



# 7. Description

Survey No. CAR 306

**Condition**

excellent

good

fair

deteriorated

ruins

unexposed

**Check one**

unaltered

altered

**Check one**

original site

moved

date of move Beauty Shop ca. 1980

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

SEE CONTINUATION SHEET 7.1

# 8. Significance

Survey No. CAR 306

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 checked="" 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 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 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

### Unknown

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.

SEE CONTINUATION SHEET 8.1



**CAR-306**

**William Noble House**

**Denton, Caroline County, Maryland**

**Description**

**Continuation Sheet 7.1**

### **Description Summary**

The William Noble House, located in Caroline County, is a L-shaped frame dwelling built in ca. 1900. Likely constructed on a portion of the large estate, called Plaindealing (CAR-9), which was sold by the descendants of the Dukes family, the property was owned by the Noble and Murphy families in the first half of the twentieth century. William and Virginia Engerman subsequently converted it to a chicken farm upon their purchase in 1944. Only the dwelling retains its historical appearance on its original location, despite considerable alteration of the interior, which has been largely re-built. The remaining buildings either date from the last few decades, been moved to the site, or have been radically altered.

### **Description**

The William Noble House, accessed by means of a short entrance from the east side of MD 404, has been subdivided, with much commercial development and an industrial park encompassing most of the original property. It is located just south of the intersection of MD 404 with Engerman Avenue. The property borders the increasingly commercialized and developed strip of MD 404 on the south side of Denton, characterized by industrial parks, shopping centers, gas stations and car dealerships. According to the current owners, the property was entirely wooded when Mr. Noble purchased it from Mr. J. Boone Dukes 1904.

The two-story frame dwelling was built on property accumulated by William and Bertha Noble in the early twentieth century in a number of land purchases. The dwelling (1) is oriented to the west (MD 404) with two heavily altered agricultural outbuildings, plus machine shed and chicken house, located directly behind. A former gas station, moved from a site further south, and renovated into a motel, then an office and finally into a barber/beauty shop, is located directly to the north of the dwelling. The original construction date is unknown. Only the pump house likely predates 1950 and remains in its original location—the remaining structures were either moved to the site or constructed by the Engermans.

The dwelling (1) is an L-shaped, side-gable, frame structure, of a type widely distributed and well represented in the architectural record in Maryland. Clad with vinyl siding, the structure is composed of a principle rectangular block, facing west, with a two-story wing centered on the rear, or east elevation. One-story porches are appended to the west elevation of the main block and the south elevation of the ell, with the easternmost bay fully enclosed. The Engermans built a number of additions to this original structure—

**CAR-306****William Noble House****Denton, Caroline County, Maryland****Description****Continuation Sheet 7.2**

a one-story bedroom wing was appended to the east end and a two-story shed roof addition appended to the angle formed by the main block and the wing on the northwest. There are two brick chimneys in place on the structure, each inside the north and south gable ends. The fenestration is regular, characterized by six-over-six wooden sash in the original section with a few replacements.

The five-bay wide east, or entrance facade, is symmetrically arranged about the centered sidelight entrance sheltered by a one-story, full-width porch. This porch wraps around the three-bay long south elevation, in which there is a secondary entrance. This south elevation is composed of the gable end of the principle block, with two two-pane fixed windows in the roof level and returns of the boxed cornice. It is also composed of the south elevation of the side-gable ell-wing continuing the forward plane of the wall. The partially enclosed porch is carried on square replacement pillars. A one-story, two bay long, bedroom wing is set back and appended to the east elevation of the ell. The east elevation is composed of the gable ends of the ell wing and the one-story addition, with additional entrances located in each section. The north elevation is composed of three sections representing three periods of construction—the gable end of the original block, the shed roof addition of the addition in the northeast angle, the end bay of the ell, and the one-story bedroom suite.

The owners have reported that the pump house (2), clad with vinyl siding, has been heavily altered on the interior. It is located to the east of the house and adjacent to the apartment house/machine machine garage combination structure (3). According to the owners, this two part building is composed of a small frame chicken house which was converted into an apartment house, and appended, on the east, to a large, front-gable machine shed, with a corncrib centered between two equipment bays. The structure is characterized by the dominant, multiple-slope, gable, metal-clad roof, with the corncrib located in the tallest, centered section that is sandwiched between the long, lower slopes sheltering the open bays. Across the farm road (on the south side) from the machine shed is a long frame chicken house(4), with a tall, narrow, front gable, two-story section centered between two, very long, one-story, side-gable, frame windowless sections.

Immediately to the north, and fronting MD 404 on the west, is the second major building on the property (5), a former gas station which was moved by Mr. Engerman to his property about twenty years ago from a location further south where it was slated for demolition. The original construction date is unknown. The owner gutted it in order to convert it to four identical motel rooms, each occupying a quadrant. Each unit had a bath, and an entrance from the outside. The owner subsequently converted the building to a real estate office, tearing out all but one bathroom and most of the interior walls. It was converted a fourth

**CAR-306**  
**William Noble House**  
**Denton, Caroline County, Maryland**

**Description**  
**Continuation Sheet 7.3**

time into a beauty parlor/ barber shop.

It is a square frame building supported on concrete block foundation, with a pyramidal roof of composition shingle, and clad with vinyl siding. All of the windows are vinyl and are mostly six-over-six sash. It is oriented to MD 404 on the west, with a three bay principle facade sheltered by a nearly full-width porch, and a doorway to north of center. The shed-roofed porch is supported on square pillars, with stock wrought metal railings, and placed on a concrete porch. There is evidence that the south elevation was formerly the location of an open porch, the two front bays of which have been enclosed.

The south, three-bay wide elevation is characterized by a doorway offset to the west, with sash windows to each side and an open porch in the east bay. The east elevation, three-bay wide, has likely been extended to enclose what originated as open porch. A shed roof dormer is centered in this elevation. The south corner is open, with an entrance in the rear to access the central space. with two small windows offset to the north along with a doorway. Two windows symmetrically placed, with a smaller window in the enclosed extension to the east punctuate the north elevation.

### **Historic Context**

The first settlement of Maryland, following the initial colonization by Cecilius Calvert at St. Mary's in 1633, occurred along the waterways, moving from the Chesapeake Bay to its tributary streams. What was to become Caroline County was thus settled later than areas with frontage on the Chesapeake Bay. The area was agricultural in character, with tobacco, which had been introduced to early settlers by the Native Americans, being the primary crop. Fluctuating prices and competition from other markets in the mid-eighteenth century had disastrous results for the growers, and by the 1770s, the acreage of tobacco had been greatly reduced.

The William Noble farm is located a few miles from Denton, on the road from Denton to Williston, thus its viability as an agricultural complex would have been affected by improvements in transportation and the development of Denton as a trading hub. Denton, originally known as Pig Point, was established at a ferry landing on the Choptank, just south of Melvill's Landing. In the late eighteenth century it became the county seat and the first courthouse was built there in 1797. A bridge replaced the ferry that had originally crossed the Choptank, as the town grew in the early nineteenth century.

**CAR-306**  
**William Noble House**  
**Denton, Caroline County, Maryland**

**Description**  
**Continuation Sheet 7.4**

The Revolutionary War affected the markets for local products, prompting a switch in agricultural production to wheat and other grains. By 1780, approximately one-third of the land was cultivated. Landings along the Choptank had always been important as a means of taking produce to market and receiving goods. Potter's Landing was first used around the middle of the eighteenth century. During the Revolution, the landing served as a depot for collecting supplies for the soldiers. The town of Williston, located a few miles southeast of the William Noble farm, grew up around the landing and early trading villages.

The county retained its agricultural character into the nineteenth century. Slaves were used on some of the plantations, but the slave population generally declined over time, with many freed between 1790 and 1860, reflecting the decline of tobacco farming. The population in Caroline County shrank in the early nineteenth century, primarily because of the exhaustion of land from tobacco-farming, the decline of tobacco and the falling agricultural economy. With the eclipse of tobacco as a major cash crop, most of the land was farmed by small self-sufficient landowners working without slaves and growing diversified crops. By the middle of the century, the Maryland Agricultural Society for the Eastern Shore was helping the farmers to plan marketable crops and improve the land. Local mid-nineteenth century farmers were raising sheep, cattle and chickens, and were growing Indian corn, oats, wheat, rye and potatoes.

There were important improvements in transportation. The first steamboat arrived in Denton before 1850, which provided for the easy transport of goods and people by water, as the steamboats made weekly trips between Denton and Baltimore.

In 1875 there was little settlement in the area south of Denton, in the vicinity of the William Noble House, although settlement had occurred nearby. Potter's Landing, to the southwest of the study area, plus other landings in the vicinity, indicate the importance of the Choptank River to the local economy. Railroads were eventually built in Caroline County in the second half of the nineteenth century. The Delaware and Chesapeake Railroad had been constructed to the north of the study area in the 1870's. By the end of the century, the Queen Anne Railroad had been laid through Denton and Hobbs, near the study area. The railroad stimulated population growth in Denton and the rural areas through the early twentieth century, with the result that Denton became the population and administrative center of the surrounding agricultural community.

By 1870, peaches were the prime agricultural crop. Strawberries replaced them as the dominant export in the early 1900's, after diseases had ruined the peach orchards. Vegetable production increased in the 1930s, and soybeans were introduced as a cash

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**William Noble House**

**Denton, Caroline County, Maryland**

**Description**

**Continuation Sheet 7.5**

crop in 1940. Many canneries appeared in Caroline County, among them the first tomato cannery in the United States. At the high point in 1920, Caroline County had at least 62 businesses canning peas and tomatoes. The William Noble farm was utilized to grow fruits and vegetables for sale to the local populations and to the canneries.

The county has always been predominantly rural, with towns centered on local industries or water. Caroline County prospered in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, following the introduction of the railroads that provided improved access to larger markets. Despite the consequent growth of established towns like Denton and the appearance of new towns like Goldsboro, Caroline County retained its rural and agricultural character.

Although sections of Caroline County were settled in the seventeenth century, the county was populated slowly and has retained its generally rural character. Little population growth has occurred outside of the small towns, with only scattered homes along rural roads. Much of the local development, including the extension of rail lines throughout the county, dates to the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Recent changes in the study area include the Denton bypass and road construction in the study area.

**CAR-306**  
**William Noble House**  
**Denton, Caroline County**

**Continuation Sheet 7.6**  
**Description**

**Chain of Title**

Austin and Virginia Murphy      To      William Engerman      104/1671  
112.47 acres      3/24/1944

William and Bertha Noble To      Austin and Virginia Murphy      97/535  
\$2,122 plus \$5,000 Mortgage      1/12/1938

**Three Parcels**

1. Clement Noble      To      William Noble      83/273  
and Hestor      82 acres      3/18/1899

Same land that Clement Noble  
purchased from Levi T. Dukes , Attorney,  
in a Land Division between William and Clement Noble

2. J. Boone Dukes, Trustee      To      William and Bertha Noble      69/204  
10.5 Acres      5/3/1904  
Will of Maria Louise Dukes  
Circuit Court, Equity Case 1120

3.. Harvey Cooper, Assignee      To      William Noble      77/322  
5/5/1915

Default on Loan (Nichols to Robert Wheeler, Mortgage Records 11/537)  
Auction, Sold for \$675  
13 Acres

Robert Wheeler      To      J. Edward Nichols      11/537  
3/29/1910

Line of Division between land  
of T. Boon Dukes and Clement Noble  
5 acres

J. Boon Dukes      To      Robert Wheeler      5/4/1904

**CAR-306**  
**William Noble House**  
**Denton, Caroline County, Maryland**

**Significance**  
**Continuation Sheet 8.1**

**Significance Summary**

The William Noble property is composed of an altered frame dwelling with one altered and likely original outbuilding, and three remaining agricultural outbuildings that likely date to the ownership of the Engermans in the last fifty years. One additional building, currently utilized as a beauty/barber shop, was moved by the current owner and converted to a variety of uses in at least three renovations. Of a ubiquitous architectural dwelling type, the William Noble House evokes little association with the past and is only marginally significant.

Built for use as a poultry operation by the current owners, the Engermans, in ca. 1950, the property owed its economic viability to improvements in transportation that occurred in the late nineteenth century with the arrival of railroad service. Growth in railroad technology and service led to a more effective transportation network in the years following 1870, which opened new markets for Caroline County's produce.

**Significance**

The William Noble House has been analyzed within the contexts of architecture and agriculture in relation to an historic period of increasing industrialization and urbanization (Maryland Historical Trust Historic Context—*Industrial/Urban Dominance, 1870 to 1930*). The William Noble House conforms to a standard, I-house design that is ubiquitous in Caroline County. Many of these dwellings, dating to the late nineteenth or early twentieth centuries, have two-story rear wings that give them an L or, occasionally, a T shape.

The William Noble House, although containing an agricultural complex, has little integrity because, for one, it is no longer used for agriculture, but has been largely sold off or subdivided, thus it is nearly surrounded by commercial and industrial development. Its agricultural integrity as a late nineteenth and twentieth century Caroline County farm has been compromised because only one period outbuilding likely pre-dating 1950 is extant, though modified. Other outbuildings currently on site (chicken house and machine shed) date to the mid to late-twentieth century.

The William Noble House has also been analyzed within the context of agriculture in relation to an historic period of increasing industrialization and urbanization (1870-1930), which was closely tied to the continued development of an extended

**CAR-306**

**William Noble House**

**Denton, Caroline County, Maryland**

**Significance**

**Continuation Sheet 8.2**

transportation network. Caroline County Houses owed their prosperity to the growth in railroad technology and service led to a more effective transportation network in the years following 1870, which opened new markets for the county's produce. Opportunities to transport perishable products such as fruits and vegetables quickly became, with vegetable production increased in the 1930s, and the introduction of soybean cultivation as a cash crop in 1940. Many canneries appeared in Caroline County, among them the first tomato cannery in the United States.

### **Evaluation of National Register Eligibility**

The William Noble House, located in Caroline County, is a L-shaped frame dwelling built in ca. 1900. Likely constructed on a portion of the large estate, called Plaindealing (CAR-9), which was sold by the descendants of the Dukes family, the property was owned by the Noble and Murphy families in the first half of the twentieth century. William and Virginia Engerman subsequently converted it to a chicken farm upon their purchase in 1944. Only the dwelling retains its historical appearance on its original location, despite considerable alteration of the interior, which has been largely re-built. The remaining buildings either date from the last few decades, been moved to the site, or have been radically altered. The property has been subdivided, with much commercial development and an industrial park, encompassing most of the original property.

The William Noble House has been evaluated in light of the National Register criteria, with a careful consideration of the criteria of integrity. It has no documented history, insofar as we have been able to determine, as the location of a store, post office, or any known association with the historical identity of the region. Thus it does not convey a strong connection with the past, or an immediate association or feeling in an historic sense of a particular period of time. In its present state it conveys little association with any historic event or person.

No information has come to light that indicates any association of this dwelling with persons important in history on any level. In its current modified state, it does not retain key elements required by the national register criteria as regards integrity. It does not retain a high degree of integrity of design, materials, feeling, or association with the past. In sum, the William Noble House does not convey a significant historical link with the history of the county, region or state, and therefore is not likely to meet the criteria of listing in the National Register of Historic Places.

This building has been evaluated under National Register of Historic Places Criteria A, B, and C. It does not meet the requirements for significance under Criterion C for its

**CAR-306**  
**William Noble House**  
**Denton, Caroline County, Maryland**

**Significance**  
**Continuation Sheet 8.3**

architectural merit because of its extensive alteration. It is not known to have been associated with significant historical events or persons, and is not, therefore, eligible for listing in the NRHP under Criteria A or B.

The William Noble House does not appear to meet any of the National Register criteria, which are listed below:

- a. Association with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history; or
- b. Association with the lives of persons significant in our past; or
- c. Embodiment of the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or works of a master, or that possesses high artistic values, or that represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction; or
- d. Potential to yield information important in prehistory or history. No construction impacts have been determined to occur in an archeologically sensitive area of this property with this project, thus archeological studies are not warranted.

MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST REVIEW  
Eligibility recommended \_\_\_\_\_  
Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

Eligibility not recommended

Reviewer, Office of Preservation  
Services: *Christina*

Date: *Feb. 12, 1999*

Reviewer, NR  
program: *Rebecca*

Date: *9/2/99*

*JMS*

**CAR-306**

**William Noble House**

**Denton, Caroline County, Maryland**

### **9.1 Major Bibliographical References**

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Cochrane, L.C., et.al. History of Caroline County, Maryland. Baltimore: Regional Publishing Company, 1971.

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**CAR-306**

**William Noble House**

**Denton, Caroline County, Maryland**

**Continuation Sheet 9.2**

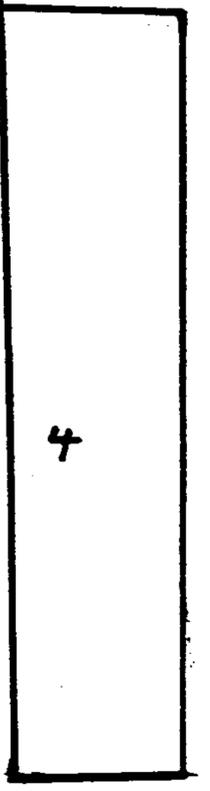
**Major Bibliographical References**

Stein, Elaine. "Caroline's Farming Began in 1660", in Caroline County's Story of Progress During the 350<sup>th</sup> Year of the Founding of Maryland, edited by Nona Medford. pp. 24-25. Denton, Maryland: Caroline County Committee for the Celebration of the 350th Year of the Founding of Maryland, 1984.

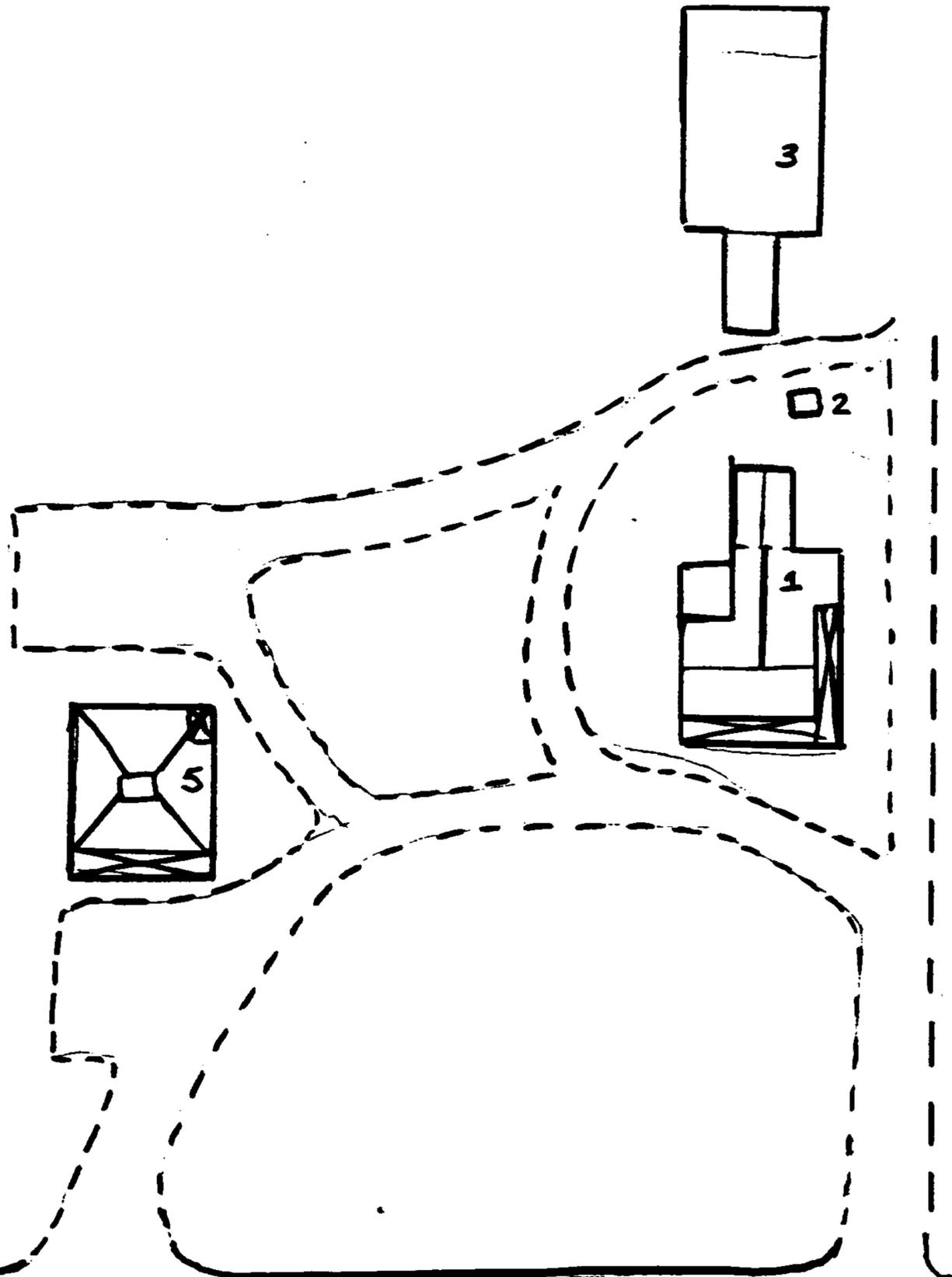
Truitt, Charles J. Breadbasket of the Revolution: Delmarva 's Turbulent War Years. Salisbury, Maryland: Historical Books, Inc., 1975.

USGS Quadrangles for Denton, Maryland (7.5 minute edition of 1905).

CAR-306  
William Noble House  
Denton, Caroline County, Maryland  
Sketch Map-Not to Scale

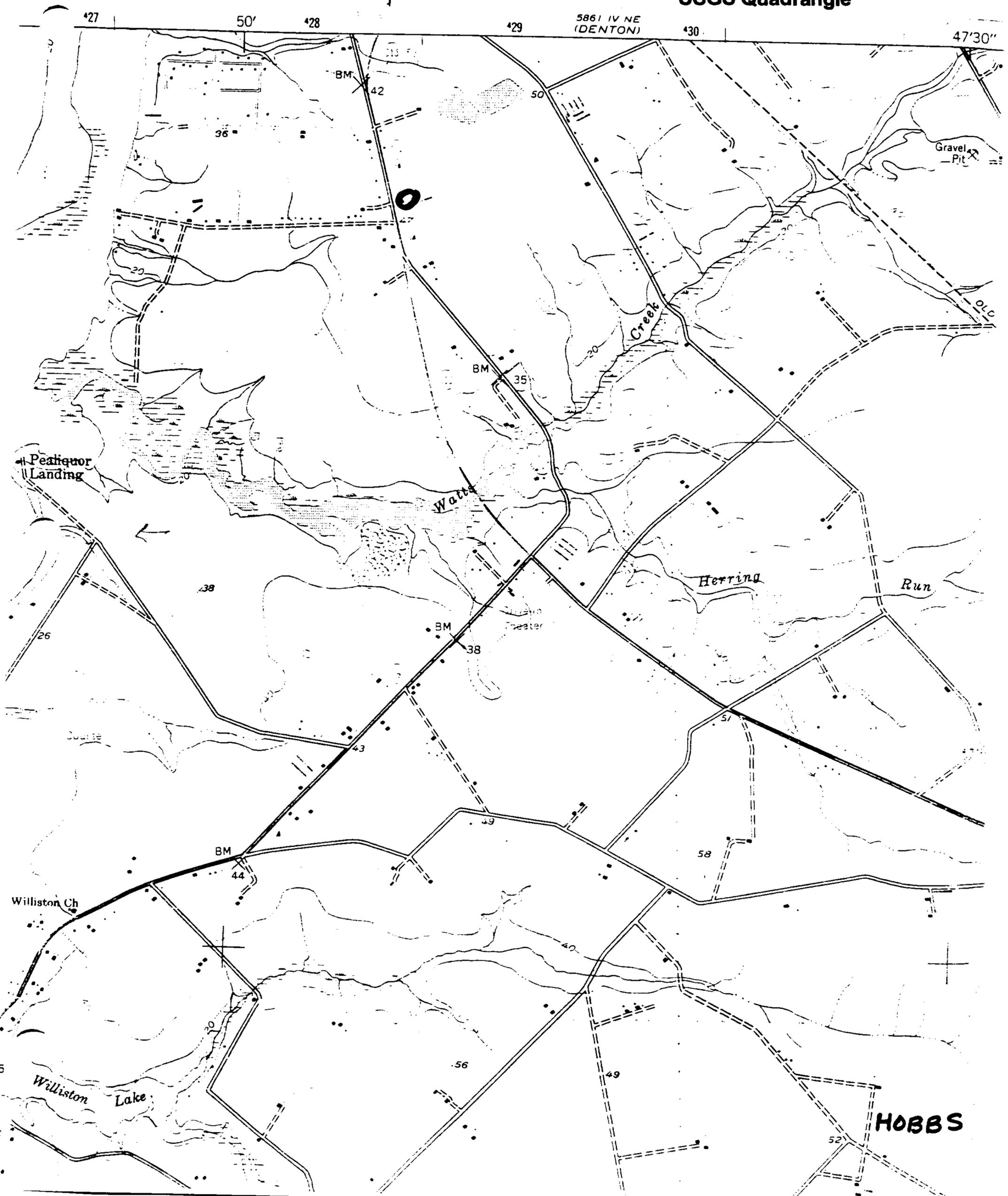


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MD 404

**CAR-306**  
**William Noble House**  
**Denton, Caroline County, Maryland**  
**Location map**  
**USGS Quadrangle**





CAR 306

William Noble House

Denton, Caroline

Ruffness 10/98

keys at mid SHPO

Dwelling

~~WEST~~ Entrance Facade

1/12



CAR 306

William Noble House

Denton, Caroline County

R Sufferer 10/98

negs at MD SHPO

Dwelling  
SW corner

2/12



CAN 306

William Noble House

Denton, Caroline County

R Suffern 10/98

negs at MD SHPo

SE corner

3/12



CAR 306

William Noble House

Denton, Caroline County

Ruffner 10/98

negs at MD SHPE

North Elevation

4/12



CAR 306

William Noble House

Denton, Caroline County

Ruffer 10/98

negs at MD SHPO

Dwelling

~~NE~~ corner

5/12



CAR 306

William Noble House

Denton, Caroline County

R Suffren 10/98

negs at MD SHPo

Pumphouse SE Elevator

6/12



CAR 306

William Noble House

Denton, Caroline County

R Suffern 10/98

keys at md (1+00)

Apartment House

South Elevator

7/12



CAR 306

William Noble House

Denton, Caroline County

R Suffren 10/98

Keys at MD SHPO

Wagon shed, attached to  
Apartment Bldg.

SW Corner

8/12

MANUE  
BY



CAR 306

William Noble Howe

Denton, Caroline County

Ruffness 10/98

men's at MD SHP v.

Farmer Chichen House

NW corner

9/12



CAR 306

William Noble House  
Denton, Caroline County

Ruffen 10/98  
negs at MD SHPL

Former gas station, moved.  
converted to motel, then  
offices

S. elevation

10/12



CAR 306

William Noble Horne

Denton, Caroline County

12 suffrage 10/98

negs at M D S H O O

Former gas station, moved,

converted to motel

then office, since 1960

W. Elevator

11/12



CHEVROLET



7

CAR 306

William Noble Howe  
Denton, Caroline Cty

R Suffern 10/98

negs at MDSTAPO

Former gas station, moved ca 1960

~~East~~ Elevation

12/12