

John Attaway Clarke died in 1779. His estate passed first to his wife and then to his "dear and well beloved nephew, William Somerville." Somerville added to Clarke's impressive improvements. The 1798 tax list records six frame domestic outbuildings. Before Somerville died in 1806, he replaced two (the kitchen and the work house) with brick structures. The new kitchen may date from 1801, a date scratched into its plaster, while the floor joists for the new work house were cut later in 1804. Its brick walls probably were raised early in 1805 after the danger of frost was past.

The old work house had been a Virginia style building two rooms long and one room deep (26 ft. long by 20 ft. wide). The new work house was a compact structure one room long by two rooms deep (22 ft. long by 27 ft. wide). The front of the structure one large room behind which were two rooms approximately ten feet square. The building has served many functions. The loft was a heated quarter, a full cellar stored (and still stores) the plantation's root crops, and a brick-walled pit for seed sweet potatoes was added in front of the ground floor hearth. In 1814, the building was serving as a weaving house, and at some other time, the south room was used as a smoke house. The ground floor fireplace is modest (4' 4" wide), but it is equipped with an iron chimney bar for pot chains or ratchets. It may have been used for dyeing, washing or preserving.

The weaving house guards one flank of the mansion house. Its architectural twin and fellow sentinel, the brick kitchen, defends the opposite flank. Both are impeccably composed Georgian dependencies with centered doors and flanking windows. Together, weaving house and kitchen gave Mulberry Fields one of the most impressive forecourts in Southern Maryland. But inside the weaving house's fair exterior lurks an architectural hodgepodge. In building the weaving house, new timber was used only for those elements most exposed to the weather: the roof rafters and the joists above the cellar. The rest of the building's interior was pieced together from timber and plank salvaged from demolished structures.

The weaving house interior incorporates fragments from at least four, and perhaps six, predecessor structures. Ground floor partitions, stair wall, loft floor frame, and loft kneewalls were assembled of used lumber. Most of the front room ceiling joists (4 by 6 roughly adzed pine members) were reused from a 16 ft. wide outbuilding, while the back room ceiling joists came from at least three other structures: one with 4 by 6 oak joists, one with 4 by 5 poplar joists, and one with 3 by 7 inch planed and beaded poplar joists. Other apparent tie-beam fragments may represent fifth and sixth structures. While the

rough-hewn pine oak, and poplar tie beams were cannibalized from ordinary buildings, at least two above average structures contributed their bones to the weaving house. The beaded tie beam may be from a good dwelling house, and this also may be the building that contributed the beaded poplar studs for the stair wall and the beaded weatherboard for the partitions. The other unusual building seems to have been a two-story agricultural or industrial structure--a granary or mill. It was best represented by the large beam reused as a summer to support the ground floor joists, but it also may have contributed the numbered studs and post for the partition between the front and rear rooms. Other prominent salvaged members are the former roof rafters of riven oak now serving as studs in the partition between the two rear rooms. The Somerville's disregard for the appearance of the work-a-day interior of the weaving house preserved unusually good clues to the 13th-century structures on the plantation.

The weaving house was dated by the tree-rings of the ground floor joists. These were too termite-eaten to sample by coring, but when they were removed during the building's 1980 restoration, it was possible to saw disks from the joists. Many of the rear room ceiling joists--extensively water damaged--also had to be removed. After 176 years, these members were returned to the Mulberry Fields timber shed where they remain for potential tree-ring dated of the weaving house's antecedent structures.

#### References:

Cary Carson, "Mulberry Fields," 1971. Architectural file SM-1

National Intelligencer, 15 October 1814, p.3, col. 4

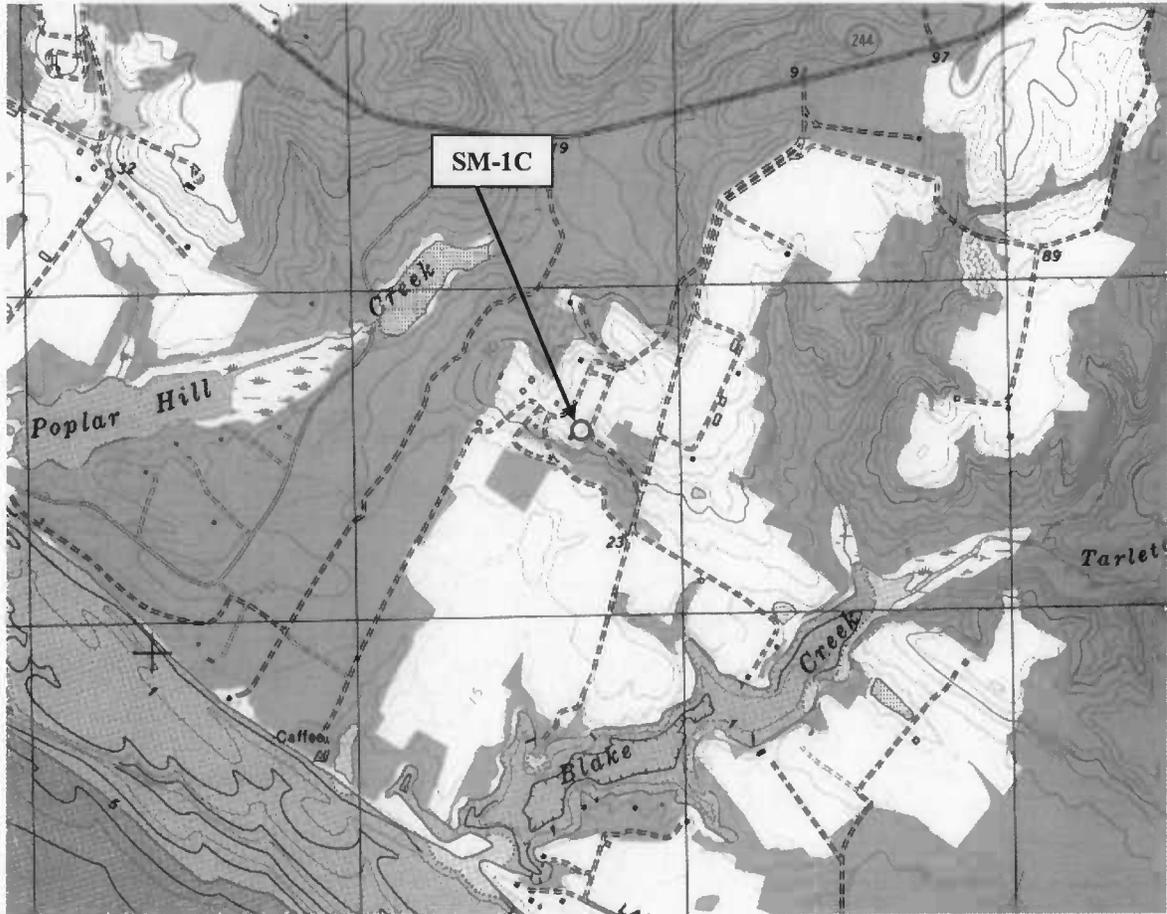
Garry Wheeler Stone, Field Notes, SM-1C, 1979-1980

United States of America, DIRECT TAX OF 1798, Maryland Historical Society (microfilm)

SM1C  
→SM-1A  
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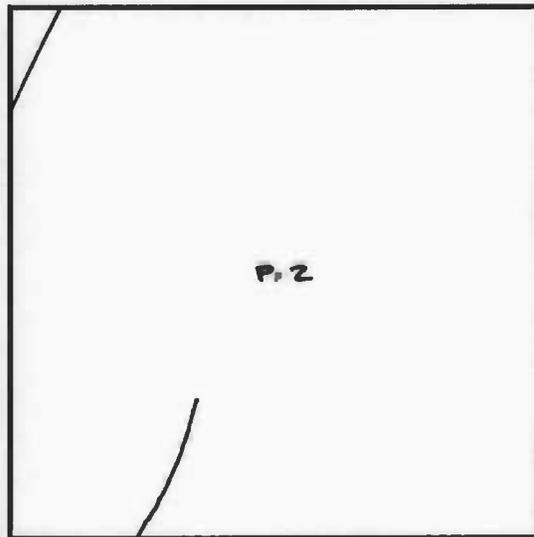
MULBERRY FIELDS was built about 1760 by Captain William Somerville. The kitchen and office buildings are placed symmetrically with the great house, but off the long axis.

SM-1C  
Mulberry Fields Weaving House  
19700 Mulberry Fields Road  
Piney Point Quadrangle



1993 Aerial Photo

Tax Map 56





Kitchen at Mulberry Field  
before restoration started

SM-10

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W & S Farodes



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JUL 23 1936



Kitchen at Mulberry Fields  
before restoration started.

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W Farabe



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JUL 23 1956