

Summary

HA - 1602

Alexander Demby House  
Dembytown Road

The Alexander Demby house was built by members of the Demby family, who were displaced when the Federal Government took over their homeland on the Gunpowder Neck, south of Magnolia ( today Edgewood - APG ). It is a plain but well constructed and spacious residence that has as its most notable feature, heavy log joists supporting the first story floor. It is abandoned, and will probably be demolished in the near future.

INVENTORY FORM FOR STATE HISTORIC SITES SURVEY

**1 NAME**

HISTORIC

AND/OR COMMON

Alexander Demby House

**2 LOCATION**

STREET & NUMBER

407 Dembytown Road

CITY, TOWN

Dembytown

VICINITY OF

Magnolia

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

STATE

Maryland

COUNTY

Harford

**3 CLASSIFICATION**

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

**4 OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME

Alexander and Blanche Demby

Telephone #:

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

Joppa

VICINITY OF

Maryland STATE zip code

21085

**5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE  
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC

Harford County Courthouse

Liber #: GRG 364

Folio #: 151

STREET & NUMBER

40 South Main Street

CITY, TOWN

Bel Air

Maryland STATE

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE

DATE

FEDERAL  STATE  COUNTY  LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE

# 7 DESCRIPTION

HA-1602

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

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

The Alexander Demby House is located on a dirt lane running east from Dembytown Road, about 1/10 north of the intersection with Trimble Road. When visited in November 1980, the house was uninhabited and used for storage. The house sits to the rear (east) of a lot containing a mobile home.

This two story frame gable roof dwelling measures 22'2" wide by 27'2" deep, and faces west, with the roof ridge running north-south. The house has an L-plan with three rooms up and three down. A one story shed roof porch (8' deep) is attached at the west elevation, and is supported by plain wooden posts. The roof and the porch have asphalt shingle roof coverings. The exterior is covered with asbestos shingles but underneath this, vertical planks butted at their seams were observed. All windows are 2/2 pane double hung sashes. Exterior trim is plain 4" boards around windows and doors, and at the rakeboards. There is a slight projection of the roof at the eaves, accomplished by extending the roof sheathing about 10". The house is raised approximately 18" above grade and rests on concrete block piers. Examination of the open crawl space revealed log joists, which are finished on one side only. There is a brick chimney with a simple corbelled cap rising from the ridge in the north bay of the west elevation. At the east elevation (rear of the ell) is another interior flue of concrete block.

The house is three bays wide at the west elevation (front) with window-door-window arrangement. At the north side (two bays) there is a double window and a single window to light the two parlors. The south elevation is blind, as are both gable ends.

The interior is divided by a partition running east-west. There are two rooms to the north, well lit by windows, and each with a stove flue. The south room contains an enclosed stairway to the second floor, attached to the south wall. The wall enclosing the stairway is of 5" tongue and groove panelling in imitation of 2 1/2" V-grooved boards. First floor door and window trim is plain, and the walls were papered.

The second floor duplicates the first floor plan, except that only the east room of the north side has a flue opening. Walls are of 9" wide vertical planks, rabbeted at their edges. Floors throughout are 5" tongue and groove type.

There is no access to the attic. However, circular sawn rafters were observed. Aside from a small one story shed addition at the southwest corner, which shelters a porch, there is no evidence of any significant changes to this house.

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

# 8 SIGNIFICANCE

<b>PERIOD</b>	<b>AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW</b>			
<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 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

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

**STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE**

The Alexander Demby house is one of the original structures in the early 20th century Black community of Dembytown. Such a building can teach us a great deal about the Black experience in Harford County, an aspect of local history too often overlooked. Architecturally, it is a plain but well constructed residence that utilizes modern sawn materials, but relies on large log joists to support the first story floor. The house may be demolished in the summer of 1961, according to the present owners.

History

In 1917, the Federal Government took over most of Harford County's coastal area for use as a military reservation. This annexation included the Gunpowder Neck, south of Magnolia, the area today known as the Edgewood Arsenal - APG. Some of the Black families displaced by the takeover, including the Dembys, purchased small parcels of land from Joshua Hammond, and settled in the area now referred to as Dembytown. The Dembys, Charles and his brother William, purchased land to the south, near Trimble Road, while the Gilberts purchased land to the north. Although land records indicate that this house stands on ground purchased by Charles and Jennie Demby in 1917, the older residents of Dembytown all refer to it as the "Alex Demby House". Without additional oral interviews with these older people, it is not possible to gather the necessary information to reconstruct the earlier days of this community. Little written material exists concerning the Black experience in Harford County.

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

**9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES**

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 Phillip Lord Historic Sites Surveyor

ORGANIZATION Harford County Planning and Zoning Dept. DATE April 1961

STREET & NUMBER 45 South Main Street TELEPHONE 301-879-2000 ext. 207

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

Title Search

HA-1602  
Alexander Demby House

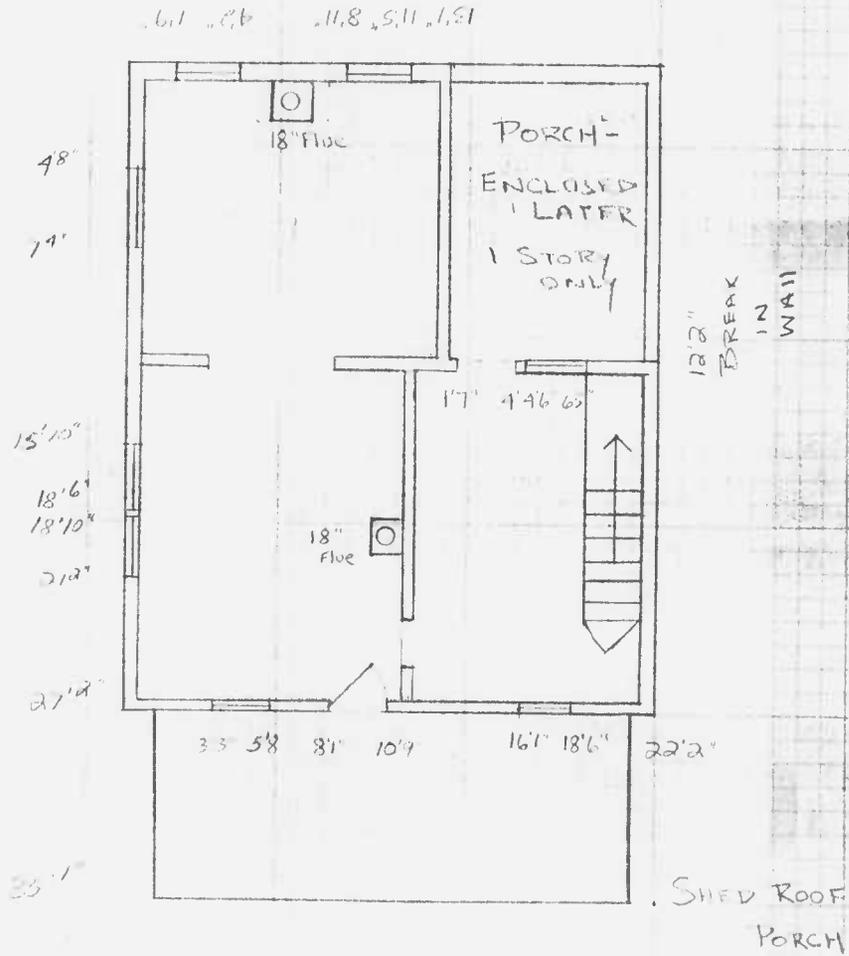
Tax Map 69 - Parcel 5

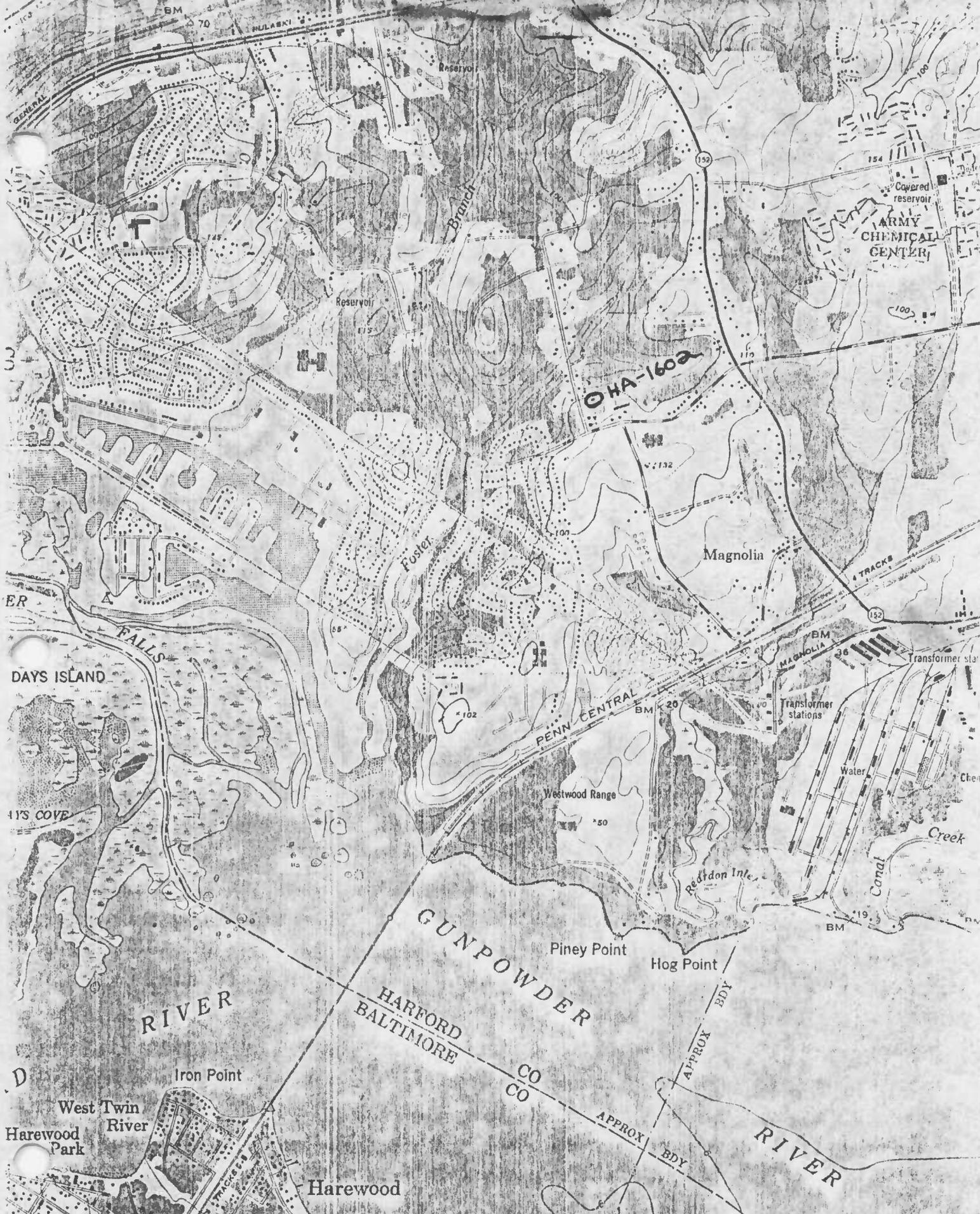
GRG 364/151	September 5, 1951	Grantor: Jennie B. Demby, widow Grantee: Alexander and Blanche Demby Acreage: 4.6 acres
JAR 155/462	August 9, 1917	Grantor: Joshua and wife, Augusta Hammond Grantee: Charles and Jennie Demby Acreage: 10-1/100 acres
JAR 147/308	April 29, 1915	Grantor: Charles H. Carter, Trustee Grantee: Joshua Hammond Public sale of 327 1/2 acres for \$2,500.00 as a result of equity case decision.

BY LORD DATE 11/80  
CHKD. BY \_\_\_\_\_ DATE \_\_\_\_\_  
MA-1602

SUBJECT \_\_\_\_\_  
ALECK DEMBY HOUSE  
DEMBYTOWN ROAD  
MAGNOLIA AREA

SHEET NO. \_\_\_\_\_ OF \_\_\_\_\_  
JOB NO. \_\_\_\_\_  
1ST FLOOR PLAN





OHA-1602

ARMY CHEMICAL CENTER

Magnolia

DAYS ISLAND

PENN CENTRAL

HARFORD BALTIMORE

GUNPOWDER RIVER

RIVER

Harewood Park

Harewood

EDGEWOOD QUAD.

(GUNPOWDER) 5762 1/2  
SCALE

82 980 000 FEET 383 CHASE 1 MI. MIDDLE RIVER 5.7 MI 384

Army Map Service  
from USC&GS surveys

MN



HA-1602

A. Demby House

Dembytown, Md.

Phillip R. Lord 11/80

Northwest



HA-1602

A. Demby House  
Dembytown, Md.

Phillip R. Lord 11/80  
Southeast