MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST
DETERMINATION OF ELIGIBILITY FORM

NR Eligible: yes ___
no ___

Property Name: Cornelius & Elizabeth Johnson House Inventory Number: CH - 246

Address: 5650 Gilwell Place City: Mason Springs/Indian Head Zip Code: 20640

County: Charles USGS Topographic Map: Port Tobacco Quad

Owner: David Allen Boswell Is the property being evaluated a district? ____yes

Tax Parcel Number: 108 Tax Map Number: 21 Tax Account ID Number: 10 - 000424

Project: Mason Springs Cell Site – Verizon Agency: FCC

Site visit by MHT Staff: _____no ___yes Name: _____ Date: _____

Is the property located within a historic district? ____yes X no

If the property is within a district District Inventory Number: _____

NR-listed district ____yes Eligible district ____yes District Name: _____

Preparer's Recommendation: Contributing resource ___yes ___no Non-contributing but eligible in another context ____

If the property is not within a district (or the property is a district)

Preparer's Recommendation: Eligible ____yes X no

Criteria: ___A ___B ___C ___D Considerations: ____A ___B ___C ___D ___E ___F ___G ___None

Documentation on the property/district is presented in: MIHP

Description of Property and Eligibility Determination: *(Use continuation sheet if necessary and attach map and photo)*

Located on about five (5) acres on the east side of Mason Springs Road (Rte. 425), it is situated at the end of the dirt road known as Gilwell Place. The frame structure is sited in an open and grassy field. The architectural description of the main residential structure is in keeping with the MIHP form prepared in 1998, however the building has been modified in several significant ways. Both portions of the building have been re-sided in aluminum siding; all of the windows have been replaced with one-over-one double hung sash, aluminum frames; the roof is now an asphalt shingle finish; and new decking/porch construction has been added adjacent to the house. The only apparent original features of the structure are the two decorative wooden porch supports at the front entrance of the ca. 1900 portion of the house. The outbuildings are also extant as described in the MIHP form, but in these cases neglect has caused significant deterioration. New construction also has been added in areas adjacent to the historic outbuildings. The site has been compromised over the years and at this time eligibility for individual listing on the National Register is not recommended.

Prepared by: Kate Mahood Date Prepared: 1-11-03

MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST REVIEW

Eligibility recommended ____ **Eligibility not recommended** x

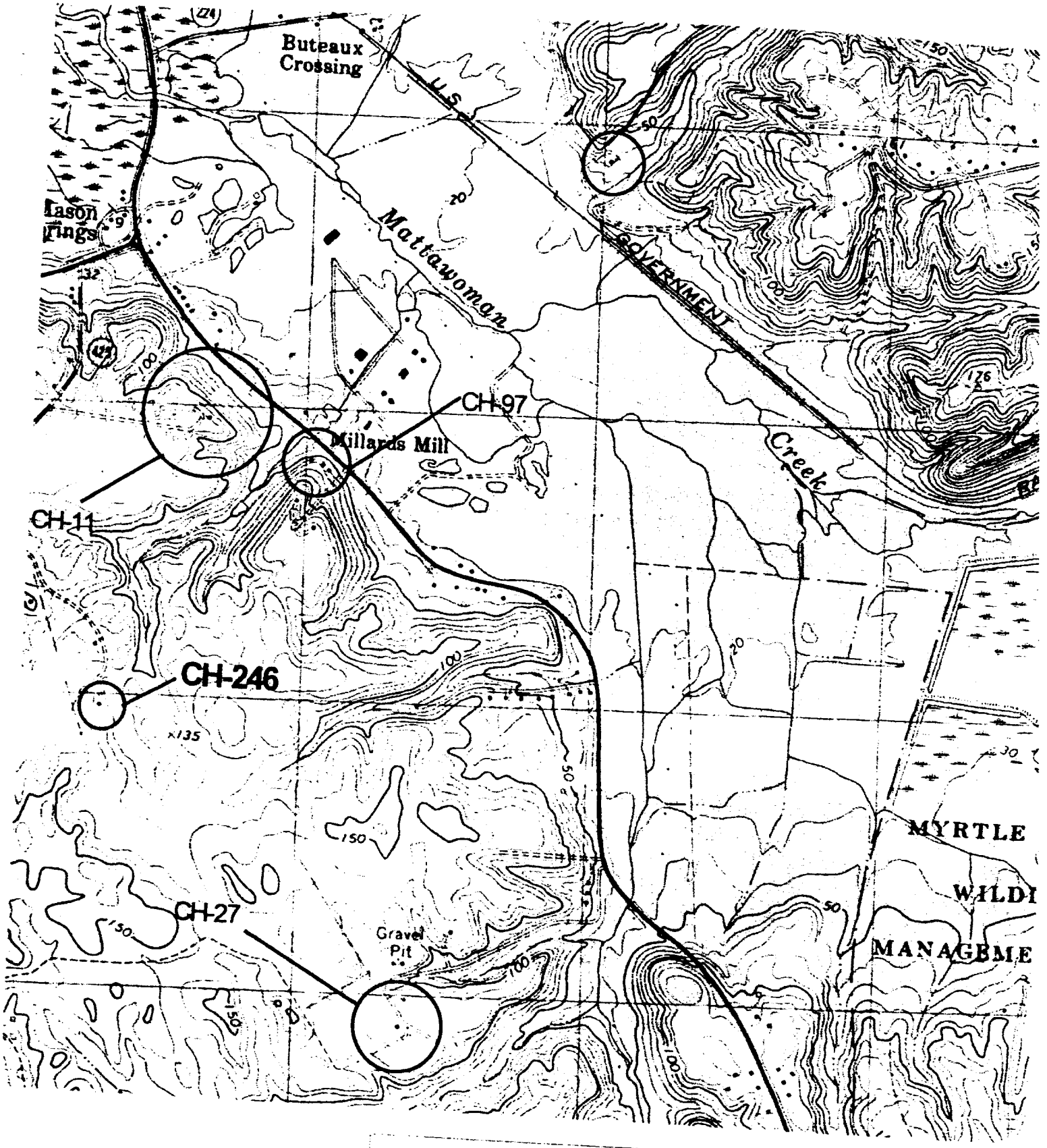
Criteria: ___A ___B ___C ___D **Considerations:** ___A ___B ___C ___D ___E ___F ___G ___None

Comments: _____

3/5/03

Reviewer, Office of Preservation Services **Date**

Reviewer, NR Program **Date**



N

Cornelius Johnson House
Charles County, MD

CH-246

PORT TOBACCO, MD QUAD
(1966) 1978

CH - 246

The Cornelius & Elizabeth Johnson HSE

5650 Gilwell Place

Charles County (Mason Springs Vic.) MD

Photographer: KK Mahood / Jan 10, 2003

Neg. w/ Shipp

Main House, South Facade

Photo 1 of 4

CH - 246
The Cornelius & Elizabeth Johnson House
5650 GILWELL PLACE
MASON SPRINGS VIC., CHARLES CO, MD
KKHALLOID / JAN 10, 2003
NEGATIVE W/ SHPO
MAIN HOUSE, LOOKING EAST
PHOTO 2 OF 4

CH - 246
The Cornelius & Elizabeth Johnson House
5650 GILWELL PLACE
MASON SPRINGS, VIC., CHAS. CO, MD
KKMAHOOD / JANUARY 10, 2003
NEGATIVE W/ SHPO
MAIN HOUSE, LOOKING SOUTH
PHOTO 3 OF 4

CH-246
The Cornelius & Elizabeth Johnson Hse
5650 GILWELL PLACE
MASON SPRINGS VIC., CHAS. CO., MD
KKMATTOON / JANUARY 10, 2003
NEGATIVE W/ SHPO
~~MAIN~~ + OUTBUILDING, WEST OF MAIN HSE.
PHOTO # 4 OF 4

CH-246 **circa 1900**
Cornelius & Elizabeth Johnson House
Mason Springs vic.
Private

Standing on a small secluded parcel east of Mason Springs Road, the Johnson House consists of two distinct parts. One portion, built around 1900, appears as a modest Vernacular Victorian frame house. The second portion is, reputedly, a 1-story side gable former slave quarter once associated with the nearby "Araby" plantation. Although little firm evidence confirms this description, the unusual form of the dwelling's second part indicates that it is possible. Several 20th century outbuildings accompany the main dwelling on the Johnson property.

The Johnson House is an interesting example of combination architecture. It appears that two disparate parts were brought together to form a new dwelling house. One portion, a typical turn-of-the-20th-century frame house, is a common type in rural areas of Charles County. The other section is, reputedly, the remains of a former slave quarter associated with the "Araby" farm to the north. The house has been significantly altered on the exterior, and thus, is difficult to study. However, oral evidence indicates that prior to the circa-1900 construction of the Victorian section, the site was occupied, and that the frame wing was originally used as a slave quarter. Together with its unusual form, this suggests that the frame wing either originally stood on this property (as a part of Araby) or was moved here prior to 1900, and was then occupied as a single-family residence.

MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST Inventory No. CH-246
MD INVENTORY OF HISTORIC PROPERTIES

==========

1. Name of Property

==========

historic name Cornelius & Elizabeth Johnson House
common/other name _____

==========

2. Location

==========

street & number 5650 Gilwell Place not for publication _____
city or town Mason Springs vicinity X state Maryland code MD
county Charles code 017 zip code 20640

==========

3. State/Federal Agency Certification N/A

==========

==========

4. National Park Service Certification N/A

==========

==========

5. Classification

==========

Ownership of Property (Check all that apply)

X private
____ public-local
____ public-State
____ public-Federal

Category of Property (Check only one box)

X building(s)
____ district
____ site
____ structure
____ object

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing	Noncontributing	
5	0	buildings
0	0	sites
0	0	structures
0	0	objects
5	0	Total

Is this property listed in the National Register?
Yes ____ Name of Listing _____
No X

MARYLAND INVENTORY OF HISTORIC PROPERTIES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Inventory No. CH-246

==========

6. Function or Use

==========

Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat:	Sub:
DOMESTIC	Single dwelling
AGRICULTURE/Processing	Tobacco barn

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat:	Sub:
DOMESTIC	Single dwelling

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7. Description

==========

Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)

Vernacular Victorian

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)

foundation solid: poured concrete
roof cross gable: asphalt shingles
walls frame: vinyl siding
other roof (1-story section): side gable asphalt shingles

Narrative Description (Describe the historic and current condition of the property.)

See Continuation Sheet No. 7-1

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8. Statement of Significance

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Applicable National Register Criteria (Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing)

____ A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.

____ B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.

_X_ C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.

____ D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations (Mark "X" in all the boxes that apply.)

____ A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.

____ B removed from its original location.

____ C a birthplace or a grave.

____ D a cemetery.

____ E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.

____ F a commemorative property.

____ G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

MARYLAND INVENTORY OF HISTORIC PROPERTIES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Inventory No. CH-246

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Areas of Significance (Enter categories from instructions)
ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance circa 1900

Significant Dates circa 1900

Significant Person (Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

Cultural Affiliation Undefined

Architect/Builder Unknown

Narrative Statement of Significance (Explain the significance of the property.)

See Continuation Sheet No. 8-1

CH-246

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9. Major Bibliographical References
==========
(Cite the books, articles, legal records, and other sources used in preparing this form.)

Brown, Jack D., et al. *Charles County, Maryland, A History*. Charles County Bicentennial Committee, 1976.

Charles County Land Records, Charles County Courthouse, La Plata, Maryland.

Klapthor, Margaret Brown. *The History of Charles County, Maryland*. La Plata, MD: Charles County Tercentenary, Inc., 1958.

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10. Geographical Data
==========
Acreage of Property 5.285 acres

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

The property at 5650 Gilwell Place is designated as Parcel 108 on Map 21, Grid 13 on the Charles County Property Map.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The dwelling at 5650 Gilwell Place has been associated with Parcel 108, Map 21 since its construction circa 1900.

==========
11. Form Prepared By
==========
name/title Kathryn Gettings Smith, Architectural Historian
organization Charles County Planning Dept. date December 1,1998
street & number P.O. Box B telephone 301-645-0689
city or town La Plata state MD zip code 20646
==========
12. Property Owner
==========
name David Allen Boswell
street & number 5650 Gilwell Place telephone 301-743-3656
city or town Indian Head state MD zip code 20640
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Standing on a small secluded parcel east of Mason Springs Road, the Johnson House consists of two distinct parts. One portion, built around 1900, appears as a modest Vernacular Victorian frame house. The second portion is, reputedly, a 1-story side gable former slave quarter once associated with the nearby "Araby" plantation. Although little firm evidence confirms this description, the unusual form of the dwelling's second part indicates that it is possible. Several 20th century outbuildings surround accompany the main dwelling on the Johnson property.

The Johnson House occupies a 5.3-acre site on the east side of Mason Springs Road at the end of Gilwell Place. Bordered by forested areas, the site is open and grassy with a dirt and gravel driveway approaching the house from the west. The dwelling faces north, and only a few scattered young trees grow on the property.

The house consists of two sections a 2-story, "L"-shaped frame Victorian-style house, and a 1-story side gable frame wing. The Victorian-era house was built circa 1900, while the 1-story wing may be what remains of an early 19th century slave quarter associated with the "Araby" property to the north (CH-11, "Araby"). However, no physical evidence, other than its form, corroborates this date or use.

The circa 1900 section of the dwelling displays typical Vernacular Victorian features. It is two stories in height with an "L'-shaped footprint and a cross gable roof with open eaves. The foundation consists of solid poured concrete and the frame structure has been reclad in vinyl siding. The roof has also been reclad with asphalt shingles. A 1-story, 2-bay porch with a shed roof extends off the west and north walls of the house. Supported by turned wood posts, the porch features decorative scroll-sawn brackets. The window sash throughout has been replaced, mainly with 2/2 modern wood sash.

The north or facade elevation of the circa-1900 section contains just two bays at the first story, one entrance bay containing a single-leaf panel-and-light door, and one window with modern 2/2 wood sash. The facade's second story is occupied by two replacement 2/2 sash windows.

The west elevation is pierced by a single window bay at each story. Again, each opening contains replacement 2/2 sash.

The southern, or rear, elevation, again displays few openings.

Replacement sash fills the single first story window, as well as the one second story opening.

No openings pierce the circa-1900 section on its east gable end where it attaches to the 1-story wing.

The 1-story eastern wing displays an unusual. Its elongated rectangular form, and steeply pitched side gable roof are more indicative of a 19th century dependency. Possibly, this wing was moved to this property, or was added to when the circa-1900 Victorian house was built. Little physical evidence sheds light on its origins, however. At the time of the survey, the surveyor was unable to gain entrance to the interior, nor examine the under structure or attic space.

The wing stands on what appears to be a pier foundation. The foundation's materials and design are obscured by a metal curtain hung from the sill of the building and extending into the ground. The wing has been reclad with vinyl siding and its roof covered in asphalt shingles. The cornice has been encased in aluminum, and a louvered vented added to the east gable end. The wing is currently used as a combination kitchen/dining room.

The north elevation of the wing contains three window openings. From east to west, these contain one 1/1 metal sash windows, two single-light sliding panes, and one 2/2 modern sash. No openings, other than the vent, pierce the east gable end. The rear, or south wall, of the wing displays four irregularly placed openings. One is a single-leaf panel-and-light wood door. Flanked by single 2/2 modern sash windows. The last bay to the east holds a single window opening that contains a 1/1 sash window.

OUTBUILDINGS:

Several outbuildings share the property with the main dwelling house. These include an early 20th century tobacco barn and three sheds. The 1-story tobacco barn is quickly deteriorating. It consists of a 1-story central frame section with sheds extending off either transverse side. The central section is framed with hewn and lapped sills set on a wood pier foundation and circular sawn vertical framing members. Wire nails were used in its construction and vertical board siding clads the exterior. The roof is covered in corrugated metal, and the shed additions are constructed of unhewn post-in-ground supports. The building is

typical of early 20th century tobacco barns in southern Maryland.

A 20th century toolshed stands just west of the tobacco barn. This shed has a gable-front design with vertical board cladding and a corrugated metal roof. It appears to be a post-in-ground structure built during the first half of the 20th century.

A second shed stands a short distance southwest of the main house. This shed appears to have been erected during the first half of the 20th century, and features a sloping shed roof, vertical board siding and a standing seam metal roof.

The third shed stands on post-in-ground supports approximately 75 feet southeast of the house. Like the other two sheds, it is clad in vertical boards and dates to the first half of the 20th century. The roof is clad in corrugated metal sheets.

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The Johnson House is an interesting example of combination architecture. It appears that two disparate parts were brought together to form a new dwelling house. One portion, a typical turn-of-the-20th-century frame house, is a common type in rural areas of Charles County. The other section is, reputedly, the remains of a former slave quarter associated with the "Araby" farm to the north. The house has been significantly altered on the exterior, and thus, is difficult to study. However, oral evidence indicates that prior to the circa-1900 construction of the Victorian section, the site was occupied, and that the frame wing was originally used as a slave quarter. Together with its unusual form, this suggests that the frame wing either originally stood on this property (as a part of Araby) or was moved here prior to 1900, and was then occupied as a single-family residence.

According to the property's former owner, his great grandmother and grandfather moved to this property in the 1890s, and his great Aunt was born there between 1896 and 1898. Land records show, however, that Cornelius and Elizabeth Johnson first purchased this property in 1901 from Charlotte J., Elizabeth M., Park, C. Mary, and Charles H. Wills and B.W.B. McPherson. The 10-acre lot cost $450, and was described as a portion of a farm known as "Araby." It was at this time that the 2-story Vernacular Victorian section was built. It is possible that part of the Johnson family occupied the supposed former slave quarters as tenants prior to their purchase of the property in 1901.

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In 1956, Cornelius Johnson's widow, Elizabeth, sold the property to Clara I. Ayers with the condition that she would retain a life estate on the property. In 1981, Ayers passed the property on to Joseph Cleveland & Mary Ellen Boswell, again with a life estate clause. By this time the lot had diminished in size to its present five acres. The current owner is Joseph & Mary Ellen Boswell's son, David Allen Boswell, who acquired the property in 1995.

The lack of concrete physical or archival evidence documenting the original construction date and use of the frame wing makes it difficult to assess this property. The presence of a former slave quarter would obviously make it a much rarer, more significant site.

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HISTORIC CONTEXT:

Geographic Organization: Western Shore

Chronological/Development Period (s):

Agricultural-Industrial Transition, 1815-1870
Industrial/Urban Dominance, 1870-1930

Prehistoric/Historic Period Theme (s):

ARCHITECTURE

RESOURCE TYPE(S)

Category: Building

Historic Environment: Rural

Historic Function (s): DOMESTIC/Single dwelling

Known Design Source: Unknown

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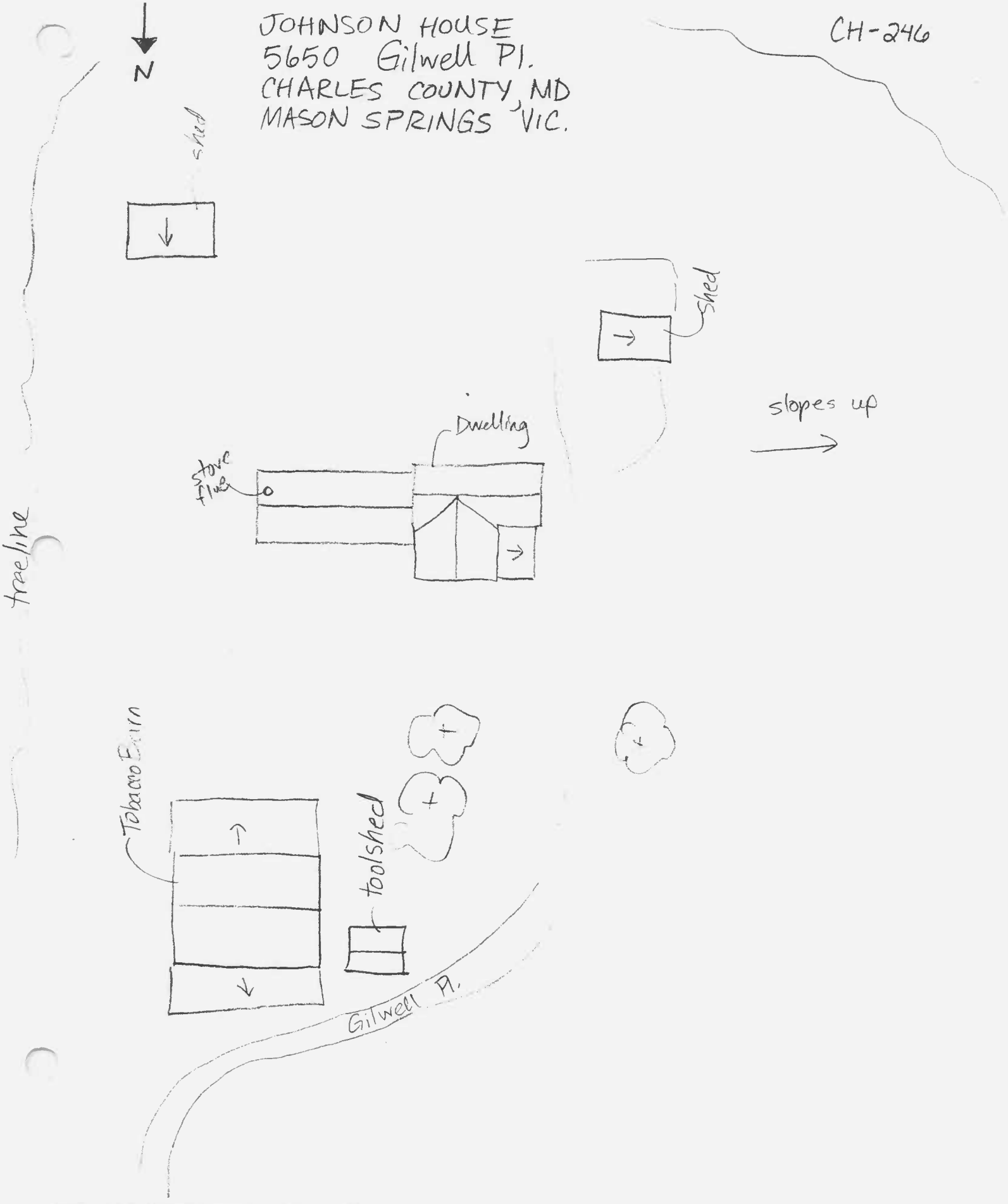
Chain of Title:

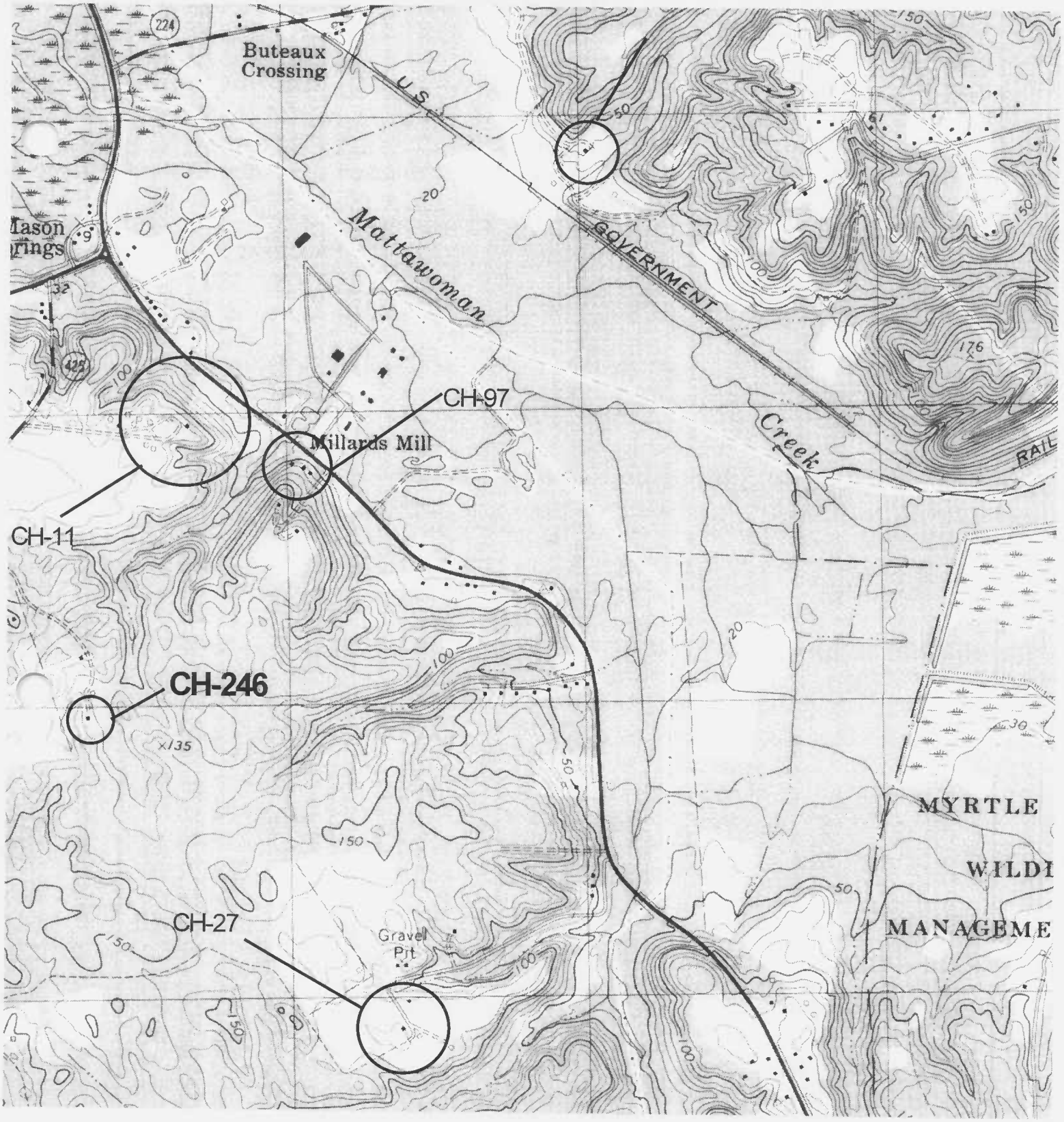
December 16, 1901:	Charlotte J. Wills, Elizabeth M. Wills, Park Wills, C. Mary Wills, Charles H. Wills & B.W.B. McPherson to Cornelius & Elizabeth Johnson $450 Portion of the farm known as Araby Charles County Land Records Liber BGS 12 Folio 413
February 19, 1913:	Cornelius Johnson to Elizabeth Johnson Charles County Land Records Liber HCC 25 Folio 332
November 13, 1956:	Elizabeth Charlotte Johnson, widow to Clara I. Ayers 10 acres With life estate for Elizabeth Charles County Land Records Liber 127 Folio 57
July 16, 1981:	Clara I. Ayers to Joseph Cleveland & Mary Ellen Boswell 5.285 acres Charles County Land Records Liber 792 Folio 75
November 2, 1995:	Joseph Cleveland & Mary Ellen Boswell to David Allen Boswell (their son) 5.285 acres Parcel "C" on plat by D.H. Steffens, June 4, 1981 (Plat Book 30, Folio 32) Charles County Land Records Liber 2179 Folio 246

RESOURCE SKETCH MAP
10/98

JOHNSON HOUSE
5650 Gilwell Pl.
CHARLES COUNTY, MD
MASON SPRINGS VIC.

CH-246





N

Cornelius Johnson House
Charles County, MD

CH-246

PORT TOBACCO, MD QUAD
(1966) 1978

CH-246
CORNELIUS JOHNSON HOUSE
CHARLES COUNTY, MD
K.G. SMITH
10/98
MARYLAND SHPO
FACADE
1 OF 7

CH-246
CORNELIUS JOHNSON HOUSE
CHARLES COUNTY, MD
K.G. SMITH
10/98
MARYLAND SHPO
MAIN DWELLING, LOOKING NE
2 OF 7

CH-246
CORNELIUS JOHNSON HOUSE
CHARLES COUNTY, MD
K.G. SMITH
10/98
MARYLAND SHPO
TOBACCO BARN - LOOKING SW
4 OF 7

CH-246
CORNELIUS JOHNSON HOUSE
CHARLES COUNTY, MD
K.G. SMITH
10/98
MARYLAND SHPO
LOOKING SW
3 OF 7

CH-246
CORNELIUS JOHNSON HOUSE
CHARLES COUNTY, MD
K.G. SMITH
10/98
MARYLAND SHPO
TOOLSHED - LOOKING NE
5 OF 7

CH-246
CORNELIUS JOHNSON HOUSE
CHARLES COUNTY, MD
K.G. SMITH
10/98
MARYLAND SHPO
SHED - LOOKING SW
6 OF 7

CH-246
CORNELIUS JOHNSON HOUSE
CHARLES COUNTY, MD
K.G. SMITH
10/98
MARYLAND SHPO
SHED - LOOKING NE
7 OF 7