

K-636

Alexander Farm or Middle Farm
Near Millington
1821

The brick house on this farm which borders Pudding Branch appears at first glance to be later than the date on the recently "discovered" marked attic rafter – 1821. All walls of this 37' x 18', two-story house are laid in common bond. Its smaller, two-story wing has a corbeled brick cornice. For the size building, it is surprising that the plan includes a central stairhall, albeit somewhat narrow.

The stair is a very delicate, close-string stair with plain square newel, round handrail and thin rectangular balusters. Its spandrel is composed of vertical beaded boards, now enclosing a basement stair. Both rooms have plain Federal style mantels. The stair only ascends to the second floor. Like many 19th century farmhouses, the attic stair is a winder located in the corner of the south room.

In the 1877 Atlas, this farm and two others were owned by the Spear family. The Alexander Farm is actually referred to as "Middle Farm." The road on which this house is located is named for that family.

K-636

1821

Alexander Farm

Near Millington

Private

The Alexander Farm is almost a mile east of Route 313 (the Millington-Massey road) via Spear Road, originally a farm lane. With Pudding Branch to the east, the farm was once the middle of three farms arranged east to west belonging to the Spear family. The rather small, two-storey main farmhouse was built of brick in 1821 in a late Federal style. It was altered on the exterior later in the nineteenth century to try to make it look fashionably Victorian: a central gable was added to the approach, west side, and the roof was altered, probably removing a corbelled brick cornice. There is a true 1-1/2 storey one-bay-wide lower wing at the south end that may be later than the main section; it appears to have been shortened. The main section is three bays wide and two deep, with a slightly off-center entry. There is a narrow central hall with stair, and one room on each side. Details are simple, late Federal. The Alexander Farm is an example of a quite small and simple late-Federal-style dwelling. It was built in a period when the agricultural economy was just beginning to recover from a period of decline and probably was considered a very fine house for the period, though it is not very refined. Building craftsmanship seems to have declined in the county during the early nineteenth century from higher eighteenth century standards; brickmaking and bricklaying especially seem to have declined. This building is especially important because it is a dated building. A previously undiscovered date was found on a rafter during the survey investigation. The house therefore helps serve as a benchmark in studying other houses.

Maryland Historical Trust State Historic Sites Inventory Form

1. Name (indicate preferred name)

historic Sunset Farm, Middle Spear Farm

and/or common Noble Alexander Farm (preferred)

2. Location

North side Spear Rd., .7 mile east of Rt. 313

street & number north of Millington

___ not for publication

city, town Millington

vicinity of

congressional district

state Maryland

county Kent

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input 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 checked="" 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 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 type="checkbox"/> other:

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

name Mr. and Mrs. Noble Alexander

street & number P.O. Box 178

telephone no.: 928-3318

city, town Millington

state and zip code Maryland 21651

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Kent County Courthouse

liber EHP 111

street & number

folio 232

city, town Chestertown

state Maryland

6. Representation in Existing Historical Surveys NONE

title

date

___ federal ___ state ___ county ___ local

depository for survey records

city, town

state

7. Description

Survey No. K-636

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 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.

Located a mile via Spear Road (originally a farm lane) east of Route 313 (the Millington-Massey road), and with Pudding Branch to the east the Alexander Farm was once the middle farm of three arranged east to west belonging to the Spear family. The rather small, two-storey main farmhouse was built of brick in 1821 (date found on attic rafter) in a late Federal style. It was altered on the exterior later in the nineteenth century to try to make it look fashionably Victorian: a central gable was added to the approach west side, and the roof probably was altered, removing a corbelled brick cornice. There is a true 1-1/2 storey one-bay wide lower wing at the south end that appears somewhat later than the main section; it appears to have been shortened. The main section is three bays wide and two deep, with a slightly off-center entry. There is a narrow central hall with stair, and one room on each side. Details are simple, late Federal.

(Continued)

8. Significance

Survey No. K-636

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	1821	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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> state <input type="checkbox"/> local	

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

The Alexander Farm is an example of a quite small and simple late-Federal-style dwelling. It was built in a period when the agricultural economy was just beginning to recover and probably was considered a very fine house for the period, though it is not very refined. Building craftsmanship seems to have declined in the county during the early nineteenth century from higher eighteenth century standards. Brickmaking and bricklaying both seem to have declined. This building is especially important because it is a dated building. A previously undiscovered date was found on a rafter during the survey investigation. The house therefore helps serve as a benchmark in studying other houses of the area and general period.

According to the 1860 Martenet map of Kent County this farm and several others near it were owned by members of the Spear family; the same was true in 1877, according to the atlas map of that year. According to the owners of this house, there were three Spear farms together here, aligned west-east. The one closest to the road was the one still known as the Spear Farm (K-167), with a hipped-roof brick house dating from somewhat later in the nineteenth century. The Alexanders' farm was the middle Spear farm, and to the east, across Pudding Branch was the Back Farm, where the house is now gone. There formerly were several other old buildings back in this rather remote area between public roads but with Pudding Branch and the Kent & Queen Anne's Railroad running through it.

The main section is about 37 feet wide by 18 feet deep. It is three bays wide in both front and rear, though the central bay in the rear is covered on both storeys by a c. 9' x 9' frame extension with shed roof for bathrooms. The openings of the central bay are slightly to the north of center: the main entry, the window above, and the added central gable. Openings do align from first storey to second. At the north end there is an attic casement window on each side of the chimney. On the storeys below there is only one opening, in the west bay of the first storey. The wing front and rear walls are flush with those of the main section; the wing was added to the south end of the main section, perhaps somewhat later, though it is possible that it is contemporary with the main section. The wall evidence is not clear. It is about 14 feet wide. There once was some sort of addition at the wing's south end, said to have been of brick, perhaps one storey in height though it is possible that it was two. It seems to have been rather crudely detached.

The brick of the main section is laid in 1-to-5 common bond throughout. It is dark red and handmolded and laid with wide (1/2"), now-eroded joints. Typical bricks measure about 8" x 2-1/4" x 4". Some repair work has been done using modern grey cement mortar, and some twentieth-century common bricks have been installed, such as under some of the windows. The three-sided wing is also laid in the same bond. Courses seem aligned between wing and main section; however there is some separation in the joint area. However, only the front and rear brickwork is visible because the wing end is parged and painted deep red. There have been some difficulties with stability in the wing, resulting in the installation of three iron turnbuckles to hold bulging walls. There has been considerable repair work, and the wing seems to be pulling away to the south.

There is a cellar only under the hall and south room of the main section. There appears to have been no original entrance from the inside of the house to the cellar, the under-stair closet only recently having been converted for use as a cellar entry. There is one front cellar window with flat splayed stretcher arch in the main facade south bay (but not directly under the south bay windows of the storeys above). The entry from the exterior is between the south bay and south corner of the east side.

There is now no chimney in the wing. A wing chimney may have been in a section now gone. The main section has a chimney at each end, in the center within the wall. The north chimney is built of the same dark red brick as the main walls of the house; the south chimney is parged. There is a two-course cap on the north chimney and a one-course cap on the south one, of brick that is unparged.

The roof of the main section is covered with deteriorated wood shingles. On the end wing there are new asphalt shingles, and the bathroom bump-out seems to have asphalt shingles as well. The cornice of the main section may have been corbelled originally as there is somewhat unusual construction of the roof edge. It may have been altered when the central gable was added. There is now a box cornice that is continuous around the roof perimeter of the central gable. There is a large cyma recta crown molding and a compoundly
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molded bed. The overhang on sides and ends is about 12-14". There are end returns of about 24-28", which the original roof would not have had. The wing roof has a corbelled cornice, the lower two header courses original, the upper stretcher course reworked. There is a frame boxed roof extension on the south end overhanging the wall about 18". It is obviously not original.

The off-center main entry is on the west side. There is a rough Port Deposit granite sill set into the brick 8-1/2" on each side. It measures 56" wide by 6" high. There is said to be a similar stone, with a date, at the rear opening of the central hall, but it is now covered and the door no longer leads to the exterior but to a bathroom. The original door is gone. In its place is a 15-light door and a mill-finish aluminum storm door. Three concrete steps now lead to the entry. There is said to have been a porch here before the present owners' tenure, but there is no clear evidence about its size. Some evidence in the brick suggests that a porch may have extended just to or just beyond the side bay windows. As at all the first-storey openings, there is a flat, splayed stretcher arch above the main entry. The transom now has one light; there are no sidelights. The 1-7/8" jamb edges are molded into a large inside bead and an outside 7/8" fillet.

The main-section windows are double-hung except for the 4-light casement windows on each side of the north chimney. Sash lights are 6-over-6, with the second-storey windows slighter shorter than those of the first. The north end's west-bay window on the first storey is a recent replacement. The opening arches are flat, splayed stretcher arches on the first storey, of bricks especially molded for the purpose. The arches are 8-1/2" tall on the main, west facade and north end but only 7" tall on the rear openings. The jamb edges are molded as at the main entry. Aluminum storm windows-screens are in place. The wood sills are heavy, about 2-3/4" to 3" deep. The shutters were already gone by the time the present owners purchased the farm. Applied hinges remain, and there are a few shell-type shutter dogs. The wing windows have been replaced on the first storey and are 3-over-3 on the second.

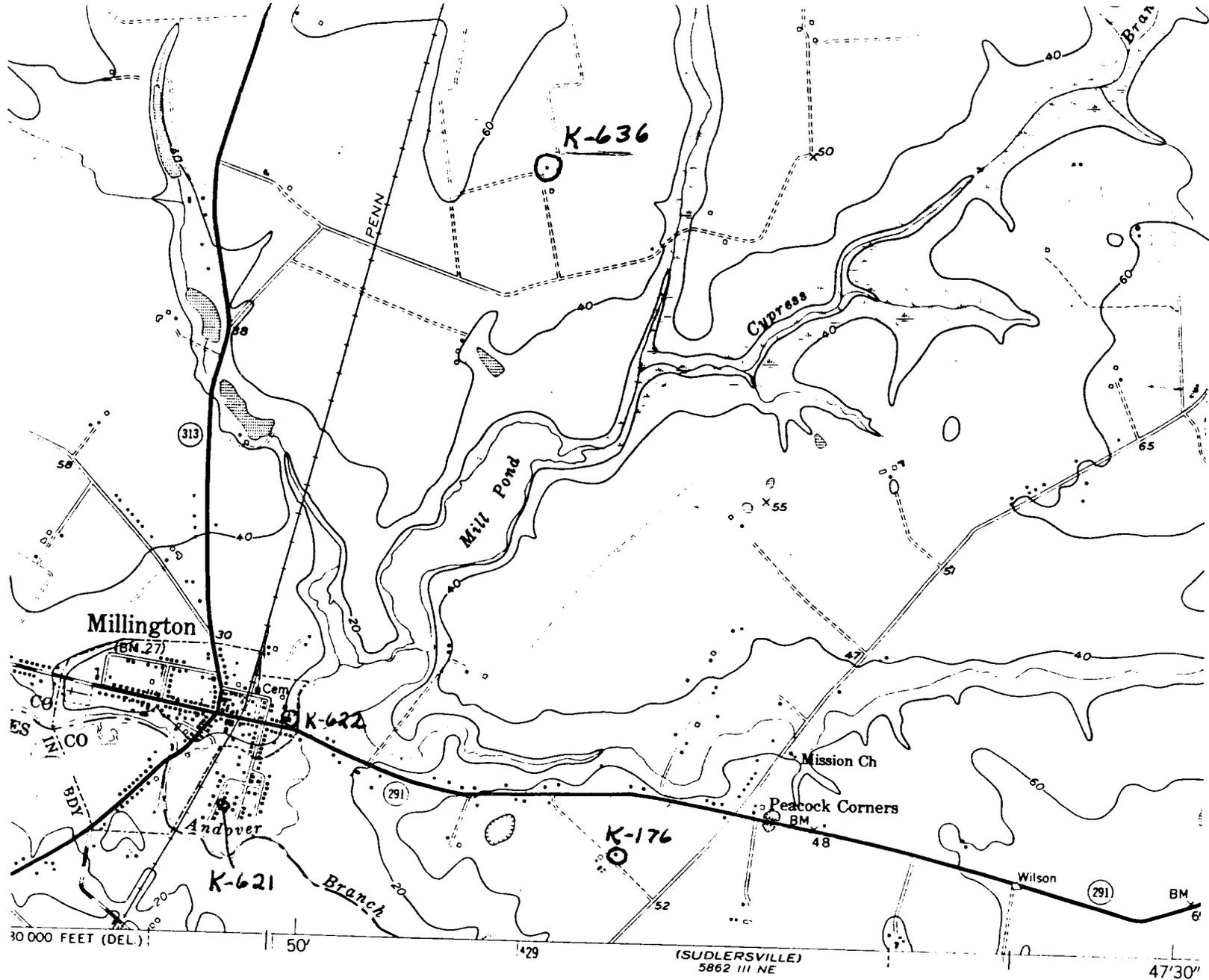
The central gable is now painted white (but was once dark red). It is not especially steep, and it is non-function (i.e., it does not admit extra light to living space--the attic was never finished). It is covered with lapped, horizontal weatherboard with a deep lower "frieze" board (c. 12") with upper and lower moldings. Its single window is double-hung, with the upper sash pointed. Its jamb trim is plain, but the head trim is compound.

Mantels are typical late Federal, or transitional mantels. While retaining Federal features such as frieze blocks, these are plain. Shelf bed moldings, while deep and with multiple profiles, are not delicate and appear to be machine-made.

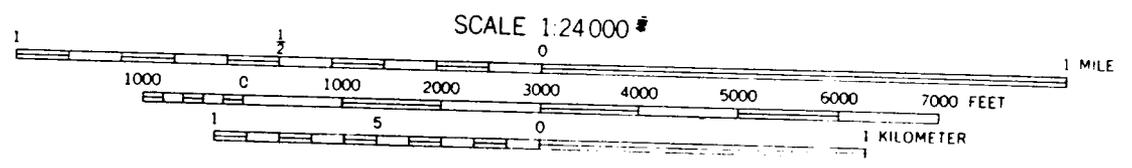
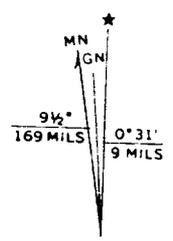
The stair rises on the narrow hall's south wall. It is quarter turn with winders. It is closed-string. The balusters are rectangular in section and measure about 5/8" x 1-1/4", with the narrow edge facing the treads. The
(continued)

treads, like the hall, are narrow. The entire tread is 33" wide. They are painted. The newel is plain and c. 2-1/2" square, with a thin (5/8") plain square cap that is slightly larger and has its edges rounded over. The rail is almost round, with an approximate diameter of 2-1/2". The stair spandrel is of medium random vertical beaded boards. The stair to the attic is not in the stair hall but in the south bedroom; it is enclosed in a corner.

Doors are six-panel, and door and window trim is relatively simple but handsome (see profile). In the north room some trim paint was located that may be the original color--a very bright but somewhat deep green, perhaps what is called Kelly green.



30 000 FEET (DEL.) | 50' | 129 | (SUDLERSVILLE) 5862 III NE | 47'30'



CONTOUR INTERVAL 20 FEET
NATIONAL GEODETIC VERTICAL DATUM OF 1929

THIS MAP COMPLIES WITH NATIONAL MAP ACCURACY STANDARDS
FOR SALE BY U. S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, RESTON, VIRGINIA 22092
A FOLDER DESCRIBING TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS AND SYMBOLS IS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST

MILLINGTON QUADRANGLE

TM GRID AND 1973 MAGNETIC NORTH
DECLINATION AT CENTER OF SHEET



K 636-30

K-636
Noble Alexander Farm
Rt. 313, near Millington
M. Q. Fallaw - 7/1/86
View to east

MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST
LIBRARY

K-636 Middle Farm 1821



K-636

Noble Alexander Farm

Rt. 313, near Millington

M. Q. Fallaw - 7/1/86

View to west