

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

| |
|------------------|
| FOR NPS USE ONLY |
| RECEIVED |
| DATE ENTERED |

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

HISTORIC

Part of Joseph's Lot, also known as Little's Purchase; Loller Farm

AND/OR COMMON

JOHN EMBERT FARM (preferred); Whistlefield

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER South side of Baxter Road, .6 miles east of Peters
Corner Road

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

STATE Millington

VICINITY OF
CODE

First
COUNTY

CODE

Maryland

24

Queen Anne's

035

3 CLASSIFICATION

| CATEGORY | | OWNERSHIP | STATUS | PRESENT USE | |
|------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|---|---|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT | <input type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S) | <input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC | <input type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED | <input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE | <input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM |
| <input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE | <input type="checkbox"/> SITE | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED | <input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL | <input type="checkbox"/> PARK |
| <input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT | | <input type="checkbox"/> BOTH | <input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS | <input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL | <input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE |
| | | PUBLIC ACQUISITION | ACCESSIBLE | <input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT | <input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS |
| | | <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"/> NO | <input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OTHER: Storage |

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

Jed and Bonnie Howell

STREET & NUMBER

Rt. #1, Box 93-A

CITY, TOWN

Sudlersville

VICINITY OF

STATE

Maryland 21668

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Queen Anne's County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

Centreville

STATE

Maryland

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 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED | <input type="checkbox"/> MOVED DATE _____ |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> FAIR | <input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED | | |

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The John Embert Farm, renamed Whistlefield by the present owners, lies on the south side of Baxter Road, about one-half mile east of Stevens Corners. Constructed of brick, the house is one-and-one half stories high with a two-bay facade.

Although the north and south facades share identical fenestration, with a door in the west bay and a six-over-six window in the east bay, the north elevation was clearly intended as the principal facade. On this facade, the brick is laid in Flemish bond, while the remainder of the building is laid in three-course American bond, and the cellar windows and paired shed dormers are symmetrically placed. On the south facade, the ground level is lower, allowing for a bulkhead entrance to the cellar at the east end. There is a single shed-roofed dormer in the east bay.

The west gable end was covered until recently by a story-and-a-half frame addition. This was considered beyond repair and removed, exposing the ghost of an earlier addition in the upper gable. The roof of this addition was about 18 inches lower than that of the brick house, but had an identical pitch. A door in the center of the gable wall on the first floor appears to be original, but was used for access to the later additions. Another door in the center of the gable on the second floor is not original, and may have been made by enlarging a window.

The east gable is uninterrupted by doors or windows. A flush chimney is centered on this wall.

The gable roof is of medium pitch, averaging 43 degrees, and is covered with modern corrugated tin. The plain box cornice is not original, but is made up of one-inch material secured with wire nails. Fragments remain of the upper edge of the rakeboards, but no discernible details have survived.

Several details remain to suggest that in its original form the building had a certain degree of sophistication. The north and south doorways have raised-panel jambs and soffits, and all openings have beaded surrounds with a strip of ogee molding around the outer edge. The original door on the north facade has raised panels on the exterior face to match the soffit, and vertical beaded boards secured with wrought nails on the inner face. The raised six-panel door on the west gable is probably also original. The south door has been replaced with a modern batten door.

Although the interior consists of a single room on each floor, the degree of sophistication is quite dramatic. The fireplace is centered on the east gable wall, with a winder stair in the alcove to the left and a four-door cupboard in the alcove to the right. This entire wall was originally paneled. Although the mantel and the paneling above the fireplace are now gone, the rest of the wall is intact, with the doors to the stair and to the closet below the stair and all cupboard doors have fielded panels.

Complex molding surrounds on all door and window openings and a simpler surround for the cupboard add to the feeling of refinement. Only one section of baseboard is evident, in the southwest part of the room. There is no chairrail on the first floor.

SEE CONTINUATION SHEET #1.

Form No. 10-300a
(Rev. 10-74)UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

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John Embert Farm
Queen Anne's County

CONTINUATION SHEET Maryland

ITEM NUMBER 7 PAGE 1

(DESCRIPTION, continued)

The second floor was originally a single room, but has been partitioned to create two smaller rooms. There is a very small fireplace approximately centered on the east gable wall, with a molded board surround. A rather wide, beaded chairrail with shelf and a beaded baseboard encircle the original room. This chairrail is quite unusual, for on the facade walls it consists of a very wide one-inch board that actually rests on top of the masonry wall, acting as a false plate to receive the roof framing. It projects out beyond the finish plaster on the inside sufficiently to double as a half-round shelf for the chairrail. The utilitarian nature of this arrangement may further be appreciated by the absence of a chairrail on the first floor, despite the latter being the more formal room.

The cellar is reached through a frame shed covering a bulkhead entrance on the east end of the south facade. The door to this shed is a very nice, random-width beaded batten door secured with hand-wrought, T-head nails.

Centered on the east wall of the cellar is a massive chimney support with the typical arched recess in the center. Otherwise, the room is quite plain, with light provided by three small window openings, one of which retains two of the original diamond section wooden bars set horizontally and flattened at each end to rest in a bed of mortar in the masonry walls.

Some time in the 19th century about one-third of the cellar was partitioned off, apparently to create a storage area for milk and/or vegetables. This was accomplished by erecting a wooden screen of vertical boards nailed top and bottom with about one inch left open between each board. The ceiling joists were covered with machine-sawn lathing and plaster.

The full one-and-one-half story height of the masonry walls, the combination of Flemish bond and American bond brickwork, and the interior woodwork all suggest an early 19th century date for this building.

The brick foundation walls are laid in three-course American bond, while above ground the brickwork is Flemish bond on the north facade and American bond on the remaining sides.

The first floor joists are very large, consisting of unbarked logs hewn only on the top face and laid parallel to the gable on 14 to 20-inch centers. The ends are cut into large, crude tenons and are set directly into the masonry walls. The joist closets to the chimney base is more carefully crafted, also large in scale but hewn on all four sides, presumably to simplify the framing around the chimney and the support for the hearth.

SEE CONTINUATION SHEET #2.

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John Embert Farm
Queen Anne's County

CONTINUATION SHEET Maryland

ITEM NUMBER 7 PAGE 2

(DESCRIPTION, continued)

The roof is constructed of common rafters secured at the ridge by center-cut mortise and tenon joints. Each rafter pair is joined by a collar that doubles as a ceiling joist. The collars are half-dovetailed and pegged into the rafters. The rafter ends are supported by a flat false plate resting on the top of the masonry wall. This plate has a molded edge on the inside and doubles as the shelf of the second floor chairrail. All visible framing is gang-sawn; the roof pitch is 43 degrees.

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 type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899 | <input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE | <input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT | <input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY | <input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION |
| <input 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

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Although the John Embert Farm house can easily be accepted at face value as a fine example of early 19th century domestic architecture, its greatest contribution is as an exceedingly rare and almost pristine example of a house type that has all but disappeared.

Documentary evidence demonstrates conclusively that, popular notions to the contrary, the great majority of the population in Tidewater Maryland and Virginia lived in houses of this small scale throughout the 17th, 18th, and 19th centuries. Orphan's Court records, deed descriptions, and the 1798 Federal Direct Tax all demonstrate that the typical house of this period was in the 16 x 20 to 24 x 28 range, and it was generally a sign of considerable success to own a house over 30 feet in length.

The majority of these houses were frame, however, and due to the fragile nature of their materials and the increasing impracticality of their small size, they have all but disappeared from the landscape.

The earliest deed reference that can be located specifically referring to "Joseph's Lot" is the 1773 will of Agnes Peters, in which she leaves

...to my sons Jonathon Peters and William Peters part of a tract of land called Joseph's Lot to be equally divided betwixt them both. The part I now live upon to my son William Peters and the other part to Jonathon Peters....¹

William's share of the land is variously referred to as being 62 or 63 acres. In the Assessment of 1783 William Peters is listed as a resident of Upper District and is assessed for four tracts of land including "Joseph's Lot, 63 acres." Unfortunately, the "Lands" list for this district is missing, and so there is no enumeration of buildings available.²

In 1798 William Peters devised Joseph's Lot to John Peters,³ and the 1798 Federal Direct Tax for that year includes the following entry:

#72 John Peters, part of Joseph's Lott
 1 dwelling house \$ 50
 63 acres land \$126

It is regrettable that no description of the dwelling is included as well.⁴

SEE CONTINUATION SHEET #3.

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John Embert Farm
Queen Anne's County

CONTINUATION SHEET Maryland ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE 3

(SIGNIFICANCE, continued)

In 1799 John Peters sold "Joseph Lotts" to William Vandyke for 157 pounds.⁵ Vandyke sold the land to John Greenwood for 200 pounds the following year.⁶

The change in price during these years is of particular interest. Vandyke was able to sell the property for a noticeably larger price than he had paid the preceding year. This may suggest that Vandyke built the house, or it may simply indicate a shrewd business transaction. The house listed on the 1798 Federal Direct Tax is valued at only \$50, a figure that seems somewhat low, particularly in view of the prices paid for the land in 1799 and 1800. It is possible the house referred to in the tax list was the unfinished shell, or it may have referred to one of the small dwelling houses listed in the 1822 Orphans Court Valuation.

In 1803 John Greenwood sold the land to Thomas Little, again for 200 pounds.⁷ Little had purchased the adjoining parcel from William Vandyke for 125 pounds three years earlier.⁸ This was a 75-acre tract that Vandyke purchased from John Burris (or Burroughs) in 1799 and was part of a tract called "McConekin's Career," which John inherited from his father, George Burris (also appearing in the deed books as George Burrows). George Burris had purchased McConekin's Career from Daniel McConekin in 1759.⁹

After Thomas Little's death, the lands were ordered sold, and in 1807 Caleb Spry purchased Little's property, which consisted of three adjoining tracts known as "Little's Purchase," "Little's Chance," and "Joseph's Lot," comprising about 200 acres. The purchase price was one thousand twenty-six dollars.¹⁰

Caleb Spry died in 1821, and the property descended to his son, Caleb Wright Spry, a minor.¹¹ In 1822 the Orphans Court of Queen Anne's County ordered Samuel Cacy and George Palmer to appraise the property and establish an annual rent that the guardian, George Spry, was to pay for the use of the farm. This valuation and a second valuation made in 1827 provide a superb picture of the farm during those years. Included is the following description of the house and farm buildings from the 1822 valuation:

...we also find on said farm one small Brick Dwelling house twenty foot by sixteen with a cellar...with a frame house as a Dwelling attached there-to in good repair, one round log Corn Crib sixteen foot by eight, one round log stable eighteen foot by fourteen, one round log smokehouse ten foot by eight, one poultry house nine feet square, all in bad repair...¹²

SEE CONTINUATION SHEET #4.

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John Embert Farm
Queen Anne's County

CONTINUATION SHEET Maryland

ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE 4

(SIGNIFICANCE, continued)

The 1827 valuation elaborates somewhat on the appearance of the house:

...one brick Dwelling House one story and an half high, twenty feet by eighteen feet with a frame addition twenty feet by sixteen...¹³

Both documents enumerate several other buildings on the property, the condition of the fences, and an inventory of the fruit trees in the orchard. Also included was Spry's "Personal Estate," which consisted of "one Negro boy called Moses, aged twelve" valued at \$25 per year in 1822, and in 1827, at the age of seventeen, at \$35 per year. The remainder of the estate, including 120 acres of swampy woodland, was valued at \$144 per year in 1822 and only \$88 per year in 1827. This drop in value is apparently an indication of the declining state of both the land and the buildings, as the assessors note the increasing disrepair of the farm yard.

The year in which Caleb W. Spry reached his majority is not know, however, it is clear that he took possession of the farm, and in 1855 sold the same 200 acres to Daniel Loller.¹⁴

Loller died early in 1863, and John M. Robinson, appointed Trustee by the Circuit Court, was ordered to sell the property and divide the proceeds among the heirs.

Robinson sold the land to Charles Noble of Philadelphia in 1866,¹⁵ and after Noble's death, the land was sold to John Biggs, of New Castle, Delaware, in 1886.¹⁶

The property remained in the Biggs family until 1951, and then passed through several transactions until 1974, when Ernest Cookery sold 13 acres with the brick house and several farm buildings to the Howells.¹⁷

At that time there was a frame addition on the west gable of the brick house, but this was in derelict condition and was demolished.

Two photographs taken in April 1974 show that the frame addition was built in two stages and was slightly narrower than the brick house. This would suggest that the earlier frame section may have been the 16 x 20 foot frame dwelling referred to in 1822 and 1827 as being attached to the brick house. As mentioned in the architectural description, however, a ghost remains in the west gable brickwork to indicate that a slightly smaller frame addition must have pre-dated the building visible in the 1974 photographs.

SEE CONTINUATION SHEET #5.

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John Embert Farm
Queen Anne's County

CONTINUATION SHEET Maryland

ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE 5

(SIGNIFICANCE, continued)

Regardless of these questions, the brick structure that remains is the most significant building association with the property. It seems probable that the house was constructed circa 1800, perhaps by William Vandyke, and that the frame, 16 x 20 foot addition was made before 1822.

¹Wills: Liber WHN No. 2, folio 408. April 29, 1773.

²1783 Tax Assessment, Upper District, p. 6. Jonathon Peters is also listed owning 62 acres, part of Joseph's Lot.

³Wills: Liber WHN No. 3, folio 246. October 13, 1798. There is some confusion here, for William Peters leaves the property "to my son, Lewis Peters...." However, the deed by which John Peters conveyed the land to William Vandyke in 1799 specifically states that John Peters received the land from William Peters, who in turn inherited it from his mother, Agnes Peters.

⁴1798 Federal Direct Tax for Chester Hundred, Queen Anne's County. Entry #72 in both the General List and the Particular List.

⁵Deeds: Liber STW No. 4, folio 552. January 23, 1799.

⁶Deeds: Liber STW No. 5, folio 330. November 3, 1800.

⁷Deeds: Liber STW No. 6, folio 324. April 5, 1803.

⁸Deeds: Liber STW No. 5, folio 247. May 24, 1800.

⁹Deeds: Liber STW No. 4, folio 554. January 23, 1799. Also see Liber RT No. F, folio 4. June 28, 1759. This was probably part of a 150 acre tract patented as "Mc Conekin's Career" by John McConekin in 1750. See Patents, BY & GS. No. 5, folios 46 and 503. McConekin's Career is listed under the Burris family in both the 1783 and 1798 tax lists. See: 1783 Tax Assessment, Upper District, p. 1. 1798 Federal Direct Tax, Chester Hundred Entry No. 12 in General Lists: Lands. Because there is no dwelling house, the property is not included in the Particular List.

SEE CONTINUATION SHEET #6.

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NATIONAL PARK SERVICENATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

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John Embert Farm
Queen Anne's County

CONTINUATION SHEET Maryland

ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE 6

(SIGNIFICANCE, continued)

¹⁰Deeds: Liber STW 8, folio 271. December 19, 1807. Little's Purchase and Joseph's Lot totaled 138 acres. When and from whom Little purchased the remaining 60-odd acres is not known. The name "Little's Chance" disappears in all subsequent deeds, and the 200 acres is called "Little's Purchase" or "Joseph's Lot." It seems probable that this third tract may have been the wooded swampland referred to in the 1822 assessment. For Thomas Little's Will, refer to Wills: Liber WHN No. 4, folio 258. Probated Nov. 18, 1806.

¹¹Wills: Liber TCE No. 1, folio 154. Probated May 19, 1821.

¹²Valuations: Liber WHN No. 4, folio 202. April 27, 1822.

¹³Valuations: Liber WHN No. 4, folio 330. March 30, 1827.

¹⁴Deeds: Liber JP No. 1, folio 505, October 24, 1855.

¹⁵Deeds: Liber SED No. 2, folio 268. April 3, 1866.

¹⁶Deeds: Liber SED No. 8, folio 192. March 25, 1886.

¹⁷Deeds: Liber TSP No. 2, folio 385. August 16, 1951.
Biggs to Embert.

Liber CWC No. 61, folio 568. January 31, 1972.
Embert to Yoder.

Liber CWC No. 73, folio 195. April 23, 1973.
Yoder to Cookery.

Liber CWC No. 80, folio 548. January 10, 1974.
Cookery to Howell.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

QA-33

Title search, 1978-1866, carried out by Bonnie Howell.
Queen Anne's County Land Records, Centreville, Maryland.

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 1 1/2 acres

UTM REFERENCES

| | | | | | | | |
|---|------|------------------|---------------------|---|------|---------|----------|
| A | 1, 8 | 4, 2, 9, 9, 8, 0 | 4, 3, 4, 1, 8, 4, 0 | B | | | |
| | ZONE | EASTING | NORTHING | | ZONE | EASTING | NORTHING |
| C | | | | D | | | |

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

SEE CONTINUATION SHEET #7.

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

| STATE | CODE | COUNTY | CODE |
|-------|------|--------|------|
| STATE | CODE | COUNTY | CODE |

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Orlando Ridout V, Historic Sites Surveyor

ORGANIZATION

Queen Anne's County Historical Society

STREET & NUMBER

124 South Commerce Street

CITY OR TOWN

Centreville

DATE

April, 1978

TELEPHONE

STATE

Maryland 21617

12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL

STATE

LOCAL

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

[Signature]

9-24-79

TITLE

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER

DATE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

ATTEST:

DATE

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

FOR HCRS USE ONLY

RECEIVED

DATE ENTERED

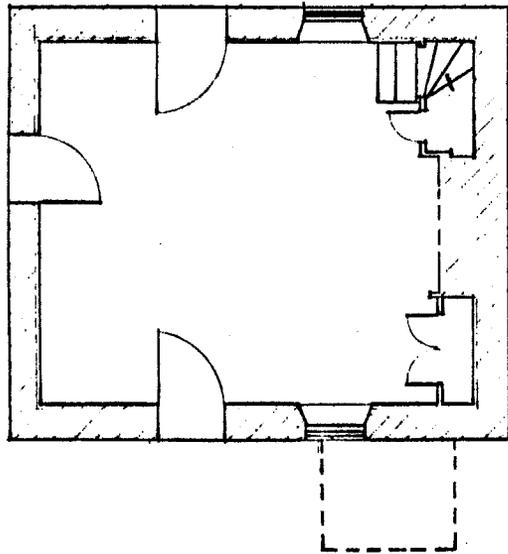
**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

John Embert Farm
Queen Anne's County

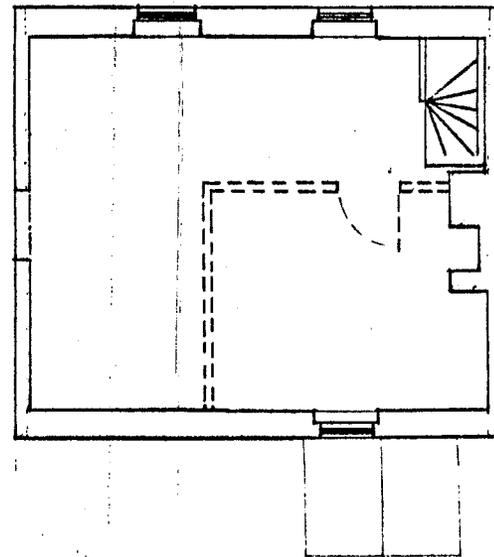
CONTINUATION SHEET Maryland ITEM NUMBER 10 PAGE 7

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

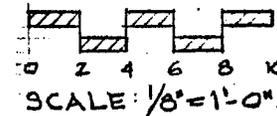
BEGINNING at a point on the south side of Baxter Road about 3300 feet east of Peters Corner Road; thence, northeast along the south side of Baxter Road about 250 feet to a point; thence, southeast about 300 feet; thence, southwest about 200 feet; thence northwest about 350 feet to the point of beginning, containing approximately 1½ acres.



FIRST FLOOR



SECOND FLOOR

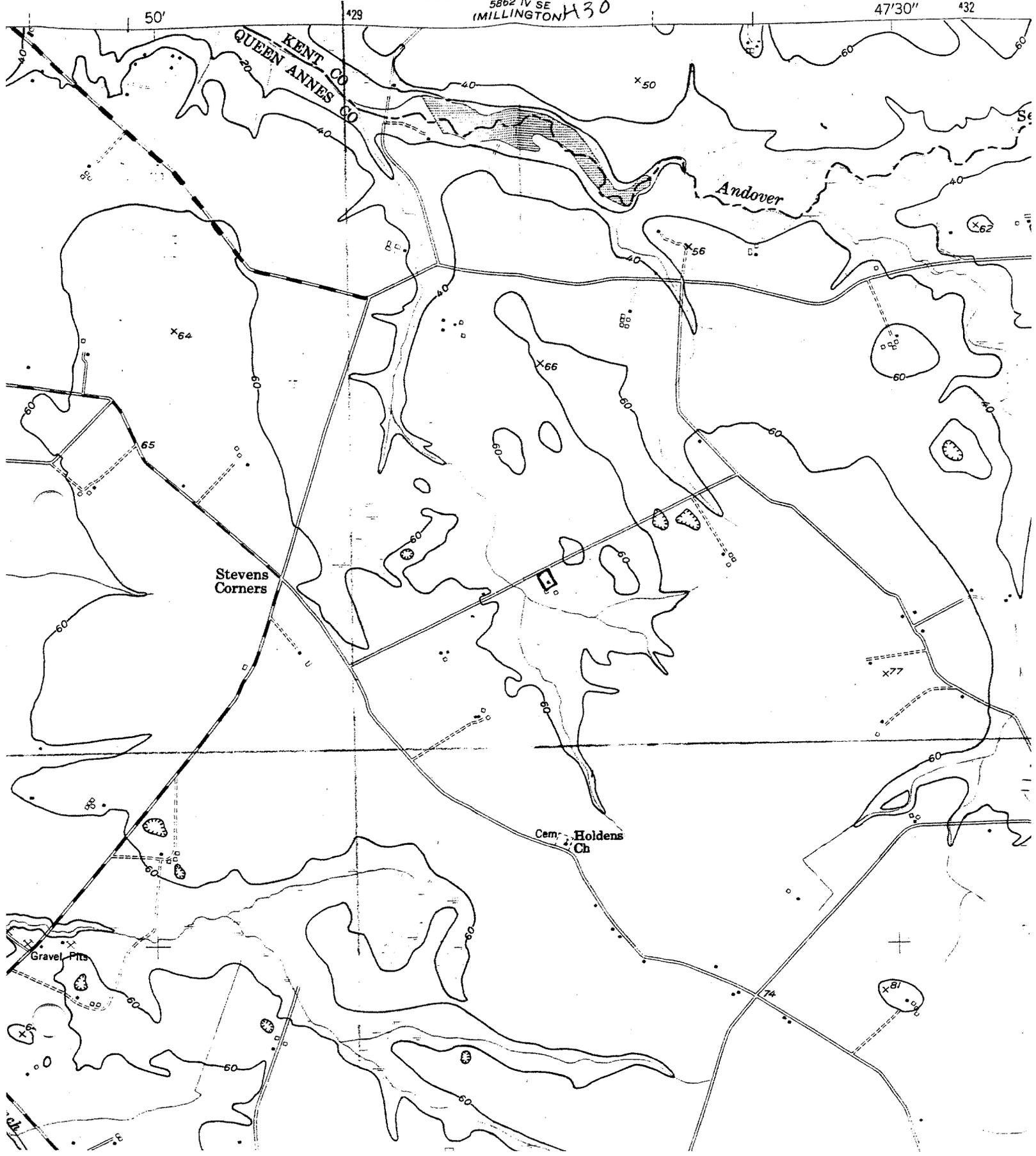


QA-33

JOSEPH'S LOT
STEVENS CORNERS, MARYLAND

MARCH 2, 1978.

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
CORPS OF ENGINEERS
5862 IV SE
(MILLINGTON) H30



QA-33
Joseph's Lot
Sudlersville
Private

circa 1800

Built circa 1800, Joseph's Lot is a rare example of a house type that was common throughout the Tidewater region until the mid-19th century, but has all but disappeared. This example is particularly noteworthy due to the survival of most of the original interior woodwork, including the first floor paneling.

MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST

INVENTORY FORM FOR STATE HISTORIC SITES SURVEY

1 NAME

HISTORIC

Part of Joseph's Lot, also known as Little's Purchase; Loller Farm

AND/OR COMMON

John Embert Farm, Whistlefield

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

South side of Baxter Road

CITY, TOWN

Millington

 VICINITY OF

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

First

STATE

Maryland

COUNTY

Queen Anne's

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY

DISTRICT
 BUILDING(S)
 STRUCTURE
 SITE
 OBJECT

OWNERSHIP

PUBLIC
 PRIVATE
 BOTH
PUBLIC ACQUISITION
 IN PROCESS
 BEING CONSIDERED

STATUS

OCCUPIED
 UNOCCUPIED
 WORK IN PROGRESS
ACCESSIBLE
 YES: RESTRICTED
 YES: UNRESTRICTED
 NO

PRESENT USE

AGRICULTURE MUSEUM
 COMMERCIAL PARK
 EDUCATIONAL PRIVATE RESIDENCE
 ENTERTAINMENT RELIGIOUS
 GOVERNMENT SCIENTIFIC
 INDUSTRIAL TRANSPORTATION
 MILITARY OTHER storage

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

Jed and Bonnie Howell

Telephone #: 438-3239

STREET & NUMBER

RT#1, Box 93-A

CITY, TOWN

Sudlersville

 VICINITY OF

STATE, zip code

Maryland 21668

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,

REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC Queen Anne's County Courthouse

Liber #: CWC 80

Folio #: 548

STREET & NUMBER

Courthouse Square

CITY, TOWN

Centreville

STATE

Maryland

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

DATE

 FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCALDEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE

7 DESCRIPTION

| | | | | | |
|--|---------------------------------------|---|---|--------------------------------|------------|
| 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"/> MOVED | DATE _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> GOOD | <input type="checkbox"/> RUINS | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED | | | |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> FAIR | <input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED | | | | |

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The John Embert Farm, renamed Whistlefield by the present owners, lies on the south side of Baxter Road, about one-half mile east of Stevens Corners. Constructed of brick, the house is one-and-one-half stories high with a two bay facade.

Although the north and south facades share identical fenestration, with a door in the west bay and a six-over-six window in the east bay, the north elevation clearly was intended as the principle facade. The brick is laid in Flemish bond, while the remainder of the building is laid in three-course American bond, and the cellar windows and paired shed dormers are symmetrically placed. On the south facade, the ground level is lower, allowing for a bulkhead entrance to the cellar at the east end. There is a single shed roof dormer in the east bay.

The west gable end was covered until recently by a story-and-a-half frame addition. This was considered beyond repair and removed, exposing the ghost of an earlier addition in the upper gable. The roof of this addition was about 18 inches lower than that of the brick house, but had an identical pitch. A door in the center of the gable wall on the first floor appears

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

CONTINUATION SHEET

7.1 DESCRIPTION

to be original, but was used for access to the later additions. Another door in the center of the gable on the second floor is not original, and may have been made by enlarging a window.

The east gable is uninterrupted by doors or windows. A flush chimney is centered on this wall.

The gable roof is of medium pitch, averaging 43 degrees, and is covered with modern corrugated tin. The plain box cornice is not original, but is made up of one-inch material secured with wire nails. Fragments remain of the upper edge of the rakeboards, but no discernable details have survived.

Several details do remain, however, to suggest that in its original form the building had a certain degree of sophistication. The north and south doorways have raised-panel jambs and soffits, and all openings have beaded surrounds with a strip of ogee molding around the outer edge. The original door remains for the north facade, this has raised panels on the exterior face to match the soffit, and vertical beaded boards secured with wrought nails on the inner face. The raised six-panel door on the west gable is probably also original. The south door has been replaced with a modern batten door.

CONTINUATION SHEET

7.2 DESCRIPTION

Although the interior consists of a single room on each floor, the degree of sophistication is quite dramatic. The fireplace is centered on the west gable wall, with a winder stair in the alcove to the left and a four-door cupboard in the alcove to the right. This entire wall was originally paneled. Although the mantel and the paneling above the fireplace are now gone, the rest of the wall is intact, with the doors to the stair, to the closet below the stair, and all cupboard doors having fielded panels.

Complex molding surrounds on all door and window openings and a simpler surround for the cupboard add to the feeling of refinement. Only one section of baseboard is evident, this is in the southwest part of the room. There is no chairrail on the first floor.

The second floor was originally a single room, but has been partitioned off to create two smaller rooms. There is a very small fireplace approximately centered on the east gable wall, with a molded board surround. A rather wide beaded chairrail with shelf and a beaded baseboard encircle the original room. This chairrail is quite unusual, for on the facade walls it consists of a very wide one-inch board that actually rests on the top of the masonry wall, and acts as a false

CONTINUATION SHEET

7.3 DESCRIPTION

plate to receive the roof framing. It projects out beyond the finish plaster on the inside sufficiently to double as a half-round shelf for the chairrail. The utilitarian nature of this arrangement may further be appreciated by the absence of a chairrail on the first floor, despite the latter being the more formal room.

The cellar is reached through a frame shed covering a bulkhead entrance on the east end of the south facade. The door to this shed is a very nice random-width beaded batten door secured with hand-wrought T-head nails.

Centered on the east wall of the cellar is a massive chimney support with the typical arched recess in the center. Otherwise, the room is quite plain, with light provided by three small window openings, one of which retains two of the original diamond section wooden bars set horizontally and flattened at each end to rest in a bed of mortar in the masonry walls.

Sometime in the nineteenth century about one-third of the cellar was partitioned off, apparently to create a storage area for milk and/or vegetables. This was accomplished by erecting a wooden screen of vertical boards nailed top and bottom with about one inch left

CONTINUATION SHEET

7.4 DESCRIPTION

open between each board. The ceiling joists were covered with machine-sawn lathing and plastered.

The full one-and-one-half story height of the masonry walls, the combination of Flemish bond and American bond brickwork, and the interior woodwork all suggest an early 19th century date for this building.

CONTINUATION SHEET

7.5 DESCRIPTION

Construction Details

The brick foundation walls are laid in three-course American bond, while above ground the brickwork is Flemish bond on the north facade and American bond on the remaining sides.

The first floor joists are very large, consisting of unbarked logs hewn only on the top face, and laid parallel to the gable on 14 to 20 inch centers. The ends are cut into large, crude tenons and are set directly into the masonry walls. The joist closest to the chimney base is more carefully crafted, also large in scale but hewn on all four sides, presumably to simplify the framing around the chimney and the support for the hearth.

The roof is constructed of common rafters secured at the ridge by center-cut mortise and tenon joints. Each rafter pair is joined by a collar that doubles as a ceiling joist. The collars are half-dovetailed and pegged into the rafters. The rafter ends are supported by a flat false plate resting on the top of the masonry wall. This plate has a molded edge on the inside and doubles as the shelf of the second floor chairrail. All visible framing is gang-sawn, the roof pitch is 43 degrees.

8 SIGNIFICANCE

QA-33

| PERIOD | AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW | | | |
|---|--|---|---|--|
| 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 type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899 | <input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE | <input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT | <input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY | <input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION |
| <input 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

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Although the house can easily be accepted at face value as a fine example of early 19th century domestic architecture, its greatest contribution is as an exceedingly rare and almost pristine example of a house type that has all but disappeared.

Documentary evidence demonstrates conclusively that, popular notions to the contrary, the great majority of the population in Tidewater Maryland and Virginia lived in houses of this small scale throughout the 17th, 18th, and early 19th centuries. Orphan's Court records, deed descriptions, and the 1798 Federal Direct Tax all demonstrate that the typical house of this period was in the 16 x 20 to 24 x 28 range, and it was generally a sign of considerable success to own a house over 30 feet in length.

The majority of these houses were frame, however, and due to the fragile nature of their materials and the increasing impracticality of their small size, they

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

CONTINUATION SHEET

8.1 STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

have all but disappeared from the landscape.

The earliest deed reference that can be located that specifically refers to "Joseph's Lot" is the 1773 will of Agnes Peters, in which she leaves

...to my sons Jonathon Peters and William Peters part of a tract of land called Joseph's Lot to be equally divided betwixt them both. The part I now live upon to my son William Peters and the other part to Jonathon Peters... (1)

William's share of the land is variously referred to as being 62 or 63 acres. In the Assessment of 1783 William Peters is listed as a resident of Upper District, and is assessed for four tracts of land including "Joseph's Lot, 63 acres". Unfortunately, the "Lands" list for this district is missing, and so there is no enumeration of buildings available. (2)

In 1798 William Peters devised Joseph's Lot to John Peters, (3) and the 1798 Federal Direct Tax for that year includes the following entry

CONTINUATION SHEET

8.2 STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

#72 John Peters, part of Joseph's Lott

| | |
|------------------|-------|
| 1 dwelling house | \$ 50 |
| 63 acres land | \$126 |

It is regrettable that no description of the dwelling is included as well.⁽⁴⁾

In 1799, John Peters sold "Joseph Lotts" to William Vandyke for 157 pounds.⁽⁵⁾ Vandyke sold the land to John Greenwood for 200 pounds the following year.⁽⁶⁾

The change in price during these years is of particular interest. Vandyke was able to sell the property for a noticeably larger price than he had paid the preceding year. This may suggest that Vandyke built the house, or it may simply indicate a shrewd business transaction. The house listed on the 1798 Federal Direct Tax is valued at only \$50, a figure that seems somewhat low, particularly in view of the prices paid for the land in 1799 and 1800. It is possible the house referred to in the tax list was the unfinished shell, or it may have referred to one of the small dwelling houses listed in the 1822 Orphans Court Valuation.

CONTINUATION SHEET

8.3 STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

In 1803 John Greenwood sold the land to Thomas Little, again for 200 pounds.⁽⁷⁾ Little had purchased the adjoining parcel from William Vandyke for 125 pounds three years earlier.⁽⁸⁾ This was a 75 acre tract that Vandyke purchased from John Burris (or Burroughs) in 1799, and was part of a tract called "McConekin's Career", which John inherited from his father, George Burris (also appearing in the deed books as George Burrows). George Burris purchased McConekin's Career from Daniel McConekin in 1759.⁽⁹⁾

After Thomas Little's death, the lands were ordered sold, and in 1807 Caleb Spry purchased Little's property, which consisted of three adjoining tracts known as "Little's Purchase", "Little's Chance", and "Joseph's Lot", comprising about 200 acres. The purchase price was one thousand twenty-six dollars.⁽¹⁰⁾

Caleb Spry died in 1821, and the property descended to his son, Caleb Wright Spry, a minor.⁽¹¹⁾ In 1822, the Orphans Court of Queen Anne's County ordered Samuel Cacy and George Palmer to appraise the property and establish an annual rent that the guardian, George Spry, was to pay for the use of the farm. This valuation, and a second valuation made in 1827, provides a superb picture of the farm during

CONTINUATION SHEET

8.4 STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

those years. Included is the following description of the house and farm buildings from the 1822 valuation:

...we also find on said farm one small Brick Dwelling house twenty foot by sixteen with a cellar... with a frame house as a Dwelling attached there-to in good repair, one round log kitchen sixteen foot by fourteen, one round log Corn Crib sixteen foot by eight, one round log stable eighteen foot by fourteen, one round log smoke-house ten foot by eight, one poultry house nine feet square, all in bad repair... (12)

The 1827 valuation elaborates somewhat on the appearance of the house:

...one brick Dwelling House one story and an half high, twenty feet by eighteen feet with a frame addition twenty feet by sixteen... (13)

CONTINUATION SHEET

8.5 STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Both documents proceed to enumerate several other buildings on the property, the condition of the fences, and an inventory of the fruit trees in the orchard. Also included was Spry's "Personal Estate", which consisted of "one Negro boy called Moses, aged twelve" valued at \$25 per year in 1822, and in 1827, at the age of seventeen, at \$35 per year. The remainder of the estate, including 120 acres of swampy woodland, was valued at \$144 per year in 1822 and only \$88 per year in 1827. This drop in value is apparently an indication of the declining state of both the land and the buildings, as the assessors note the increasing disrepair of the farm yard.

The year in which Caleb W. Spry reached his majority is not known, however, it is clear that he took possession of the farm, and in 1855, sold the same 200 acres to Daniel Loller.⁽¹⁴⁾

Loller died early in 1863, and John M. Robinson was appointed Trustee by the Circuit Court, and ordered to sell the property and divide the proceeds among the heirs.

Robinson sold the land to Charles Noble of Philadelphia in 1866,⁽¹⁵⁾ and after Noble's death, the land was sold to John Biggs, of New Castle,

CONTINUATION SHEET

8.6 STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Delaware, in 1886. (16)

The property remained in the Biggs family until 1951, and then passed through several transactions until 1974, when Ernest Cookery sold 13 acres with the brick house and several farm buildings to the Howells. (17)

At that time there was a frame addition on the west gable of the brick house, but this was in derelict condition, and was demolished.

Two photographs taken in April 1974 show that the frame addition was built in two stages, and was slightly narrower than the brick house. This would suggest that the earlier frame section may have been the 16 x 20 foot frame dwelling referred to in 1822 and 1827 as being attached to the brick house. As mentioned in the architectural description, however, a ghost remains in the west gable brickwork to indicate that a slightly smaller frame addition must have pre-dated the building visible in the 1974 photographs.

Regardless of these questions, the brick structure that remains is the most significant building associated with the property. It seems probable that the house

CONTINUATION SHEET

8.7 STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

was constructed circa 1800, perhaps by William Vandyke, and that the frame, 16 x 20 foot addition was made before 1822.

Footnotes

- (1) Wills: Liber WHN No. 2, folio 408. April 29, 1773.
- (2) 1783 Tax Assessment, Upper District, p. 6.
Jonathon Peters is also listed, owning 62 acres,
part of Joseph's Lot.
- (3) Wills: Liber WHN No. 3, folio 246. October 13,
1798. There is some confusion here, for William
Peters leaves the property "to my son, Lewis
Peters..." However, the deed by which John
Peters conveyed the land to William Vandyke
in 1799 specifically states that John Peters
received the land from William Peters, who in
turn inherited it from his mother, Agnes Peters.
- (4) 1798 Federal Direct Tax for Chester Hundred,
Queen Anne's County. Entry #72 in both the
General List and the Particular List.
- (5) Deeds: Liber STW No. 4, folio 552. January 23, 1799.
- (6) Deeds: Liber STW No. 5, folio 330. November 3, 1800.
- (7) Deeds: Liber STW No. 6, folio 324. April 5, 1803.

- (8) Deeds: Liber STW No. 5, folio 247. May 24, 1800.
- (9) Deeds: Liber STW No. 4, folio 554. January 23, 1799.
Also see Liber RT No. F, folio 4. June 28, 1759.
This was probably part of a 150 acre tract patented as "McConekin's Carear" by John McConekin in 1750. See Patents, BY & GS. No. 5, folios 46 and 503. McConekin's Career is listed under the Burris family in both the 1783 and 1798 tax lists. See: 1783 Tax Assessment, Upper District, p. 1. 1798 Federal Direct Tax, Chester Hundred Entry No. 12 in General Lists: Lands. Because there is no dwelling house, the property is not included in the Particular List.
- (10) Deeds: Liber STW 8, folio 271. December 19, 1807.
Little's Purchase and Joseph's Lot totaled 138 acres. When and from whom Little purchased the remaining 60-odd acres is not known. The name ^{Little's Purchase} disappears in all subsequent deeds, and the 200 acres is called "Little's Purchase" or "Joseph's Lot". It seems probable that this third tract may have been the wooded swampland referred to in the 1822 assessment.
For Thomas Little's Will, refer to Wills: Liber WHN No. 4, folio 253. Probated Nov. 18, 1806.

- (11) Wills: Liber TCE No. 1, folio 154. Probated
May 19, 1821.
- (12) Valuations: Liber WHN No. 4, folio 202. April 27, 1822.
- (13) Valuations: Liber WHN No. 4, folio 330. March 30, 1827.
- (14) Deeds: Liber JP No. 1, folio 505. October 24, 1855.
- (15) Deeds: Liber SED No. 2, folio 268. April 3, 1866.
- (16) Deeds: Liber SED No. 8, folio 192. March 25, 1886.
- (17) Deeds: Liber TSP No. 2, folio 385. August 16, 1951.
Biggs to Embert
Liber CWC No. 61, folio 568. January 31, 1972.
Embert to Yoder
Liber CWC No. 73, folio 195. April 23, 1973.
Yoder to Cookery
Liber CWC No. 80, folio 548. January 10, 1974.
Cookery to Howell

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

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

Orlando Ridout V, Historic Sites Surveyor

ORGANIZATION

Queen Anne's County Historical Society

DATE

6/8/79

STREET & NUMBER

TELEPHONE

CITY OR TOWN

Centreville

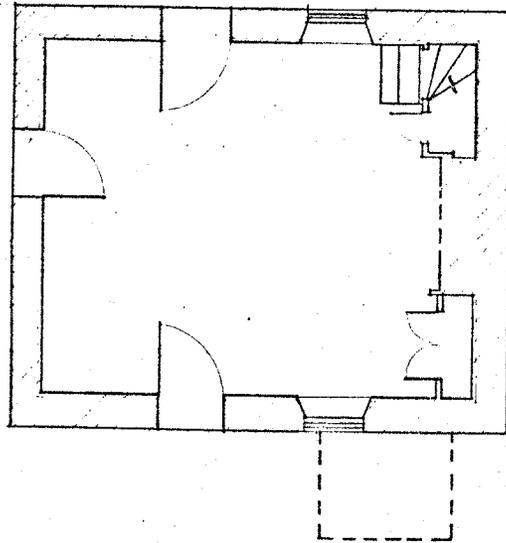
STATE

Maryland 21617

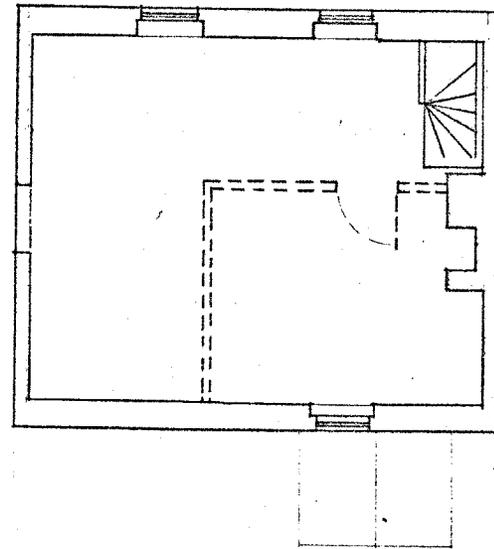
The Maryland Historic Sites Inventory was officially created by an Act of the Maryland Legislature, to be found in the Annotated Code of Maryland, Article 41, Section 181 KA, 1974 Supplement.

The Survey and Inventory are being prepared for information and record purposes only and do not constitute any infringement of individual property rights.

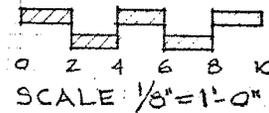
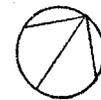
RETURN TO: Maryland Historical Trust
The Shaw House, 21 State Circle
Annapolis, Maryland 21401
(301) 267-1438



FIRST FLOOR



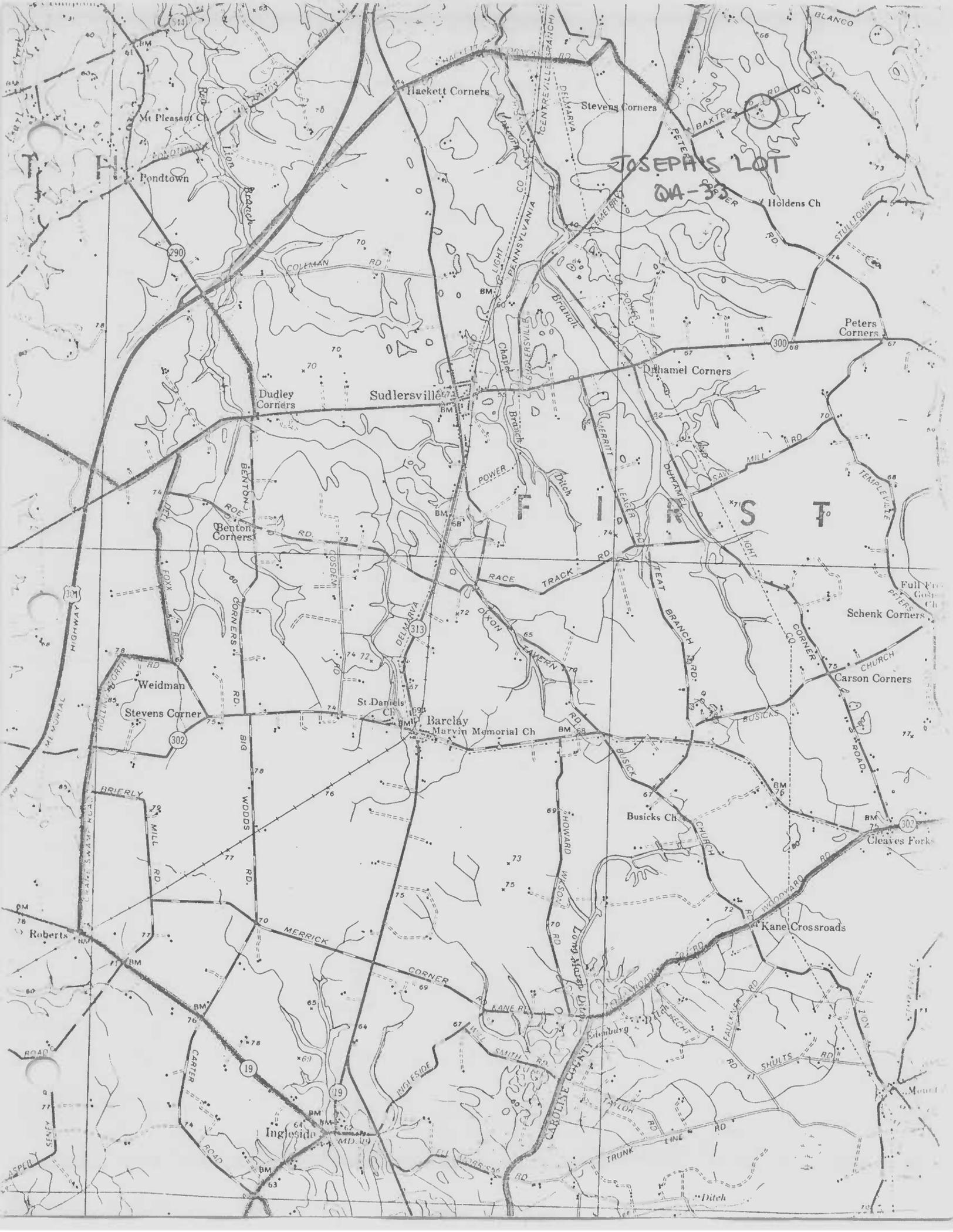
SECOND FLOOR



QA-33

JOSEPH'S LOT
STEVENS CORNERS, MARYLAND

MARCH 2, 1978.



QA-33





QA-33

John Embert Farm

Mary McCarthy

Spring/Summer 2003

Digital color photo on file at MHT



QA-33

John Embert Farm

Mary McCarthy
Spring/Summer 2003
Digital color photo on file at MHT



Q4-33 Josephs hat
Audlersville vic
ORV 1978



Q4-33 Josephs hot
Andersson's vic.
OKV 1978



QA-33

Joseph's Lot
Sudlersville, Maryland
Orlando Ridout V, 1978 (MHT)
First floor, paneled wall



QA-33

Joseph's Lot
Sudlersville, Maryland
Orlando Ridout V, 1978 (MHT)
2nd floor mantel