BA-612 1850s
Miles House
1531 Sparks Road
Monkton

The stone portion of this house has a hip roof and was built in the 1850s with much more Victorian "gingerbread" than now survives. A clapboarded, frame wing was added in 1888 and has a gable roof.

Located on Sparks Road, 0.65 mile west of Carroll Road, this house was probably built by Nelson R. Miles, who was shown as its owner on the 1877 atlas. Miles was active as a Methodist lay preacher and was a nurseryman and maintained a greenhouse (no longer standing). He had a store in the city in the 1870s and was a member of the Gunpowder Agricultural Society. The property was shown on the 1989 Bromley's atlas as Mrs. Edwards' and as Howard Pierce's in the 1915 issue. The present owner is listed as Mrs. K. Simkins.

CAPSULE SUMMARY
BA-612
Miles House
1531 Sparks Road
Sparks, Baltimore County
Circa 1855
Private

The Nelson R. Miles House was constructed circa 1855 by its namesake. In 1843, Nelson Miles acquired the land from J. Parkin Scott, Trustee to Abraham Miles. Nelson Miles built the house approximately a decade later and resided there for approximately forty years until 1896. By way of its form, and lack of ornament the house is representative of the many vernacular stone dwellings erected throughout rural Baltimore County in the mid-19th century.

Initially constructed circa 1855, the Nelson R. Miles House faces east on the southwest side of Sparks Road. It is sited in a rural setting on a sloping lot surrounded by several mature trees and shrubs. A gravel driveway leads from the road to the north side of the dwelling. The house overlooks farmland with a small pond to the northeast. The Miles House is a two-story vernacular dwelling of solid coursed rubble-stone construction with a hipped roof clad with asphalt shingles. Massive stone quoins join the corners of the structure. In 1888, a two-and-a-half-story wood frame wing was built onto the south elevation of the main block. This wing is flush with the north elevation of the main block and projects south beyond the plane of the façade. It is clad with German wood siding with cornerboards, and is capped with a front gable roof covered with asphalt shingles. The roof features wide eaves and a raking cornice. The two-bay-wide wing sits on a solid coursed rubble-stone foundation. Two reconstructed stretcher bond interior brick chimneys rise above the roof of the main block, while an exterior stretcher bond brick chimney, half-shouldered, rises along the south elevation of the wing.

Maryland Historical Trust
Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties Form

Inventory No. BA-612

1. Name of Property (indicate preferred name)

historic	Miles House
other	

2. Location

street and number	1531 Sparks Road	___ not for publication
city, town	Sparks	___ vicinity
county	Baltimore	

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

name	Sharon L. Bowyer				
street and number	1531 Sparks Road			telephone	n/a
city, town	Sparks	state	MD	zip code	21152-9335

4. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc.	Baltimore County Courthouse	tax map and parcel:	34/227		
city, town	Towson	liber	1454	folio	655

5. Primary Location of Additional Data

___ Contributing Resource in National Register District
___ Contributing Resource in Local Historic District
___ Determined Eligible for the National Register/Maryland Register
___ Determined Ineligible for the National Register/Maryland Register
___ Recorded by HABS/HAER
___ Historic Structure Report or Research Report at MHT
___ Other: _____

6. Classification

Category
___ district
x building(s)
___ structure
___ site
___ object

Ownership
x public
___ private
___ both

Current Function
___ agriculture
___ commerce/trade
___ defense
x domestic
___ education
___ funerary
___ government
___ health care
___ industry
___ landscape
___ recreation/culture
___ religion
___ social
___ transportation
___ work in progress
___ unknown
___ vacant/not in use
___ other: _____

Resource Count

Contributing	Noncontributing	
4		buildings
		sites
	1	structures
		objects
4	1	Total

Number of Contributing Resources previously listed in the Inventory
1

7. Description

Inventory No. BA-612

Condition

__ excellent
x good
__ fair
__ deteriorated
__ ruins
__ altered

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

Initially constructed circa 1855, the Nelson R. Miles House faces east on the southwest side of Sparks Road. It is sited in a rural setting on a sloping lot surrounded by several mature trees and shrubs. A gravel driveway leads from the road to the north side of the dwelling. The house overlooks farmland with a small pond to the northeast. The Miles House is a two-story vernacular dwelling of solid coursed rubble-stone construction with a hipped roof clad with asphalt shingles. Massive stone quoins join the corners of the structure. In 1888, a two-and-a-half-story-wood frame wing was built onto the south elevation of the main block. This wing is flush with the north elevation of the main block and projects south beyond the plane of the façade. It is clad in German wood siding with cornerboards, and is capped with a front gable roof covered in asphalt shingles. The roof features wide eaves and a raking cornice. The two-bay-wide wing sits on a solid coursed rubble-stone foundation. Two reconstructed stretcher-bond interior brick chimneys rise above the roof of the main block, while an exterior stretcher-bond brick chimney, half-shouldered, rises along the south elevation of the wing.

EXTERIOR

The east elevation of the original 1850s dwelling is two stories in height and three bays across. Covering the full-width of the first story is a 1880s shed-roof porch supported with chamfered wood posts and scroll-sawn brackets. It has a replacement wood rail balustrade, a wood deck, and is resting on a stone pier foundation. The first story has a side entry which contains a single-leaf 15-light wood door illuminated with a 1-light transom. Next to the entrance are two 6/6 wood sash windows with stone lintels and wood sills. The second story has three 6/6 wood sash windows with wood sills and a boxed wood cornice serving as a continuous lintel. The 1880s frame addition is two bays wide and two-and-a-half stories in height with a full basement. The basement story is illuminated by two 6-light wood fixed windows. The first and second stories feature two 9/9 wood sash windows with wood sills and square-edged surrounds. The upper half-story contains one 2/2 wood sash window with a wood sill and square-edged surround. Each window on both sections have wood louvered shutters.

The first story of the north elevation on the main block exhibits one side entry containing a 9-light 1-panel wood Dutch door with a stone lug lintel. This story also has one 6/6 wood sash window with a stone lug lintel and a wood sill. The second story features two 6/6 wood sash windows with a boxed wood cornice serving as a continuous lintel.

The west elevation of the 1850s dwelling shows two 6/6 wood sash windows with stone lug lintels and square wood sills on the first story. The second story is illuminated with two 6/6 wood sash windows with square wood sills and the wood cornice serving as a continuous lintel. The first story of the frame 1880s section contains a side entry using a single-leaf 9-light, 1-panel wood door. This entry is illuminated by a two-light transom. The second story features two off-center 9/9 wood sash windows with wood sills and surrounds. The upper-half story is illuminated by one 2/2 wood sash window with a wood sill and surround.

One 3-light wood fixed window and a wood frame bulkhead is seen at the basement level on the south elevation. The first story exhibits four 9/9 wood sash windows with

wood sills and surrounds. The second story contains five 9/9 wood sash windows with wood sills and surrounds.

INTERIOR

The center hall of the main block contains a replacement dog-leg stair. It has a simple turned newel post, square-cut balusters, and scroll-sawn brackets. The hall features the original 6 ½ inch wood floorboards. The walls and ceiling are covered with the original plaster and painted. The south wall is exposed stone. The wood baseboard with a cyma reversa molding is original. Each of the three interior doors in the hall have been removed. The door surrounds are original and feature cyma reversa moldings. A closet beneath the stair has a single-leaf vertical board door with a square-edged beaded wood surround.

The original kitchen, now a parlor, to the west of the hall has been refinished. The original random width wood floorboards range from four to six inches wide. The plaster ceilings are original and are painted. The walls are covered with replacement grooved vertical board paneling. The window features a deep embrasure wood sill, and its molding has been removed. The casement for the doors are replacement flush wood, and the flush wood baseboard is a replacement. In this room, two doors have been removed. The deep stone fireplace on the south wall feature a heavy replacement molding. It has a stone and brick hearth, and is fitted with a wood stove. Adjacent to one side of the chimney breast are built-in shelves and a cabinet.

The dining room is located to the north of the hall. The six-inch wood floorboards are original, as are the plaster and painted walls and ceiling. The original wood baseboard uses a cyma reversa molding. The original window casements consist of fillets, a cyma reversa, a boltel, and a splayed surface. The window sills feature a double ovolo molding separated by a fillet. There are two door openings in this room; both doors have been removed. The door casements are original and consist of a cyma reversa molding. The deep stone fireplace in the northwest corner of the dining room exhibits a brick hearth and a plain wood mantel shelf.

West of the dining room is the kitchen. The original wood hemlock floorboards are random width ranging from four to six inches. The walls and ceiling are covered with plaster and painted. The replacement wood baseboard is flush except for a shoe molding. The original window casements have a beaded surround, and the wood sills are deep set. The casing for the doorway into the dining room is a replacement wood molding. Access to the exterior is through the Dutch door; a 1-light cross-braced panel door. This is not the original kitchen.

The 1880s addition, south of the hall, contains the living room. The original random width wood floorboards range from three to eight inches. The original walls and ceiling are painted plaster. Around the perimeter of the room is the original wood baseboard featuring a cyma recta molding. The original window casings feature a double ogee molding. Two doorways, with doors removed, feature original wood casings with an ogee molding. A replacement wood dentilated crown molding is seen around the perimeter of the living room. Centered on the south wall is a brick fireplace with an original slate hearth and delft tiles on the face. The replacement wood mantel around the firebox is molded with ears, and above this is an inset panel with reeding

and dentils. The original mantel is stored in the corncrib. The original mantel is plain with flush pilasters with molded caps and a plain shelf.

The rear service hall, to the west of the living room, holds three five-panel wood doors with porcelain knobs. One door leads to the boxed stair ascending to the second story. A second leads to a stair descending to the basement, and one accesses the bath and storage room.

Two bedrooms and one bathroom are on the second story of the 1850s section. This section uses six-inch pine wood floorboards and five-panel wood doors. The frame section contains one bedroom with narrow wood floorboards and four-panel wood doors. A winder stair leads to the attic story. The door and window casings vary slightly in both sections using cyma reversa moldings. Seen in the attic story of the 1880s frame section are circular sawn rafters, narrow wood flooring with some replacement planks, and no ridge board.

OUTBUILDINGS

The circa 1855 ice house, constructed of coursed rubble stone, is one-story in height. It has one center bay holding a single-leaf vertical-board door with a square-edged wood surround. It is capped with a side gable roof clad in standing-seam metal.

The corncrib is a narrow, one-bay-wide rectangular structure that dates circa 1940. It is wood frame construction clad with vertical-board wood slats resting on a concrete pier foundation. It has a center doorway with a missing single-leaf door. The corncrib has a front-gable roof clad with standing-seam metal.

Next, is a one-story, one-bay-wide 1940s wood-frame shed. It is covered with board-and-batten siding and features a wood post foundation. It is pierced by one board-and-batten double-leaf wood door, and is capped with a standing-seam metal shed roof.

Finally, a circa 1990 in-ground swimming pool with a concrete deck is located to the rear of the house.

8. Significance

Inventory No. BA-612

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

Specific dates	1850 ca.	Architect	unknown
Construction dates	1850 ca.	Builder	unknown

Evaluation for:

_____ National Register _____ Maryland Register __x__ not evaluated

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

The Miles House was built circa 1855 for Nelson R. Miles. In 1843, Nelson Miles acquired the farmland located at 1531 Sparks Road from J. Parkin Scott, Trustee to Abraham Miles. Nelson Miles built the house approximately a decade later and resided there for nearly forty years until 1896. The house is representative of the many vernacular stone dwellings erected throughout rural Baltimore County in the mid-19th century.

HISTORY

The Nelson R. Miles House, named after the original owner, is located near the historic villages of Glencoe Station and Sparks Station in the Tenth District of Baltimore County. As early as 1850, the village of Sparks and the road that connected it to Philopolis, were non-existent. The land that later became the community, lying east of the Gunpowder Falls, was traversed only by a few farms.(1) The 1850 Atlas shows York Road in place as well as the Susquehanna Railroad. Along these corridors, the beginnings of a village is seen on the 1850 Atlas. Although the 1850 county atlas does not depict the Nelson R. Miles House, exterior architectural evidence, including form, materials, and lack of ornament, suggests that the house was constructed shortly thereafter. At this time, along York Road were a cluster of dwellings and non-residential buildings such as a grist and saw mill, the J.B. Lamb Boarding School, the Philopolis Post Office, and several school houses, and a store. Among the residences in the area were several members of the Mathews and Price family, as well as W.T. Heston, H.M. Fitzhugh, and W.H. Wheeler.

By 1877, Sparks Road had been constructed from York Road in Philopolis to its terminus at Carroll Road. The village formed around the Sparks station along the Northern Central Railroad, and included only a school and a few dwellings along Sparks Road.(2) The 1877 Hopkins Atlas denotes around the village of Sparks the E. Parsons Milton Academy, a store, and a hotel owned by A. Shanebrook. The residences are noted with the names A. Shanebrook (noted twice), Josh Price (noted twice), T.R. Price, E. Price, Mrs. S. Barton, Mrs. Underwood, George Ensor, and E. Stewart. Next to the Miles House on Sparks Road is S.G. Sparks to the west. To the east of the Miles House is the residence of Edward Austen called the "Oaklands."

Prior documentation indicates that Miles was a member of the Gunpowder Agricultural Society and operated a store in Sparks in the 1870s.(3) As a patron of the Hopkins

1877 Atlas, Nelson R. Miles was noted as a farmer and resident of Philopolis with 138 acres. He was born in Baltimore County in 1826.(4) Previous documentation listed Nelson Miles as a Methodist lay preacher in the local community.(5)

In 1881, Sparks had a population of approximately 6,000, which was down over a thousand from a decade prior. During this period, its primary source of income was its mining for iron ore, marble, and limestone. It also maintained numerous mills, grist and saw mills, in addition to paper factories.(6) It was during this period of growth in the community, specifically 1888, that Nelson Miles constructed a wood frame wing addition to his residence. A greenhouse was also constructed on the property in the mid- to late 19th century.

In the eight years after construction of the wing, occupancy of the building transferred to Mary B. Edwards. By 1915, when Howard Pierce occupied the property, a post office was established in the village of Sparks.(7) The Sparks State Bank was erected in 1916.(8) The 1915 Atlas shows the village of Philopolis with a cluster of buildings along York Road. P.H.F. Friese, William H. Price, Dr. Smith, and A&H. Fahnestock are a few of the residents in the area at this time.

The property changed hands six times between the time Miles sold it and Susie Lee Given bought it in 1926. By the mid-20th century, the village of Sparks had declined. The area has come to encompass the neighboring community of Philopolis. Susie L. Given occupied the house for thirty-nine years, selling it in 1965 to Michael T. and Henrietta G. Horner. It was sold two years later to John E. and Katherine S. Simkins. Katherine Simkins held onto the property for twenty-two years until 1989. Afterwards, the property changed hands three times, until the present owner Sharon Bowyer bought the property at 1531 Sparks Road in 2000.

The Miles house, a vernacular 1850s stone dwelling, is a typical representative of stone dwellings located throughout Baltimore County. Vernacular buildings tend to have little to no stylistic detailing and are typically constructed by local builders with locally available tools and materials. Vernacular architecture accounts for the majority of the built environment and reflects the traditions of society, rather than the whims of the architect.(9) Throughout Baltimore County, there are a number of vernacular stone houses from this period. Stone was readily available in the county, with both marble and granite quarries located throughout the region. Commonly, as in the case of the Miles House, these random rubble stone dwellings are two stories in height, single-pile with side gable roofs. This continuity of form is a result of folk architecture and the reliance on constructing forms that had been built by the previous generation.

Maryland Historical Trust
Maryland Inventory of
Historic Properties Form

Inventory No BA-612

Name Miles House

Continuation Sheet
Number 8 Page 3

ENDNOTES

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

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

3. Baltimore County Historic Inventory.

4. Hopkins 1877 Atlas of Baltimore County.

5. Baltimore County Historic Inventory.

6. Scharf, p. 876.

7. Baltimore County Historic Inventory; see also Map of Baltimore County (Philadelphia, PA: G. W. Bromley, 1915).

8. Baltimore County Historic Inventory. The bank is separately listed in the Baltimore County Historic Inventory as BA-2462.

9. Dell Upton and John Michael Vlach, editors, Common Places: Readings in American Vernacular Architecture, (Athens, GA: The University of Georgia Press, 1986), pp. xv-xvi.

Chain of Title

June 12, 2000	Albert F. and Susan G. Goetze, III to Sharon L. Bowyer Land Records of Baltimore County Liber 14542 Folio 655
June 29, 1993	Richard E. and Seska P. Dunne to Albert F. and Susan G. Goetze, III Land Records of Baltimore County Liber SM 10009 Folio 28
December 12, 1989	Katherine S. Simkins to Richard E. and Seska P. Dunne Land Records of Baltimore County Liber SM 8362 Folio 639
September 29, 1988	John E. and Katherine S. Simkins to Katherine S. Simkins Land Records of Baltimore County Liber SM 8057 Folio 803
June 9, 1967	Michael Thomas and Henrietta Gordon Horner Land Records of Baltimore County Liber OTG 4766 Folio 470

Maryland Historical Trust
Maryland Inventory of
Historic Properties Form

Inventory No BA-612

Name Miles House

Continuation Sheet
Number 8 Page 4

April 15, 1965	Susan Lee Given to Michael Thomas and Henrietta Gordon Horner Land Records of Baltimore County Liber RRG 4445 Folio 14
January 26, 1926	Harry M. Rodman (Attorney named in mortgage) to Susie Lee Given Land Records of Baltimore County Liber WPC 626 Folio 591
December 2, 1924	Clara Louise Clement to Harry M. Rodman, Attorney, Fourth National Building and Loan Ass. Land Records of Baltimore County Liber WFC 698 Folio 159
February 12, 1923	Frederick and Amanda B. Hetzler to Clara Louise Clement Land Records of Baltimore County Liber WPC 568 Folio 53
October 25, 1919	Howard T. Pierce and Mary B. Pierce to Frederick and Amanda B. Hetzler Land Records of Baltimore County Liber WPC 518 Folio 99
December 5, 1908	International Trust Company of Maryland to Howard T. Pierce Land Records of Baltimore County Liber WPC 336 Folio 202
Between 1896 & 1908	Mary B. Edwards to International Trust Company of Maryland Land Records of Baltimore County Liber WPC 266 Folio 220
April 17, 1896	Nelson R. Miles to Mary Blanche Edwards Land Records of Baltimore County Liber LMB 215 Folio 51269
December 30, 1843	J. Parkin Scott (Trustee to Abraham Miles) to Nelson R. Miles Land Records of Baltimore County Liber JK 337 Folio 137

Bibliography

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

Baltimore County Historic Inventory.

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

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

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

Upton, Dell and John Michael Vlach, ed. Common Places: Readings in American Vernacular Architecture. Athens, GA: The University of Georgia Press, 1986.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Inventory No. BA-612

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

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of surveyed property	9.777		
Acreage of historical setting	9.777		
Quadrangle name	Hereford, MD	Quadrangle scale	1:24,000

Verbal boundary description and justification

The Miles House is located at 1531 Sparks Road in the 10th District of Baltimore County. It has been associated with tax map 34 parcel 227 since its construction circa 1855.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title	K. Baynard & R. Weidlich, Architectural Historians		
organization	E.H.T. Traceries	date	6/22/2002
street and number	1121 Fifth Street, NW	telephone	202/3931199
city or town	Washington	state DC	zipcode 20001

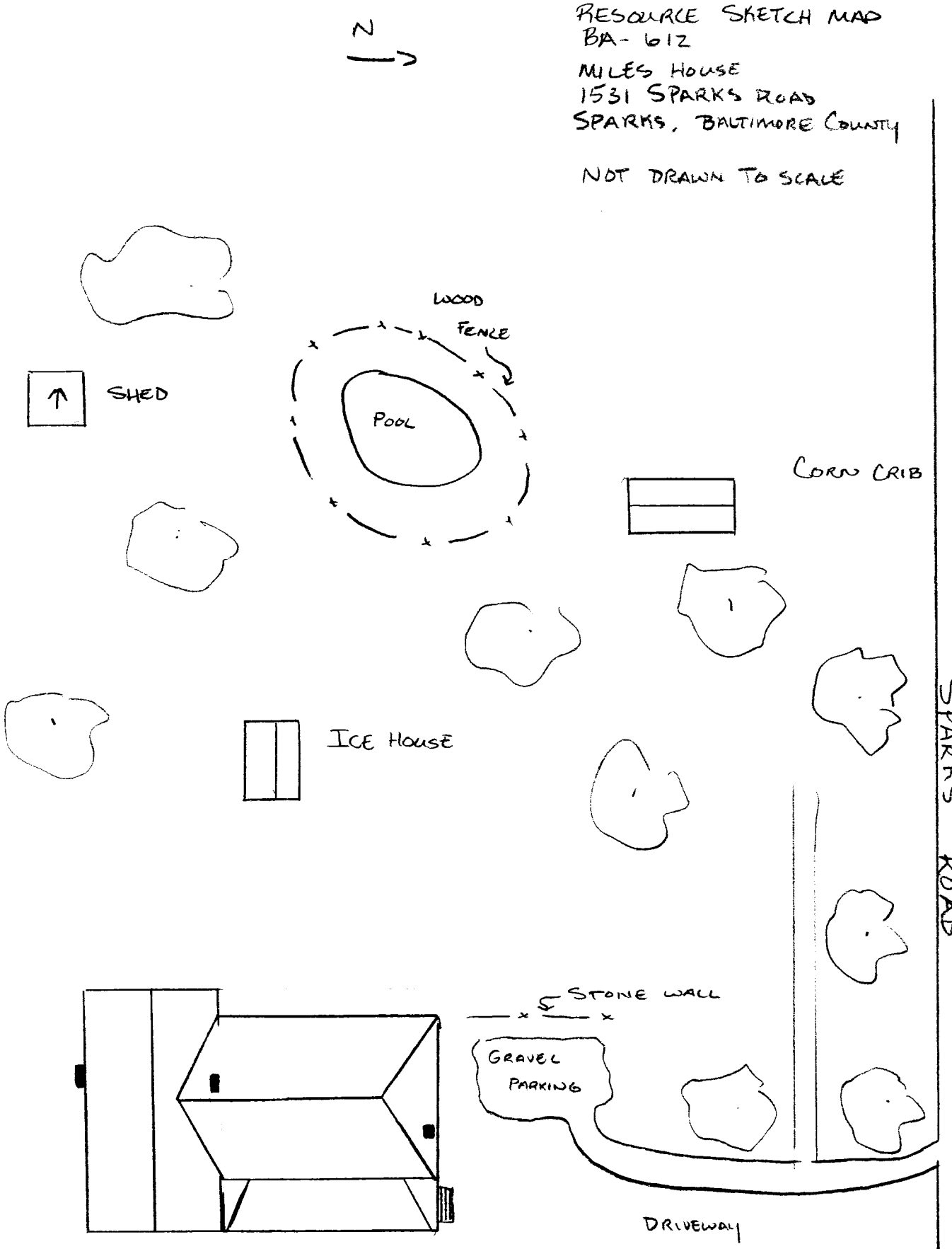
The Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties was officially created by an Act of the Maryland Legislature to be found in the Annotated Code of Maryland, Article 41, Section 181 KA, 1974 supplement.

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

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

RESOURCE SKETCH MAP
BA-612
MILES HOUSE
1531 SPARKS ROAD
SPARKS, BALTIMORE COUNTY

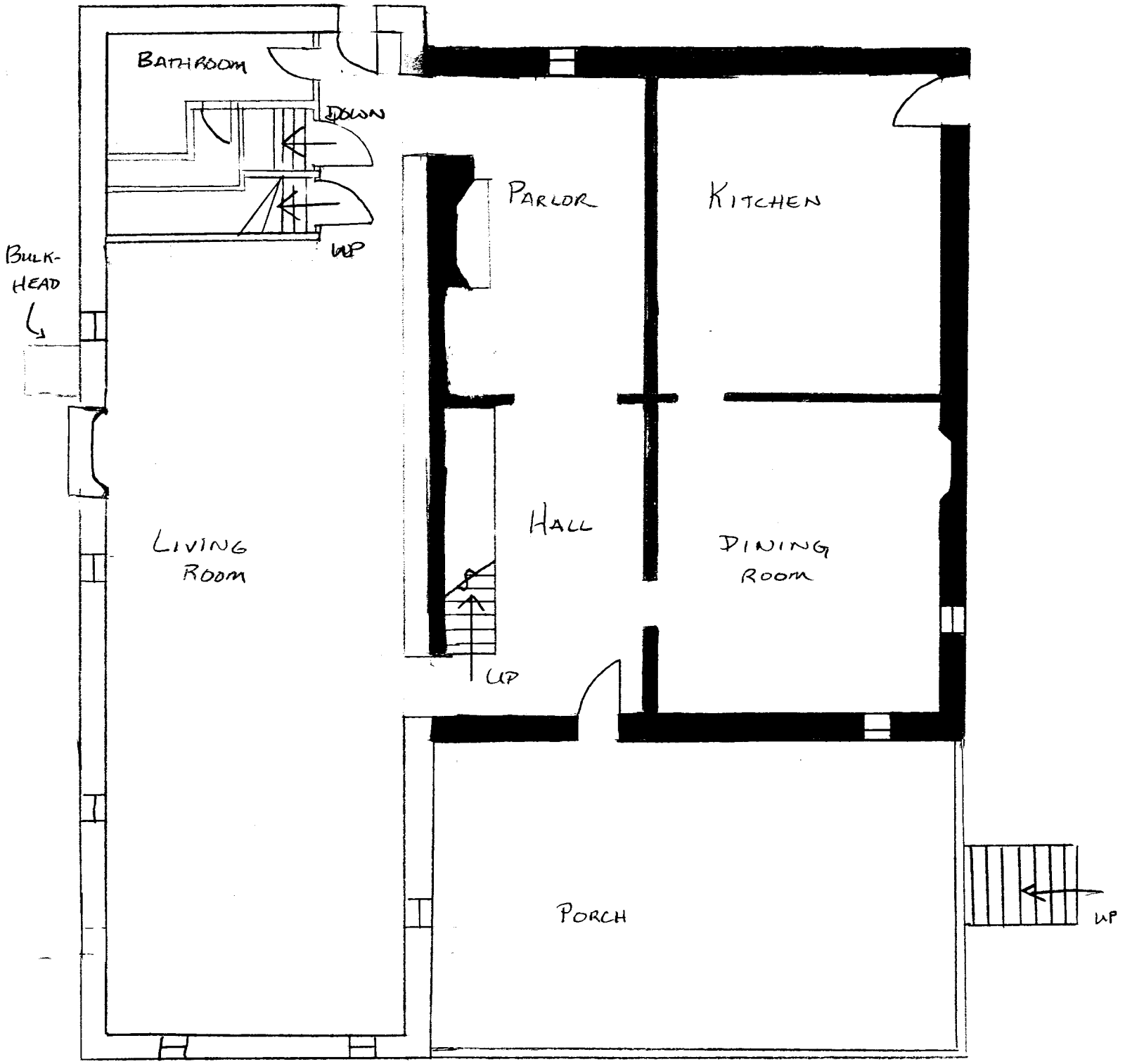
NOT DRAWN TO SCALE

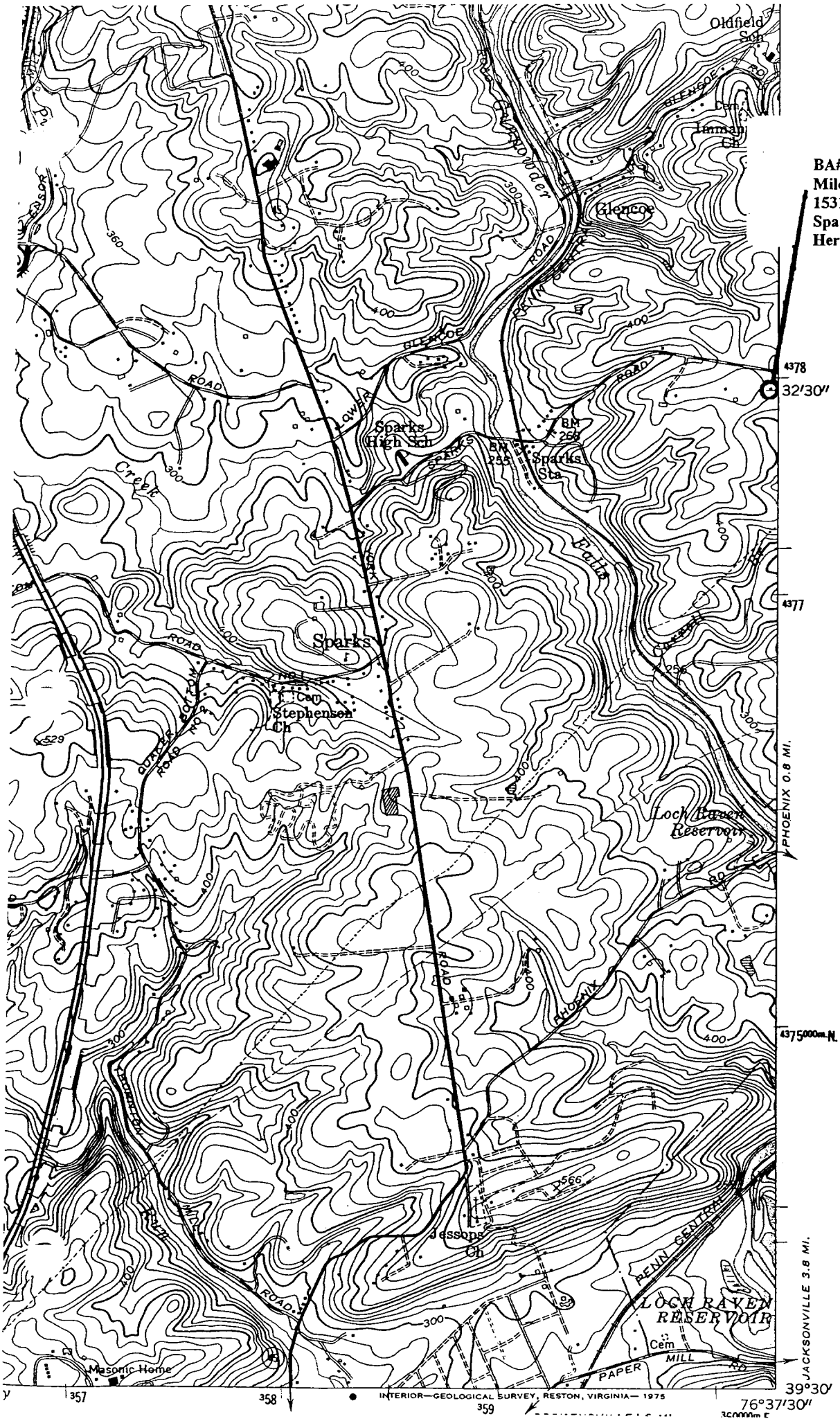


RESOURCE FLOOR PLAN
BA-612
MILES HOUSE
1531 SPARKS ROAD
SPARKS, BALTIMORE CO.

N

1st PERIOD
2nd PERIOD





BA#: 612
Miles House
1531 Sparks Road
Sparks, Baltimore County
Hereford, MD USGS Map

BA - 612

Miles House

1531 Sparks Road

Baltimore County, MD

Traceries

2/2002

MD - SHPO

MAIN HOUSE, EAST ELEVATION

1 of 9

BA - 6612
Miles House
1531 Sparks Road
Baltimore County, MD
Traceries
2/2002
MD - SHPO
MAIN HOUSE, SOUTHWEST CORNER

2 of 9

BA-612
Miles House
1531 Sparks Road
Baltimore County, MD
Traceries
2/2002
MD-SHPO
OUTBUILDINGS, VIEW LOOKING NORTHWEST
3 of 9

BA- 612
Miles House
1531 Sparks Road
Baltimore County, MD
Tracenes
212002
MD-SHPO
MAIN HOUSE FIRST FLOOR CENTER PASSAGE, CAMERA FACING EAST

4 of 9

BA - 0612
Miles House
1531 Sparks Road
Baltimore County, MD
Traceries
2/2002
MD - SHPO
MAIN HOUSE, 1st FLOOR, LIVING ROOM, CAMERA FACING SOUTHEAST
6 of 9

BA-0612
Miles House
1531 Sparks Road
Baltimore County, MD
Traceries
2/2002
MD-SHPO

MAIN HOUSE, 1st FLOOR, CENTER PASSAGE, CAMERA FACING WEST

5 of 9

BA-0612
Miles House
1531 Sparks Road
Baltimore County, MD
Tracenes
2/2007
MD-SHPO
MAIN HOUSE, 1st FLOOR, DINING ROOM, CAMERA FACING NORTH

8 of 9

BA-5612
Miles House
1531 Sparks Road
Baltimore County, MD
Tracenes
212002
MD-SHPO
MAIN HOUSE, 1st FLOOR, PARLOR, CAMERA FACING SOUTHEAST
7 of 9

BA-612
Miles House
1531 Sparks Road
Baltimore County, MD
Traceries
2/2002
MD-SHPO
MAIN HOUSE, 1st FLOOR, KITCHEN, CAMERA FACING NORTHWEST

9 of 9