

Mitchell-Magness House  
3022 Snake Lane  
Aberdeen, Maryland 21001

SUMMARY

The Mitchell Magness House is quite similar to other 4 bay wide - one room deep frame houses in the vicinity, all of which were built around the last quarter of the 19th century. This particular house is on land given by Robert Mitchell to his daughter Margaret, and it is still in the Mitchell family today.

INVENTORY FORM FOR STATE HISTORIC SITES SURVEY

**1 NAME**

HISTORIC

AND/OR COMMON

Mitchell-Magness House

**2 LOCATION**

STREET & NUMBER

3022 Snake Lane

CITY, TOWN

Aberdeen,

\_\_\_ VICINITY OF

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

STATE

Maryland 21001

COUNTY

Harford

**3 CLASSIFICATION**

**CATEGORY**

- DISTRICT
- BUILDING(S)
- STRUCTURE
- SITE
- OBJECT

**OWNERSHIP**

- PUBLIC
- PRIVATE
- BOTH
- PUBLIC ACQUISITION**
- IN PROCESS
- BEING CONSIDERED

**STATUS**

- OCCUPIED
- UNOCCUPIED
- WORK IN PROGRESS
- ACCESSIBLE**
- YES: RESTRICTED
- YES: UNRESTRICTED
- NO

**PRESENT USE**

- AGRICULTURE
- MUSEUM
- COMMERCIAL
- PARK
- EDUCATIONAL
- PRIVATE RESIDENCE
- ENTERTAINMENT
- RELIGIOUS
- GOVERNMENT
- SCIENTIFIC
- INDUSTRIAL
- TRANSPORTATION
- MILITARY
- OTHER:

**4 OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME

Edna L. Magness

Telephone #:

STREET & NUMBER

3022 Snake Lane

CITY, TOWN

Aberdeen,

\_\_\_ VICINITY OF

STATE, zip code

Maryland 21001

**5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE,  
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Harford County Courthouse

Liber #:

Folio #:

STREET & NUMBER

40 South Main Street

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

**7 DESCRIPTION**

**CONDITION**

**CHECK ONE**

**CHECK ONE**

- EXCELLENT
- GOOD
- FAIR

- DETERIORATED
- RUINS
- UNEXPOSED

- UNALTERED
- ALTERED

- ORIGINAL SITE
- MOVED DATE \_\_\_\_\_

**DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE**

This two-story shingled house with a gable roof is located on the north side of Snake Lane. Four bays wide and one room deep, it has a one-room addition on the north and a shed-roofed porch across the front-or south facade. Set on a high stone foundation, the house has 6/6 sash windows in the first story, 3/6 sash windows in the second story, and a central brick chimney.

The south facade has two entrances-in the east and second from the west bays-with windows in the alternate bays, and four windows in the second story. The porch has turned posts and a central flight of steps (although there is no central entrance). The east end has one window in the second story; the west end has one window in the first story. The north side, partially covered by the wing, has two windows in the first story and two smaller ones in the second.

The addition has a tall central brick chimney.

North of the house are ruins of a stone out-building.

**CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY**

# 8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD		AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW				
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION		
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE		
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE		
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN		
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input 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				

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SPECIFIC DATES	BUILDER/ARCHITECT
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### STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

On property given to Margaret Mitchell by her father, Robert Mitchell, the house now belongs to Margaret's daughter, Lillian Magness. It was probably built around the time of the other Mitchell family homes, i.e. the last quarter of the 19th century.

**9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES**

Interview with Mary Volz, 1979

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 S. Main St.

TELEPHONE

301-879-2000 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

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

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.

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

Also, on December 17, 1783, John Stevenson sold 243 acres of "Stony Ridge" to John Mitchell for 486 pounds.<sup>5</sup> 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.<sup>6</sup> 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.<sup>7</sup>

It is said that in 1831 Elisha Mitchell possessed the land on which the Bechtold-Lohr house and the Mitchell-Lauterbach (HA-1288) house now stand.<sup>8</sup> 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<sup>9</sup>, Samuel built the Markline house (HA-1283)<sup>10</sup> and eventually occupied his father's house; John Thomas built the Mitchell Tenant house #1,<sup>11</sup> 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.<sup>12</sup>

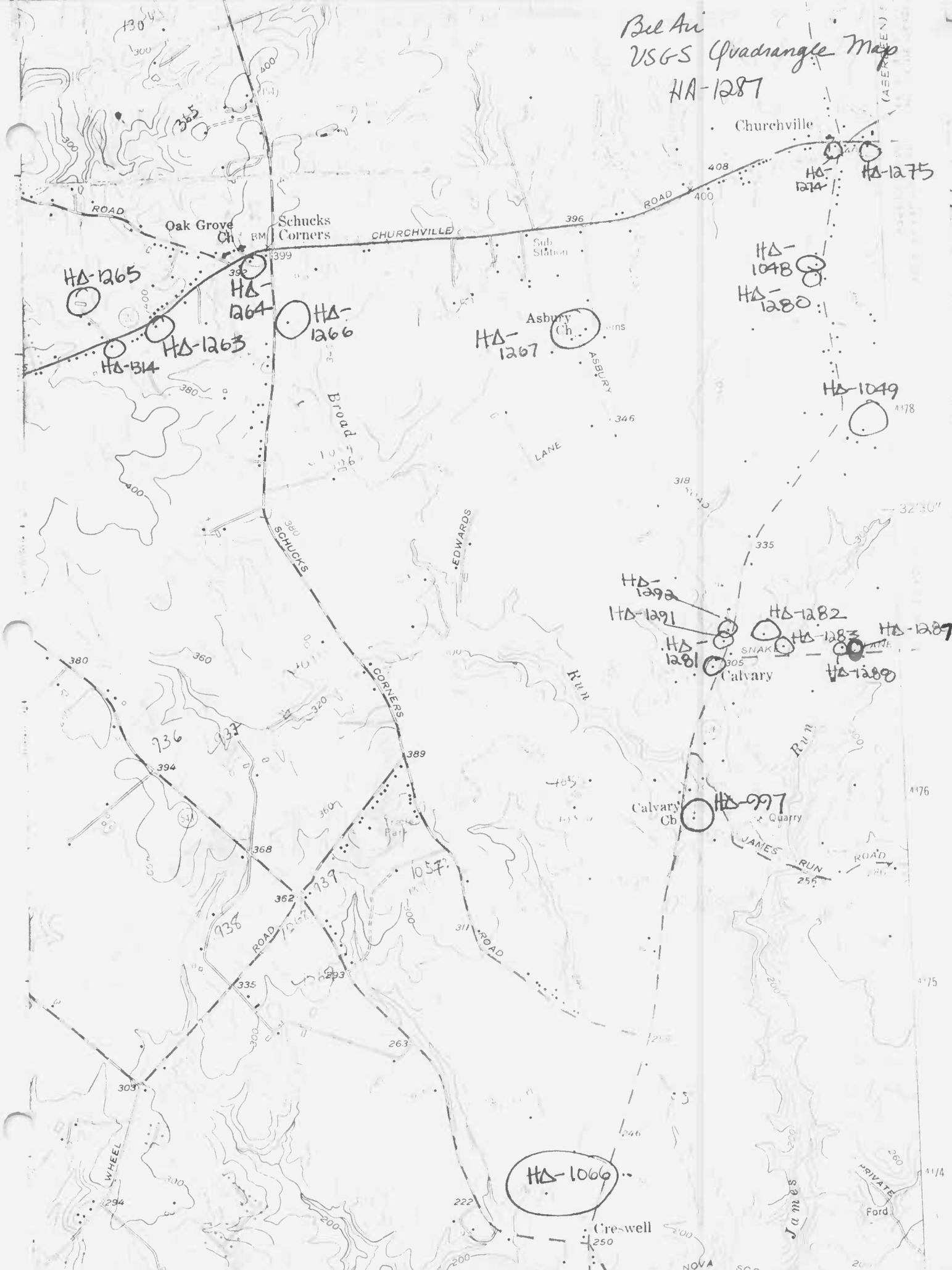
Thus, most of the Mitchell houses on Snake Lane were built during the last quarter of the 19th century by the children of Robert Mitchell.

## Footnotes

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- 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

Bel Air  
USGS Quadrangle Map  
HA-1287

(ASBURY)





Mitchell-Magness House  
Churchville, MD 21028  
Natalie Shivers  
April, 1979  
Southwest

HA- 1287



Mitchell-Magness House  
Churchville, MD 21028

HA- 1287

Natalie Shivers

April, 1979

Northeast