

Site M:26/10/14

Robb/Higgins/Ward House

101 North Adams Street

Built: c. 1797, 1860's, additions c. 1930 Private/Restricted Access

One of the two existing 18th century structures in Rockville, this house combines 18th, 19th & 20th century vernacular styles and building methods. It includes an 18th century kitchen building covered with crude, random-width sawn weatherboarding and nine-over-six windows. There is also a two-story half house of early date. These two parts are now connected to later additions, the Adams Street facade having some Colonial Revival detailing.

The building was owned by several of Rockville's merchants, from the 1797 tavernkeeper Adam Robb, through John Higgins (1840's to 1870) and William Ward from 1917-1940. It is used as a law office.

# Maryland Historical Trust State Historic Sites Inventory Form

## 1. Name (indicate preferred name)

historic Robb/Higgins/Ward house

and/or common

## 2. Location

street & number 101 North Adams Street  not for publication

city, town Rockville  vicinity of congressional district 8

state Maryland county Montgomery

## 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	<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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> not applicable	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other:

## 4. Owner of Property (give names and mailing addresses of all owners)

name Victor Crawford

street & number 101 North Adams Street telephone no.: 762-1000

city, town Rockville state and zip code Maryland

## 5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Montgomery County Land Records liber 6004

street & number Montgomery County Courthouse folio 700

city, town Rockville state Maryland

## 6. Representation in Existing Historical Surveys

title National Register - West Montgomery Ave. Historic District - 1974

Locally designated historic district - 1974

date M-NCPPC - 1976  federal  state  county  local

pository for survey records City of Rockville

city, town Rockville state Maryland 20850

# 7. Description

Survey No. M: 26/10/14

<b>Condition</b>		<b>Check one</b>	<b>Check one</b>
<input 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
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		date of move _____

Prepare both a summary paragraph and a general description of the resource and its various elements as it exists today.

This house is located on the western half of lot 78 of the original Town of Rockville; its earliest sections predate 1798. The house fronts on North Adams with its south side bordering Middle Lane. It is in the form of a modified square, 2 stories over a rubble foundation, and is of frame construction. Its several alterations in the 19th and 20th centuries have resulted in multiple roof lines and various sheathing materials. Each of these changes has left some of the earlier features intact, resulting in a composite building illustrating vernacular construction over a 175-year period.

The attached photo was taken in the early 1860s -- before the alterations known to exist at the time of the sale of the house in 1873. Along with the attached drawing, it should be used to compare and illustrate the development of the house. The photo shows the south elevation, the building then fronting on Middle Lane.

## South Elevation:

### Right Side:

Before 1860-present: A two-story, one bay, shed-roofed "half-house" of approximately 7' 6" x 7' 8". Covered in beaded clapboard 5-6½ inches wide, six-over-one windows with shutters.

### Left Side:

1797-1860s: Hall and parlor, 1½ story cottage of the colonial period with steep gabled roof and small center gabled dormer. Four-light transom over entrance door, and twelve-over-six windows.

### Present:

Two story, approximately 17 feet long, aluminum siding, large second floor shed dormer with paired windows. No entrance on this facade, but paired 6-over-6 windows on first floor.

## East Elevation:

### Right Side:

1797-present: One story and loft auxiliary building (probably kitchen and quarter) with tall brick chimney rising from it. This 11' x 11' building is covered in very rough, sawn and (some) beaded weatherboards in widths from 9-14".

It is assumed that repairs were made in 1871 when the Orphans' Court ordered repairs made to the building before sale. Metal strips, some bracket-shaped, are placed randomly across the crude weather-boarding and tucked into sheet metal cornerboards to brace the original siding. The clapboard siding on the north side replaced the log weatherboard entirely.

The front gabled roof has left side eave projecting farther than right side eave. Nine-over-six windows with plain trim and shutters (replacement). Small opening for window at ground level.

(continued 7.1)

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Robb/Higgins/Ward house  
101 North Adams Street  
Rockville  
Continuation page 7.1

East Elevation (continued):

Left Side:

1860s to present: One bay, two story frame section added to connect "kitchen" to main body of house. This section has a shed roof rising to meet the single slope of half-house. This section is framed in and around the projecting eave of the kitchen building.

First floor is unfinished room containing storage and leads to cellar entrance under main body of house. Cellar stairs are framed in half-log timbers. Right side interior wall of this section is former exterior wall of kitchen and retains crude weather-boarding. This "passage" section is of lower elevation than kitchen section, requiring several steps up into kitchen section.

Outer door is wooden, five paneled. A six-over-one window is on the first floor on each facade.

Second floor of this section is covered porch, now screened and partially enclosed by partitions.

North Elevation:

This section was added in the 1940s. It has two bays and measures 23' 4" x 11', covered with nailed clapboard. The windows are four-over-four on the first floor. The second floor has shed dormer to match south side, with paired six-over-one windows.

West Elevation:

The west facade fronts on North Adams Street and is now the main entrance.

It is 2½ stories with a broad double-pitched front gable roof which covers the 30' main body of the house, the slightly recessed 8' section at the south end (an earlier porch) and the 11' north end addition which retains its own door.

There is neoclassical detailing from the 20th century addition of an off-center pedimented portico supported by paired turned support columnets and a side-lighted entry door.

A diamond shaped window with plain trim is located at the gable apex.

Windows on this facade are six-over-two with flat lintels and very wide sills cut out to receive closed shutters; present shutters are replacements. (continued p. 7.2)

Other Details:

The original entry from Middle Lane as pictured in old photo is today invoked by a picket gate at the brick step leading from Middle Lane. The remainder of the picket fence is gone, but there is a hedge of corresponding height.

The outbuildings include a large, 20' square, hipped roof garage that lies east of the house. This garage was built in 1929 to replace the large L-shaped stable shown on the 1879 Hopkins Atlas. The stable lay north of the house, on lot 79. This site is now under construction for the building of a new office building, but the brick apron of the driveway from N. Adams Street to the stable area is extant.

There is a large covered well at the northwest corner of the yard, also located on lot 79. The well is of the same large rubble stone as the house foundation. It is covered with a pyramid roof of modern shingles and has frame corner supports.

# 8. Significance

Survey No. M: 26/10/14

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 checked="" 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 checked="" 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		

1929

Specific dates pre 1798; 1860s; // Builder/Architect

check: Applicable Criteria:  A  B  C  D  
and/or

Applicable Exception:  A  B  C  D  E  F  G

Level of Significance:  national  state  local

Prepare both a summary paragraph of significance and a general statement of history and support.

The house at 101 North Adams is significant as one of only two remaining 18th century structures in the original Town of Rockville. Portions of the earliest sections are visible from the exterior.

In 1784, William P. Williams (1754-1813) laid out 45 acres of streets and lots in the new County seat, naming his town "Williamsburgh". Lot sales were slow, however, and in 1793 Williams still owned lots 78 and 79.<sup>1</sup> In that year on lot 5 directly opposite the Courthouse lot, a Scot named Adam Robb was renting a building for \$35 a year.

Many of the early Williams deeds were faulty (which resulted in a new town survey and plat in 1803), and although Adam Robb was deeded lots 78 and 79 in 1799, the Tax Assessment for 1798 shows him already as the owner of these two lots, "one improved, value \$286, one unimproved, value \$16."<sup>2</sup> The small cottage and crude outbuilding that Robb built is shown in the accompanying photo and discussed in Section 7.

We know several things about Adam Robb; he was born in Ayr, Scotland and married to Caroline Lansdale. In 1799 he purchased lots 3 and 4, immediately resold lot 3 and probably built his tavern on lot 4.<sup>3</sup> One of his slaves was a young boy named Josiah Henson, later famous as "Uncle Tom", but Henson (according to his memoirs) did not long remain with Robb.<sup>4</sup>

In 1810 Robb's daughter, Jane Neale Robb, became the second wife of the Clerk of the Court, Upton Beall, and upon construction of the Beall-Dawson House at 103 West Montgomery Avenue (Survey Site 26/10/1) in 1815 its first mistress. Beall stayed at one of the town's taverns while attending Court sessions before erecting his house; perhaps he met Miss Robb while boarding at Robb's.

One famous personage who did stay at Robb's was Benjamin Latrobe, who in 1811 drew "Looking out of Robb's Window, Montgomery Courthouse". Research is now being done to determine the locale of the drawing, its perspective being either from lot 4 or the subject lot 78.

By the 1820s Robb had given up tavernkeeping and was acquiring farm property around Rockville that would total over 800 acres. He was involved in several quasi-official commissions and was a respected citizen, Upton Beall naming him "friend and executor" of his 1827 Will.

(continued 8.1)

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE - 101 North Adams Street, Rockville, MD (continued)

Robb sold lots 78 and 79 to John Adamson, Jr. for \$500 in 1821.<sup>5</sup> Adamson was postmaster of Rockville at the time. In the 1840s he and Jesse H. Higgins were partners in a general store. Creditors forced the sale of the store at Higgins' death in 1848, and Higgins' newly married son, John H., bought out his father's old partner.<sup>6</sup>

One consequence of Higgins' marriage to Sophia Barnard of Georgetown was his adoption of an anti-slavery position. His outspoken Unionist views during the Civil War made him a target when, in 1863, General Jeb Stuart's forces entered Rockville. Forewarned, Higgins and several other men stayed out of sight in the Episcopal Church vestry. The main body of troops left but a squad of Confederate Calvary had orders to arrest the men. The prisoners were taken north for a brief time and Higgins was paroled outside of Brookeville.<sup>7</sup>

Rockville entered into a Commissioner form of government in 1860. Maryland's conflicting sentiments during the Civil War are illustrated by the selection of the first Commissioners to serve the City, the resulting body of officers being equally divided between Unionists and Secessionists. John Higgins was one of those elected, and served until his death in 1870.

Sophia and John owned two dwellings. Although they may have resided in this house, based on the records of Higgins' estate it is assumed that it was not their principal home. The inventory of the estate reported that the brick dwelling house (with garden) that was located over Higgins' store was in good repair. However, the appraisal of the Adams Street property describes it as "A frame dwelling, very much out of repair, on one acre of land...with one stable, one carriage house, one meat house, and one wood and corn house...garden and fence in good condition."<sup>8</sup> (emphasis added)

The Orphans Court ordered Sophia "To make such repairs as in her judgment were required, not to exceed \$200." It is probable that the bracing of the log weatherboards and addition of sheet metal cornerboards to the house were done at this time.

By the time of the sale of Higgins' estate in 1873, it was advertised as "A comfortable house with large stable, fronting on both streets, with carriage house and all necessary outbuildings." The lots were sold to Mary Dodd for \$2,500.<sup>9</sup> The L-shaped stable is shown north of the house on the 1879 Hopkins Atlas; its brick driveway is partially visible in front of the new office building being constructed on that part of lot 79. A stone well, covered by a roof structure, still stands.

Mrs. Dodd eventually purchased most of the block. Her daughter, Martha Hall, later owned the property and did dressmaking out of the house. Between 1917<sup>10</sup> and 1940, Wilson and Sarah Ward owned the house; in 1929-30 they remodeled the facade to face North Adams Street, added a west section with its new entrance and porches to the north and south, and built the garage to the east.

(continued p. 8.2)

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE - 101 North Adams Street, Rockville, MD (continued)

The Brown family owned the property from 1946 to 1970.<sup>11</sup> During that time, they added the north side section and remodeled the interior. By 1971, the Brown daughters were elderly and found it difficult to maintain the house; they contemplated demolition, but instead found a purchaser who adapted and rehabilitated the building for use as a law office. The house owned by Clyde Winters was the first property to be changed to the new 0-2 zone in an attempt to establish a buffer between the Central Business District and the residential area to the west. Later, attorneys closed the south porch and added aluminum siding to the south section.

Though considerably enlarged (like Rockville itself), the residence of Adam Robb, John Adamson and John Higgins retains much of the sense of the past in its architectural growth.

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FOOTNOTES:

1. Montgomery County Tax Assessments, 1793.
2. Montgomery County Land Records H/596,598; Tax Assessment 1798. The confusion over Williamsburgh lots is illustrated by two 1799 sales of lots 78 & 79 from Williams to Thomas Perry Willson for 40 $\frac{1}{2}$  and from Willson to Robb for 38 $\frac{1}{2}$ .
3. Ibid., folios 595,599.
4. Henson, Josiah, Uncle Tom's Story of His Life, ed. John Loeb (London: 1877). Quoted in Montgomery County Story, Vol. 18, No. 1, pp. 4-6.
5. Land Records, V/426.
6. Ibid, STS 3/391 and STS 5/550.
7. Scharf, History of Western Maryland, p. 173 and Letter from Sophia Higgins dated July 29, 1863 (included with MHT form on 101 South Van Buren Street, Site #26/10/38 ).
8. Higgins Estate - Inventory at RWC 38 et seq. Order of February 27, 1871, p. 247.
9. Montgomery County Sentinel advertisement, in Equity #231 - 1871.
10. Land Records, 272/468.
11. Ibid. 803/448.

# 9. Major Bibliographical References

Survey No. M: 26/10/14

Montgomery County Land, Equity, Plat & Tax Records  
Montgomery County Story; General histories, including Scharf, McMaster & Hiebert, and Civil War histories; Montgomery County Sentinel  
Maps & Atlases; photos, Montgomery Co. Historical Society

# 10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property 8167 square feet

Quadrangle name \_\_\_\_\_

Quadrangle scale \_\_\_\_\_

UTM References do NOT complete UTM references

A	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
	Zone	Easting	Northing

B	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
	Zone	Easting	Northing

C	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
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D	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
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E	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
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F	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
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G	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
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H	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
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### Verbal boundary description and justification

Part of Lot 78, original Town of Rockville

### List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	code	county	code
state	code	county	code

# 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Anne W. Cissel

organization Peerless Rockville

date September 1984

street & number P.O. Box 4262

telephone 762-0096

city or town Rockville

state Maryland 20850

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  
Shaw House  
21 State Circle  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401  
(301) 269-2438

M: 26/10/14

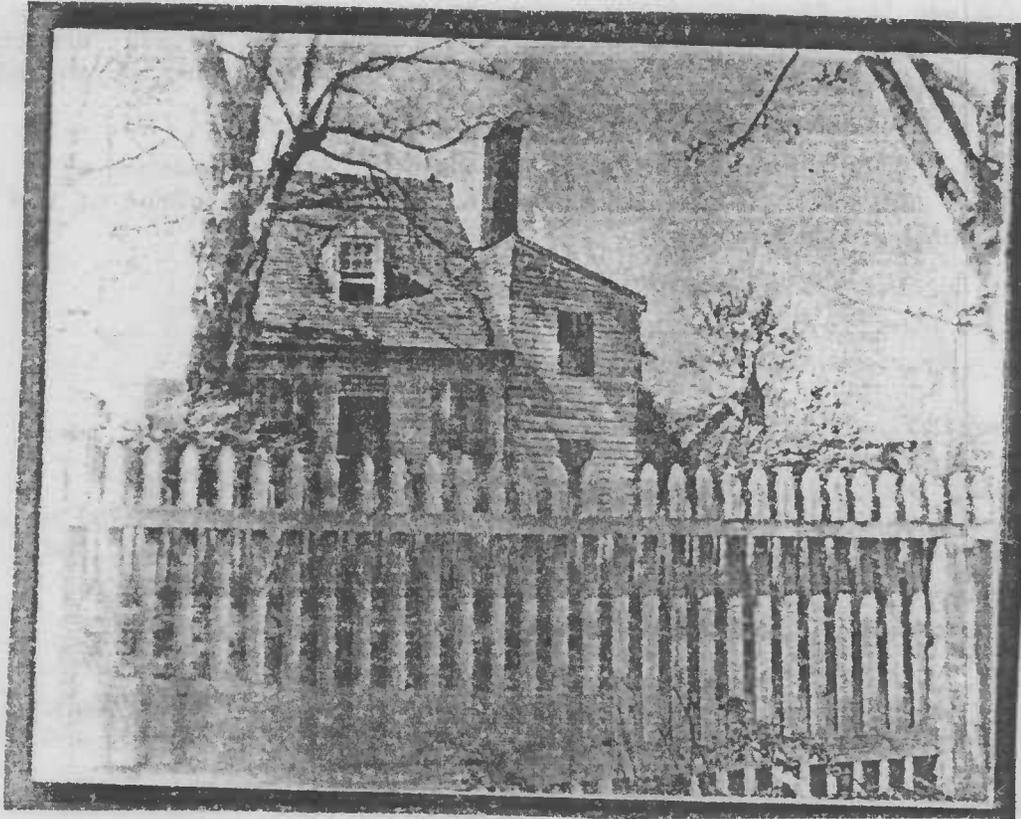
Robb/Higgins/Ward House

101 North Adams Street

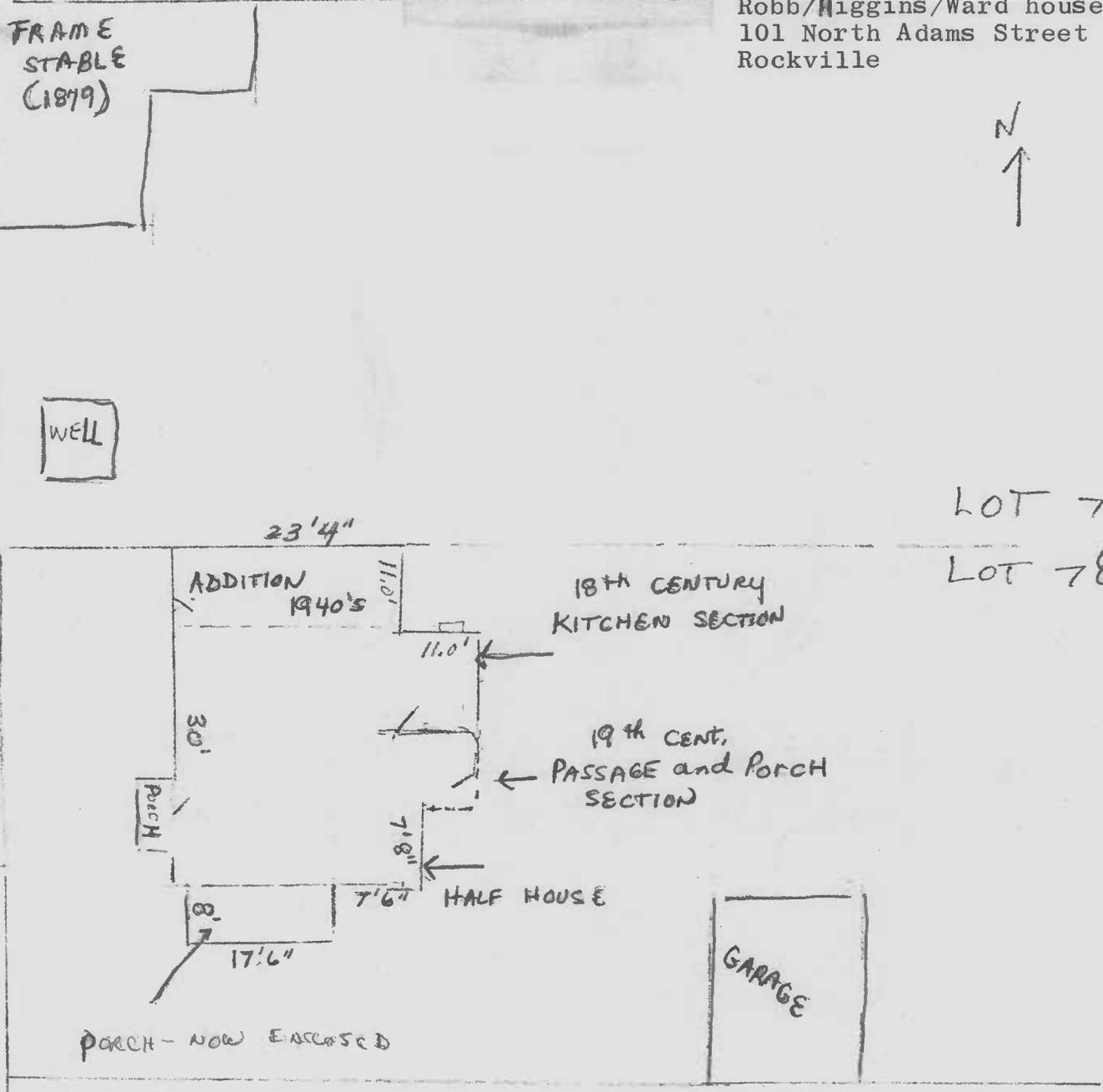
Photo before 1873

Courtesy, Montgomery County  
Historical Society

View from Middle Lane

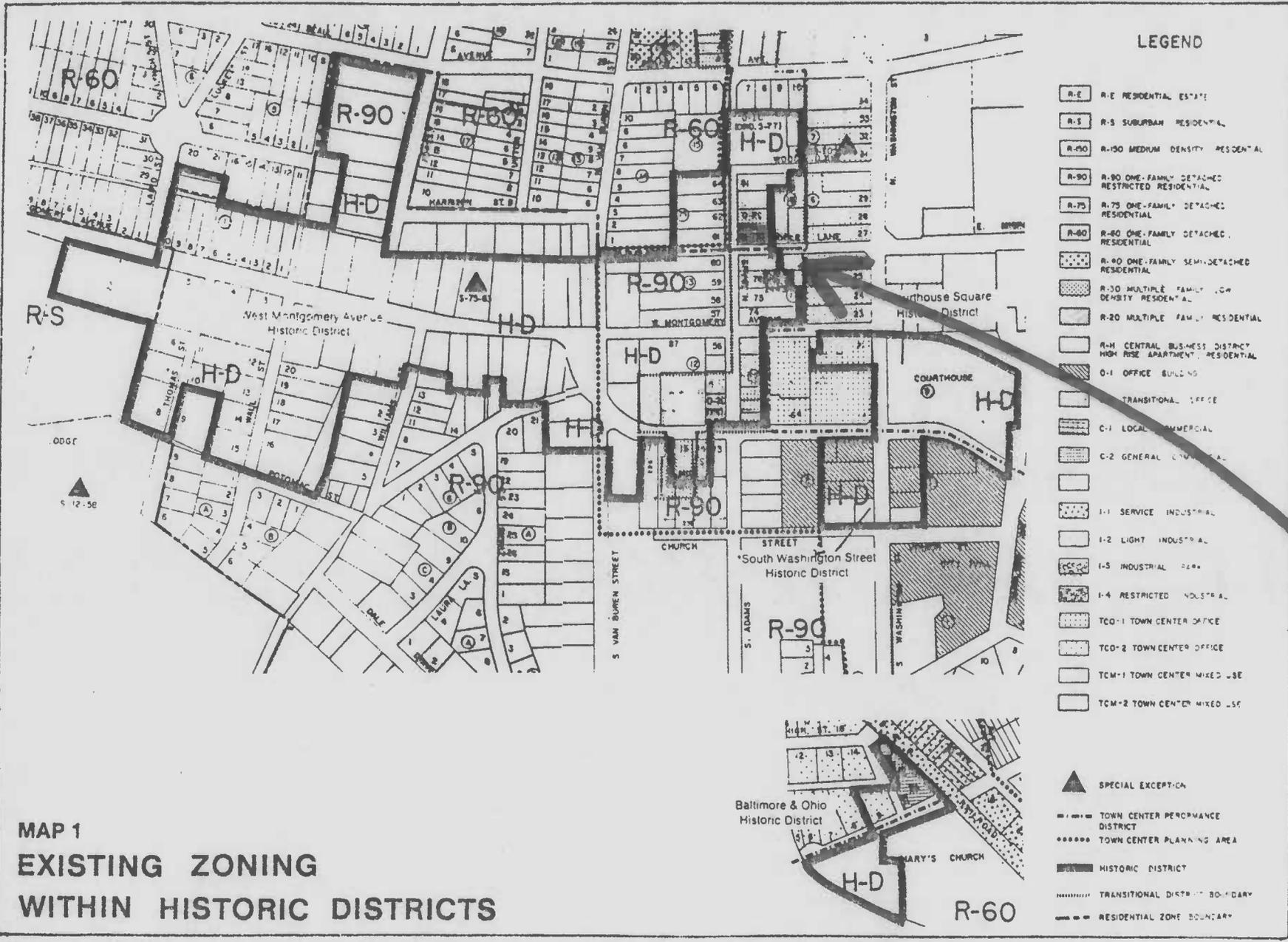


M: 26/10/14  
Robb/Higgins/Ward house  
101 North Adams Street  
Rockville



LOT 79  
LOT 78

MIDDLE LANE



**MAP 1  
EXISTING ZONING  
WITHIN HISTORIC DISTRICTS**

\*Note: For discussion and planning purposes South Washington Street and the Courthouse Square district are considered independent Historic Districts even though they are shown on the existing zoning map as one district.

P11  
 M: 26/10/14  
 Robb/Higgins/Ward House  
 101 North Adams Street  
 Rockville



1017-4

RICHARD H. ANDREWS  
1608 Farragut Avenue  
Rockville, Maryland 20851

M: 26/10/14  
ROBB/HIGGINS/WARD HOUSE  
101 No. Adams St.  
WEST ELEVATION  
AUGUST, 1984



1017-3

**RICHARD H. ANDREWS**  
1608 Farragut Avenue  
Rockville, Maryland 20851

M: 26/10/84  
ROBB/HIGGINS/ WARD HOUSE  
101 No. Adams St.

SOUTH ELEVATION

AUGUST, 1984



RICHARD H. ANDREWS  
1608 Farragut Avenue  
Rockville, Maryland 20851

1022-11

M: 26/10/14  
ROBB/HIGGINS/WARD  
101 No. Adams St.  
EAST/NORTHEAST CORNER  
AUGUST, 1984



RICHARD H. ANDREWS  
1608 Farragut Avenue  
Rockville, Maryland 20851

M: 26/10/14  
ROBB/HIGGINS/WARD  
101 No. Adams St.  
EAST ELEVATION (RT SIDE)  
AUGUST, 1984

1021-2