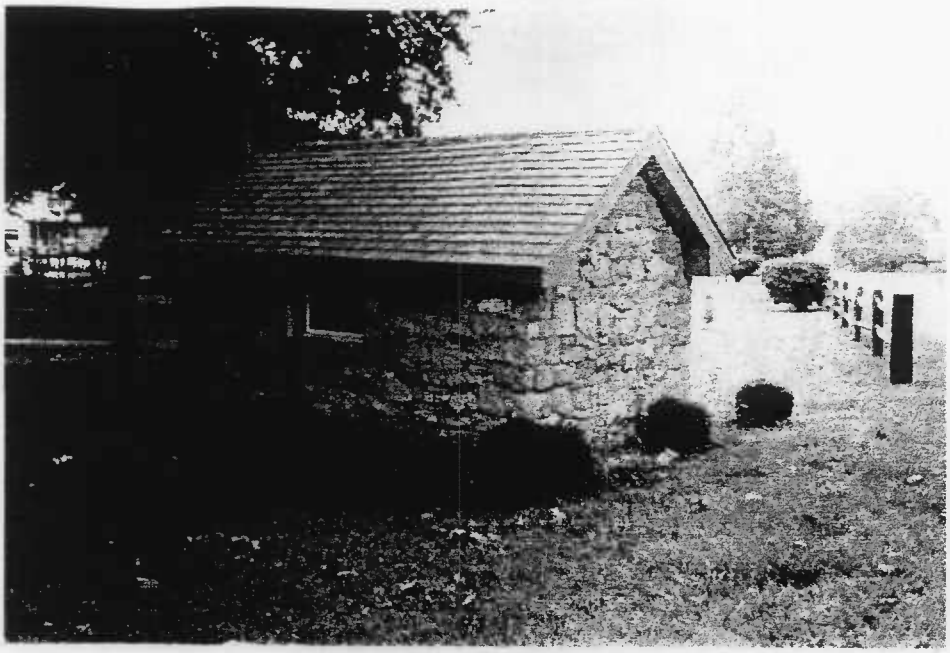


Figure 19 Hilsmere Farm Pump House 1994

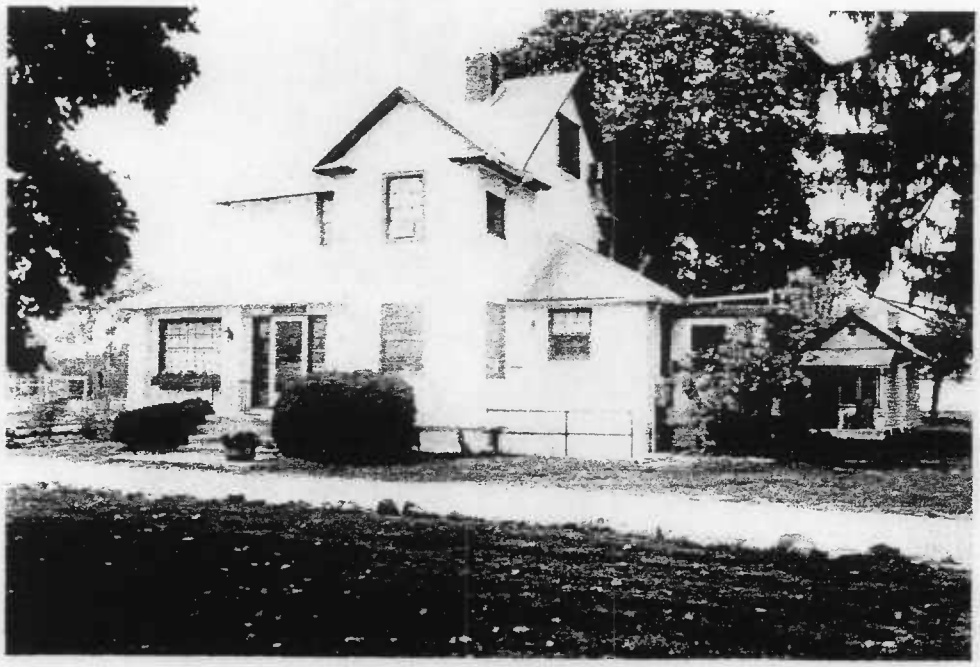


Figure 20 Hilsmere Farm Manager's House 1994

AA-942

Hillsmere Shores

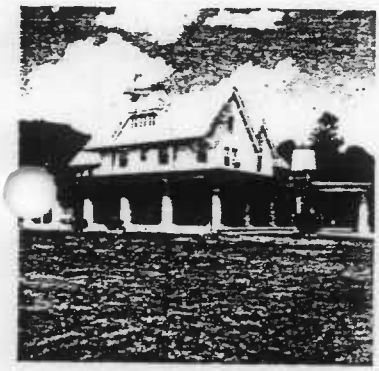
"WHERE THE SOUTH RIVER MEETS THE CHESAPEAKE BAY"

SMITH BROTHERS ORGANIZATION

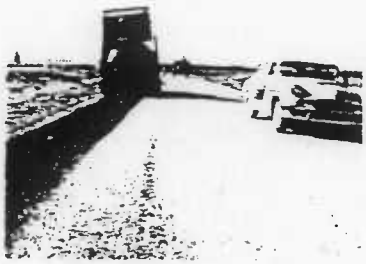
DEVELOPERS FOR THE HILLSMERE ESTATES

BEACH

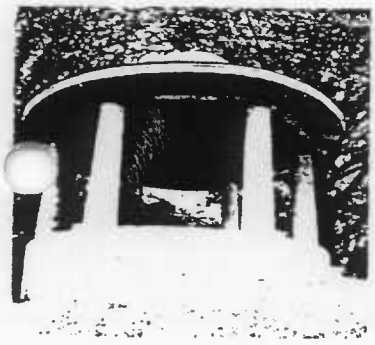
BOAT PIERS



MANOR HOUSE



MODERN PRIVATE ROADS



PAGODA

Dear Sir,

This letter contains a fortune of information! Would you like to own a portion of a million dollar estate in the beautiful Chesapeake Bay Country? Hillsmere Shores offers a vacation land in which you can relax and enjoy seasonal sports all year round . . . a delightful change from over-crowded resorts.

There are miles of beautiful natural beaches. Community boat parks with excellent piers for fishing, crabbing and boat docks. Parking facilities at the beaches and boat parks. Picnic and barbeque facilities for the entire family.

With a bus service from our front gate, we are within three miles of Churches, Banks, Schools, Theatres and complete shopping facilities.

Our lots are large, overlooking the South River and Chesapeake Bay. They are wooded or cleared whichever you desire. There is a beautiful natural lake. Private roads installed by the corporation insuring owners complete privacy of the development.

Some of the large lumber and supply companies and numerous qualified building contractors are nearby to assist, if you desire to build. Already there are homes completed and occupied all year round and a large number of homes under construction.

Hillsmere Shores is just three miles south of Annapolis and is open from daylight to sunset, rain or shine. We invite you and your family to drive down to see for yourself how this million dollar estate fits your every need. With excellent super highways from the big cities you have a pleasant drive over scenic routes direct to Hillsmere Shores. Our property managers will be pleased to answer any questions and take you on a tour of inspection.

Very sincerely,
Smith Brothers Organization
Craver [redacted]
Property Managers
Box 1485, Annapolis, Md.

Pres[illegible]
To [illegible]
[illegible]

Figure 21. Hillsmere Estates' advertisement (approx. 1957)

Figure 22. Blueprint 1915 Manor House ground floor.

AA-942

AA-942

Fire 23. Sketch of 1st and 2nd floor plans for 1915 Manor Hous

RA-942

Survey No. AA-942

Magi No.

DOE __yes __no

Maryland Historical Trust
State Historic Sites Inventory Form

1. Name (indicate preferred name)

historic HILSMERE (preferred)

and/or common KEY SCHOOL

2. Location

street & number Carroll Drive ___ not for publication

city, town Hillsmere Shores vicinity of congressional district

state MD county AA

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
___ district	___ public	___ occupied	___ agriculture	___ museum
___ building(s)	___ private	___ unoccupied	___ commercial	___ park
___ structure	___ both	___ work in progress	___ educational	___ private residence
___ site	**Public Acquisition**	**Accessible**	___ entertainment	___ religious
___ object	___ in process	___ yes: restricted	___ government	___ scientific
	___ being considered	___ yes: unrestricted	___ industrial	___ transportation
	___ not applicable	___ no	___ military	___ other:

4. Owner of Property (give names and mailing addresses of all owners)

name Key School Inc. map 56/parcel 171 (9.216 acres)

street & number Hillsmere Dr. telephone no.:

city, town Annapolis state and zip code MD 21401

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. liber 1471

street & number folio 203

city, town state

6. Representation in Existing Historical Surveys

title

date ___ federal ___ state ___ county ___ local

depository for survey records

city, town state

7. Description

Survey No. AA-942

Condition		Check one	Check one
___ excellent	___ deteriorated	___ unaltered	___ original site
___ good	___ ruins	___ altered	___ moved date of move _____
___ fair	___ unexposed		

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

A 23-room mansion, Tudor Revival style.
Stucco wall cladding.
Two prominent cross gables on facade, one with decorative half-timbering.
Two prominent side gables capped by a hip, one with half-timbering.
First floor level: wide boxed eaves, Prairie-style.
Upper levels: wide eaves, not boxed, Craftsman-style.
Double hung sash windows 6/1, first and second floors.
Window groups of two and three at attic level, with small multipane glazing.
Wrap-around portico (S/E sides): 12'-15' wide glazed brick floor, tongue-and-groove ceiling supported by rotund classical columns; originally open-sided (closed in 1960's for classroom use).
Slate roof.

8. Significance

Survey No. AA-942

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
___ prehistoric	___ archeology-prehistoric	___ community planning	___ landscape architecture	___ religion
___ 1400–1499	___ archeology-historic	___ conservation	___ law	___ science
___ 1500–1599	___ agriculture	___ economics	___ literature	___ sculpture
___ 1600–1699	___ architecture	___ education	___ military	___ social/ humanitarian
___ 1700–1799	___ art	___ engineering	___ music	___ theater
___ 1800–1899	___ commerce	___ exploration/settlement	___ philosophy	___ transportation
___ 1900–	___ communications	___ industry	___ politics/government	___ other (specify)
		___ invention		

Specific dates **Builder/Architect**

check: Applicable Criteria: __A __B __C __D
and/or
Applicable Exception: __A __B __C __D __E __F __G

Level of Significance: __national __state __local

Prepare both a summary paragraph of significance and a general statement of history and support.

See [illegible] [illegible]

9. Major Bibliographical References

Survey No. AA-942

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property _____

Quadrangle name _____ **Quadrangle scale** _____

UTM **References** do NOT complete UTM references

A	Zone	Easting	Northing	B	Zone	Easting	Northing
C				D			
E				F			
G				H			

Verbal boundary description and justification

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

state	code	county	code
state	code	county	code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Susan McCherill

organization A.A.Co. Planning & Zoning **date** July 1987

street & number **telephone**

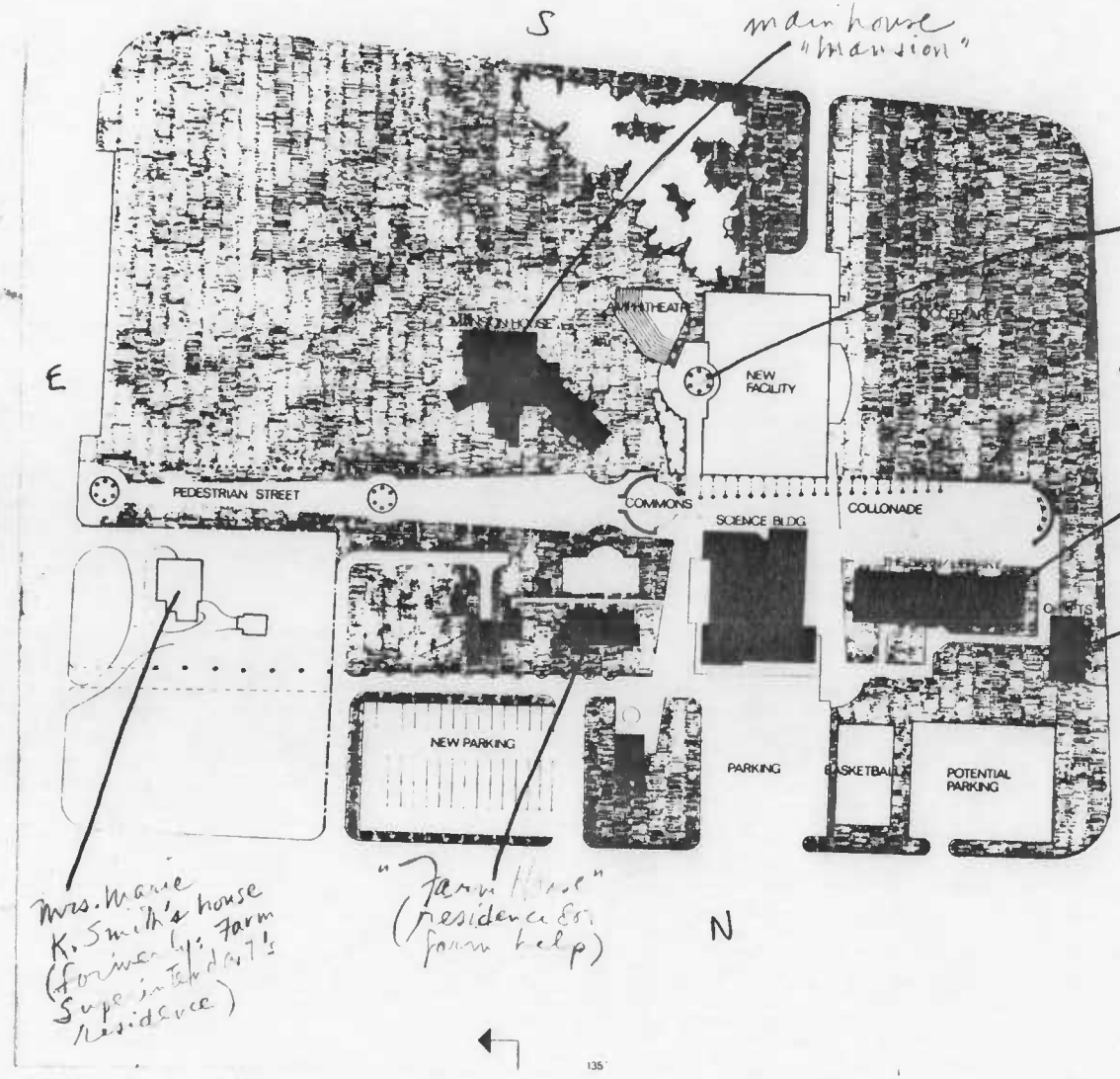
city or town **state**

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
Shaw House
21 State Circle
Annapolis, Maryland 21401
(301) 269-2438

AA-942



main house "mansion"

1980's site plan

one of 3 gazebos

dairy barn/horse barn

Calving and colt barn

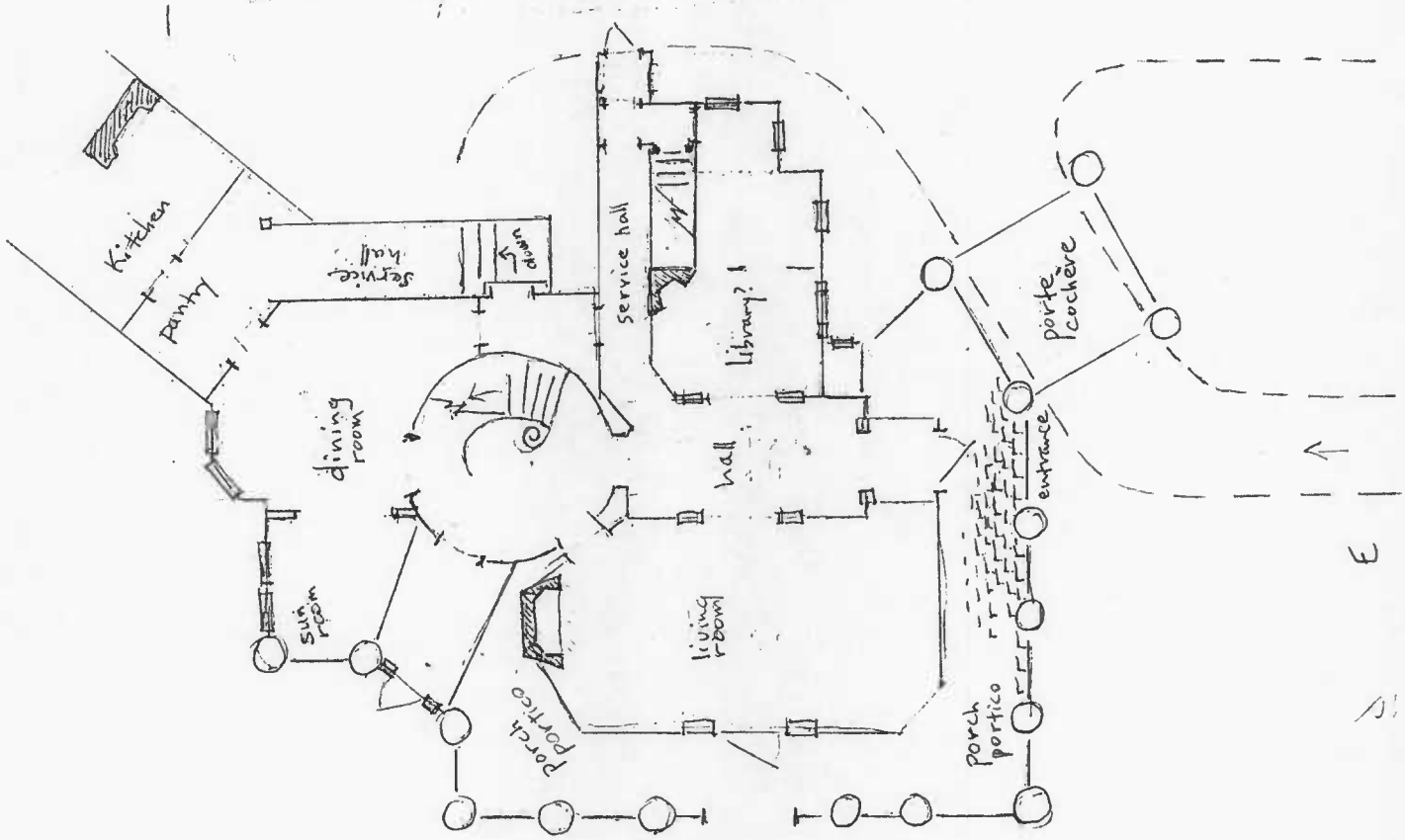
Mrs. Marie K. Smith's house (former Ag. Farm Superintendent's residence)

"Farm House" (residence for farm help)

PRELIMINARY
KEY SCHOOL MASTER PLAN
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND

DEWBERRY & DAVIS

AA-942



sketch/floor plan of "Hilsmere" mansion (Key School)
by Susan Wetherill - 7/87

AA-942

(Continued on Page 3)

DAN N. ARMIGER NEW SUPT. OF BEAUTIFUL HILSMERE ESTATE

5/1936

Beautiful Hilsmere estate located where the Chesapeake Bay and South River meet has a new superintendent and the rich soil is being converted into a large truck farm in spots distant from the lovely home and its attendant buildings.

Hilsmere is owned by Mrs Martin H. Smith, of New York, widow of the late M. H. Smith of Annapolis and New York. Mrs. Smith and her two daughters, Miss Muriel Smith, and Mrs. Chester Bayless of New York plan on coming here within a month to spend the Summer months. As a matter of fact the owners were in Annapolis last week-end to talk with the estate's new over-seer.

The new over-seer is Daniel N. Armiger who gained large headlines through the state in his fight with the State Roads Commission. Mr. Armiger is a Democrat in fact, served as president of the Board of Election Supervisors in Anne Arundel County, but lost this post, and his regular assignment with the State Roads Commission when the Republican party gained control of the State Administration. Kept [illegible] State Ro[illegible] force, but [illegible] point to [illegible] resigned and [illegible] the superintendent of Hilsmere and moved [illegible]

[illegible]

Hilsmere [illegible] 1903 [illegible] and bridle paths are to be found around much of its 600 acres of terrace, farm land, woods and waterfront. The land is abundant in game and Mrs. Smith's daughters are adept in marksmanship, horseback riding and in tennis, they having a private court alongside the main house.

Everything at Hilsmere is white. The buildings for the overseer, chauffeur, maids, butler, the dwellings of the lesser servants, the barns, chicken coops, dog kennels, turkey runs, equipment sheds all are painted white. The hundreds of chickens, their brooder houses, the turkeys themselves, the ducks, and even the concrete walks between the rose bushes laid so the family members won't get their feet wet when plucking the buds in the early morning are snow white. Most of the flowers give white blossoms, but there are two variations from the color scheme. the horses are generally brown as is Jenny the mule which does the rough work, and the cows which are jerseys.

Duck Blinds Noted

Around the shores of the water-[illegible] are found duck blinds. Private [illegible] houses are sprinkled along the [illegible] when the bay became [illegible]

[illegible] Hilsmere [illegible] of [illegible] and [illegible]

CIRCULATION

Hillsmere

AA-942

MRS. THEODORE G. QUINTAL
200 EAST 66TH STREET
NEW YORK, N. Y. 10021

October 10, 1979

Dear sir;

On July 22nd of this year I wrote to your newspaper requesting 3 copies of the April 7th issue of the Evening Capital. As I mentioned in that letter, ''said edition contained a one page spread, on page 10, of my family's old home Hilsmere (as it was spelled in my father's day).'' Neither have I ever received the papers, nor has anyone ever had the courtesy to acknowledge my letter.

As stated above, my father owned - and created- the estate, and I am, needless to say most anxious to obtain these papers! It has now been brought to my attention that you ran a further article , and pictures, of the place on 10/1/79. I am, of course, equally anxious to receive 3 copies of this issue ! Can you possible help me in this matter ? I should be most grateful ! The papers, plus bill for same, should be addressed to me at the above address.

Incidentally, you might be interested to know that my father, Martin H. Smith, had no connection with Philadelphia, as stated in both articles - rather Annapolis and subsequently New York City.

I am wondering, also, if you might conceivably be able to assist me in another matter. Several years ago some woman, in or near Annapolis, did a brochure of the history etc. of Hillsmere, and at the time promised to send my family and me copies of same. She never did, and we have never been able to locate her since. It has occurred to me that perhaps you obtained some of your information from said brochure, and I should be most grateful, if so, if you could send me her name and address.* Somehow, my recollection is that her name was not ''Marie K. Smith'', as mentioned in your article.

Any help you may be able to supply in reference to the above will find me extremely grateful.

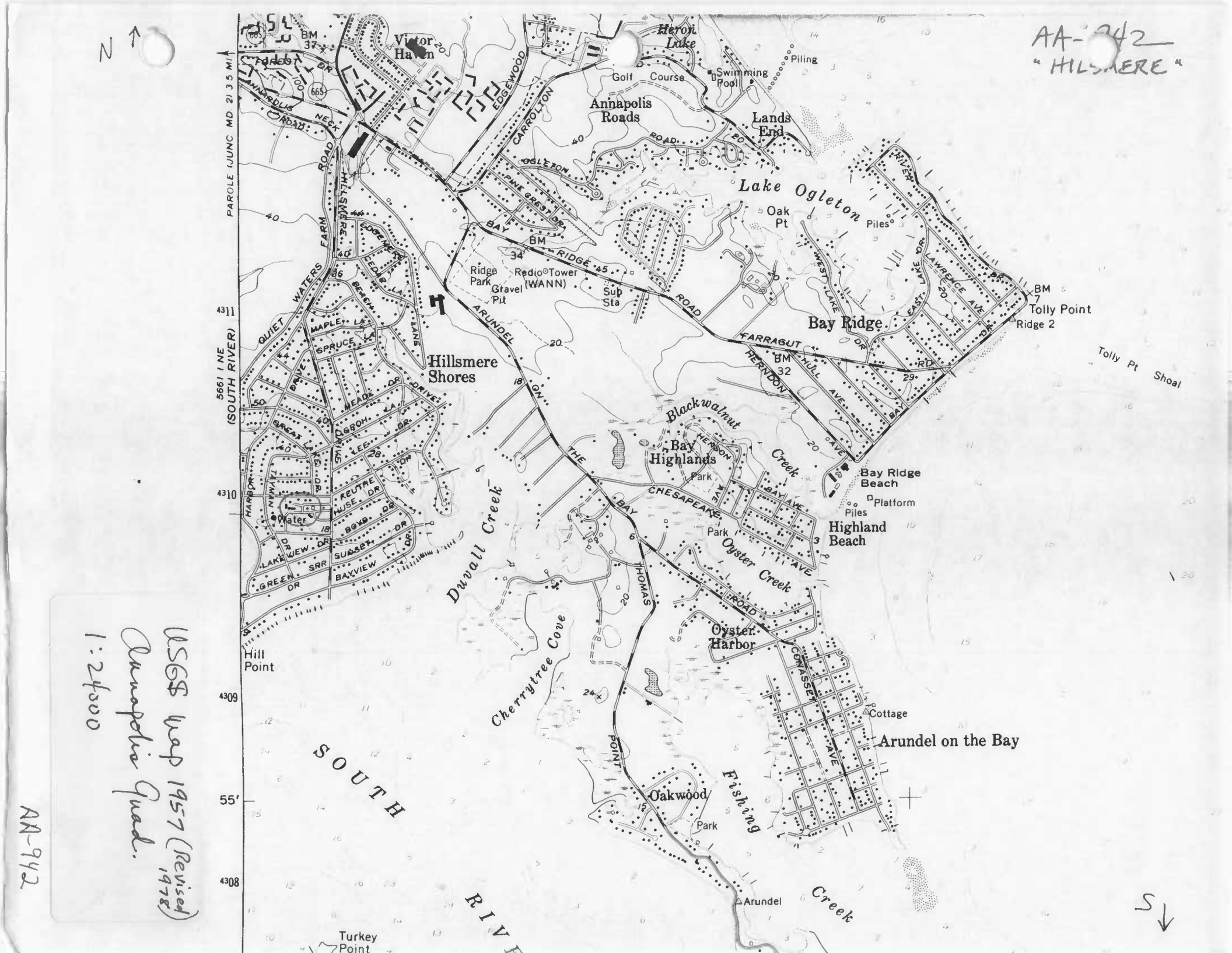
Thanking you,

Yours sincerely,

Muriel Smith Quintal
(Mrs. Theo. G.)

Editor of the Eve. Capital
Evening Capital Newspaper
Annapolis , Md. 21400

* or, the brochure - if you have no further use for same.



USGS map 1957 (Revised 1978)
Annapolis Quad.
1:24000

AA-942

AA-942
HILSMERE (KEY SCHOOL)
Hillsmere Shores
A.A.Co. MD
S. Wetherill, 7/87
Mansion House, facade, E elev.

AA-942
HILSMERE (KEY SCHOOL)
Hillsmere Shores
A.A.Co. MD
S. McNeill 7/87
Mansion Hse, SE corner

AA-942
HILSMERE (KEY SCHOOL)
Hillsmere Shores
A.A.Co. MD
J. McNeill 7/87
Mansion Hse., S elev.

AA-942
HILSMERE (KEY SCHOOL)
Hillsmere Shores
A.A.Co. MD
S. Wetherill 7/87
Mansion Hse., SW corner

AA-942
HILSMERE (KEY SCHOOL)
Hillsmere Shores
A.A.Co. MD
S. Weddell, 7/87
Mansion Hse., detail, W. elev.

AA-942
HILSMERE (KEY SCHOOL)
Hillsmere Shores
A.A.Co. MD
S. Wetherill 7/87
Mansion Hse., (Service entrance)
NW corner

MANGE
DAL 934

AA-942
HILSMERE (KEY SCHOOL)
Hillsmere Shores
A.A.Co. MD
S. Wetherill, 7/87
Mansion Hse., NE corner

AA-942
HILSMERE (KEY SCHOOL)
Hillsmere Shores
A.A.Co. MD
S. Wetherill, 7/87
Mansion Hse. entrance, E facade

Smith Bros
REAL STATE

AA-942
HILSMERE (KEY SCHOOL)
Hillsmere Shores
A.A. Co. MD
S. Wetherill 7/87
Superintendant's Hse., SE Corner

Smith Bros
REAL ESTATE

AA-942
HILSMERE (KEY SCHOOL)
Hillsmere Shores
A.A. Co. MD
S. Wetherill 7/87

Superintendant's Hse., NE corner

AA-942
HILSMERE (KEY SCHOOL)
Hillsmere Shores
A.A. Co. MD
S. Wetherill 7/87
Farm House, SE corner

FARM
HOUSE

AA-942
HILSMERE (KEY SCHOOL)
Hillsmere Shores
A.A.Co. MD
S. Wetherill 7/87
Farm House, NW corner

AA-942
HILSMERE (KEY SCHOOL)
Hillsmere Shores
A.A.Co. MD
S. Wetherill 7/87
Dairy Barn, facade, N elev.

AA-942
HILSMERE (KEY SCHOOL)
Hillsmere Shores
A.A. Co. MD
S. Wetherill, 7/87
Dairy Barn, SW corner

AA-942
HILSMERE (KEY SCHOOL)
Hillsmere Shores
A-A. Co. MD
S. Wetherill 7/87
Calf Barn, NE corner

AA-942
HILSMERE (KEY SCHOOL)
Hillsmere Shores, A.A. Co. MD
S. Wetherill, 7/87
Mansion Hse. interior,
Closed-in portico, SE corner

AA-942
HILLSMERE (KEY SCHOOL)
Hillsmere Shores
A.A.Co. MD
S. Wetherill, 7/87

One of three gazebos on property.

EXIT

AA-942
HILLSMERE (KEY SCHOOL)
Hillsmere Shores
A.A.Co. MD
S. Wetherill, 7/87
Mansion Hse. interior, circular stair-hall