

CE-88
Mercer Brown House
1207 England Creamery Road
Rising Sun
Private

1746
Builders: Mercer (Messer)
Brown, et. al.

The Mercer Brown House consists of three distinct portions. The two-story, three-bay, gable-roofed brick part dates from 1746 and is laid in Flemish bond on all four sides with dark, glazed headers on the south and west facades. Several bricks are inscribed with the initials of local citizens and probable assistants of Mercer Brown, Jr. in the construction of his house. There is an intricately carved datestone with the inscription M B H (for Mercer and Hannah Brown) and ANNO DOMONI (sic) 1746. The interior retains its original floor plan of two rooms on each floor connected by a winder staircase and a small portion of its original woodwork. The three bay wide frame portion of the house dates from the early and late 19th century and is partly the work of Amassa Churchman, husband of the granddaughter of Mercer Brown, Jr. It retains its original floor plan but has been fitted with woodwork not original to the house. Abutting the north facade of this frame portion is one half of a double-pen log barn moved to this property from an adjoining farm. Facing north with a central doorway, the brick portion holds a central door on the first floor flanked by 9/6 windows, and two 6/6 windows on the second floor. Between the two floors is a projecting roof not supported by posts, which runs around the west and south facades as well. The south facade has similar fenestration to the north, but the door has a 4-light transom and the first-floor openings are topped by narrow elliptical arches made of header bricks. The frame portion is three bays wide on

the south side, with an 8-paneled door in the west bay and two 6/6 sash windows in the two bays to the east. The second floor holds two irregularly spaced 6/6 windows. The west gable ends of the house has a single window, and a chimney which services a corner fireplace on the interior. The east gable end is two bays wide. A chimney between the brick and frame portions services a chimney opening into the east room of the brick portion. The tall gable roof of the log pen addition to the north of the frame portion covers a chimney between the two sections. In the north gable end, covered with random width beaded siding, is an 8/8 sash window. Also on the property is an early-20th century bank barn.

The Mercer Brown House is architecturally significant as an important, firmly dated survivor of the distinctive Pennsylvania Quaker building tradition brought to Maryland in the Colonial period. Among the distinguishing features of this tradition are the remains of pent roofs, the elaborate use of glazed header brickwork, and a highly decorative datestone. The most unusual feature, however, is the set of local initials carved into the brickwork of the 1746 half of the house; very few buildings in Cecil County offer as much insight concerning the actual building process.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

For NPS use only

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

received

date entered

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic BROWN, MERCER, HOUSE

and or common

2. Location

street & number 1270 England Creamery Road N/A not for publication

city, town Rising Sun vicinity of First

state Maryland code 24 county Cecil code 015

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> religious
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> not applicable	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name Edward Clark Plumstead

street & number 1416 Telegraph Road

city, town Rising Sun N/A vicinity of state Maryland 21911

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Cecil County Courthouse

street & number Main Street

city, town Elkton state Maryland

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Maryland Historical Trust
Historic Sites Inventory has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date 1969 federal state county local

depository for survey records Maryland Historical Trust

city, town Annapolis state Maryland 21401

7. Description

CE-88

Condition Check one Check one
 excellent deteriorated unaltered original site
 good ruins altered moved date N/A
 fair unexposed

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

Number of Resources		Number of previously listed National Register properties included in this nomination: <u> 0 </u>
Contributing	Non contributing	
<u> 1 </u>	<u> 1 </u> buildings	nomination: <u> 0 </u>
<u> 0 </u>	<u> 0 </u> sites	
<u> 0 </u>	<u> 0 </u> structures	Original and historic function and uses: residential
<u> 0 </u>	<u> 0 </u> objects	
<u> 1 </u>	<u> 1 </u> Total	

SUMMARY DESCRIPTION:

The Mercer Brown House is located in a rural setting west of the village of Calvert in Cecil County, Maryland. It consists of three distinct portions: the two-story, three-bay, gable-roofed, brick part dates from 1746 and is laid in Flemish bond on all four sides with dark, glazed headers on the south and west facades. Several bricks are inscribed with the initials of local citizens and probable assistants of Mercer Brown, Jr. in the construction of his house. There is an intricately carved datestone with the inscription M B H (for Mercer and Hannah Brown) and ANNO DOMINI (sic) 1746. The interior retains its original floor plan of two rooms on each floor connected by a winder staircase and a small portion of its original woodwork. The three bay wide frame portion of the house dates from the early and late nineteenth century and is partly the work of Amassa Churchman, husband of the grand-daughter of Mercer Brown, Jr. It retains its original floor plan but has been fitted with woodwork not original to the house. Abutting the north facade of this frame portion is one half of a double-pen log barn moved to this property from an adjoining farm. Also on the property is an early 20th century bank barn, which does not contribute to the significance.

**United States Department of the Interior
 National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
 Inventory—Nomination Form**



Continuation sheet BROWN, MERCER, HOUSE Item number 7 Page 1
CECIL COUNTY, MD

GENERAL DESCRIPTION

The Mercer Brown House is situated on a five acre tract located in a rural area of Cecil County, Maryland, approximately one mile west of the crossroads village of Calvert. The topography is characterized by gently rolling terrain comprised of cropland and pastureland drained by several branches of the North East Creek. The house faces north-south and is situated a few feet from and perpendicular to England Creamery Road which runs between Zion and the road to Calvert.

The present house consists of three distinct and easily recognizable portions. The brick part dates from 1746 and is a two-story, three bay wide, gable-roofed structure on a fieldstone foundation laid in Flemish bond on all four facades with glazed headers on the south and west facades. A diagonal pattern of glazed headers is visible on the west gable, which faces the road. Rubbed brick headers were used for the segmental arches above the first story windows and doors and for the more semi-circular arches above the cellar windows. There is a chamfered brick water table on the north, south and west facades.

A distinctive tombstone-shaped datestone is situated on the second story of the south facade directly above the center doorway. This elaborate and unusual plaque is inscribed with the initials M B H (for Mercer and Hannah Brown and ANNO DOMONI (sic) 1746, along with folk decorations of compass rose, Tudor rose, fleur-de-lis, tree-of-life and trailing vines.

Several of the bricks are incised with the initials of local citizens and probable assistants of Mercer Brown, Jr. in the construction of his house. A few also incorporate a diamond or lozenge pattern with the initialed inscriptions. The names associated with each set of initials are as follows:

- T. W. 1746 Thomas Wilson
- W. W. William White, who is recorded on a bill of sale for "burning and setting bricks."
- S. E. Samuel England, who is recorded as supplying 500 bricks to Mercer Brown.
- J. D. John Day, a local tanner who settled in the area in 1739.
- B. Chandlee
 (spelled out) Benjamin Chandlee, a well-known local clock-maker, to whom the carving of the datestone may be attributed.

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Continuation sheet BROWN, MERCER, HOUSE
CECIL COUNTY, MD

Item number 7

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GENERAL DESCRIPTION (continued)

- H. R. (twice) Hezekiah Rowles, a local cabinet-maker who is recorded as executing the 1752 interior of the Brick Meeting House in Calvert and whose initials also appear in the woodwork of the nearby John Churchman House (1745), both on the National Register.
- J. B. 1746 Jeremiah Brown, whose nearby stone house built in 1757 is the only other building in the county possessing the distinctive carved initials of its builders.

The pent roofs across the north, west and south facades and below the west gable are restorations, but pre-restoration photographs clearly show the original wood supports and the projecting brick drip courser.

Although the wooden window frames are original, the sashes are replacements. The door frames and three-light transoms are not original and probably date to the early nineteenth century. Evidence of a stoop and flanking hand-rails was found in the brickwork surrounding the south doorway; these have since been restored. There is a wooden cellar door on the north facade.

The brickwork of the north facade incorporates racking, suggesting that there was once a small wing, perhaps a buttery, off of the main house.

The interior retains its original floor plan of two rooms on each floor connected by a winder stairway located in the southeast corner, although the dimensions of the second floor rooms have been changed somewhat. There is a fireplace on the east wall of each level as well as a corner fireplace located in the northwest corner of the first floor.

Most of the original woodwork had been removed before the house was acquired by the present owner in 1964 but has been restored using the evidence of molding profiles imbedded in the later replasterings. This evidence revealed a high mantel shelf above the east end fireplaces and a tombstone shaped panel resembling the datestone located to the left of the downstairs fireplace.

The best surviving original woodwork is the ornamental cupboard built in above the corner fireplace. Original features include the deep cornice, grooved keystone, narrow flanking side panels with round finials, three built-in shelves and ledges and portions of the fireplace surround. The doors leading to the basement and attic are also probably original.

(See Continuation Sheet #3)

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Continuation sheet BROWN, MERCER, HOUSE
 CECIL COUNTY, MD

Item number 7

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GENERAL DESCRIPTION (continued)

Attached to and connecting with the east end of the brick half is the two-story, three bay wide, gable-roofed frame structure, part of which was built in the early nineteenth century; the rest dates from the late nineteenth century. Window and door frames are mostly original to their respective periods. The inferior quality of the brickwork visible from the interior of the frame wing indicates that some structure always existed attached to the brick house.

The interior of the frame wing has been fitted with woodwork brought from an early eighteenth century house threatened with demolition in Feasterville, Pennsylvania. There is a fireplace with fielded paneling on the north wall and a cupboard with original painted landscape on the east wall. The upstairs has retained its original floorplan of three small bedrooms.

Abutting the north facade of the frame portion and connected to it by the north door is one half of a double pen log barn brought here from an adjoining farm. The barn features V-notched logs filled with plaster and stone chinking and dates from the late eighteenth century. The gable roof has a wide overhang on the east side. The barn's interior has been re-plastered and is used as an office.

An early 20th century bank barn stands southwest of the house, across England Creamery Road; the building is open on the east side, with its roof ridge running north-south.

8. Significance

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

Specific dates 1746 (brick half) **Builder/Architect** Mercer (Messer) Brown, et al., builders

(see description)

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

Applicable Criteria: C
 Applicable Exceptions: None
 Significance Evaluated: Local

SIGNIFICANCE SUMMARY:

The Mercer Brown House is architecturally significant as an important, firmly dated survivor of the distinctive Pennsylvania Quaker building tradition brought to Maryland in the colonial period. Among the distinguishing features of this tradition are the remains of pent roofs, the elaborate use of glazed header brickwork and a highly decorative datestone. The most unusual feature, however, is the set of local initials carved into the brickwork of the 1746 half of the house; very few buildings in Cecil County offer as much insight concerning the actual building process.

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Continuation sheet BROWN, MERCER, HOUSE
 CECIL COUNTY, MD Item number 8 Page 4

HISTORY AND SUPPORT

Architecturally, the Mercer Brown House is significant for three reasons: it is an important survivor of the distinctive Pennsylvania Quaker building tradition brought to colonial Maryland by William Penn and his followers; the brick section is an early, dated building located in a section of Cecil County, the Nottingham Lots, unusually rich in examples of eighteenth century architecture, thus giving important clues to the history of architecture in the county; and the house possesses a distinctive set of carved local initials in the brickwork, offering unusual insights into the building process. Only one other house, the nearby Jeremiah Brown House built in 1757, possesses such a collection of initials.

The house stands on a portion of Lot 28 of the Nottingham Lots laid out in 1701 by William Penn. This eighteen-thousand acre tract, spanning parts of both present day Pennsylvania and Maryland was laid out by Penn to attract settlers to territory disputed between him and Lord Baltimore. Among the first settlers was William Brown who bought Lot 28 for his son Mercer (also variously spelled Messer) Brown, Sr. After his death in 1732, the land passed to his son Mercer Brown, Jr., the builder of the brick half of the house. Both men were ironmasters (receipts for bar iron from as far away as Cumberland Forge still exist) and Mercer Brown, Jr., was probably responsible for the decorative iron hinges, ghosts of which were found on doors of the house.

The early settlers of the Nottingham Lots brought with them the building traditions they had known elsewhere in Pennsylvania and the brick half of the Mercer Brown House possesses several important characteristics of Pennsylvania Quaker architecture. Among these are the remains of pent roofs, elaborate glazed header brickwork and the carved datestone.

Pent roofs are a distinctive feature of seventeenth century architecture in Pennsylvania and at one time were a common sight in this section of Cecil County. Nearly all have been removed due to deterioration or changing tastes. Although this occurred at the Mercer Brown House, the joist holes and brick drip course were still visible and guided the restoration of the present replacement pent roofs. Originally the Mercer Brown House had pent roofs on two levels, a variation often seen in Cecil County.

The Mercer Brown House is an important contribution to the character of the Nottingham Lots, one of the most important collections of eighteenth century architecture in the county. It is one of eight early, definitely dated buildings in this area, thus providing important clues to the architectural history of the county. Most of these houses, although smaller and less pretentious than the Georgian mansions built by the English settlers

(SEE CONTINUATION SHEET #5)

9. Major Bibliographical References

CE-88

SEE CONTINUATION SHEET NO. 6

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property 5 acres

Quadrangle name Bay View, MD - PA

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UTM References

A

1	8	4	1	4	4	4	0	4	3	9	3	7	3	0
Zone		Easting				Northing								

B

Zone		Easting				Northing								

C

Zone		Easting				Northing								

D

Zone		Easting				Northing								

E

Zone		Easting				Northing								

F

Zone		Easting				Northing								

G

Zone		Easting				Northing								

H

Zone		Easting				Northing								

Verbal boundary description and justification

SEE CONTINUATION SHEET NO. 7

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

state N/A code county code

state code county code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Geoffrey B. Henry

organization date

street & number 1515 Rutledge Avenue telephone (804) 293-8006

city or town Charlottesville state Virginia

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national state local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature *[Signature]* 4-22-87

title STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER date

For NPS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

date

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

BROWN, MERCER HOUSE
CECIL COUNTY, MD

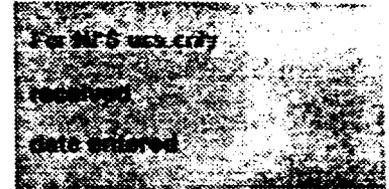
Continuation sheet

Item number

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MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

- Gifford, G. E., Jr. **Cecil County Maryland, 1608-1850, As Seen by Some Visitors** (George Gifford Memorial Committee, Calvert School, Rising Sun, Md. 1974)
- Johnston, George **History of Cecil County Maryland** (Elkton, Md., 1881)
- Touart, Paul **Building Traditions of the Nottingham Lotts** (Maryland Historical Trust, 1981)
At the Head of the Bay, Maryland Historical Trust unpublished manuscript)
- Cope, Gilbert **Browns of Nottingham** (unpublished pamphlet, 1864)

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BROWN, MERCER, HOUSE
CECIL COUNTY, MD



Continuation sheet

Item number

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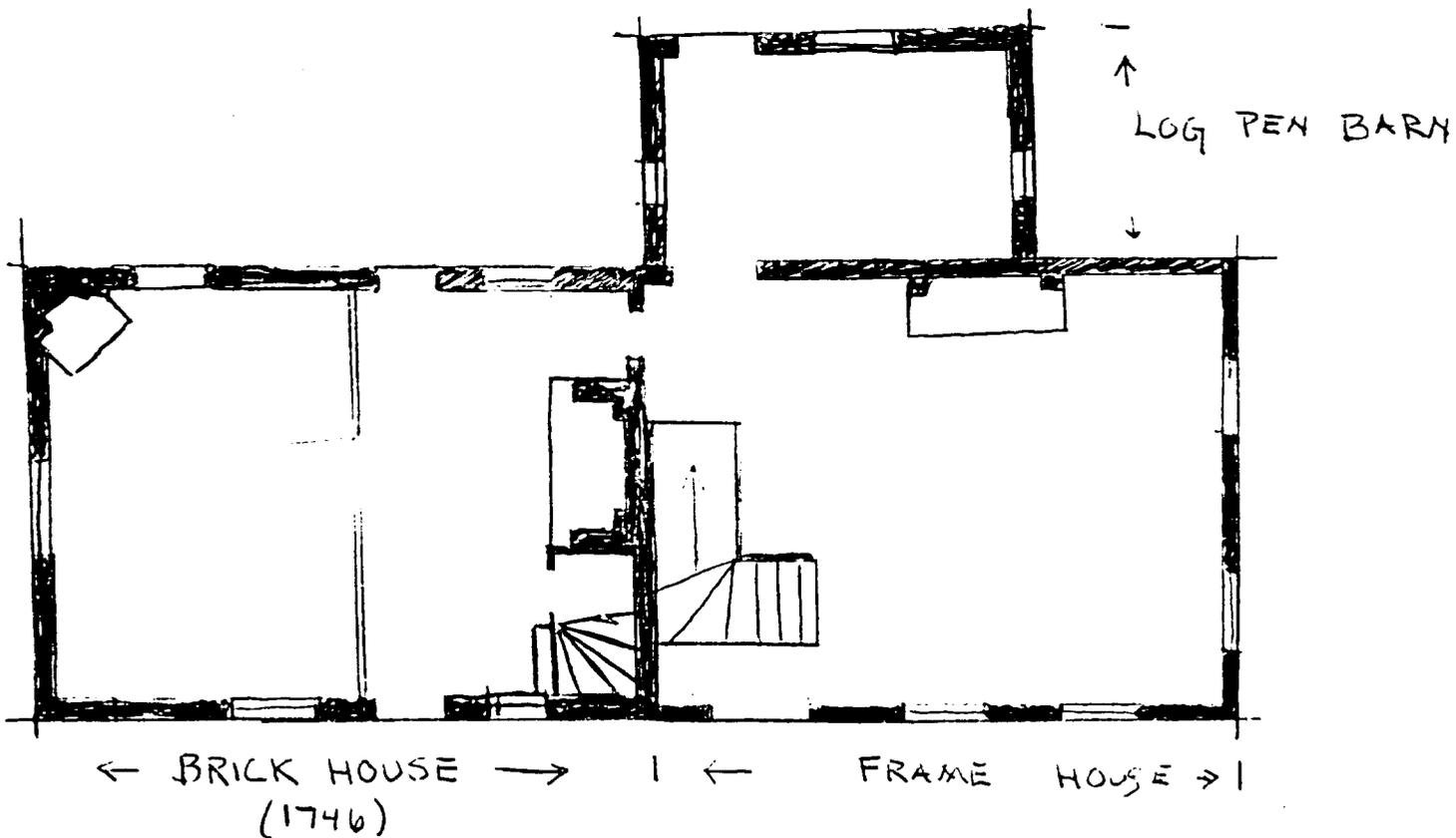
Page

7

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION AND JUSTIFICATION

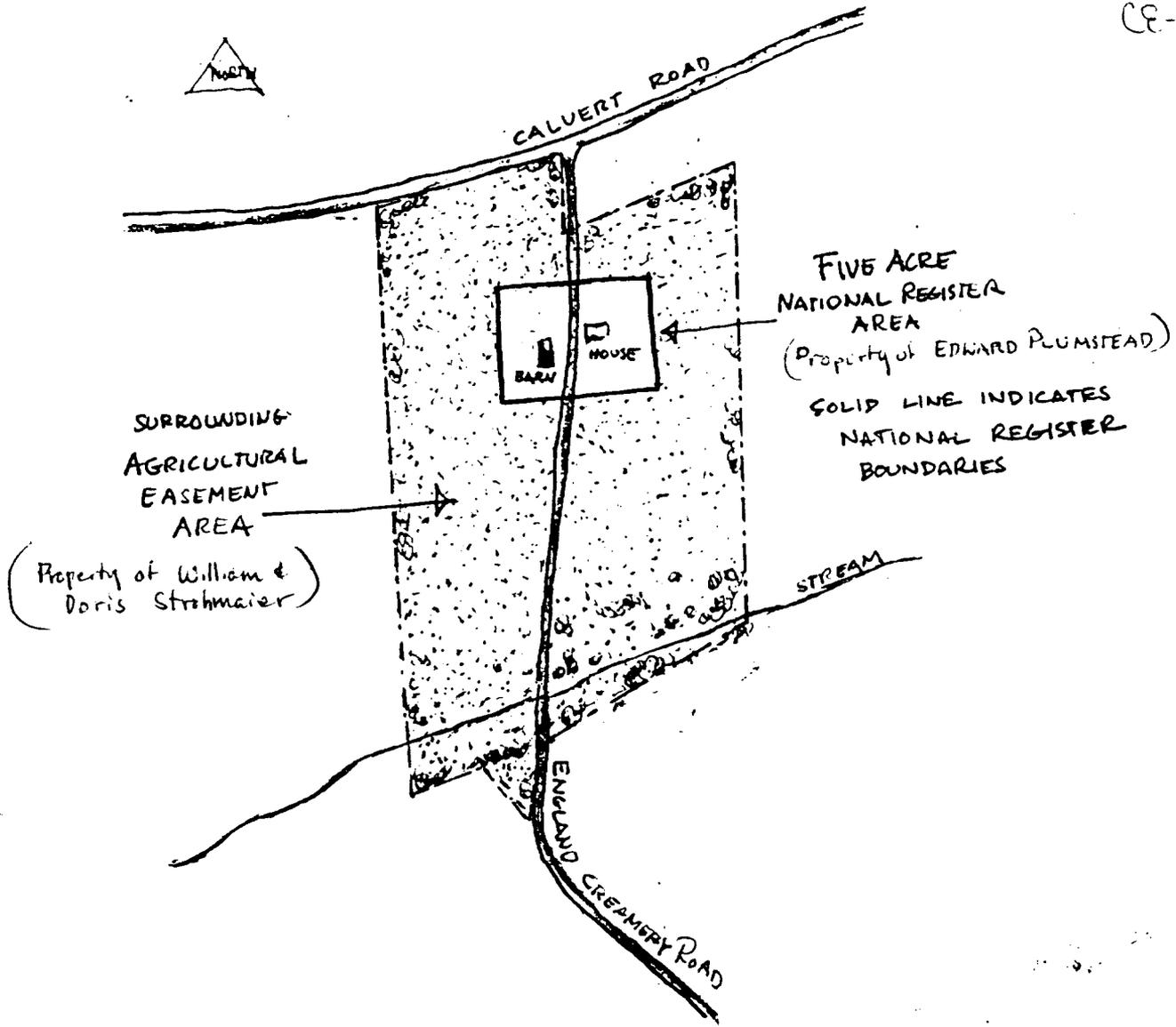
The Mercer Brown House property is a five acre rectangle depicted on the attached sketch map. The lot is bisected by England Creamery Road and the Mercer Brown House is situated few feet to the east of this road. The lot is part of the original lot 28 of the Nottingham Lotts laid out in 1701 by William Penn. The nominated property thus represents the remnant of the land historically associated with the house, and contributes to the resource's integrity of setting. The surrounding farmland, which is owned by others, is protected from development by a permanent agricultural easement.

CE-88.



MERCER BROWN HOUSE
CALVERT, MARYLAND
CECIL COUNTY

SKETCH PLAN
Approx. SC only
1986



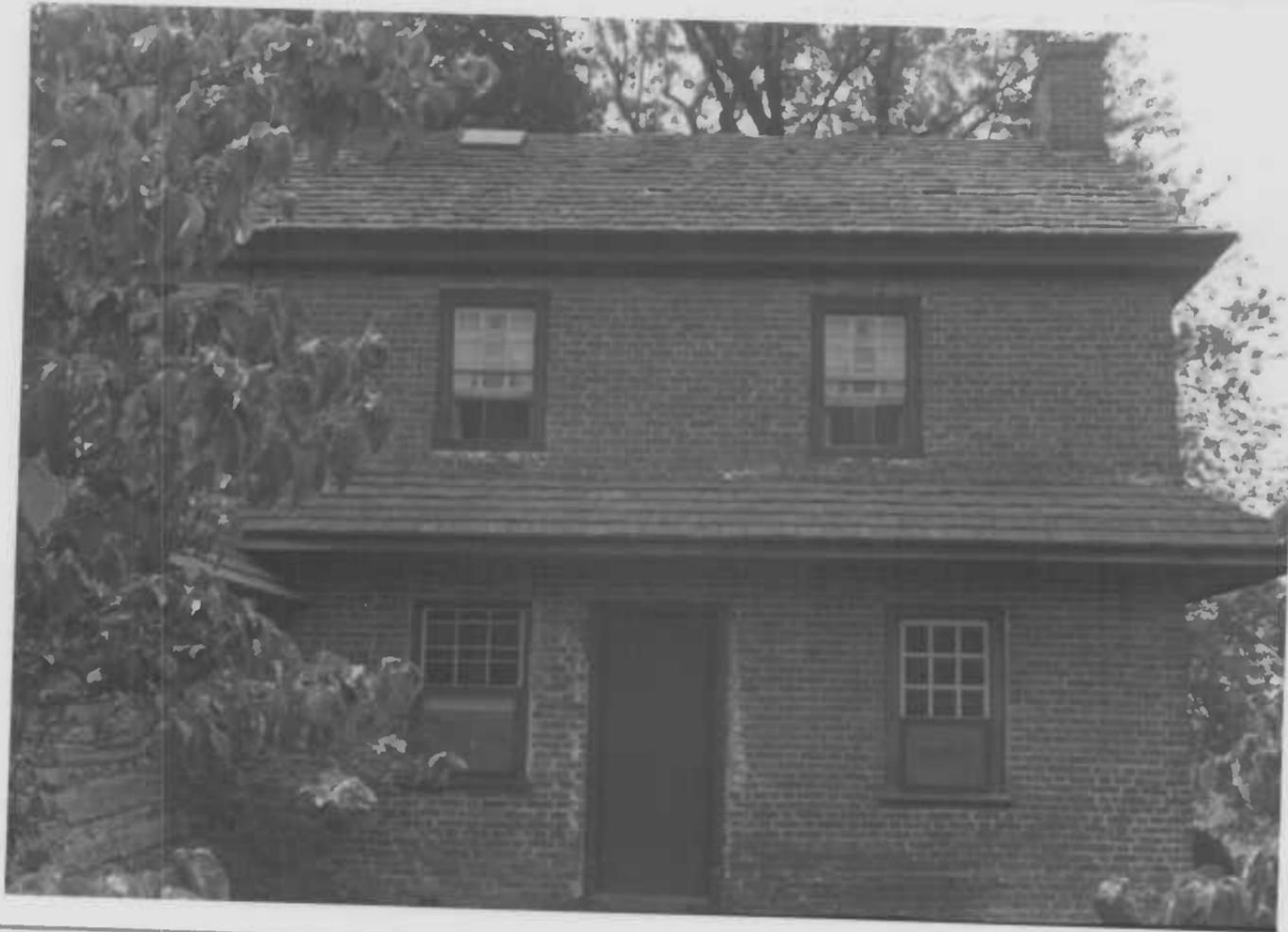
SKETCH SITE PLAN

MERCER (MESSER) BROWN FARM
CECIL COUNTY, MARYLAND

SCALE 1" = 660'

1986

(IMPROVEMENTS NOT TO SCALE)



CE-88 Mercer Brown House
near Calvert, Md.
Geoffrey Henry 6/86
Negatives at MHT
North facade

2/



Ce-88

Mercer Brown House

Near Calvert, Md.

Log barn addition, NE corner

G. Henry, photographer, 6/86



CE-88

Mercer Brown House

Near Calvert, Md.

Brick half, S. facade

T.C. Masek, photographer, 7/86



CE-88

Mercer Brown House

Near Calvert, Md.

Frame half, S. facade

T.C. Masek, photographer, 7/86



CE-88 Mercer Brown House
near Calvert, Md.
Geoffrey Henry 6/86
Negatives at MHT
Interior, log addition

16/



CE-88, Mercer Brown House
near Calvert, Md.
Geoffrey Henry 6/86 13/
Negatives at MHT
Interior, frame half, looking west



CE-88 Mercer Brown House
near Calvert, Md.
Geoffrey Henry 6/86
Negatives at MHT
Interior second floor

11/



CE-88

Mercer Brown House

Near Calvert, Md.

Corner Cabinet above fireplace

T.C. Masek, photographer, 7/86



CE-88 Mercer Brown House
near Calvert, Md.
Geoffrey Henry 6/86
Negatives at MHT
South facade w/ datestone

4/



CE-88

Mercer Brown House

Near Calvert, Md.

Frame half, E. facade

T.C. Masek, photographer, 7/86



CE-88 Mercer Brown House
near Calvert, Md.

Geoffrey Henry 6/86

Negatives at MHT

Corner fireplace, keystone and arch 22/



CE-88

Mercer Brown House

Near Calvert, Md.

Restored int. fireplace, 1st floor

G. Henry, photographer, 6/86



CE-88

Mercer Brown House

Near Calvert, Md.

Restored panelling, mantel shelf

(1st floor) T.C. Masek 7/86



CE-88 Mercer Brown House
near Calvert, Md.
Geoffrey Henry 6/86 18/
Negatives at MHT
Corner fireplace, cornice detail



Mercer Brown House
South Elevation
Near Calvert
2/81 PBT
NEG/MD. Hist. Trust

CE-88

P 13 9
C



Mercer Brown House
Southwest Elevation
Near Calvert
2/81 PBT
NEC MD. Hist. Trust

CE-88



CE-88 Mercer Brown House
near Calvert, Md.
Geoffrey Henry 6/86 7/
Negatives at MHT
Bricks with "B. Chandlee", "W L "



CE-88 Mercer Brown House
near Calvert, Md.

Geoffrey Henry 6/86

Negatives at MHT

Datebrick, west facade

10/



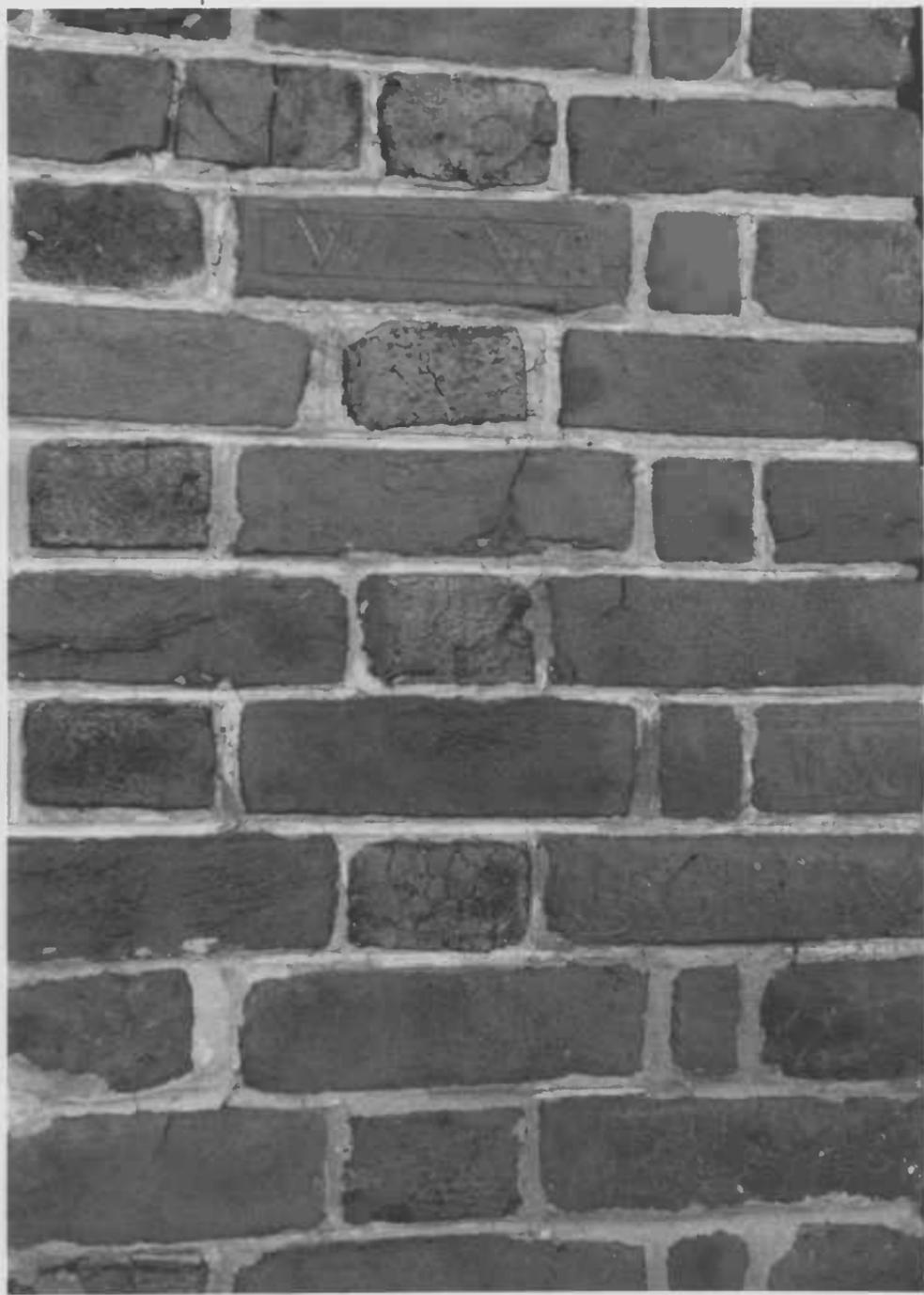
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Mercer Brown House

Near Calvert, Md.

Doors leading to basement and 2nd
floor, brick half

G. Henry. photographer. 6/86



CE-88

Mercer Brown House

near Calvert, Md.

Decor of initialed bricks, w.fac.

T. J. Jasek, photographer, 7/86



CE-88 Mercer Brown House
near Calvert, Md.
Geoffrey Henry 6/86
Negatives at MHT
Corner fireplace, panelling

20/



CE-88 Mercer Brown House
Near Calvert, Md.
Restored panelling, 1st floor,
brick half
G. Henry, photographer, 6/86



CE-88 Mercer Brown lise., Calicut inc. PJB



CE-88 Mercer Brown House
near Calvert, Md.
Geoffrey Henry 6/86
Negatives at MHT
Brickwork on S facade

5/



CSCIL CTY # 88

88 Carl

409 DAG 1/68