

K-264

Little Neck  
Near Rock Hall  
c. 1826

Originally part of Hinchingham, the 2000 acre land grant patented to Thomas Hynson in 1659, Little Neck is the name given to a narrow strip of land situated between Swan and Tavern Creeks. A portion of this land was sold to Richard Coleman of Baltimore in 1826.<sup>1</sup> Richard is listed as a resident of Kent County in two deeds in 1839, but by the time of his death in the 1850's, he was again residing in Baltimore. The farmhouse at Little Neck was constructed for Richard Coleman's use.

The main facade of Little Neck appears to be the west side of the house, facing Tavern Creek. These openings are the only ones to have jack arches; all walls are laid in common bond. From the three bay west facade, the two story frame kitchen wing is set back. The rear walls of both wings are on the same plane. Across the entire back of the building there was a leanto porch, which included a bulkhead door to the cellar. The cellar is only beneath the east half of the house.

Because of the small scale of the building, the plan was made to take advantage of all of the limited space. Instead of having a hall which extended through the building, the stair was located in a narrow passage in the southeast half. A dining room opened to the north and on the west side there was one large room which extended the full length of the facade. Like the Mitchell House, its grand neighbor located three miles to the north, Little Neck had a double door between the two rooms. Here, however, the opening was relatively small. Both of these rooms had well designed simple

late Federal mantels and a chair rail. The living room also had a paneled cupboard to one side. The kitchen wing consisted of one space with enclosed stair adjacent the cooking fireplace. A pantry was partitioned off in the corner abutting the dining room. At one time there was also a west kitchen porch. Other similarities to the Mitchell House include the profile of the round stair rail, backband molding in various locations and an exterior corbeled cornice.

On the second floor, there were three bedrooms. The chamber above the living room had the only fireplace. The other two bed chambers were located above the kitchen. The stair ascended to the third floor, which was finished with plaster and undoubtedly used for children's accommodations. It was lighted by one window in each gable.

In the 1852 Tax Assessment, Richard Coleman was taxed on 230 acres being part of Hinchingham. It listed a "Brick House and other buildings in tolerable repair." He also owned 244 acres that was part of Hinchingham and Millers Purchase, on which there was a frame house, and 87 acres of "St. Tantons." There was no mention of household furniture or other items which might indicate he was in residence at Little Neck.

Richard Coleman agreed to sell his farm to John K. Bruff after 1852 for which he received half payment before he died. As it was not recorded, Richard's heirs had to register the deed in 1857 and were subsequently paid the other half.<sup>2</sup> In the meantime, Richard's widow, Sarah Coleman, married John K. Bruff. The Bruffs purchased an additional 133 acres at the southern end of Little Neck in 1859.<sup>3</sup> In the 1877 Atlas John Bruff is listed as owner and there appears to be another dwelling on the lower end of the Neck.

Bruff had died two years before the Atlas was printed.

The farm was sold as the result of an equity case in 1880.<sup>4</sup> It was purchased by Thomas W. Eliason. From that time until the late 1980's, it remained in the Eliason estate. The farm was tenanted and few changes were made to the property. The kitchen wing was covered with shingles around the 1920's and a wash room was installed on the corner of the west porch.

In the late 1980's the farm was purchased by a development company and sub-divided. The exterior of the house was remodeled and placed on the market with about 20 acres.

One of the interesting structures to have remained until the subdivision was a small frame carriage house which had post-in-the-ground construction.

1. Land Records, Lib. TW 4, fol. 981.
2. Land Records, Lib. JFG 4, fol. 569.
3. Land Records, Lib. JKH 1, fol. 689.
4. Land Records, Lib. SB 1, fol. 494.

# Maryland Historical Trust State Historic Sites Inventory Form

## 1. Name (indicate preferred name)

historic Bruff Farm, Davis Farm

and/or common Swan Creek Farm

## 2. Location

street & number S. side of Swan Point Rd., 1.8 miles W and S of Rt. 445,  
N of Rock Hall,  not for publication

city, town Rock Hall  vicinity of congressional district 1st

state Maryland 21661 county Kent

## 3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" 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	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other: vacant

## 4. Owner of Property (give names and mailing addresses of all owners)

name Thomas W. Eliason, Jr.,

street & number David Drive, telephone no.: (301)-778-0597

city, town Chestertown state and zip code Maryland 21620

## 5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Kent County Court House liber EHP 79

street & number  folio 616

city, town Chestertown state Maryland 21620

## 6. Representation in Existing Historical Surveys

title "Reconnaissance - level County Survey

date 1968-1970  federal  state  county  local

depository for survey records Maryland Historical Trust 21 State Circle

city, town Annapolis, state Maryland 21401

# 7. Description

Survey No. K-264

<b>Condition</b>		<b>Check one</b>	<b>Check one</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved    date of move _____
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		

Prepare both a summary paragraph and a general description of the resource and its various elements as it exists today.

Deeper than it is wide, the gable-roofed brick 2-story main section is 3 bays wide and 2 deep with an unusual side hall plan. The narrow side hall is only half the building's depth, and the wall dividing the two 1st story rooms is beneath the roof ridge. Such a townhouse-type plan is more often seen in towns and cities, where narrow lot width required it. It is unusual in a rural area such as this. Transitional (from Federal to Greek Revival) in style, the main section probably dates from about 1825-1840. A later 19th century 2-story, side frame wing is half the depth of the main section, but the east sides, the facades, are continuous. A 6-bay porch extends the width of both.

# 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/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> 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	Builder/Architect
check: Applicable Criteria: <input type="checkbox"/> A <input type="checkbox"/> B <input type="checkbox"/> C <input type="checkbox"/> D and/or	
Applicable Exception: <input type="checkbox"/> A <input type="checkbox"/> B <input type="checkbox"/> C <input type="checkbox"/> D <input type="checkbox"/> E <input type="checkbox"/> F <input type="checkbox"/> G	
Level of Significance: <input type="checkbox"/> national <input type="checkbox"/> state <input type="checkbox"/> local	

Prepare both a summary paragraph of significance and a general statement of history and support.

Unoccupied for some time and in deteriorated condition verging on ruinous, this unusual house in Kent County's architectural history is not likely to survive many more years of neglect. This surveyor has not seen this sort of main section floor plan in the county; it may indeed be unique locally. Duck Hollow (K-117) in Georgetown does have a main section with a side hall plan that is two rooms deep, but the hall is spacious and the stair important. It is a townhouse style in a town formerly of some note. The house at Swan Creek Farm is in a remote (though not by water) rural area, and the stair is merely utilitarian. About 21 feet wide by 30 feet deep, the main section's proportions perhaps presage nearly square houses like the somewhat later Greek Revival/Italianate Middle Plantation (K-252). In the Swan Creek house, though not a central hall house like Middle Plantation, the stair, as in Middle Plantation, is relegated to an insignificant design location. The stair is indeed in a side hall with entry, but it is narrow and only half the depth of the house. In fact, the main entry perhaps originally was on the west side, with the stair not visible but in the rear with that orientation. The stair is late Federal but mantels appear transitional, and the first story shows an early and rare use of double doors (though not particularly large) between major rooms.

At first glance Swan Creek House appears quite similar to the Tavern Creek House (K-262), apparently almost a century older, located southwest across Tavern Creek. Upon closer inspection, the differences soon become apparent, but nonetheless it is possible that the owner/builder of Swan Creek House derived inspiration from the nearby house. Other possible reasons for the selection of this particular plan are the limited land area between a possible earlier wing or original house on the site where the present wing is now located and the escarpment to the south (the area would seem to have been settled early because of its proximity to the Bay and creeks); also a possible Philadelphia connection of the owner/builder of the main section.



## CONTINUATION SHEET

## 7.1 DESCRIPTION (continued)

BUILDING FORM AND MATERIAL

1. Size  
Main Section: 2 stories, 3 bays wide, 3 bays deep. Main section measures ca. 21'-2" wide x 30'-2" deep.  
Wing A: later and lower 2 stories, 3 bays wide, 2 bays deep. Attached at main section's north gable end, with east sides continuous. Half the depth of main section.
2. Plan type  
Main Section: side hall plan (but hall only half the depth of the section), with two rooms on the first story (front and rear, with the dividing wall under the ridge line). Second story appears to have been two rooms originally, the west room later divided by a board wall and an opening made to the stair landing, reached by several steep steps from the resulting southeastern room.
3. Roof type: both sections gable
4. Chimneys:  
Location: two in north gable end, the northwestern one the larger as it passes through the house since it serves two fireplaces; appears to have two flues; within walls. Wing chimney is in the center of the north gable end, within wall, with low fireback.  
Materials: brick
5. Material/Walls  
Main Section: Brick, of orangey-red color, with sandy, washed out mortar. Sample brick measurement: 8-3/4" x 2-1/4" x 4-1/8". East side and both gable ends: 1 to 5 common bond; west side 1 to 6 common bond. First story, east side (under porch): once parged, whitewashed.  
Wing A: Frame. Wood shingles over horizontal lapped weatherboard.
6. Material/Roofs  
Wood shingles throughout.
7. Material/Foundation  
Main Section: brick, cellar. Foundation not seen below ground level. Surveyor did not inspect cellar since stairs of access in east side porch floor had collapsed.  
Wing A: brick, crawl space.
8. Age  
Main Section: ca. 1820-1840. Wing added later in 19th Century.
9. Style- highly vernacular transitional, from Federal to Greek Revival; unusual townhouse plan in rural area. Nondescript vernacular later side wing.

BUILDING ELEMENTS AND DETAILS

1. Doors  
Really are two "main" entries in the main section, though the west side main entry may have been intended initially for the "company" entry. In practice the east side entry became the main entry.  
1) east side, south bay, to stair hall. Door is 6-panel with panel moldings as on first story of interior. No transom. No arches at door or over two windows this side, but brickwork has sagged or been altered above.  
2) west side, south bay, opposite east side door, but with stair and hall intervening

## CONTINUATION SHEET

## 7.2 DESCRIPTION (continued)

- 2) This door has 3-light transom, trim with large bead.

Secondary entries: 1) Wing A, east side, in central bay but off-center, into kitchen; 2) opposite #1 from west side screened porch into kitchen.

## 2. Windows

Main Section: Type - double-hung. Lights - 9/6 on front and rear of 1st story glass measures 8-1/2" x 11-1/2".

2nd Story - 6/6, also 6/6 on gable ends.

Details: large wood sills, bold bull-nose frame, or bead (1"), with 3/4" outside fillet; muntin shape on exterior is a V; meeting rail of sash is narrow.

Shutters - Removed; hinges (not pintle type) remain.

Main Section Opening Arches: 1) flat splayed stretcher arches 1st story door and windows of west side only; 2) no arches over east side door and 1st story windows; 3) south gable end--no arches 1st story windows, flat header arches at 2nd story windows.

Wing: Type: double hung. Lights: 4/4-pantry; 6/6 elsewhere

Details: plain wood sills, smaller than main section's. Trim--originally inside 1/2" bead with outside fillet but trim partially covered when shingles added.

Shutters: removed

## 3. Dormers: none

## 4. Roof Details

Main Section: corbelled cornice (2 courses); tapered verge boards.

Wing: plain, small box cornice (relatively new) with slanted fascia (rafter ends cut at 90 degrees.)

## 5. Porches

East Side: 6 bay, open, shed-roofed, concrete floored porch the width of both main section and wing; asbestos shingles; varying wood posts; probably early 20th century but altered.

West side: wing screened porch with bathroom accessible only from porch; shed roof.

6. Color: current - exposed brick is orangey-red in color; some brick has been whitewashed and/or parged. The wing's shingle siding shows no evidence of paint. Trim is white throughout.

INTERIOR DESCRIPTION

1. Plan type: (see sketch) Side hall (front half of main section only), with two rooms 1st story, front and rear. Service wing added to north gable end.
2. Major stair: federal; open string with two 1" x 3/4" plain rectangular balusters per tread; carriage-beaded lower edge; spandrel-vertical wide random-width beaded boards; rail is nearly full round, ca. 2-3/8" diameter; all stair parts are painted; newel has 2-1/2" square base and cap, with simple, slender, tapered, turned shaft. Intermediates in similar style. Dog-leg type stair with small landing 3 steps from second floor. From landing 3 probably later, steep, narrow steps also ascend directly to southwest bedroom. Stair is narrow throughout (treads

ca. 31" wide). Run continues to attic; there is no door; the balustrade continues into the attic. The attic was finished and apparently intended originally for living space. Despite the depth of the main section, it is entirely open from knee wall to knee wall and from one gable end to the other. Closet, with 4 vertical raised panel door (whose panel molding does not match other doors in house) is under stair on 1st story.

Other Stairs: Wing A--corner stair, all winders, at north gable end, to small front hall on 2nd story.

3. Major mantels: 1) west 1st-story room, main section: plain recessed frieze; plain pilasters with simple bases and composite capitals; rectangular shelf with molded edge (see profile); composite bed molding includes a cove 2) east 1st story room, main section (dining room)-see profile for surround detail; plain frieze; same shelf as #1, but same pilasters and surround as 2nd floor mantel above west room. All main section mantels have same shelf. Style tends toward vernacular Greek Revival. All openings are rectangular and closed. 3) Wing-kitchen-large painted brick fireplace projecting into room with no trim, narrows to chimney size about 55" height.
4. Major trim:  
 Windows/doors: Main section doors-trimmed with 5/8" inside bead with 1-3/8" to 1-5/8" fillet (fillet varies). Windows same except covered in places by new molding where sheet rock added over plaster. Closet door trim, 2nd story is as on 1st story side trim of cupboard next to fireplace (see profile). Wing trim is plain. Windows 2nd story, main section-sill and aprons' lower edges beaded (5/8", appears large).  
 Baseboards: plain board, ca. 5" (some appear to be replacements); wing plain.  
 Cornices: none  
 Chair rails: see profile; intact in only some parts of 1st story main section.
5. Major doors:  
 6-panel, slightly raised both sides; 2nd story main section doors have no panel moldings; 1st story doors have panel molding (see profile). Wing-4 panel, slightly raised. Double doors between 1st story rooms of main section. Single door above on 2nd story in same location between front and rear bedrooms, the only two on 2nd story originally.
6. Floors:  
 medium random pine, painted, in main section; wing-narrower random pine.
7. Walls/ceiling finishes: painted and papered plaster and plasterboard; a medium width board wall added on 2nd story main section to divide west bedroom, with beaded board and batten door. Wing-stair hall and first story room surfaced with narrow to medium horizontal boards; the same also on kitchen ceiling.

#### OUTBUILDINGS/SITE DESCRIPTION

1. Major outbuildings
  - A. Meathouse: 15-20 ft. north of wing, large (14'-3" x 12'-5"), with gable roof. Brick foundation; north and south ends-horizontal lapped weatherboarding, east and west sides-vertical boards. Construction system-widely spaced stud framing on ends, corner posts, one intermediate post each side. Appears late 19th or early 20th century.

## CONTINUATION SHEET

## 7.4 DESCRIPTION (continued)

- B. Pole shed to northwest, 20th century, with corrugated metal roof, in near ruins.
- C. Pole shed/shed with corrugated metal walls and roof, in good condition and in use for farm operation, mid-20th century.
- D. shed (or carriage house or garage) to southeast, deteriorated
- E. "Necessary" to south at escarpment.

## 2. Site description:

The only house on the long, narrow neck between Swan and Tavern creeks to the east and west respectively, it is sited on a north-south ridge which terminates abruptly in an escarpment about 50 feet to the south of the house. There is a wire fence at the escarpment. The area immediately surrounding the house, with remnants of shrub and tree plantings, is overgrown and littered. The old farm lane from Swan Creek Road is now impassable; access now is on foot or by vehicle that can cross cornfield from the north.

## 3. Views to/from Site

Beyond the outbuildings to the north are cultivated fields. Below the escarpment to the south are lower farm fields with trees beyond at the southern end of the neck, over which the Gratitude water tank is visible. To the east are rolling cultivated fields with trees in both near and far distance. Tavern Creek is visible to the west and southwest; the broad southern portion of Swan Creek is visible to the southeast; upper portions to the east are visible only from the 2nd story.

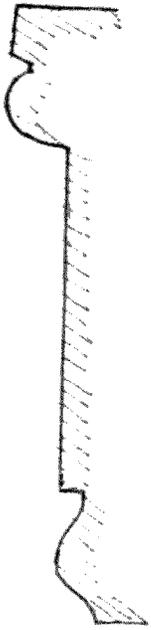
USE OF BUILDING

- 1. Current: Uninhabited and not in habitable condition at present. Parts of the house are open to the weather, and wildlife has had easy access to the interior. Electricity and modern plumbing have never been installed. The trailer to the north is leased to gunners.
- 2. Historic: farmhouse

HISTORY OF BUILDING/PAST OWNERSHIP

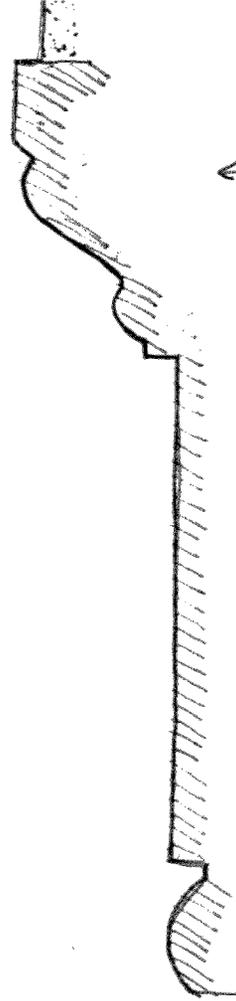
1877 Atlas of Kent County shows ownership by Jno. Bruff. There was also another structure, presumably a house, farther south on the neck, in the lower area. Evidently it is gone. It is not shown on the modern USGS quad map nor visible from K-264.

CHAIR RAIL - MAIN SEC,  
FIRST FLOOR - WEST  
ROOM

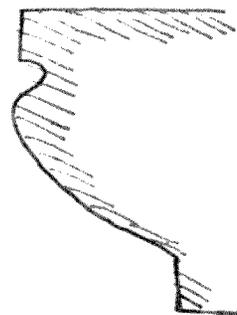
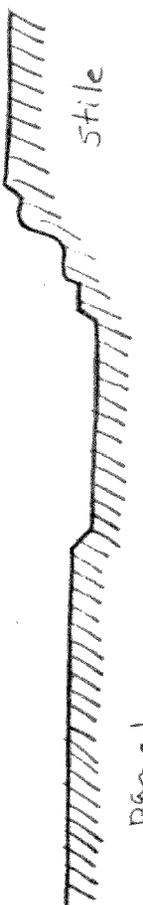


p48 K-264

BACKBAND -  
← 1st Flr. west room  
cupboard doors,  
surround of east  
room mantle, + 2nd  
floor mantle

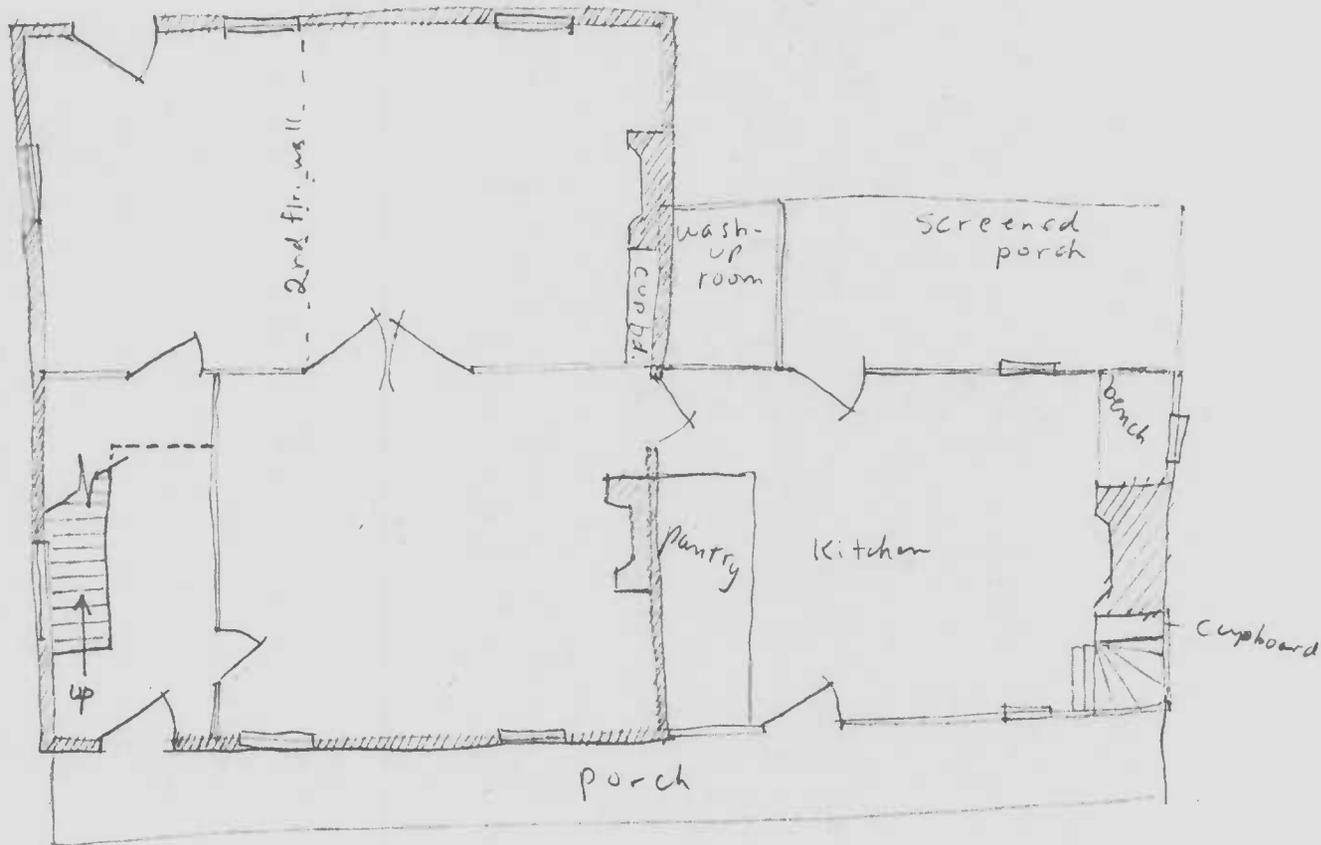


DOOR PANEL  
MOLDING -  
1st floor  
doors -  
taken from  
1st floor  
double  
door



Mantle shelf  
edge  
shelf has  
composite bed,  
including a cove

K-264



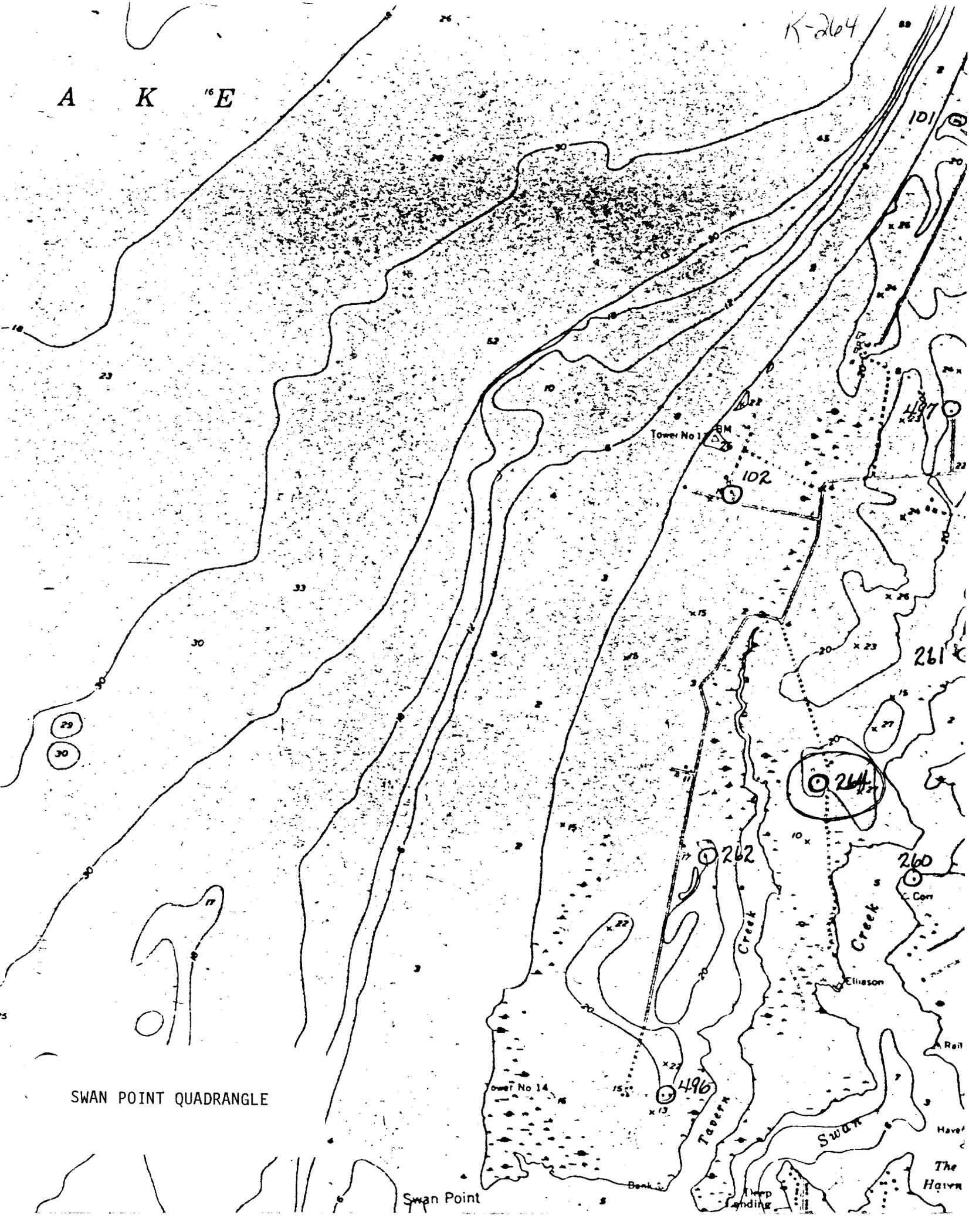
FIRST FLOOR PLAN  
SWAN CREEK HOUSE (K-264)  
NO SCALE M.Q.F.



K-264

A K 'E

K-264



SWAN POINT QUADRANGLE

Swan Point

Tabern Creek

Deep Landing

Swan Creek

Ellison

Com

Rail

Haven

The Haven

Bank

Tower No 14

Tower No 13

262

264

260

102

496

261

187

101

29

30

30

33

23

53

10

45

55

20

25

20

25

20

22

20

20

20

20

20

20

20

20

20

20

20

20

20

20

20

20

20

20

20

20

20

20

20

20

20

20

20

20

20

20

20

20

20

20

20

20

20

20

20

20

20

20

20

20

20

20

20

20

20

20

20

20

20

20

20

20

20

20

20

20

20

20

20

20

20

20

20

20

20

20

20

20

20

20

20

20

20

20

20

20

20

20

20

20

20

20

20

20

20

20

20

20

20

20

20

20

20

20

20

20

20

20

20

20

20

20

20

20

20

20

20

20

20

20

20

20

20

20

20

20

20

20

20

20

20

20

20

20

20

20

20

20

20

20

20

20

20

20

20

20

20

20

20

20

20

20

20

20

20

20

20

20

20

20

20

20

20

20

20

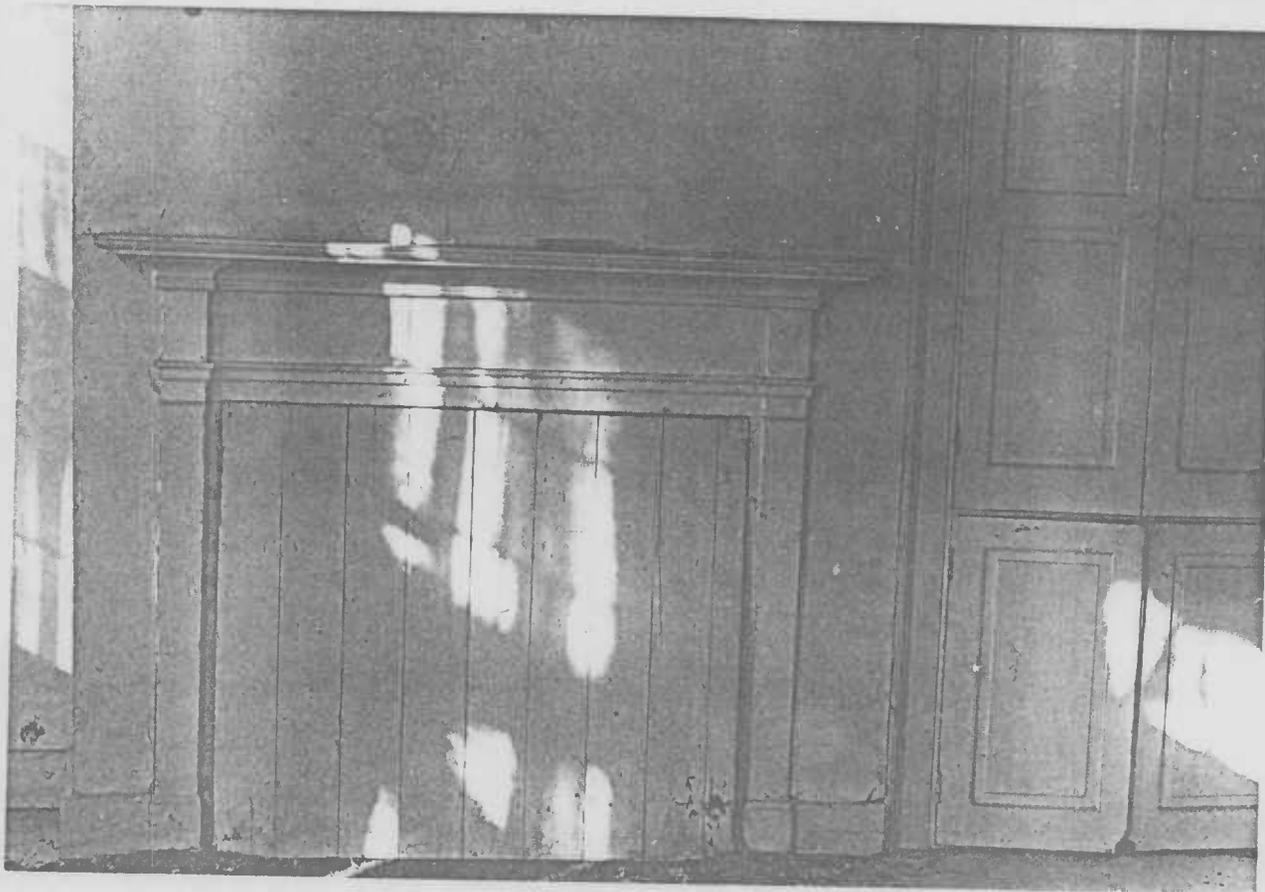


View to Northeast

SWAN CREEK HOUSE (K-264)

Rock Hall, Kent County

Photograph: M. Q. Fallaw, Nov. 1981



West Parlor

SWAN CREEK HOUSE (K-264)

Rock Hall, Kent County

Photograph: M. Q. Fallaw, Nov. 1981