

K-28

Bedingfield Hands House  
106 South Queen Street, Chestertown  
c. 1750's

For many years the old frame house on the northwest side of Queen Street, between High and Cannon, has been called the Murray House after its supposed builder, Dr. William Murray. The fact of the matter is that Dr. Murray never owned the western half of Lot No. 79 on which this house was constructed. Records of property transfers found in the County Courthouse tell of the Murrays moving from Front Street to Lot No. 10 on Cannon Street.<sup>1</sup> This places their residence across the street from the subject of this investigation.

When Lots Nos. 78 and 79 were originally sold by Simon and Dorcas Wilmer in 1726 and 1730, they were not sold as laid out (extending from High Street to Cannon Street), but in two halves. Each purchaser bought an acre lot, one on High Street and the other on Cannon.<sup>2</sup>

In 1730, John Spencer, a joiner, purchased the acre lot on Cannon Street,<sup>3</sup> but sold it two years later for a @10 profit.<sup>4</sup> In the latter deed, Spencer sold it to Alexander McGachan, a Chestertown merchant, who had purchased Water Lot No. 17 in 1730.<sup>5</sup> When McGachan wrote his will, he specified that his property was to go to his wife Sarah, and after her death, to their daughter Sarah.<sup>6</sup>

In a deed for Water Lot. No. 17 (1765), it mentions Sarah as the only child of Alexander McGachan and having married Bedingfield Hands, an important attorney and businessman in mid-18th century Chestertown.<sup>7</sup>

The existing house was probably built for Sarah and Bedingfield Hands soon after their marriage. With a lack of references to Lots Nos. 78 and 79 and a lack of wills for either Sarah or Bedingfield, it is only assumed that Lots Nos. 78 and 79 descended to Bedingfield Hands, Jr. However, an agreement written in 1811 between Mary Hands (Bedingfield Sr.'s second wife) and Bedingfield Hands, Jr., specifies that Mary Hands was in possession of the half lots and Lots Nos. 70 and 71 at that time.<sup>8</sup> She apparently deeded the lots to Bedingfield Jr., in exchange for @40 yearly stipend provided that he pay the taxes and keep the buildings in good repair.

Bedingfield, Jr. married Catherine Thompson in the first decade of the 19th century and died in 1821, leaving the "house lots and all real estate in Chestertown" to her for her lifetime, after which the properties were to descend to his brother, Alexander.<sup>9</sup> Two years after his brother's death, Alexander mortgaged the property to Philemon Thomas of Talbot County, where he was also living.<sup>10</sup> Thereafter he disappears from the real estate records of Kent.

After Bedingfield Hands, Jr.'s death, Catherine married Richard Ringgold, who died in 1841. In that year the tax assessment stated that parts of Lots Nos. 78 and 79 were occupied by Mrs. Richard Ringgold and on part of Lots Nos. 70 and 71 there was an old stable. All together these properties were valued at \$1,800.00. Mrs. Ringgold also had 7 slaves, \$300 worth of household furniture, 96 ounces of silver and two gold watches.

Is is interesting to note in the assessment that Mrs. Ringgold's sister,

Caroline Thompson, owned part of Lot No. 10, the lot which her grandfather, Dr. William Murray, had owned in the 18th century.

Catherine Ringgold died in 1849 and the properties went to her sister Caroline Thompson, for her lifetime with the stipulation that they would descend to her niece, Emily Ann Spencer.<sup>11</sup> Miss Thompson, however, outlived her niece and the property descended instead to thirteen great nieces and nephews who later sold it to Charlotte R. Spencer,<sup>12</sup> who resided therein until 1916, when it was sold out of the family.

In the first of several deeds to Charlotte Spencer, prior to Miss Thompson's death in 1885, the deed gives a good description of the property " ... lot on North east corner of Cannon Street in Chestertown now occupied by said Caroline Thompson including the Brick Office in connection therewith ... ." <sup>13</sup> This deed not only confirms the fact that Caroline Thompson lived in the subject property, but that it had a brick office, a photo of which was found at the Maryland Historical Society.

Miss Thompson bequeathed money to Emmanuel Church, which was used in 1905 to construct the bell tower on the Cross Street facade. A tablet in the narthex commemorates the fact that it was erected through her generosity and the fact that she died in her 100th year.

From the early 20th century photographs of the house, it appears to have changed little over at least the last 70 years. The house is a two-and-a-half-story frame structure. Its proportions are similar to Worrell's Tavern which once stood nearby. The earlier photographs do indicate a roof of

slightly steeper pitch.

The brick office, mentioned in the description of the property after Caroline Thompson's death (1885) was apparently built by Bedingfield Hands, Sr. It was apparently built with a facade of all header bond and had an external chimney on its southwest gable. Flanking the chimney were two full-size windows, similar to the Smith-Ringgold House and others on Water Street. The three-bay gambrel roof building was demolished in the early 20th century, probably by Charlotte Spencer.

Since 1915 there have been ten owners. In 1960, the house was completely remodeled due to extensive termite damage. The roof was reconstructed with a lower pitch and no dormers.

1. Land Records, Lib. 29, fol. 381.
2. See plat enclosed.
3. Land Records, Lib. 4, fol. 27.
4. Land Records, Lib. 4, fol. 166.
5. Land Records, Lib. JS 16, fol. 233.
6. Wills, Lib. 1, fol. 385.
7. Land Records, Lib. DD 2, fol. 169.
8. Land Records, Lib. BC 6, fol. 485.
9. Wills, Lib. 10, fol. 225.
10. Land Records, Lib. TW 4, fol. 214, 216.
11. Wills, Lib. JFB 1, fol. 275.
12. Land Records, Lib. SB 3, fol. 521.
13. Land Records, APR 1, fol. 211.

106 S. Queen St.

K 28

Chestertown, Md.

private residence

One of the more substantial 2½ storey dwellings in Chestertown, 106 S. Queen St. was drastically rebuilt and remodelled in the late 1950s. Local legend calls it the Captain Alexander Murray House, however no direct reference can be found to substantiate this.

INVENTORY FORM FOR STATE HISTORIC SITES SURVEY

**1 NAME**

HISTORIC

AND/OR COMMON

**2 LOCATION**

STREET & NUMBER

106 S. Queen St.

CITY, TOWN

Chestertown

\_\_\_ VICINITY OF

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

First

STATE

Md.

COUNTY

Kent

**3 CLASSIFICATION**

**CATEGORY**

- DISTRICT
- BUILDING(S)
- STRUCTURE
- SITE
- OBJECT

**OWNERSHIP**

- PUBLIC
- PRIVATE
- BOTH
- PUBLIC ACQUISITION**
- IN PROCESS
- BEING CONSIDERED

**STATUS**

- OCCUPIED
- UNOCCUPIED
- WORK IN PROGRESS
- ACCESSIBLE**
- YES: RESTRICTED
- YES: UNRESTRICTED
- NO

**PRESENT USE**

- AGRICULTURE
- COMMERCIAL
- EDUCATIONAL
- ENTERTAINMENT
- GOVERNMENT
- INDUSTRIAL
- MILITARY
- MUSEUM
- PARK
- PRIVATE RESIDENCE
- RELIGIOUS
- SCIENTIFIC
- TRANSPORTATION
- OTHER:

**4 OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME David M. Williams

Telephone #: 778-0912

STREET & NUMBER

106 S. Queen St.

CITY, TOWN

Chestertown

\_\_\_ VICINITY OF

STATE, zip code

Md. 21620

**5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE,  
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Clerk of the Court

Liber #: EHP 64

Folio #: 458

STREET & NUMBER

Kent County Court House

CITY, TOWN

Chestertown

STATE

Md.

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE none known

DATE

\_\_\_ FEDERAL \_\_\_ STATE \_\_\_ COUNTY \_\_\_ LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED      DATE _____
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Presently this dwelling is a 4 bay 2½ storey, without dormers, home. The second floor windows, all shuttered and double hung are the old 9/9. The first floor windows, of the same dimensions and shuttered, are the modern 1/1. The doorway, with 4 light transom over it, is ~~xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx~~ the 3rd bay, from l to r. within

The cornice is simple box type and the roof is of composition materials. The house faces directly on Queen (or Princess) St. and is set back a good distance from the street, being completely on the rear of the present lot.

The southern view, beginning with the main section of the house has the bargeboard returning on it self and two small quarter circle windows in the gable. Below them, on the 2nd level is one 6/6 shuttered double hung window. On the first level are 2 1/1 double hung and shuttered windows with an exposed brick chimney breast. However, this chimney breast is built out from the house and this was done when the house was remodelled. (see below). The chimney protruding from the roof is very small. Behind the main or frontal section of the house is a wing with the roofline, again of composition materials, obviously in the opposite direction. At its westernmost end a small chimney protrudes from the roof. This wing has 2 4/4 double hung shuttered windows on the 2nd floor and a built out bay on the first floor. Attached to this wing is a modern small one storey wing, obviously the kitchen.

The northern side of the main section is completely clapboarded, as is the entire house, with one 6 pane casement in the gable and again, the bargeboard returning on itself. The rear of west facade of the main house, from l to r, contains one 6/6 shuttered, double hung window on the 2nd floor, one 6/1 shuttered, double hung directly below it, and one on a level between the two toward the south and the junction of the main house and addition. Directly below this window is a door. The north view of the wing has 2 6/6 double hung shuttered windows on the second floor and one 6/1 double hung shuttered window on the first floor at the westernmost end. The kitchen wing is then attached.

From an early photo one can see that there were 4 dormers and it appears the original pitch of the roof was steeper. The north chimney, which clearly shows in the photo with its interesting ~~carving~~, has been completely deleted. In or about 1958 the house was virtually taken down and rebuilt, with some of the old materials. The Queen St. facade windows were all 9/9 and the house had a Greek revival porch with 4 Doric tapered columns. Judging from the old photo it appears that the frontal axis may have been shortened. The house originally had interesting woodwork.

\*see next page

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

K-28

**8 SIGNIFICANCE**

**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 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/HUMANITARIAN |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799 | <input type="checkbox"/> ART                     | <input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING            | <input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC                  | <input type="checkbox"/> THEATER             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899            | <input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE                | <input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT | <input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY             | <input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1900-                | <input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS          | <input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY               | <input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT    | <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)     |
|   |  | <input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION              |   |  |

**SPECIFIC DATES** mid to late 1700s      **BUILDER/ARCHITECT** unknown

**STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE**

106 S. Queen St. was/is one of the more substantial 2½ storey dwellings, of which there are few left, in Chestertown. Around 1958 it was nearly entirely rebuilt and altered. Local legend calls it the Captin Alexander Murray House, however no direct reference can be found to substantiate this. Fred G. Usilton in his History of Chestertown, p. 101, refers to Captain Alexander Murray being born in this house in 1755.

continuation of 7. This dwelling is often referred to as the Captain Alexander Murray House. In tracing the title chain I can find no reference to him and I also searched properties under his name and that of his family. I can locate the Murrays directly across the street on plot #10. Capt. Murray may have rented the property in the 1780s-90s.

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

K-28

**9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES**

Fred G. Usilton, The History of Chestertown, no date, no pub.

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

**10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA**

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 6,000 sq. ft. more or less

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION beginning on nw side Queen St., also known as Princess St., between High and Cannon, a distance of 50' ne from nw corner of Queen and Cannon and running thence by and with the nw side of Queen N 44°30 min. E 50' to lands now or formerly of Wm.T.Bramble, et al. Thence by and with Bramble lands N 45°30 min. W 120' to SE side of 14' alley or right of way, thence by and with SE side of said alley, S 44°30 min. W 50' to lands formerly of Gladys R. Wickes, thence by and with a new line formerly established S 45°30 min. E 120' to NW side of Queen and the place of begin.

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

perpetual use in common of 14' right of way.

STATE

COUNTY

STATE

COUNTY

**11 FORM PREPARED BY**

NAME / TITLE

Kathleen B. White, Historic Site Surveyor

Oct. 1976

ORGANIZATION

DATE

Md. Historical Trust/City of Chestertown

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

EHP 64/458 8/27/75 Elizabeth Woodburn Moore and Ernest Cookerly, personal representatives of estate of Ruth P. Woodburn, to David M. Williams.

Will ERB 7/372 of Ruth P. Woodburn, 3/28/68, item 7

EHP 25/114 12/6/67 Roland Gibson to Ruth P. Woodburn

WHG 60/10 5/27/59 Alex Jr. and Grace Johnson to Roland Gibson

WHG 46/526 8/29/56 J. Hyland and Dorothy D. Jewell to Alex and Grace Johnson

RAS 34/266 7/7/44 Joseph Wickes, Gladys R. and Daniel H. Dietrich to J. Hyland and Dorothy D. Jewell  
Gladys now deceased, Will EE 1/439 left her real estate to Joseph Wickes and Gladys Dietrich

RRA 1/309 10/7/22 Gladys Wickes to J. Hyland and Dorothy D. Jewell - error later found in this deed.

APR 1/211 6/1/16 Charlotte R. Roberts to Gladys R. Wickes \$4,747.00, 2 lots, one on other side of Queen too.

SB 8/601 1/15/87 James A. Pearce, Trustee to Charlotte R. (oberts) Spencer, \$3,000, more land than is presently there.

8/18/86 John, Charlotte, Wm. C., Julian, Bedingfield H., Jervis, Elizabeth R., all a Spencer and Sarah C. Blake, Elizabeth Murray and Charles M. Spencer against David W. Spencer and Richard T. Earle, Jr. Catherine Ringgold will of 6/3/1848 mentions lot #79, devising it to her sister Catherine Thompson during her natural life and after her death to Elizabeth Spencer, niece. Caroline Spencer lived and died there on 7/11/1885. Elizabeth A. Spencer married Richard T. Earle Sr., died in 1868 intestate and without issue. These nieces and nephews are petitioning against 2 other nephews to sell property and divide money. Equity case #716 mentions that Richard T. Earle, Jr. nephew is of "unsound mind" and in Md. Hospital for Insane. Wm. C. Spencer and Julian Spencer have already sold their interests to Charlotte Spencer. Case mentions 2 old dilapidated houses, 1 2 storey frame, 1 small brick (office?) Pearce appointed to sell property.

JNG 1/1 11/25/26 Rachel D. Hands to Catherine Ringgold, wife of Richard, \$500 cm. house and lot and brick building, which son Bedingfield Hands received through his father's, Thomas B.'s, will, on 5/18/11, after his mother's death. Thomas purchased property from estate of Wm. Slubey, deed says.

? Slubey somehow bought this property but I cannot find any reference to it under property transactions or in his will

Will 8/22 3/28/98 of Wm. Slubey leaves real estate to nieces and nephews, Wm., Nancy, Thomas, Nicholas, and David Jones. Wm. Jones is executor. No record of property transfer from a Jones to Hands either.

? Slubey somehow, no reference, bought this property from Alexander McGachen or someone to whom McGachen sold it, but no reference again.\*

4/166 4/5/32 John Spencer and Elizabeth to Alexander McGachen, £15 cm., sw half of lots 78 and 79.

4/27 9/7/30 Simon and Dorcas Wilmer to John Spencer, Joyner, £5 cm., sw half of lots 78 and 79.

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Northwest half of 78 and 79

3/438 8/18/26 Wilmer, Simon and Dorcas to James Cruickshank, chirurgeon, £5 cm Md., one half of 78 and 79. Will 2/99 of 12/27/37 of James Cruickshank leaves real estate to daughters Elizabeth and Mary,  $\frac{1}{2}$  each of his  $\frac{1}{2}$  of 78 and 79.

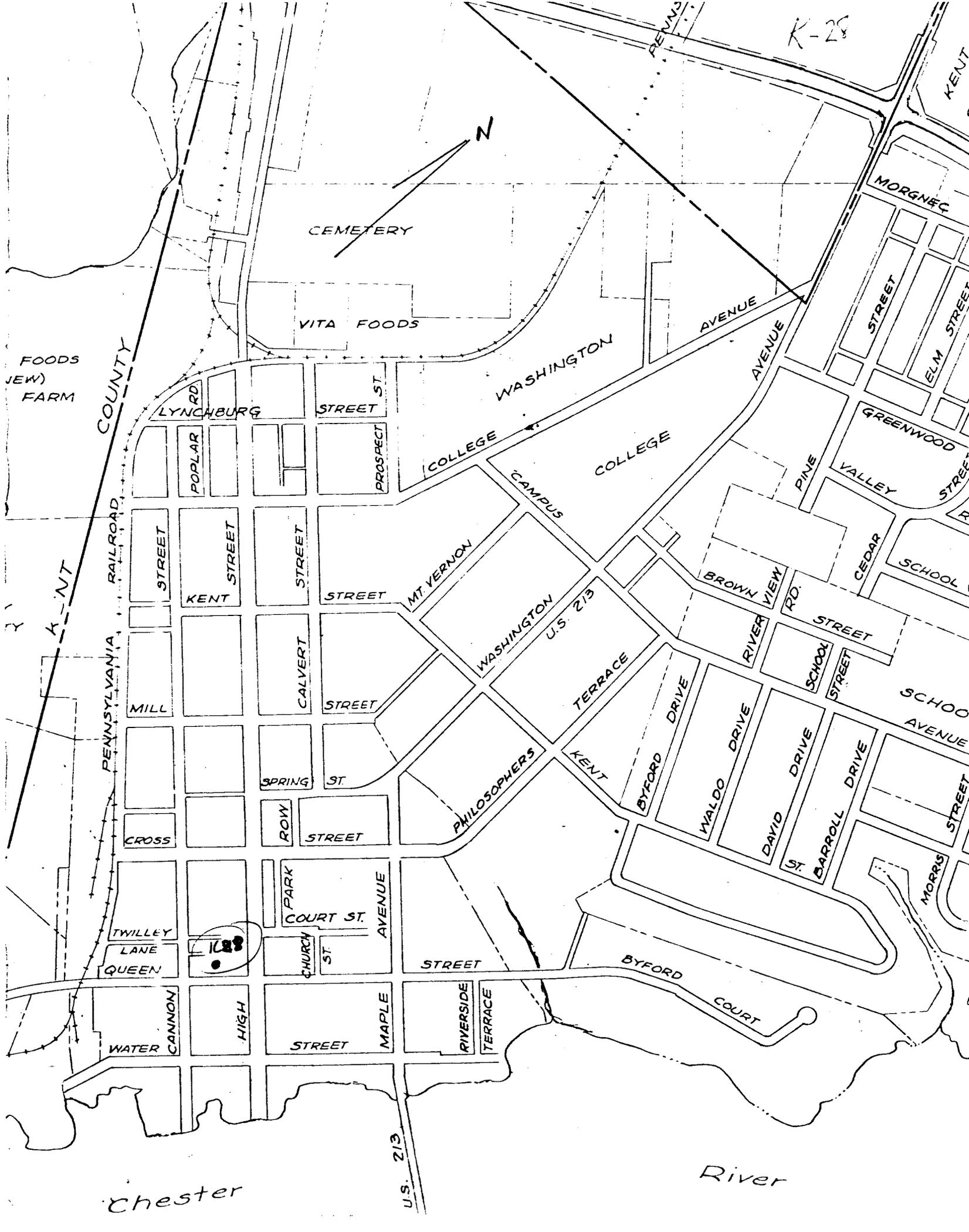
DD 5/209 2/18/79 Robert Cruickshank, Esq. and Mary Cruickshank and Sarah Cruickshank, daughters of James, to Wm. Slubey, merchant, £350 cm., ne  $\frac{1}{2}$  #78 and 79.

BC 3/233 10/3/91 Wm. Slubey, merchant to Thomas Jones, farmer, 5 shillings cm Md. part of 79, with houses, etc.

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\* Will 1/385 of Alexander McGachen, (8/19/1732), leaves to his wife, Sarah 2 lotts and house, then to his daughter Sarah. However, his wife can sell this property if she wishes. I can find no reference to a Sarah McGachen selling any property.

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FOODS (JEW) FARM

CEMETERY

VITA FOODS

COUNTY

PENNSYLVANIA RAILROAD

KENT

LYNCHBURG

POPLAR RD.

STREET

STREET

STREET

STREET

PROSPECT ST.

COLLEGE

WASHINGTON AVENUE

COLLEGE AVENUE

MORNING

STREET

ELM STREET

GREENWOOD VALLEY

PINE

CEDAR

SCHOOL

MT. VERNON

CAMPUS

BROWN VIEW RD.

RIVER

STREET

MILL

KENT

STREET

WASHINGTON U.S. 213

TERRACE

BYFORD DRIVE

WALDO DRIVE

DAVID DRIVE

SCHOOL STREET

SCHOOL AVENUE

SPRING ST.

PHILOSOPHERS

KENT

CROSS

ROW

STREET

TWILLEY LANE QUEEN

1688

PARK COURT ST.

CHURCH ST.

AVENUE

STREET

BYFORD COURT

WATER CANNON

HIGH

STREET

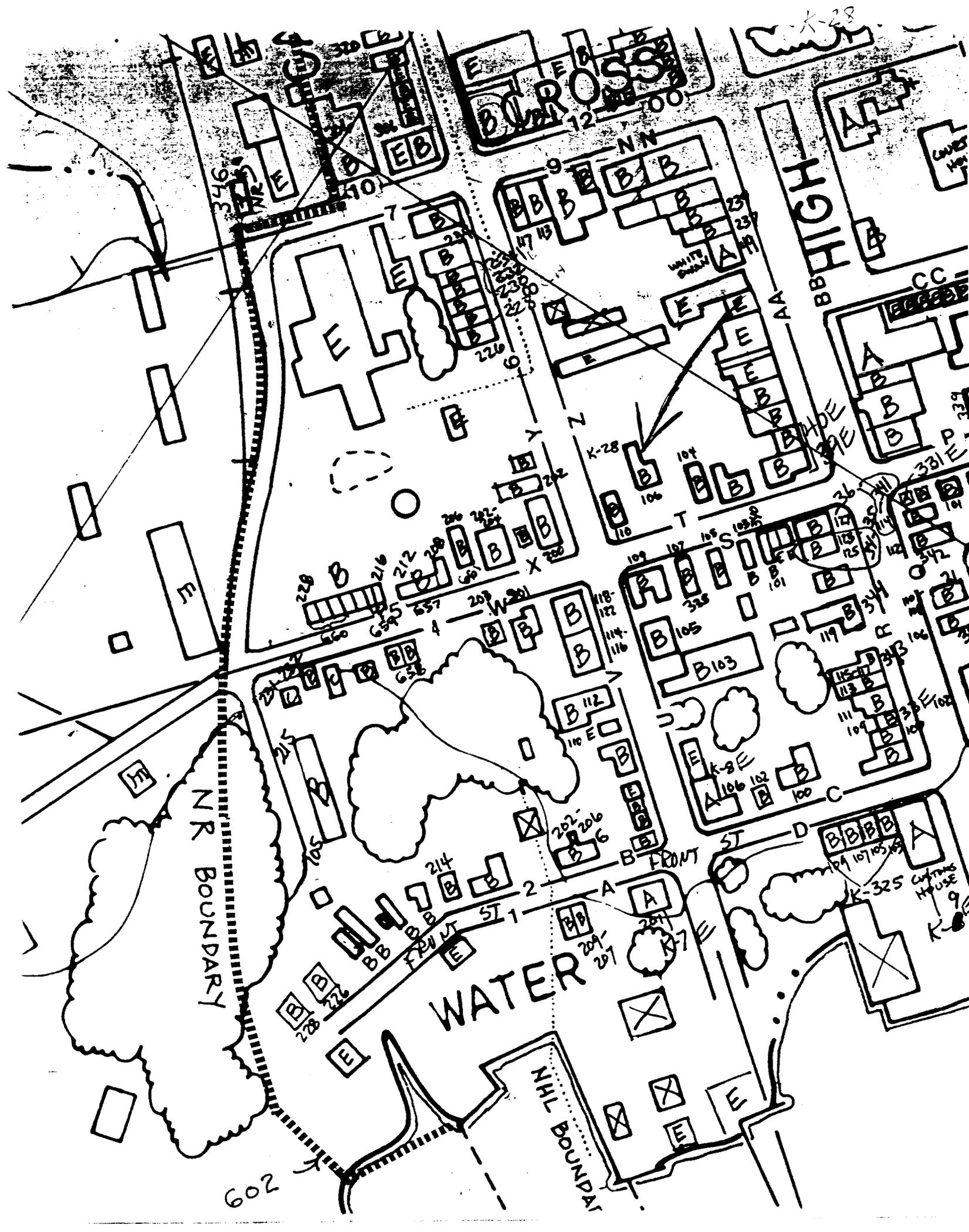
MAPLE

RIVERSIDE TERRACE

River

Chester

U.S. 213





K 28

106 S. Queen

1/77 E



K 28 106 S. Queen

1/77 E & N



106 S. Queen St., Chestertown

K-28

M013

~~K-28~~

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K 28 106 S. Queen St. - prior to "rebuilding"