

Dr. Benjamin Smith House
309 S. Main
Bel Air
Private

This house is an excellent example of the front gable Victorian. It has unusual porch posts, chamfered on paneled blocks with another paneled block at the top. It also has a good two story porch on the south side behind the two story bay window. The interior woodwork in the main block is unusually ornate: entablatures over the door and window surrounds. The dining room woodwork is plain.

The house is now used for offices. The interior, however, has been very little altered.

INVENTORY FORM FOR STATE HISTORIC SITES SURVEY

1 NAME

HISTORIC
Dr. Benjamin Smith House
AND/OR COMMON
Rice Insurance Agency

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER
309 S. Main 1st
CITY, TOWN CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT
Bel Air VICINITY OF
STATE COUNTY
Maryland Harford

3 CLASSIFICATION

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

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME
Roger Rice Telephone #: 838-8600
STREET & NUMBER
309 S. Main Street
CITY, TOWN STATE, zip code
Bel Air VICINITY OF Maryland 21014

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.
Harford County Courthouse
STREET & NUMBER
Main Street
CITY, TOWN STATE
Bel Air, Maryland

Liber #: 694
Folio #: 559

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
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED DATE _____
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

 DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

This two and a half story three bay house with a front gable is at 309 S. Main Street in the Town of Bel Air, Harford County, Maryland. Like many contemporary houses in Bel Air, it is L-shaped with a fairly steeply pitched slate roof. It has a side hall plan with the public rooms (in this case double parlors) in the front block. The dining room and former kitchen are in the ell to the east. An enclosed porch room is in the single story shed roofed addition to the rear (east). The window in the front gable is a round-headed, 2/2 double-hung sash. Double 2/2 windows light the side (north and south) gables. The side windows of the whole building (except those in the two story hexagonal bay on the south elevation) are 6/6, including those in the single story shed roofed rectangular bay on the north elevation in the first bay of the back building. The windows in the hexagonal bay are 1/1 and may be replacements. The windows in the front (west) elevation are 2/2 upstairs, and long 2/4 downstairs. The entrance is a glass and aluminum replacement. There are wooden louvered shutters on the front.

There are two porches. The front (west) porch is hip-roofed and carried on unusual posts -- the middle portion chamfered and resting on a panelled block. The top third over the top of the chamfered portion is square. There is no balustrade. There is also a two story shed-roofed side porch on the south elevation. It shades the west two bays of the back building, the westernmost bay holding a door. The porch has chamfered posts with scroll brackets up and down. There is no balustrade down and a plain square balustered one up.

The kitchen shed (now part of an antique store) has an entrance in the south elevation.

The interior houses offices today but it is little changed except for the front of the two parlors. An open string dog-leg staircase rises in the north wall. It has the usual turned balusters and fat Victorian turned newel one sees all over Town. This house has unusually complex woodwork for Bel Air. An entablature tops the inside of the front door, the door to the back parlor inside and out, and the hall side of the dining room door. The windows in the double parlors have similar entablatures. The hall door to the front parlor has been altered. Evidence in the wall and baseboard suggests a wide square arched entrance. It now has a modern door and plain woodwork.

The mantel in the front parlor has been removed and a door north of the chimney breast has been plastered over. The mantel in the back parlor is of slate, with the usual Victorian round-arched opening and spandrels, but they are not carved- just shallowly incised.

The woodwork inside the dining room is plain. The mantel against the east wall is plain but elegant, a plain wooden surround on molded blocks. The plain shelf is supported on thick cut-out brackets.

Upstairs the woodwork is entirely plain. There are four (bed) rooms and a bath.

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 checked="" 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 1884 BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

This long, narrow house, typical of houses built in Bel Air in the 1880's, was built on a portion of what had been the First Presbyterian Church Parsonage lot next door to the north (the Van Bibber House was the parsonage). The church trustees sold this lot to William B. Browne in 1870 (24/442) for \$700. Browne leased the lot to Dr. Benjamin Smith in 1881 for \$45 a year with a purchase price of \$750 (43/63). The Brownes were living in Columbia, Pennsylvania at the time.

Dr. Smith built the house in 1884. The Harford Democrat says it was finished in October; they bought the lot in November (53/57) and lived there until 1909 when they sold the property to Octavia Sawyer for \$3250 (137/314). In 1920 the house was assessed at \$2700 and the lot at \$480.

In 1921, Octavia Sawyer being dead, the property was sold to J. Woodley Richardson for \$7200 (173/146). The house was next door to the Richardson residence. Relatives of the Richardsons lived there. Mr. Richardson died in 1941 and both properties were transferred in a pair of straw transactions so that Mrs. Isobel Richardson and Matilda Price owned them (269/316,317. Isobel Richardson died first; Matilda Price died in 1960 and left the property to Frank Hays Fulford who had roomed there for several years (will 24/473). Fulford, the son of Frank Fulford, nephew of Alex Fulford, grandson of Alexander and Frances Fulford and great-grandson of merchant Thomas Hays, sold the property to Roger Rice in 1965 (694/559). Mr. Fulford lives in Baltimore City.

Mr. Rice made some minor changes in the building and occupies most of the ground floor as his offices. Two rooms in back house an antique shop. An accounting firm and a clothing alterations business occupy the second floor.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Harford Democrat
1920 Bel Air Tax Records

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY _____

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

This property occupies parcel #1380 in the Town of Bel Air, 47.79' x 180.04'

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

STATE COUNTY

STATE COUNTY

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Marilynn M. Larew, Architectural Historian

11 September 1979

ORGANIZATION

Town of Bel Air

DATE

838-8700

STREET & NUMBER

39 Hickory Avenue

TELEPHONE

CITY OR TOWN

Bel Air

STATE

Maryland

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

MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST 21 STATE CIRCLE SHAW HOUSE ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401	SURVEY NUMBER: HA-1457
HISTORIC SITES SURVEY FIELD SHEET Individual Structure Survey Form	NEGATIVE FILE NUMBER:
	UTM REFERENCES: Zone/Easting/Northing
	U.S.G.S. QUAD. MAP:
	PRESENT FORMAL NAME: Rice Insurance Company
COUNTY: Harford	ORIGINAL FORMAL NAME: Dr. Benjamin Smith House
TOWN: Bel Air	PRESENT USE: offices
LOCATION: 309 S. Main	ORIGINAL USE: private residence
COMMON NAME: Rice's Insurance Co.	ARCHITECT/ENGINEER:
FUNCTIONAL TYPE: private residence	BUILDER/CONTRACTOR:
OWNER: Roger Rice	PHYSICAL CONDITION OF STRUCTURE: Excellent() Good(x) Fair() Poor()
ADDRESS: 309 S. Main Bel Air, Md.	THEME: Architecture
ACCESSIBILITY TO PUBLIC: Yes(x) No() Restricted()	STYLE: Vernacular
LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE: Local(x) State() National()	DATE BUILT: 1884
GENERAL DESCRIPTION:	
Structural System	
1. Foundation: Stone(x)Brick()Concrete()Concrete Block()	
2. Wall Structure	
A. Wood Frame: Post and Beam()Balloon()	
B. Wood Bearing Masonry: Brick()Stone()Concrete()Concrete Block()	
C. Iron() D. Steel() E. Other:	
3. Wall Covering: Clapboard()Board and Batten()Wood Shingle()Shiplap(x) Novelty()Stucco()Sheet Metal()Aluminum()Asphalt Shingle() Brick Veneer()Stone Veneer() Bonding Pattern: Other:	
4. Roof Structure	
A. Truss: Wood()Iron()Steel()Concrete()	
B. Other:	
5. Roof Covering: Slate(x)Wood Shingle()Asphalt Shingle()Sheet Metal() Built Up()Rolled()Tile()Other:	
6. Engineering Structure:	
7. Other: plain	
Appendages: Porches(x)Towers()Cupolas()Dormers()Chimneys(x)Sheds(x)Ells(x) Wings() Other: 2 story bay window	
Roof Style: Gable(x)Hip()Shed()Flat()Mansard()Gambrel()Jerkinhead() Saw Tooth()With Monitor()With Bellcast()With Parapet()With False Front() Other:	
Number of Stories: <u>2½</u>	
Number of Bays: <u>3</u>	
Approximate Dimensions: <u>25' x 75'</u>	
Entrance Location: <u>S. Main</u>	
THREAT TO STRUCTURE: No Threat()Zoning()Roads() Development(x)Deterioration() Alteration()Other:	LOCAL ATTITUDES: Positive()Negative() Mixed() Other:

ADDITIONAL ARCHITECTURAL OR STRUCTURAL DESCRIPTION:

Windows in ell & shed 6/6, 1/1 in hex bay(s), 6/6 sides, 2/2 & 2/4 front front porch hip roof on decorative brackets, posts panel under chamfer 2 story side porch (s) shed roof chamfered posts, scroll brackets up & down, plain balustrade 2nd floor shutters front
 1 story shed roof bay, N. side, windows 1/1
 entrance: rectangular glass & aluminum replace,emt
 interior: victorian turned newel, turned balusters, open string dog leg stair double parlors: w room fireplace removed
 next room, hall door surround = entablature & over interior windows, both bay & other, fireplace slate, Victorian - decorations just incised dining room: mantel wooden, sq. colonettes, shelf on carved brackets, plain woodwork
 door to front parlor probably much larger: now plain woodwork

RELATED STRUCTURES XXX (DESCRIBE) X

entablature on inside of entry
 woodwork upstairs plain - 4 rooms & bath

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE:

Dr. Benjamin Smith (Harford Democrat)

REFERENCES:

MAP: (Indicate North in Circle)



Fulford

J. Main

SURROUNDING ENVIRONMENT:

Open Lane()Woodland()Scattered Buildings()
 Moderately Built Up()Densely Built Up()
 Residential(x)Commercial(x)
 Agricultural()Industrial()
 Roadside Strip Development()
 Other:

Marilynn M. Larew

RECORDED BY:

Town of Bel Air

ORGANIZATION:

7 September 1979

DATE RECORDED:

TITLE: 309 S. Main Street

- 694/559 23 November 1965
Frank Hays Fulford
 to
Roger R. Rice and Joanne, wife
Isobel Emory Richardson predeceased Matilda
Price; Matilda Price died March 3, 1960, and
left the property to Frank Hays Fulford
(will 24/473).
- 269/317 21 November 1941
Frank H. Jacobs, Jr.
 to
Isobel Emory Richardson & Matilda Price
straw transaction
- 269/316 21 November 1941
Isobel Emory Richardson, widow
 to
Frank H. Jacobs, Jr.
two parcels - this one is #2
J. Woodley Richardson now dead
- 173/146 23 April 1921
Noble L. Mitchel, trustee
 to
J. Woodley Richardson and Isobel
\$7200
The property of A. Octavia Sawyer, deceased
- 127/314 28 October 1909
Benjamin Smith & Lucy, wife
 to
A. Octavia G. Sawyer
\$3250
- 53/57 14 November 1884
William B. Browne & Sarah, wife
 to
Benjamin Smith
\$750
"on which Smith now resides
the reversion of the lease

43/63

lease

23 April 1881

William B. Browne and Sarah, wife, of Columbia
Lancaster County, Pennsylvania

to

Benjamin Smith

\$45 p.a.; purchase price \$750

24/442

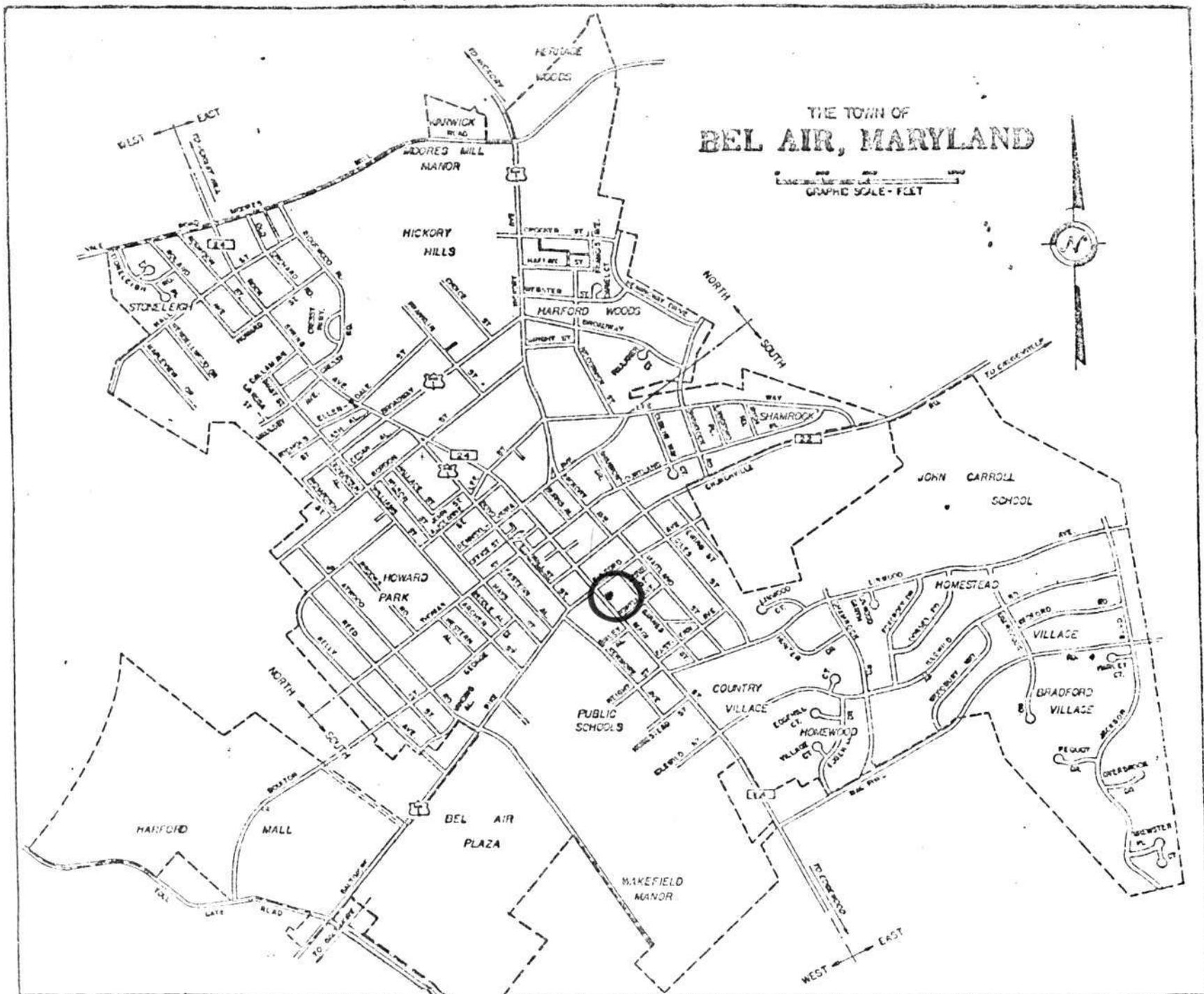
1 November 1870

Trustees of the First Presbyterian Church

to

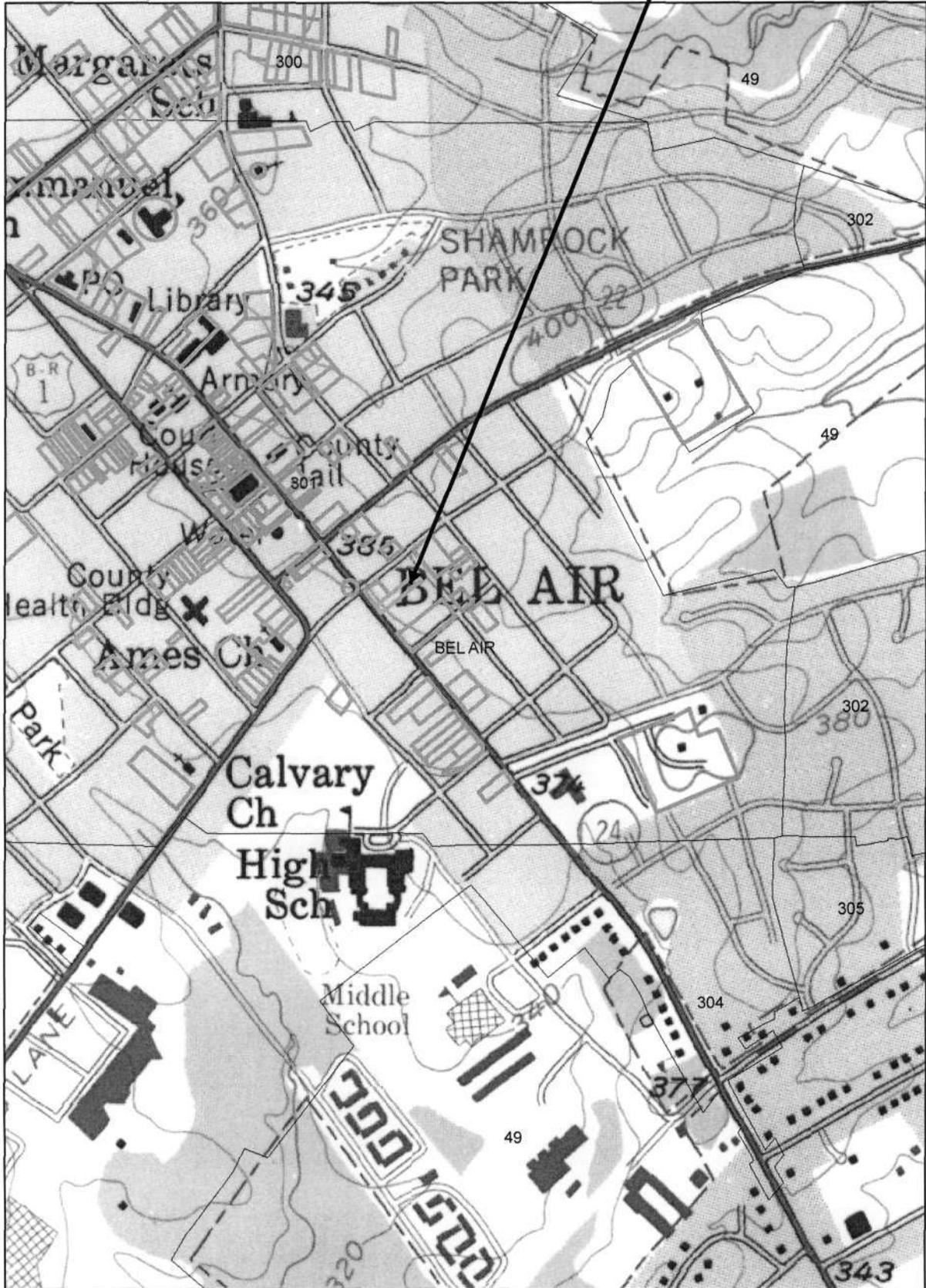
William B. Browne

\$700



HA- 1457 Rice Insurance - Dr. Benjamin Smith House
309 S. Main

HA-1457
Dr. Benjamin Smith House
S. Main Street
Bel Air
Bel Air Quad
Harford County





HA- 1457 Dr. Benjamin Smith House, 309 S. Main
Bel Air
w + s elev
Mr. Larew, 1979



U.A. - 1457

Dr. Benjamin Smith House, 309 S. Main
Bel Air

see also

M. Larew, 1979



HA-1457 Dr. Benjamin Smith House, 309 S. Main
Bel Air
n. elev.
Dr. Larew, 1979



NA-1457

Mr. Benjamin Smith House
Bel air

d. n. mantle, looking east.

M. Laruo, 1979