

K-647
Grassdale
Near Chestertown
Private

Circa 1820-1860;
1870-1890

The house at Grassdale is an irregular complex of six frame and brick building sections with building dates perhaps from as early as the second quarter of the nineteenth century to the 1970s. They are clustered together in a pragmatic fashion and now house two separate households. The earliest section is a two-bay-wide two-storey section with gable roof that now has a large kitchen on the first storey with corner stair to two bedrooms. Most likely there was an earlier 1-1/2 storey section at its northwest end. Now at its northwest end, but offset to the rear, is a small true 1-1/2 storey section without dormers, appearing to be the second oldest section, with stair and one room per storey. The front, main section was built next, a vernacular Victorian Gothic Revival 2-1/2 storey building with a cross central gable. Appearing to have been built circa 1870-1890, it was added in front of most of the early two-storey section, with part of the earlier building protruding from behind it on the southeast end. The roof ridges of both these sections are parallel. The multiple-part assemblage at Grassdale is one of the most unusually developed dwellings in Kent County. Its layout as it grew evidently was dictated by convenient arrangement of rooms to each other rather than whether or not the resulting grouping would appear like more conventionally arranged Kent County house sections. The practice of placing a large, new main section almost directly in front of a previous building whose axis is the same direction is most unusual. The only other part of the county in which this is seen--usually the new house essentially covering the old by its bulk--is in the Rock Hall area, especially on Route 20 and on the road to Gratitude. The dilemma seemed to be what to do when a large, stylish new main section was wanted but the old to be retained faced the public road. The problem was solved by simply placing the new in front of the old. The Victorian main section of this house is also unusual for its depth, being very close to square. It is also a cross-gable building, not a type of Victorian construction used in Kent County.

Maryland Historical Trust State Historic Sites Inventory Form

1. Name (indicate preferred name)

historic Grassdale (preferred)

and/or common Cooper Farm

2. Location

street & number Northeast side Rt. 297, .5 mile northwest of Rt. 213,
northwest of Chestertown ___ not for publication

city, town Chestertown vicinity of congressional district Fourth

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 Mrs. Bertha Cooper Layhen, etal

street & number RD 4 Grassdale telephone no.: Unlisted

city, town Chestertown state and zip code Maryland 21620

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Court House liber EHP 76

street & number Cross Street folio 800

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-647

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.

The house at Grassdale is an irregular complex of six brick frame and building sections with building dates perhaps from as early as the second quarter of the nineteenth century to the 1970s. They are clustered together in a pragmatic sort of fashion and now house two separate households. The earliest section is a two-bay-wide two-story section with gable roof that now has a large kitchen on the first story with corner stair to two bedrooms. Most likely there was an earlier 1-1/2 story section at its northwest end. Now at its northwest end, but offset to the rear, is a small true 1-1/2 story section without dormers, appearing to be the second oldest section. The front, main section was built next, a vernacular Victorian Gothic Revival 2-1/2 story building with a cross central gable. Appearing to have been built circa 1870-1890, it was added in front of most of the early two-story section, with part of the earlier building protruding from behind it on the southeast end. The roof ridges of both these sections are parallel. With the building of the large, new main section a U-shaped space was created to its rear, at first filled in with an open porch. About 1972 it was enclosed and fully surrounded by a new one-story, brick addition. The sixth building part is not contiguous in the same sense as the others are but stands to the rear of the earliest section, connected by a pair of shed-roofed porches that are screened together and face each other, one a kitchen porch and the other a porch for a two-story structure constructed like a farm building but with a cellar. It is known as the old slave quarter, but it may not be that old, though it very likely served to house farm laborers during the latter half of the nineteenth and early part of the twentieth centuries.

(Continued)

8. Significance

Survey No. K-647

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 1820-40;1870-90 **Builder/Architect**

check: Applicable Criteria: A B C D
and/or

Applicable Exception: A B C D E F G

Level of Significance: national state local

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

The multiple-part assemblage at Grassdale is one of the most unusually developed dwellings in Kent County. Its layout as it grew evidently was dictated by convenient arrangement of rooms to each other rather than whether or not the resulting grouping would appear like more conventionally arranged Kent County house sections. The practice of placing a large, new main section almost directly in front of a previous building whose axis is the same direction is most unusual. The only other part of the county in which this is seen—usually the new house essentially covering the old by its bulk—is in the Rock Hall area, especially on Route 20 and on the road to Gratitude. The dilemma seemed to be what to do when a large, stylish new main section was wanted but the old to be retained faced the public road. The problem was solved by simply placing the new in front of the old. The Victorian main section of this house is also unusual for its depth, being very close to square. It is also a cross-gable building, not a type of Victorian construction used in Kent County.

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The main Victorian section at Grassdale is 32 feet wide and 28 feet deep. It is three bays wide and two deep. The parallel old section behind it is 20 feet wide and 18 feet deep; it is two bays wide and two deep. The small, northwest addition to the earliest section is about 10-1/2 feet wide and 15-1/2 feet deep; it is one bay wide and two deep. The area that began as a northwest kitchen porch and is now enwrapped living space could not be measured. The newest, brick section is about 12 feet wide and almost 16 feet deep; it is two or three bays wide and three closely-set bays deep.

All sections of the house at Grassdale are frame except the most recent addition, which appears to be brick veneer. The frame sections (except for the free-standing little building near the rear that is connected to the main house by screened porches) are now covered with asbestos shingles over horizontal weatherboard, presumably lapped. It was not seen. On three of the main section corners there are full bold pilasters on two sides. They have no bases but are panelled, with arched panel heads. They have composite moldings for caps. At the fourth corner the newest, brick section wraps around part of the main section, obscuring the pilaster, which is still visible above it, however.

The Victorian main section is built over a crawl space with a fieldstone foundation. The oldest section, with the large open kitchen filling its entire space, is built over a cellar. The walls are partially fieldstone; the upper sections are brick. Entry to this cellar is through the floor of its rear porch.

There is an old chimney within the northwest gable-end wall at the center of the oldest section, now the main kitchen. It is built of brick but has been parged. It has a one-course cap and a one-course drip. On the exterior of the southeast end wall of this section there is a modern, concrete-block chimney to serve the new furnace in the cellar. There was once a chimney between the two rooms of the southeastern half of the main section, but it has been partially removed, on the first storey only. It remains on the upper storeys and protrudes through the roof. A chimney has been removed from the main section's northwest gable-end wall, where it evidently was in the center; when the presently deep single room was divided, it apparently was not divided equally. The fireplace was in the front, large parlor section. The present owner says that the rear part of it when she was a child was the "cake room," evidently for overflow from the pantry. It is not known if the partition was original or added.

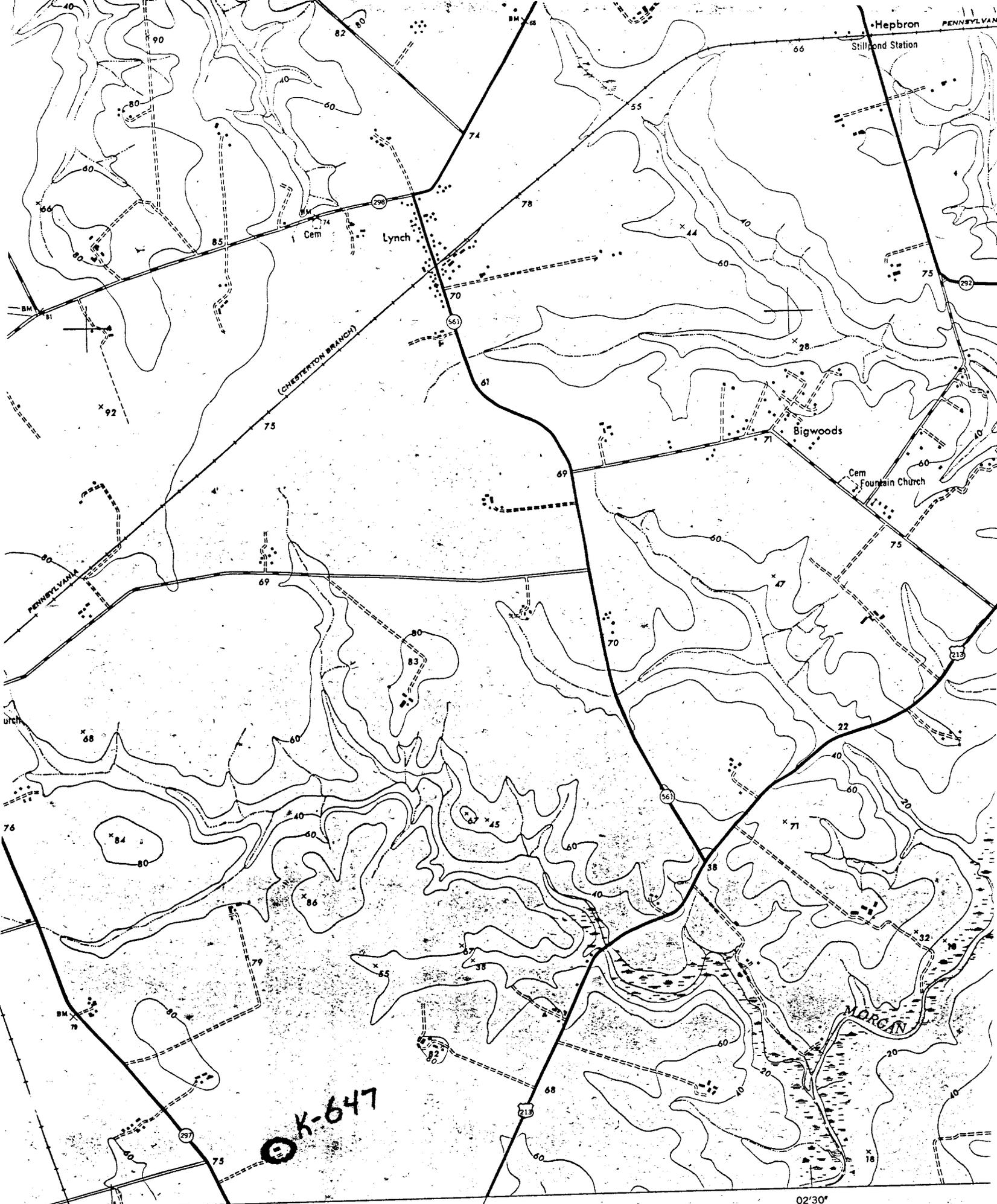
The main section has a dormer on each side of the central gable of the approach facade. There is also a rear-slope dormer for the north room. However, in the approximate location of where the other rear dormer would be is what might be called a "cricket roof," a gable roof running from the rear slope of the main section to the front roof slope of the earlier, parallel section behind it, to take care of the drainage problem that would otherwise ensue from the two roof edges meeting. The construction of this blind gable roof can be seen from the attic of the earlier section. The roofs of the main section and earliest section are covered with asphalt shingles over wood

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shingles. The small wing added to the early section (with one room on each storey) has a roof of corrugated metal. The now-enclosed porch and the newest brick section are roofed together, with one long, continuous shallow shed roof. The roof could not be seen well but appears to be of built-up material.

Because the main section is so deep, not only is it possible to have rooms arranged two rooms deep, as is the case on the second storey and was at least in part originally on the first storey, but the stair from first to second storey can run its entire distance in a single, straight run without being too steep. There is thus no need for a landing. The stair to the third storey is over the run from first to second, also a straight run, made possible by the existence of a rear central gable as well as a front one in order to provide head room at the top of the third-storey stair. As on the first and second storeys, there is a long, narrow front-to-rear hall on the third storey. The stair hall is not open to the front gable however; there is a small room there. The stair hall on the first storey has been altered. Formerly it led straight through, long and narrow, to a rear door leading to the porch in the U. Now the section of the hall adjacent to the beginning of the stair run is a closet, and behind it living space (bathroom) for the apartment that occupies the first storey of the northwestern part of the house was built.

According to the present owner, in whose family the farm has been for some time, the main section of the house was built by a Thomas Massey, a distant relative by marriage. This is the name that appears on the 1877 Lake, Griffing and Stevenson atlas map of this section of the county. According to Martenet's 1860 map of Kent County, an E. M. Wood was the owner at that time. Though it was not researched, this farm may once have been part of the Rose Hill farm (K-119), where the farmhouse dates to the eighteenth century and which lies fairly close to the east across the fields but is reached by a different public road, Route 213 instead of the road to Worton from Hopewell Corner. The farm has been about 200 acres for a long time, the owner says, and Grassdale is a fairly old name for it. It also has been popularly known as the Cooper Farm, for her family that owned it for a considerable period of time.



05'00"

CHESTERTOWN 3 MI.
KINGSTON 3.7 MI.

CHESTERTOWN 3 MI.
KINGSTON 3.7 MI.
SCALE 1:24000

02'30"

1 Mile



K-647

Grassdale

Rt. 297, near Chestertown

M. Q. Fallaw - 7/22/86

View to southwest



K247-14

K-647

Grassdale

Rt. 297, near Chestertown

M. Q. Fallaw - 12/19/85

View to northeast



K247-12

K-647

Grassdale

Rt. 297, near Chestertown

M. Q. Fallaw - 12/19/85

View to north