

K-309
Cliffs School
Chestertown

1879

West of Chestertown on Quaker Neck Road stands Cliffs School, the only remaining one-room school in Kent County which has not been converted to another use. This one-story frame school has a gable-roof main section, 1 bay wide and two deep. The sole entry is into a lower gable-roofed section at the north gable end which is divided on the interior into a cloakroom and a closet. From about 1879 to 1930, the school served white children in grades 1-7 from the nearby Cliffs Community as well as nearby farms. Along with Mowbray Chapel (K-247), Cliffs School was a social center with box socials, pie socials, and other activities held here.

Maryland Historical Trust State Historic Sites Inventory Form

1. Name (indicate preferred name)

historic Cliffs School, Cliffs City School

and/or common Same

2. Location

Southeast Corner at 90degree turn of Quaker Neck Rd.
street & number 8 miles west of Chestertown not for publication

city, town Quaker Neck, Chestertown vicinity of 1st congressional district

state Maryland 21620 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input 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	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" 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 type="checkbox"/> not applicable	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other:

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

name Preservation Inc., c/o Karl Miller

street & number Water Street telephone no.:

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 99

street & number folio 281

city, town Chestertown state Maryland 21620

6. Representation in Existing Historical Surveys

title

date federal state county local

depository for survey records

city, town state

7. Description

Survey No. K-309

Condition		Check one	Check one
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input 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.

This one story frame school has a gable-roofed main section 1 bay wide and two deep. The sole entry is into a lower gable-roofed section at the north gable end which is divided on the interior into a cloakroom and a closet.

8. Significance

Survey No. K-309

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 checked="" 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.

Cliffs School is the only remaining one room country school in Kent County which has not been converted to other uses. Recently refurbished by a preservation organization it eventually may be open to the public as a document of education in a past era. From about 1879 to the 1930's it served white children in grades 1-7 from the nearby Cliffs Community as well as nearby farm children. Along with Mowbray Chapel (K-247) this school was also a social center for nearby residents, with box socials, pie socials, and other activities held there.

CONTINUATION SHEET

7.1 DESCRIPTION (continued)

BUILDING FORM AND MATERIAL

1. Size
Main Section: 1 story, 1 bay wide, 2 deep
Wing A: (Cloakroom)- 1 story, 1 bay wide, 1 deep
2. Plan type
Main Section: One-room with cloak room on north gable
3. Roof type
Main Section: 90 degree gable with plain, overhanging eaves
Wing(s): same as main section
4. Chimney(s)
Locations: One short brick chimney in center of school room at ridge.
Materials: Brick
Decorative Elements: 2 course cap and drip. A modern aluminum cap has recently been added.
5. Material/Walls
Main Section: Frame;Type: 6" weather boarding with narrow cornerboards.
Wing A: Frame; Type: Same
6. Material/Roofs
Main Section: Blue asphalt Wing A: Same
7. Material/Foundation
Main Section: Brick piers Wing A: Same
8. Age
Main Section: ca. 1879
Wings/Additions: Cloak room is contemporary with main section of building.
9. Style- Vernacular

BUILDING ELEMENTS AND DETAILS

1. Doors
Main Entry: location/description- in center of cloakroom gable (north) a recent 5 panel door set in a plain frame with 2 light transom above. Two simple wooden steps lead to it.
2. Windows
Main Section: type-double hung
lights-6/6
details- plain trim with an inside bead on the exterior
shutters- board and batten
Wing(s): type- narrow double hung windows in side of cloakroom
lights-
details- same as above
shutters- same as above
dormers- none
4. Roof Details
Main Section: Simple overhanging box cornice with a plain chamfered crown molding.
Wings: Same

CONTINUATION SHEET

7.2 DESCRIPTION (continued)

5. Porch(es)- Location/description: none
6. Color- current: barn red/ white trim
historic: grey in 1920's and 1930's

INTERIOR DESCRIPTION

1. Plan type- one room with cloak room
2. Major Stair- none
3. Major mantles- none. Schoolroom is heated by a simple centrally^{located} coal stove which was recently added, presumably to replace an earlier stove.
4. Major trim:
Windows/doors: Plain 4" trim
Baseboards: Plain 6" board with beaded horizontal boarding above
Cornices: none. Black boards on all sides of room, 2½'-5' high slate.
Chair rails: projecting ledge which provide base of blackboards.
5. Major doors- originals have vanished
6. Floors- Narrow yellow pine, unfinished
7. Walls/ceiling finishes- white washed plaster; trim is pale grey. Cloakroom walls are covered with horizontal beaded boards.

OUTBUILDINGS/SITE DESCRIPTION

1. Major outbuildings: none
2. Site description: On the south east corner of a bend in Quaker Neck Road. Surrounded by grassey lawn with several large trees.
3. Views to/from Site: Two small frame buildings across the road. Mowbray Chapel is to the east.

USE OF BUILDING

1. Current: Vacant but restored as a school
2. Historic: School

HISTORY OF BUILDING/PAST OWNERSHIP

The school has recently been restored by Preservation, Inc. of Chestertown, Md. Work has involved stabilizing the building and painting inside and outside. The new coal stove, a copy of a 19th century design, has been added, and iron frames for duplicates of school benches have been fabricated.

According to Kent County land records the property was owned by the County School System from 1878 to 1939; presumably the building was standing and in use for most of that period.

A teacher who taught at the school from 1928 to 1932 said that in some years she

CONTINUATION SHEET

7.3 DESCRIPTION (continued)

had more than 40 students in grades 1-7. During her tenure there were double bench seats/desks in several sizes. A large stove was used for heat as well as for heating beans and soup for lunch. In the 20th century there usually was an active PTA which sponsored various activities at the school. The teacher was expected to stage such events as box socials and pie socials.

This particular school always had informal ties with Mowbray Chapel (K-247). Indeed they were the only nearly public buildings in the area. After Mowbray Chapel (then Walton Chapel) burned in 1889, services were held at the school until a new church was built. The church held a harvest festival and supper each fall, and the teacher was supposed to have a "fancy" table there. Each spring and fall the church had a special children's service, which the teacher was to prepare and which the students were expected to attend and participate in as a group.

CHAIN OF TITLE

EHP 99/281 given to Pres. Inc. .89 acre 3/12/79

EHP 83/610 9/29/78 Anne B. McKay to Michael & Edith Miller

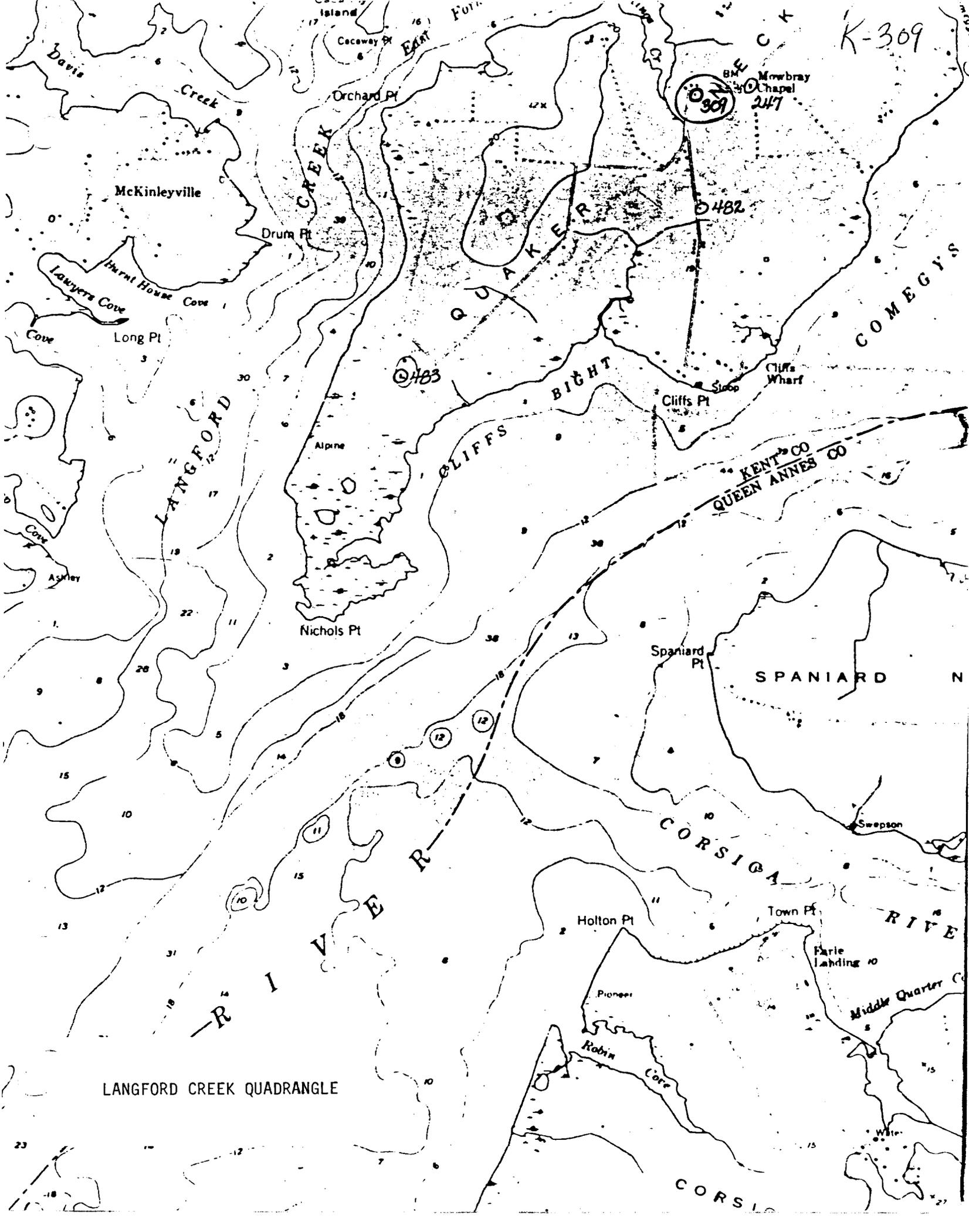
WHG 61/244 8/28/59 Jesse Metcalf, II, et al. to James M. & Anne B. McKay

WHG 29/546 7/29/53 Catherine M. Wallace, et. al. to Jesse Metcalf, II

RAS 23/065 sold by Board of Ed., Kent Co., Nov. 29, 1939 to Bert E. Wallace -no longer needed for educational purposes

DCB 4/244 purchased by Board of County School Commissioners, Sept. 2, 1878 from James P. and Mary Ann DeCourse

K-309



LANGFORD CREEK QUADRANGLE

CORSI

K-309

Early Victims Of The Horseless Carriage

EARLY VICTIMS of the horseless carriage, like thousands of others throughout the country, are these two one-room schools in Kent's Quaker Neck. They were known as Middle School, located at the juncture of Johnstontown Road, Quaker Neck Road and lower Quaker Neck Landing Road; and Cliff's School, just two and a half miles further down the neck.

Middle School is now owned by Bartus Trew, descendant of a Quaker Neck family that goes 'way, 'way back to the earliest days of the coming of English settlers to Maryland. The building has been completely refurbished and is used as a dwelling.

Cliff's School is owned by James M. McKay. It is not used for any particular purpose but is kept in an excellent state of repair, and the grounds are mowed and bushes trimmed. Pupils from nearby farms walked to classes at these schools over rutted, muddy roads.

When the automobile came along, authorities thought Pomona School was close enough to serve the elementary grades for all of Quaker Neck, and closed Middle and Cliff's schools.

So, some pupils rode tin lizzies to class in Pomona, but most of them travelled by dearborn, carriage or horseback, and many of them still walked! Were those the good, old days? Depending upon the age groups involved, you can get an argument on the subject!



QUAKER NECK CLIFF'S SCHOOL

K-309

K-309



K309-21

K-309

Cliffs Public School

Rt. 289, Quaker Neck, near Chestertown

M. Q. Fallaw - 3/29/86

View to southeast



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K309- 21

K-309

Cliffs Public School

Rt. 289, Quaker Neck, near Chestertown

M. Q. Fallaw - 3/29/86

View to northwest