

INVENTORY FORM FOR STATE HISTORIC SITES SURVEY

1 NAME

HISTORIC Weller-Johnson House

AND/OR COMMON

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

27 West Main Street

6th

CITY, TOWN

Thurmont

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

STATE

Maryland

___ VICINITY OF

COUNTY

Frederick

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 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

John and Carol Ford

Telephone #: 271-7608

STREET & NUMBER

27 West Main Street

CITY, TOWN

Thurmont

___ VICINITY OF

Maryland

STATE, zip code

21788

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,

REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. Frederick County Courthouse

Liber #: 1325

Folio #: 0125

STREET & NUMBER

Patrick & Court Streets

CITY, TOWN

Frederick, Md.

STATE

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

DATE

___ FEDERAL ___ STATE ___ COUNTY ___ LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE

7 DESCRIPTION

F-6-114

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 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

Weller-Johnson house is located on the north side of West Main Street and east side of Altamont. The south facing house is a side gabled, modified L-shape, with a 3 story square block 3 bays by 2 and a 2 story northern wing. A two-tiered porch occupies interior wall or east side of wing.

It is constructed of coursed fieldstone with end chimneys. The west side chimney is incised with construction date of 1805 and the first owner's initials. The present standing seam tin roof is laid over extant cedar shingle. The upper half of north wing is frame, marking an early 20th century addition of 3 rooms to original structure.

Windows are 12-over-8 on front (south) facade and 9-over-6 elsewhere except for two modified for later porch access.

A center hall separates the rooms into the traditional German plan of one by two rooms in the main block. Original detailing is present throughout in the beaded, eared moulding of paneled doors and windows. Modest incised or fluted design grace the wooden mantels. Plank doors to original stable yard are extant; one with wrought iron strap hinge, possibly manufactured by original owner. The modern strip flooring is laid over random width pine.

An original cast iron German language fireback occupies the altered kitchen fireplace--its twin was lost to sale in 1963.

The grounds are graced by a wrought iron fence enclosing a box wood garden. Mature trees surround the house. Nothing remains of the original log stable buildings accessed through east side driveway or other original outbuildings.

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

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"/> 00-1499	<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/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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> _OTHER (SPECIFY)	
	<input type="checkbox"/> _INVENTION			Local History	

SPECIFIC DATES 1805-06

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Master craftsman and entrepreneur Jacob Weller " B.S." built this large fieldstone Federal era structure in 1805-6 in the new Town of Mechanics (now Thurmont). Traditional Anglo-Germanic architectural plan and detailing abound throughout dating from its use as the first inn in the town. Later owners included merchant George Johnson. Its 20th century owners, the Zimmerman sisters, opened the house to summer boarders. It has been beautifully restored by its present owners.

HISTORY AND SUPPORT

According to the Moravian Church records, in July 7, 1807, George Weller and Catherine Huber were married at the house of Jacob Weller.B.S., in the " new town". This is one of the earliest references to Mechanicstown (later Thurmont). which was laid out ca. 1803 at the crossing of roads west and north When John Creeger marked out the town lots, they adjoined the Weller famiy's 110 acre farm on tracts "Beauty" and "Buckshorn".¹ The third generation on this tract was Jacob Weller, who always signed documents as "B.S." to distinguish himself from the other Jacob Wellers in the vicinity. He paid \$ 38 for lots 6 & 7 on the north side of "Main road from Hagerstown to Baltimore" for 1 acre and an additional 4 lots on the south side of the road comprising 2 acres. (Land Record WR 27-327). He also purchased lot 8 the same day which became the site of the large log stable and driveway behind his inn.²

Construction began on the Weller house immediately and was memorialized on the west side chimney where "J.W.B.S. 1805" was inscribed. The original house rises 3 stories/with a 2 story porch on interior of north end wing. The three bay symmetrical facade has 12-over-8 windows on the street elevation with 9-over-6 on the sides. Inside the German influence is evident in the one by two lay-out of the rooms divided by the center hall; original cast iron fireback with German motto; dog-eared moulding and mantels. Some of Weller's own forge work remains in strapwork hinges of plank doors opening to stable yard of original inn.

While Weller was owner of this building he built and operated the only edge tool factory in Western Maryland, making shovels, axes, etc. from the raw iron carted to Mechanicstown from the Catoctin Furnace three miles south of town.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

F-6-114

Frederick County Land, Will, Tax Records
Catoctin Clarion and Catoctine Enterprise newspapers (1871-1963)
Weller, Johnson, Zimmerman family histories and Thurmont history
articles and unpublished memoirs.

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 12,410 square feet

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Fronting on the north side of West Main Street and bounded by the
east side of Altamont Avenue

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

STATE COUNTY

STATE COUNTY

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Anne W. Cissel

May, 1995

ORGANIZATION

Historic Research Associates

DATE

STREET & NUMBER

117 Sunhigh Drive

TELEPHONE

(301) 271-2141

CITY OR TOWN

Thurmont, Md.

STATE

MD 21788

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 infringe-
ment of individual property rights.

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

Mr. Weller invested heavily in lots and structures in town. On one of the lots opposite his inn he built what would become known as "The Match House".

An 1841 article about Mechanicstown in the Baltimore Phoenix and Budget represents Mr. Weller as being the first hostler in town.³ Evidence of this building's use as the first inn is bolstered by the \$4,000 sale price to John Leatherman in 1813. (WR 44-375).

In April 1817 John Leatherman resold the property for the same \$4,000. The land was assessed to James Hammett in 1825 taxes, but that year Hammett sold it to Sarah Foster, his sister-in-law for \$1,000. For an additional thousand Sarah bought 3 negro slaves ages 14-27, furniture including 2 desks, 2 cupboard, bedsteads" with cheats (sic)"(Land Records JS 21-583).⁴

During the next few years, Mechanicstown saw its prosperity and population increase. Many new industries arose, including Jacob Weller & Son's introduction and manufacturing of the first friction matches in the U.S.; woolen mills, tanneries and other business thrived alongside Little Hunting Creek. On the nearby original tract now called "Weller's Correction", Jacob built a the first church and cemetery. The street now abutting the west side of subject house was the lane to the church. In later years some of this acreage was added to the Weller-Johnson house lot. Unfortunately Jacob Weller, over extended himself financially and would end up insolvent, forced to sell all his property at the hands of trustees. The cemetery holds both the 1831 grave of his father and his own in 1846. The church is now known as Weller United Methodist in memory of Thurmont's most influential early citizen.

George Johnson was a young clerk in the one of the local stores in these years. Born in Lynn, Massachusetts, he was in Mechanicstown by 1829 when he witnessed the will of Jacob Weller, Senior (called "Old Jake"). He was living in the Weller's "Match House" in the 1850 Census. At Sarah Foster's death in 1856 she devised her house to her Hammet nephew and niece, who soon sold the house to Mr. Johnson who had remarried and needed a larger home. The connection between the Weller/Johnson continued when in 1871 George Johnson located his dry goods, grocery store near the site of the old tilt forge.⁵

In 1863 George purchased acreage behind his house for over 415 feet north along the Church Alley (now Altamont Street). George and wife Hannah died within a year of each other in 1897-98. Their executors sold the old Weller house to Cordelia Zimmerman for \$1,650 in 1899, who then sold to her sister Mrs Castle.⁶ In 1907 Mrs. Castle deeded the house to her spinster nieces Mattie and Bessie Zimmerman, but continued to make her home with them. A new three room "apartment" was built over old kitchen section, which was her home until her death in 1935.

During the next 50 years the Zimmerman sisters opened ^{the} house for summer visitors, who often spent the whole season in Thurmont. Numerous trains ran from Baltimore to the mountain areas every day. In addition to second floor addition, a large west side porch in the newest "colonial revival" style was added. The old-fashioned, original kitchen fireplace was closed up, burying and preserving

the german-style fireback for later discovery.⁷ The Zimmerman sister's house was on a Homemakers Tour in late 1930's, at which time the placement of rooms in the Weller era was documented, with the right side room identified as the tap-room or tavern part. Across the hall was the large dining room and kitchen combined in two rooms, but now divided into three. The 1929 modernization hid the random width plank floor with modern pine; standing seam tin roof was laid over the old cedar shingles. One of the most interesting 19th century souvenirs is the charred rafters in the attic, scarred by a fire when one of the Weller antecedents was showing off her wedding clothes by candlelight which upset and caused their destruction.⁸

In July 1962 the Catoctin Enterprise newspaper advertised the house and contents at auction sale. The winning bid of \$15,500 included some antique furniture, and the original tavern room fireback. (The remaining one was bricked up in the old kitchen).

Guy Angell and Robert Dunn were owners between 1963 to 1986 when it was purchased by its current owners John and Carol Ford who have spent several years, rehabilitating and restoring the old house to reflect its original style and detailing. The wood detailing has been stripped and repainted its original Prussian Blue and Turkey red colors. The beautiful beaded, eared mouldings and simple mantles, each one differently incised or fluted have been restored. The charred attic rafters have been left in situ but unsympathetic 20th century elements have been removed.

Footnotes:

1. The original tracts "Beauty" and "Bucks Horn" were combined and resurveyed for Jacob Weller B.S. in 1804. This 110 acres was renamed "Fire In The Mountain", however 19th century deeds out of this acreage refer to it as "Weller's Correction" for which no patent has been found.

2. Fred. Co Land Records, WR 27-327 and 326.

3. Weller (1775-1846) would have still been alive when this article was published. Entitled "Machanicstown" and signed "A.M.B", it is in the bound volume of Baltimore Phoenix and Budget at the Maryland Historical Society.

4. The most intriguing mystery surrounding this house is the find of a 12 inch full face portrait of a young black girl done in lamp black or some other permanent pigment which has impregnated the wood. It was found under several layers of paint on the dado board of stair landing to third floor. The crude portrait is a stereotypical caricature of a "pickaninny" with fly-away pigtails and a wide open mouth.

5. Catoctin Clarion, June 10, 1871

6. Land Records DHH 3-553 eq seq.

7. In 1971 the taproom fireback was in a Keymar, Md. house. Its loose translation is contained in an unpublished letter from Howard R. Damuth, now part of Damuth Collection of the Thurmont Historical Society. Translation:

Who ever will laugh at this shouldn't

Unless he can do better

Advice can many give

Doing it is the creator's pleasure.

8. Damuth Collection-Thurmont Historical Society, containing personal recollections, undated newspaper clippings and the events and locales of 1951 Bi-Centennial Committee.

F-6-114

EXECUTOR'S SALE

OF VALUABLE REAL AND PERSONAL PROPERTY

Pursuant to Orders of the Orphans' Court of Frederick County, Maryland, dated the 23rd day of May, 1962, and the power of sale contained in the Last Will and Testament of Martha C. Zimmerman, late of Frederick County, Maryland, deceased, recorded in Liber T.M.E. No. 2, folio 123, one of the record books for Wills in the office of the Register of Wills for Frederick County, Maryland, I will offer at public sale at the residence of said deceased, on the corner of West Main Street and Altamont Avenue in Thurmont, Frederick County, Maryland, on

SATURDAY, JULY 7, 1962

at the hour of 10:30 O'clock A. M. (DST), the following valuable antique and modern personal property and stocks:

ANTIQUES: Early Victorian walnut loveseat, large Victorian marble top stand, Victorian arm chair (gentleman's), 3 mahogany horsehair covered side chairs, 2 Windsor spindle back side chairs, German back fireplace plate, brass fireplace fender and andirons, large brass piano lamp, (rare), walnut arch door corner cupboard, 6 leg cherry drop leaf table, 6 maple cane seat chairs, walnut drop leaf wall table, Sheraton mahogany side board, Empire desk chest, marble top table, round marble top stand, sleepy hollow rocker, 2 drawer sewing stand.

Cherry slant top solid end desk, cane seat rocker, steeple clock, cherry night stand with drawer, marble top dresser, walnut wardrobe, 2 walnut cane seat chairs, 2 Adams chairs, 2 drawer needle cabinet, Empire cane seat chair, marble top washstand and bureau, maple cane seat chair, cane seat rocker, walnut bed, Ogee mirrors, spool stand, Empire bureau, 2 walnut wardrobes, Empire maple chest, 2 cane seat Empire chairs, walnut Heppelwhite drawer stand, Heppelwhite solid end chest of drawers, 2 maple cane seat chairs, large mahogany mirror, pine blanket chest, 3 mahogany side chairs with upholstered seats, walnut bureau with brown marble top, walnut stands, rockers, chairs, etc.

3 gold leaf frames, gilt frames, Victorian vases, oil paintings, bric-a-brac, lustre fruit bowl, brass candlesticks and candelabra, cruets and syrup jar, majolica deer pitcher, 6 old Haviland Limoges square cake plates, 50 piece old Limoges china dinner set, cups, saucers, fruit bowls, vegetable dishes, meat platters, cut glass bowls, 6 lustre fruit plates, Austrian and old German china, 12 Bavarian plates, 8 pink lustre berry dishes, 6 Prussian saucers, wines, glassware, 2 old blue pottery jars, vases, table cloths, linen napkins, 8 coin silver soup spoons, silver punch ladle, coin silver tea spoons, coin silver table spoons, serving forks, spoons, ladles, flat silverware, amborina fruit bowl.

JEWELRY: Ladies old diamond ring, gold ring with set in turquoise stones and pearls, onyx pin, costume jewelry.

MODERN & MISCELLANEOUS: Knabe grand piano, rockers, beds, pictures, bureaus, washstand, clothes trees, trunks, tea cart, 7 ft. Frigidaire, hard bottom chairs, gas stove, old kitchen cupboard, radio and stand, everyday china, cooking utensils, vacuum sweeper, books, rugs, book shelf, single iron bed and springs, wardrobes, mantle clock, sewing machine, linens, bedspreads, and miscellaneous

items of said Bessie H. Zimmerman predeceased Martha C. Zimmerman.

The above lot is improved with a stone, modern dwelling, containing four rooms on the first floor, 4 bedrooms and bath in the front on the second floor and a separate three room and bath in the rear apartment on the second floor. There is also a bedroom on the third floor. Heat is by oil-fired, hot water heating system and the roof of the dwelling is metal.

The apartment on the second floor is now rented to tenants under a month to month lease.

The property can be inspected on Saturday, June 23rd and on Saturday, June 30th between the hours of one and three p. m. and on Friday, July 6, between the hours of seven and nine p. m. (DST) and on the day of sale.

TERMS OF SALE: Personal property, cash on day of sale as prescribed in Court Order. No property to be removed until paid for. Real estate, cash on day of sale or ratification by the Orphans' Court. A deposit of 10% of the purchase price shall be paid on the day of sale to insure compliance with the terms thereof. All costs of conveyancing including writing of deed and state and federal revenue stamps to be at the expense of the purchaser. Possession upon day of settlement except as to rented apartment as to which landlords possession will be given. State, County and City taxes and water rent as well as rent for the apartment for the month of July to be adjusted to the day of settlement.

FRANK A. CASTLE

Executor of the Last Will and Testament of Martha C. Zimmerman

ROBERT E. CLAPP, JR.

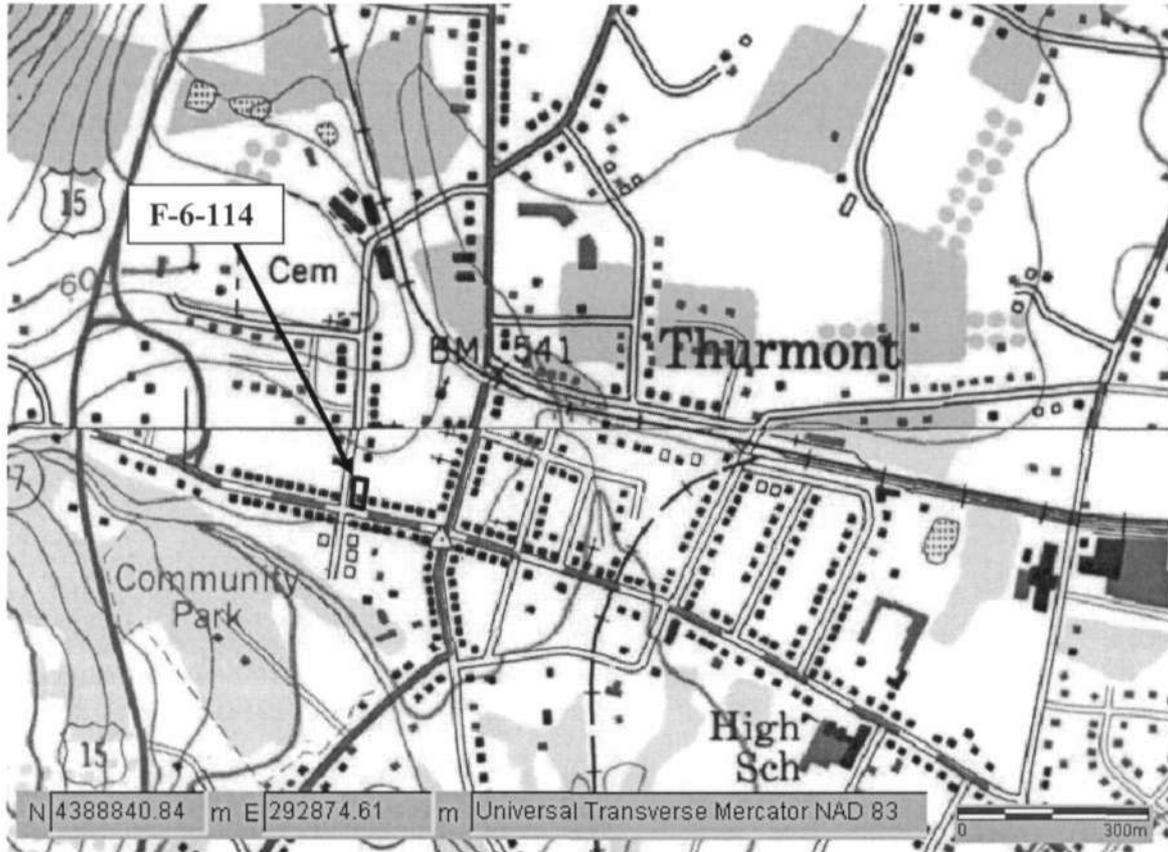
Attorney for Executor

EMMERT R. BOWLUS, Auctioneer

HORACE M. ALEXANDER, Clerk

6-22-3t-(3)

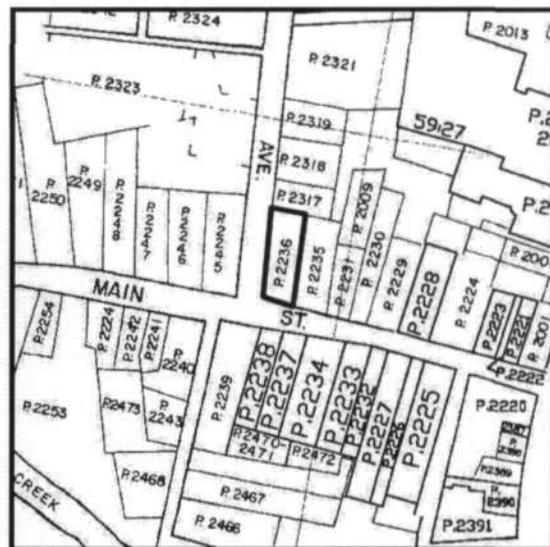
F-6-114
 Weller-Johnson House
 27 W. Main Street (MD 77), Thurmont
 Catoclin Furnace Quadrangle



1993-95 Aerial Photo



Tax Map 752, p. 2236





Wesley

F-6-114

Wesley

MAY 94

MAY 94

MAY 94



F-6-114

APR 95

APR 95



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APR 95

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