

F-7-62

Murdock-Lawson Farmstead; "The Locust"  
Urbana vicinity  
Private

Ca. 1825-ca. 1930

The Murdock-Lawson Farmstead is centered on a circa 1825 brick dwelling with a side hall plan and a one-story porch, with a one-story addition on the northwest corner. Other buildings in the farmstead are a frame smokehouse, a privy, a garage, a saw mill, a wagon shed/corn crib, a blacksmith shop, a tractor shed, a hog barn, and a bank barn with milk house. The outbuildings date from the period about 1875-1930. The farmstead is moderately significant in architecture and agriculture for the vernacular Federal style of the dwelling and the variety of outbuildings illustrating the various functions of the late 19th and early 20th century farm. The saw mill is an unusual component in the farmstead; although many portable steam saw mills were in operation from about 1875 to the mid-20th century, few have survived in farmstead building groups. The farm was established about 1825 by Benjamin or Richard B. Murdock and the dwelling dates from about this period. By 1890, the Murdock family sold the farm to William P. N. Lawson, in whose family the property remained until the mid-1980's. "The Locust" is said to have been the name the Murdock family used in connection with the farm.

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Murdock-Lawson Farmstead  
Urbana  
Frederick County

HISTORIC CONTEXT:

MARYLAND COMPREHENSIVE HISTORIC PRESERVATION PLAN DATA

Geographic Organization: Piedmont  
(Harford, Baltimore, Carroll, Frederick, Howard, Montgomery  
Counties, and Baltimore City)

Chronological/Development Period:  
Agricultural-Industrial Transition, A.D. 1815-1870  
Industrial/Urban Dominance, A.D. 1870-1930

Prehistoric/Historic Period Themes:  
Agriculture  
Architecture, Landscape Architecture and Community Planning  
Economic (Industrial)

Resource Type:

Category: Building

Historic Environment: Rural

Historic Function & Use:  
Domestic/single dwelling/residence  
Domestic/secondary structure/smokehouse  
Agriculture/subsistence/animal facility/barn  
Agriculture/subsistence/storage/granary  
Agriculture/subsistence/agricultural outbuilding/tool shed  
Industry/Processing/Extraction/manufacturing facility/mill

Known Design Source: None

# Maryland Historical Trust State Historic Sites Inventory Form

Magi No.

DOE  yes  no

## 1. Name (indicate preferred name)

historic  Murdock-Lawson Farmstead (preferred); "The Locust"

and/or common

## 2. Location

street & number 2914 Roderick Road  not for publication

city, town Urbana  vicinity of congressional district 6th

state Maryland 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	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> not applicable	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other:

## 4. Owner of Property (give names and mailing addresses of all owners)

name Field Farms Limited Partnership, et al

street & number 1 N. Summit Avenue telephone no.:

city, town Gaithersburg state and zip code Md. 20877

## 5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Frederick County Courthouse liber 1341

street & number 100 W. Patrick Street folio 607

city, town Frederick state MD 21701

## 6. Representation in Existing Historical Surveys

title

date  federal  state  county  local

depository for survey records

city, town state

# 7. Description

Survey No. F-7-62

<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved    date of move _____
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		

Prepare both a summary paragraph and a general description of the resource and its various elements as it exists today.

CONTRIBUTING RESOURCE COUNT: 10

The Murdock-Lawson Farmstead or "The Locust" is an originally agricultural complex now principally a private residence centered on a two-story brick dwelling built about 1825 and its associated domestic and agricultural outbuildings, most of which date from the period about 1890-1930. The outbuildings include a frame and stone bank barn, a wagon shed/corn crib, a smokehouse, a saw mill, a blacksmith shop, and a hog barn. The farmstead is located on the west side of Roderick Road about two miles west of Urbana, Frederick County, Maryland. The buildings are set back from the road about 150 yards and the house faces east, with the outbuildings located north of the dwelling. The dates of the structures are based on architectural evidence and land records.

The dwelling is a two-story brick building with a three-bay east elevation laid in flemish bond. The entrance is in the south bay and a one-story porch with turned columns, a scroll-sawn frieze, and brackets shelters the first story. The cornice is corbeled and the roof is covered with standing seam metal. An interior end chimney is at the north gable end. The windows are 6/6 with gauged arches and louvred shutters. The doorway has a 4-light transom and a 6-panel door with glazed upper panels. The west elevation also has three bays with an off-set window in the south bay which lights the interior stair landing. Below this window, on the first story is a repointed area of different color brick surrounding a small 1/1 window showing that an original doorway opening from the rear of the side hall was altered. The gauged arch over the former doorway is still in place above the modern window. At the northwest corner of the house is a one-story frame kitchen addition with an enclosed porch on the north elevation. The addition has german siding. A stone foundation partially visible on the west elevation suggests that the present shed-roofed addition may replace an original side wing of one or 1-1/2 stories of undetermined plan. Both the north and south gable ends have no openings except a single off-center attic window. The interior retains some door and window trim, but was not accessible for more complete documentation.

### Domestic outbuildings:

**Smokehouse:** The frame smokehouse has a stone foundation and board and batten siding and an overshot gable roof covered with corrugated metal. Under the extended gable is a vertical beaded board door on the east elevation. The gable is faced with german siding. The smokehouse appears to date from about 1875, although an interior examination may reveal earlier features, such as log structure.

**Garage:** The circa 1920 garage located immediately north of the smokehouse has concrete block walls and a shed corrugated metal roof. Twin sets of sliding, cross-braced doors are on the east elevation.

**Privy:** Behind the smokehouse is a small frame privy with a corrugated metal roof and vertical board siding. It probably dates from about 1900-1915.

# 8. Significance

Survey No. F-7-62

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	<u>X</u> agriculture	___ economics	___ literature	___ sculpture
___ 1600-1699	<u>X</u> architecture	___ education	___ military	___ social/
___ 1700-1799	___ art	___ engineering	___ music	humanitarian
<u>X</u> 1800-1899	___ commerce	___ exploration/settlement	___ philosophy	___ theater
<u>X</u> 1900-	___ communications	<u>X</u> industry	___ politics/government	___ transportation
		___ invention		___ other (specify)

**Specific dates** C. 1825 - C. 1930 **Builder/Architect**

check: Applicable Criteria: XA \_\_\_ B XC \_\_\_ D  
and/or

Applicable Exception: \_\_\_ A \_\_\_ B \_\_\_ C \_\_\_ D \_\_\_ E \_\_\_ F \_\_\_ G

Level of Significance: \_\_\_ national \_\_\_ state X local

Prepare both a summary paragraph of significance and a general statement of history and support.

The Murdock-Lawson Farmstead is moderately significant in architecture and agriculture, the dwelling illustrating the vernacular Federal style of the mid-1820's and the extensive outbuilding group having representative examples of a wide variety of agricultural and domestic functions from the last quarter of the 19th century to about 1930. The presence of a saw mill in farmsteads was common in the late 19th and early 20th centuries after portable steam saw mill equipment became common, but few of these have survived. The machinery in the Murdock-Lawson saw mill has been removed, but the surrounding structure remains relatively unchanged. The bank barn, hog barn, wagon shed/corn crib, tractor shed, and blacksmith shop further exemplify the needs and activities of the farm. The bank barn has the typical concrete block enclosure of the stalls showing the conversion from grain as the principal product to dairying in the early 20th century.

The house was possibly built by Richard B. Murdock or his father Benjamin Murdock about 1825. It was certainly built by 1834, when Benjamin's last will and testament devised to Richard "the farm on which he now lives, to contain 379 acres." The Murdock descendants retained the farm until 1890 when an equity sale took place and the farm was sold to William P. N. Lawson (1836-1911), who then sold it to James U. Lawson (1830-1897). His son Gabriel U. Lawson (1868-1940) received the farm in 1910 in a second equity sale. The advertisement in 1910 described the farm as follows:

"This farm (121 acres, 18 square perches) is improved by a substantial brick and frame dwelling house containing 9 rooms, and a good bank barn, wagon shed, and necessary outbuildings. This farm is well supplied with water both at the house and in the fields, and is under good fencing. Mr. Gabriel U. Lawson residing on the premises . . ."

According to Mr. Marion Lawson, the son of Gabriel, the farm was called "The Locust" by the Murdock family, but no other reference to a name has been discovered. The Lawsons retained the property until the mid-1980's.



7.1 Description (Continued)

Agricultural outbuildings:

Wagon shed/corn crib: The frame wagon shed/corn crib has vertical siding and sliding doors on both the east and west central openings. The cribs have horizontal siding on the north and south sides and stone piers. The gable roof is corrugated metal. A shed addition on the north side also has a set of sliding doors. The wagon shed was probably built about 1890.

Saw mill: The saw mill, which operated from at least the 1920's until the 1970's, is a long open shed located west of the wagon shed. A corrugated metal roof covers the shed, which has a partially enclosed section at the east end, while the west end is open on all sides. The steam-powered mill equipment has been removed to a nearby farm and the structure is currently a recreational building.

Blacksmith shop: The frame building probably built as a blacksmith in about 1890-1900 is located adjacent to the wagon shed/corn crib, the westernmost building in a row leading eastward to the bank barn. The exterior is covered with board and batten siding on the east end of the rectangular building and vertical boards on the west end. A sliding door opens to the west end on the south elevation. The roof is corrugated metal. The interior has a concrete block chimney which is brick above the roof, located at the east end.

Tractor shed. The frame building east of the blacksmith shop appears to have been built as an all-purpose shed for wagons and/or small tractors. Now deteriorated to the point of sagging toward the west, the building has vertical board siding and a corrugated metal roof. The south elevation is open. The building probably dates from about 1900-1910.

Hog barn: The building which appears to be a hog barn is located just west of the bank barn and is linked to it by a covered area from its east gable end. The building has vertical siding and dutch doors on the south elevation opening to a feeding aisle across the south side. Concrete piers support the building on the north side, where a slope falls away to a former farm land running from the barnyard to the western agricultural fields of the farm. The hog barn was probably built in the early 1920's, but could be an enlargement of an earlier shed.

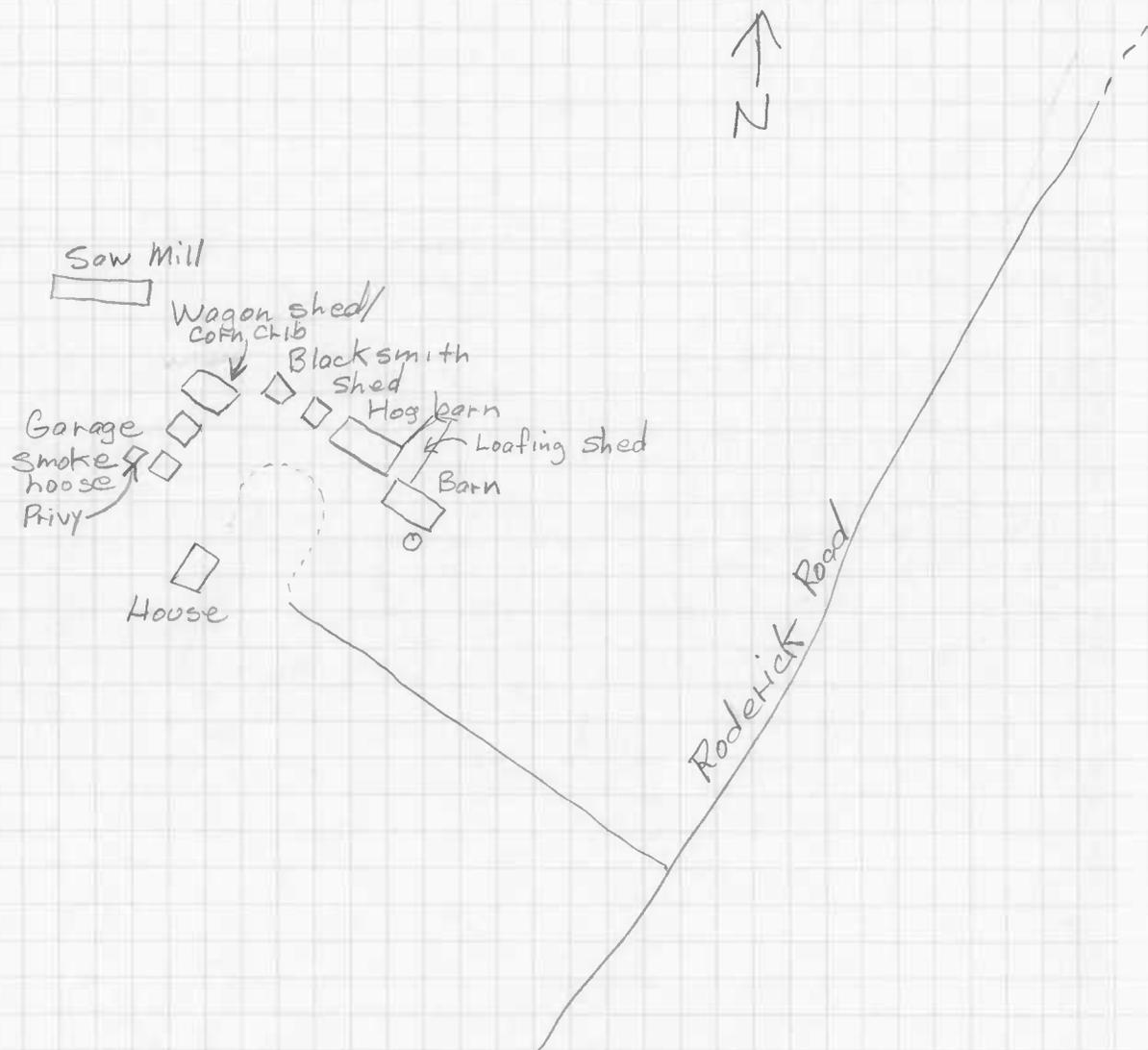
Bank barn: The frame bank barn was probably built about 1890-1900 and has tongue-and-groove siding with louvred arched vents and a stone foundation. German siding encloses the stall level on the north elevation and a concrete block enclosure near the northeast corner forms the milking parlor. The roof is standing seam metal over wood shingles. Three louvred cupolas are on the ridge. A concrete block milk house built about 1920 stands near the east end. It has a standing seam gable roof and german-sided gables with 6/6 sash in the walls. A non-contributing concrete block silo is located on the east side of the ramp on the south elevation of the barn.

2914 Rodrick Rd.

Liber/Folio	Grantee	Grantor	Lot Size, Description, Original Tracts, Miscellaneous	Cost
1341/607 29 May 86	Field Farms Ltd. P'ship	Wm. D. King et al, pers. repr of estate of W. Lawson King	121a., 1R., 18sq. p.	\$268,600
1015/264 14 Apr 77	Mr. Lawson King	Marion U. Lawson et al, pers. repr of estate of Mary V. Lawson dec.	121a., 1R., 18sq. p.	\$230,000
416/237 2 Mar 39	James U. & Mary V. Lawson	Gabriel U. & S. M. Lawson	James U. died 1 Feb 71	
292/327 17 May 10	Gabriel U. Lawson	Glenn H. Marchington & John Lawson	See also Equity Record HWB 2/491 trustee in Equity 8504	\$8439.25
WIP 11/421 4 Aug 1890	James U. Lawson (died 20 Jan 1897)	Wm. P. M. Lawson	121a. 18sq. p. described in a mortgage from Sarah R. Muddock et al to Rodrick Hobbs 27 Oct 1882 AF 6/187	\$1816
Equity Record HWB 2/491	Advertisement of Sale, 19 Feb 1910: "This farm (121a., 18sq. p.) is improved by a substantial brick and frame dwelling house containing 9 rooms, and a good bank barn, wagon shed, and necessary outbuilds. This farm is well supplied with water both at the house and in the fields, and is under good fencing. " Mr. Gabriel U. Lawson residing on the premises... "			
WIP 11/20 21 Feb 1890	Wm. P. M. Lawson	Wm. P. Maulsby Jr., trustee	Equity 5632. AF 6/187 Refers to ROW in JS 6/588, 15 June 1818 Equity Record WIP 4/674	
Equity Record WIP 4/674	Advertisement of Sale, 26 Dec 1889: "... about 2 miles southwest of Urbana and has a convenient outlet to the county road leading to Pauls Mills. The improvements consist of a large brick house with good bank building, stabling & a birch spring is near			

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Liber/Folio	Grantee	Grantor	Lot Size, Description, Original Tracts, Miscellaneous	Cost
<u>Equity Record</u> WIP 4/674 (cont.)			"the house and the farm is well watered, with running streams. There are about 8 or 10 acres of wood land principally oaks and the remainder is in a fine state of cultivation. An orchard of young trees is on the place. It is now in the possession of the Murdocks and Howards. (Sarah H. Murdock Juliana B. D. Murdock, Laura H. Howard & Leonard H. Howard)	
AF 6/187 27 Oct 1882 mortgage	Roderick D. Hobbs	Sarah Rebecca Murdock, et al		\$1400
TG 8/506 7 Dec 1877	Sarah Rebecca Murdock, et al	Augustus Murdock et ux	part of "Resurvey on The Hope" 380 A. laid off & assigned to late Richard B. Murdock as one of heirs of Benjamin Murdock, dec. L W & T dated 9 <sup>th</sup> May 1834	\$2250
<u>Will Record</u> GME 1/574 6 June 1834	Richard B. Murdock	Benjamin Murdock	"I give and bequeath to my son Richard B. Murdock the farm whereon he now lives, to contain 379 A." (Will also devised negroes with each parcel or farm left to different children, balance of "negroes, stock and farming implements to Richard")	
JS 23/401 <del>2 Nov</del> 1825 31 Oct	Benjamin Murdock	Levi Phillips	"Hope" 365 A.	
JS 23/447 29 Oct 1825	Benjamin Murdock	Charles Fenton Mercer		
JS 23/555 28 Nov 1825	Benjamin Murdock	Robert Darnall		



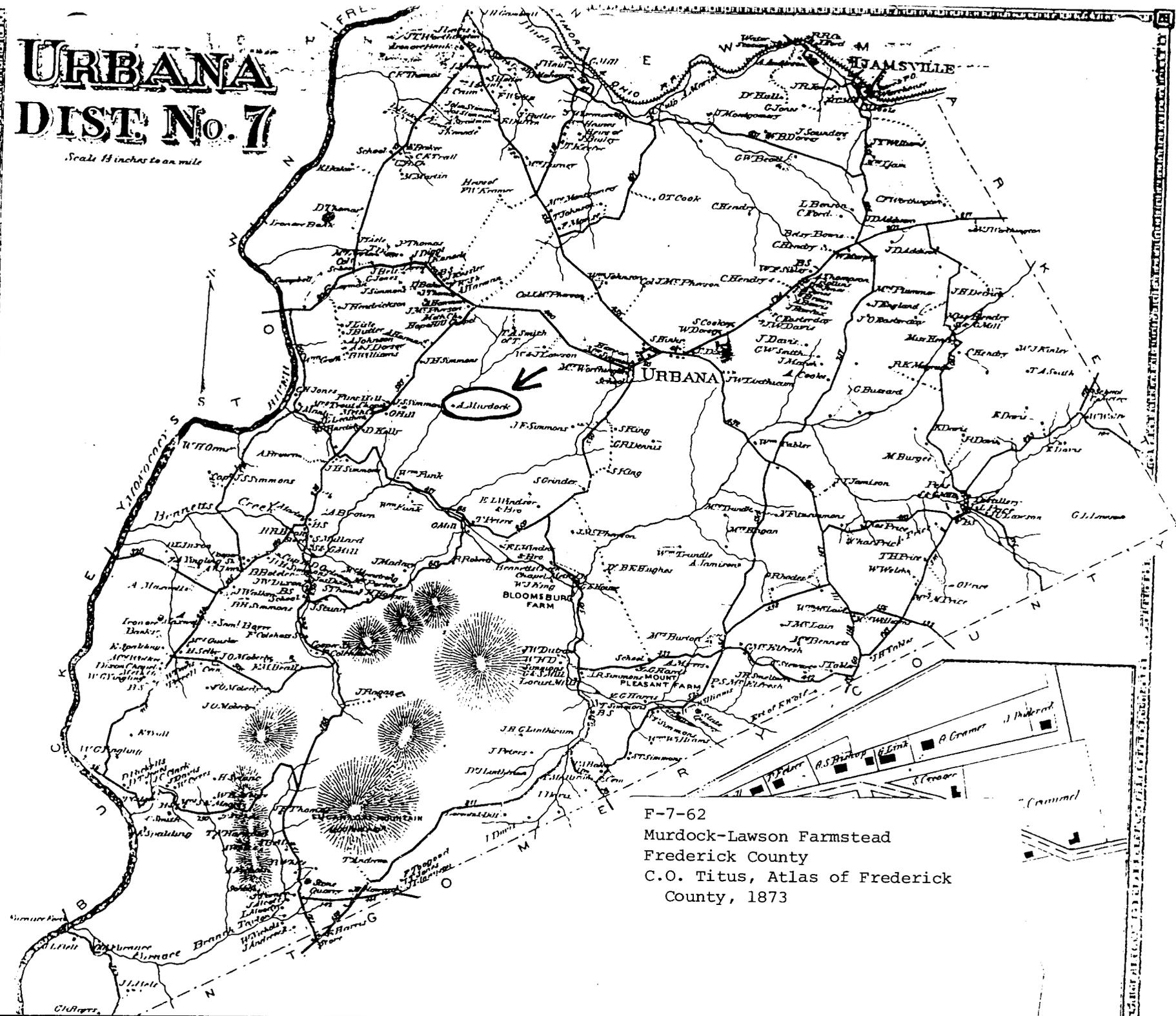
F-7-62  
 Murdock-Lawson Farmstead  
 Frederick County

Janet Davis  
 November 4, 1993

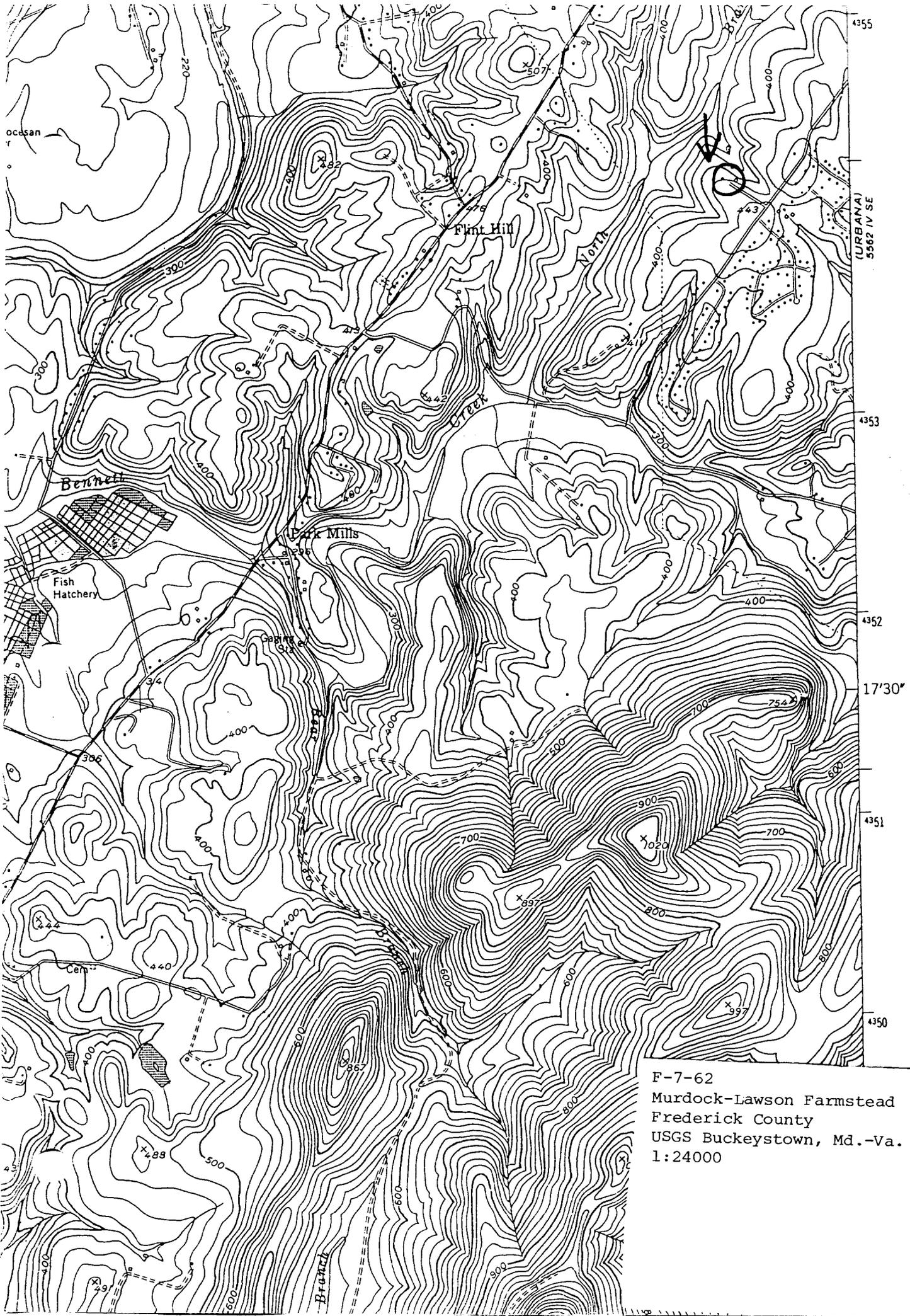
Not to Scale

# URBANA DIST. No. 7

Scale 1/4 inches to an mile



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Murdock-Lawson Farmstead  
Frederick County  
C.O. Titus, Atlas of Frederick  
County, 1873



F-7-62  
Murdock-Lawson Farmstead  
Frederick County  
USGS Buckeystown, Md.-Va.  
1:24000









