

K-260

William's Venture or Humphreys Point
Rock Hall
c. 1775

The tract William's Venture was patented in 1725 to William Bradshaw. It consisted then of 114 acres.¹ When he died in 1773, Bradshaw bequeathed his dwelling plantation to his son, John.² In 1770 and 1772, John Bradshaw sold first 2, then 7 1/2 acres to John Page, planter, which was to be known for the next eighty years as "Page's Point." Page paid @85 for the two parcels, which was not enough for a substantial brick house to have been standing.³

John Page built a house on the point soon after he purchased the land. When first constructed, the house was a four-bay, one-and-a-half story brick house built on a high stone basement. Both facades were laid in Flemish bond and the north gable in English bond.

The plan of the house was a somewhat typical hall-parlor plan, but it differed from most in that it had nearly equally sized rooms. The stair, located in the northeast corner of the hall was a full-blown, two flight, open-string stair with finely turned walnut balustrade. It also possessed the added refinement of raised panel wainscot in both rooms and two-part cornice. Between the two rooms there was a vertical board partition with corner cupboard built into the parlor. The parlor fireplace had a mantel with dentil course beneath the shelf on a full wall of raised paneling. A kitchen wing was located off the south gable of the house.

In 1783, John Page was taxed on the small acreage he had acquired

from Bradshaw, along with 860 other acres. He apparently had a warehouse on one of his properties, because Benjamin Chambers was taxed on one hogshead of tobacco at John Page's warehouse in the same assessment.⁴

Page left the property to his son, Henry, but Henry lost it to the State, apparently for non-payment of taxes. In 1806, the property was sold to a Philadelphia lawyer by the name of James Vaux.⁵ Vaux sold the property (which then contained 10 acres) to John Humphreys in 1808.⁶ Henceforth, the point became known as "Humphreys Point." During the long ownership of John Humphreys, the second story was added to the old house. Modern brick was used and there was no attempt made to follow the Flemish bond pattern. Like many early 19th century brick houses, the cornice was constructed of corbeled brick. The three windows of the second story did not line up with those below. The addition of a leanto porch helped to minimize this asymmetry. The same treatment was employed at Little Neck across Swan Creek. An old photo in Robert Johnson's "Gravesend, Serene But Still Profound" shows the house with the porch.

John Humphreys died without a will in 1851. His widow, Martha declined to administer the estate, so the job was taken over by his two neighbors, Merritt Miller and James Page who lived up the creek. Two other neighbors, Abel Rees and Hiram Jones appraised the estate.⁷

By the time the county appraisers visited the property in 1852, it was in the name of Miss Catherine Humphreys and the house was listed in bad repair.⁸ By 1877, the property appears to be in the ownership of John Humphreys' appraiser, Abel Rees.⁹

When the property was purchased in the 1950's by Berthold and Silvia Atwater Bothe, it had seen years of neglect.¹⁰ In their renovation, an old two-story kitchen wing was replaced by a one-and-a-half story frame structure. The porches were removed, as was the north fireplace and chimney. Inside, the partition between the hall and parlor was removed, creating one large room. The fact that the house has survived its damp location is a tribute to the materials and craftsmanship of its builders.

1. Certificates, Lib. IL No. A, fol. 637; Patents, Lib. PL No. 6, fol. 131.
2. Wills, Lib. 4, fol. 319.
3. Land Records, Lib. DD 3, fol. 391; Lib. DD 4, fol. 79.
4. 1783 Tax Assessment.
5. Land Records, Lib. TW 3, fol. 349.
6. Land Records, Lib. BC 5, fol. 351.
7. Bonds, Lib. 13, fol. 68; Inventories, Lib. 27, fol. 96, 102, 126; Accounts, Lib. 20, fol. 264.
8. 1852 Tax Assessment.
9. 1877 Atlas.
10. Land Records, Lib. EHP 18, fol. 296.

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William's Venture, Humphreys Point, Pages Point
Rock Hall
Private

1725 to 1753

William's Venture is architecturally significant for its outstanding 18th century woodwork. Historically it is significant as a document of an early grant (1725). And recently it has become a document of the joys and problems of restoration, and of the importance of restoration to a community. Surrounded on three sides by the waters of Swan Creek, the little house was first erected as a one and one-half story, hall and parlor dwelling between 1725 and 1753. In the middle years of the 19th century a full second story was added. The restoration preserved interior and exterior details of both periods and reconstructed a side wing after one of the five earlier wings discovered.

MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST

K-260
MAGI #1502605204

INVENTORY FORM FOR STATE HISTORIC SITES SURVEY

1 NAME

HISTORIC

Humphreys Point (1783), Pages Point, William's Venture

AND/OR COMMON

William's Venture

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

Swan Creek

Humphreys Point Road

BLK
213/94

CITY, TOWN

Rock Hall

VICINITY OF

First

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

STATE

Maryland

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 PROCESS

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

Ms. Sylvia Bothe

Telephone #: (301) 639-3666

STREET & NUMBER

William's Venture

CITY, TOWN

Rock Hall

VICINITY OF

STATE, zip code
Maryland 21661

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Kent County Courthouse

Liber #: EUP 18

Folio #: 296

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

Chestertown

STATE

Maryland 21620

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

DATE

FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE

7 DESCRIPTION

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

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Now a two story, three bay brick house with a modern frame wing and gable roof, William's Venture was originally a one and one-half story gable roof dwelling probably constructed by William Bradshaw between 1725, when he purchased the property, and 1753, when he died. The second story was probably added in the middle of the 19th century; the present owners constructed the frame wing, to earlier dimensions, and the several outbuildings. The house faces east and is nearly surrounded by the waters and marshes of Swan Creek.

Old masonry walls are laid in Flemish bond on long facades. The water table has a molded upper course and three additional brick courses laid in English bond. The field stone foundation extends about 18" above grade, forming the lower part of the water table. The second story brick walls are common bond and the north gable appears largely rebuilt in a random English bond with glazed headers and portions of Flemish bond. There is a three-course corbelled brick cornice. An enclosed brick chimney, probably original to the early form of the building, is visible in the south gable; it has a corbelled cap. Another, later, small chimney is enclosed in the north gable.

Later, second story fenestration is evenly placed with one 6/6 sash window in the three bays. There is also a modern 6/6 window in each gable. Early windows, including sash and trim remain on the first floor, east facade. These have also 6/6 sash but with very wide muntins. First floor windows are also evenly spaced but in four bays; the window in the northern bay is placed higher than the others, in order to light the stair within. Old windows have rowlock arches and ogee backband moldings; one sill is rounded with cove bed. Other sills are plain. Nineteenth century windows have plain frames. Louvered shutters are used on the second floor, paneled shutters below. A modern French door with stoop has been introduced in the north gable. A wide window with a seat was added in the rear. Old basement windows with segmental arches remain on the long facades. The main entrance, in the second bay from the north, has double, raised, and beveled panel doors with an old box lock. A gable hood and steps are modern. A gable roofed cellar entrance formerly on the north gable was removed.

The two-bay frame addition with shed porch, on the gable, was built in the 1950's based on one of the five additions discovered to have stood, one after the other, against this gable wall. This one has a steeply pitched roof with gable dormers and 6/6 sash windows.

The first floor was made into one room by the removal of a central partition. The two-run corner stair is located in the northeast corner of the room. It has an open string with wave step bracketts and plain balusters, three per tread. The newel is turned with block top and base. The handrail is oval in section and molded; there is a pronounced ease at the landing. There is a raised and beveled panel on the spandrel and six panel door to the cellar beneath. Wainscoting is of raised and beveled panels and extends around the entire room. Window trim is of the three part type and there are deep sills beneath each. The fireplace wall is paneled with flanking four-panel doors. The mantle has

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899 | <input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE | <input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT | <input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY | <input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION |
| <input checked="" 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 Grant - 1725 BUILDER/ARCHITECT William Bradshaw

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

William's Venture is architecturally significant for its outstanding 18th century woodwork. Historically it is significant as a document of Kent's past. More recently it has become a document of the joys and problems of restoration, and of the importance of restoration to a community.

The following pages are from Gravesend, Serene But Still Profound, a publication of the American Revolution Bicentennial Committee of Rock Hall, 1975, by Robert J. Johnson.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Forman, Henry Chandlee, Early Manor and Plantation Houses of Maryland
 Easton, Maryland, 1934.
 Johnson, Robert J., Gravesend, Serene But Still Profound, Rock Hall,
 The American Revolution Bicentennial Committee of Rock Hall, 1975.

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

Marsha L. Fritz, Consultant

ORGANIZATION

Kent County Historical Society

DATE

August, 1977

STREET & NUMBER

Church Alley

TELEPHONE

CITY OR TOWN

Chestertown

STATE

Maryland 21620

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

7 Continued

a molded surround and shelf with wall of Troy moldings and three reeded frieze blocks. There is a cornice and old random pine floors. A corner cupboard which stood against the partition was moved to the present dining room in the new wing.

The second floor has a central hall. Trim is very simple with flat frames with triangular lintle.

The house is beautifully maintained and sited.

From Early Manor and Plantation Houses of Maryland. Henry Chandlee Forman, Easton, Maryland, 1934.

Humphrey's Point - 1783 - owned by two sons of Col. James Hodges a member of Washington's staff - the living room and stair hall are combined into one room.

Smith's Range - Sept. 22, 1663 to James Smith: Smith & Floyd died
The Addition - Oct. 7, 1667 to John Floyd without heirs.

Granted to William Bradshaw "these lands to be called William's Venture" Dec. 1, 1725.

William Bradshaw - Patent 11491 - Charles Calvert.

William Bradshaw in will dated March 16, 1753 leaves estate to wife for her life and then to his son, John Bradshaw; 7 acres with houses building - inherited by John Bradshaw; Frances married William Hodges. executor.

Feb. 4, 1806 part of William's Venture and Bradshaw Farm, deeded to John Page by John Bradshaw was deeded by Cuthbert Hall to John Vaux.

Oct. 18, 1808 James Vaux to John Humphreys - The Point - part of two tracts William's Venture and Bradshaw Farm.

July 1827 - John Humphries mortgaged to Richard Coleman of Baltimore "tract where John Humphries now resides."

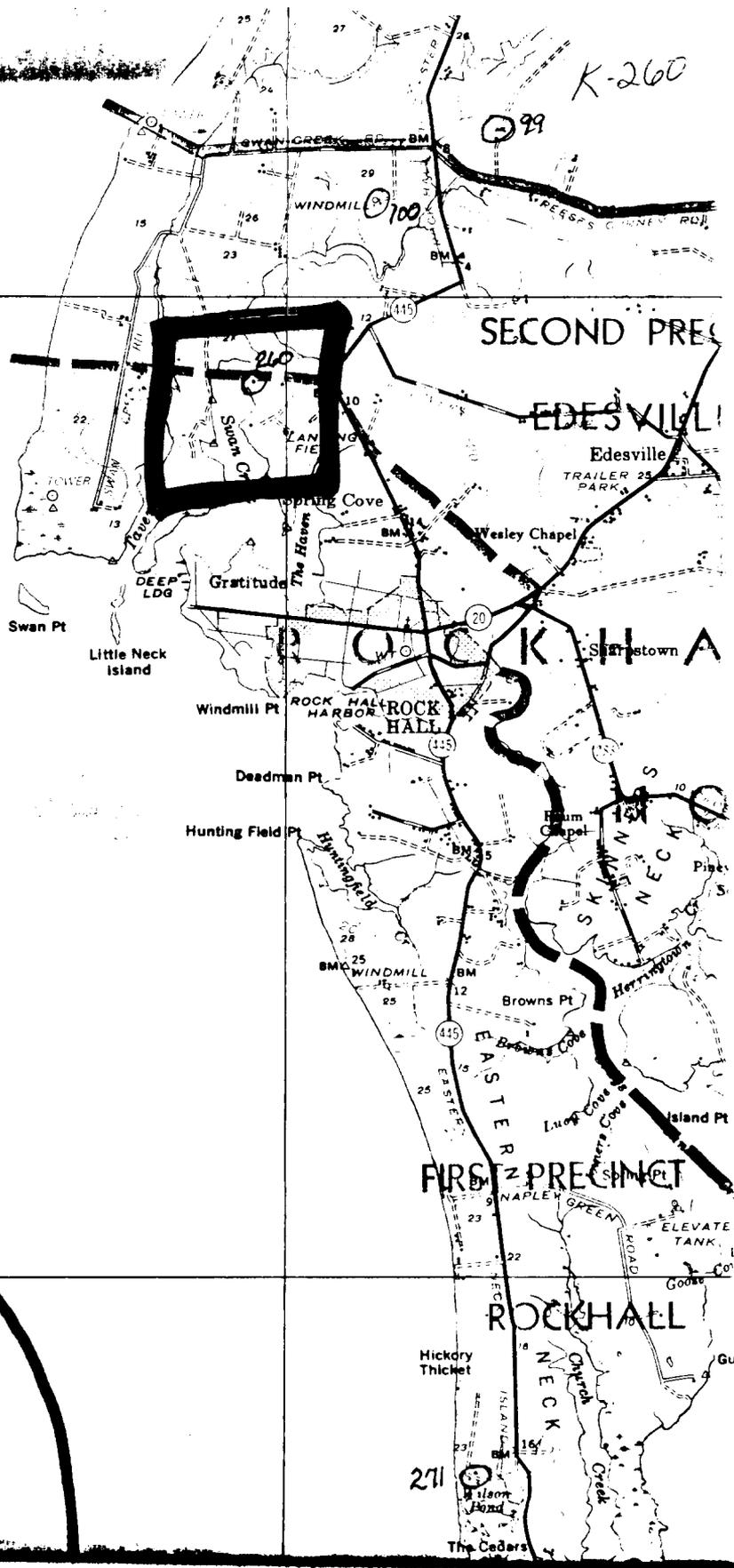
K-260

9 Continued

Rock Hall Commemoration, Inc., Rock Hall Historical Collection,
'57, Rock Hall, Maryland, 1957.

C H E S A P E A K E

490
10'
480
470
460
C5'
450





K-260

Willisess Venture MHT K 260

Tolchester Rd.

Rock Hall

East

C. Engstrom

Aug 1977



K-260

WILLIAMS VENTURE

ROCK HALL - TOLCHESTER RD.

ROCK HALL, MD.

FIRST FLOOR EAST

C. ENGSTROM AUG 1977



K-260

William's Venture UAT. #260

Trafalgar Rd.

Rock Hill

East

C Engstrom

Aug 1977