

BA 993

DR. EPHRAIM BELL'S HOUSE

1831-33

MARYLAND LINE

PRIVATE

The large, primitive brick house on the east side of York Road was supposedly a place of public accommodation about 1804, but tax lists would suggest the construction of a house between 1831 and 1833, probably built for John Walker, who sold to Dr. Ephraim Bell. The house has a large area of flat-roofed rear space, allowing a full three stories of clear head-rood for the back rooms. There is no proof that this was ever a tavern, but the first story is set practically at ground level and there is a full width front porch of hospitable appearance. Dr. Bell served in one of the State constitutional conventions; he was reputed to have been the only slave-owner at this spot about a city block from the Mason-Dixon line.

INVENTORY FORM FOR STATE HISTORIC SITES SURVEY

1 NAME

HISTORIC DR. EPHRAIM BELL'S HOUSE

AND/OR COMMON

Hare House

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

21,525 York Road

CITY, TOWN

Maryland Line

___ VICINITY OF

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

2nd

STATE

Maryland

COUNTY

Baltimore County

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE <input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL <input type="checkbox"/> PARK
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	PUBLIC ACQUISITION	ACCESSIBLE	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT <input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT <input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL <input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

Grason L. Hare

Telephone #:

STREET & NUMBER

21,525 York Road

CITY, TOWN

Maryland Line

___ VICINITY OF

STATE, zip code

Maryland 21105

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC

County Courts Building

Liber #: OTG 4665

Folio #: 604

STREET & NUMBER

401 Bosley Avenue

CITY, TOWN

Towson

STATE

Maryland 21204

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE Historic Sites Inventory-Baltimore County
Maryland Historical Trust

DATE

On-going since 1964

___ FEDERAL STATE ___ COUNTY ___ LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

21 State Circle

CITY, TOWN

Annapolis

STATE

Maryland 21401

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

 DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Dr. Ephraim Bell's House or the Hare House is a very peculiar structure, apparently much expanded, and unbalanced in layout. The house is a mixture of brick and frame, forming an L-shape in the multi-story portions. The main block of brick was the starting point for this house; in a vernacular or undecorated Federal style, this brick, two-story portion is five bays wide, with center hall plan. The windows are double-hung sash types with 6-over-6 lights. The second-story windows have louvered shutters. The wooden porch deck is two steps above grade. A full width hip-roofed, one-story porch runs across the front of the house. The porch is supported in front by four square columns, machine-turned down to a circular cross-section of various mouldings. Two similar recessed wooden columns support the rear corners of the porch. The posts are decorated with oversized scroll-brackets in a spider-web design.

The south (right) end wall of the main block is blank, except for two windows of four panes each set in the gable end.

Roof eaves overhang on the south end. There are two inside end chimneys with corbelled caps.

The north (left) end of the main block is entirely covered with aluminum siding. The main block merges with a rear wing of frame to provide three full stories of space. The wing has a flat or slightly pitched roof and the level roof line of the rear wing meets the downward sloping line of the main block front roof at its ridge line.

The rear wing is three bays deep, three stories of 6-over-6 double-hung sash windows. The bay located nearest to the street provides windows to light the back rooms of the main block; the other bays are in the frame addition. The rear wing terminates with a small, one-story, shed-roofed, one-bay addition with one window, similar to the others in its (north) side wall. All side windows at first and second-story level have louvered shutters. The similar three windows on the third floor are without shutters. The plain eaves of the mixed gable and flat roof portions have a slight overhang.

On the southeast corner of the house, a second-story room is appended to the house, supported by posts that form a recessed porch at first-story level, sheltered by a shed roof that blends with the rear slope of the main block's

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

(continued)

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES 1831-1833 (est.) BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Traditional sources place this primitive house at 1804 and give its builder as Dr. Ephraim Bell. (1) However, Dr. Bell would have been only eleven years old at the time and he is not found as a landowner in the tax data of 1818, 1823, or 1824. He appears in the 1833 assessment with 67 acres but it can be demonstrated by drawing a plat that the property lay entirely on the westside of York Road across the road from the house under discussion, entirely surrounding what was called the Maryland Line Hotel (BA 992). (2)

Dr. Bell married Julian Deagan of Baltimore City in 1835, which might have made a new home necessary or desirable. (3) In April of that year, a month before the wedding, Dr. Bell purchased the tract under discussion, a 6-3/4 acre parcel, from Henry Webb. (4) Bell paid \$613 for the property, which would certainly allow for an existing house. Henry Webb was not found among the town residents in the 1833 tax lists, but in September of 1834, he had mortgaged the property in a document that mentioned "a house and lot of land in the village of New Market." (5)

Webb had purchased the house from John Walker in May of 1833 for \$478. (6) If John Walker's purchases of property are followed, it can be demonstrated that Walker purchased four parcels of land:

1827	4.50 acres for \$102.54
1829	1.75 acres for 12.00
1831	0.75 acres for 27.50
1832	74 sq. perches for 20.00 (7)

The largest parcel, the 4.5 acres purchased from Frederick Kaufman are found in the 1823 tax ledger under Kaufman's account, with the improvements assessed at a mere \$67. (8)

With the foregoing evidence, it could be argued that no substantial structure stood on the 6-3/4 acre tract until after John Walker acquired it and improved whatever dwellings

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Chauncey C. Day, "Maryland Line (Originally New Market),"
 mss., n.d., p. 3.
 Baltimore City and County Deeds, Tax Ledgers.
 Communication from owner, Mrs. Etta V. Hare, February 11, 1980.

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 7.00

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Property bounded on north by Harris Mill Road, on east by I-83,
 on south by Groethe property, with 82.5-foot frontage on eastside
 of York Road. (Map 3, P51)

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

STATE NONE COUNTY NONE

STATE NONE COUNTY NONE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

John W. McGrain, Sites Surveyor

ORGANIZATION

Baltimore County Office of Planning & Zoning

DATE

April 11, 1980

STREET & NUMBER

401 Bosley Avenue

TELEPHONE

494-3495

CITY OR TOWN

Towson

STATE

Maryland 21204

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

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

RETURN TO: Maryland Historical Trust
 The Shaw House, 21 State Circle
 Annapolis, Maryland 21401
 (301) 267-1438

BA-993

CONTINUATION SHEET NO. 1, ITEM 7, PAGE 2 DR. EPHRAIM BELL'S HOUSE

gable roofing.

Foundation is stone, the basement rafters are logs, and the main block floors are random width planking. There are five fireplaces in the main block and a spiral staircase as reported by its present owner. The rear wing was merely a "summer house" and lacked fireplaces. In spite of undocumented stories that this house had been a roadside hotel, its wide and accessible porch—possibly a Victorian afterthought—is the only element that would suggest public use.

he acquired with the lots. Any study of the tax lists of 1818 and 1823 would suggest that New Market was almost entirely undeveloped as a town, certainly there were few town lots and the structures on them were close to sub-taxable.

Local traditions still persist. The present owner of the house, Mrs. Hare, cites the traditions that the house was the first place of public accommodation in the town, making it older, if that were true, than the Maryland Line Hotel. (9) Travelers would have been passing along the watershed line on which the York Road now travels, even before the laying out of the Baltimore and York Town Turnpike in 1810, since that was one of the routes for getting to York and it entered the town by striking along a NW-SE line from the Harford County border. But neither town nor inn were shown on the 1795 map by Dennis Griffith. Road traffic would have probably tripled about 1810 when the completed turnpike began to offer the best paved way of getting to York.

Sidney's 1850 map showed Dr. Bell as owner of the house. (10) The 1852 Assessment shows Dr. Ephraim Bell as owner of a 13-acre lot, part of the tracts Lawson's Pleasant Hills, The Road Tract, and Part of Spark's Folly. (11) The grounds contained \$1500 worth of improvements. This property can be easily followed from Dr. Bell to the present owner.

Dr. Bell was recorded in Chauncey Day's sketch as one of the only two slaveholders in town. With the Mason-Dixon Line a city block away, the village seems like a poor location for the maintenance of slavery. (12) The doctor's obituary showed that he had lived to age 83, and had served in both the 1850 and 1867 State Constitutional Conventions, and had several times been a member of the General Assembly. He had been "one of the glorious 19" at the second of his constitutional sessions as the Baltimore Sun put it. (13) Dr. Bell died on August 19, 1875 and was buried in Greenmount Cemetery, Baltimore City. (14)

Dr. Bell left his properties to two daughters, Mrs. Thomas DeFord and Mrs. John E. Hurst. Both the daughters' husbands were prominent Baltimore businessmen, DeFord in leather manufacturing, Hurst in wholesale drygoods—in fact, it was in Hurst's basement that the Great Baltimore Fire originated in 1904.

The 1877 atlas shows the owners as Hurst and DeFord. In 1879, the daughters, Mary R. S. Hurst and Sallie W. DeFord sold to Hannah H. Duncan, "the land of which the late Dr. Ephraim Bell died seized," 13 acres and 97 perches as surveyed by Martin Heathcote. This deed contains no "Same As" clause to make the descent of title certain. (15)

In 1885, Sampson S. and Hannah H. Duncan sold to Sarah A. L. Caskey. (16) Mrs. Caskey appeared in three tax series with a dwelling, barn, and outbuildings on the 13 acres. The 1918 ledger gave the following dimensions:

13 a. at New Market e. of York Road adj. Noah Krout N. @ \$40 Per Acre		\$520
Dwelling	15 x 41 17 x 39 2 stories	550
Barn	24 x 52	174. (17)

On becoming a widow, Mrs. Caskey sold in 1929 to Maryland Lloyd Caskey for a nominal \$5 plus "love and affection." (18) In 1958, some of the rear of the property (the eastern end) was condemned by the State Roads Commission to build I-83. (19)

In 1966, Maryland Caskey Myers, administrator of Maryland Lloyd Caskey, sold to Grason L. Hare and Etta V. Hare. (20) Mrs. Hare was sole owner at the time of writing.

This house, in spite of its uncertain origin, is a good example of a structure built in anticipation of business opportunities provided by the pay-highway of 1810. It demonstrates a primitive sort of construction with its long shed roof and voluminous interior.

NOTES:

1. Chauncey C. Day, "Maryland Line (Originally New Market)," mss., no date, pp.3-4.
2. Plat Drawn, 1980 for report on Maryland Line Hotel (BA 992) by John McGrain.
3. Baltimore American, May 4, 1835.
4. Baltimore City Deeds, TK 247:402.
5. Baltimore City Deeds, TK 242:1.
6. Baltimore City Deeds, TK 230:72.
7. Baltimore City Deeds, WG 185:497; WG 201:19; WG 215:477; and AI 221:393.
8. Assessor's Field Book, Old District 5, 1823 (Hall of Records).
9. Etta V. Hare, personal communication, February 11, 1980.
10. J. C. Sidney and P. J. Browne, "Map of the City and County of Baltimore, Maryland, From Original Surveys" (Baltimore, 1850).
11. Assessment, District 7, 1852 (Hall of Records #8256).
12. Chauncey C. Day, "Maryland Line," p. 3.
13. Sun, August 9, 1875. Also, Diehlman File, Md. Historical Society, Baltimore.
14. Diehlman File, Maryland Historical Society, Baltimore.
15. Baltimore County Deeds, JB 111:132.
16. B.C. Deeds, WMI 146:569.
17. Tax Ledger, District 7, 1918, f. 459.
18. B.C. Deeds, LMCLM 832:21.
19. S.R.C. Plats, No. 18, 198, Contract No. B 578-35-420.
20. B.C. Deeds, OTG 4665:604.



DR. EPHRAIM BELL'S HOUSE BA 993
Baltimore County, Maryland
J. McGrain, Oct 1979
Neg. located at MHT
Main & south facades from SW



DR. EPHRAIM BELL'S HOUSE BA 993
Baltimore County, Maryland
J. McGrain, Oct 1979
Neg located at MHT
Main & north facades from NW