

QA-276  
Seward House  
Centreville  
Private

Early 19th century

This narrow gambrel roof house with a single room on each floor was originally a hall-parlor plan house. In the late 19th century, this portion of the larger house was sawn off and moved to the present location, where it was set on a new foundation and adapted as a small dwelling.

MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST

INVENTORY FORM FOR STATE HISTORIC SITES SURVEY

**1 NAME**

HISTORIC

AND/OR COMMON

Seward House

**2 LOCATION**

STREET & NUMBER

338 South Commerce Street

JLK  
9/14/97

CITY, TOWN

Centreville

\_\_\_ VICINITY OF

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

3rd

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:

**4 OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME

James R. and Margaret Seward

Telephone #: 758-1745

STREET & NUMBER

103 N. Liberty Street

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 12

Folio #: 134

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

QA-276

**7 DESCRIPTION**

<b>CONDITION</b>		<b>CHECK ONE</b>		<b>CHECK ONE</b>	
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE	DATE <u>late 1930s</u>	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> MOVED	<u>cen</u>	
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED				

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Seward house is a frame, two bay, gambrel roof house located on the west side of South Commerce Street (Md. Route 213) on the southern edge of Centreville. One-and-a-half stories in height and raised on a brick foundation, the street facade is only 12' 7" wide, giving an extreme sense of verticality to the building. A frame, one story lean-to has been added to the northeast gable end of the house to accommodate a kitchen, and a very small lean-to addition on the rear of the kitchen facilitates a bathroom.

The entrance door is on the right side of the street facade. There is a six-over-six window to the left of the door. One six-over-six window in the southwest gable is the only other opening on the first floor of the main house. Single, six-over-six shed-roof dormers on each facade provide the only light for the second floor.

Very little detail remains on the exterior of the building. All evidence of rakeboards, corner boards, and siding has been obliterated by modern asphalt shingle siding and new corner boards. The cornice has survived on the rear of

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

## CONTINUATION SHEET

## 7.1 DESCRIPTION

the house; this is composed of a box cornice with a crown molding above the fascia and a bed mold below the soffit. A small strip of molding similar to the bed mold is visible at the eave line of the rear dormer window.

Both lean-to additions are of modern construction, probably dating to the early 20th century. A modern stove chimney rises against the northeast gable of the main house.

The interior consists of a single room floor plan with a steep winder stair in the front left corner rising to a single room on the second floor. A door in the northeast gable wall of the first floor leads to the kitchen addition. A similar door is also visible on the northeast gable wall of the second floor, indicating that a major alteration occurred at some time prior to the construction of the present kitchen. This doorway appears original, and still frames a beaded batten door. A trap door in the ceiling leads to the loft.

Despite the simple nature of this house, certain basic embellishments do remain. A beaded baseboard and chairrail on the first floor, and beaded baseboard

## CONTINUATION SHEET

## 7.2 DESCRIPTION

on the second floor add refinement to an otherwise plain interior. A beaded coat rail remains on the northeast gable of the second floor to the left of the blocked door. The wooden pegs or hooks have been sawed off flush, however.

Construction Details

The house rests on a brick foundation uninterrupted by openings for ventilation or access. A pair of seams on the southwest gable indicates there was probably once an access point to the crawl space. A very small hole in the foundation wall to the left of the front door does allow limited access at the present time. The brick is laid in extremely random fashion, of very poor workmanship, and in such a manner as to suggest numerous sections have been rebuilt from time to time. This foundation supports a sawn sill. The joists are also sawn and are notched over the sills, running parallel to the ridge of the house. Few sawmarks are visible, those that are appear to be made by a pit saw or whip saw. There is no evidence in either the foundation wall or the framing to suggest the presence of a chimney.

## CONTINUATION SHEET

## 7.3 DESCRIPTION

The common rafter roof is made up of rafter pairs secured at the ridge by open, center-cut mortise and tenon joints. The upper rafters of the gambrel rest on a flat false plate or curb plate supported by the second floor ceiling joists. These joists are half-lapped and pegged into the upper end of the lower rafter pairs, and act as collars as well as joists. Short, lightweight outriggers are secured to the ends of the upper rafters, apparently to create an eave or curb at the break in the roof. The gable framing is of stud construction, mortised into the end joists, which double as plates, and toenailed with machine nails into the gable rafters. A small window in the southwest gable has been covered over.

There is evidence in the framing of the northeast end of the roof to support the possibility of major alterations at that end. The last rafter pair is not supported by the false plate. Only 12 or 15 inches beyond the next-to-last pair, it rests on one inch blocks nailed to the top of the joist. Just below the joist, it is possible to see split lath and plaster on the exterior side of the studs. This confirms that there was once a larger second floor, and the way

## CONTINUATION SHEET

## 7.4 DESCRIPTION

in which the rafter pairs have been rearranged would suggest the gambrel roof continued to the northeast to accommodate at least one more room on each floor. This would explain the unusually narrow proportions of the present house, and the absence of an original fireplace. The implication is that the house was at one time a larger gambrel roof house that was literally sawed in half and re-covered.

# 8 SIGNIFICANCE

QA-276

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 type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input checked="" 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

Based on the foregoing analysis, several points of interest may be noted. The present house appears to be the unheated hall and upstairs chamber of a gambrel roof, hall-parlour house dating to the late 18th or early 19th century. The house has been cut in half, for unknown reasons, and moved to its present site. There is no house located on this lot on the 1877 map of Centreville<sup>(1)</sup>, so the move must have occurred after that date. It seems probable that the kitchen addition was made immediately after the house was altered and moved.

Despite the major change the house has apparently undergone, the part that remains is virtually intact and no doubt retains many of the answers to its past under the cover of the asphalt siding and kitchen addition.

The one room plan, though apparently not original, is a rare reminder of a concept of

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

## CONTINUATION SHEET

## 8.1 STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

space and form no doubt common in the 17th, 18th and early 19th centuries.

- (1) Francis Lamb, Atlas of Kent and Queen Anne Counties, 1877. Republished in 1976 by the Wicomico Bicentennial Commission.

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# 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

3/30/78

STREET & NUMBER

TELEPHONE

CITY OR TOWN

Centreville

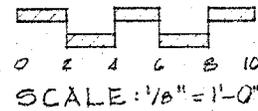
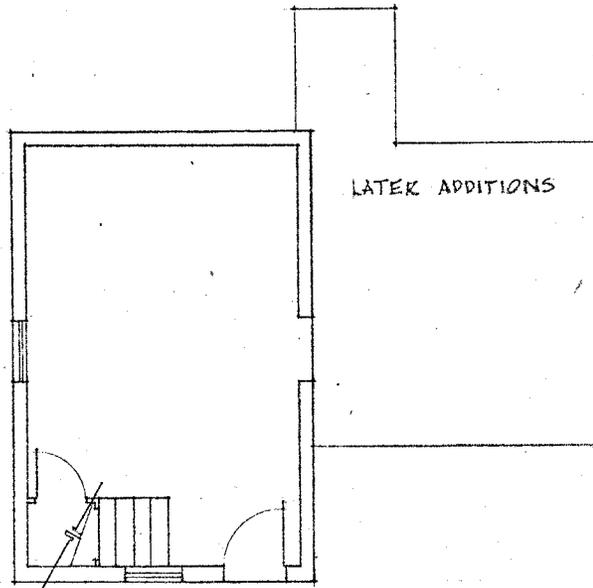
STATE

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



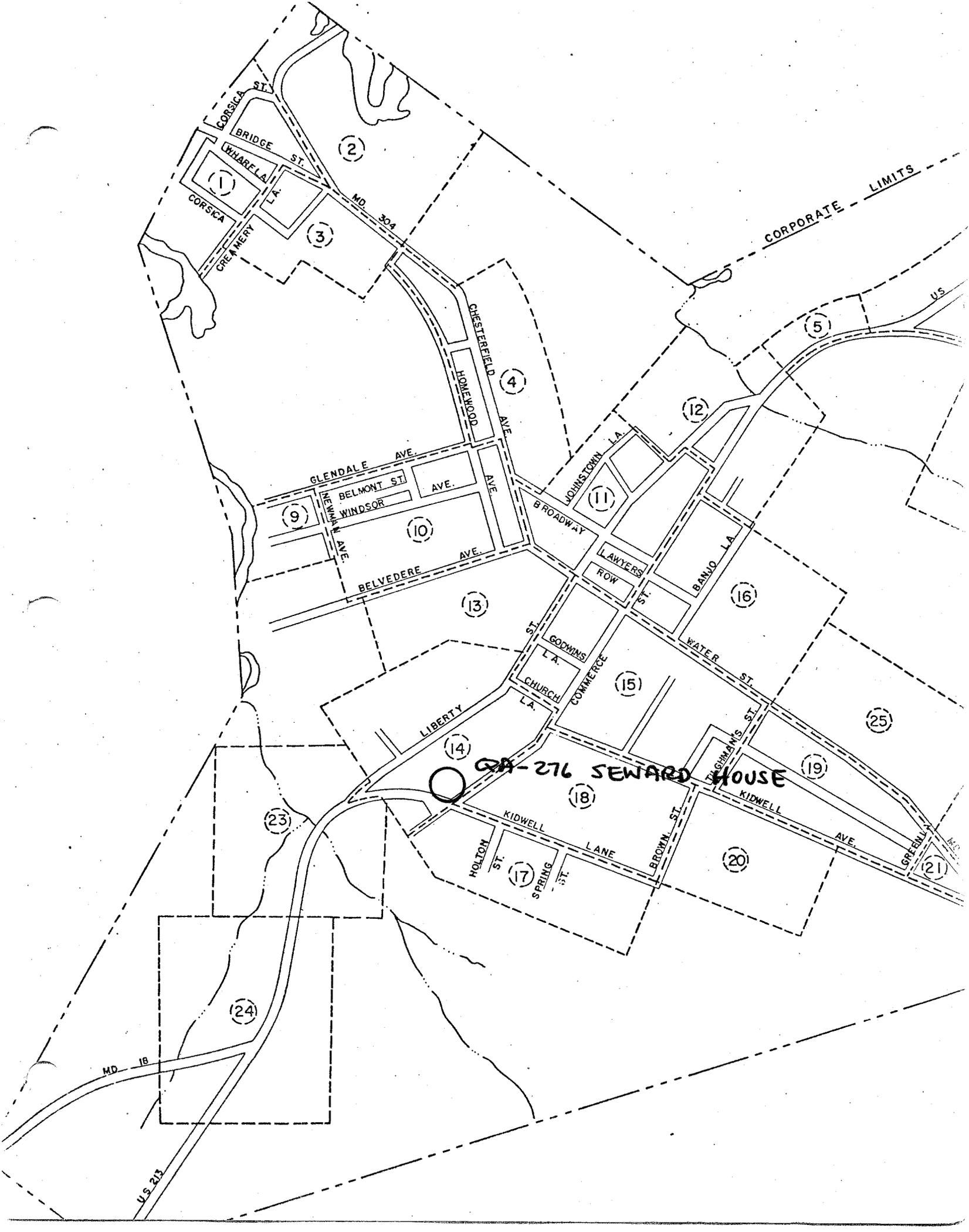
ORLANDO RIPOUT V.

QA-276

338

SOUTH COMMERCE STREET  
CENTREVILLE, MARYLAND

FEBRUARY 17, 1978



(1) WAREHOUSE ST. L.A. CORNICE

(2) BRIDGE ST. CORNICE

(3) WAREHOUSE ST. L.A. CORNICE

(4) CHESTERFIELD AVE. HOMEWOOD AVE.

(9) BELMONT ST. WINDSOR AVE. BELVEDERE AVE. NEWMAN AVE.

(10) WINDSOR AVE. BELVEDERE AVE.

(13) BELVEDERE AVE.

(12) JOHNSTOWN L.A.

(11) JOHNSTOWN L.A.

(15) LAWYERS ROW ST. GODWINS L.A. CHURCH L.A.

(16) BANDO L.A. WATER ST.

(14) LIBERTY ST.

(15) GODWINS L.A. CHURCH L.A. COMMERCE ST.

2A-276 SEWARD HOUSE

(18) KIDWELL LANE

(19) TACUMANS ST. KIDWELL AVE.

(17) HOLTOM ST. SPRING ST.

(20) BROWN ST. KIDWELL AVE.

(25) GREENBURY ST.

(21) GREENBURY ST.

(24) MD 18

(5) US 213

CORPORATE LIMITS

MD 18

U.S. 213

QA-276  
Seward House

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





DO NOT  
ENTER

QA-276



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