

Survey # F-4-121

Approximate date September 14, 1862

J. O'Neil Farm

Street Address: 1900A Dahlgren Road

Town, State: Middletown vicinity, MD

private X, public \_\_\_

This property is included in the survey of resources associated with the Civil War Battle of South Mountain, which occurred on September 14, 1862. The J. O'Neil Farmstead is located on the north side of Dahlgren Road on the eastern slope of South Mountain. The buildings face east overlooking the Middletown Valley through a ravine extending from the valley floor up the mountain. The complex includes a house, barn, hog barn, chicken house and various small sheds. The main house is a 2 1/2 story sided log building with German vernacular influence in the use of a recessed double porch along part of the front elevation and a three room floorplan. The house has five bays across the front elevation with four of them recessed beneath the porch. This small hill farm lay in the path of General Joseph Hooker's I Corps as they made their way up the mountain to attack Confederates defending Turner's Gap. Although the property is shown on several maps from the 1850s and the Civil War, the current house displays datable surface features from the 1880s or later. The farm is also an example of a 19th century "hill farm," a small agricultural operation on the slopes of South Mountain. The property was owned by the O'Neil (O'Neal) family from 1859 and 1860 to 1941. It is shown on Isaac Bond's 1858 map of Frederick County under the name of O'Neal. It exhibits vernacular building traditions in log and frame construction from the 19th century.

Photo Reference: Photo #

Form Prepared By: Paula S. Reed, PhD and Edith B. Wallace  
Woodward-Clyde  
200 Orchard Ridge Drive  
Gaithersburg, MD 20878

Date: February, 1998

# Maryland Historical Trust State Historic Sites Inventory Form

Survey No. F-4-121

Magi No.

DOE  yes  no

## 1. Name of Property (indicate preferred name)

historic J. O'Neil Farm

and/or common

## 2. Location

street &amp; number 1900A Dahlgren Rd.

 not for publication

city, town Middletown

 vicinity of

congressional district 6

state Maryland

county Frederick

## 3. Classification

**Category** district  
 building(s)  
 structure  
 site  
 object**Ownership** public  
 private  
 both**Public Acquisition** in process  
 being considered  
 not applicable**Status** occupied  
 unoccupied  
 work in progress**Accessible** yes: restricted  
 yes: unrestricted  
 no**Present Use** agriculture  
 commercial  
 educational  
 entertainment  
 government  
 industrial  
 military museum  
 park  
 private residence  
 religious  
 scientific  
 transportation  
 other:

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

name A. Edwin and Christine B. Sparks

street &amp; number 1900A Dahlgren Rd.

telephone no.: (301)-293-2386

city, town Middletown

state and zip code MD 21769

## 5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Frederick County Courthouse

Liber 454

street &amp; number 100 West Patrick Street

Folio 441

city, town Frederick

state MD

## 6. Representation in Existing Historical Surveys

title

date  federal  state  county  local

depository for survey records

city, town

state

## 7. Description

Survey No. F-4-121

|                                          |                                       |                                             |                                                        |
|------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------|
| <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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> good | <input type="checkbox"/> ruins        | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered | <input type="checkbox"/> moved      date of move _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> fair            | <input type="checkbox"/> unexposed    |                                             |                                                        |

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

The J. O'Neil Farmstead is located on the north side of Dahlgren Road on the eastern slope of South Mountain. The buildings face east overlooking the Middletown Valley through a ravine extending from the valley floor up the mountain. The complex includes a house, barn, hog barn, chicken house and various small sheds. The main house is a 2 1/2 story sided log building with German vernacular influence in the use of a recessed double porch along part of the front elevation and a three room floorplan. The house has five bays across the front elevation with four of them recessed beneath the porch. At the south elevation, the house is three bays deep with one of the windows lighting the recessed porch. The exterior of the house is covered with German siding. Windows have six over six light sash within late 19th century architraves with pointed tops. The main entrance is located in the third bay from the south end of the house and opens directly into the kitchen, another Germanic feature. Doors have four panels. Built into the sloping ground of the mountainside, the house rests on stone foundations which are exposed to almost a full story at the front elevation. Brick chimneys are located inside the gable ends.

The interior of the house follows a traditional three room German floorplan. The northern half of the house is kitchen while the southern half was divided into two rooms with a partition running perpendicular to the end wall. This partition has been removed at the first story level, but remains at the second story. The kitchen fireplace was rebuilt in the 1950s, and the floors were replaced, also in the '50s. The southeast room, the parlor, has a stove opening in the chimney. There is no fireplace, but a mantelpiece enframes the chimney projection. The mantle has applied molded trim and appears to date from the 1870s or 1880s. Interior door and window trim has shallow curvilinear molding also typical of the 1880s. The flooring was replaced in the 1950s. The kitchen is lined with tongue and grooved wainscotting which appears to date from the time of the other main interior features in the late 19th century.

To the northwest of the house is a timber framed bank barn which although it has had its vertical siding replaced, has a framing system which could date from c. 1850. Also present is a frame hog barn and a chicken house. The building complex is located at the edge of a ravine on the north side of Turner's Hill. It was through this ravine that Hooker's I Corps approached the right flank of the Confederate defenders of Turner's Gap. A 1950s photograph of the farm in the possession of the present owners shows that the fields were open and farmed for this and the adjoining Haupt farm. Many fields were demarcated by stone fences which are portrayed on Civil War maps and which survive in part today. However, the appearance of the property has changed in that the fields have grown up in woods and brush, so that the open farmed landscape is no longer present. The photograph showing the open land divided into small fields shows the easy route up the ravine which presented itself to General Hooker's Corps. The property contains 33 acres with the buildings located at the northeast corner.

# 8. Significance

Survey No. F-4-121

| 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 checked="" 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 type="checkbox"/> other(specify) |  |

**Specific dates** September 14, 1862      **Builder/Architect**

---

check: Applicable Criteria:     A     B     C     D  
and/or  
Applicable Exceptions:         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 O'Neil property is primarily significant for its association with the Battle of South Mountain which occurred on September 14, 1862. The small hill farm lay in the path of General Joseph Hooker's I Corps as they made their way up the mountain to attack Confederates defending Turner's Gap. Although the property is shown on several maps from the 1850s and the Civil War, the current house displays datable surface features from the 1880s or later. The farm is also an example of a 19th century "hill farm," a small agricultural operation on the slopes of South Mountain. The property was owned by the O'Neil (O'Neal) family from 1859 and 1860 to 1941. It is shown on Isaac Bond's 1858 map of Frederick County under the name of O'Neal. It exhibits vernacular building traditions in log and frame construction from the 19th century.

The O'Neil property derives its significance for its role in the Battle of South Mountain. The Union objective was to gain access to the passes across South Mountain so that Federals could attack the divided and vulnerable Confederate Army in the valley to the west. The Confederates held a thin line of defense under General D.H. Hill at Turner's Gap which was the main Union objective, since the National Road crossed the mountain through this gap. Expecting the pass to be strongly defended, the Federals initiated flanking movements to the north and to the south of the National Road. General Hooker was responsible for the action on the north side of the turnpike, and the men in his command made their way upward along Dahlgren Road and the ravine to its north, and along Frostown further to the north.

"For his advance, Hooker deployed the Divisions of John P. Hatch on the left and George G. Meade on the right, with James Ricketts' Division in reserve. The Yankees found the rocky, heavily timbered slopes hard going, and Robert Rodes' brigade of Alabamans, which did the lion's share of the fighting on this flank, added greatly to their difficulties. Rodes used a heavy skirmish line made up of crack shots from the 12th Alabama to delay Hatch's advance. When the Federals finally cleared away these skirmishers they came up against the main Rebel line posted solidly on high ground in front of them. The fighting was as bitter here as it had been earlier at Fox's Gap, and casualties were heavy on both sides. There was a particularly vicious series of charges and countercharges in a cornfield in which General Hatch was wounded and the opposing lines came as close as thirty feet before they broke apart."<sup>1</sup>

Hatch's Division passed through the O'Neal property and the fact that the owners have found minie balls and artillery shells on the farm indicate

<sup>1</sup>Stephen W. Sears, "Fire on the Mountain: The Battle of South Mountain, September 14, 1862," *Blue and Gray*, December-January, 1986-87, p. 18.

# Maryland Historical Trust State Historic Sites Inventory Form

Survey No. F-4-121

Magi No.

DOE  yes  no

Section Number 8 Page 2

---

that action did occur on the property. The Confederate line of sharpshooters commanded by Rodes would have been located on the ridge just above the farm.

The O'Neil property also derives significance for its architectural expression, as an example of a mid-late 19th century hill farm. These properties were smaller and more modest in their improvements than farms in the richer valley lands. Fields were defined for the most part by stone fences, and the buildings were wooden, log for the house and timber frame for the barn and outbuildings. The buildings were constructed into the sloping ground and oriented to face east with the mountain rising behind them. The form of the house with a raised basement and a recessed double porch along part of the front elevation is common in central Maryland and south central Pennsylvania and is associated with construction during the mid 19th century by people of German descent. A farmstead appears on this site on the 1858 Isaac Bond map of Frederick County and the official US Army engineers maps for the Battle, under the name of O'Neil or O'Neal. According to deed records for the property, it was purchased by John and Charlotte O'Neal (O'Neil) in two parcels on March 30, 1859 and April 6, 1860. (Deed Liber BGF 4/ Folio 386, and BGF 6/ Folio 52) from John Miller, trustee and Daniel Koogle respectively. The property remained in the O'Neal family until 1941 (430/544, 368/72) when it was purchased by Roay M. Wallace. It was sold to Oscar H. and Flora E. Michael on May 1, 1944 (442/119) and acquired by A. Edwin and Christine B. Sparks on May 18, 1946 (454/441). The Sparks family continues to own the property.

An inspection of the house revealed that interior and exterior features date from the late 19th century, probably the 1880s. These may have been renovations done to an earlier building constructed in the 1850s. The Germanic form and plan of the house may be the product of the Koogle or Miller ownership rather than of the Scots-Irish O'Neils. The timber framing system of the barn with hewn members, latticework under the forebay and pegged vent windows appear consistent with mid 19th century construction.

# Maryland Historical Trust State Historic Sites Inventory Form

Survey No. F-4-121

Magi No.

DOE  yes  no

Section Number 8 Page 3

---

## HISTORICAL CONTEXT:

### MARYLAND COMPREHENSIVE PRESERVATION PLAN DATA

Geographic Organization: Piedmont

Chronological/Developmental Period(s):

Agricultural-Industrial Transition A.D. 1815-1870

Prehistoric/Historic Period Theme(s):

Architecture, landscape architecture and community planning

Agriculture

Military

Resource Type:

Category: Buildings

Historic Environment: Rural

Historic Function(s) and Use(s):

domestic/single dwelling/residence

agriculture/subsistence/animal facility

Known Design Source: None

---

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

Survey No. F-4-121

---

### Books

- Cartwig, D. Scott, Civil War Regiments, A Journal of the American Civil War, Vol 5, #3, "Antietam, the Maryland Campaign of 1862". Article entitled "My God, Be Careful! The Morning Battle of Fox's Gap", Savas Publishing Co., Campbell, CA, 1997.
- Luvaas, Jay and Harold W. Nelson eds., The U.S. Army War College Guide to the Battle of Antietam, The Maryland Campaign of 1862, Harper Collins Publishers, Washington, 1987.
- Murfin, James V., The Glean of Bayonets, The Battle of Antietam and Robert E. Lee's Maryland Campaign, September 1862, Thomas Yoseloff, New York, 1965.
- Roth, Dave, "The General's Tour of South Mountain", Blue & Gray Magazine, Dec-Jan, 1986-87.
- Schildt, John W., The Ninth Corps, At Antietam, Chewsville, Maryland, 1988.
- Sears, Stephen W., "Fire On The Mountain, The Battle of South Mountain September 14, 1862", Blue & Gray Magazine, Dec-Jan, 1986-87.
- Sears, Stephen W., Landscape Turned Red, The Battle of Antietam, Ticknor and Fields, New York, 1983.
- Swinton, William, Army of the Potomac, Smithmark Publisher, New York, 1995.
- U.S. War Department, The War of Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies, Series I, Vol XIX, Parts I and II, Government Printing Office, Washington, 1880-1901.

### Manuscripts

- Frye, Dennis, National Register Nomination Form, South Mountain Battlefields F-4-17-A,B,C, 1986.

### Maps

- The Official Military Atlas of the Civil War, Plate 27, Gramercy Books, New York, 1983.
- Engineers Maps, 1862, National Register Nomination, South Mountain Battlefields F-4-17-A,B,C, 1986.
- Macombe Map, 1861.



J. O'Neil House F-4-121  
1 level Floorplan







F-4-121

J. O'Neil House

Frederick Co., Maryland

Edith B Wallace

3 November 1997

Maryland SHPO

View north from Dahlgren Rd.

S and E elevations of house

1/8



F-4-121

J. O'Neil House

Frederick Co, Maryland

Edith B Wallace

7 February 1970

Maryland State

SE elevation

2/8



F-4-121

J. O'Neil House

Frederick Co, Maryland

Edith B Wallace

7 February 1998

Maryland SHPO

notification

3/8



F-4-121

J. O'Neil House

Fredenck Co, Maryland

Edith B Wallace

? February 1998

Maryland SHPO

main house, first floor parlor, S wall

4/8



F-4-121

J. O'Neil House

Frederick Co, Maryland

Edith B Wallone

7 February 1978

main house, SHPO

main house, first floor hall, N wall

5/8



F-4-121

J O'Neil House

Frederick Co, Maryland

Edith B. Wallace

7 February 1996

Maryland SHPO

barn, SE elevation

6/8



F-4-121

J O'Neil House

Frederick Co, Maryland

Edith S. Wall's c

6 February 1998

Maryland SHPO

N. and W. elevations, overall

7/8



F-4-121

J. O'Neil House

Frederick Co, Maryland

Edith B. Wallace

6 February 1998

Maryland SHPO

interior, timber framing, log barn

8/8