

**United States Department of the Interior  
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For HCRS use only

received

date entered

20

See instructions in How to Complete National Register Forms  
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

**1. Name**

historic Cannonball House

and/or common

**2. Location**

street & number 200 Mulberry Street

not for publication

city, town St. Michaels

vicinity of

congressional district

First

state Maryland

code 24

county Talbot

code 041

**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) structure	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> site	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> religious
	<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 Mr. and Mrs. Ralph Simmons (Anne)

street & number 200 Mulberry Street

city, town St. Michaels

vicinity of

state Maryland 21601

**5. Location of Legal Description**

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Talbot County Courthouse

street & number Washington Street

city, town Easton

state Maryland

**6. Representation in Existing Surveys**

Md. Hist. Trust Historic Sites Inventory

has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no

date 1977

federal  state  county  local

depository for survey records Maryland Historical Trust

city, town Annapolis

state Maryland 21401

# 7. Description

T-61

Condition		Check one	Check one	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site	
<input 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

Cannonball House is located at 200 Mulberry Street at the intersection of St. Mary's Square (southeast corner) near the center of Saint Michaels in Talbot County. The building stands relatively near the sidewalks.

The house is an early nineteenth century, 2½-story brick structure with a dormered gable roof (east/west axis), three bay facade (north elevation) and later wings and porches attached to the east and south sides. The brick is laid with extremely thin mortar joints in Flemish bond on the street elevations (north and west) and common bond on the south (fine courses of stretchers to one course of headers) and east (random courses of stretchers between each course of headers) walls. The regular color of the bricks is obscured by a whitish cast overlay. The principal windows of the main block have double-hung wooden sashes with nine-over-six lights, beaded surrounds, splayed brick flat arches, wooden sills, and louvered wooden shutters with plain iron holders.

The facade or north elevation of the main block has three bays with the entrance located in the west bay, a two light window with three wooden ventilator bays centered in the foundation below the first floor windows, and a wooden boxed cornice resting on a plain fascia with complex bed molding and topped by a series of crown moldings with a middle cyma.

The entrance is reached by a modern brick steps and porch and a modern surround with Ionic pilasters on podiums supporting pedimented entablature. The door, transom, soffit, and reveals are original. The door has six panels with the smallest panels in the middle just above the lock rail. The transom is rectangular and has three lights with diamond or lozenge shaped tracery above a transom bar decorated by a row of small indentations. The soffit and reveals are distinguished by recessed panels with equal sized panels in the soffit and four of varying sizes in each reveal.

Two gable-roofed, pedimented window dormers project from the roof on the facade (north) elevation. The dormers have three-quarter, semi-detached fluted Doric columns supporting a full entablature. The pediment is broken and characterized by a boxed cornice with cyma crown molds. The windows have round arched with double-hung wooden sashes with nine-over-six lights and are articulated by beaded surrounds. The sides of the dormers appear to have modern siding.

The elevation along St. Mary's Square (west) is also three bays wide with two windows in the gable and two in the foundation. The gable windows have six-over-six light double-hung wooden sashes with splayed brick flat arches and wooden sills. The arch windows are not as high as those of the lower levels. The foundation windows have a single light protected by three wooden ventilator bars each. The returns from the north and south elevation cornices are moderate and the rakeboard continues the facade moldings.

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# NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

Cannonball House  
Talbot County

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(DESCRIPTION, continued)

The rear or south elevation is three bays wide with two gable-roofed dormers projecting from the roof and a shed-roofed enclosed frame porch stretching across the first story. The dormers are pedimented with nine-over-six double-hung round arch windows with beaded surrounds but without columns supporting the entablature. Modern siding sheaths the sides of the dormers. The second story has nine-over-six double-hung windows detailed similar to those on the front elevation. The enclosed porch has flush wood siding with a modern door and windows. The section of the wall covered by the porch contains a nine-over six window lighting the south parlor and flanked by six-panel doors (original) opening into the parlor and hall.

The east elevation of the house (the side least visible from a street) has random course brick bonding with four, six and eight courses of stretchers between the header courses. On the first floor, a nine-over-six window punctuates the second floor with a six-over-six window with a one course splayed flat arch lintel wedged in the apex of the gable.

A shed roofed brick wing, two stories high along Mulberry Street and one story on the back, projects from the south portion of the east elevation of the main block. This wing, though not connected to the main block by a door or window, is believed to be fairly contemporary with the main block. The wing has a one story mid-twentieth century frame addition on the north side which opens into the main block via a doorway which originally was a window corresponding to the above on the second floor.

The rear facade of the kitchen wing is executed in five course common bond with a semi-whitewashed coating. The modern sash which exist in the two window openings of this facade is two 2x3 light casements to the west with wooden sills and to the east, a pair of six over six light double hung windows with wooden sills. Two modern shed-roofed dormers exist where the kitchen abuts the main house and on the opposite gable end abutting the chimney. The cornice on this wing is characterized by a beaded fascia and a cyma crown molding. The east gable end of the kitchen wing, also laid in five course common bond, features a flush chimney with arched cap and approximately 8" cornice returns on the southeast corner. The rakeboard consists of two fascias with the lower one recessed and beaded.

SEE CONTINUATION SHEET #2.

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(DESCRIPTION, continued)

The Mulberry Street facade of the kitchen wing, laid in the five course common bond, contains in its enclosed first story a door flanked by two six-over-six double hung windows with beaded fascia surrounds. All three openings are topped with splayed jack arch lintels. Three six-over-six double hung windows symmetrically placed above the first story fenestration with double fascia surrounds and single-course splayed jack arch lintels light the loft of the kitchen wing.

The interior of Cannonball house is characterized by a hall/double parlor plan. The six-panel Mulberry Street facade door, which retains its brass box lock, opens into a hall lit on its west side by the three windows, one of which is crossed by the stairs. The architrave surrounds of the windows and two exterior doors at either end of the hall and two doors to the parlors all consist of the same moldings (fascia quarterbead recessed fascia, cyma, recessed fascia and innerbead bounding the jambs). A chairrail distinguished by a carved herringbone pattern in the frieze bounded on the top by a cyma and projecting fascia and on the bottom by a bead runs continuously in this hall except where a modern closet has been inserted to the west of the front doorway. A beaded baseboard also runs continuously around the hall. A triumphal arch which frames the stair consists of two strip pilasters decorated with incised flutes and bisected by the chairrail which breaks forward to accommodate the pilasters application to the wall. Plain molded capitals support an elliptical arch with plain paneled soffit and architrave surrounds with keystones. The open string stair is elaborated with a tapered newel and carved brackets under the treads which are in turn bounded by architrave moldings topped by a scotia and concluding in a quarter round bead. Underneath the stair is a four-panel door leading to the basement stair with a simpler surround (large quarter bead, recessed fascia and inner bead). Original six panel doors are found at the entrances to the front and rear parlors.

The rear parlor contains on its south wall a 9.6 double hung window beaded around its opening, flanked to the east by a six-panel door, both with the same surround as the hallway openings. This exterior door is characterized in addition by paneled reveals (2 recessed panels in soffit and three on each side reveal). The original window to the left of the fireplace was recently converted into a door to the modern addition. The mantel surround repeats the same architrave moldings as the door and window openings atop which is a plain frieze articulated by a center block, and a corner block supporting a complex series of moldings beneath the mantel shelf.

SEE CONTINUATION SHEET #3.

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(DESCRIPTION, continued)

Built-in cabinets exist to the right of the fireplace with double doors (each containing three recessed panels) above chairrail level and double doors below. The chairrail resembles that of the hallway except that the middle fascia is plain instead of herringboned. The baseboard, somewhat thicker than elsewhere on the first floor, is the same as in the hallway.

A six-panel door separates the rear parlor from the front parlor with approximately 8" thick reveals paneled in the same fashion as the south exterior doorways. The plain side of the six-panel door faces the back parlor; the raised side faces the front parlor. The herringbone chairrail which characterizes the room is the same as in the hallway. The mantel piece in this room, though period, is not original to the house and was installed a few years ago.

The hallway on the second floor features a repeat of the triumphal arch with keystone used downstairs only this second story version possesses a plain, unelaborated soffit and unfluted flanking pilasters. A simple Roman ovolo molding characterizes the architecture of the triumphal arch. The second floor plan replicates that of the first floor with two bed chambers in positions corresponding to the parlors. The door surrounds in the hallway are identical to those used to frame the first floor doorways.

The second floor rooms have simple architrave trim with beaded chairrail encircling the rooms except for the partition wall separating the rooms. The north room has a mantel with a plain frieze and central and corner blocks with a set of crown moldings similar to those found on the mantel in the first floor rear parlor. The south bedroom is distinguished by a mantel with reeded corner blocks and central panel against a plain frieze.

On the third or attic story are two chambers created by the subsequent installation of a partition wall and accessible via later 19th century four panel doors.

Although a few changes have been made to Cannonball House and small additions attached to the south and east side, the basic structure retains most of its original features and is in south condition.

# 8. Significance

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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/		
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater		
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation		
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other (specify)		

LOCAL HISTORY

Specific dates early 19th cent. Builder/Architect

## Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

### SIGNIFICANCE

*al*

The significance of Cannonball House is derived from two sources. First, as a fully articulated Federal style house, the building is an example of the type of domestic architecture that was erected in the urban center of the Eastern Shore in the early decades of the 19th century. Among the important design features of these houses that are found in Cannonball House are the side-hall-double-parlor arrangement of rooms in the principle section, the interplay of shapes and patterns in both form (here the round arch in a rectangular hallway) and decoration (the use of ovals and rectangles in the decoration of the arch, the herringbone patterned chairrail, and the plain and decorated blocks in the mantelpieces), and a sophistication in execution indicating an awareness on the part of the craftsman and the people for whom these houses were erected of what was currently fashionable in the major style centers. Second, Cannonball House achieves significance in local history as having been erected as the residence of William Merchant, a successful shipbuilder, and its association with the 1813 attack on Saint Michael's by British forces.

### HISTORY AND SUPPORT

Cannonball House was erected sometime between 1805 and 1813. Merchant purchased Lot #16 on the early plat of Saint Michael's for \$550, in 1799. Lot #16 is located along Mulberry Street and records indicate that Merchant had a small frame house erected on it. In 1805 he acquired Lot #17 which also fronts on Mulberry Street and is bounded on the west by the north gates of Saint Mary's Square. Both the stylistic and construction features, county records, and historical factors indicate that the house was erected in the years following acquisition of Lot #17.

Cannonball House acquired its name during the British siege of St. Michael's in 1813 when a contingent of British ships threatened to destroy the thriving commercial port. Local tradition indicates that the citizens of Saint Michael's hung lights in the treetops and blacked out the buildings to confuse the British who overshot their mark. A lone cannonball, however, grazed the chimney stack of Cannonball House, ricocheted, and entered the house through the southwest dormer window, leaving burn marks on the stair as evidence of its errant path.

Although little is known about Merchant, land records indicate that he owned waterfront acreage at the foot of Mulberry Street and was involved in the shipbuilding trade. In the first quarter of the 19th century Saint Michaels was a thriving port and shipbuilding center on the Eastern Shore. The construction of Cannonball House is one indication of Merchant's success.

SEE CONTINUATION SHEET #4,

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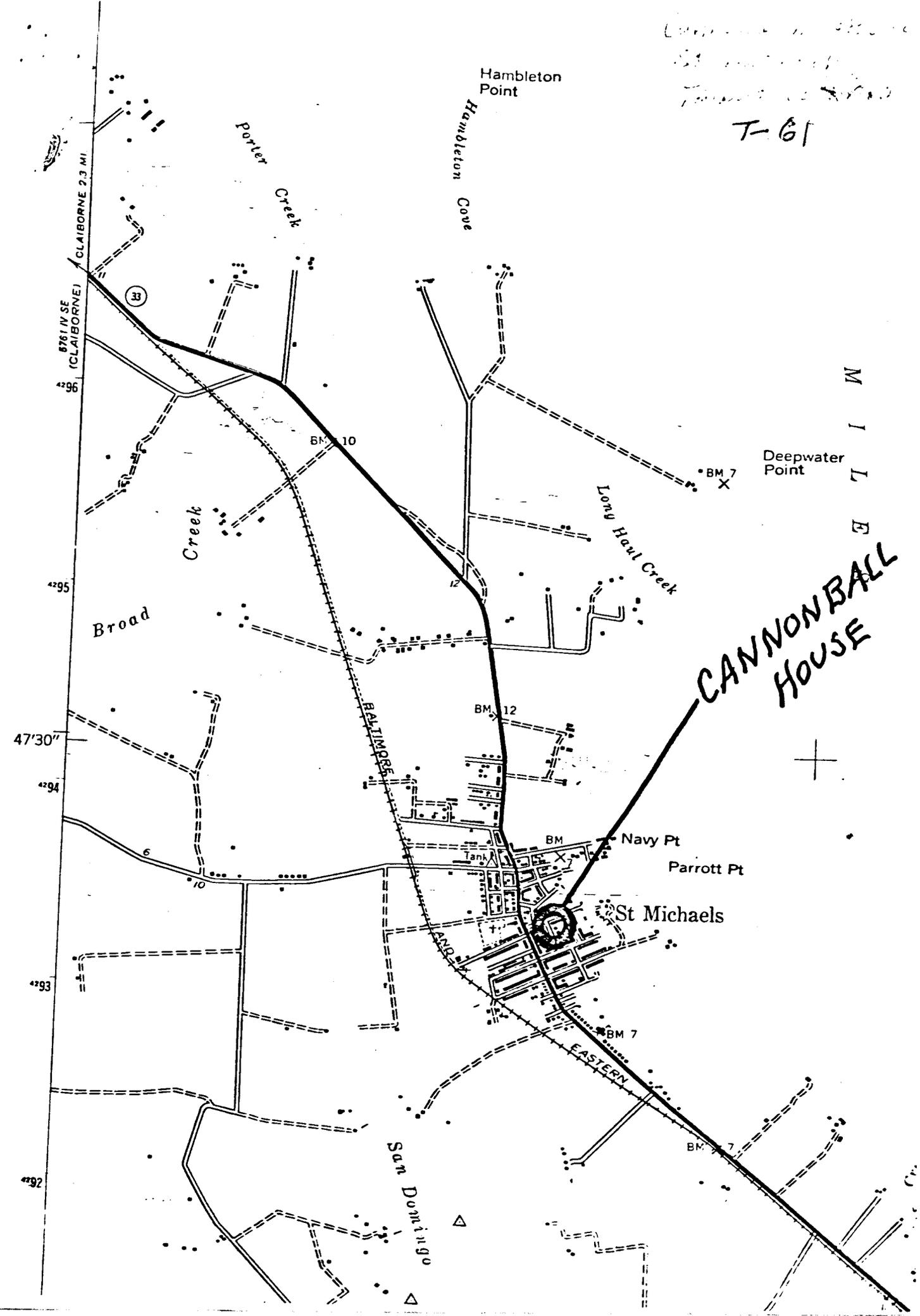
(SIGNIFICANCE, continued)

In 1820 Merchant's widow conveyed the property to John Dorgin, trustee of Merchant's will, who sold all of Merchant's holdings to cover debts and provide support for his two daughters. Dorgin conveyed Cannonball House to Samule Tennant in 1831 for \$1000.00. Tennant's daughter, Mary, inherited the house and sold it to James Seth in 1852 for \$1650.00. Seth, in turn, sold the property to the stewards of the Old Talbot Circuit of the Methodist Episcopal Church for \$1500.00 in 1857, at which time Cannonball House served as church school and related facilities in conjunction with Sardis Chapel of St. Mary's Square.

The trustees of the Methodist Episcopal Church/Sardis Chapel relinquished the property to James Benson in 1882 who resold it immediately to Louisa Dawson whose heirs lived in the house until 1916. A dispute ensued at that time among the surviving heirs concerning ownership and the result of the equity court case dictated sale to another party, Archer Thomas. Thomas sold the property to H. Morton Merriman who retained it until 1937. Sadie Swanhaus and Raymond Jump owned the property until 1943 when it was purchased by Orem Gardner and his wife. In 1971 the Gardners conveyed Cannonball House and lot to Captain and Mrs. William G. Ludlow who replaced the front parlor fireplace mantel with another early 19th century mantel of similar design, among other restoration measures. The present owners acquired the property in recent years.



CLAIRBORNE 2.3 MI  
8761 N SF (CLAIBORNE)  
T-61



16

6.16

89%

17



18

14 x 2.05

75%

64

CANNONBALL HOUSE  
St. Michael's, MD  
Ellen Coxe  
February 1980

Maryland Historical Trust, Annapolis, MD  
Northwest elevation.

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(5)

993



CANNONBALL HOUSE

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St. Michael's, MD

Ellen Coxe

February 1980

Maryland Historical Trust, Annapolis, MD

South (rear) facade.



CANNONBALL HOUSE

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St. Michael's, MD

Ellen Coxe

February 1980

Maryland Historical Trust, Annapolis, MD

Kitchen wing, northeast elevation.



CANNONBALL HOUSE

T-61

St. Michael's, MD

Ellen Coxe

February 1980

Maryland Historical Trust, Annapolis, MD

Interior: first floor stairhall.