CH-36D

INVENTORY CAPTION : SLAVE HOUSE, CRAIN FARMS

CH-36D
Mt. Victoria 1830-50
Private

This one story log house was probably built as a dwelling for slaves. In the 20th century additions have been built onto each gable end, but originally the structure consisted of only the one room log block with one room upstairs. It was representative of many of the houses occupied by rural black families in the 19th century in southern Maryland.

MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST

MAGI #09036D5404

INVENTORY FORM FOR STATE HISTORIC SITES SURVEY

1 NAME

HISTORIC: SLAVE HOUSE, CRAIN FARMS

AND/OR COMMON: "Mt. Victoria" or "Strawberry Vale"

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER: Crain Farms, South Side of Mt. Victoria Rd.

CITY, TOWN: Mt. Victoria ___ VICINITY OF

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT: 5

STATE: Maryland

COUNTY: Charles

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY
- ___ DISTRICT
- ✓ BUILDING(S)
- ___ STRUCTURE
- ___ SITE
- ___ OBJECT

OWNERSHIP
- ___ PUBLIC
- ✓ PRIVATE
- ___ BOTH

PUBLIC ACQUISITION
- ___ IN PROCESS
- ___ BEING CONSIDERED

STATUS
- ✓ OCCUPIED
- ___ UNOCCUPIED
- ___ WORK IN PROGRESS

ACCESSIBLE
- ✓ YES: RESTRICTED
- ___ YES: UNRESTRICTED
- ___ NO

PRESENT USE
- ___ AGRICULTURE
- ___ COMMERCIAL
- ___ EDUCATIONAL
- ___ ENTERTAINMENT
- ___ GOVERNMENT
- ___ INDUSTRIAL
- ___ MILITARY
- ___ MUSEUM
- ___ PARK
- ✓ PRIVATE RESIDENCE
- ___ RELIGIOUS
- ___ SCIENTIFIC
- ___ TRANSPORTATION
- ___ OTHER

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME: Bennett Crain

Telephone #: 259-2406

STREET & NUMBER:

CITY, TOWN: Mt. Victoria ___ VICINITY OF

STATE, zip code: Md. 29661

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

Map.83, P. 38
Liber #: 163
Folio #: 711

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.: Charles County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER:

CITY, TOWN: La Plata

STATE: Md.

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE: NONE

DATE:

___ FEDERAL ___ STATE ___ COUNTY ___ LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:

CITY, TOWN:

STATE:

CH-36D

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
✓ EXCELLENT	DETERIORATED	UNALTERED	✓ ORIGINAL SITE
✓ GOOD	RUINS	✓ ALTERED	MOVED DATE_____
FAIR	UNEXPOSED		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

This elongated house stands on the side of a hill near the top, looking out over the nearby fields to the south. About 100 yards S.W. of the house are barns, a backsmith shop, and other work buildings associated with plantation life. According to Mrs. Bennett Crain, these are postbellum (investigation of them was not permitted).

The house consists of three sections, the middle one being the original log house to which two frame additions have been built at different times. The facade of the log block consists of two bays, a door and a small window. It is one bay in depth, and the back length contains only a door, located opposite the front one. The facade has no porch. Steep stairs lead up to the house, for the house is raised rather high above the ground on brick pilings. Corrugated tin insulates the space underneath the house. The log walls are sheathed with white weatherboards that are not original and that cover the corners, so that the notching used in the corners could not be seen. In the window is a double hung sash frame with 2x2 lights. Originally the roof was covered with wood shingles but now with tin, painted red. The eaves are not boxed; the rafters abutt onto a false plate and do not overhang the walls. The gable cornices are enclosed with plain, narrow planks. The structural system of the roof was masked by the ceiling in the upstairs. A large brick chimney supported by a stone foundation ascended the exterior of the west gable end, but has now been enlcosed by the frame kitchen.

The interior consisted of one room whose walls were exposed logs painted white. The hewn joists were also exposed. A boxed stairway in the northest corner of one flight of narrow steps led to the one room upstairs, that was unheated. That chamber served only as sleeping quarters, containing only beds. This lack of furnishings for personalized use of space probably indicates the appearance of the upstairs chambers of many tenant or small landowners' houses in earlier years. It was therefore photographed (See slides).

The kitchen addition is frame, with circular saw joists, tongue and groove siding on the walls, and attached by wire nails, and was possibly added in the late 19th century, though more likely in the first quarter of the 20th due to the 6x6 double hung sash windows. A wood stove has been let into the brick chimney, and is still used for cooking. The fireplace in the main block has been filled in, and a wood stove there serves as the source of heat.

On the opposite gable end of the log block has been added a bathroom and a small bedroom for the parents (the children sleeping upstairs above the sitting room and kitchen).

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

CH-36 D

8 SIGNIFICANCE

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 2nd Quarter 19th Century BUILDER/ARCHITECT BLACK HISTORY

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

According to Mrs. Crain, the wife of the owner of the farm, this small log house was built as a slave house. No structural or oral evidence could be found to dispute this tradition. The presence of machine cut nails with finished, square heads in the jamb of the front door, which appears to be original to the structure, suggests that the house was built not earlier than the second quarter of the 19th century.

The original log house is representative of those occupied by most black families in the 19th century in southern Maryland. Its present condition and its furnishings reflect the life style of the rural poor in southern Maryland today.

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

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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	Maryland 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

CREDIT TO
GEORGE W. McDANIEL

CH 36 D
Slave house, Crain farms
Mt. Victoria, Md.
North elevation
GWM
2-77

CREDIT TO
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CH 36 D
Slave house, Crain farms
Mt. Victoria, Md.
Facade, south view
GWM
2-77