HA-1283

SUMMARY

Louis Markline House
2920 Snake Lane
Churchville, Maryland 21028

The Louis Markline house was probably built in the fourth quarter of the 19th Century by a member of the Mitchell family. While architecturally undistinguished, in the sense that it uses sawn framing materials and stock trim, it is important as a typical Harford County 'small farmhouse' from the late 19th century. Consequently we can learn more about houses of the average man from studying buildings like this one.

HA- 1283

MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST MAGI #1312835604

INVENTORY FORM FOR STATE HISTORIC SITES SURVEY

1 NAME

HISTORIC

AND/OR COMMON
Louis Markline house

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER
2920 Snake Lane

CITY, TOWN
Churchville, ___ VICINITY OF

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

STATE
Maryland 21028

COUNTY
Harford

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE	
__DISTRICT	__PUBLIC	X OCCUPIED	__AGRICULTURE	__MUSEUM
X BUILDING(S)	X PRIVATE	__UNOCCUPIED	__COMMERCIAL	__PARK
__STRUCTURE	__BOTH	__WORK IN PROGRESS	__EDUCATIONAL	X PRIVATE RESIDENCE
__SITE	**PUBLIC ACQUISITION**	**ACCESSIBLE**	__ENTERTAINMENT	__RELIGIOUS
__OBJECT	__IN PROCESS	X YES: RESTRICTED	__GOVERNMENT	__SCIENTIFIC
	__BEING CONSIDERED	__YES: UNRESTRICTED	__INDUSTRIAL	__TRANSPORTATION
		__NO	__MILITARY	__OTHER:

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME
Louis R. and Hester L. Markline

Telephone #:

STREET & NUMBER
2920 Snake Lane

CITY, TOWN
Churchville, ___ VICINITY OF

STATE, zip code
Maryland 21028

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

Liber #: 422
Folio #: 232

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.
Harford County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER
40 South Main St.

CITY, TOWN
Bel Air,

STATE
Maryland 21014

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

DATE

__FEDERAL __STATE __COUNTY __LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE

HA-1283

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
__EXCELLENT	__DETERIORATED	__UNALTERED	X ORIGINAL SITE
__GOOD	__RUINS	X ALTERED	__MOVED DATE_____
X FAIR	__UNEXPOSED		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

This two-story frame house with a gable roof has two shed-roofed additions - one two-story and one 1-story on the north (or rear) side in a stepped descent of roof heights from front to back. There is a new one-story, shed-roofed addition on the west end. Set on a stone foundation, the house has exposed eaves and an interior brick chimney in the east end. The windows have 6/6 sash with narrow beaded trim and the gable windows have four lights.

The two bay by one bay main or south section has a one-story, shed-roofed porch with square posts and balusters across the south facade. The entrance is in the west bay, flanked on the east by a window, with two windows in the second story. The east end has two gable windows and one window in both the first and second stories. The west end is similar except the new addition covers the first story.

The two-story addition attached to the north side has an entrance with a shed-roofed portico in the first story and a window in the second story of the east end and a window in the second story of the west end. There is an entrance to the basement under the portico and two windows north of that. The north side has two windows in the second story, and the rear addition covers the first story. The east end of this section has a door and vestibule in the south bay flanked by a window on the north. The north side has one window east of center.

The interior plan is uncomplicated with one room in each section and a staircase in the east side of the middle part. The mantel in the east wall of the front section has a double ogee shelf, raised molded panels in the frieze, and oval molded panels on the pilasters flanking the opening. In the attic the rafters are butted together. In the basement, the joists are sawn and, in the north section, notched into the posts. The date 1879 is painted on a joist in the north section.

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

HA-1283

8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
__PREHISTORIC	__ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	__COMMUNITY PLANNING	__LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	__RELIGION
__1400-1499	__ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	__CONSERVATION	__LAW	__SCIENCE
__1500-1599	X AGRICULTURE	__ECONOMICS	__LITERATURE	__SCULPTURE
__1600-1699	X ARCHITECTURE	__EDUCATION	__MILITARY	__SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
__1700-1799	__ART	__ENGINEERING	__MUSIC	__THEATER
X 1800-1899	__COMMERCE	__EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	__PHILOSOPHY	__TRANSPORTATION
__1900-	__COMMUNICATIONS	__INDUSTRY	__POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	__OTHER (SPECIFY)
		__INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Like most of the houses on Snake Lane, this was built in the last quarter of the 19th century by a member of the Mitchell family - probably Samuel Mitchell. Built on Robert Mitchell's farm and part of the original Stony Ridge tract, this house never had much land with it. In 1877, Robert and Avarilla Mitchell sold the lot to Samuel Mitchell for $420.[1] In 1894, the house and 8-¾ acres passed out of Mitchell hands to Austin Harvey for $450.[2] By 1919, when John and Elizabeth Webster bought the house, there were only two acres included with it.[3] They must have added at least one of the north additions, because James and Lillian Magness paid $950 for the property in 1927.[4] They defaulted on their mortgage and the property was sold at a public sale to Arthur and Mary Hanson in 1930. Thus, while the house is undistinguished, it has been owned by members of three of Harford County's oldest and most extensive farming families - the Mitchells, Websters, and Magnesses.

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

NA-1283

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Land and Will Records of Harford County

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY _____

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

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

STATE COUNTY

STATE COUNTY

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE
Natalie Shivers, Historic Sites Surveyor

ORGANIZATION
Harford County Historic District Commission

DATE
May, 1979

STREET & NUMBER
45 South Main Street

TELEPHONE
838-6000 ext. 207

CITY OR TOWN
Bel Air,

STATE
Maryland 21014

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

massive rock-faced concrete block piers, tapered columns, and hipped roof was constructed after the house was built but is appropriately-and symbolically-prepossessing for a house of this breadth. Its cousin, the Bonnett-Mitchell house, has a relatively scaled-down porch with square Doric posts covering the central three bays. Both houses have central entrances and central sets of porch steps-but no center hall on the interior. The formal symmetry of the exteriors bely the simply, functional interiors. Inside of both are two rooms, the room with the staircase (which is aligned with the entrance) larger than the other.

Finally-with the ultimate formal arrangement-the Gorrell house is three bays wide, with floor-length windows in the first story. Spanning the facade, the hipped-roofed porch with square posts shelters the projecting three-sided vestibule with a double-leafed door in the center, flanked by windows with colored glass borders. Inside, the house has a central hall plan. The principal facade of the Gorrell house has all three formal elements present in varying degrees in the other houses of this area: the extroverted porch, the inflected entrance, and relatively elaborate ornament.

HA-1283

Background Information on Mitchell properties in Snake Lane vicinity

On October 4, 1779, Amos Cord conveyed 150 acres of "Stony Ridge Enlargement" to John Mitchell for the sum of 500 pounds.[1] In a description of the boundaries of Mitchell's land, this property was referred to as part of "Stony Ridge" and "Paca's Enlargement".[2] Originally, this land had belonged to John Paca, who in 1775 conveyed it to John Blackburn.[3] Blackburn then sold it to Thomas Perigrine Farsby who exchanged it with Amos Cord in 1776.[4]

Also, on December 17, 1783, John Stevenson sold 243 acres of "Stony Ridge" to John Mitchell for 486 pounds.[5] And in 1800, Captain James Philips of Baltimore City conveyed 100 acres of Stony Ridge, which he had inherited from his father, to John Mitchell.[6] This parcel had been confiscated from James Christie after the Revolution and sold by commissioners appointed to preserve confiscated British property to James Philips on October 1, 1782 for 100 pounds.

John Mitchell (b. 1737, d. 1801), has been described as "a respected and thrifty millwright." He married Mary Tidball in 1765 and had eight children. The property we are concerned with here-i.e. on the north side of Snake Lane-presumably passed to John Mitchell's son, Elijah, and then to Elijah's three sons William, Robert, and Elisha.[7]

It is said that in 1831 Elisha Mitchell possessed the land on which the Bechtold-Lohr house and the Mitchell-Lauterbach (HA-1286) house now stand.[8] William's house burned. Robert owned the property where the Winfield Mitchell house (HA-1286), the Mitchell Tenant house #1, the Markline house, and the Mitchell-Magness house are now situated. Robert probably lived in the house now owned by William Craig, located behind the Mitchell-Magness house. However, that structure has been altered extensively, and the house as Robert Mitchell would have known it is unrecognizable.

Robert Mitchell married Averilla Hawkins and together they had seven children: Robert Louis, Mary Jane, Samuel, George, John Thomas, Catherine, and Margaret. In the last quarter of the 19th century, Robert Louis Mitchell built the Winfield Mitchell house[9], Samuel built the Markline house (HA-1283)[10] and eventually occupied his father's house; John Thomas built the Mitchell Tenant house #1,[11] and Margaret lived in the Mitchell-Magness house.

John Thomas Mitchell had two sons, George and Alonzo. George's house burned; Alonzo lived in what is called the Mitchell tenant house #1 and inherited Robert Louis Mitchell's house. John Winfield Mitchell, son of George Mitchell, then inherited the property of Alonzo Mitchell who had no children of his own.[12]

Thus, most of the Mitchell houses on Snake Lane were built during the last quarter of the 19th century by the children of Robert Mitchell.

Footnotes

1 Liber JLGC, Folio 239
2 Liber JLGD, Folio 16
3 Ref. Liber JLGC, Folio 239
4 Liber JLGA, Folio 257
5 Liber JLGE, Folio 416
6 Liber JLGP, Folio 430
7 Mitchell family archives
8 HD 14/87
9 ALJ 32/190
10 ALJ 32/464
11 ALJ 36/186
12 ALJ 64/373

Architectural Significance of Mitchell Properties in Snake Lane vicinity HA-1283

Although unimpressive singly, this cluster of houses in the Snake Lane vicinity represents a good cross-section of Harford County's small farmhouses built in the second half of the 19th century. Each is ordinary and, thus, together they represent the surprising variety of vernacular forms built at that time. None seems distinctive, but, on closer examination, no two are the same (although at least one house was a deliberate imitation of its neighbor).

There are certain common denominators among these buildings. They are all two story frame structures with gable roofs. Most are L or T shaped, with 6/6 sash windows and brick end chimneys (for stoves). They are of various construction: clapboard, shingle, board-and-batten. (However, most have been covered in asphalt shingles or aluminum siding, so the original materials are not apparent.) There is minimal exterior ornament: the shutters, gable returns, and carved porch brackets on the Winfield Mitchell house represent the height of fancy; the Wakeland-Gorrell house with its projecting vestibule and colored glass windows is an anomaly. Similarly, the interior plans are functional: one or two rooms in each story of the main section, one or two rooms in the el, with a staircase tucked in between. Or, if the staircase is in the center of the main section as in larger houses, it is not given undue prominence by being set apart in a hallway (again, except for the Wakeland-Gorrell house); it is against one wall of one of the rooms. Utilitarian, functional, with few conceits-these are the underlying themes of these houses.

Other motifs are subtler-the relationships between formal and informal elements, for instance. This dichotomy is represented in various ways: the symmetrical fenestration on the front facade versus the haphazard arrangement on the rear; the ambiguous relationship between the facade and the interior arrangement, wherein the former formalizes the latter. Perhaps the best way to discuss this cluster of seemingly non-descript buildings is to group them on this basis.

All houses have a front porch--less one for sitting than one to announce the entrance. It is the way visitors are introduced to the house and is often the one element that is decorated. The porches on these houses are of different shapes-their scale and ornament in direct proportion to the size and prosperity of the house: The George Jones house (HA-1053) is absolutely straightforward: three parts built side by side with an entrance in each. The formal entrance, in the west section, has a one bay wide, gable-roofed portico-and that is the only exterior element that could be considered extraneous. The Markline house and the Mitchell Tenant house #2 both having two parts, each two bays wide and two bays deep have undecorated shed-roofed porches spanning their front facades. The Markline house represents a slightly more formal arrangement than the other two-with its additions annexed to the rear, leaving the front facade symmetrical and singularly autonomous.

The Mitchell Tenant house #1, which is wider than the Markline house by one bay and has a central entrance, correspondingly has a more ornate porch with gable returns and collared posts. Likewise, instead of the stair being tucked between the front and rear sections as in the Markline house, the stair is in the center, against the east wall of the parlor.

The Winfield Mitchell house and the Mitchell-Magness house-both four bays wide, with entrances in the two center bays-illustrate well the formal-informal dichotomy that the other houses suggest. The symmetrical facades, the porches with carved brackets, collared or turned posts, and central flights of steps represent the public gestures; and the rear elevations, haphazardly arranged, are for residents' eyes only. The two entrances-one leading into the family parlor, the other into the formal partlo-manifest the duality.

The Bechtold-Lohr and Bonnett-Mitchell houses are both five bays wide-and the latter was copied deliberately from the former. The porch of the Bechtold-Lohr house with its

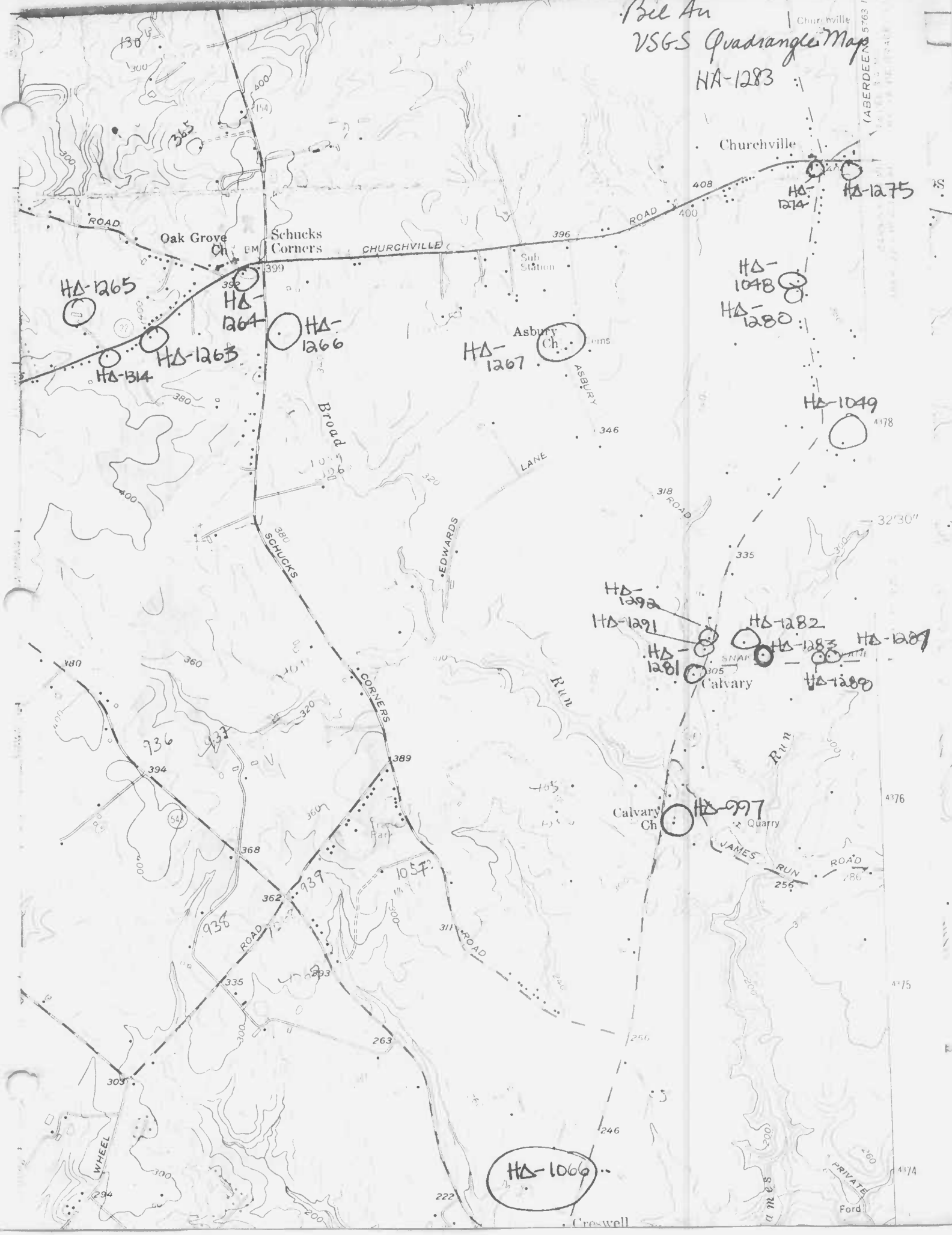
TITLE SEARCH

Markline House

HA- 1283

	422/232	October 13, 1954	Grantor:	Mary Hanson
			Grantee:	Lewis R. & Hester L. Markline
			Acreage:	2 Acres, 1 road, 2 square perches
SWC	218/214	February 21, 1931	Grantor:	James H. Broumel, Trustee
			Grantee:	Mary Hanson
			Acreage:	
			Sum:	$1000.
DGW	211/349	March 2, 1929	Grantor:	James & Lillian Magness
			Grantee:	Arthur E. Hanson (assumed mortgage)
			Acreage:	2 Acres, 1 road, 2 square perches
DGW	203/38	March 7, 1927	Grantor:	John Webster
			Grantee:	James & Lillian Magness
			Acreage:	2 Acres, 1 road, 2 square perches
			Sum:	$950
JAR	164/27	April 25, 1919	Grantor:	Austin L. & Emma J. Harvey
			Grantee:	John & Elizabeth Webster
			Acreage:	2 Acres, 1 road, 2 square perches
WSF	80/270	April 2, 1894	Grantor:	Samuel B. & Alice B. Mitchell
			Grantee:	Austin L. Harvey
			Acreage:	8-3/4 Acres, part of "Stony Ridge"
			Sum:	$450
ALJ	36/182	December 24, 1877	Grantor:	Robert & Avarilla Mitchell
			Grantee:	Samuel Mitchell
			Acreage:	
			Sum:	$420 - Part of Stony Ridge and part of Robert Mitchell's farm

Bel Air
USGS Quadrangle Map
HA-1283



Markline house HA- 1283
Aberdeen, Md. 21001
N. Shivers
January, 1979
south side, east end

Markline House HA- 1283
Aberdeen, Md. 21001
N. Shivers
January, 1979
north side, east end