INVENTORY CAPTION: SLAVE QUARTERS, ST. IGNATIUS CHURCH

Ch- 7A
~~Bal Alton~~ Charles Point
Private

1830-50

This small one story frame dwelling was built as quarters for the slaves and later free blacks who were cooks for the rectory at St. Ignatius church. Originally the interior consisted of one room downstairs and another upstairs, but the downstairs was divided into three rooms in 1866 when it was occupied by the priests after the rectory burned. Its most unusual feature is the tunnel in the cellar that once led down to the Potomac River. Oral tradition says that it was used during the Civil War by Confederate soldiers to enter and leave the state. In earlier days, it may have been a clandestine means of communication by blacks and may have been a part of the Underground Railroad.

C H- [redacted] 7A

MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST

INVENTORY FORM FOR STATE HISTORIC SITES SURVEY

1 NAME

HISTORIC: SLAVE QUARTERS, ST. IGNATIUS CHURCH

AND/OR COMMON:

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER: Adjacent to the rectory of St. Ignatius Church, south side of Bel Alton Rd., 2 miles west of its jct. with Rt. 301

CITY, TOWN: CHARLES POINT ~~Bel Alton~~ X VICINITY OF

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT: 1

STATE: Md.

COUNTY: Charles

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE	
__DISTRICT	__PUBLIC	__OCCUPIED	__AGRICULTURE	__MUSEUM
__BUILDING(S)	X PRIVATE	X UNOCCUPIED	__COMMERCIAL	__PARK
X 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
		__NO	__MILITARY	X OTHER Storage

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME: St. Ignatius Church

Storage Facility
301 - 934-8245
Telephone #: 934-9630

STREET & NUMBER: Bel Alton Rd.

CITY, TOWN: Bel Alton __ VICINITY OF

STATE, zip code: 20611

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.: Liber #: A.B. & H. Folio #: 37 As written on photstat of land patent dated 1649 in ms. Collection of St. Ignatius Church

STREET & NUMBER:

CITY, TOWN: Annapolis

STATE:

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE: NONE

DATE:

__FEDERAL __STATE __COUNTY __LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:

CITY, TOWN:

STATE:

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
__EXCELLENT	__DETERIORATED	__UNALTERED	X ORIGINAL SITE
X GOOD	__RUINS	X ALTERED	__MOVED DATE_____
__FAIR	__UNEXPOSED		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

This small, frame one story house is located approximately 10 yards behind the east gable end of the rectory of St. Ignatius Church. It faces north. The structure is painted white, consists of one principal block with a facade of 2 bays (a door and a small window). It is sheathed with German siding and stands on brick under pinnings. Inside the west gable wall ascends a brick stove flue, which may have been added when the western end was extended about 4' or 5' in the 3rd quarter of the 19th century, replacing an earlier brick chimney.

The interior consists of two rooms on either side of a N-S partition. In earlier days an E-W partition bisected the western room. The interior of the downstairs is completely lathed and plastered, including the ceiling. According to Father Thoman, who has served as priest to this parish for twenty three years, this house was occupied by the priests after a fire in 1866 gutted the church and rectory. This tripartite division of space may have resulted from their occupancy, the house perhaps originally being only one room.

Along the eastern gable wall a ladder stairs ascends to the one open room upstairs, which is unheated and ventilated by a small window in each gable end. The rafters are hewn timbers, as are the other framing members of the house. They are butted together at the peak and fastened by machine cut nails, the type of nails found throughout the house.

This is the only slave house located so far in southern Maryland that has a cellar. An opening in the flooring of the N.E. corner of the ground floor originally let down into it. Today, entrance is gained from outside, down steps underneath the back length. Especially intriguing is the tunnel, most of which is caved in now, that was dug through the dirt floor of the cellar. According to Father Thoman, it extended from this house down to the Potomac River, a distance of more than a quarter of a mile. He did not know when the tunnel was built nor why, but did say that he had read in newspapers in the Jesuits' collection that Confederate soldiers were said to have used this tunnel to enter Maryland after crossing the Potomac from Virginia.

Since the Jesuits freed their slaves in 1833, it is also possible that the freed slaves may have used this tunnel to hide runaway slaves as part of the Underground Railroad, or for other clandestine purposes.

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

CH-7A

8 SIGNIFICANCE

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

SPECIFIC DATES

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

According to Father Thoman, this house was built as the residence of the slaves who were cooks for the parish rectory. The presence of machine cut nails of the type made after the 1st quarter of the 19th century indicates that this house was built no earlier than that time. Since Jesuit priests wrote that they took up residence in the cooks' quarters after the fire in 1866 (according to Father Thoman), that year would be the terminus ante quem for occupancy by blacks.

The cellar and tunnel are potentially valuable archaeological sites, as are other areas on this lovely site of a 17th century Jesuit manor.

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

CH-7A

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY _____

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

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

STATE COUNTY

STATE COUNTY

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE
George W. McDaniel, Historic Sites Surveyor

ORGANIZATION
Md. Commission on Afro-American History & Culture

DATE

STREET & NUMBER
20 Dean Street

TELEPHONE
269-2893

CITY OR TOWN
Annapolis, Maryland

STATE
21401

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

ADDENDUM TO THE FILE
BLACK SERVANT HOUSE AT ST. THOMAS MANOR
CH-7A

Three staff members of the Maryland Historical Trust (Orlando Ridout, Diane Wasch, and Marcia Miller) made a site visit to St. Thomas Manor on June 27, 1990 to participate in a barn recording project with Mary Washington College. During that visit, Diane Wasch and Marcia Miller measured and recorded a small dwelling house on the property. The house was previously surveyed by George McDaniel and was assigned M.H.T. Survey Number CH-7A. On the basis of the recent site visit, an addendum is being filed with the original survey form.

Description

The black servant house at St. Thomas Manor is part of the Jesuit mission complex in Charles County. The one-story, heavy timber framed servant house faces north to Chapel Point Road and stands approximately 100 yards to the east of the large, brick Jesuit manor house dated 1741. Construction evidence indicates that the small frame house was built during the first half of the nineteenth century and was remodelled during the third quarter. An 1867 map suggests that the house was moved to its present site and the interior remodelled as a priests' temporary residence after a fire gutted the manor house in the winter of 1866.

Despite its antebellum construction date, the house can be called a servant dwelling and not slave quarter based on the Jesuits' emancipation of their slaves in 1830. While it is possible that the house was constructed prior to the manumission of the slaves, it seems more likely that the dwelling was constructed during the second quarter of the nineteenth century, perhaps immediately following their manumission.

The servant house is twenty feet long and sixteen feet wide. The house is sided with clapboards fastened with modern wire nails. All four walls are framed with plain cornerboards. The gable roof is covered with standing seam tin, and the gable ends have tapered rake boards with beaded edges. The cornice is boxed with a beaded fascia board. The house sits on a brick foundation and has a fully excavated cellar.

The fenestration of the principal north facade consists of a door to the east and a six-light single sash window to the west. A vertical seam in the siding suggests that the door may have originally been centered on the facade. A cellar window is positioned below the first-floor window.

The east, gable end is blank except for a four-light attic window. Loose clapboards reveal posts and down braces of the heavy timber framing system. A pair of posts, each set in 5'5" from the corners, are evidence of an original chimney that was demolished when the house was moved. There is no evidence of a chimney foundation in the current brick foundation nor is there any ground disturbance that would demarcate a chimney base, indicating that the house has been relocated to its present site.

The south wall has two windows. The west window is identical to that on the north facade; the east window has been replaced with a four-light sash. The two cellar windows are evenly spaced below. A bulkhead with a tin, standing-seam cover is roughly centered and provides access to the fully-excavated cellar.

The west gable end is blank, and has similar rakeboards and cornerboards as the east gable.

The interior of the dwelling is currently divided into two nearly equal sized rooms, although construction evidence indicates that the present plan is the third configuration. During the first period of occupation, the dwelling was a diminutive hall-parlor plan with a larger heated hall to the east and smaller parlor or "inner room" to the west. During the second period of construction, probably c.1867, the parlor was enlarged at the expense of the hall, and the parlor was partitioned into two heated chambers. During the third period of construction, the partition in the two heated chambers was removed and the plan returned to a two-room configuration.

As originally constructed during the first or second quarter of the nineteenth century, the dwelling had a hall-parlor plan. The 12 by 15 foot hall was heated by an exterior chimney on the east wall; the posts of which can still be seen in the exterior gable end. The 7 by 15 foot parlor was reached through a door centered on a partition wall. The evidence for the separate parlor is an exposed ceiling joist and cross sill that lie approximately seven feet in from the west wall. The ceiling joist has empty mortises that indicate a stud partition wall. The cross sill, visible in the cellar, still retains the posts and downbraces that were pinned into the beam. The framing members were cut off when new flooring was laid over the sill. (This cross sill and joist were mistakenly interpreted as signs of an original end wall in the previous survey.)

The second period of construction dates to 1867 after a fire in late 1866 devastated the manor house and the priests required new quarters during the renovation. A period map shows the servant dwelling house significantly closer to the manor house than it is today. It is likely that the servant house was moved out of the way during the major renovation project. The roof and rafters appear to date from this period, thus the dwelling itself probably suffered fire

damage. It was common for farm buildings to be relocated; the eighteenth-century barn behind the manor house was moved there some time after 1867.

During this second period of construction, the interior finish was improved and the plan was reconfigured into a three room lay out. The walls and ceiling were refinished with plaster applied over circular-sawn lath fastened with fully mature machine cut nails. Each of the two windows on the west side consist of fixed sash that open by being raised up into a slot in the wall. The window in the east room is a later replacement. The baseboards, door and window trim are simple pieces of square-edged lumber painted brown.

The interior stud wall was relocated towards the east. The enlarged west parlor was subdivided into two chambers, each 9 by 7 1/2 feet, by a vertical plank partition wall running east-west through the room. A freestanding brick chimney stack was constructed near the west wall; it had two flue holes -- one to heat each chamber. A section of the partition wall remains in the space between the back of the stack and the west wall. Each chamber was accessed by its own door opening from the hall; there was no direct communication between the two chambers. The front door was probably repositioned towards the east during this remodelling.

The size and relative importance of the hall declined as it became primarily a circulation space. The now unheated room contained the ladder stair to the attic, the opening to the cellar, and the doorways to the two sleeping chambers. The new ladder stair rose along the east wall in front of the old chimney. It is not clear where the previous attic opening had been positioned. The circular-sawn framing for a cellar opening near the foot of the ladder stairs is visible from the cellar; it has now been sealed by the new flooring.

The third period of construction came closely on the heels of the second. The Jesuits were anxious to rebuild their manor house to forestall any movement to transfer the mission to another area. Thus, the manor house was repaired within a year and the priests returned to their original quarters. The small dwelling house reverted back to the black servants. The east-west partition wall was removed to make a two-room plan; the interior north-south wall was retained. At this time, the doorway to the "back" chamber was sealed. The machine cut nails, circular-sawn lath, and appearance of the plaster are identical to that used throughout the interior, supporting a remodelling date close to 1867.

The unfinished attic is reached by the ladder stair in the east room. Circular-sawn floor boards and a mitred common rafter roof point to a postbellum, post-fire construction date. Indeed, the original roof may have sustained significant damage in the fire. The cellar is reached through an exterior bulkhead in the south wall. The

cellar was clearly used as living or cooking space. The chimney stack in the west has a flue hole, and the entire room is whitewashed. The four cellar windows on the north and south walls have been partially bricked up, but were originally large enough to admit light. There is a modern concrete floor and reinforced walls. Portions of the original hewn sills and framing members are visible in the cellar although much circular sawn lumber is also evident. Circular sawn lumber frames a now-sealed opening to the northeast corner of the first floor.

A deep cistern-like hole in the southwest corner connects to a passage which is popularly thought to lead to the banks of the Potomac. Recent archeology reports, however, that this hole terminates in a small cubicle. Local residents believe that a tunnel was used by the Underground Railroad, or by the Jesuits during the 18th-century persecution of Catholics in Maryland. Both of these unsubstantiated stories, however, are flawed by the fact that there is no sign of a tunnel or a building over the opening in the detailed 1867 map that shows the topography and landscape features.

Significance

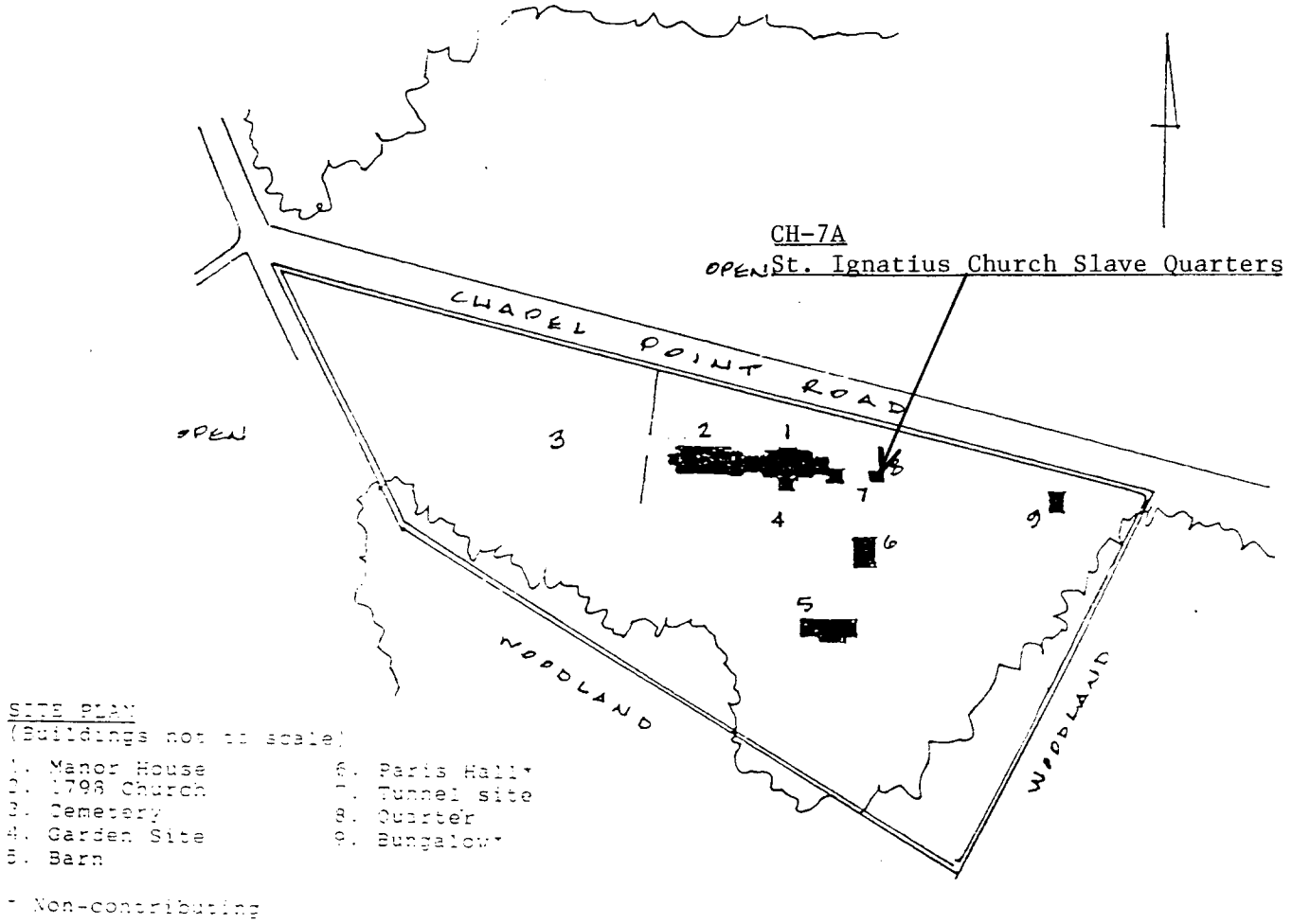
The black servant house at St. Thomas Manor is significant in three important ways. First, it is a rare example of antebellum, free black housing. Second, of the nineteenth-century hall-parlor houses that have been documented in Tidewater, Maryland, this dwelling is one of the smallest. Third, this dwelling graphically illustrates the discrepancy in housing standards between wealthy whites and blacks of the most fortunate circumstances. Thus, the primary significance of this house dates to its period of original construction rather than to the subsequent remodellings.

Antebellum free black housing is difficult to find not only because of the small numbers of these structures, but also because black housing of any sort was typically crudely constructed. It is not known what the housing was like for the free blacks who worked the fields at the manor, although one would expect that the house servants enjoyed better quarters than their field-working brethren. As a dwelling for free blacks who worked inside the Jesuit manor house, this dwelling was at the upper end of spectrum for black housing.

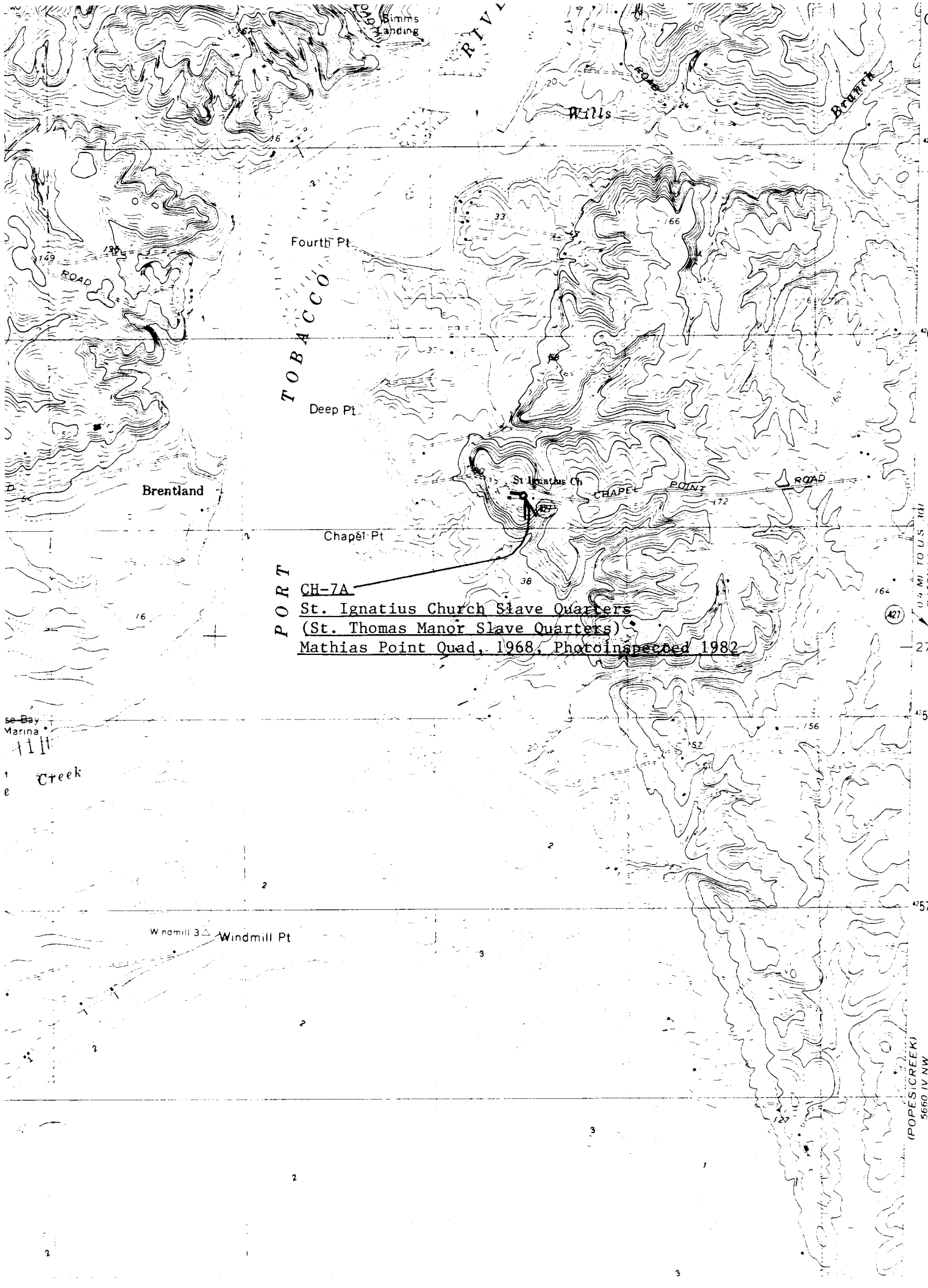
The dwelling has the dimensions of a slave house with the plan of a white planter's house. While the 16 by 20 foot size is typical for black housing, the hall-parlor plan sets the dwelling house apart from the usual one room, all-purpose layout. For the black servants, like most whites, the most important improvement to a house was the introduction of a private -- however cramped -- parlor. The parlor clearly expressed the importance of the separation of public and private space even within the poorest households.

This hall-parlor house for free blacks is particularly impressive by slave housing standards. The building was solidly constructed and stands in good condition today. The two-room plan attests to a higher standard of living than that endured by most slaves. Yet it is still a modest structure that would be inhabited by only the poorest whites (or priests awaiting better quarters).

RESOURCE SKETCH MAP, 1988



See Continuation Sheet No. 7/6



CH-7A
St. Ignatius Church Slave Quarters
(St. Thomas Manor Slave Quarters)
Mathias Point Quad, 1968, Photoinspected 1982

CREDIT TO
GEORGE W. McDANIEL

Slave Quarters, St. Ignatius Church
CH ~~326~~ 7A
Bel Alton, Md.
North facade
GWM 1/77

Slave Quarters, St. Ignatius Chu
CH ~~326~~ 7A
Bel Alton, Md.
South Elevation
GWM — 1/77

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GEORGE W. McDANIEL

Slave Quarters, St. Ignatius Church
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BEL GITON, Md.
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