

WO-268  
Clayton J. Purnell House  
Snow Hill  
Private

1894

Clayton J. Purnell, a long-time attorney and author of "The Law of Insolvency of Maryland; with Forms of Procedure," a professional treatise on insolvency, purchased a vacant lot that bordered Church and Martin streets on March 7, 1894 for \$1,100. Before the official records had been drawn together in the courthouse, the Democratic Messenger stated on February 24, 1894, that

Clayton J. Purnell, Esq. has purchased the Bishop lot, opposite the residence of Senator Smith and Hon. George W. Covington, of Dr. Bishop, and will shortly commence to build for himself a handsome and commodious residence. Jackson Gott, of Baltimore, is to be the architect. Mr. Purnell certainly has purchased one of the most desirable building lots in the town and we are sure his new house will be worthy (of) the location.

The Clayton J. Purnell house is one of two dwellings designed by Jackson C. Gott. The other house is the Governor John Walter Smith house across the street, evidently built a few years earlier. Unlike the John Walter Smith house, this large Victorian dwelling has been divided into multiple apartments. As a result the original exterior design has been obscured with two-story porches serving the four front apartments. Nevertheless, similar architectural features such as the corner octagonal tower and the hip roofed dormers are elements shared by both buildings.

In addition to his law practice, Clayton Purnell served as an examiner of public schools between 1886 and 1891, and during the same period he helped organize the First National Bank of Snow Hill. He was also one of the promoters of the Pocomoke City National Bank.

HISTORIC CONTEXT INFORMATION

Resource Name: Clayton J. Purcell House

MHT Inventory Number: W1-268

MARYLAND COMPREHENSIVE HISTORIC PRESERVATION PLAN DATA:

1) Historic Period Theme(s):

ARCHITECTURE, LAW

2) Geographic Orientation:

EASTERN SHORE

3) Chronological/Developmental Period(s):

1870-1930 URBAN-INDUSTRIAL DOMINANCE

4) Resource Type(s):

1. STANDING STRUCTURE

a. house

# Maryland Historical Trust State Historic Sites Inventory Form

## 1. Name (indicate preferred name)

historic CLAYTON J. PURNELL HOUSE

and/or common

## 2. Location

street & number South Church Street  not for publication

city, town Snow Hill  vicinity of congressional district First

state Maryland county Worcester

## 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	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> not applicable	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other:

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

name Dale E. Evans

street & number 116 West Martin Street telephone no.: 632-3684

city, town Snow Hill state and zip code MD 21863

## 5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Worcester County Clerk of Court liber 1142

street & number Worcester County Courthouse folio 102

city, town Snow Hill state MD 21863

## 6. Representation in Existing Historical Surveys

title

date  federal  state  county  local

pository for survey records

city, town state

# 7. Description

Survey No. W0-268

<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
<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 Clayton J. Purnell house stands on the northeast corner of the intersection of South Church and Martin streets in the southern residential district of Snow Hill, Worcester County, Maryland. The large two-and-a-half story frame dwelling faces southwest with the principal gable oriented on a northwest/southeast axis.

Designed by Baltimore architect, Jackson C. Gott, this asymmetrical two-and-a-half story frame dwelling, now converted into apartments, was erected in 1894. Supported by a raised common bond brick foundation pierced by six-pane cellar windows, the house is sheathed asbestos shingles and covered by a steeply pitched slate roof. Rising on the northwest corner is a three-story semi-octagonal tower topped by a squat octagonal spire. Extending from the southwest (street) elevation are a pair of two-story screened in porches. The first and second floors of the house are lighted by single-pane sash windows which retain their louvered shutters. Piercing the sides of the tower are six-over-one sash windows. In addition to the tower, the roof is marked by hip roofed dormers filled with six-over-one sash windows as well. Extending to the northeast is a two-story wing. The large house is served by a centrally positioned brick chimney.

The interior was not seen, but the house is divided into at least four apartments.

# 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 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** 1894 **Builder/Architect** Jackson C. Gott, 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 Clayton J. Purnell house is one of two Snow Hill dwellings designed by Baltimore architect, Jackson C. Gott during the late nineteenth century. The other house is the Governor John Walter Smith house across the street. Unlike the John Walter Smith house, this large Victorian house has been divided into multiple apartments. As a result the original exterior design has been obscured with two-story porches servicing the front four apartments. Nevertheless, similar architectural features such the corner octagonal tower and the hip roofed dormers are features the two buildings share.

### HISTORY AND SUPPORT

Clayton J. Purnell, long-time attorney and author of "The Law of Insolvency of Maryland; with Forms of Procedure," a professional treatise on insolvency, purchased this Church street lot from Dr. George Wilson Bishop on March 7, 1894 for \$1,100 (FHP 4/592) Before the official records had been drawn together in the courthouse, the Democratic Messenger stated on February 24, 1894 that,

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CHAIN-OF-TITLE

CLAYTON J. PURNELL HOUSE  
Church Street  
Snow Hill, MD 21863

1142/102

Daniel W. Hudson, Jr.  
Sandra J. Hudson

to

12/12/1985

Dale E. Evans \$75,000

FWH 662/198

Aubrey R. Hottenstein

to

5/4/1979

Daniel W. Hudson, Jr. \$54,000

FWH 545/1

Aubrey R. Hottenstein  
Maude C. Hottenstein

to

9/5/1976

Aubrey R. Hottenstein  
Maude C. Hottenstein  
Carolyn H. Harner

JEB 10/28

Bessie P. Corddry, et al.  
William Howard Corddry

to

8/27/1941

Aubrey R. Hottenstein

FHP 4/592

Dr. George W. Bishop

to

3/7/1894

Clayton J. Purnell \$1,100.

sesses that essential qualification to success in public life, that of making friends readily and strengthening the ties of all friendships as time advances.



CLAYTON J. PURNELL, of the Worcester County bar, has for years been recognized as one of the ablest lawyers in the first judicial circuit of Maryland. At this writing, unfortunately, he is incapacitated for active professional work, owing to a stroke of paralysis that paralyzed the entire left side. This was caused by overwork, for he has been a man of tireless energy, and one who exercised to their utmost the large mental faculties with which he is endowed. To the profession in Maryland he is well known as the author of "The Law of Insolvency of Maryland; with Forms of Procedure," of which the legislature ordered three hundred volumes. The work is an octavo, bound in sheep, and interleaved for observations and annotations. Of this work the highest praise has been given by the press and the bar. We have space for but a few of these.

Baltimore *Sun*: "A new treatise on insolvent law in Maryland is rendered valuable by the recent changes, the repeal of the national bankrupt act, and the lapse of time since the different decisions of our court have been brought together in proper connection. Insolvency is a matter which should be understood, not only by the lawyer, but by the general trader, and fortunately it is neither so complicated, nor is the volume before us so large or abstruse, that a fair understanding by non-legal minds cannot be obtained of the subject. The entire statute of insolvency is given in an appendix, together with a list of forms, and the book is interleaved for observations and new decisions."

Baltimore *American*: "This is a volume which is needed, and which undoubtedly will receive the welcome that its merits deserve. Mr. Purnell has given the entire law, with the forms of procedure, and has presented the subject with a full-

ness and clearness that are alike creditable to his ability as a lawyer and his talent as a writer."

Baltimore *Morning Herald*: "This book deserves a place in every law student's library."

Maryland *Law Record*: "It is essential to every working lawyer in the state." Hon. John P. Poe, professor of law in the University of Maryland: "Your book will fill a long-felt want. You have undoubtedly succeeded in giving us a complete and perspicuous and at the same time accurate and exact book." Hon. E. K. Wilson, United States senator: "I believe it will supply a want that is becoming more and more felt amongst the profession, and will prove a great convenience even to the old practitioner and almost essential to the inexperienced." Hon. Charles B. Roberts, attorney-general of Maryland: "It appropriately meets a growing need for just such a work and it cannot fail to be useful to both the bench and the bar of the state."

On the Rochester farm, near Snow Hill, Worcester County, the subject of this article was born January 22, 1856, to John M. and Sarah A. (Leonard) Purnell. His father, who was county commissioner for a number of years, died in 1889, at sixty-five years of age. The wife and mother is living in Snow Hill, and is now sixty-four years of age. They were the parents of six children, but one daughter, Annie B., died at eleven years, and another of the same name died in infancy. Leonard D. graduated in medicine from the University of Maryland, but died of typhoid fever the day he received his diploma. Clayton J. is next in order of birth. Perry W. died when in his twenty-first year. Ella L. resides with her mother in Snow Hill.

When our subject was two years of age his parents removed from the country into the town of Snow Hill, and there and at the Maryland Agricultural College he received his education. At the age of eighteen he entered the office of the clerk of court, I. T. Matthews, and served as deputy for four years, meantime reading law with George W. Purnell. He was admitted to the bar on the twenty-first anniversary of his birth, being examined in open court by Judge Franklin. He continued in the office of the clerk of court until

## PORTRAIT AND BIOGRAPHICAL RECORD.

January 1, 1878, when he opened a law office in Snow Hill, and from that time was active and prominent in the profession until May 24, 1895, when he was stricken with paralysis. From 1886 to 1891 he was examiner of public schools for Worcester County. In 1893 he was a candidate for associate judge for the first judicial circuit of Maryland, his opponent being Judge Henry Lloyd, of Dorchester County. After six thousand ballots had been cast, the deadlock was broken by the nomination of Judges Page, Lloyd and Holland, the present judges. This deadlock was in many respects one of the most remarkable that has ever occurred. The convention met at Ocean City, September 5, 1893. Judge Charles F. Holland, of Wicomico County, was pitted against Judge Henry Page, of Somerset County, and our subject against Henry Lloyd, of Dorchester County. Each county had four votes. Wicomico and Worcester voted solidly for Holland and Purnell, while Dorchester and Somerset voted for Page and Lloyd. Failing to nominate at Ocean City the convention adjourned to Cambridge, where the contest was continued. Innumerable ballots failing to break the eight to eight, convention adjourned to meet at Salisbury, where the contest was resumed, but without breaking the deadlock, and the convention adjourned to Princess Anne. It was feared that no nominations might be made. Finally, on the five thousand six hundred and fiftieth ballot, Gov. E. E. Jackson, upon behalf of Wicomico, withdrew Holland for chief-justiceship, and this resulted in the nomination of Judge Henry Page for chief justice, and Charles F. Holland and Henry Lloyd for associates. This long contest was widely commented upon in the newspapers of the day throughout the state, and all of the newspaper articles admitted that Clayton J. Purnell was the peer of any of the contestants in point of legal ability and fitness for the bench.

Under Governor Brown, the appointment of director of the Maryland Agricultural College was tendered Mr. Purnell, and he is now one of twelve directors of that college. In politics he has always been a Democrat, while in religious belief he is a Presbyterian, contributing gen-

erously to the support of the denomination with which he is identified. In the organization of the First National Bank of Snow Hill, in 1888, he took an active part, and has since been one of the directors of the institution, as well as counsel of the board of directors since their first meeting. He was also one of the promoters of the Pocomoke City National Bank, of which he is vice-president and counsel.

In 1880 Mr. Purnell married Miss Ella A., daughter of Dr. Edward Hubbell, who for many years was register of wills for Worcester County and a well-known resident of Snow Hill. They are the parents of three children, of whom two are living, May H. and Bessie L. The summers of 1892 and 1894 were spent by Mr. Purnell in traveling in Europe.

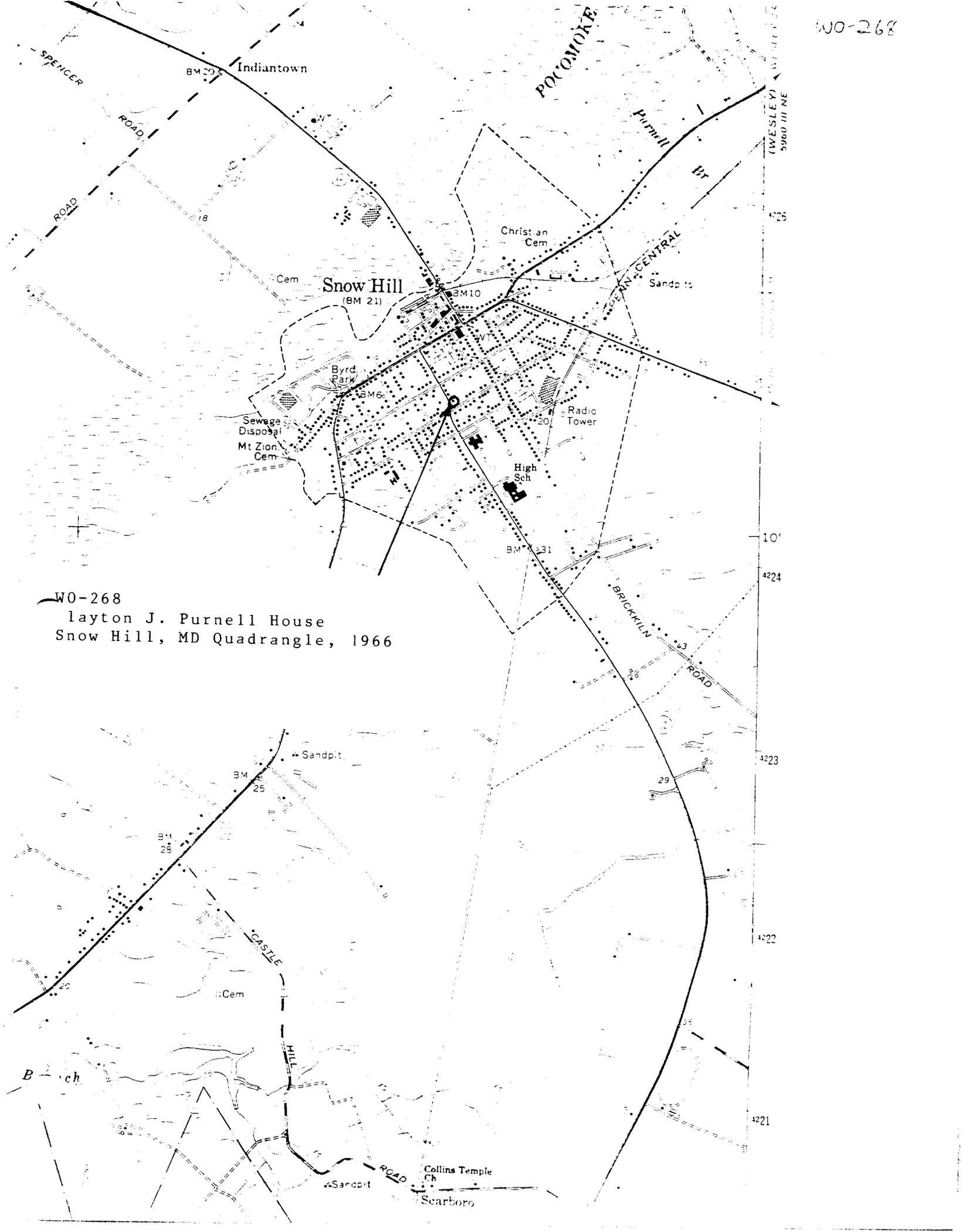


**H**ON. CHARLES F. HOLLAND, circuit judge of the first judicial district of Maryland, was born in Sussex County, Del., and is a son of Elisha and Louisa (White) Holland, also natives of that county. He is the third of five children, all but one of whom are now living. In the place where he was born April 3, 1841, the years of his boyhood were uneventfully passed, his education being obtained in the public schools and Milton Academy, and subsequently he pursued a classical course at Milford. After graduating when in his twenty-first year, he began the study of the law in the office of Judge Layton, of Georgetown, Del., and in 1866 was admitted to the bar of Delaware. For one year he engaged in practice with the judge at Georgetown, and then in 1868 came to Wicomico County, which had been formed in the fall of 1867. But one term of court had been held at the time he settled here. He built up a large practice and became well known as a lawyer.

A staunch Democrat, Judge Holland has taken an active interest in public affairs. He refused the nomination for state's attorney. Upon the election of Judge Wilson to the United States senate in December, 1884, Judge Holland was

Democratic Messenger, February 24, 1894

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 Layton J. Purnell House  
 Snow Hill, MD Quadrangle, 1966