QA-139
Tucker House
Centreville

circa 1794

Tucker House is one of the oldest houses in Centreville. It stands on the southwest half of Lot No. 4, sold by Elizabeth Nicholson to James Kennard in 1792. This house is unusual both in form and in plan. The original plan consisted of two rooms, one behind the other, with a shared chimney on the north gable. Four other examples of this plan have been identified in Queen Anne's County, all dating to the period circa 1790-1810. Three other examples have been located in Talbot County. In the second quarter of the 19th century a side stair hall was added to the south gable. The present form of the house, with gambrel roof and double pile plan combined, is relatively unusual on the Eastern Shore, with only three recorded examples in Queen Anne's County.

QA-139

MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST

MAGI #1801395204

INVENTORY FORM FOR STATE HISTORIC SITES SURVEY

1 NAME

HISTORIC

AND/OR COMMON
Tucker House

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER
124 South Commerce Street

CITY, TOWN
Centreville

__ VICINITY OF

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT
First

STATE
Maryland

COUNTY
Queen Anne's

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE	
__DISTRICT	__PUBLIC	X OCCUPIED	__AGRICULTURE	X MUSEUM
X BUILDING(S)	X PRIVATE	__UNOCCUPIED	__COMMERCIAL	__PARK
__STRUCTURE	__BOTH	__WORK IN PROGRESS	__EDUCATIONAL	__PRIVATE RESIDENCE
__SITE	**PUBLIC ACQUISITION**	**ACCESSIBLE**	__ENTERTAINMENT	__RELIGIOUS
__OBJECT	__IN PROCESS	X YES: RESTRICTED	__GOVERNMENT	__SCIENTIFIC
	__BEING CONSIDERED	__YES: UNRESTRICTED	__INDUSTRIAL	__TRANSPORTATION
		__NO	__MILITARY	__OTHER:

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME
Queen Anne's County Historical Society Telephone #:

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN
Centreville

__ VICINITY OF

STATE, zip code
Maryland 21617

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. Queen Anne's County Courthouse

Liber #: CWC 34
Folio #: 614

STREET & NUMBER
Courthouse Square

CITY, TOWN
Centreville

STATE
Maryland 21617

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

DATE

__FEDERAL __STATE __COUNTY __LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE

7 DESCRIPTION

QA-139

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
X EXCELLENT	__DETERIORATED	__UNALTERED	X ORIGINAL SITE
__GOOD	__RUINS	X ALTERED	__MOVED DATE_____
__FAIR	__UNEXPOSED		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Tucker House is located on the west side of South Commerce Street in Centreville. It is named for the late Mrs. Clarence A. Tucker of Baltimore, who left the house to the Queen Anne's County Historical Society in 1968. It has been restored by the Society and is now used as a working museum.

The house was constructed in at least four separate periods. The original house was only two bays wide and two rooms deep, measuring approximately 18 feet wide by 26 feet deep. This was enlarged at an early date by the addition of an 8' x 26' hall that stretched the full depth of the house along the south gable. Late in the 19th century, a two story frame addition was added to the rear of the house, and in the 20th century a modern bathroom was added as an enclosed second story above a first floor rear entrance porch.

Today, the street facade offers little suggestion of this complex development. The ordered three bay facade is similar to other side-hall plan houses in the county, with the double paneled

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

CONTINUATION SHEET

7.1 DESCRIPTION

entrance door located in the south bay and large nine-over-six windows in the center and north bays. Three six-over-six shed roof dormers are ranged across the second floor and a six-light cellar window is located directly below the first floor north window.

On the north gable, there are single nine-over-six windows near the front and rear corners on the first floor and similarly placed six-over-six windows on the second floor. A pair of four-over-four windows flank the chimney in the upper gable.

The north end of the rear facade is covered by the rear addition, leaving a nine-over-six window in the center bay and a six-panel exterior door in the south bay. On the second floor, there are six-over-six shed roof dormers in the center and north bay, but the south bay is covered by the bathroom addition. A bulkhead entrance to the cellar is located in the center of this facade.

On the south gable, there are two nine-over-six windows on the first floor, two six-over-six windows on the second floor, and a single four-over-four window in the upper gable. Two three-light cellar windows have been fitted with restored wood frames

CONTINUATION SHEET

7.2 DESCRIPTION

with horizontal diamond-section bars.

One photograph has been located which illustrates the house before it was restored. This was taken in 1964 by Michael Bourne, and includes all of the front facade and part of the south gable. At that time, a one story porch covered the south and center bays of the front facade, and two pitched roof two-over-two dormers were located on the upper slope of the gambrel roof, giving added light to the third floor. Both of these features were a result of late alterations, and have been removed. The asbestos shingle siding has also been replaced, using beaded flush siding. Beaded and tapered rakeboards have survived, as well as the box cornice with crown mold and bed mold.

The interior originally consisted of a double-parlour plan with the two rooms arranged one behind the other. This is an unusual plan type in Queen Anne's County, though it seems to occur occasionally in Southern Maryland. It is not clear whether the original entrance was located on the front facade or on the south gable. A gable entrance seems more likely, but is quite unusual in an urban context

CONTINUATION SHEET

7.3 DESCRIPTION

unless the gable faces the street.

The two parlours share a chimney stack on the north gable wall. The front fireplace is offset toward the center partition wall, and scars in the floor to the right of the chimney identify this as the original stair location. The fireplace in the rear parlour is set into the northeast corner on a diagonal, forming a triangular stack backed against the conventional chimney shaft of the front fireplace. Early mantels survive on both fireplaces. These consist of molded board surrounds with plain side-blocks supporting molded shelves. Beaded baseboard and molded chairrails encircle both rooms, as well as an interior cornice added when the house was restored. A door in the northwest corner of the rear parlour leads to the rear addition.

The hall was added at an early date, and extends the full depth of the house along the south gable. One unusual survival of this alteration is an original exterior window in what is now the partition wall between the rear parlour and the west end of the hall. This window may have been left in place to allow more light into the rear stairhall. The stair

CONTINUATION SHEET

7.4 DESCRIPTION

rises against the south wall of the hall to a landing on the rear wall. It is an open-string stair with delicate turned newels, square-section ballusters, and a walnut railing. The carriage piece is decorated with simple wave-pattern console brackets, and the area below the carriage is paneled. A small paneled door below the landing leads to an interior cellar stair. The door and window surrounds employ the same quarter-round molding with fillets found in the original portion of the house, but the chairrail is simpler, with a wide, beaded fascia below a square shelf.

The second floor plan is similar, but the east end of the hall is partitioned to form a small unheated chamber. The fireplace in the front chamber has been blocked up, but the original mantel remains. This is similar to the mantels on the first floor, consisting of a board surround with a plain shelf supported by a heavy molding. A seam in the floor to the right of the fireplace marks the location of the original winder stair. The batten door between the front chamber and the hall is constructed of vertical beaded boards and beveled battens, and is hung on

CONTINUATION SHEET

7.5 DESCRIPTION

wrought H-L hinges. There is a small corner fireplace in the northeast corner of the rear chamber with an early mantel and raised-panel cupboards built in above the shelf. The mantel consists of a board surround with an ogee-astragal backband that also serves to support the plain shelf. The cupboard doors are hung on small butt hinges marked "Baldwin Patented". The batten door between the rear chamber and the hall is constructed of vertical beaded boards and beaded battens, hung on butt hinges. A similar door is found on the unheated chamber at the east end of the hall. The trim in both of the original rooms, the stairhall, and the hall chamber matches the first floor trim, but there is no chairrail.

A narrow enclosed stair rises along the south wall of the hall to the third floor. A ghost in the plaster on the wall above the first floor stair suggests that the present stair replaces an earlier, broader stair. The third floor consists of a stairhall and a small storage room at the south end and one large chamber at the north end. The chimney in the north room is fitted for a wood stove, but there is no evidence of an early hearth or fireplace. A patch

CONTINUATION SHEET

7.6 DESCRIPTION

in the floor to the right of the chimney marks the original stair location. The walls and ceiling are plastered throughout the third floor, but the rafters and roof nailers are whitewashed, so the plaster is not an original feature. Evidence also indicates that there were two dormers on the front wall and one on the rear, but these were not original, and were probably added when the rooms were plastered.

The roof framing is standard for gambrel construction. The lower rafters are secured to the third floor ceiling joists with pinned mortise-and-tenon joints, and the upper rafter pairs rest on a curb plate and are secured at the ridge with a pinned mortise-and-tenon joint. The roof framing was originally exposed and whitewashed, and did not have collar beams. When the ceilings and walls were plastered, light collars were scabbed to the rafter pairs, leaving a cramped crawl space above the ceiling. An examination of this space revealed that the roof framing above the later hall was also originally whitewashed and exposed. Several pieces of the exterior siding on the south gable of the original house remain in place, now covered by the later south addition. Also visible are the ghosts

CONTINUATION SHEET

7.7 DESCRIPTION

left by the original gable studs, which were removed when the hall was added. All of the surviving gable siding is secured with machine-made nails, and the single surviving nail from a gable stud is also machine-made. There is no evidence of earlier nails or nail holes from previous siding, and it seems apparent, therefore, that the present gambrel roof could not date earlier than 1815. The gable framing of the south addition is also constructed with machine-made nails. It is possible that this is one of a number of examples of gambrel roof houses that originally had pitched gable roofs, but were later enlarged (see 227 North Commerce Street, QA-144, for example). Unfortunately, the chimney at Tucker House is covered with stucco in the third floor and the attic crawl space, covering any evidence regarding changes in roof pitch or roof type.

The cellar plan is identical to the first floor, with the growth in plan clearly reflected in the brick foundation and walls. The chimney base in the front room has been rebuilt, but appears to have once had a large fireplace. The chimney base in the rear room has a recessed relieving arch, but no chimney.

CONTINUATION SHEET

7.8 DESCRIPTION

The floors in both of the north rooms are paved with brick. The bulkhead entrance in the rear wall appears to be the original location, while a second opening in the south gable wall of the original section has been bricked up. Most of the ceiling is closed in with modern materials, but the original floor framing is exposed in several places. A number of wrought nails are clearly visible, particularly in the framing around the rear fireplace. Although these nails cannot be placed in a specific context, they do lend credence to the theory that the basic shell of the house dates to the late 18th or early 19th century, while the roof has been rebuilt circa 1815. Evidence to prove or refute this conflict is not accessible at the present time.

Meat house: Directly to the rear of Tucker House there is a post-and-plank meat house. It is 10 feet wide and 12 feet long, with a steeply pitched gable roof. The exterior is covered with vertical board siding secured with machine nails. The door is located in the center of the west facade, and there are window openings in the center of the west wall as well as in the upper

CONTINUATION SHEET

7.9 DESCRIPTION

west gable. The eaves are boxed in with plain boards, but these are badly weathered and are missing in places.

The interior has been partitioned into two storage areas, but otherwise remains almost entirely original. The log planks are hewn and pit-sawn, 2½-3 inches thick and 7 to 9 inches wide, and are widely spaced with no evidence of chinking. These are secured to hewn corner posts with a pegged mortise-and-tenon joint. There are no intermediate posts, but part of the original door jamb remains in place. This indicates that the door was originally only 4'-3" high and 3'-8" wide, but has been enlarged.

The roof framing consists of common rafter pairs set at a pitch of 53 degrees and supported by a flat false plate resting on hewn and pit-sawn ceiling joists. The rafter pairs are secured at the ridge with a pegged mortise-and-tenon joint, and the gable rafters are reinforced with a series of collar beams. There are two collar beams remaining in each gable, with evidence of a third that was located directly above the gable top plate. These were let into the exterior face of the gable rafters with half-lap joints, and the lowest collar was pegged, while the two surviving

CONTINUATION SHEET

7.10 DESCRIPTION

collars are nailed. Unfortunately these joints are covered by the exterior siding, making it impossible to determine what type of nails were used. The collar beams on the two intermediate rafter pairs are not original, but are one-inch boards scabbed on with machine-made nails. Wrought nails are in evidence both in the roof nailers and in the sides and lower face of the rafters, but these serve only as evidence that at least the rafters are reused from an earlier structure.

Although positive dating evidence is lacking, it would appear likely that this building dates to the second quarter of the 19th century, and has always had exterior siding, with the log walls left without chinking and visible only from the inside.

QA-139

8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
PREHISTORIC	__ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	__COMMUNITY PLANNING	__LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	__RELIGION
__1400-1499	__ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	__CONSERVATION	__LAW	__SCIENCE
__1500-1599	__AGRICULTURE	__ECONOMICS	__LITERATURE	__SCULPTURE
__1600-1699	__ARCHITECTURE	__EDUCATION	__MILITARY	__SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
__1700-1799	__ART	__ENGINEERING	__MUSIC	__THEATER
__1800-1899	__COMMERCE	__EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	__PHILOSOPHY	__TRANSPORTATION
__1900-	__COMMUNICATIONS	__INDUSTRY	__POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	__OTHER (SPECIFY)
		__INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES Circa 1794 BUILDER/ARCHITECT James Kennard (owner)

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Tucker House is generally believed to be one of the first houses built in Centreville. It stands on the southwest portion of Lot No. 4, sold by Elizabeth Nicholson to James Kennard in 1792.(1) A tax assessment compiled in May 1797 lists James Kennard as the owner of 1/2 of Lot No. 4, and notes that the lot is improved, with an assessed value of $866.67.(2) Kennard had therefore constructed the house before May 1797, and it seems reasonable to assume that it was begun soon after the lot was purchased.

Architecturally, Tucker House is of interest today as an example of a double pile gambrel roof house with a side-hall plan, a house type found only in scattered examples on the Eastern Shore. Only two other buildings of this type have been recorded in Queen Anne's County. These are the Brosius House (QA-158) on nearby Liberty Street,

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

CONTINUATION SHEET

8.1 STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

and the frame house on the Herbert Wilson farm (QA-71), a few miles east of Centreville. Tucker House differs from these two houses in that the side hall is not original, but is an early 19th century addition. The original double parlour plan is unusual on the Eastern Shore, but seems to have gained some favor in Centreville, where four examples have been identified, all dating to the period 1790-1810. Architectural evidence is ambiguous, but suggests that the gambrel roof may also be an early modification, replacing an earlier pitched gable roof. If so, this would correspond to similar alterations on at least a dozen other gambrel roof houses in the county.

The interior of Tucker House evidently dates largely to the early 19th century, and survives essentially intact to that period. The woodwork and mantels are in an excellent state of preservation, and modern intrusions have been held to the bare minimum. Particular details worthy of note include the fine open-string stair and several handsome mantels.

To the rear of the main house stands a log post-and-plank meathouse believed to date to the second quarter of the 19th century.

CONTINUATION SHEET

8.2 STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The early history of the house is drawn almost entirely from tax records. The previously cited assessment of 1797 notes only that the lot was improved, and unfortunately does not describe the building or buildings found on the lot. The Federal Direct Tax of 1798 is much more specific, but apparently includes one unfortunate error. James Kennard owned two lots in Centreville, as well as a farm adjoining the west side of the town. The 1797 tax assessment included both town lots, numbers 4 and 16, with both described as improved and ~~both~~ each valued at $866.67. The 1798 Federal Direct Tax also listed the two lots, but apparently reversed the lot numbers, as Lot No. 16 (on South Liberty Street) is described as being "on C. Street", or Commerce Street. The dwelling house listed under Lot 16 exactly matches Tucker House in its 18th century form. The house listed under Lot No. 4 is described as a two story brick house. This lot is noted as being on "H" (?) Street. This does not correspond with any of the early Street names, and must actually refer to Liberty or "Back" Street, as it was generally known in the early period. There seems little doubt that this confusion is the

CONTINUATION SHEET

8.3 STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

result of an error, as the 18 x 26 foot dimensions of Tucker House are a relatively unusual size, and this combined with the reference to "C" Street leaves little doubt that the lots are simply reversed.(3)

Little is known of James Kennard. He was appointed a town commissioner in April 1798, and evidently owned at least a part-interest in a mill on the west branch of Corsica Creek. The 1798 tax list refers to a mill on his property known as Ward's Gift (QA-283), probably meaning Chester Mill.

The house and lot remained in the Kennard family until 1822, when Ann Gilder came into possession of the property.(4) In 1837, Ann Gilder sold it to Thomas B. Cook for $1750.(5) In his will, probated in April, 1848, Thomas Cook left to his son, Clinton Cook, "the house and lot in Centreville occupied by him".(6) Thomas apparently had divided the original half-acre lot, for a later deed, recorded in 1858, specified that Clinton Cook's lot was the "front portion", facing Commerce Street, and that the other portion, "lying upon the back street (Liberty Street), being the same which was devised by Thomas B. Cook to his grandson William C. Cook and which is now in the occupancy and

CONTINUATION SHEET

8.4 STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

possession of Mrs. Susan Cook..." In 1858, following the death of Clinton Cook, the executors of his estate sold the house and lot on Commerce Street at a public sale to Joseph K. Cook for $1005.[7] Joseph K. Cook left the property to his son, Thomas B. Cook, and in 1884 Thomas sold it to John B. Brown for $2800.[8] During John Brown's ownership the lot was again subdivided, and a strip approximately 30 feet wide was sold off. In 1896 a trustee was appointed "for the creditors of John B. Brown, Insolvent". The house and lot on Commerce Street were sold at public auction to Alfred Tucker, Jr., for $1051.50.[9] The property remained in the Tucker family until 1968, when Mrs. Clarence A. Tucker of Baltimore gave the house to the Queen Anne's County Historical Society for use as a working museum.[10]

Footnotes

(1) Deeds, Liber STW 2, folio 202. March 29, 1792.

(2) 1797 Tax Assessment.

(3) 1798 Federal Direct Tax, Wye Hundred.

(4) Deeds, Liber TM 3, folio 77. November 5, 1822. Also see TM 2, folio 169, October 9, 1819; and TM 3, folio 135, November 21, 1822.

(5) Deeds, Liber JT 2, folio 301. November 20, 1837.

(6) Wills, Liber TCE 2, folio 244. Probated April 4, 1848.

(7) Deeds, Liber JP 3, folio 555. July 20, 1858.

(8) Deeds, Liber SCD 5, folio 342. December 23, 1884.

(9) Deeds, Liber WHC 7, folio 461. April 22, 1898. See also BHT 6, folio 314, January 28, 1927.

(10) Deeds, Liber CWC 34, folio 614. May 17, 1968.

QA-139

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
3/8/79

STREET & NUMBER

TELEPHONE

CITY OR TOWN
Centreville

STATE
Maryland 21617

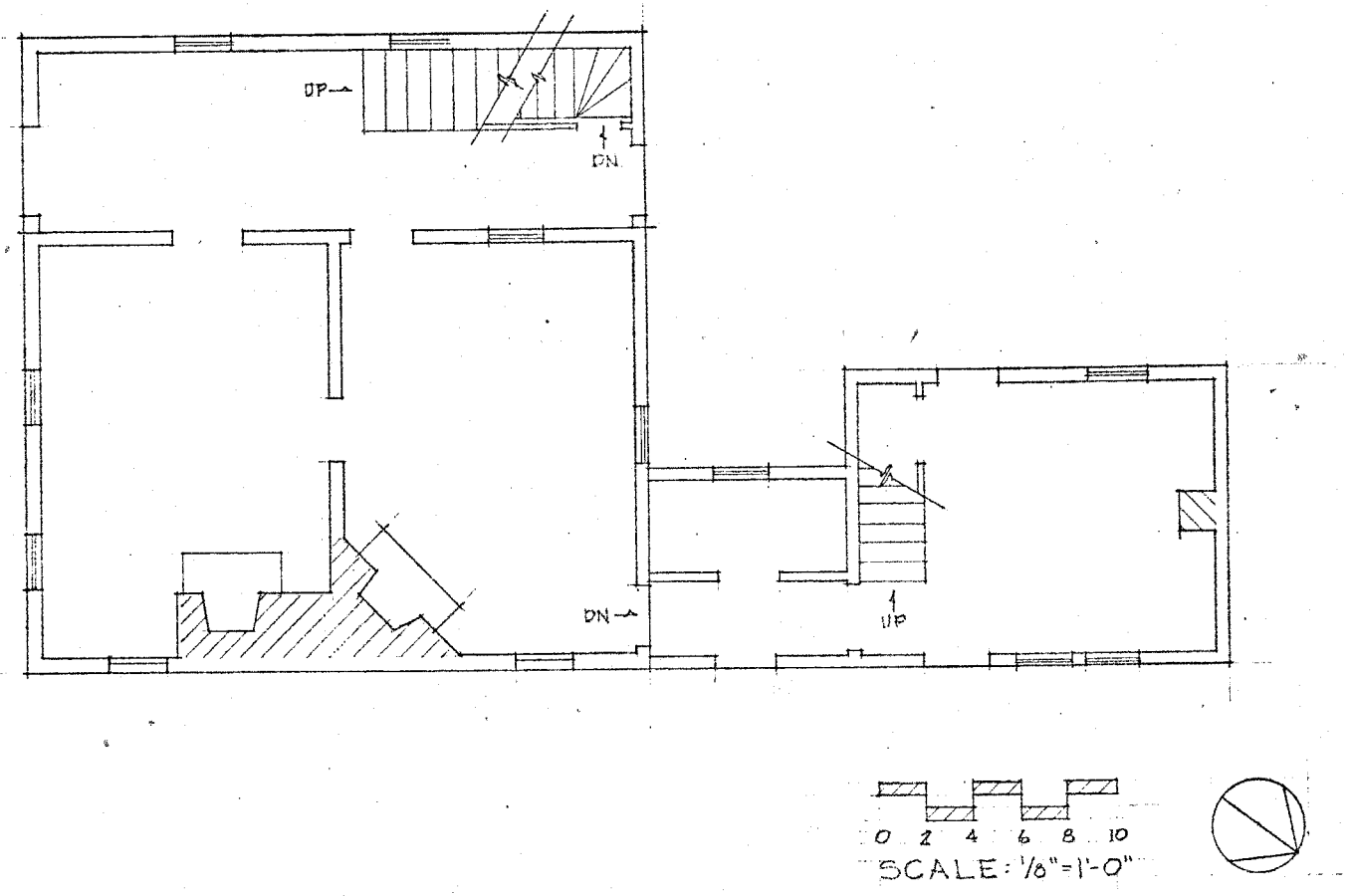
Field Book QA-V, Recorded September 25, 1978.

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

PS-1108



ORLANDO RIDOUT V

QA-139

TUCKER HOUSE

CENTREVILLE, MARYLAND SEPT. 25, 1978.

CENTREVILLE
QUEEN ANNE Co
BROADWAY
WATER ST.
LIBERTY ST.
COMMERCE ST.
LAWYERS ROW
County Court House
Arlington Hotel
Jas. Smith
W. J. Hand
Academy
Wm T. P. Turpin
R. T. Larimore
Capt. A. McCabe
Wm Bowen
Wm McKenny
Lloyd Tilghman
Meth. E. Ch.
Meth. Parsonage
Female Seminary
Depot
R. G. Price
Turn Table
Engine House
QUEEN ANNE'S & KENT R. R.
QA-139 TUCKER HOUSE
Mrs M. Cook
Mrs M. Brown
Mrs R. Goldsborough
T. J. Keating
P. E. Rectory
A. J. Collins
J. Adams
Cold School
H. Clayton
L. Tilghman
CEMETERY
P. E. CEM.
Dr. Jas. Bordley
John B. Brown
J. W. Willmer
John B. Brown
McKenny & Tilghman
T. J. Keating
Dr. J. A. Holton
Wm Price
Minnie Turpin
G. W. Taylor

QA-139
Tucker House

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

QA-139 Tucker House
124 South Commerce Street
Centreville, Md
Orlando Ridout V , 1978 (MHT)
Rear Elevation, Cameral Facing SE

OA-139 Tucker House
post and plank meathouse
OAV 1979

OA-139 Tucker House
Centreville
OR 1979

OA-139 Tucker House
Centreville
OKV 1979

OA-139 Tucker House
Centreville
OAV 1979