

HA-138

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name Paradice Farm, Priest Neale's Mass House
other names/site number Priest Neale's Mass House and Mill Site (preferred)

2. Location

street & number 2618 Cool Spring Road N/A not for publication
city, town Bel Air X vicinity
state Maryland code MD county Harford code 025 zip code 21014

3. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resources within Property	
		Contributing	Noncontributing
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<u>1</u>	<u>1</u> buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input type="checkbox"/> district	<u>1</u>	<u> </u> sites
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site	<u> </u>	<u> </u> structures
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<u> </u>	<u> </u> objects
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	<u>2</u>	<u>1</u> Total

name of related multiple property listing: N/A
Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet.

[Signature] 1/26/90
Signature of certifying official Date
STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet.

Signature of commenting or other official Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

entered in the National Register.
 See continuation sheet.

determined eligible for the National Register. See continuation sheet.

determined not eligible for the National Register.

removed from the National Register.

other, (explain:)

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)
DOMESTIC/single dwelling
RELIGIOUS/religious structure

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)
DOMESTIC/single dwelling

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(enter categories from instructions)
COLONIAL

Materials (enter categories from instructions)
foundation stone
walls stone
roof slate
other

Describe present and historic physical appearance.
DESCRIPTION SUMMARY:

Priest Neale's Mass House -- the phrase has been used to describe the structure since 1756 -- is a stuccoed stone dwelling constructed c.1743 on a knoll overlooking the rural Deer Creek Valley in Harford County, Maryland. The house, used by Jesuits as a mission in the mid and late 18th century before Roman Catholics obtained freedom of worship under the United States Constitution, stands five bays wide by two bays deep and one and one half stories tall beneath a slate-covered gable roof. The original house had a hipped roof, which was destroyed by fire around 1940. The interior floor plan is unique in Maryland -- and seemingly American -- architecture and reflects the building's combined function as Jesuit priests' residence and house of worship: an unusually wide center hall provided meeting space and was flanked by two chambers on the west and a large reception room on the east. Some interior details (such as mantels) date to the second quarter of the 19th century (after the house was sold by the Church) but they do not lessen the integrity of the structure, nor does the one-story ell added to the northeast at about the same time. These details and additions are sympathetic in design and scale to the original material of the house, as is a 20th-century kitchen, located to the rear of the ell. Original, 18th-century material includes walls, doors, window framing, walnut ceiling beams (plastered over), and much hardware. In fact, according to one recent history, "the main structure is not much altered from its original form, and only the roofline has been remodeled." Northeast of the house, on the banks of Deer Creek, is the site of an 18th-century mill which the priests used to generate money to support their endeavors. Maryland Mill expert John McGrain calls it "the first mill in the region." The millrace, ruins, and millstones were all in evidence as recently as the 1930s and, while only traces of the millrace remain visible today, the site is potentially of great archeological significance.

See Continuation Sheet 7.1A for footnotes

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¹Charles V. Joerndt, St. Ignatius, Hickory, and Its Mission, (Baltimore: Baltimore Publication Press, Inc., 1972), p. 38.

²The most thorough and reliable history of the Paradise tract and of Priest Neale's Mass House is undoubtedly John W. McGrain, Jr.'s, "Priest Neale, His Mass House and His Successors;" in Maryland Historical Magazine, September 1967 (pp 254-284) and June 1968 (pp. 137-157).

³Joerndt, St. Ignatius, p. 31.

⁴McGrain, I, p. 266.

⁵Samuel Mason, Jr., Historical Sketches of Harford County, Maryland, (Darlington: privately printed, 2nd edition 1955), p. 64.

NOTE: The footnotes for this document are numbered beginning with Section 7 and running consecutively through Section 8.

8. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally statewide locally

Applicable National Register Criteria A B C D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions) A B C D E F G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

Architecture
Religion

Period of Significance

c. 1745-1789

Significant Dates

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Significant Person

N/A

Architect/Builder

unknown

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

SIGNIFICANCE SUMMARY:

Priest Neale's Mass House (interchangeably called Paradise) is important as a seemingly unique building whose idiosyncratic form is the direct result of the troubled early history of the Roman Catholic church in Colonial America. Its peculiar floorplan, still largely intact, is the physical manifestation of colonial Maryland laws promulgated after England's Glorious Revolution of 1688-'89 swept away the colony's original Toleration Act. These laws culminated in the act "to prevent the growth of popery" passed by the Maryland General Assembly in 1704. Queen Anne modified that law in 1705 and 1707¹² and the result allowed Catholic priests to conduct masses but only in private homes. Chapels, in order to exist at all, had to be part of a larger residence. This allowed Maryland's Catholic clergy to perform their spiritual duties using their residences and to "circuit ride" thence to celebrate the mass in the far-flung houses of the faithful. In addition, the entire nominated acreage may be read as a single unit. The priests lived and worshipped in the house while they and their slaves tended the farm and ran the mill on Deer Creek to generate income, thus creating a largely self-sufficient economy. Moreover, no building similar to the "Mass House" exists elsewhere in America because no other colony had a similar history. And of the few colonial era Catholic-associated buildings in Maryland, none is architecturally comparable to Paradise: each case is discussed below but basically Paradise is a dual-use structure which reads as an organic whole; other dual-use buildings exist but they read as dual-use, in each case the religious area of the building is clearly discernible from the living quarters. The Mass House gains further importance for being one of the oldest extant buildings associated with the Catholic Church in America. Only Maryland and Pennsylvania, among the English American colonies, had any substantial and active Catholic populations at the time or any colonial era Catholic-associated architecture. Of the handful of Catholic structures standing in the former

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13 colonies, only the chapel at Doughoregan Manor in Howard County, the timber framing of St. Francis Xavier in St. Mary's County, and altered sections of St. Thomas Manor in Charles County, antedate the "Mass House;" all are in Maryland. The rest are all younger and were the products of legal and social conditions very different from the hardships and persecution faced by the first priests in Maryland. Nor can there be any doubt that the house is Priest Neale's. The chain of title is complete and as long ago as 1816 Leonard Neale, Archbishop of Baltimore, wrote that this house "was the very one purchased by Bennett Neale, an uncle of mine, who was missionary at Deer Creek Church and lived on the plantation."¹³

¹²McGrain, I., pp.254-255.

¹³MS #2229, Maryland Historical Society.

See footnotes for sections 7 and 8.

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

See continuation sheet

Primary location of additional data:

- State historic preservation office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Specify repository:

Harford County Office of Planning
and Zoning

10. Geographical Data

acreage of property 43.3697 acres

USGS quad Bel Air, MD

UTM References

A

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

B

1	8	3	9	2	4	0	0	4	3	8	3	9	0	0
Zone		Easting						Northing						

C

1	8	3	9	2	4	4	0	4	3	8	3	5	1	0
Zone		Easting						Northing						

D

1	8	3	9	1	4	8	0	4	3	8	3	4	5	0
Zone		Easting						Northing						

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

The property includes only parcels 40 and 81. See map on continuation sheet 10.1

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

The nominated property, 43.2697 acres, comprises the resource within its rural hilltop setting and includes its historic approach lane and the mill site to the east. The surrounding areas have been significantly altered over time and do not contain any of the resources discussed here.

See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Mr. Christopher Weeks

organization Planning Office, Harford County

date 1989

street & number 220 Main Street

telephone 301-879-2000

city or town Bel Air

state Maryland zip code 21014

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GENERAL DESCRIPTION:

Priest Neale's Mass House is a sturdy one-and-one-half-story stuccoed stone structure 46 feet wide and 26 feet deep with 23-inch thick walls constructed c. 1743 in rural Harford County, Maryland, on a knoll overlooking the Deer Creek Valley. The oldest section stands five bays wide by two bays deep; an early 19th-century ell extends to the rear with a mid 20th-century kitchen and garage opening off of it. The main entrance is located in the central bay of the south (main) facade and consists of paneled double doors that seem to be original; flanking bays hold nine-over-nine sash windows with their original beaded frames; most windows and doors appear to have their original hardware as well. Three gabled dormers are arrayed across the south slope of the slate-covered gable roof; this roof replaced the original hipped roof which was destroyed by fire in 1940. The two bays of the west end are nine-over-nine sash, again with their original beaded framing; the corresponding openings in the east end are French doors which the current owners feel are original; the doors appear in 19th century photographs of the house and their framing and trim is similar to that found elsewhere in the old section of

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GENERAL DESCRIPTION:

the house. The masonry walls of the old house were not plumb and are still markedly thicker at their bases; this is evident on the interior, where the window and door frames give the appearance of being set in crookedly. Brick interior chimneys rise from each gable end and a mid-19th-century ell, one bay wide and two deep, abuts the eastern third of the north elevation; in the 1960s a kitchen and frame garage, the latter designed to resemble a wagon shed, were added perpendicular to the north end of the ell.

The plan of the house remains largely unaltered and is the result of the building's highly unusual use as a house of worship disguised as a private residence. The large, originally unheated, center hall measured 18 feet by 23 feet and is believed to have functioned as a place for church services before a fixed or temporary altar; the heated side room (to the east) measures 12 feet by 23 feet and served as a reception or living room while the twin 11-foot-square heated rooms to the west were the priests' sleeping quarters; the unheated attic, reached by a winder stair (still in place and original) sheltered guests. The original plan was noted as

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GENERAL DESCRIPTION:

early as c. 1900 in a voluminous exchange of letters between Father J. Alphonse Frederick (priest at St. Margaret's Church in Bel Air) and Father Deritt, noted Catholic historian at Loyola College in Baltimore and Georgetown University.⁶ In the 19th century a small section of the center space was partitioned off for a hallway (and now bath) and a fireplace was installed (see plan) and the wall dividing the twin chambers was removed. Mantels throughout the house date from this remodeling although the hearths in the chambers and the reception room remain in place.

This plan is unique in Maryland's extant architecture. Moreover, it is seemingly unique in this country because of the peculiar position Catholics occupied in Lord Baltimore's colony and of the different manner in which Catholics were treated in each of the 12 other English colonies in America. Although this will be gone into in more detail in Section 8, it is important to note here that Priest Neale's Mass House

6

Paper and notes pertaining to the history of St. Ignatius Church, Ms No. 2229, Maryland Historical Society, Baltimore.

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GENERAL DESCRIPTION:

stands as an unparalleled survivor in the nation's architecture, the direct result of its unique place in America's religious history. The role of Roman Catholics in each of England's American colonies varied widely, ranging from near-complete toleration in Pennsylvania to rancorous persecution in New England and New York and Virginia. Maryland, founded under Catholic auspices, initially served as a Catholic haven and attracted sizeable numbers of that faith. But conditions here changed after the Glorious Revolution of 1688-'89 and throughout the 18th century already-settled Catholics in Maryland suffered from the constantly shifting whims of the English penal laws as reflected in various punitive acts promulgated by the Maryland Assembly. During much of that century, Maryland's law held that priests could hold mass only in private houses and chapels were permitted only if part of a larger residence. (Again, conditions in the colonies varied widely: in Pennsylvania there were no such restrictions while Connecticut's laws held that "no Mass House or Popish

7

McGrain, I., p.255.

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GENERAL DESCRIPTION

chapels" could be built at all.) Thus the floor plan of Priest Neale's Mass House reflects the state of the law in Maryland by incorporating residence and chapel in one building in a manner unlike that seen in any of the state's extant structures.

Northeast of the house, by the shores of Deer Creek, the priests built a stone gristmill in the 18th century and this, too, was the result of the politics of the times. The legal uncertainties of the age made the Church's financial situation precarious (at best) and the mill was intended to create an agricultural/industrial economy that was perforce largely self sufficient. The mill is known to have been standing by the 1750s because Bennett Neale's scrupulously-kept account book--recently found and now in the manuscript collection of the Maryland Historical Society--contains dozens of entries regarding his milling activities, the number of bushels "made" each year of corn, rye, and wheat, and his sales of the flour

8

Maggie Bunson, Founding of Faith: The Church in America, (Boston: The Daughters of St. Paul, 1977), p.99.

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GENERAL DESCRIPTION:

and seed to his Deer Creek neighbors. The mill was abandoned
around 1800¹⁰ and gradually crumbled into ruin. As recently
as the 1930s one writer noted "the race may easily be seen
today and two, three-foot millstones lie partly buried in the
earth near it,"¹¹ but only vestiges of the millrace remain
today. The site's archaeological potential is great.

Priest Neale's Mass House retains considerable integrity
despite the reconstruction of its roof. The original
floorplan, essential to its significance, remains substantial-
ly intact and is clearly reflected in the building's present
configuration.

The period of significance chosen represents that span of
years from the first priest's arrival here to begin his

9

Account Book for the Mission of Saint Joseph, 1742-1774,
MS #1133, Maryland Historical Society, Baltimore.

10

John McGrain, "The Molinography of Harford County,"
unpublished typescript in the Harford County Department of
Planning and Zoning.

11

Mason, Sketches, p.80.

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GENERAL DESCRIPTION:

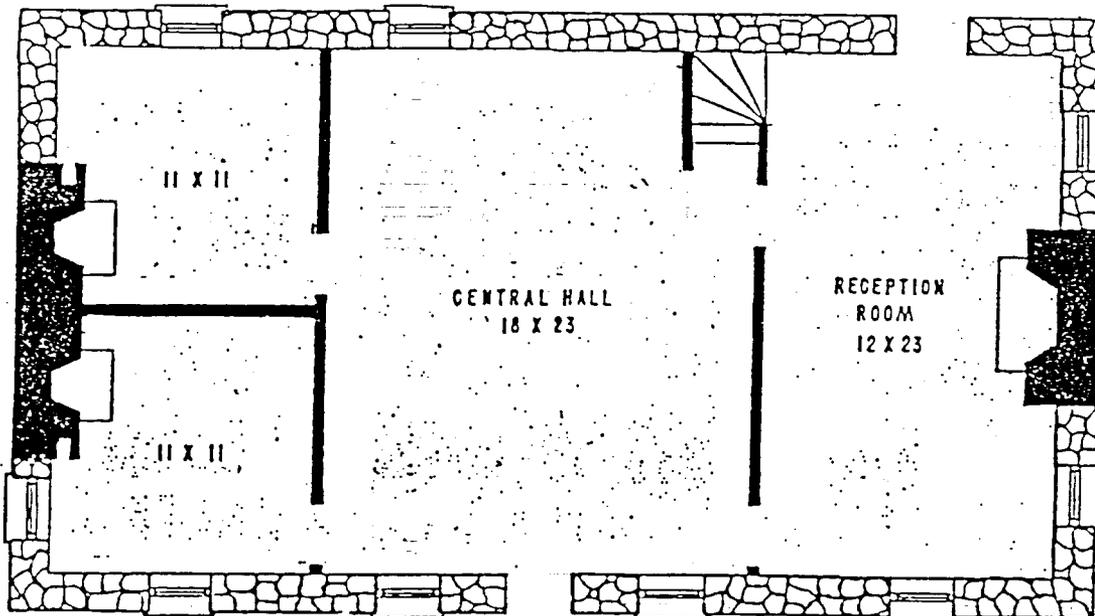
missionary work until the area's Catholic population was finally able to erect a real church for themselves, secure in the religious liberty guaranteed them in the United States Constitution.

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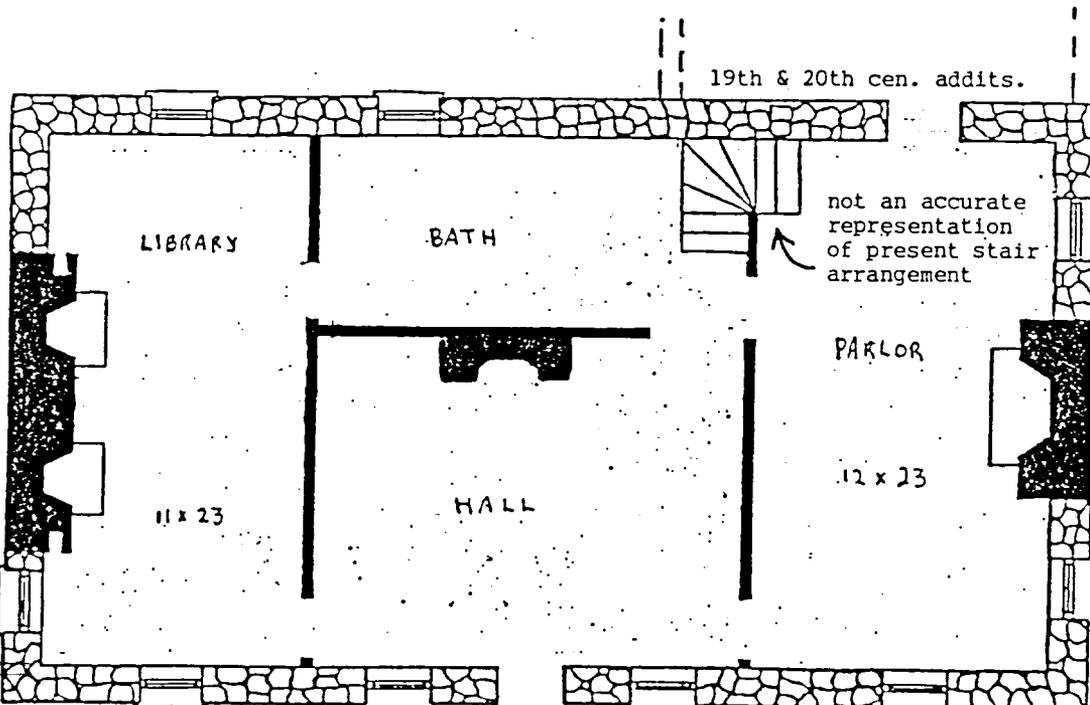
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early floor plan

source:
Maryland
Historical
Society,
Ms. #2229



present floor plan, 1989

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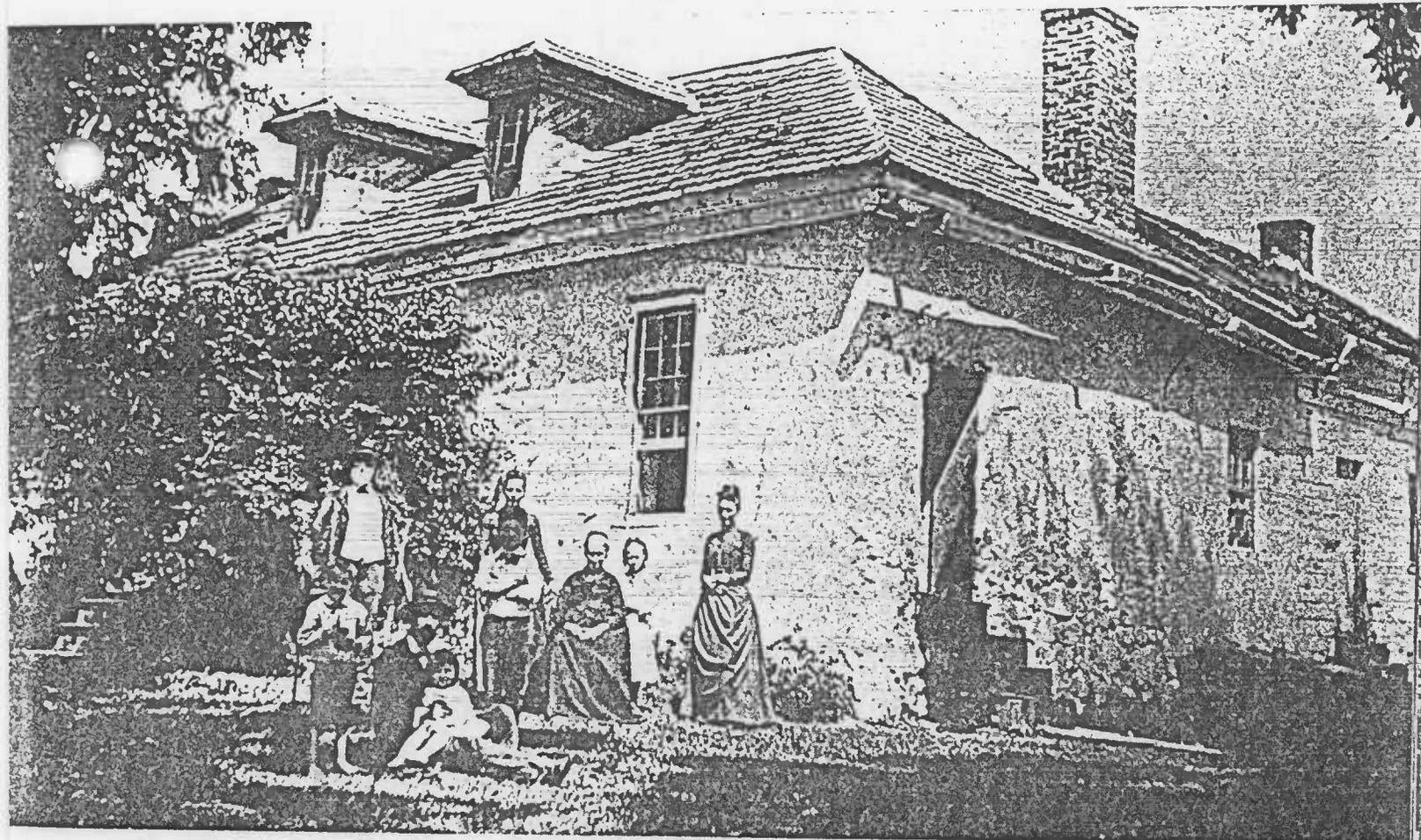
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1888 photograph

source: Warren, Mame and Marion E. Warren. Maryland Time
Exposures 1840-1940. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins
University Press, 1984, p.83.



Priest Neale's Mass House, above, was built c. 1750 as the home of the first Jesuit priests in Harford County. It was July 4, 1888, when this family group posed in front of the landmark, which still stands on Cool Spring Road between Churchville and Dublin.

See Continuation Sheet No. 7.10

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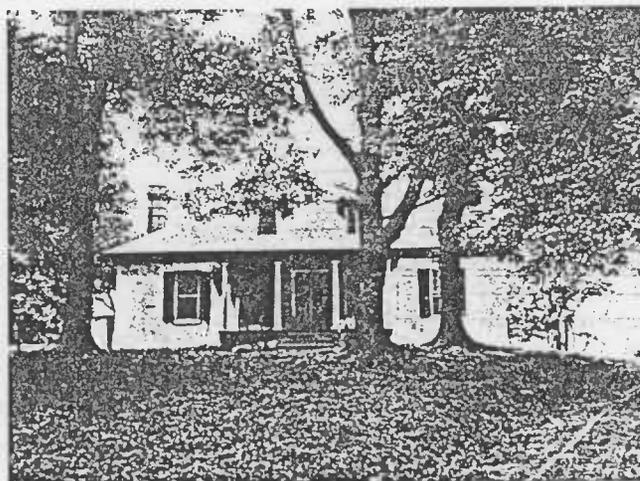
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HARFORD COUNTY

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PARADICE

(Or "Priest Neale's Mass House")

Before 1740

As strange as an event in Kubla Khan that "Paradice" should have been a Colonial monastery on the banks of Deer Creek in America! In the Jesuit chapel, now the Living Room, monks used to chant. Two cells, large enough for cots, opened upon the chapel. Piles of stone found in the neighborhood indicate the former existence of a refectory and other out-buildings. A letter dated 1740 shown recently to the owner by a priest tells of the delightful fishing to be had at "Paradice".

The property was 300 acres surveyed in 1673 for Giles Stevens, and later possessed by James Heath. The Rev. Bennett Neale lived at "Paradice" in 1747. He was a grandson of Capt. James Neale.

View: From South.

Dimension:

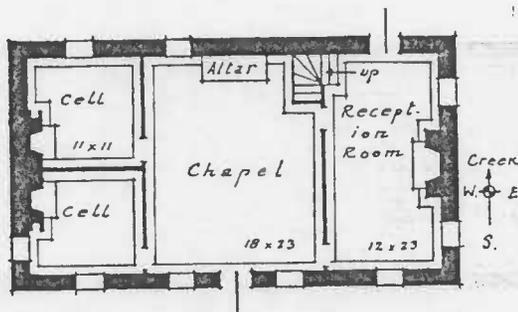
Overall, 46-0 by 26-2.

Grade to floor, 43.

Grade to cornice, 12-2.

Ceiling, 9-0.

Sill, 23.



source: Forman, Henry Chandlee. Early Manor and Plantation Houses of Maryland. Easton, MD.: Printed for the author, 1934.

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HISTORIC CONTEXT:

MARYLAND COMPREHENSIVE HISTORIC PRESERVATION PLAN DATA

Geographic Organization: Piedmont

Chronological/Developmental Period(s): Rural Agricultural Intensification
1680 - 1815 A.D.

Prehistoric/Historic Period Theme(s): Religion
Architecture/Landscape Architecture/
Community Planning
Agriculture
Economic (Commercial and Industrial)

Resource Type:

Category: Building; Site

Historic Environment: Rural

Historic Function(s) and Use(s): Domestic/single dwelling
Religion/religious structure; church-
related residence
Industry/Processing/Extraction/
Manufacturing facility

Known Design Source: None

See Continuation Sheet No. 8.2

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HISTORIC CONTEXT:

HISTORY AND SUPPORT

The Roman Catholic church in 20th century America is rich and powerful--indeed, with more than 52,000,000¹⁴ communicants, it is easily the largest sect in the country. (Southern Baptists, the nation's second largest sect, number roughly 14, 000,000.) This makes it difficult to realize how tenuous and perilous were its 17th and 18th century beginnings in the 13 colonies from New Hampshire to Georgia. That era was not a tolerant age; in fact, one scholar has written that "toleration was regarded as a weakness, a betrayal of truth, closely akin to apostasy."¹⁵ The British colonists were overwhelmingly Protestant and each colony dealt with Catholics in its own generally harsh way. For a better understanding of the significance of Priest Neale's Mass House--of just how rare the resource

¹⁴ Statistical Abstract of the United States (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Census, 1987)

¹⁵ Charles H. Metzger, S.J., Catholics and the American Revolution, (Chicago: Loyola University Press, 1962), p.4.

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is--it will be necessary to discuss the situation Catholics found themselves in the colonies.

New England is well-known today for its colonial role as land of the Puritans, where an extremely illiberal Protestantism held sway, driving out all dissenters. Moreover, "while...staunch Protestants might be opposed to the very presence of other Protestants of different belief, the full force of Puritan vigor was directed against those who professed 'popery'. They were especially abhorred....Not only were Catholics vigorously excluded from their communities, but war against them was transformed into a battle for Christ and His cause." Throughout colonial New England the "annual 'Pope's Day' parade was another indication of the sort of hatred that faced the [Catholic] Church in pre-Revolutionary days." It seems that England's Guy Fawke's Day celebrations became "Pope's Day" celebrations in New England as "a figure representing the Holy Father was carried in mockery through

¹⁶
Metzger, Revolution, p.5.

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HISTORIC CONTEXT:

the streets of Boston and other New England communities and finally burned in a gigantic bonfire." Moreover, "everyone gathered for the burning in a holiday mood. Some years there were two or three figures of the Pope carried through the streets. When they met on the corners or at the crossroads, the 'Popes' battled it out, with the men carrying the figures beating one against the other. Howling mobs yelled and jeered the Pope and the Church in these parades."¹⁷

How many Catholics were there in colonial New England? How many would brave an atmosphere like this--and it is important to note that that strong anti-Catholic sentiment had come to New England with the first settlers. The answer came when John Adams boasted, in extolling the literate, "highly educated" citizens of the region, that "'a native who cannot read or write is as rare an appearance as a Jacobite or a Roman Catholic, that is, as rare as...an earthquake.'" Adams later noted that if "a few rascally Jacobites or Roman Catholics" did

¹⁷
Bunson, Founding, p.185.

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HISTORIC CONTEXT:

exist in New England, "they dare not show themselves."¹⁸ One should not look to colonial New England for buildings associated with the Catholic church.

Nor should one look to New York, where the situation may be summarized by Governor Bellamont's 1701 law regarding Catholic priests, which declared that any priest found in New York would be "deemed and accounted an incendiary and...an enemy of the true Christian religion and shall be adjudged to suffer perpetual imprisonment. If he escapes and be recaptured, he is liable to the death penalty. All who harbor priests are subject to a fine of 250 and three days in the pillory."¹⁹ From that point²⁰ "for 75 years Catholics had no place to worship" in New York and those few who chose to live in the colony²¹ "lived in constant fear of perpetual punishment." In 1753

¹⁸ Quoted in Metzger, Revolution, p.146.

¹⁹ Thomas P. Phelan, Catholics in Colonial Days, (Ann Arbor: Gryphon Books, 1971), p.77.

²⁰ Metzger, Revolution, p.144.

²¹ Metzger, Revolution, p.144.

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HISTORIC CONTEXT:

as distinguished a person as William Livingston spoke of the "antichristian Church of Rome" and "advocated exclusion of papists from the common benefits of society" while urging "extension of full liberty to all Protestants without distinction."²² Even at the outbreak of the Revolution, New Yorkers such as Alexander Hamilton and John Jay were vehemently outspoken against Catholics, Jay going so far as to suggest a flag for "his colony, New York...with the simple legend: 'No²³ Popery!'" The English bishop John Challoner wrote in 1763 that although there may have been a few Catholics "here and there" in New York "as they are without priests and have little prospect of obtaining any...their status and future are not encouraging."²⁴

Little documentation exists regarding Catholics in early New Jersey until a 1698 ruling that religious freedom "shall not

²² Metzger, Revolution, p.21.

²³ Bunson, Founding, p.98.

²⁴ Metzger, Revolution, p.144.

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HISTORIC CONTEXT:

extend to any of the Romish religion" in the colony; attitudes are believed "to have remained thus until the end of British rule."²⁵ One of the most outspoken anti-Catholics in all the colonies was Samuel Davis, 4th president of the College of New Jersey (now Princeton University); in 1755 he delivered an address "On Religion and Patriotism" in which he pitied those settlers in the western wilderness, near French-controlled lands, who constantly fell victim to "all the horrid acts of Indian and Popish torture." Davis warned his audience (later, his readers for he had his text published) to beware the "Heathen savages and French Papists" for "in such an Alliance the Powers of Hell make a Third Party." He tried to rally support for his fellow Protestants in their righteous battle against "Ignorance, Superstition, Idolatry, Tyranny over Conscience, Massacre, Fire and Sword, and all the Mischief beyond Expression with which Popery is pregnant" and to save themselves and "your Wives, your Children, your Parents, your

25Phelan, Colonial Days, p.112.

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HISTORIC CONTEXT:

Friends from the cruel Hands of Barbarians and Papists."²⁶ So one should not look for colonial Catholic-associated buildings in New Jersey, either.

Incredibly, as bad as conditions for Catholics were in the northern colonies, things reached their nadir in the South, particularly in the "most tragic"²⁷ case of Virginia. And they reached it nearly from the beginning of that colony's history: about 1640, shortly after Father Andrew White had settled at St. Mary's City in Maryland, Virginia "authorities" had brigands kidnap "3 Jesuit priests...from Maryland", haul them across the Potomac to Virginia where "they died at the hands of their enemies."²⁸ Then in 1641 "a decree demanded that Catholics (or adherents of the Pope) be fined 1,000 pounds of tobacco if they attempted to hold any public office. The following year all priests were given five days to leave the

²⁶ Metzger, Revolution, p.23.

²⁷ Bunson, Founding, p.114.

²⁸ Phelan, Colonial Days, p.148.

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HISTORIC CONTEXT:

Colony. In 1661, all Catholics had to attend services in the
Church of England, the Established Church, or leave the Colo-
ny." In 1687 "two priests, Fathers Edmond and Raymond" made
the mistake of passing through Virginia and "were arrested."

This must not have been enough, for in 1700 the House of
Burgesses enacted a new "Anti Popery Act" calling for what has
simply been described as "outrageous penalties" and "in
1705...Catholics were considered and declared incompetent as
legal witnesses." According to one 19th-century scholar, "Not
even England herself sought to crush, humble, and degrade the
Catholic as Virginia did; he was degraded below the Negro
slave, for though the Negro...could not be a witness against a
white person, a Catholic could not be put on the stand as a
witness against a white man or black; the most atrocious crime
could with impunity be committed in the presence of a Catholic

29 Phelan, Colonial Days, p.148.

30 Phelan, Colonial Days, p.148.

31 Bunson, Founding, p.148.

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HISTORIC CONTEXT:

on his wife or child, whom he was made powerless to defend,
and his testimony could not be taken against the murderer."³²

No wonder, then, that the Catholic population remained small
in Virginia: Lord Culpeper, Governor of the colony, reported
that in the mid-18th century Virginia's population was "70 or
80,000 souls" and "there was only 1 papist;" and when the
"Acadian exiles reached Virginia, the Governor refused to
admit them, calling them 'bigoted papists' and sending them to
England where were kept prisoners of war for 7 years then
transferred to France."³³ Conditions must have remained the
same even after the Revolution for in 1790 Archbishop John
Carroll, in a report on the number of Catholics in America,
noted that "in Virginia and the other states to the south" the
total "approached zero."³⁴

32

John Shea, The Catholic Church in Colonial Days, (New
York; Privately printed, 1886), p.18.

33

Phelan, Colonial Days, pp.150-151.

34

Phelan, Colonial Days, p.152.

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HISTORIC CONTEXT:

In fact, of all the by-then states, Carroll said that only two, Maryland and Pennsylvania, had any appreciable number of Catholic residents--or, one may reasonably deduce, any Catholic-associated buildings. One scholar has recently written that "the truth is than in New England, New Jersey, New York, Virginia and the Carolinas, Catholics were so few and so lacking in cohesion and organization"³⁵ as to be virtually invisible.

In the Quaker State "the benign laws of Penn brought Catholics³⁶ to the colony even in the earliest days." In fact, there can be no doubt that of all the English colonies--Maryland included--Pennsylvania was the most consistently tolerant of Roman Catholics. In 1700 one traveler from another colony wrote with surprise that "mass is set up and read publicly in Philadelphia and several people turned to it" and throughout the colonial period Pennsylvania's Catholics "were not

³⁵ Metzger, Revolution, p.151.

³⁶ Phelan, Colonial Days, p.95.

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HISTORIC CONTEXT:

molested in the practice of their religion."³⁷ While it seems ironic, the colony of the Quaker Penns was, it seems, a better place to be a Catholic than the colony of the Catholic Calverts: "while Catholics were less numerous than in Maryland, their lot was much happier."³⁸ This was particularly true in the 18th century, after Benedict Leonard Calvert "conformed to the Church of England in 1714 "³⁹ and was thenceforth more responsive to the opinions of the English crown and politicians than the Penns seem to have been, for "Pennsylvania ignored the edict of William III prohibiting the public celebration of the Mass, as it was inclined to ignore most royal proclamations."⁴⁰ As a result, in 1734 Father Greator, a Catholic priest, "purchased a site [on Walnut Street in Philadelphia] for a new church and built St.

³⁷ Metzger, Revolution, p.144.

³⁸ Metzger, Revolution, p.97.

³⁹ Thomas O'Brien Hanley, The American Revolution and Religion: Maryland, 1770-1800, (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University Press, 1971), p.171.

⁴⁰ Joseph J. Kelley, Jr., Life and Times in Colonial Philadelphia, (Harrisburg, Pa.: Stackpole Books, 1973), p.146.

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HISTORIC CONTEXT:

Joseph's." (Recall that at the time the law in Maryland was that chapels had to be a part of a larger dwelling.) In 1757 the first St. Joseph's "was razed and a somewhat larger building was put up."⁴¹

Delaware was an on-again, off-again part of colonial Pennsylvania and, thanks to the Penns, "religious intolerance was almost unknown in Delaware."⁴² But, curiously, Catholics were "almost unknown in Delaware" too. A 1751 survey listed "five or six families of Papists" in the colony and no priest or chapel for those families "are attended once a month by a Jesuit from Maryland."⁴³

That Jesuit came from Bohemia, one of four such missions in 18th century Maryland, a colony that gave Catholics a sort of middle ground, half way between the outright persecution they

41 Kelley, Philadelphia, p.147.

42 Phelan, Colonial Days, p.101.

43 Bunson, Founding, p.98.

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HISTORIC CONTEXT:

suffered in Virginia and the near-complete freedom they enjoyed in Pennsylvania. Initially, of course, Maryland was a Catholic refuge and thousands of Catholics settled along the shores of the Chesapeake (north of the Potomac) in the 17th century. But in 1688-'89 the "Glorious Revolution" brought William and Mary to the English throne; in America "Charles Calvert, Third Lord Baltimore, was removed as a result of the Revolution"⁴⁴ which also "swept away the Maryland Toleration Act, however fair it might have been and established the Church of England in the Maryland colony."⁴⁵ Moreover, "the penal laws of England following that revolution forbade Roman Catholics to hold office, serve in the army, or to educate their children in their beliefs and it placed penalties of banishment or life imprisonment upon Popish Priests who performed their duties."⁴⁶

⁴⁴ Hanley, Revolution and Religion, p.173.

⁴⁵ McGrain, I, p.254.

⁴⁶ Hanley, Revolution and Religion, p.175.

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HISTORIC CONTEXT:

Dancing to those London-piped tunes, "the Maryland General Assembly in October 1704, passed a local act to 'prevent the growth of popery within the province', imposing a L 50 fine on any popish priests, bishops, or Jesuits exercising their function or making converts."⁴⁷ But then Queen Anne (and subsequently the Maryland Assembly) modified her stance and settled on a compromise allowing Catholic priests to celebrate mass--but only in private homes; chapels, if they existed at all, had to be built as part of a larger residence. "This exemption permitted the few priests in Maryland to carry on their duties using their residences as churches and riding the circuit through the settlements to offer Mass in the homes of Catholic colonists. They traveled in plain clothes and carried vestments, chalices, wine and books in their saddle bags,"⁴⁸ ministering to descendants of those who had settled in Maryland under more lenient conditions.

⁴⁷
McGrain, I, p.255.

⁴⁸
McGrain, I, p.255.

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HISTORIC CONTEXT:

Maryland's Catholics must have felt a sense of betrayal and one scholar has observed that "the threat of revocation of the exempting act hung over the heads of Maryland Catholics for the first three-quarters of the eighteenth century, and there were several waves of anti-popery that threatened, and indeed impaired, the civil liberties of both priests and parishioners. Maryland that once had offered a refuge to the British Catholic was becoming in the 1750's a trap for his descendants." ⁴⁹ Conditions deteriorated to such an extent that Charles Carroll, head of one of the colony's most illustrious Catholic families and father of Charles Carroll of Carrollton, began negotiations with the French court with a view of securing a grant of land on the Arkansas River in what was then French-held Louisiana. He went so far as to write his son, who was studying in Europe, "From what I have said, I leave you to judge whether Maryland be a tolerable residence for a Roman Catholic. Were I younger, I would certainly quit it." Carroll "went on to describe how he was turning his real property into

⁴⁹
McGrain, I, p.255.

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HISTORIC CONTEXT:

cash so that young Charles could leave the colony for French or Spanish territory where he might be allowed to participate in normal public life."⁵⁰

Only a tiny fraction of Maryland Catholics were rich enough--like the Carrolls--to build a chapel as a part of their house. The rest of the people had to depend, as noted, on circuit riders who were based in four missions in Maryland run by Jesuits who "were the only organized Catholic clergy in the colony;" the "plantation residences" were "Newtown on Bretton Neck and Saint Inigoes in Saint Mary's County; Saint Thomas Manor at Port Tobacco in Charles County; and in 1704, they began to cover the head of the bay from Bohemia Manor,⁵¹ Warwick" in Cecil County. This was true even for Catholics in Baltimore City, by the eve of the Revolution the largest city in the colony: "as no Catholic priest resided nearer than Carroll's manor of Doughoregan, some fifteen miles distant,

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McGrain, I, p.256; see also Metzger, Revolution, pp.77-77.

51

McGrain, I, p.256.

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HISTORIC CONTEXT:

the Baltimore congregation, if such it may be called, could assist at Mass only when Carroll's chaplain came to town;"⁵² perhaps that last statement should have modified for, as will be seen, even the Carrolls didn't always have a resident chaplain, and even they sometimes had to depend on circuit riders from remote missions.

As noted, Jesuits from Bohemia ministered to the needs of Catholics in Delaware; they also, beginning in the 1730s, began serving newly arriving German settlers in the Little Conewago Valley, near Hanover, Pennsylvania. Trekking from Maryland's Eastern Shore to south-central Pennsylvania would have been arduous enough in the mid-18th century to wear down even the most devout priest. Further, part of the Conewago tract was owned by the Carroll family who wished to "have an English-speaking priest within range of their tenants."⁵³

52 Metzger, Revolution, p.89.

53 McGrain, I, p.257.

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HISTORIC CONTEXT:

The logical solution was found on March 14, 1743, when John Digges, a Maryland-born, European-trained Jesuit, bought a tract of land⁵⁴ from one Thomas Shea near Deer Creek in what is now Harford County and established the Mission of Saint Joseph on Paradise Plantation. Shea had patented the land in 1715 and "Thomas Shea's plats, certificates, and sealed original potent--are preserved in the Jesuit archives."⁵⁵ The chain of title is complete from Shea in 1715 to the present (1989) owners. From here Digges set forth to attend to the needs of a Catholic flock that stretched across thousands of acres from the Chesapeake Bay to the mountains of Pennsylvania; he even had charge of the Carrolls' family chapel 45 miles away when the family couldn't keep a regular chaplain and often "it was his assignment to visit Doughoregan Manor."⁵⁶ The deed to Digges includes "the land where my Dwelling place now is" which has led some historians to believe

54 Baltimore County Deed Book TB No. C Page 465.

55 Joerndt, St. Ignatius, p.33.

56 McGrain, I, p.260.

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HISTORIC CONTEXT:

that "this document confirms the existence of the house to at least 1743."⁵⁷ While there is nothing in the construction of the house, in the scale of the building, manner of construction or details to contradict such an early date, it does not account for the highly undomestic floorplan described above. What seems a safer theory is that either Digges bought Shea's house and altered its plan to suit its new liturgical needs or he simply removed whatever was standing and built the present structure anew. In either event, the existing structure was clearly intended for other than strictly domestic use. (It was also not flawless: Neale's Account Book notes "May 1760. For reshingling the dwelling house roof 14-0-0")

Digges's tenure was brief for he died "'in Baltimore' in 1746 at the age of 34, the cause or exact place being unrecorded."⁵⁸ (Although one Jesuit scholar believes that "in

⁵⁷
McGrain, I, p.260.

⁵⁸
McGrain, I, p.260.

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HISTORIC CONTEXT:

Baltimore" meant Baltimore County which, as Baltimore County⁵⁹
then took in Harford County, meant here at his mission.)

Digges "remains a vague shadow of history" although, as one
writer has observed, "the chapel house might deserve to be
called Priest Digges' Mass House."⁶⁰

In his will, Digges left all his real and personal estate "to
my well-beloved friend, Mr. Bennet Neale, son of Mr. Anthony
Neale, deceased."⁶¹ Neale was born in 1709 into one of the
most influential families in Maryland; it was also "a family
conspicuous for the number of members that it gave to the
Church and to the Society of Jesus."⁶² His grandfather,
Captain James Neale, had come to the colony in 1636 and in
1642 was granted the title of Lord of Wolleston Manor, a

59

Letter from J.A. Frederick to E.I. Devitt, S.J., in the
Jesuit files, Georgetown University Library.

60

McGrain, I, p.260.

61

McGrain, I, p.260.

62

Devitt to Frederick, Jan. 30, 1906; MS #2229, Maryland
Historical Society.

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HISTORIC CONTEXT:

2000-acre estate in Charles County, on Neale Sound off the Potomac River. Captain Neale and his wife lived in Europe for long stretches of time, particularly in Spain and Portugal, where they represented Charles I and the Duke of York "in different capacities."⁶³ Several well-known family traditions suggest a closeness between Mrs. Neale and Charles I's wife, Queen Henrietta Maria; the Queen is often said to have been godmother and namesake to one of the Neales' daughters. The Queen is also said to have given Mrs. Neale, as a memento, an elaborate ring, which later descended in the family's female line and is now in the Maryland Historical Society. "Another family treasure, believed to have been a royal gift, was a monstrance for use in church service."⁶⁴

The Neales retired to Maryland in 1660, upon the restoration of the Stuarts, and Captain Neale was immediately made deputy governor of the colony. Their royally-named daughter,

⁶³
McGrain, I, p.260.

⁶⁴
McGrain, I, p.262.

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HISTORIC CONTEXT:

Henrietta Maria Neale, then married Richard Bennett (son of the then-governor of Virginia and whose surname was given as "the first name of his nephew, the Jesuit"⁶⁵) ; Bennett died and his widow then married Philemon Lloyd, son and heir of Edward Lloyd, I, of Wye House in Talbot County, Maryland. Henrietta Maria's strong sense of religion doubtless at least partly explains why the Lloyds' planned community of Doncaster (begun in 1683 on the Wye River and long-since abandoned, although the plat still hangs on the wall at Wye House) had the honor of having the first Catholic chapel on the Eastern Shore; town and chapel have disappeared. It is clear, then, as one scholar has written, "a highly educated elite, Maryland Catholics were important members of the leadership which improved the economic life of the colony, while maintaining their own family fortunes and quality education abroad."⁶⁶

65

McGrain, I, p.262.

66

Hanley, Revolution and Religion, p.174.

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HISTORIC CONTEXT:

The Neales were clearly Stuart supporters and intensely Catholic. Anthony Neale's will mentions a "silver chalice and suit of church stuff;" these were, according to the will, to "remain in said dwelling house for use of my family" suggesting that "the Neale house provided facilities for the visits of itinerant priests and may have served the entire neighborhood."⁶⁷

Young Bennett Neale was sent abroad to school "as was the custom with well-to-do Catholic families. Catholic schools were forbidden by statute...and the only way [Catholic children] could have prepared for college or seminary work was by going to territory not controlled by England."⁶⁸ On September 7, 1728, when he was 19, Bennett Neale entered a Jesuit school in Flanders and "then went on to study philosophy at Louvain, and theology at Liege." (Neale's and Digges's years in France have led some to see in the Mass House more than a passing

⁶⁷ McGrain, I, pp.262-263.

⁶⁸ McGrain, I, pp.263-264.

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HISTORIC CONTEXT:

resemblance to a French farm cottage.)⁶⁹ He must have been a good scholar for " Bennett Neale was given the privilege of being promoted to the priesthood at the end of his second year of theology, that is 1741. In that year [church officials] requested the Jesuit general in Rome to dispense Neale and John Digges from the fourth year of theology and from their probationary year at Ghent, to free them for immediate work in Maryland."⁷⁰

Frs. Digges and Neale returned to Maryland in 1742, the former, as discussed, to the shores of Deer Creek, the latter to the mission at Bohemia.⁷¹ Men such as Digges and Neale played a crucial role in the history of the Catholic Church for "during the period between 1634 and 1773, the Jesuit priests who worked in the colonies as missionaries were almost

69 Joerndt, St. ignatius, p.36.

70 McGrain, I, p.262.

71 McGrain, I, p.265.

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HISTORIC CONTEXT:

entirely responsible for the conduct of Catholic affairs in
the English-speaking New World."⁷²

After Digges's death, Neale moved into his friend and school-
mate's house and began his own missionary work. Then, in 1750,
he bought, in his own name, a long, narrow 18-acre strip of
land adjacent to the Paradise tract and on the south shore of
Deer Creek.⁷³ Its configuration (roughly 1/2 mile long and
320 feet wide) suggests its function: the site of a mill and
millrace. During Neale's brief stay at Bohemia he certainly
would have become aware of how that mission generated its own
income: the 1000-acre plantation contained not only the
priests' living quarters but also brick kilns and saw and
grist mills. Neale apparently decided to reproduce--on a
modified scale--those money-making operations. His mill, as
the recently-discovered account book shows, quickly became a
booming operation, grinding grain for farmers throughout the

72
Hanley, Revolution and Religion, p.177.

73
Baltimore County Deed Book TR No. D, Page 39.

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HISTORIC CONTEXT:

neighborhood and producing income to fund his missionary activities. A native of Southern Maryland's tobacco country, Neale began his agricultural career here by planting tobacco; in 1750, for instance, Neale wrote in his Account Book that he had paid L5 for a "Tobacco House, frame." But within a few years references to tobacco cease, replaced by corn, rye, and wheat. Some typical Account Book entries follow: "1764: Made this year 203 bu. of wheat;" "Oct. 1764 L5.3.6 to Mr. _____ for a quarter cask of wine;" "May 1765. Sent Hicks 20 bu sprouted wheat and 10 bu rye for which he paid me my share of whiskey, about 27 gallons. I sold 1/2 gal. whiskey to Betty Dixon..0-1-6;" "1769. I made this year 15 barrels corn, 104 1/2 bu. wheat, 700 gallons cider."⁷⁴

Neale's mill, according to Maryland mill expert John McGrain, "may have been the first mill in the region, since the nearby Noble's Mill dates to 1854 and Wilson's Mill, of about the same era (1740-1760) was a long haul away." McGrain

⁷⁴

MS #1133, Maryland Historical Society.

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HISTORIC CONTEXT:

conjectures that "the priests mill was presumably built by
Thomas Shea, an Irish immigrant."⁷⁵ Harford County historian
George Archer, writing in 1889, estimated that the mill had by
then been abandoned for nearly 100 years (for reasons which
will be discussed below) but traces existed into the 1930s and
even today it is possible to discern a bit of the millrace on
the Paradise property; the "millstones have migrated to
Medical Hall,"⁷⁶ a house nearby.

Despite clues provided by the Account Book, it is difficult to
follow, in any detail, Neale's activities while at the
Paradise property. As more than one historian has pointed out,
"Jesuit records of those days are sketchy, confusing, erratic,
and often written in roundabout codes to avoid any mention of
their Catholic nature, With the use of codes and
circumlocutions, such as writing 'factory' for 'mission'"⁷⁷

⁷⁵
McGrain, I, p.266.

⁷⁶
McGrain, I, p.266.

⁷⁷
McGrain, I, p.255.

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HISTORIC CONTEXT:

the priests hoped to avoid the worst of the penal laws. Nevertheless, it is known that Neale's missionary work took him into the Conewago Valley of Pennsylvania and to what is now Emmittsburg in Frederick County, Maryland, several times between 1748 and 1753 and that he made at least one trip to Philadelphia "when he gave power of attorney to John O'Neill⁷⁸ in connection with the estate of John Callahan." In 1756, when the British needed money for their war with France, they imposed taxes on "wines, liquors, billiard tables and bachelors of Maryland;" these levies were allocated by the Anglican parish church and St. George's Church in Perryman records the residence of the bachelor Bennett Neale. "(Catholics, by the way, were to pay twice the tax of other bachelors, since their co-religionists, the French, were the enemy.)"⁷⁹ In sum, "those Jesuit missionaries were the focus of religious life. Here Mass was celebrated, instruction carried on. Catholic aristocrats felt a responsibility for the less educated or

⁷⁸
McGrain, I, p.267.

⁷⁹
McGrain, I, p.267.

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HISTORIC CONTEXT:

those with no education at all. Much like the Methodist circuit rider, missionaries paid regular visits to such centers in the course of a month."⁸⁰

During the 1750s and '60s the Account Book includes births in Neale's mission as well as baptism, and "this is the earliest record of baptisms by Catholic priests in Harford County."⁸¹

It was at this time--as long ago as 1756--that the phrase Priest Neale's Mass House was first used to describe the house on Deer Creek. After the English defeat at Fort Duquesne, "panic ensued throughout the English colonies. There were rumors of Indian invasions and fears of spies and traitors."⁸²

A 23-year-old man named William Johnson was arrested in 1756, near Fort Cumberland in Western Maryland, and charged with being a spy for the French. In his testimony, given before

80

Hanley, Revolution and Religion, p.177.

81

Joerndt, St. Ignatius, p.47.

82

McGrain, I, p.269.

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HISTORIC CONTEXT:

Thomas Cresap in Frederick, on October 26, 1756, Johnson alleged that "about three years ago" he "came to Deer Creek in Baltimore County" where

he was several Times to Mass at Priest Neale's Mass House, and whilst in that Society, it was insinuated to them by the said Nealle [sic] that it would be much better for them to live under a French than an English government, as they would thereby get their Lands on Easier Terms and might enjoy the Free Exercise of their Religion. He recommended to them the providing themselves with Arms and Ammunition, to be ready to joyn [sic] any Party of French & Indians that might come down to invade or attack his Brittanick Majesty's Subjects.

83

Johnson also said that Neale, who "had an inclination to go back to the French and become a subject of the French King," had asked him "to carry a packet of Letters to a French

83

Quotes in McGrain, I, p.269.

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HISTORIC CONTEXT:

officer...who, as the sd Neale informed him had byt one eye...& Neale gave him a pistole."

This, understandably, caused some excitement in Annapolis and Governor Horatio Sharpe summoned a council meeting in November to investigate matters further. Neale and other alleged conspirators were arrested as "persons ill affected to His Majesty's Person and Government" and brought to testify before Sharpe. The first witness swore that Neale lived at Paradise and that he "has there three or four Negroes working upon it." That was true enough. Then, however, and despite the wonderful verisimilitude of the one-eyed French soldier, Johnson eventually confessed that he had made the whole thing up, thinking the authorities "would be pleased with my making some information against the Catholics, and as I knew some of that profession, and had heard the names of others, while I lived in Baltimore, I framed such a story as I thought would be believed." He added "I was never at Mr. Neale's or any other Mass House in my life." Johnson apologized to Sharpe--"I am sorry I have acted so foolishly and imposed on your Excellency"-- who, in turn, apologized to Neale and the others

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HISTORIC CONTEXT:

accused, and ordered the sheriff to "defray their expenses and
conduct them to their respective homes."⁸⁴

Neale continued his missionary work. In 1764 he executed a
confirmatory deed to the Paradise property;⁸⁵ that same year
he visited the recently-established mission run by Father
Mosely in Talbot County (see below); he also "visited
Piscataway in December, 1767, spending L 6, according to
Father Hunter's homemade account book." By "the late 1760s and
1770s the antipopyery had subsided and four separate chapel
buildings were constructed in Maryland without any great
pretense of being residences....They were Boone Chapel at
Cheltenham, and the Carroll Chapel at Forest Glen, Saint
Francis Xavier at Newtown [in St. Mary's County] and Saint
Peter's Church, Baltimore." In 1773, Neale sold his "Mass
House" and the entire Paradise property and moved to one of
those new churches, to Saint Francis Xavier. One document

⁸⁴
McGrain, I, pp.271-274.

⁸⁵
Baltimore County Deed Book B No. N Page 370.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Priest Neale's Mass House and Mill Site HA-138
Harford County, Maryland

Section number 8 Page 34

HISTORIC CONTEXT:

shows him as "one of 21 witnesses to the erection of a boundry
stone at St. Thomas Manor." ⁸⁶ Perhaps he thought that the age
of missionary work had ended. in any event, he stayed on at
St. Francis Xavier until his death in 1787. ⁸⁷

The mission established by Digges and brought to maturity by
Neale continued. Neale's successor at Paradise was Ignatius
Matthews. He, too, was a Marylander who had studied abroad.
Matthews entered the Jesuit Society in 1763 and began work in
Maryland in 1766. He was listed as a taxpayer in Harford
County's Spesutia Hundred in 1778 and "he took the oath of
loyalty there, too." ⁸⁸

Matthews was followed in 1779 by Father Charles Sewall, another
European-educated Marylander. "It was during his tenure
that Lafayette's army passed the Priest Ford Road ...on their

⁸⁶
Joerndt, St. Ignatius, p.46.

⁸⁷
McGrain, I, pp.278-279.

⁸⁸
McGrain, I, p.279.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Priest Neale's Mass House and Mill Site HA-138
Harford County, Maryland

Section number 8 Page 35

HISTORIC CONTEXT:

way to Yorktown, April 13, 1781...One local writer conjectured a meeting between priest and French Catholics, for Father Sewall was trained overseas like those before him. Some French officers, Captains Greme and de Gimat, did climb the nearby slopes, and Greme actually settled there after the war.⁸⁹

Sewall also executed a confirmatory deed, and had the property resurveyed, which confirmed the original lines; the incised stone Sewall used as a beginning point is still on the property.

Sewall's resurvey was "on an old form first printed for the Proprietary Government of Henry Harford with 'State of Maryland' corrected in by pen."⁹⁰ That change in government brought with it the end of the "Mass House" for the new United States Constitution ensured freedom of religion. ("Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof....") This eliminated

89
McGrain, I, p.280.

90
McGrain, I, p.281.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Priest Neale's Mass House and Mill Site HA-138
Harford County, Maryland

Section number 8 Page 36

HISTORIC CONTEXT:

the need for Catholics to worship clandestinely in chapels disguised as (or built onto) houses.

In 1786 Catholic officials bought a 344-acre site closer to the county seat and population center, Bel Air, than remote Paradise was and work began on St. Ignatius Church, completed in 1792 (National Register and recognized as the oldest Roman Catholic church in the Diocese of Baltimore). But they also decided to keep Paradise going: in 1798 an Irishman, "the Rev. Dr. Cornelius Mahoney, spent a year there before being assigned to Albany by Bishop John Carroll. The Rev. Guillaume Pasquet de Leyde...arrived in 1800 and remained six years. He had left San Domingo after the slave rebellion."⁹¹

After the Revolution, the Catholic Church in America was reorganized and in 1793 "the nominal ex-Jesuit proprietors vested their title in the new Board, which they called the

⁹¹
McGrain, II, p.138.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Priest Neale's Mass House and Mill Site HA-138
Harford County, Maryland

Section number 8 Page 37

HISTORIC CONTEXT:

Corporation of Roman Catholic Clergy and which they had caused
to be legalized."⁹² This includes the Paradise tract.

The once-efficient and prosperous farm and mill of Father
Neale evidently no longer paid after the reorganization for
letters from Father de Leyde are full of complaints of debts.
The minutes of the Corporation wryly note on May 24, 1803,
"the debts of the Deer Creek estate have not diminished."⁹³
Finally in 1804 the archbishop authorized de Leyde to sell
"the supernumerary slaves...to humane and Christian
masters."⁹⁴

Financial conditions continued to worsen and on March 31,
1806, the diocese ran an ad in the Baltimore Federal Gazette
which read, in part, "FOR SALE. A parcel of LAND...situated on
both sides of Deer Creek in Harford County....Its situation is

⁹² MS # 2229, Maryland Historical Society.

⁹³ MS # 2229, Maryland Historical Society.

⁹⁴ McGrain, II, p.139.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetPriest Neale's Mass House and Mill Site HA-138
Harford County, MarylandSection number 8 Page 38

HISTORIC CONTEXT:

well known in Harford County, as it was on this land that...a grist mill, etc., were formerly erected. The improvements, at present, are a Dwelling House, good kitchen, smoke house...and an old Barn." The place stayed on the market until 1814 when Archbishop John Carroll sold Paradice to Dr. James Glasgow of Baltimore for \$4200,⁹⁵ thus marking the end of the property's period of significance. Interestingly, Carroll's successor, the second archbishop of Baltimore, was Leonard Neale, Bennett Neale's nephew. There must have been some question as to title, understandable with all the church reorganizations, for on July 14, 1816, Archbishop Neale wrote a Father Peter Kenney concerning Paradice and stating that "the plantation sold was the very one purchased by a bargain made by Bennett Neale, an uncle of mine, who was a missionary at Deer Creek Church and lived on the plantation named. The sum of money [paid by Glasgow] was the property of the Corporation under my guardianship."⁹⁶

⁹⁵

Harford County Deed Book, HD Book Z, Page 255.

⁹⁶

MS # 2229, Maryland Historical Society.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Priest Neale's Mass House and Mill Site HA-138
Harford County, Maryland

Section number 8 Page 39

HISTORIC CONTEXT:

Paradice passed through numerous hands until the present owners took title in 1960.

To determine the importance of the Paradice property, it will be necessary to see how extremely rare colonial Catholic structures are in the United States. As has been discussed, the only English colonies with a measurable Catholic population were Maryland and Pennsylvania so one would logically look there to see what remains of what was built before the Revolution.

In the 17th and 18th centuries St. Mary's County was the center of Maryland's Roman Catholic population. Of the four main early Jesuit "plantations" in the colony (listed above), two were in St. Mary's County: Newtown on Bretton Neck (SM-58,59) and St. Inigoe's (SM-14, 15, 212). While several church-associated structures exist at these sites, they can all, for various reasons, be distinguished from Paradice. ⁹⁷

97

William Duke in Observations on the Present State of
(Footnote Continued)

United States Department of the Interior
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Continuation SheetPriest Neale's Mass House and Mill Site HA-138
Harford County, MarylandSection number 8 Page 40

HISTORIC CONTEXT:

The Newtown Manor property (National Register) has been a vitally important site since the colony's earliest days; Jesuit missionaries are known to have been based here since the 1630s. But the existing manor house, a five-bay, two-story Georgian residence, is the result of a complete 1816 overhaul and little, if anything, remains from earlier days, according to Mark R. Edwards and Pamela James, editors of Inventory of Historic Sites in Calvert County, Charles County, and St. Mary's County.⁹⁸ A dendrochronology study of the church at Newton Manor, St. Francis Xavier, has established a 1730-'31⁹⁹ date for the building's timber framing. Documentary

(Footnote Continued)
Religion in Maryland, 1795, notes "The Roman Catholic church...have several very valuable estates, and as their clergy are not numerous, they perhaps come nearer to a competency [in financial status] than any other. They conduct their affairs to advantage, and by a well-contrived economy, have maintained themselves, not only without the favour of government, but under the discouragements of public odium."⁹⁸

Mark R. Edwards and Pamela James, Inventory of Historic Sites in Calvert County, Charles County, and St. Mary's County, (Annapolis: Maryland Historical Trust, 1980), p.127.

⁹⁹ Herman J. Heikkinen and Mark R. Edwards, "The Years of Construction and Alteration of Timber Buildings, as Derived by the Key-Year Dendrochronology Technique" in Conservation of Wooden Monuments (Ottawa, ICOMOS, 1983), pp. 173-184.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetPriest Neale's Mass House and Mill Site HA-138
Harford County, MarylandSection number 8 Page 41

HISTORIC CONTEXT:

evidence, however, suggests that the interior wasn't completed until the 1760s; some brick additions date to 1767; more work was carried out in 1772 and a confessional was added in 1816. In any event, in contrast to Paradise, the house and chapel are and always have been visually and functionally distinct structures.

Nearby, the manor of St. Inigoe's was established by the Jesuits in 1637.¹⁰⁰ The Priest's house, which dated to the 18th century, has long since disappeared; a large brick manor house, built in 1705, was destroyed by fire in 1872, then rebuilt in a Victorian era manner, and finally dismantled in 1978. The acreage around the house would be unrecognizable to the colonial Jesuit fathers for it is now part of the Patuxent Air Text Center.¹⁰¹ The church (National Register) was built

100

Edwards and James, Inventory, p.117.

101

Edward C. Papenfuse et al., Maryland: A New Guide to the Old Line State, (Baltimore, The Johns Hopkins University Press), p.283.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Priest Neale's Mass House and Mill Site HA-138
Harford County, Maryland

Section number 8 Page 42

HISTORIC CONTEXT:

in 1785 "after the American Revolution had restored freedom of
religion to Maryland."¹⁰²

St. Thomas Manor (CH-6; National Register) in Charles County
was another mixed-use structure. The 4,000-acre manor was
established in 1649¹⁰³ and the buildings evolved over time
into a multi-part composition based around an elaborate 1741
mansion. There was a smaller brick chapel attached to it to
the west. The 1741 main house was twice ravaged by fire,
first in 1781¹⁰⁴ and then in 1866; the chapel (now part of St.
Ignatius Church) was vastly enlarged in 1798 (datestone) after
the Constitution made such a move practicable (although the
hyphen connecting the present church and house is believed to
be the shell of the 17th-century chapel which, according to
Edwards and James, was "considerably altered after the [1866]

102 Edwards and James, Inventory, p.118.

103 Papenfuse, New Guide, p.254.

104 Papenfuse, New Guide, p.255.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Priest Neale's Mass House and Mill Site HA-138
Harford County, Maryland

Section number 8 Page 43

HISTORIC CONTEXT:

105
fire"). Here again, form and function make what colonial fabric remains here distinguishable from Paradise.

The fourth major Jesuit mission in Maryland was Old Bohemia (CE-60), established in 1704 by Father Thomas Mansell. Bohemia's history is fascinating: here in 1745 was established the first Catholic school in the English American colonies (an alumnus was John Carroll, first American Archbishop). But little remains of the colonial buildings. The present church dates to 1790 and the school was dismantled, its bricks reused to erect the present rectory.

106

Those were the main centers of Catholicism in colonial Maryland, none of which is even remotely comparable to Paradise. One other "outpost" mission is known to have existed in Maryland before the Revolution. Its earliest history does suggest parallels to Paradise. It is St. Joseph's Mission in Talbot

105
Edwards and James, Inventory, p.59; see also Rivoire, "St. Thomas."

106
Papenfuse, New Guide, p.217.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetPriest Neale's Mass House and Mill Site HA-138
Harford County, MarylandSection number 8 Page 44

HISTORIC CONTEXT:

County (T-73), established by Father Joseph Mosley, S.J., in 1765. As mentioned above, Bennett Neale is known to have visited here--perhaps to offer advice from an experienced missionary to one just starting out? Like Paradise, it was a "child" of Bohemia; whereas Paradise was intended to serve Catholics north and west of Bohemia, St. Joseph's would minister to the needs of Catholics on the Lower Eastern Shore. Mosely's quarters were a good deal more primitive than those Digges and Neale enjoyed, for he wrote that the Talbot County house was built of boards "riven from oak trees, not sawed planks, and these nailed together to keep out the coldest air. Not one brick or stone about it, no plastering and no chimney, but a little hole in the roof to let out the smoke."¹⁰⁷ Nothing is left of that building, for it was replaced in 1782 by a brick chapel; by then anti-Catholic sentiment had subsided and Mosely was able to build his chapel as a chapel, not as a chapel disguised as a house, so despite their somewhat

107

Quoted in Norman Harrington, The Shaping of Religion in America, (Easton: The Historical Society of Talbot County, 1980), p.32.

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National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetPriest Neale's Mass House and Mill Site HA-138
Harford County, MarylandSection number 8 Page 45

HISTORIC CONTEXT:

similar early histories, St. Joseph's is not comparable to Paradise, either. (St. Joseph's got a house attached to the chapel in the 1840s.)

Farther down the Eastern Shore, the frame chapel known as Saint Mary's Star-of-the-Sea (D-18) has been dated by H.C. Forman to 1769.¹⁰⁸ Forman's pioneering work in Maryland's architectural history is justifiably well known, but he is not too reliable as a church historian; as John McGrain pointed out in his two-part story on Paradise for the Maryland Historical Magazine, Forman, and others, in writing about the "Mass House" fell victim to "a number of fantastic errors." Forman, for instance, described Paradise thusly in 1934: "As strange as an event in Kubla Khan that 'Paradice' should have been a colonial monastery on the banks of Deer Creek in America! In the Jesuit Chapel, now the living room, monks used to chant." McGrain points out that "the Mass of Father Bennett Neale's time was read quietly, and no organ was present, let alone

108

Henry C. Forman, Early Manor and Plantation Houses of Maryland, (Easton: Privately printed, 1934), p.125.

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Continuation SheetPriest Neale's Mass House and Mill Site HA-138
Harford County, MarylandSection number 8 Page 46

HISTORIC CONTEXT:

monks to chant." ¹⁰⁹ That early date is additionally troubling because McGrain, in his carefully researched work on early Catholic history, does not include the Dorchester building in his list of "four separate chapels" built in the 1760s and '70s and cited above. Nor is it included in the definitive booklet on "The Colonial Churches of Maryland" (which dates Paradise to 1742, calling it "St. Joseph's Church, Deer ¹¹⁰ Creek"). But, even accepting 1769 as correct, the small building would post-date Paradise by a generation.

The magnificent Doughoregan Manor (H-22 ; c. 1735-c.1745; National Historic Landmark) certainly exists, and its chapel (called St. Mary's) is functioning as a chapel. Built and still owned by the Carroll family, the 300-foot-long mansion is one of the undisputed great houses of America. The chapel forms "the north ell" and has been described as "richly

109

McGrain, II, p.156.

110

Frederick Lewis Weis, The Colonial Churches of Maryland, Delaware, and Georgia, (Baltimore: The Geneological Publishing Company, Inc., 1978), Appendix II.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetPriest Neale's Mass House and Mill Site HA-138
Harford County, MarylandSection number 8 Page 47

HISTORIC CONTEXT:

furnished...a reminder of the days when Roman Catholic services were conducted privately." ¹¹¹ Doughoregan obviously is built on a totally different scale from Paradise, and because it was (and is) primarily a private house, differs in function for Paradise was primarily a religious mission. It is to be recalled, too, that at times Paradise functioned as a missionary church for Doughoregan for Father Digges had as "his assignment to visit Doughoregan Manor."

In addition to the 1757 St. Joseph's in Philadelphia, three other 18th-century Catholic churches remain in Pennsylvania, all of which post-date the "Mass House." The present Conewago Chapel was built after the Revolution (National Register; 1785-'87) as a replacement for a c. 1745 structure used by Digges and Neale in their missionary circuit riding. North of Philadelphia, in Berks County, is the Church of the Blessed Sacrament (date unsure but "almost certainly

111

Papenfuse et al., New Guide, p.43.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Priest Neale's Mass House and Mill Site HA-138
Harford County, Maryland

Section number 8 Page 48

HISTORIC CONTEXT:

112
post-Revolutionary"); St. Peter's Roman Catholic Church
(1799) in is Lancaster.

As the National Register form for Conewago notes, "relics of the faith and works of early Roman Catholic missionaries in northeast America are difficult to find." Difficult but not impossible. There are St. Joseph's and the three post-Revolutionary churches in Pennsylvania, and, in Maryland, a few much-altered complexes of buildings in Southern Maryland and the Eastern Shore, the chapel at Doughoregan Manor, and, among the earliest and most fascinating of all, Priest Neale's Mass House. Llewellyn A. Digges, a collateral descendant of Father Digges, wrote in 1967 that "about 45 years ago a friend and I went to Priest Neale's Mass House and traced the mill race and saw the mill stones. Later, when the Cathedral of Mary our Queen was being planned, I proposed to...Rev. Father

112

Conversations with Jay Clouse, Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, January 23 and 24, 1989.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Priest Neale's Mass House and Mill Site HA-138
Harford County, Maryland

Section number 8 Page 49

HISTORIC CONTEXT

Hyde (now Bishop Hyde) that...those stones...be incorporated
into the Cathedral wall...as a poetic reminder of the grist

that once fed the infant, growing Catholic Church in Ameri-
113
ca."

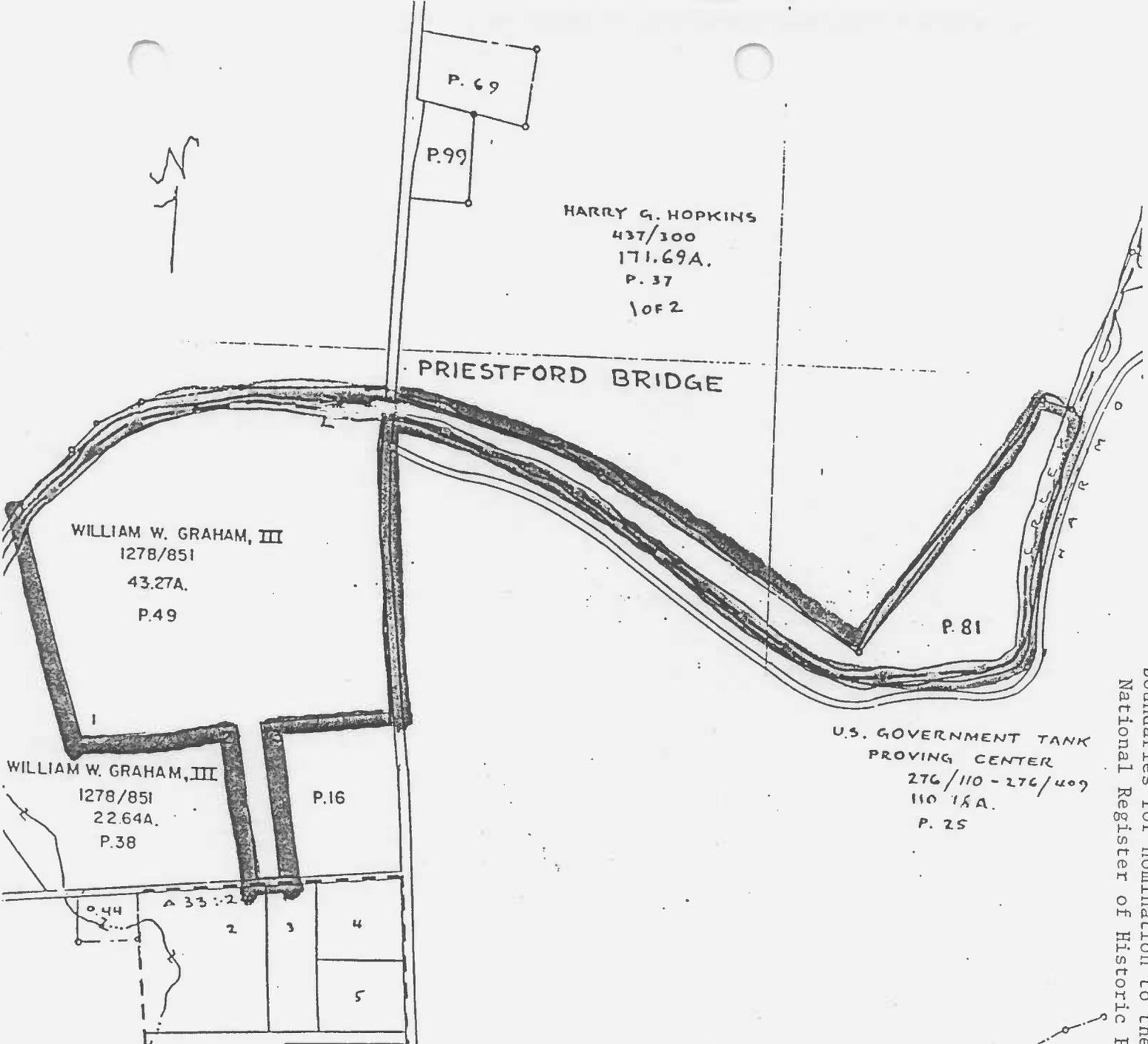
United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 10 Page 1

Priest Neale's Mass House and Mill Site
Harford County
HA-138

Boundaries for nomination to the
National Register of Historic Places



BEL AIR QUADRANGLE
 MARYLAND—HARFORD CO.
 7.5 MINUTE SERIES (TOPOGRAPHIC)

5763 II NW
 (CONOWINGO DAM)



Priest Neale's
 Mass House
 & Mill site

HA-138

Harford Co.
 Maryland

- A 18/391400/4384100
- B 18/392400/4383900
- C 18/392440/4383510
- D 18/391480/4383450



Priest Neale's Mass House

Harford County, Md.

HA-138

C. Weeks

Jan 1989

Harf Co. Dept of Planning & Zoning

Main (S.) facade

1
//

Priest Neale's Mass House

Harford Co, MD

C. Weeks

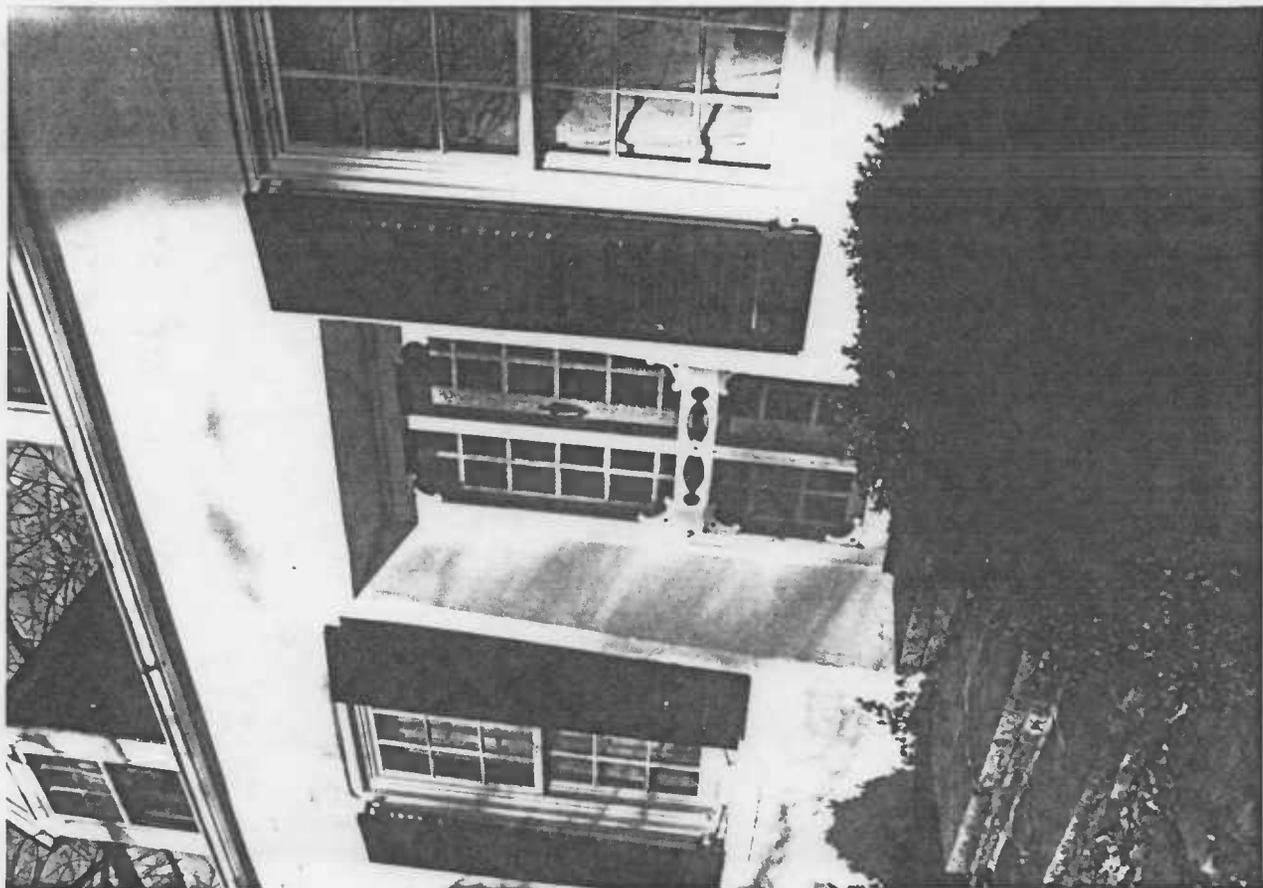
1/89

Harf Co. Dept of Planning & Zoning

E facade

2
//

NA-138



Priscilla Neale's Mass House

Hartford Co, MD

C. Woods

1/89

Hart Co. Dept of Planning & Zoning

W facade (w modern kitchen + rear)

3
//

HA-138

Priscilla Neale's Mass House

Hartford Co, MD

C Woods

1/89

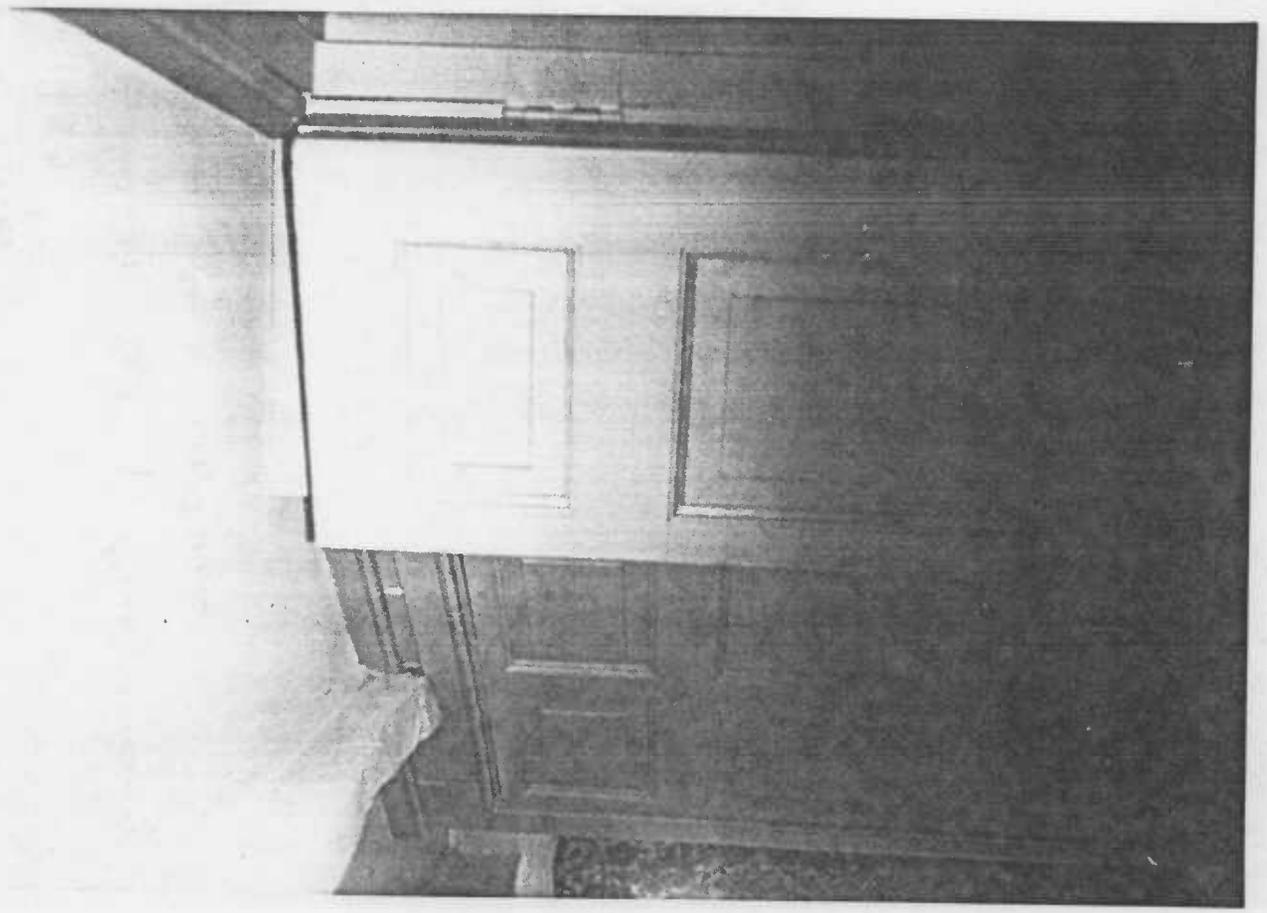
Hart Co. Dept. of Planning & Zoning

Detail-- Main door + window framing

+

///

HA-138



Priest Neale's Mass House

HA-138

Hartford (Conn., MD)

C. Crooks

1/89

Hartford Conn. Dept. of Planning & Zoning

Modern garage

5/11

Priest Neale's Mass House

Hartford Conn., MD

C. Crooks

1/89

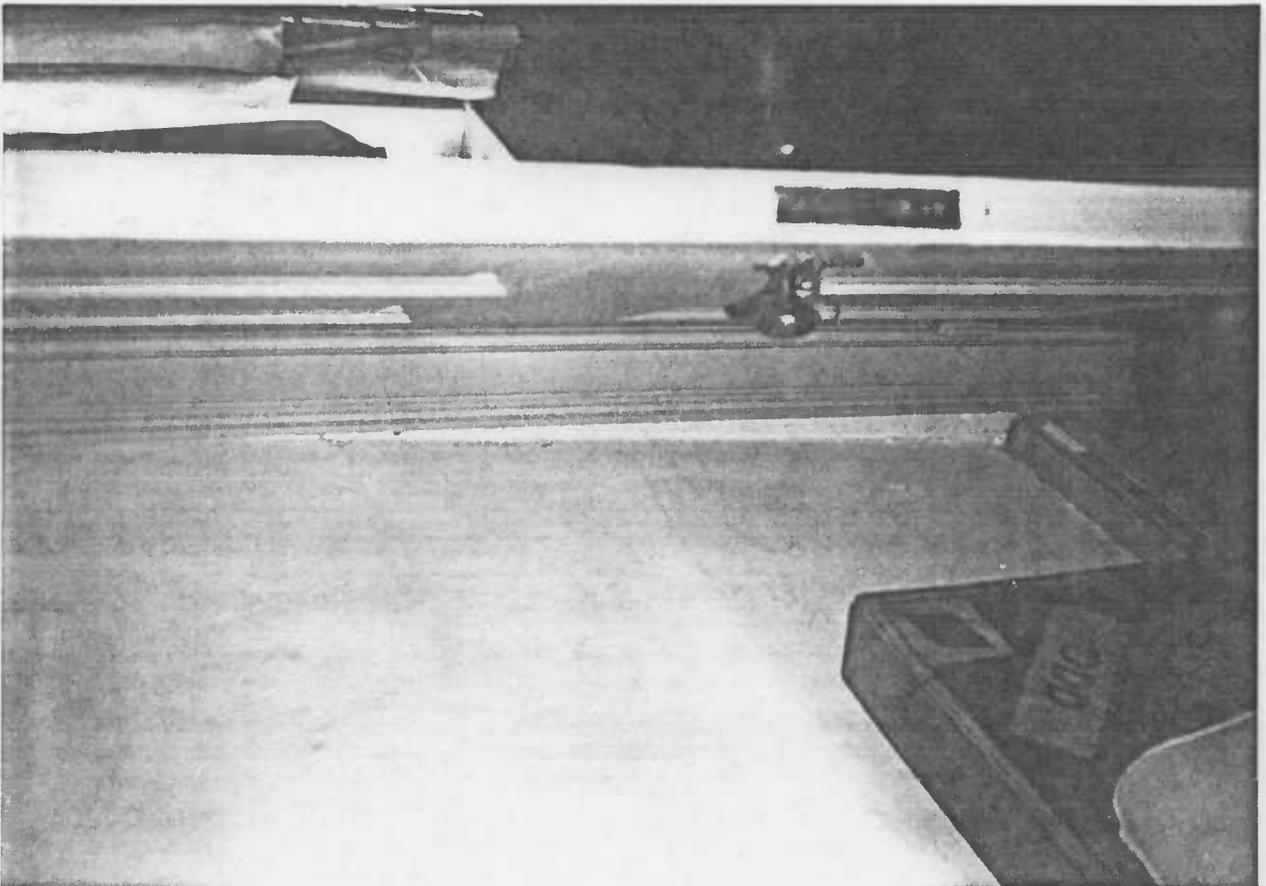
Hartford Conn. Dept. of Planning & Zoning

Detail. interior wood work

6/11

851-AU

NA-138



Priest Neale's Mass House

HA-138

Hartford Co. MD

C. Weeks

1/39

Hartford Co. Dept of Planning & Zoning

West room (original wall between rooms removed
c 1915)

7/11

Priest Neale's Mass House

Hartford County, MD

C. Weeks

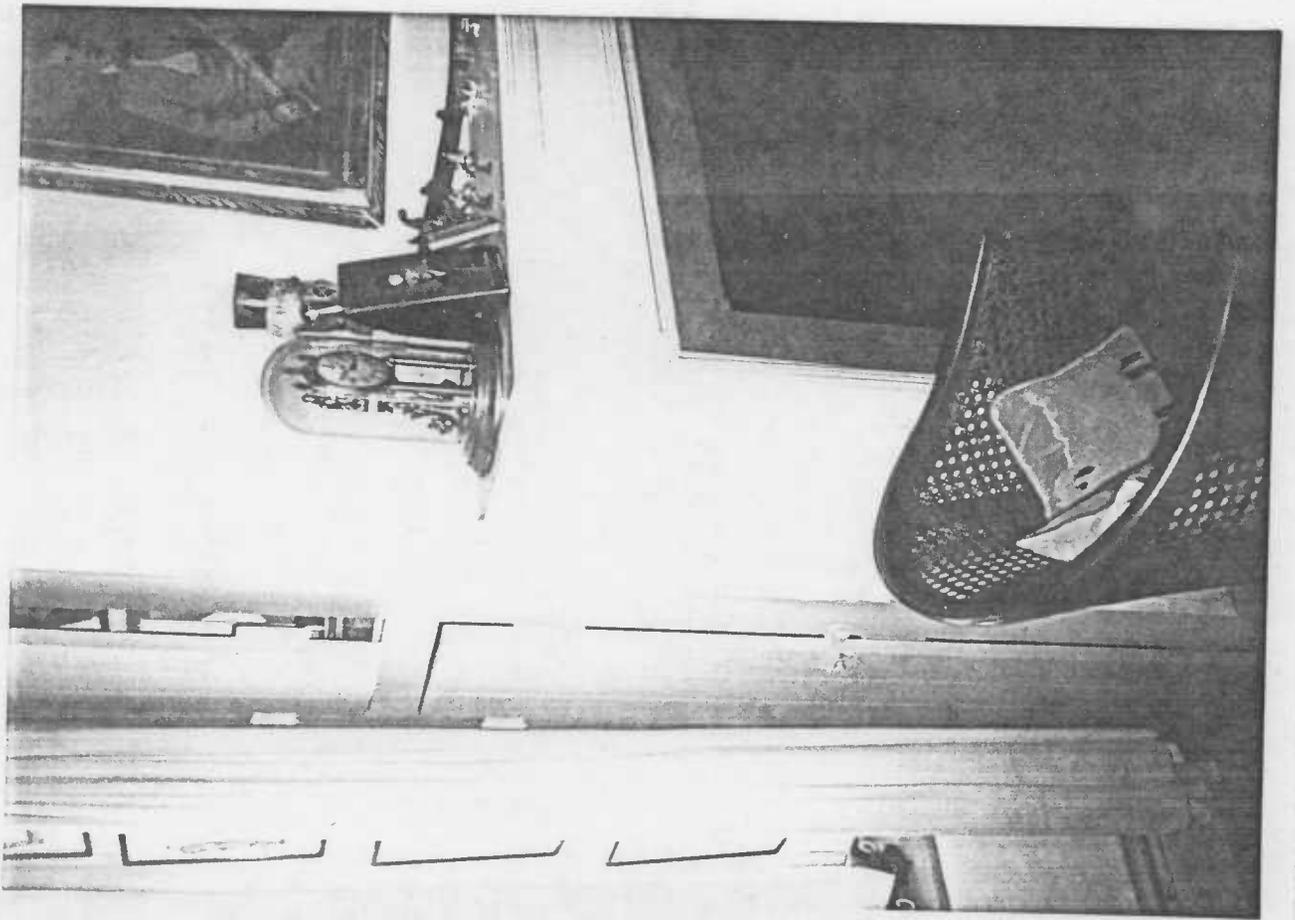
1/89

Hartford Co. Dept of Planning & Zoning

Door surround showing wall's being
out - of-plumb

8/11

HA-138



281-A



Print Neale's Mass House

Harford Co, MD

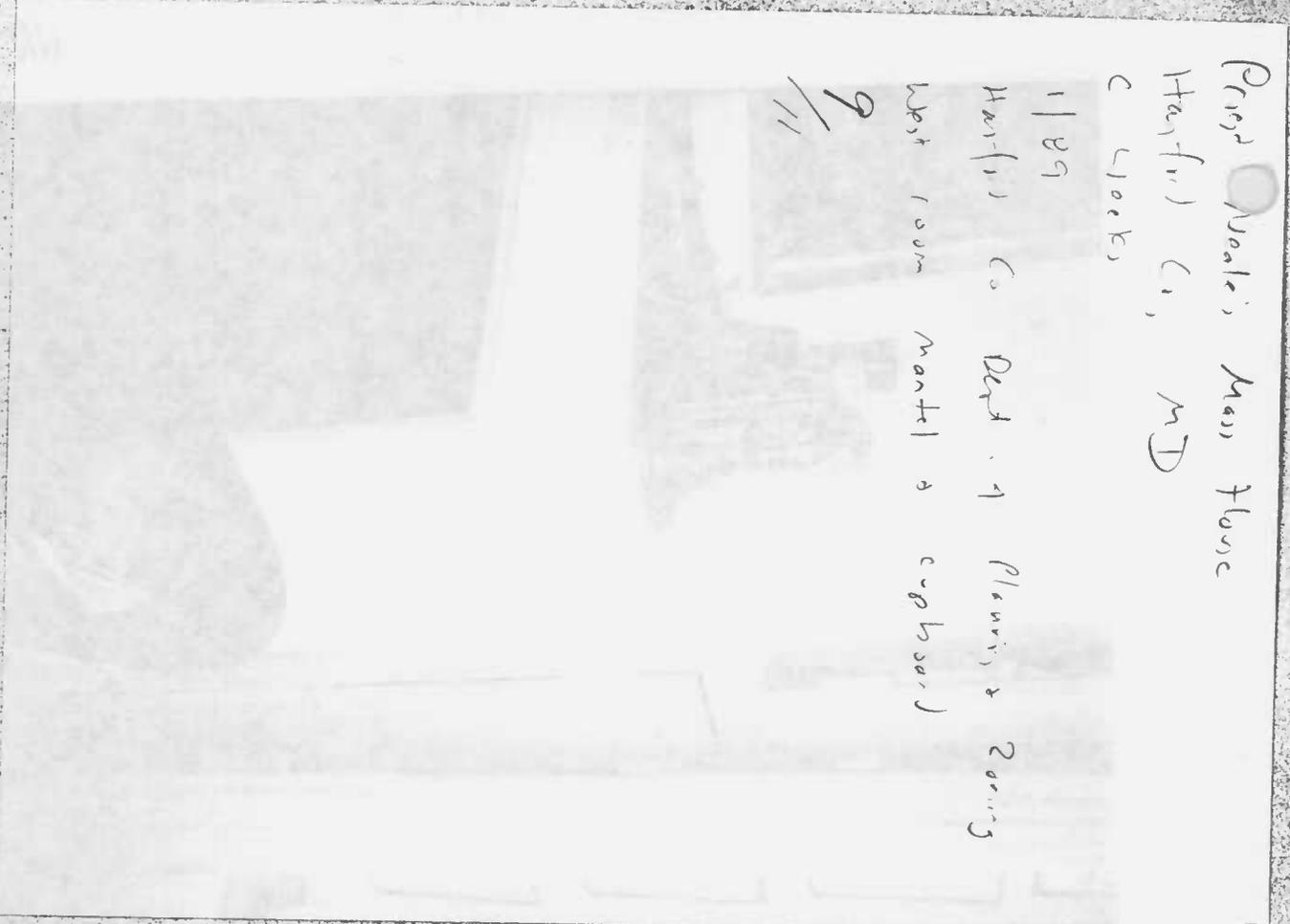
C Weeks

1/89

Harford Co Dept. of Planning & Zoning

West room mantel & cupboards

9/11



Print Neale's Mass House

HA-138

Harford Co, MD

C Weeks

1/89

Harford Co Dept. of Planning & Zoning

view to NE

10/11

HA-138

REV-AN



Priest Noale's Mass House

HA-138

Hartford Co., MD

C. Weeks

1/89

Hartford Co. Dept. of Planning & Zoning

View to SW

11/11

INVENTORY FORM FOR STATE HISTORIC SITES SURVEY

Please consider for Nomination to National Register

1 NAME

HISTORIC

Priest Neale's Mass House; The Mission of Saint Joseph

AND/OR COMMON

Priest Neale's Mass House, Paradise Farm

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

2618 Cool Spring Road

CITY, TOWN

Bel Air

___ VICINITY OF

First
CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

Harford

STATE

Maryland

COUNTY

Harford

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	PUBLIC ACQUISITION	ACCESSIBLE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL
			<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PARK
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
			<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
			<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
			<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
			<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

Col. William and Mrs. Yvette Graham

(301)

Telephone #: 734-7846

STREET & NUMBER

2618 Cool Spring Road

CITY, TOWN

Bel Air

___ VICINITY OF

Maryland

21014
STATE, zip code

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Clerk of the Circuit Court

Liber #: GRG 860 & GRG 562
Folio #: 469 & 581

STREET & NUMBER

Harford County Court House, 40 South Main Street

CITY, TOWN

Bel Air,

Maryland 21014

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

DATE

___ FEDERAL ___ STATE ___ COUNTY ___ LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE

7 DESCRIPTION

HA-138

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input checked="" 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

This stone house is located on a lane north of Cool Spring Road about 0.1 miles west of Priest Ford Road. It is situated on a knoll with a view overlooking Deer Creek. The house faces South.

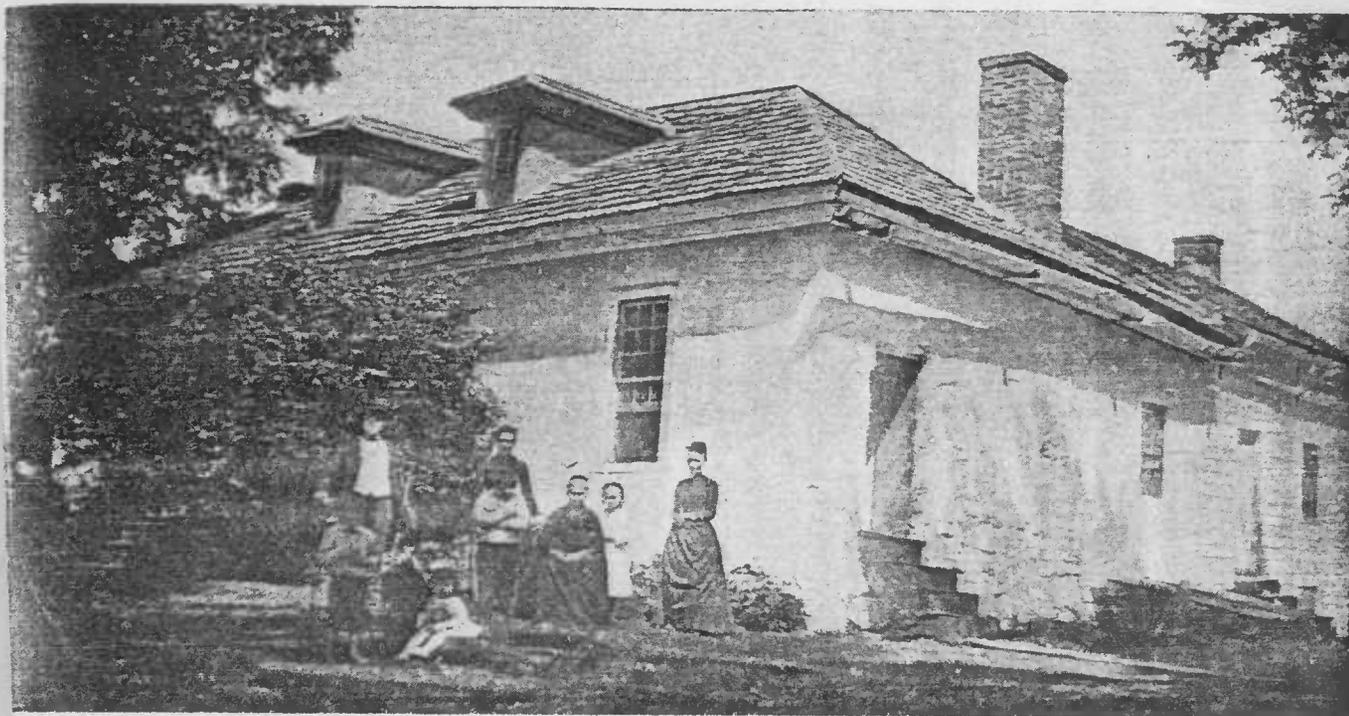
The structure is a one and one half story, stone dwelling, 5 bays by two. The windows appear to spaced evenly in the front and side elevations of the front section. The first floor windows contain 9 lights over 9. The main entrance is located in the center bay of the front elevation. The plain door is deep set in the stone wall.

Three Gable front dormers are situated directly above the lower story center door and in between the first floor windows. The gable flank roof is covered with slate shingles and has low, corbelled brick chimneys extending from inside each gable end. Small attic windows flank each chimney (2 lights over 2).

The main structure is not much altered from the original form, and only the roof line has been remodeled as a result of a fire in the spring of 1940. (McGrain, Maryland Historical Magazine, September, 1967, p. 254.). A turn-of-the-century photograph appearing in the Harford County Directory (1953: p. 357), shows that the roof at that time was hip and there were only two hip roof dormers. An Early floor plan of the house appears in McGrain's article (p. 263). It reveals that very little has been changed on the interior. The major alteration is the installation of modern plumbing.

HARFORD COUNTY DIRECTORY (1953)

p. 3



PRIEST NEALE'S MASS HOUSE

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> RELIGION, history of	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1499	<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 type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input 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 type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)	
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION			

SPECIFIC DATES _____ BUILDER/ARCHITECT unknown

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

This small stone house, overlooking Deer Creek Valley, is a reminder of a time when the right to religious freedom, the basis on which Maryland was founded, was violated. All Christians had enjoyed equal religious rights throughout the province from its founding until 1692 with the single exception of four years of rule by the Puritans (1655-1658). (Harford County Directory, 1953, p. 357). Toleration prevailed until 1692 when, as a result of the "Glorious Revolution" of 1689, the Church of England was established and the Maryland Toleration Act was dissolved. All British Subjects were required to support the Church of England whether they shared its doctrine or not. (McGrain, Maryland Historical Magazine, September, 1967, p.254). Roman Catholics were forbidden to hold office, serve in the army, or educate their children in their beliefs. Penalties of banishment or life imprisonment awaited any popish priest who performed his duties or conducted any religious service, administered any sacrament, or furnished religious instruction. The Maryland General Assembly passed a local act in October, 1704 to "prevent the growth of popery in the province." (McGrain, p.254). This act was suspended in December of the same year, and in January of the following year, Queen Anne suspended the act indefinitely.

The Queen's order allowed a Roman Priest to offer Mass in private homes or chapels that existed as part of a larger residence without fear of punishment. Priests became circuit riders, going from town to town in order to offer Mass in the private homes of Catholic colonists. Priests' homes were also used for this purpose. The main structure of the house presently owned by the Graham family was used as a Catholic place of worship. The origin of the house has not been determined but its ownership and use is well established. It is recorded in Jesuit archives that the first pastor assigned to Deer Creek was Father John Digges, Jr., who arrived in 1743. He was the son of John Digges who had received 10,501 acres at Conewago from Lord Baltimore, which eventually turned out to lie north of the Maryland line following the running of temporary boundary in 1732. Father Digges had just returned to the colonies from his training in the English Jesuit colleges in exile in the Austrian Highlands and French Flanders. He had been born in Maryland in 1712 and had entered upon his training at the age of 22. He passed through the scheduled 14 year Jesuit preparation of humanities, philosophy, theology, and practice teaching in a mere 7 years, by omitting the period of teaching, one year of study, and the final probationary year after ordination. (McGrain, p. 257).

On March 14, 1743, John Digges, Jr. entered into an agreement with Thomas Shea, the original patentee of the present Paradise Farm, to purchase it at a nominal fee of 5 shillings. There is no record of this transaction in the Jesuit archives but John McGrain states that the Woodstock archives possess an almost identical conveyance of the same tract

Father Bennett Neale 21 years later. Shea made 2 tracts over to Digges: the first was 50 acres, Thomas's Beginning on the south side of Deer Creek; the second parcel was entitled Addition to Thomas's Beginning and extended on both sides of Deer Creek. Shea had acquired the land by patent from the Proprietor's land office in September 14, 1715 and July 19, 1721. Mr. Shea's plats, certificates, and the sealed original patent of the Addition are preserved in the Jesuit Archives. Included in the Certificates

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Harford County Directory, 1953. pp. 357, 358.
McGrain, John W., Jr.; "Priest Neale, His Mass House, And His Successors", Parts 1 and 2, Maryland Historical Magazine, Vol. 62, No. 3, 1967, 1968.
Preston, Walter W.; History of Harford County, 1901, Press of the Sun Book Office, Balt. pp. 160 - 165.

Bottom of Page

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 43.2697 acres

This farm, though still owned by the Graham family has been broken into three lots and are now in a different tax acc't number. The parcel on which the nominated building is located is parcel # 2618. A detailed map is contained in Plat # 35, folio 40 in the Harford County Assessment Office, 45 S. Main Street, Bel Air.

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
Susan M. Deeney, Harford County Historic District Commission Field Historian

ORGANIZATION
Harford County Historic District Commission

DATE
8/24/76

STREET & NUMBER
45 S. Main Street

TELEPHONE
838-6000, ext. 207

CITY OR TOWN
Bel Air

STATE
Maryland

Wright, C. Milton; Our Harford Heritage, 1967, French-Bray, Baltimore. pp. 223.

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

is an indenture from Thomas Shea to John Digges dated March 14, 1743, granting to John Digges the above mentioned property. This reads in part:

"...Thomas Shea and his heirs give grant Bargain, sell and alein enfeef confirm and make over to him the said John Digges, Jun, his heirs and assigns for ever two tracts of land...together with all and singular the improvements, conveniences advantages there on or thereunto belonging or in any manner appertaining without any manner of exemption only that half an acre of Ground where the Dwelling place now is which the said Thomas Shea reserves for a Burying Place him and his family as he thinks proper to the only proper use of him the said John Digges, Jun his heirs and assigns for ever..." (McGrain, p.259). This document confirms the existence of the house to at least 1743.

Father Digges' parish extended from the Susquehanna to the Patapsco and he passed through Baltimore on his way to perform his duties, though he never held services there. He died in Baltimore in 1746 at the age of 34, leaving all his real and personal property to Mr. Bennett Neale, a young Jesuit with whom he had attended school. The will dated September 11, 1744, was not certified until November 12, 1761. Digges was succeeded then, in 1746, by his legal heir and a relative, Rev. Bennett Neale. (Bennett Neale was born August 3, 1709, the son of Anthony Neale, Gentleman of Charles County, and his second wife, Elizabeth Digges). (McGrain, p.260).

(For more information concerning the Neale Family see Christopher Johnson's "The Neale Family of Charles County," Maryland Historical Magazine, VII (June 1912), 208f. and "Maryland Genealogy, Captain James Neale and Some of His Decendants," The Times, (Baltimore), Sunday, December 27, 1885)..

Father Neale seems to have come to Deer Creek about 1746 to replace his late school mate, perhaps to move into the Paradise house which Father Digges had left him among his unspecified possessions. It is recorded that in 1750 Father Neale purchased an 18 acre tract of land on Deer Creek from Henry Beach known as Maiden's Bower Secured for the sum of 15 pounds. This property bounded Thomas's Beginning and Jerico. Included with the property were "all the houses, gardens, fences, and profits belonging or in any way appertaining thereto..." (McGrain, pp.265,266). Dr. George Archer suggests in his article "The History of the Old Catholic Chapel at Priests' Ford, Harford County" in the U.S. Catholic Historical Magazine III, that there may have been a mill and mill race included in the tract; but Father Frederick suggests Neale built the mill to support himself. This mill may have been the first in the region. The property on which the mill was located is now a part of the Aberdeen Proving Ground. Neale sold the mill site to Benjamin Wheeler 3 years later for 15 pounds but his successor, Father Matthews bought the property back for 15 shillings in 1770..

Neale was resident Pastor until about 1773. The vestry records of St. George's Parish (Episcopal) showed Bennett Neale among the bachelors of the region in 1756. It was necessary for him to produce a certificate to prove that he was not worth 100 pounds a year in order not to be taxed as a bachelor. Catholics were to pay twice the tax of other bachelors, since they shared the same religion as the French enemy. (McGrain, p. 267).

Father Neale was personally linked with the French enemy when he was accused in 1756 of treason and complicity with the French. This occurred as the result of the drunken confession overheard by a fellow soldier, of one William Johnson, a young man who, as it turned out eventually, had deserted his wife, deserted the army, changed his name, and tried to use Priest Neale as an excuse for desertion. William Marshall, alias William Johnson, admitted to the English Army Officials, after he had been arrested near Fort Cumberland and charged as a spy, that he had been in the French Service at Fort Du Quesne, having been carried off by a party of Indians after which he escaped. He testified that while he was living in Deer Creek he attended mass several times at Priest Neale's Mass House. He further stated that Priest Neale said that it would be much better for them to live under a French than an English government and

CONTINUATION SHEET: STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

recommended that they prepare themselves to join any party of French and Indians that happened by. The examinant stated that Priest Neale gave him a packet of letters to carry to a French officer at Winango and provided him with a pistol. Marshall, alias Johnson, accused Ignatius Wheeler, Thomas Burgen, John Crayton, Darby Tool, James McDonald, Ulick Berke, and Thomas Skey. Marshall identified John Cretin as Priest Neale. When it was made clear that Johnson was really Marshall and the accusations were lies, all of the accused men were released and Marshall was charged with desertion.

Bennett Neale remained at Deer Creek until around 1773, spending the rest of his life in St. Mary's County. By the 1760's and 1770's the antipopery sentiment had subsided and chapels were being constructed in Maryland. Bennett Neale's successor, another Marylander named Ignatius Matthews is shown as a taxpayer on the Spesutia Hundred taxlist of 1778. His assistant was named Bernard Diderick who shortened his last name to Rich. (McGrain, p.279). Father Matthews served until 1779 when he was replaced by Charles Sewall. During Father Sewall's tenure, Lafayette's army passed down the Priest's Ford Road from Bold Friar Ferry on their way to Yorktown. Father Sewall purchased the land which is the present site of the Church of St. Ignatius in Hickory, on September 13, 1779. Sewall's successor was the Reverend Sylvester Boardman, and he was the last Jesuit at the plantation and directed the building of the Church of St. Ignatius.

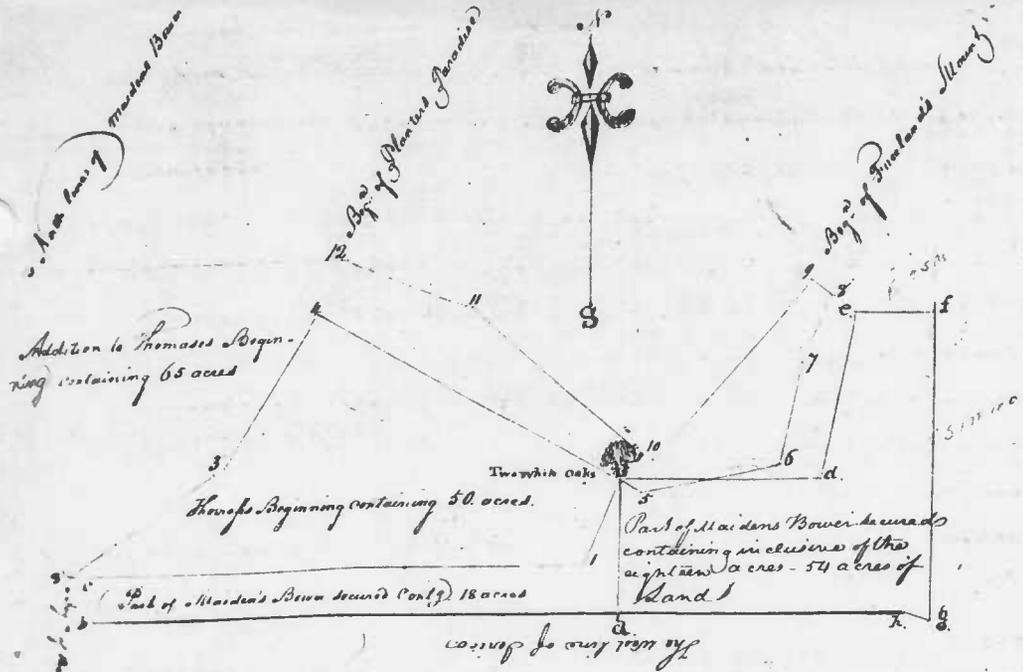
The Jesuit order was suppressed in 1773 as the absolutist Catholic monarchies of Europe forced the Pope to dissolve the order. In 1786, the 22 ex Jesuits which represented the entire Catholic organization in the colonies, formed a General Chapter preliminary to establishing a corporation promoting restoration of the Society of Jesus. (McGrain, p.287). The members who held property made out wills leaving their estates to other members, and the legatees in turn made out wills to still other members. The former Jesuits in 1793 established the Corporation of Roman Catholic Clergymen, confirmed as a legal body by the act of the General Assembly of the State of Maryland; an "act for Securing certain estates and property for the support and use of the Ministers of the Roman Catholic Religion." (McGrain, p.283). This protective Corporation enabled the Jesuits to own and manage property that included White Marsh, Arabia Petrea, and the Paradise Farm. Archbishop Marechal carried his problem of these Jesuits' Failure to pay tithes, to Rome while the Jesuit sympathizers took their case to the Secretary of State, then John Quincy Adams, but no exchange between Rome and the U.S. took place. The Corporation, however, was ordered to pay tithe to the Archbishop; but the Jesuits were notably poor. The Paradise Farm was offered for sale in 1806 but remained unsold until 1814 when Archbishop John Carroll found a buyer in Dr. James Glasgow of Baltimore.

The property of about 200 acres on both sides of Deer Creek included the site of an old iron forge, a grist mill, an oil mill and was advertized as an "excellent mill seat." The dwelling house, kitchen, smoke house, corn house, and barn were noted along with an orchard and walnut and chestnut woods. (McGrain, Maryland Historical Magazine, June, 1968, pp. 140-141).

TITLE SEARCH
HA - 138

"Priest Neale's Mass House"
Col. and Mrs. William Graham
2618 Cool Spring Road
Bel Air, Maryland 21014

GRG 860/469	11/13/70	Grantor:	Benjamin R. Cadwalader, executor of the estate of Alan Kerr Bond
TLA 31/428	Will	Grantee:	William W. and Yvette LaVarre Graham
		Acreage:	Tracts 2 and 3 described in a plat entitled "Plan of subdivision of the farm of Mary A. Harlan and others..." GRG 10/16. Tract 2 15.036 acres. Tract 3 8.129 acres.
GRG 562/581	12/2/60	Grantor:	Mary A. Harlan, Alan Kerr Bond, J. Glasgow Archer, and Mary K. Archer, his wife.
		Grantee:	William W. and Yvette LaVarre Graham
		Acreage:	Plat 1, described in plat mentioned above, being part of a tract called Paradiice and consisting of 50.30 acres.
GRG 447/402	10/31/55	Grantor:	H. Warren Buckler, William S. James, Trustees
		Grantee:	Mary A. Harlan, Allan Kerr Bond, J. Glasgow and Mary K. Archer.
		Acreage:	73.46 acres, the farm called "Paradice". Plat Record GRG 6/20.
GRG 404/163	10/3/53	Grantor:	Benjamin R. Cadwalader
		Grantee:	Mary A. Harlan, et al
		Acreage:	68 acres comprised of tracts or parts of tracts known as Thomas' Beginning, Addition to Thomas' Beginning, Betouze's Lot, and Paradiice.
GRG 404/160	10/30/53	Grantor:	Mary Harlan
		Grantee:	Benjamin R. Cadwalader
		Acreage:	68 acres
DGW 178/297	6/30/22	Grantor:	Mary E. G. Harlan, widow
		Grantee:	Susan G., Elizabeth S., and Mary A. Harlan
		Acreage:	180 acres, parts of tracts called Thomas' Beginning, Addition to Thomas' Beginning, Maiden's Bower secured, Betouze's Lot.
Will Records of Baltimore County		Grantor:	George Archer
		Grantee:	Mary E. G. Harlan
ALJ 65/77	5/7/1889	Grantor:	George R. Glasgow
		Grantee:	George Archer
		Acreage:	180 acres (of the above named tracts of land).
Will Records of Baltimore County		Grantor:	Last Will and Testament of James Glasgow
		Grantee:	George R. Glasgow
HD 29/357	4/29/1844	Grantor:	Thomas and Susanna P. Archer and Deliverance H. Glasgow
		Grantee:	James Glasgow
		Acreage:	169 acres more or less.



Laid down by a scale of 40 ft to the Inch. By
 F. Fenwick Surveyor of the County of Washington

HA-136 HD 2/259

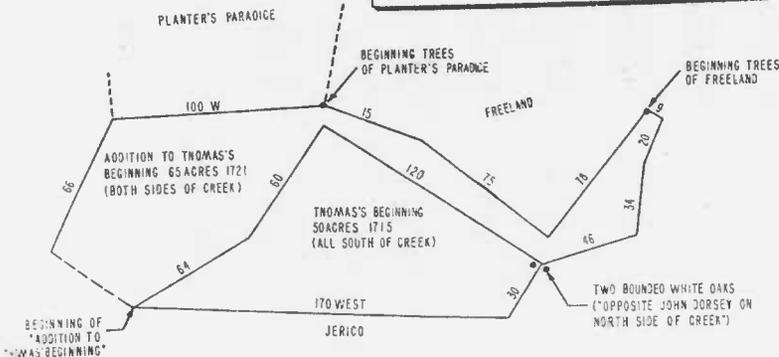
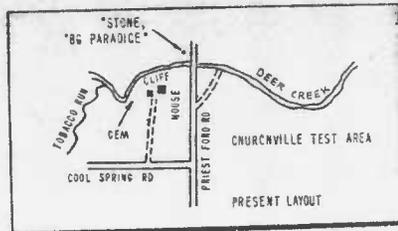
Thomas's Beginning surveyed for Thomas Shear in 1715. Beginning at two rounded white oaks standing in a lot and running from thence S 41° 30' W 30 ft to 1. thence west 170 ft to 2. thence N 50° E 64 ft to 3. thence N 80° W 120 ft to 4. thence with a straight line to the beginning, containing 50 acres of land. (as will appear on the black lines shaded yellow.)

The addition to Thomas's Beginning. Beginning at the end of the west 170 ft line of Thomas's Beginning and running from thence by and with the 3rd line of Thomas's Beginning N 58° E 64 ft to 3. thence with the 4th line of Thomas's Beginning N 31° E 60 ft to 4. thence with the given line of Thomas's Beginning and further than said given line extends S 60° E 120 ft to 5. thence N 78° E 45 ft to 6. across Deer Creek. thence N 12° E 34 ft to 7. thence N 26° E 24 ft to 8. thence S 52° W 9 ft to the Beginning of Freeland's Mount at 9. thence S 41° W 78 ft to 10. thence S 43° W 100 ft to 11. thence N 68° W 45 ft to the Beg. line of Planters Paradise at 12. thence West 100 ft to the line of Maidens Bower at 13. thence S 26° W 66 ft to 14. thence to the beginning at 2. contg. 65 acres as will appear on the map in black lines shaded blue and yellow.

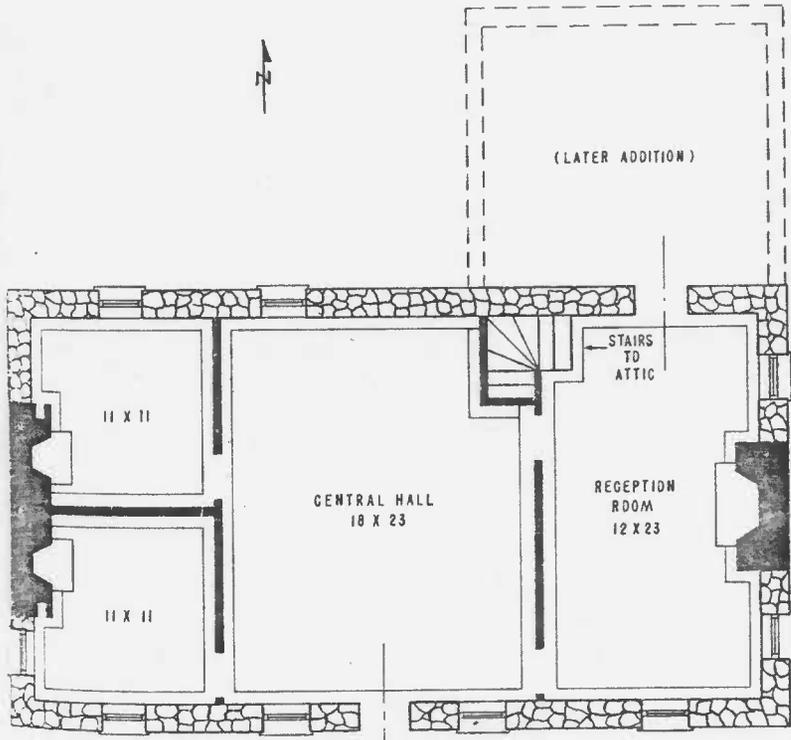
Part of Maidens Bower secured. Beg. at 2 white oaks the beg. of Thomas's Beginning and running thence S 43° W 43 ft to 1. thence west 175 ft to 2. thence with said west line West 175 ft to 3. thence N 78° E 45 ft to intersect the second line of Thomas's Beginning at the end of 168 ft from the Beg. at 4. thence with said 2nd line reversed East 168 ft to the Beginning of said 2nd line at 1. thence with the 3rd line of Thomas's Beginning reversed N 58° E 30 ft to the beginning at the two white oaks containing 54 acres as will appear on the map from the two oaks to a. b. to c. to 1. thence home

Part of Maidens Bower secured. Beginning two perches from the end of the West 170 ft line of Thomas's Beginning at c. and running thence with said line reversed East 160 ft to 1. thence N 78° E 30 ft to 2. thence with the Beg. of Thomas's Beginning, thence E 63 ft to 2. thence N by E 56 ft to c. thence East 100 ft to 3. thence S 76° W 8 ft to d. to the end of the north line of Seaco thence West until it intersects a line drawn S 31° E from the beginning at 6. thence East 54 acres of Land.

and recorded the twenty eighth day of June in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and sixteen (and Examined by Henry Dorsy Clerk)



Original Plats of Thomas Shea in Priestwood Road Area, Harford County



Early Floor Plan of Priest Neale's House

HA-138





Priest Neale Mass House HA-138
Cool Spring Road
Churchville, MD
Susan M. Deeney
Southeast

9/1/76