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K-21

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Rev. prfs.

K-21,22

The Bolton and Dunn Houses
Queen Street, Chestertown
c. 1759, 1786

John Bolton's second land acquisition after coming to Chestertown from Philadelphia was to purchase most of lot No. 23 on the corner of Queen and Fish Streets (Maple Ave.) in 1759.[1] It is difficult to determine from the @28 purchase price whether or not the lot was improved with a dwelling. We know from the structural evidence that the oldest section of the Bolton house was a 21' x 18', one and one half story structure (Fig. 1), but whether it was standing in 1759 or was built soon thereafter may never be answered. The question is further complicated since the basement was constructed at the same time as the first addition. (Conjectural plans and elevations are based on what little evidence exists.) The first building was sheathed with feather edge shiplap siding painted the typical red of the period. In the south corner there was an enclosed stair to the second story. The interior wall finish appears to have been vertical beaded boards. Interior partitions and placement of it fireplace have not been determined. (Fig. 2)

When Bolton enlarged the building, he dug a basement under not only the original 21' x 18' section, but also under the 10' extension on the back. The original back wall was removed and a new feather edge vertical panel partition was installed 4' in from the former wall creating two nearly equal size spaces with corner fireplaces. The stair remained in the same location. Probably the rear roof-pitch was altered to cover the extension. The kitchen location is unknown. (Fig. 3)

"John Bolton was an 18th century activist, who played a significant role in Chestertown's commercial life, as well as in Kent County's participation in America's Was for Independence. He was born in Philadelphia June 20, 1726, the son of Robert Bolton ... and Ann Curtis Clay." [2] Not only was he an active merchant, he was county coroner in 1770 and 1773 was executor to various estates and member of the Sons of Liberty. At the beginning of the war, he was appointed Commissary for Kent County, an appointment which cost him much of the fortune he had accumulated as as merchant. He was a pew holder of Chester Parish's Chappell of Ease in Chestertown (No. 28) as well as the parish church at I.U. and a vestryman between 1779 and his death in 1784.[3] Only a year before his death his real estate was listed in the 1783 Tax Assessment. In town, he owned seven lots worth @700 including improvements. He also owned 344 acres near Worton worth @516. In addition to the real estate there were eleven slaves in Chestertown and five on the plantation.

In his will he directed that his property, with the exception of the Queen Street house, was to be sold to settle his debts. The Queen Street house and contents were to be reserved for the support of his remaining minor children, under the guardianship of his sister-in-law Jane Dougherty.[4]

He appointed Thomas McClure executor of his estate who provided an inventory of his personal belongings first. The inventory obviously included the contents of his store, as there are numerous items of dry goods, kitchen wares, hardware, etc.[5] The total value was @1262.9.9 1/2.

Apparently McClure sold much of Bolton's property in order to settle the debts Bolton had sustained as a result of the position of Kent County Commissary during the Revolution. Only two years after Bolton's death he even sold lot No. 23 which had been tentatively reserved for the children. McClure sold the lot and house on Queen Street to William Dunn.[6]

In his first recorded land transaction in 1778, William Dunn is called "Joiner," and leased a property near St. Paul's Church to John Fitzgerald, a schoolmaster. In subsequent deeds, he is referred to as a "Farmer" or "Planter." Finally, in 1782 he is called "Innholder." He was undoubtedly of the Dunn family which owned Poplar Neck, now part of Remington Farm. His earlier deeds refer to property in the vicinity of St. Paul's Church. In 1786, William Dunn purchased for @350 the northwestern half of lot 23 on which John Bolton had resided. He undertook a major project of remodeling and enlarging the Bolton House and building a second dwelling adjoining.

Dunn added a stair hall/entry and living room on the southwest side of Bolton's house and raised the entire roof above a full second story, producing an asymmetrical five bay dwelling. Simultaneously, he built his own four bay house adjoining, utilizing the new center chimney to serve two fireplaces in each dwelling. He used the same roof line across both houses, producing an eighty six foot long facade along Queen Street. The interiors of both houses were finished in a similar manner. Both stairs were composed of three flights to the second story and contained a paneled spandrel housing a basement stair. They both had close string balustrade with turned newels and intermediates and delicate rectangular balusters. The principal room in each house was trimmed with baseboard chair rail and a dentil

K-21+224

cornice, similar to the one installed in Benjamin Chambers' dining room. In the house Dunn kept for himself he installed a mantel with dentil molded shelf to match.

For his own house, Dunn installed the kitchen fireplace in the southwest side of the basement. To light the basement stair he installed a small two-pane horizontal window at the head of its stair, a unique feature in Chestertown. Both stories had the same floor plan ... two rooms flanking a central stair hall. On the second story was a small room at the head of the stair, over the entry. Most interior partitions were vertical beaded boards and all doors had six panels. The stair originally continued to a closure at attic level, but later, in the 19th century the closure was brought closer to the second floor level.

In Bolton's house, beside the addition of the stairhall and living room mentioned above, the original enclosed stair was removed, creating more space in the back room. Since the ceiling height of the first floor was lower than the new addition, and the entire structure had the same roof line, the second story rooms over the old section had higher ceilings than elsewhere. With the old stair gone, access to the back bedroom was obtained by making a corridor on the far side of the attic stair. With the first four steps being open on both sides, it was necessary to install a balustrade on both sides of the first four steps, another unique feature in an otherwise simple 18th century dwelling. Only the partitions in the new part of the house were vertical beaded board. Stud walls with plaster were used for the second story rooms in the old part. Like the neighboring house, the stair originally continued to a closure at attic level, but in the 19th century the closure was brought closer to the second floor. Both attics were left unfinished and were

lighted by a single small casement at the two gables.

William Dunn sold the Bolton House in 1790 to John Scott for @400. From the description of the property lines Scott was already residing in the house and Dunn was living in the adjoining house. In the transaction, Scott received the "cow house" mentioned in Bolton's will, but it is also called the stable in that deed.[7] Scott was forbidden to erect a building within twenty feet of Dunn's house because Scott acquired eighteen feet of the lot behind Dunn's House, a condition which was to change several times over the next two hundred years.

Later in 1790, William Dunn sold his house and lot to William Ringgold for @250. It was then being rented to Joseph Williams.[8] No other real estate transactions are recorded in Kent County under the name of William Dunn. It is thought that he moved to Philadelphia.
Between 1790 and 1828, the two houses were owned separately. The Bolton House being owned by John Scott and his heirs. The Dunn House was sold twice until it was purchased in 1819 by Robert Constable. It was Constable who purchased the adjoining house in 1828 by Robert Constable. It was Constable who purchased the adjoining house in 1828 from the Scott sisters who were then living in Baltimore.[9] The Scotts had advertised the house for rent and finally for sale in the 1820's in the Transcript.

Between 1828 and 1867 the two houses were owned jointly by four different owners, including the aforementioned Robert Constable and his daughter, Margaret Ann Osborn. In 1841 she sold the two houses to John McKenny a farmer, from Queen Anne's County.[10] He is listed as the owner

of the houses in the 1841 Tax Assessment: "Two Houses + Lot. Pt. N° 23 - in good repair ocd by Dr. Wroth + Dr. Whaland." He also owned the other house on lot 23 facing Maple Ave. and a stable on lot 22 worth a total $3,200.00.

The two occupants of the houses were probably Dr. Peregrine Wroth and Catherine his wife, and Dr. Thomas Whaland, all of whom appear on the same assessment without owning town land.

John McKenny, by then a merchant in Centreville, sold the properties in 1846 to Dr. James Bordley, also from Queen Anne's County.[11] Dr. Bordley's name appears on Martinet's Map of the county printed in 1860. Dr. Bordley sold the properties to William H. Lambert in 1867.[12]

Lambert then sold the Dunn House to John K. Willis[13] within a few days and kept the Bolton House himself which he deeded to Mary J. Lambert in 1901.[14] Mary Lambert died in 1903 and the executors sold it to Cora Baldwin in 1910.[15]

In the meantime, a similar fate occurred to the Willis family next door. John Willis died in 1880 and the property descended to his daughter Mary. Mary mortgaged the house and lot to Harrison Vickers but could not keep up the payments, so it was sold to Thomas Wickes in 1893. Wickes is mentioned in the Lambert deed in 1901. Fred G. Usilton owned the Dunn House for a year before selling it to Emma and Mary Knight in 1903.[16] The Knights sold it to Cora Baldwin in 1917.[17]

From 1917 to the present the two properties have had four owners. In 1926, Mrs. Baldwin had a large two story addition constructed behind the Bolton House living room and the back of the Bolton House remodeled, creating six apartments in the enlarged building. The Baldwins continued to live next door in the Dunn House.

Possibly at the same time as the remodeling, a kitchen addition with leanto was built onto the Dunn house and the old basement kitchen fireplace and chimney was disassembled and replaced with a simple brick stack. Above the kitchen, a bath and small bedroom were added. the property remained essentially unchanged, even after it was sold in 1973 to Lester Carpenter Leonard.[18] Leonard allowed the buildings to deteriorate to such a point that they became nearly uninhabitable. Preservation Incorporated purchased the two houses in 1989[19] and began their restoration, first removing the 1926 addition then effecting an exterior restoration. When completed, the houses will be sold as two separate dwellings reflecting primarily their 1790 appearance, with later porches.[20]

1. Land Records, JS 29, fol. 213.

2. McCall, Davy H. "John Bolton," a lecture delivered by Dr. McCall Feb. 1993, sponsored by the Historical Society of Kent Co.

3. Chester Parish Vestry Records, Hall of Records.

4. Wills, Lib. 7, fol. 53.

5. Inventories, Lib. 8, fol. 229-233. Included in the inventory were 5 large pictures and four small ones. This entry may have included the one portrait of John Bolton which was advertised for sale at the Kennedy Gallery in recent years. Also included was "old map of the Town," an item

which has not survived to the present day.

6. Land Records, Lib. EFG, fol. 552.

7. Land Records, Lib. BC 3, fol. 4.

8. Land Records, Lib. BC 3, fol. 91.

9. Land Records, Lib. JNG 1, fol. 444.

10. Land Records, Lib. JNG 7, fol. 515.

11. Land Records, Lib. JNG 11, fol. 158.

12. Land Records, Lib. JKH 6, fol. 114.

13. Land Records, Lib. JKH 6, fol. 161.

14. Land Records, Lib. JTD 5, fol. 166.

15. Land Records, Lib. JTD 21, fol. 52.

16. Land Records, Lib. JTD 8, fol. 402.

17. Land Records, Lib. RAS 20,. fol. 154.

18. Land Records, Lib. EHP 50, fol. 775.

19. Lane Records Lib.

20. The porches were added at two distinct times, the Greek Revival Porch on the Bolton house was probably installed by Dr. James Bordley before selling it in 1867. The Dunn House porch was probably installed during the Willis ownership between 1867-1893.

K-21-22 135-137 Queen Street 1841-~~1867~~ ?

Chestertown

private

This double house may have come into the 19th century as a part of the Constable property and if that is the case it will be some time before any accurate dating can be done on it. The first documentary evidence that the house exists on its property, Lot 23, is a deed dated 1841. In its present form, greatly altered and covered with asbestos siding, the building is of little architectural or historical interest.

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MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST

INVENTORY FORM FOR STATE HISTORIC SITES SURVEY

1 NAME

HISTORIC

AND/OR COMMON

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER
135-137 Queen Street

CITY, TOWN
Chestertown

___ VICINITY OF

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT
1C-21 + 22
First

STATE
Maryland

COUNTY
Kent

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE	
__DISTRICT	__PUBLIC	X_OCCUPIED	__AGRICULTURE	__MUSEUM
X_BUILDING(S)	X_PRIVATE	__UNOCCUPIED	__COMMERCIAL	__PARK
__STRUCTURE	__BOTH	__WORK IN PROGRESS	__EDUCATIONAL	X_PRIVATE RESIDENCE
__SITE	**PUBLIC ACQUISITION**	**ACCESSIBLE**	__ENTERTAINMENT	__RELIGIOUS
__OBJECT	__IN PROCESS	__YES: RESTRICTED	__GOVERNMENT	__SCIENTIFIC
	__BEING CONSIDERED	__YES: UNRESTRICTED	__INDUSTRIAL	__TRANSPORTATION
		__NO	__MILITARY	X_OTHER apts

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME
Lester and Madolyn Leonard

Telephone #:

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN
Washington, D.C.

___ VICINITY OF

STATE, zip code

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.
County Clerk's Office

Liber #: EHP 50
Folio #: 775

STREET & NUMBER
Kent County Court House

CITY, TOWN
Chestertown

STATE
Md.

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE
none

DATE

__FEDERAL __STATE __COUNTY __LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE

7 DESCRIPTION

K-21 + 22

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

135-137 is a double house which faces on Queen Street and occupies the south corner at the intersection of Queen Street and Maple Avenue in Chestertown. It is situated on a part of Town Lot 23.

The house is a 2-story frame double house ~~comprised~~ made up of two 4-bay halves, one room deep, and has a multitude of added wings to the rear. It is covered with asbestos shingle siding. It has an "A" roof.

There are two wood entrance porches: that belonging to 137 is a Greek Revival style porch with fluted pillars, a modillioned cornice, and a flat roof. It occupies the third bay in from Maple Avenue (left); 135's porch is plainer, with square pillars and a plain box cornice. Both doors have 4-pane transoms over them.

The house sits on a stuccoed brick basement. The windows on 137 are 1/1, those on 135 are 2/2, and all have louvered shutters.

The main cornice is a plain box with a molding. The roof is coverd with wood shingles. There are three chimneys, one within each gable end and one central chimney serving both houses.

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

8 SIGNIFICANCE

K-21 x 22

ERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
__PREHISTORIC	__ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	__COMMUNITY PLANNING	__LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	__RELIGION
__1400-1499	__ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	__CONSERVATION	__LAW	__SCIENCE
__1500-1599	__AGRICULTURE	__ECONOMICS	__LITERATURE	__SCULPTURE
__1600-1699	__ARCHITECTURE	__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		Local history, property transfer in historic area

SPECIFIC DATES 1841-1867 ? BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

This double house may have come into the nineteenth century as a part of the Constable property (which included all of Town Lots 22 and 23) and if that is the case it will be some time before any accurate dating can be done on it. The first time the property was transferred, leaving any documentary evidence was 1841 when Lots 22 and 23 were sold as a package to John McKenney for $3000. In 1867 part of Lot 23--the part that now as 135-137 on it--sold for $2900 and the deed mentions two dwelling houses, neither of which can be 108 Maple, which was sold the same year--on another piece of Lot 23--for $1800. This means that both Lot 22 and a good deal of 23 with a large frame house have dropped out of the package and the price has held: we should probably assume this means that 135-137 was built in the interim.

The house would have some architectural interest were it stripped of its asbestos siding and porches.

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

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9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY _____

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

All those lots of ground situated in Chestertown being known as 131,133,135, and 137 Queen Street.

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

STATE COUNTY

STATE COUNTY

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Robert Neill Historic Site Surveyor

ORGANIZATION DATE

Maryland Historical Trust / Town of Chestertown June, 1976

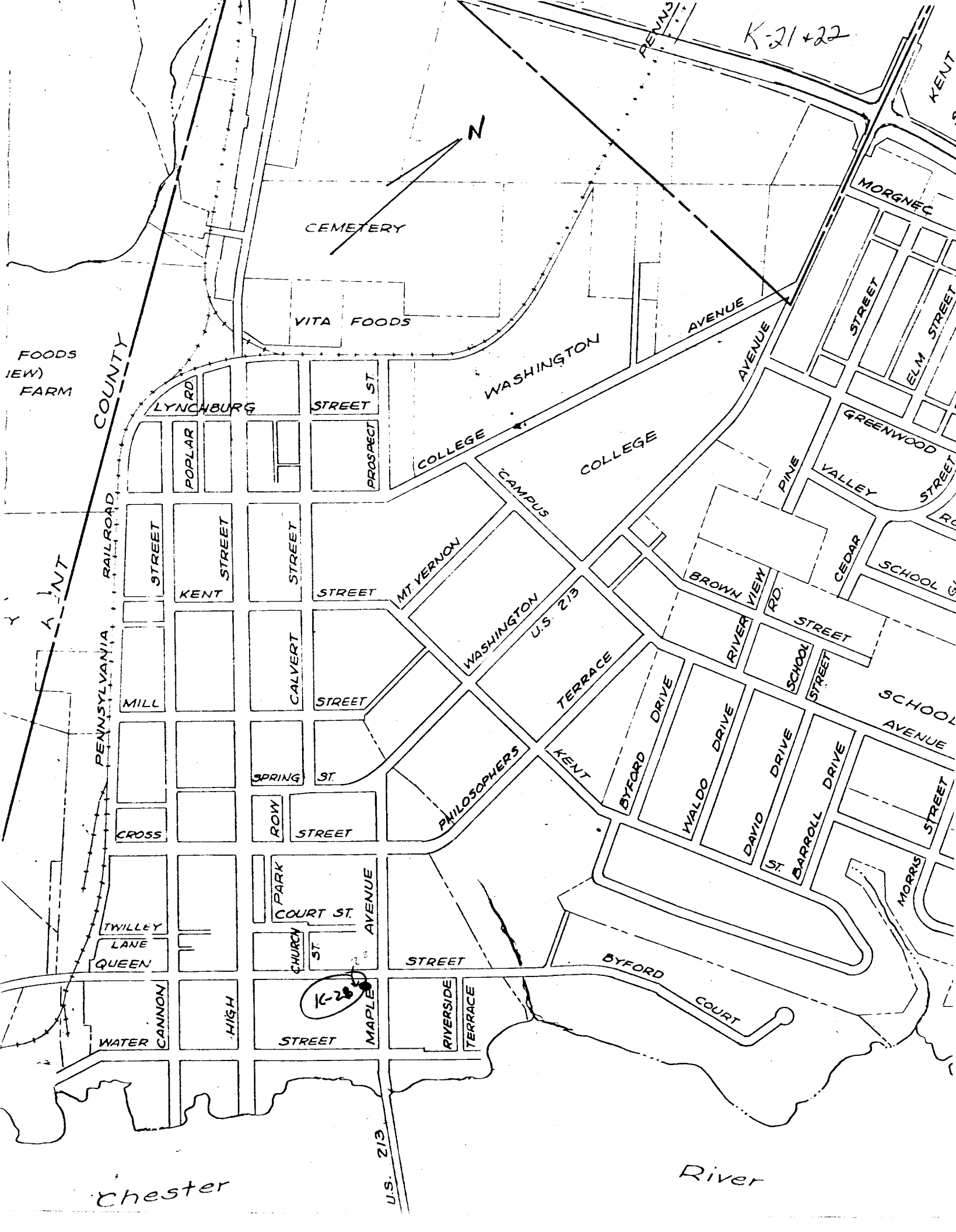
STREET & NUMBER TELEPHONE

CITY OR TOWN 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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CEMETERY
VITA FOODS
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FARM
COUNTY
KENT
PENNSYLVANIA RAILROAD
LYNCHBURG
RD.
POPLAR
STREET
PROSPECT
ST.
WASHINGTON
AVENUE
COLLEGE
CAMPUS
MORGNEC
STREET
ELM
STREET
GREENWOOD
VALLEY
STREET
PINE
CEDAR
SCHOOL
BROWN
VIEW
RD.
RIVER
STREET
SCHOOL
STREET
SCHOOL
AVENUE
MT. VERNON
U.S. 213
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KENT
STREET
MILL
STREET
CALVERT
STREET
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TWILLEY
LANE
QUEEN
CHURCH
ST.
STREET
BYFORD
COURT
K-28
WATER
CANNON
HIGH
STREET
MAPLE
RIVERSIDE
TERRACE
U.S. 213
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K 2B+22 / 135-137 Queen St

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K 28+22/35-137 Queen

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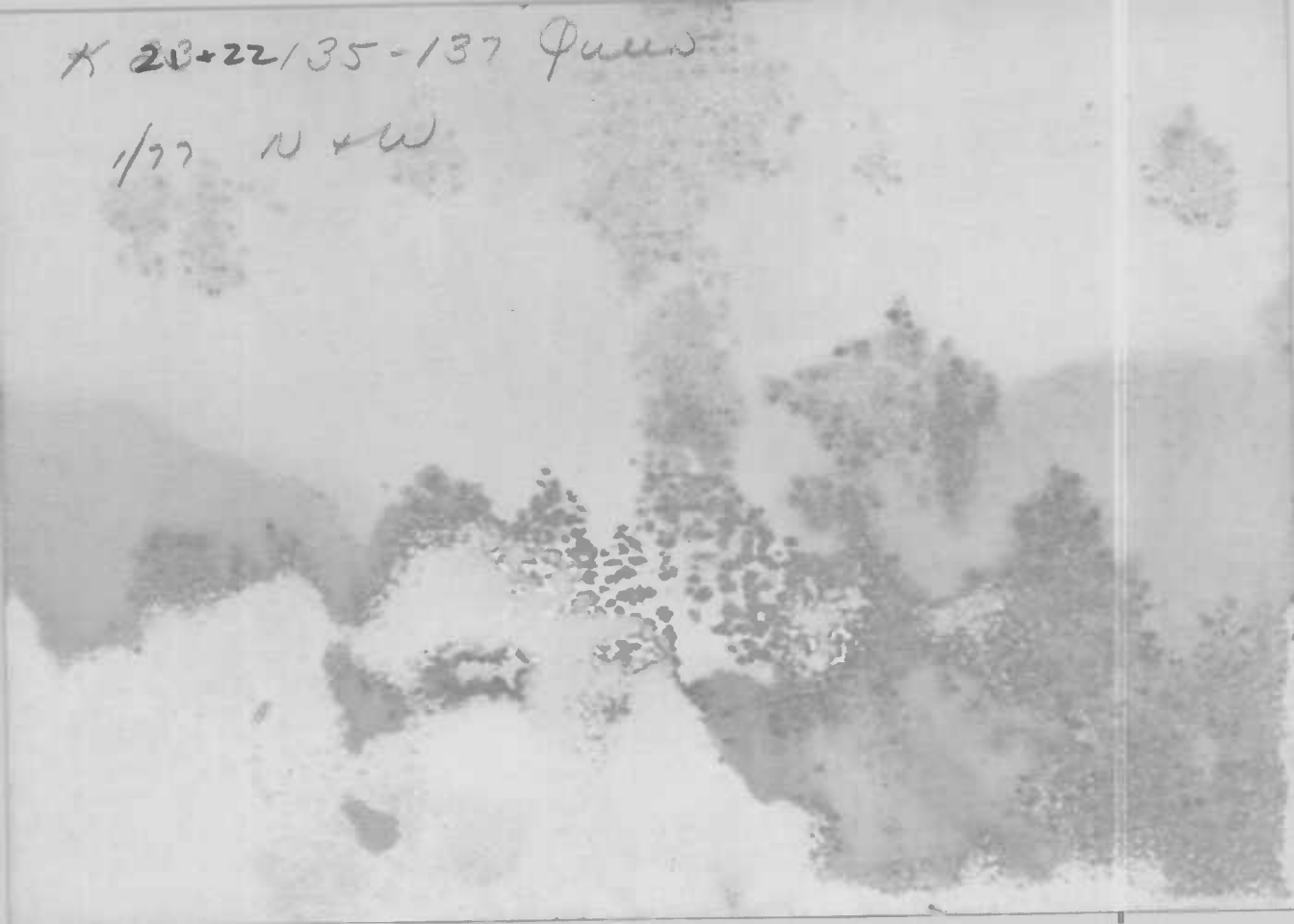

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