CT-110

CLVT- 1[illegible]10
GROSS-JOHNSON HOUSE
Port Republic
Private

2nd quarter 19th century

This house began its history as a 1 1/2-story log slave house. Similar in plan to many Calvert County folk houses, it has the front entrance in the center bay of the gable end, oriented toward the road. The interior originally consisted of two rooms, "one up and one down." Over the years succeeding generations of the Johnson family have modified the house in a medley of styles, and it and the surrounding acreage remain in their possession.

CT-110

MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST Mag. # 0501105404

INVENTORY FORM FOR STATE HISTORIC SITES SURVEY

1 NAME

HISTORIC: THE GROSS JOHNSON HOUSE

AND/OR COMMON:

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER: North side of Hance Rd., 0.5 mile west of Jct. of Hance Rd. and Broome's Island Rd.

CITY, TOWN: Mutual X VICINITY OF

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT: 1

STATE: Maryland

COUNTY: Calvert

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE	
__DISTRICT	__PUBLIC	X OCCUPIED	__AGRICULTURE	__MUSEUM
__BUILDING(S)	X PRIVATE	__UNOCCUPIED	__COMMERCIAL	__PARK
X STRUCTURE	__BOTH	__WORK IN PROGRESS	__EDUCATIONAL	X PRIVATE RESIDENCE
__SITE	**PUBLIC ACQUISITION**	**ACCESSIBLE**	__ENTERTAINMENT	__RELIGIOUS
__OBJECT	__IN PROCESS	X YES: RESTRICTED	__GOVERNMENT	__SCIENTIFIC
	__BEING CONSIDERED	__YES: UNRESTRICTED	__INDUSTRIAL	__TRANSPORTATION
		__NO	__MILITARY	__OTHER

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME: Mr. Albert Johnson Telephone #: 301-586-0123

STREET & NUMBER: Box 42 Hance Road

CITY, TOWN: Port Republic __ VICINITY OF

STATE, zip code: Md.

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.: County Courthouse, Registry of Deeds

Liber #: AWR 1

Folio #: 369

STREET & NUMBER:

CITY, TOWN: Prince Frederick

STATE: Md.

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE: NONE

DATE:

__FEDERAL __STATE __COUNTY __LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:

CITY, TOWN:

STATE:

CT-110

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
__EXCELLENT	__DETERIORATED	__UNALTERED	X ORIGINAL SITE
__GOOD	__RUINS	X ALTERED	__MOVED DATE_____
X FAIR	__UNEXPOSED		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Additions to the original log block of this house have been built, destroyed, and replaced, and today they almost encase the old section, but it remains the core.

The house stands at the end of a long dirt drive that passes through abandonned fields that the present owner and occupant, Albert Johnson, once farmed as did his ancestors. The gable end faces the dirt drive and constitutes the front of the house, an orientation frequently found in small farm houses in Calvert County. Today this facade is sheltered by a screen porch built by Johnson, but an earlier photograph of the 1930's in his possession shows his parents (Edward Gross and Eliza Johnson) seated in front of the house which at that time had no porch, only one bay(the door), and exposed log walls. Copies of that photograph were taken as a part of this survey.

The original log block stood one and a half stories and consisted of one room downstairs and another upstairs. In the S.W. corner of the downstairs a narrow dog-leg boxed stairway enclosed by a door ascended the southern wall. A small closet was built under the stairs, a feature commonly found in houses cramped for storage space. A door now leads through the western wall to the storage rooms added by Mr. Johnson; this may have been a small window originally. In the eastern wall a doorway leads into the rooms of the frame additions. In the center of the northern gable end is a large, stone fireplace that was once used for cooking. It is now boarded over and a wood stove installed. Since county housing codes have prohibited, according to the Johnsons, the installation of electricity in this sagging old house, the wood stove continues to be used for cooking and to heat the house.

The upstairs room was unheated and had one 2 x 2 light, double hung sash window in the southern gable end that probably replaced a wooden shutter. The roofing rafters and doorway made by the additions of Johnson's father remain. The original upstairs had no ceiling, and the rafters were sawn, half-lapped and pegged at the peak.

According to Johnson, his father, Edward Gross moved into this house about 55 years ago, when it was a part of the Dorsey Plantation where he worked as a sharecropper. Soon afterwards, Gross doubled the size of the 2 room house by building a log 1 and a half story addition whose axis was perpendicular to the eastern side of the original block. It consisted of one room downstairs and another upstairs, both connected to the adjacent rooms of the original block by doorways. When Hurricane Hazel of recent fame cut her swath through Maryland, she demolished this log addition. Johnson then replaced it with 1 story frame wing which consisted of a "sitting room" adjacent to the main block, a large bedroom, and at the farthest end, a smaller bedroom. The upstairs was not used. At the same time Johnson built more additions to the west side of the house, thus closing from view the original house except at its back length.

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

CT-110

8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
__PREHISTORIC	__ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	__COMMUNITY PLANNING	__LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	__RELIGION
__1400-1499	X ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	__CONSERVATION	__LAW	__SCIENCE
__1500-1599	X AGRICULTURE	__ECONOMICS	__LITERATURE	__SCULPTURE
__1600-1699	X ARCHITECTURE	X EDUCATION	__MILITARY	__SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
__1700-1799	__ART	__ENGINEERING	__MUSIC	__THEATER
X 1800-1899	__COMMERCE	__EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	__PHILOSOPHY	__TRANSPORTATION
__1900-	__COMMUNICATIONS	__INDUSTRY	__POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	X OTHER (SPECIFY)
		__INVENTION		

Black, Social Histories

SPECIFIC DATES

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

This log house is the only one that remains of the three that once stood in this vicinity on the Dorsey plantation. According to Albert Johnson, these houses were all considered to be quite old by everyone on the plantation in the early 1900's when he was young, and they were probably slave hosues.

According to Johnson, his father had been raised on the Dorsey Plantation and soon after World War I moved into this house. In the 1930's his father, mother and their children moved out of this house and into the Dorsey's large, antebellum home on the south side of Hance Rd., a short distance away. Here they lived along with their son Albert Johnson, his wife and children. In 1944 Marion Dorsey Ross deeded to Edward Gross the 36 acres on which this house stood, and the Grosses returned to their log house, and the plantation house was once more occupied by the Dorseys. In 1956 Albert Johnson inherited this house from his father, Edwin Gross, and has lived here since, having raised six children in this house.

The design, construction, and traditions conveyed by persons whose ancestry is rooted in this plantation indicate as conclusively as possible in the absence of written or structural evidence that this log house began its history as a slave house. Two succeeding generations in the 20th century have modified and enlarged it in response to family needs for space and desires for style within the limits of their financial capability. Throughout they have used familiar designs and construction materials which were familiar, inexpensive, and readily available. The result is a house that began simply, that has never been built "to square", and that from its builders has acquired the distinctive characteristics of an individual.

According to the Johnons, the costs of repairing this house to satisfy the county codes for the installation of electricity would be almost as much as the down payment on another home. Thus, this house may be replaced by a "Jim Walters home", as the Mr. and Mrs. Johnson both desire to live in a house with electricity before they die.

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

CT-110

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY _____

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE COUNTY

STATE COUNTY

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE
George W. McDaniel, Historic Sites Surveyor

ORGANIZATION
Md. Commission on Afro-American History & Culture

DATE

STREET & NUMBER
20 Dean Street

TELEPHONE
269-2893

CITY OR TOWN
Annapolis, Maryland

STATE

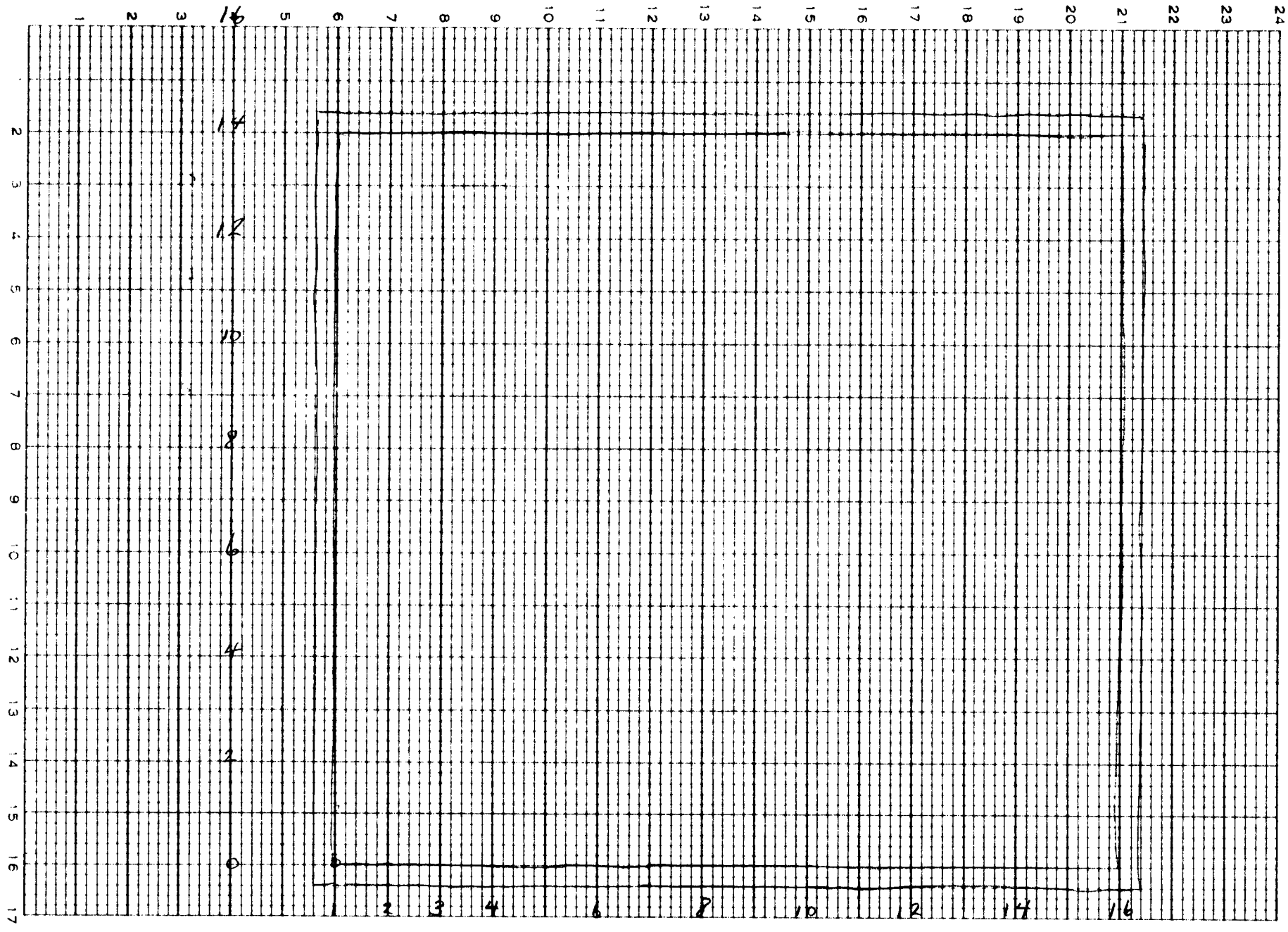
The Maryland Historic Sites Inventory was officially created by an Act of the Maryland Legislature, to be found in the Annotated Code of Maryland, Article 41, Section 181 KA, 1974 Supplement.

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
The Shaw House, 21 State Circle
Annapolis, Maryland 21401
(301) 267-1438

PS-1108

ALBERT JOHNSON



CT-110

CT-110

Johnson House
CLXT-110

Facade
S Elev.
Port Republic, Md.

CREDIT TO
GEORGE W McDANIEL

CT-110

CREDIT TO
GEORGE W. McDANIEL

CT-110

011-10

Lyndon Johnson Library
CL V 7-11

Page from the photo
album

Top & bottom left photos
are of Johnson speaking
in front of Kennedy by
[illegible]
[illegible] before changing

CT-110