

CT-1183

Parran/Bond Tobacco Barn
Port Republic
Calvert County

Capsule Summary

The Parran/Bond tobacco barn is a rectangular, timber-framed structure constructed about 1861 for John T. Bond, one of a group of progressive farmers in the Port Republic area of Calvert County who experimented with an innovative tobacco curing method in the 1860s. Facing increased labor costs and a declining tobacco market, these innovators sought to improve the value of their crop by controlling the quality of the product. In its general form and construction, it is typical of tobacco barns in the lower Southern Maryland region, comprising a gable-roofed main block measuring 20 by 40 feet, with lean-to sheds on three sides. The interior is divided on a traditional four-foot module into a series of drying racks or "rooms" supported on poles. The barn is unusual in that it was intended and constructed to accommodate a process of curing tobacco by means of heat through a patented system of flues, rather than the air-curing method which was traditional in the region. The barn housed a "Tobacco Curing Apparatus" patented in 1861 and manufactured by Bibb & Co. of Baltimore; the furnace which generated heat for the process remained in place until its recent removal to a regional museum for conservation. Adaptations to flue curing included closely butted vertical siding and a partially excavated floor, with the space below the sills was sealed by short riven boards and an earthen berm; these measures apparently were intended to retain heat within the structure. A vertical prise, used for packing tobacco into hogsheads, remains in the south shed.

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MARYLAND COMPREHENSIVE HISTORIC PRESERVATION PLAN DATA

Geographic Organization: Western Shore

Chronological/Developmental Period(s): Agricultural-
Industrial Transition, 1815-1870

Prehistoric/Historic Period Theme(s):

Agriculture

Architecture, Landscape Architecture and Community
Planning

Economic (Commercial and Industrial)

Resource Type: Architecture: tobacco barn; standing
structure

Category: Building

Historic Environment: rural

Historic Function(s) and Use(s): agricultural

Known Design Source: unknown; accommodated patented
flue-curing system, see Patent No. 32,610,
dated June 25, 1861

Maryland Historical Trust
State Historic Sites Inventory Form

MARYLAND INVENTORY OF
HISTORIC PROPERTIES

Survey No. CT-1183
Magi No.
DOE yes no

1. Name (indicate preferred name)

historic Bond, John T., Tobacco Barn

and/or common Parran Tobacco Barn (preferred)

2. Location

street & number 4510 Route 765

n/a not for publication

city, town Port Republic

vicinity of

congressional district

state Maryland

county

Calvert

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input 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	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<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 Thomas Parran, III

street & number 4510 Route 765

telephone no.:

city, town Port Republic

state and zip code Maryland 20676

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Calvert County Courthouse

liber

street & number

folio

city, town Prince Frederick

state Maryland

6. Representation in Existing Historical Surveys

title Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties (CT-163)

date

federal state county local

Maryland Historical Trust, 100 Community Place, 3rd floor
depository for survey records Crownsville, Maryland 21032-2023

city, town

state

7. Description

Survey No. CT-1183

Condition

excellent
 good
 fair

deteriorated
 ruins
 unexposed

Check one

unaltered
 altered

Check one

original site
 moved date of move _____

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

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Continuation Sheet 7.1

The Parran/Bond tobacco barn is a rectangular, timber-framed structure constructed about 1861 for John T. Bond, one of a group of progressive farmers in the Port Republic area who experimented with an innovative tobacco curing method in the 1860s. In its general form and construction, it is typical of tobacco barns in the lower Southern Maryland region, comprising a gable-roofed main block measuring 20 by 40 feet, with lean-to sheds on three sides. The interior is divided on a traditional four-foot module into a series of drying racks or "rooms" supported on poles. The barn is unusual in that it was intended and constructed to accommodate a process of curing tobacco by means of heat through a patented system of flues, rather than the air-curing method which was traditional in the region. The barn housed a "Tobacco Curing Apparatus" patented in 1861 and manufactured by Bibb & Co. of Baltimore; the furnace which generated heat for the process remained in place until its recent removal to a regional museum for conservation, and archeological evidence of other elements of the system also was found. Diverging from traditional practice, the vertical board siding was butted closely, rather than spaced to permit air circulation; this apparently was intended to retain heat within the building. Additionally, the floor of the barn was partially excavated, and the space below the sills was sealed with short riven boards and an earthen berm. A vertical prise, used for packing tobacco into hogsheds, remains in the south shed.

The following architectural interpretation of the John T. Bond tobacco barn was prepared by J. Richard Rivoire:

Typical of tobacco barns in the lower Southern Maryland region, the John T. Bond barn is a rectangular, timber-framed structure with a gable roof and lean-to sheds. The main body of the barn measures approximately 20 by 40 feet and was built on an east-west axis. The sheds, which cover the east, south, and west elevations, are each 12 feet deep. The barn was constructed largely of oak timbers and scantling and employed mortise-and-tenon joinery for most of the major timbers and lapped and pinned joints for the down braces and roof collars. The rafter pairs are set approximately four feet on center and are seated on flat, one-inch false plates. Machine cut nails were used as fasteners in fashioning the roof frame; identical nails were used to secure vertical boards as wall sheathing -- much of which still survives on the two end walls and in fragments on the south wall -- and the shingle nailers. The barn has continuous sills underpinned with fieldstones positioned

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Continuation Sheet 7.2

below the major wall posts and at the corners. On the north side, the sill and exterior sheathing have been replaced; a former transverse sill and associated down braces also have been removed. The formerly wood shingled roof has been reclad with metal. There is a double-leafed door centered in the north elevation, a single door centered in the south elevation, and a low, narrow door centered in the west end wall. The three sheds were constructed using earth-set cedar posts, hewn plates, and hewn, sawn and pole rafters. All three sheds were extensively repaired and modified at various times in the late 19th century and early to mid-20th century. All of the existing exterior finishes of the sheds -- sawn vertical planks for siding and metal roofing -- are 20th century. The barn is in a fairly good state of repair but the sheds are deteriorating.

The extent to which the barn's sheds have been repaired and altered complicates a full interpretation of the manner in which the building evolved to its present form. Based on the surviving physical evidence, it appears that the shed on the west gable is an original feature. In its earliest form, the shed extended the full depth (20 feet) of the barn and was fully enclosed on all four sides. The likelihood that this shed is original is suggested by the fact that the sheathing boards on the outside face of the west wall of the barn show no sign of having been exposed to the weather, and the fact that the hewn rafters of the shed's lean-to roof are identical in size and carpentry to those of the barn. The nails used in the roof frame also are identical to those used in constructing the barn.

The south shed also may be an original feature but the evidence is not conclusive. The strongest evidence that this shed is contemporary with the barn is the fact that the boards that sheathed the outside face of the south wall of the barn were installed in two runs, with the seam between the two located about five feet above the base of the sill. This matches the board sheathing of the end wall of the barn covered by the west shed and suggests that these sheathing boards never were intended to be exposed to the elements. The roof frame of the south shed has much heavier rafters than either the barn or the west shed, however, and these rafters are sawn whereas the rafters of the latter are hewn. It is

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Continuation Sheet 7.3

possible that the roof rafters of the south shed were replaced inasmuch as there has been extensive reworking of the shingle nailers in the past and the fact that the weight-bearing capability of the roof of the west shed was increased by later inserting poles between the light and widely-spaced hewn rafters. In its earliest form the south shed is believed to have extended only the length of the south wall of the barn. The east end of the shed was sheathed with vertical boards, as was likely true of the south wall. There is no evidence of marks from sheathing nails on the tie beam spanning the southwest corner post of the barn and the south wall of the shed. However, this entire area later was extensively reworked and this timber and the rafter above may be replacements. The framing of the corner area joining the south and west sheds largely has been rebuilt but its oldest surviving components appear to be somewhat later than the adjacent framing.

Of the three sheds, the east shed displays the greatest evidence of being a later addition. At this end of the barn the vertical sheathing boards extend unbroken the full height of the wall from the sill to tie beam while the gable is sheathed with horizontal boards. Also, the sheathing boards below the gable show some signs of having been exposed to the weather, though not for any great length of time. Further, the roof of this shed is fashioned using sapling poles for rafters rather than hewn or sawn rafters. There also are differences in framing materials and methods used in constructing the exterior walls. Lastly, this shed was built as a single unit extending across the full depth of the barn and south shed. In the mid-20th century, a small tobacco stripping room was created at the south end of this shed.

The barn was built for the specific purpose of heat rather than air curing tobacco, and the Bibb furnace, which bears a patent date of 1861, was installed at the time the barn was constructed. The tightly-fitted board siding of the walls and gables, and sealing the spaces under the sills with short riven boards and an earthen berm, reflect adaptations to the heat curing process. The west shed, which apparently was similarly sealed and which appears to be original to the barn, is conveniently placed for the storage of fuel to fire the furnace, and the low, narrow door between this shed and the barn was

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Continuation Sheet 7.4

aligned perfectly with the furnace's fire door. That the barn and furnace are contemporary, rather than the barn being an older structure adapted to the flue curing process, is suggested by the type of mature machine nail used in the barn's construction. While details of the barn's framing carpentry are derived from longstanding traditional practice, ample documentation exists for the persistence of early building traditions in the construction of barns, granaries, and other agricultural buildings long after they ceased to be used commonly in erecting dwellings. Therefore, an 1860s construction date for the barn is reasonable.

Another significant aspect of the barn is the vertical tobacco prise located in the south shed just to the right of the south doorway. This prise appears to be original to the shed and quite likely always occupied that location.

8. Significance

Survey No. CT-1183

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 checked="" 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/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	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 ca. 1861 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

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Continuation Sheet 8.1

Significance Summary:

The John T. Bond tobacco barn is significant under Criterion A in that it reflects an innovative response to the economic and social pressures which affected tobacco farming in Southern Maryland in the post-Civil War period. Facing declining tobacco prices and increased labor costs, a small number of progressive farmers attempted to produce a more valuable product through flue curing rather than the traditional method of air-curing tobacco. The John T. Bond barn is one of four surviving structures in Calvert County in which this method was tried, and the only one which was specifically constructed for the purpose. It derives additional significance under Criterion C as an example of a type of agricultural structure which was designed and built to accommodate a patented flue-curing system. The barn retains a high degree of integrity, with the majority of its character-defining features intact. In its form and construction, it is largely typical of tobacco barns of the period in the region, comprising a rectangular timber-framed structure, 20 by 40 feet, with sheds on three sides. Innovative aspects related to flue-curing include closely-set vertical siding and an excavated floor with the space under the sills sealed by short riven boards and an earthen berm; these features are apparently intended to retain heat within the building. In addition, the barn retains the brick and stone foundation of the furnace which supplied heat to the flues of the Bibb & Co. Patent Tobacco Curing Apparatus (the furnace has been removed to a regional museum for conservation). One of the barn's sheds retains a vertical tobacco prise, a rare device used in packing tobacco.

Historic Context

Please see Appendix 1, Julia A. King, "Tobacco, Innovation and Economic Persistence in 19th Century Southern Maryland" (ms. submitted to Agricultural History, included with permission), especially pages 6-32.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Survey No. CT-1183

See Continuation Sheet 9.1

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property _____

Quadrangle name Broome's Island, MD

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

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"/>
---	----------------------	----------------------	----------------------

H	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
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Verbal boundary description and justification

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 Peter E. Kurtze with Gabrielle Lanier

organization _____

date July 1995

street & number P. O. Box 757

telephone (410) 296-7538

city or town Riderwood

state MD 21139-0757

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~~

MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST
DHCP/DHCD
100 COMMUNITY PLACE
CROWNSVILLE, MD 21032-2023
(410) 774-0000

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Continuation Sheet 9.1

Major Bibliographical References

Bently C. Bibb, George F. Needham, and George W. Dorsey, "An Improved Apparatus for Curing Tobacco," Washington, DC: U. S. Patent Office, Patent No. 32,610, June 25, 1861.

G. W. Dorsey, "Tobacco Firing and Curing Apparatus," The Maryland Farmer, Vol. 4, No. 5, May 1, 1867.

Julia A. King, "Tobacco, Innovation and Economic Persistence in 19th Century Southern Maryland," ms. submitted to Agricultural History, 1995 (included as Appendix 1). [on file, MHT Library]

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Location Map
USGS Broomes Island, MD quad