NPS Form 10-900
(Rev. 11-90)

OMB No. 10024-0018

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES REGISTRATION FORM

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

Historic name: Wiley-Ringland House
Other names/site number: M: 35-131

2. Location

Street & Number: 4722 Dorset Avenue
City or town: Chevy Chase [N/A] Vicinity
State: Maryland Code: MD County: Montgomery Code: 031 Zip Code: 20815

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this [X] nomination [ ] request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property [X] meets [ ] does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant [ ] nationally [ ] statewide [X] locally. ([ ] See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

10-24-00

Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property [ ] meets [ ] does not meet the National Register criteria. ([ ] See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State or Federal agency or bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:
[ ] entered in the National Register.
( ) see continuation sheet
[ ] determined eligible for the National Register
( ) see continuation sheet
[ ] determined not eligible for the National Register
[ ] removed from the National Register
[ ] other, (explain:)

Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

Wiley-Ringland House — Montgomery County, MD
Name of Property — **County and State**

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
[X] Private
[ ] Public-Local
[ ] Public-State
[ ] Public-Federal

Category of Property
[X] Building(s)
[ ] District
[ ] Site
[ ] Structure
[ ] Object

No. Resources within Property

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1		Buildings
		Sites
		Structure
		Objects
1	0	Total

Name of related multiple property listing
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)
N/A

Number of contributing resources Previously listed in the National Register
0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)
Domestic/Single Dwelling

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)
Vacant/Not in Use

7. Description

~~Architectural Classification~~ (enter categories from instructions)
Late Victorian: Queen Anne

~~Materials (enter categories from instructions)~~
foundation: stone
wall: wood
roof: asphalt

Narrative Description
Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets

(SEE CONTINUATION SHEETS)

Wiley-Ringland House | Montgomery County, MD
Name of Property | **County and State**

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria
(Mark x in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

[X] **A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history

[X] **B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.

[ ] **C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.

[ ] **D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Areas of Significance
(Enter categories from instructions)

Community Planning and Development
Science
Politics and Government

Period of Significance
1893-1950

Significant Dates
1893; 1938

Criteria Considerations
(Mark x in all the boxes that apply.)

[ ] **A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.

[ ] **B** removed from its original location.

[ ] **C** a birthplace or grave.

[ ] **D** a cemetery.

[ ] **E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.

[ ] **F** a commemorative property.

[ ] **G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Significant Person
(Complete if Criterion B is marked above.)
Harvey Washington Wiley
Arthur C. Ringland

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder
E. H. Ketcham, architect

Narrative Statement of Significance
SEE CONTINUATION SHEET

Wiley-Ringland House — Montgomery County, MD
Name of Property — **County and State**

9. Major Bibliographic References
[X] See continuation sheet

Previous documentation on file (NPS):
[ ] preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67)
[ ] previously listed in the NR
[ ] previously determined eligible by the National Register
[ ] designated a National Historic Landmark
[ ] recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey #_____
[ ] recorded by Historic American

Primary location of add. data:
[X] State SHPO office
[ ] Other State agency
[ ] Federal agency
[X] Local government
[ ] University
[X] Other
Specify repository:
Montgomery County Historical Society, Rockville, MD
Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Engineerin

10. Geographical Data
Acreage of property one acre

UTM References

	Zone	Easting	Northing
1	**18**	**318450**	**4314060**
2			
3			
4			
5			

[X] See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

[X] See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

[X] See continuation sheet

Wiley-Ringland House | Montgomery County, MD
Name of Property | **County and State**

11. Form Prepared By

Name/title Kimberly Prothro Williams
Organization _____ Date July 2000
Street & Number 9120 LeVelle Drive Telephone 301 907-3435
City or Town Chevy Chase State MD Zip code 20815

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

[X] Continuation Sheets

Maps

[X] A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

[ ] A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

[X] Representative black and white photographs of the property.

Additional items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

[X] Figures (architectural drawings)
[ ] Historical photographs

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name Mr. Joe Lipscomb and Ms. Laura Will
street & number 4807 Dorset Ave. telephone 301 941-1248
city or town Chevy Chase state MD zip code 20815

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 *et seq.*)

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of the Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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I. SUMMARY

The house at 4722 Dorset Avenue, commonly known as the Wiley-Ringland House for original owner/builder Harvey Wiley and long-time owner/resident, Arthur Cuming Ringland, is located in the Town of Somerset, in Montgomery County, Maryland. The two-story Queen Anne frame dwelling was built circa 1893 by Dr. Harvey Washington Wiley, a leading scientist and one of the founding members of the residential enclave, originally known as Somerset Heights (incorporated as the Town of Somerset in 1906). The house was one of the first houses constructed in the community, and survives on its original and spacious, one-acre lot of land. Despite a fire in 1978 which effectively destroyed the rear kitchen ell, the dwelling retains its integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling and association.

After the fire, the Wiley-Ringland House was vacated and never repaired or re-occupied. For over twenty years, the property was left abandoned and unmaintained. As a result, the house was, until recently (summer 2000), covered with vegetation, and the yard inundated by brush, overtaking the large evergreen trees. Since being purchased by new owners, however, the house has been cleared of its vines, and the yard cleared of its brush and many of its moribund trees. Despite the fire and subsequent abandonment of the house, the building is structurally sound, and, in terms of overall massing, architectural detailing, and interior arrangement of space, survives virtually intact to its original condition. The house is slated for complete renovation by the current owners, a process that is being reviewed by the Montgomery County Historic Preservation Commission.

II. SITE

The Wiley-Ringland House is located mid-block on Dorset Avenue in the heart of the Town of Somerset in Montgomery County, Maryland. The residential community is located just north of the Montgomery County-District of Columbia border at Friendship Heights. It is bounded on the east by Wisconsin Avenue, on the west by Little Falls Parkway, on the south by Little Falls Creek, and on the north by the residential community of Drummond. Topographically, Somerset Heights occupies a slight knoll of gently rolling terrain. The community of narrow residential streets slopes south from its high point at Cumberland Avenue and Surrey Street to the Little Falls Creek stream bed below. A wooded ravine and stream bed area of Little Falls Creek, originally platted as a driving and walking park, is now known as Vinton Park.

As originally laid out, Somerset Heights consisted of a grid system of narrow streets with large residential building lots. A fifty-acre tract of the larger, 242-acre subdivision historically formed the nucleus of the community. Its narrow streets were landscaped with rows of trees, and its first houses, built between 1893 and 1915, respected uniform setbacks, creating a park-like setting that still defines the community today. A significant section of the originally platted territory, however, was not developed until after 1946, at which time it was resubdivided in a free form pattern typical of the mid-20th century, with gently curving streets following the contours of the land. As development in the

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area intensified in the mid-to late 20th century, the especially large corner lots of the older section were resubdivided into narrower lots fronting side streets, while other deep lots were divided from the front, creating interior lots accessible by narrow drives or alleys. In addition to new houses on newly divided lots, the community has experienced, in recent years, the demolition of older houses and their replacement with larger residences. As a result, the residences of Somerset Heights represent four periods of construction. These range from the original large frame Victorians of the initial period of construction (1890-1900), to the smaller craftsmen bungalows and other builder-erected houses from the second phase of construction (1900-1915), to the 1-1/2-story, brick and frame Colonial Revival-style houses of mid-century, to the ranch houses of the post-1946 infill period, and finally to the large historicist houses of the 1980s and 1990s.

The Somerset Historic District (M:35/36), listed on the Montgomery County Master Plan for Historic Preservation, is limited to a reduced section of the original fifty-acre tract of land (primarily developed between 1893 and 1915), that retains the highest degree of architectural integrity. In general, the streets and avenues of the historic district retain their suburban residential scale, uniform setbacks, and landscaping. Rows of trees line each street and grassy medians separate the side walk and street, providing a clear distinction between public and private space. The neighborhood is particularly verdant and bucolic. Individual lawns feature mature shade trees, hedges, bushes and flowering plants. Some property owners have taken advantage of the naturally rolling terrain by building stone retaining walls, an effect that further emphasizes the rusticity of the residential neighborhood. Garages and other outbuildings, generally detached and located at the rear of the lots, are not visible from the public streets.

III. ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

The Wiley-Ringland house at 4722 Dorset Avenue is located on the south side of Dorset Avenue, east of Surrey Street. Set back from the road and surrounded by land on all four sides, the house is a 2-1/2-story frame structure designed in a Queen Anne farmhouse manner. Generally square in plan with several projections and recessions, the house sits upon a rubble stone foundation and is covered with a hipped roof with an intersecting gable. The roof, clad with asphalt shingles, has overhanging eaves with exposed rafters and a central brick chimney. The house features several Queen Anne-inspired exuberances, including a three-sided, corner projecting bay or tower capped by a semi-conical, bell-shaped roof; a wrap-around hipped-roof porch; a projecting gable; and a hipped dormer window. The porch is raised upon brick piers and its roof is supported by turned wood columns. A railing with closely-spaced square balusters is only partially intact. The house is clad with German siding and features decorative wood shingling in the projecting gable ends. A two-story kitchen ell at the rear of the house appears to have been an addition, though probably built within several years of the original construction.[1]

[1] The stone foundation of this ell abuts the foundation of the main block and the interior door and window trim differs from the main block. However, the exterior cladding material and windows are identical to those of the main block, making the addition appear seamless, and relatively contemporary to it.

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Exterior Description:

The primary facade is the north elevation facing Dorset Avenue. It is divided into two principal parts, including a corner projecting bay or tower, and the main, front wall of the house, all of which is surrounded by the one-story, wrap-around porch. The corner projecting bay or tower is three sided with boarded up window openings hiding 2/2 sash in all three sides on the first and second stories. The main wall includes a single entry door next to the tower and a square window letting light into the stair hall (now boarded up) on the first story, and two boarded up windows on the second story. The entry door, hidden behind a plywood board, features the original nine-light, three-paneled wood and glass door.

The east elevation consists of the wall of an unfenestrated main block, and a projecting bay and second-story oriel. The first-story bay consists of canted walls forming an unusual bowed surface. Above this canted surface is an overhanging gable-end oriel bay. The bay features two, single, boarded up windows on the first-story and a pair of boarded up windows in the second-story oriel. The attic level in the gable end of the oriel is decorated with rounded wood shingles and an attic level opening. A small enclosed room located at the intersection of the main block and the projecting bay, and sitting upon the roof of the wrap-around porch, is covered with a hipped roof and clad with rounded wood shingles.

The west elevation is two bays deep with single windows on both stories. The openings on the first story are boarded up, while those of the second story feature original 2/2 sash and original louvered shutters. A hipped-roof dormer is located between the pairs of windows and on center of the roof slope. The dormer has a pair of window openings, with missing sash.

The south elevation features a two-story, one-bay-deep ell addition with a kitchen on the first floor. This ell was basically destroyed by the fire in 1978, and though still standing in part, is missing a side wall, has no roof, and is structurally unsound. The kitchen ell is slated for demolition.

Interior Description:

The interior of the Wiley-Ringland House is divided into a stair hall, three rooms and the rear kitchen ell. The stair hall, entered directly from the exterior door off of the porch, features a quarter-turn, open-stringer stair with turned balusters and heavy, squarish newels. The main newel features incised detailing and chamfered edges with lamb's tongue stops. A front parlor next to the stair hall occupies the front projecting bay or tower, taking advantage of its long windows, and extends back to a rear parlor, located at the back of the main block of the house. These front and rear parlors feature corner fireplaces. The fireplace in the front room features a simple wood mantel; the fireplace in the rear room has been altered to accommodate a stove and no longer retains its original mantel. Another room, behind the stair hall, and reached from both it and the rear parlor, occupies the bowed space

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formed by the projecting bay on the east side of the house. Despite the condition of the house, and its missing mantels, most of the original trim and interior detailing is intact. The typical interior doors have four panels, some of which have transoms; and the door and window trim has bulls-eye corner block moldings and reeded stiles.

The second floor of the main block includes the stair hall, two bedrooms and their adjoining bathrooms. Again, most of the original four-paneled doors and all of the bulls-eye door and window trim survives intact.

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SIGNIFICANCE

I. SUMMARY

The Wiley-Ringland House at 4722 Dorset Avenue was one of the first houses built in the present-day Town of Somerset by Dr. Harvey Washington Wiley, a leading chemist at the Department of Agriculture, and one of the original developers of the suburban property. Originally known as Somerset Heights, the suburban town was started in the early 1890s by a group of five scientists, including Harvey Wiley, who banded together to develop a residential enclave or "colony" outside the city limits. The group, referred to as the Somerset Colony Company, purchased a fifty-acre tract of land from the owners of Somerset Heights and began the development of their colony by first constructing their personal residences, and later subdividing the land into building lots, and promoting their individual sale as a real estate venture.

The Suburban Colony Company specifically chose the fifty-acre tract of land outside the city, but convenient to the existing and growing streetcar and railroad network leading to and from Washington. Inspired by the large-scale and comprehensive development of Chevy Chase to the east, Somerset Heights was planned as a picturesque suburban community boasting of spacious lots and tree-lined streets that promised the clean air and tranquility of country life, along with the comforts of the city, including the prestige of distinguished and urbane residents.

The Wiley-Ringland House at 4722 Dorset Avenue meets the following National Register criteria and is significant under the themes of Community Development and Planning and, in the case of Criterion B, Science, and Politics and Government.

1) Built circa 1893, the Wiley-Ringland House is significant under Criterion A for its association with the pattern of suburban migration from northwest Washington to Montgomery County via the streetcar and railroad networks. Built adjacent to three emerging streetcar lines and thus easily accessible to the city, Somerset Heights was founded upon the late 19th-century suburban ideal that rejected the congested living conditions of the city, for the bucolic setting of freestanding houses, spacious grounds and private lawns of the country. Sited well back from the street and executed in a Queen Anne manner replete with projecting bays and wrap-around porches, the house was designed to fit this suburban ideal. It was one of the first of four "company officer" houses to be built, and survives on its original one-acre lot.

2) The Wiley-Ringland House is significant under Criterion B for its associations with owner/builder Dr. Harvey Washington Wiley, and long-time resident Arthur Cuming Ringland. Dr. Harvey Washington Wiley, one of the five founders of Somerset Heights, was, at the time, an emerging leader in the field of science, and later and best known as "the Father of the Pure Food and Drug Act" of 1906, commonly known as the Wiley Act. As chief chemist at the Department of Agriculture, Wiley began the suburban development with his colleagues and friends, not only as

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a residential "colony" in which the owners or their tenants would live, but, like many other Washington professionals of the era, as a real estate and financial venture. This type of entrepreneurial speculation on the rising value of land prices in the outskirts of Washington and along the newly emerging streetcar networks, strongly encouraged the residential growth of northwest Washington and the rise of Montgomery County as a suburban community of the nation's capital. Harvey Washington Wiley built and owned the house at 4722 Dorset Avenue until 1901. The house survives as an essential component of the present-day Town of Somerset, and is crucial to a complete understanding of the community's history and development.[2]

Arthur Cuming Ringland, a long-time owner/resident, after whom the house is named, is best known as the principal founder of CARE. Ringland began his life-long government career in 1900 when he joined the U.S. Forest Service where he helped establish the national park and national forest system. Between 1900 and 1945, Arthur Ringland led a variety of government programs that ranged from conservation work to refugee relief. In 1945, while living at 4722 Dorset Avenue, Ringland originated the concept of the private voluntary organization that became CARE. A principal aspect of that work was persuading the government to provide ships to transport food packages that had been donated for the needy in Europe. He thus became known as "the father of CARE," and was honored for his efforts by the United Nations in 1958. Ringland lived at the house from 1938 to 1978.

The period of significance extends from 1893, the year the house was constructed, to 1950, a date fifty years in the past from the present.

II. SUBURBAN DEVELOPMENT IN DC AND MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MD

The significance of the house at 4722 Dorset Avenue and the larger residential community of Somerset Heights is directly related to the suburbanization of the District of Columbia and Montgomery County. Located along three emerging streetcar lines, and one emerging railroad corridor, Somerset Heights offered the key elements of the mid-to late 19th-century suburban ideal--that is it was located on remote and previously undeveloped land at a distance from, but easily accessible to, the city center.

In the mid-19th century, Washington was a small, tightly-knit city clustered around "old downtown." During the Civil War and its aftermath, as the city's population increased exponentially, the city began to grow beyond its old borders. In the 1860s, horse drawn streetcar routes opened up new areas of the city for residential development, while the emergence of the steam railroad into

[2] The house is one of three of the original four houses still standing, and is the least altered example of them.

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Washington in 1873 began to push the city's development beyond the city/county line. In that year, the Metropolitan Branch of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad opened off the railroad's primary east-west line, bringing a new line from Point of Rocks, Maryland across Montgomery County to Washington 42 miles away. This branch ran important freight operations, transforming upper Montgomery County from pine forest to productive farmland and opening new markets for agricultural endeavors.

At the same time that the railroad opened up the possibility of transporting goods, it also offered the benefit of transporting people. Ultimately, between 1873 and 1893, the railroad created a suburban corridor in the northern section of the District and lower part of the county, by spurring the development of resorts, a religious campground, summer cottages, and commuter residences.

In 1888, the introduction of the electric streetcar accelerated national investment in suburban real estate and led to changes in the District and Montgomery County landscapes. Electric streetcars were faster and cheaper to build than steam railroads, and reached well beyond the limits of horse cars or cable cars. The rise of the electric streetcar in Washington, coupled with a growing trend to escape the negative perceptions of the city, directly influenced the development of Somerset Heights.

Located about four miles from the city, the area that was to become Somerset Heights was, prior to 1890, open farmland. The site was located between the Georgetown and Rockville Turnpike and River Road, both important stagecoach roads in the 18th and 19th centuries. In the 18th and early 19th centuries, the area saw little development and growth. However, in the late 1880s, three separate streetcar lines, and one proposed steam railroad line arose that placed the site of Somerset Heights in prime, developable territory.

The most relevant of these networks was the Georgetown and Tenallytown streetcar line. Chartered in 1888 from Georgetown to Tenallytown, this line was, in 1890, extended from Tenallytown to Alta Vista (Bethesda) across the Maryland line. This extension ran immediately east of Somerset Heights along present-day Wisconsin Avenue, offering an ideal site for a suburban community.

Less practical for potential residents, but still compelling and highlighted for promotional purposes was the Glen Echo Railway. The Glen Echo Railway, chartered in 1889, and opened in 1891 from Georgetown to Glen Echo, ran within 200 feet of the southern border of Somerset Heights. While not as accessible as the Georgetown and Tenallytown streetcar line, this secondary line emphasized the growing accessibility of the area, and the future prospects for surrounding development.

The Rock Creek Railway, noted as "within a few minutes walk" was probably the least accessible, but most alluring of the three streetcar networks. The Rock Creek Railway, chartered in 1888, provided a direct link from downtown Washington to the newly planned suburb of Chevy Chase, east of Somerset Heights. While still in the planning stages, Chevy Chase was a comprehensive suburb

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that offered the security of rising land values for the speculative developer and the promise of prominent neighbors for the potential purchaser of lots in Somerset Heights.

In addition to the streetcar lines leading into the city, the Metropolitan Southern Railroad Company which ran the Metropolitan Branch of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad (opened in 1873) was looking for a southern route from Linden, near Silver Spring, to the port at Georgetown. In 1890, the company proposed a branch line that would run from Linden, west through the holdings of the Chevy Chase Land Company in Chevy Chase, then pass through Bethesda on its way to Georgetown and the C&O Canal. Although not yet implemented in 1890, the proposed branch line further ensured that the once-remote area would be within minutes reach of the city.

The spread of electrified traction and the consequent growth of streetcar suburbs into Montgomery County were typical of trends in many American cities between 1888 and 1918. By 1893, just five years after the introduction of the electric streetcar, more than 250 streetcar companies had been incorporated in the United States. By 1920, the electric streetcar had opened new lines in Montgomery County, promoting pleasant suburban neighborhoods of large, detached houses, grassy yards and tree-lined streets. Government clerks, lawyers, bankers, scientists, military officers, and other white collar professionals that made up the communities like Somerset, Chevy Chase, Kensington, and others were essentially city people living in the countryside. It was Washington, not Rockville, that was the focal point of their lives and their place of employment, entertainment and shopping.

In this climate, Somerset Heights was developed as a picturesque suburb of the nation's capital and was one of the earliest suburban communities in the northwest reaches of the District. The suburb's plan, though still a standard grid form, introduced the "picturesque" in its spacious, one-acre lots, and in a community park with meandering parkways and a wooded preserve. It's park-like setting was further enhanced by the choice of English names for streets, that still define the neighborhood today. Finally, its origins as a "colony" for a group of scientists and their families, distinguish Somerset Heights as a unique streetcar suburb of Washington.

III. HISTORY OF SOMERSET HEIGHTS

From Farmland to Suburban Neighborhood

The land that became the residential streetcar suburb of Somerset Heights in the late 19th century was originally part of an extensive tract of land called "Friendship," patented in 1711. By the early 19th century, a triangular-shaped, 211-1/2-acre part of this tract, having almost the same boundaries as the present Town of Somerset, was purchased by Richard Williams, a farmer and patron of the Friendship Heights area. Throughout the 19th century and several changes in ownership, the 211-1/2-acre tract of land remained an operating farm in what was a flourishing rural community. By

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1890, however, the forces of suburbanization began to alter the rural landscape. In particular, the introduction of new streetcar lines, and the planned development of Chevy Chase at the end of one of these lines, fueled a flurry of speculative development that prevailed in transforming the Williams family farm from its rural roots to one of the first streetcar suburbs northwest of the District of Columbia.

It was local entrepreneur John E. Beall, one of the powers behind the streetcar line and Bethesda Park, along with local resident Dr. Ralph Walsh[3] who effected this transformation. In March of 1890, the partners purchased the "Friendship" farm, and with plans for its development and subdivision, designated the former farmland as "Somerset Heights."

The Department of Agriculture Colony

Meanwhile, a group of five, high-level Department of Agriculture scientists and friends had banded together in an unconventional and somewhat utopian manner in search of a tract of land on which to establish a residential "colony." The five scientists, Harvey W. Wiley, Charles A. Crampton, Miles Fuller, Daniel Salmon, and Horace Horton, were men of exceptional accomplishment and ability. The leader of the group, Dr. Wiley, was Chief of what became the Bureau of Chemistry in the Department of Agriculture. Dr. Charles Crampton was Assistant Chief of the Bureau of Chemistry under Dr. Wiley. Daniel Salmon, Chief of the Bureau of Animal Industry in the Department of Agriculture, gained an international reputation for his steps leading to the eradication of pleuropneumonia and Texas tick fever, both major killers of cattle. Miles Fuller, who handled the business details of the partnership, was Chief Clerk in the Bureau of Animal Industry, and later operated a business school in D.C.[4] Horace Horton, about whom little is known, sold his interests in the venture early on to Dr. E.A. de Sweinitz, Chief of the Biochemistry Division in the Bureau of Animal Industry. Of these five men, three of them--Harvey Wiley, Charles Crampton and Daniel Salmon--became leaders in their field, securing both national and international names in science.

A committee representing the five men was charged with finding an appropriate site for purchase according to a set of criteria established by the group. Somerset Heights caught the attention of the

[3] Dr. Ralph Walsh lived on a large tract of land northeast of Somerset Heights on land that was platted and subdivided in 1893 as Norwood Heights, and now part of the Town of Chevy Chase.

[4] Miles Fuller also later bought out the other partners' share of the real estate venture.

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committee, and in August of 1890, the group of five purchased a fifty-acre tract of Somerset Heights from owners Beall and Walsh for $19,000.[5] Prior to the official completion of their purchase of the land, *The Evening Star* reported the committee's find:

[5] Montgomery County Land Records JA19:489-491.

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> After considering various propositions made by land owners the committee representing the scientific men of the Department of Agriculture, who have in view the establishment of a suburban colony, have selected a tract of rolling land on the Tenleytown road, adjoining the property of Gen. Drum, just across the District line in Montgomery county, owned by John E. Beall, esq. and Dr. Ralph Walsh. The tract is a part of the so-called "Somerset Heights," and consists of fifty acres sloping to the south. The Company will begin operations by providing the property with a good system of sewage, a bountiful supply of water and electric light from the Georgetown and Tenleytown Electric Railroad Company. During the coming summer and autumn active steps will be taken in preparing the property for building. Mr. Beall, through whom the property was purchased, will build a broad avenue from the pike along the border of the property, plant shade trees and lay a sidewalk. The initiatory steps in house building will be taken by Dr. D.E. Salmon, Dr. H.W. Wiley, Dr. C.A. Crampton, Mr. H.E.L. Horton, Mr. Miles Fuller and others. The lots are to contain not less than one acre, with a view to insuring the building of a cluster of villas, forming a suburb fashioned after the very pleasant ones of Boston and other northern cities.[6]

The fifty-acre tract was located in the northern section of the larger Somerset Heights. As part of the sale, the five purchasers, referred to as the "Somerset Colony Company," were required to erect "within (1) one year from the completion of an electric railway...through said 'Somerset Heights,' five (5) or more private residences to be occupied by them or their tenants, and to cost not less than two thousand ($2,000) each."[7] In addition, the "colony" was subject to the same restrictions as that of the larger subdivision, including covenants prohibiting alleys, and one establishing 30-foot front yard setbacks.[8]

Following the sale of the 50 acres, Beall and Walsh, who still had 192 acres of land to promote and sell, prepared a sales brochure and plat describing the residential development. The brochure emphasized the investment by the "men of high standing in scientific, business and Departmental circles" and the convenience of the suburb to three nearby electric railways and the promised arrival of the B&O. The brochure noted that, "unlike other subdivisions about Washington, in which the land is parceled up into narrow slices after the plan of city lots," Somerset Heights was to have large,

[6] *The Evening Star*, May 17, 1890.

[7] Montgomery County Land Records JA 19:489-491.

[8] Montgomery County Land Records JA 19:489-491.

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one-acre lots to "afford residents facilities for establishing ideal country residences, with ample grounds, lawns and gardens." The brochure highlighted a civilized location "400 feet above tidewater"and "Away from the river; no mosquitoes; no malaria," while still conjuring up the image of a park-like setting:

> Instead of building the houses in stiff rows along a street, the citizen of Somerset can place his house in the most favorable point in a large square of ground, which will permit the exercise of his taste in landscape gardening and ornamental architecture, with broad walks or drives, smooth lawns, and shady groves."[9]

The sales plat, included with the promotional brochure, shows the subdivision of the triangular parcel of land into a grid of streets and divided into several blocks. The 192-acre tract of land owned by the Somerset Land Company was subdivided into a series of building lots, generally rectangular in plan, while a wooded preserve along Little Falls Creek, with a parkway, meandering through it, was inserted into the subdivision as a public amenity. In the tradition of residential suburbs of the times, the streets were given English names. The five streets defining the "Suburban Colony Company" were named after counties in England: Dorset, Warwick, Surrey, Cumberland, and Essex. In contrast to the subdivided lots of the larger subdivision, the four large blocks of land constituting the fifty acres purchased by the "colony," remained unsubdivided. These four blocks were clearly noted as "Property of Suburban Colony Company, Five Handsome Houses to be Erected Spring 1891." ***(See Figure 1.)***

The Suburban Colony Company Houses

As indicated, the Company houses did materialize, though not by the Spring of 1891 as promised. Within the first years, between 1893 and 1895, four of the original investors, Harvey Wiley, Charles Crampton, Daniel Salmon, and Miles Fuller built residences in Somerset. The four cottages, each displaying vernacular Victorian massing and detailing, were sited on spacious lots, clustered around the intersections of Dorset Avenue and Surrey Street. The houses were located at 4722 Dorset Avenue, 4805 Dorset Avenue, 4728 Dorset Avenue, and 4723 Dorset Avenue (demolished in 1965). The fifth original owner, Horace Horton, sold off his interest in the venture early on to Dr. E.A. de Sweinitz. Dr. deSweinitz constructed his house in 1895 at 4721 Essex Avenue, apart from the others at what is referred to as "Founders Corner."

[9] Sales brochure, Somerset Heights Land Company, circa 1890 (copy on file at Montgomery County Historical Society, Vertical Files).

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Following construction of the houses, the partners subdivided the remaining acreage into 97 building lots. To ensure fairness, each of the partners drew lots by lottery. An 1899 plat of the subdivided tract shows that the lots were comparable in size to the lots of the rest of Somerset Heights. On average, these lots had 100-foot-wide street frontages and 150-foot or deeper depths. The one-acre lots on which the company houses stood were exceptionally large, being double that of the average lot. The 1899 plat and a random sampling of deeds indicates that many of the newly subdivided lots were bought by partner Miles Fuller, who then actively promoted the sale of the lots to outside purchasers.

While the "broad avenues" advertized in the sales brochure were still only dirt roads, and the make-shift water supply, improper drainage and sewage systems were inadequate at best, lots began to sell well after 1900. By 1905, 35 families lived in Somerset Heights--up from a mere dozen in 1900. In 1902, Dr. Crampton and four other men founded and incorporated the Somerset Heights Water and Power Company of Montgomery County, for the purposes of "dealing in land" and for procuring and selling "a supply of water" in Somerset...and also for producing and selling power and light and "constructing and maintaining a system of sewage..."[10] In 1906, the boundaries of the residential community were enlarged and the area was incorporated by Montgomery County as the Town of Somerset, transforming the once small and ill-organized suburban colony of Somerset Heights into the thriving Town of Somerset.

IV. DR. HARVEY WASHINGTON WILEY (1844-1930)

Commonly known as the "Father of the Pure Food and Drug Act" of 1906, Dr. Harvey Washington Wiley was both a leading chemist and a controversial political figure. In his role as chief chemist at the Department of Agriculture, Wiley became a strong advocate for the formation of a federal agency to regulate food and drugs. For twenty years, he led a zealous campaign against food adulteration and pushed the president and members of Congress to enact the Pure Food and Drug Act, of which he was the principal author. The passage of the Act in 1906 was a monumental accomplishment in Wiley's career and a benefit to all consumers. Ultimately, however, disagreements over the implementation of the law led to internal disagreements within the Department of Agriculture, and eventually to Wiley's resignation as chief of the Bureau of Chemistry at the Department.

[10] William Offutt, *Bethesda: A Social History* (Bethesda, MD.: The Innovation Game), 1995, 235.

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Harvey Washington Wiley was born in 1844 in rural Kent, Indiana to parents of modest means and strict religious beliefs. His father was the community's schoolmaster and preacher, as well as a hard-working farmer. Wiley was a bright student with a special interest in gardening and experimenting with his family garden plot. Among other things, young Harvey made the first sorghum syrup in the mid-west--a useful commodity when the Civil War later shut off the supply of New Orleans molasses.[11]

Wiley began his college education at the age of 18 at nearby Hanover College, receiving his diploma in 1867, after fulfilling two short services with the Union Army in the Civil War. Following the War, Wiley began a teaching job, but eventually continued his studies, first at the Medical College of Indiana (now Indiana University Medical Center), and later, at Harvard University. Although he initially planned on becoming a doctor, he postponed his medical school career in 1874, when he was asked to be a professor of chemistry at Purdue University. It was at Purdue that Wiley found his true professional niche. In 1881, while still at Purdue, Wiley was named the first Indiana State Chemist, a position he used to promote the role of science in agriculture. As State Chemist, Wiley worked to regulate the sale and distribution of fertilizer and enforce the truth in labeling of fertilizer laws in the state.

Wiley's accomplishments at Purdue did not go unnoticed, and in 1883 he was asked to join the U.S. Department of Agriculture as chief chemist in the office of Chemistry (later elevated to the higher Bureau status under Wiley's tenure), a position that was government appointed. In this new capacity, Wiley's first assignment was to conduct research in an effort to make the United States self-sufficient in the sugar industry. Although not wholly successful, Wiley did manage to re-establish the sugar cane industry in Louisiana and Florida. In addition, Wiley was prolific in publishing his experiments and their results in several languages in a variety of scientific journals, making himself a well-known name in national and international scientific circles.

In 1893, while still Chief Chemist at USDA, Wiley joined the graduate faculty at Columbian University (now George Washington University), where he taught agricultural chemistry on a part-time basis. It was also during this period that Wiley invested in the Somerset Heights development, along with other real estate ventures. In 1895-96, he published his three-volume *Principles and Practice of Agricultural Analysis*.

[11] Edna Yost, *Modern Americans in Science and Invention* (New York: Frederick A. Stokes Co.), 1941.

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Early in his career, Wiley became fascinated by adulterated foods and drugs, and began a fervent campaign for pure food in the United States that would last his entire life. The safety of the American food supply was truly deplorable, and, though not universally recognized, was, in Wiley's opinion, both a fraud and health danger to the public.[12]

In the 19th century, America was primarily agrarian where people ate what they produced. Even in urban areas, food was raw, unprocessed and of local origin. However, by the late 19th century, and certainly by 1900, America was substantially urbanized and much of the food was being processed--refrigerated, canned, and chemically preserved. By processing and preserving food, this allowed manufacturers to make food available to people at all seasons, and in all parts of the country. As such, there were increasing opportunities for artifice in the food supply. Sugar, flour, cheese, milk, meat, canned goods of all kinds contained adulterants, to both extend the life of the food, preserve spoiled foods, and allow for increased financial returns for the manufacturers.

Wiley worked hard, first at developing methods for analyzing food, and then at developing means of supporting food production, as well as that of food-safety testing. Following several experiments, and in an effort to educate the public, Wiley began to publish his results. Despite his efforts, there was a counter-effort by the food manufacturers to keep the public ill-informed, and for years, Wiley's results appeared only in scientific journals. In 1902, Wiley formulated a plan that he felt sure would attract the attention of the general public and prove that certain substances commonly used in food preservation and processing were harmful to human health.

Wiley enlisted a volunteer group of twelve men, dubbed "The Poison Squad" by critics of his work, to test the effects of adulterated foods and drugs under controlled conditions. During his year-long research, in which the healthy men ate small doses of certain adulterants found in processed foods, Wiley caught the attention of the main-stream press and the general public. Having aroused interest, Wiley then engaged in a massive education campaign to inform scientists and the general public about the implications of his work. He united with coalitions of consumers, private industry and voluntary groups to further both private and public measures to improve the safety of the food supply.[13]

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[12] Wayne D. Rasmussen, "USDA Scientists: Selected Profiles, Challenges, and Achievements," (*Journal of the National Agriculture Library*), vol. 8-10 (1983-85), p. 24ff.

[13] Johanna T. Dwyer, "The Nutrition Legacy of Dr. Harvey Wiley," (*Journal of Nutrition Education*), vol. 18 (1986), 30-31.

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In concert with his scientific research, Wiley waged a political campaign to get the first food and drug laws onto the statute books. As such, Wiley was largely responsible for writing the Pure Food and Drug Act, commonly known as the Wiley Act, and for lobbying for its passage. The law was passed in 1906 and signed by Theodore Roosevelt. With Wiley at the helm, his office served as the administrator of the legal provisions of the new act. To Wiley, this act was his mandate to insure the country a pure and honest food supply, more than it was a statute with specific legal requirements and limitations.[14]

Between 1906 and 1912, some internal disagreements over Wiley's zealous implementation of the law, and a distrust and animosity between Wiley and the Secretary of the Department of Agriculture, James Wilson, led President Roosevelt to establish a new Board that began to reverse Wiley's earlier decisions. A political scandal, amongst charges that Wiley had become too controversial a figure then arose, and became quite public. His enemies argued that he was "so prejudiced against chemical preservatives in food and against rectified whiskey, that he cannot make fair decisions." Although President Taft exonerated Wiley of all charges brought against him in 1912, Wiley resigned from the Department of Agriculture several months later, after 29 years in federal government.

While Wiley's bellicose nature embraced confrontation, and would have allowed him to continue his position despite blatant animosities, his resignation was no doubt encouraged by his new wife, suffragist Frances Kelton, whom Wiley (a bachelor until the age of 67), married in 1911. Following Wiley's resignation, Frances Kelton redirected his energies and he began a second career as the founder and first director of the bureau of foods, sanitation, and health on the staff of *Good Housekeeping* magazine. As an already well-known scientific and political figure, Wiley became a household name and used his editorial position to fight for a variety of progressive causes. Amongst these, he pushed for the allocation of federal funds to help decrease infant mortality; he crusaded against smoking (which he believed caused cancer); and he fostered equal voting rights for men and women.

While still editor for *Good Housekeeping*, Wiley devoted himself to weekend farming at his farm in Loudoun County and mused about country life. Having been raised on a farm and having devoted his life to the study of agricultural science, Wiley was, not surprisingly, an ardent supporter of rural life. A book, authored by Wiley in 1915, and called *The Lure of the Land: Farming After Fifty*, provides some insight into Wiley's interest in the "suburban ideal." While generally addressing life in the country and its attributes, Wiley offers some commentary on the suburban life:

[14] Sharon Hochheiser, "The Establishment of Synthetic Food Color Regulation in the United States, 1906-1912," (*Chemistry and Modern Society*), 1983, 127-146.

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> The suburban life should be encouraged because it has some points of superiority. At least in the suburbs you can have a house with the light and air of heaven all around it, and if it is beautiful, as sometimes it may be , its beauty will not be confined to the front door, as is the case in the city. The suburbanite can have his yard and his garden, even though he may have to hire their care. He has light and air, he has opportunity for his children to place their feet upon the ground, and he does not have a saloon at every corner of his yard. He should be schooled beforehand, however, to bear the burdens becomingly and to know that even in the suburbs life is not one long dream of happiness.[15]

Always a prolific writer, Wiley set about recording his autobiography towards the end of his life. He continued to lecture and fight for pure food literally until his dying breath. Though he did not live to see the passage of the 1939 Pure Food and Drug Law, which was a successor to his own 1906 Act, Wiley did have the satisfaction of witnessing increased public awareness of food impurities and an increased enforcement of the law which he had struggled to establish. In 1956, Dr. Harvey Wiley's name and likeness appeared on a 3¢ United States postage stamp, in honor of the 50th anniversary of the Pure Food and Drug Laws in this country.

V. HISTORY OF 4722 DORSET AVENUE

The Wiley-Ringland House at 4722 Dorset Avenue, built by Dr. Wiley, was one of the first houses under construction in Somerset Heights, and survives in an unaltered, though threatened state, on its original one-acre lot of land. Although the original plans called for the construction of the "company houses" by the Spring of 1891, the first indication of Wiley's plans for the house is found in a November 1891 letter from Wiley to E.H. Ketcham, an architect in Cincinnati, Ohio.[16] In this letter, Dr. Wiley explains his real estate venture and asks the architect to design a house and provide specifications. In a subsequent letter, addressed a week later, Wiley further explains that:

> Five of us are going to build cottages...and are going to let the contracts all to the same builder. In this we can get them cheaper than if each one should make a contract by himself...furnish me with plans and specifications for a house, which, if built by itself would cost about $3500. The arrangement of floors, etc.,

[15] Harvey Wiley, *The Lure of the Land: Farming After Fifty* (New York: The Century Company), 1915, p. 9.

[16] Harvey Washington Wiley Papers, Library of Congress, Manuscript Division.

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I will leave entirely to your judgement. In as much as this house will be in the country about four miles from town, I should like to have a considerable amount of portico attached to it for summer use. The kitchen can be a one-story building, back of the house and need not be incorporated in the building itself, but should be shown on the plans and specifications...In regard to the lot on which the house will be built, it will be about one acre in extent and plenty of room every way. It is on high ground four miles northwest of the city on a ridge of the Potomac. The house will front north, there being a street on the north side and an alley on the east and south sides.[17]

[17] Letter to Ed Ketcham, dated 14 November, 1891. Harvey Washington Wiley Papers, Library of Congress, Manuscript Division. In this letter, Wiley also writes, "I do not propose living in this house at all, but I am under contract to build it as it was a part of the conditions in purchasing the land."

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The actual date of construction of the house is not known, but does not appear to have actually been constructed until 1893-1894. In 1893, a list of Wiley's real estate assets indicates that he owned ten unimproved acres in Somerset Heights, while an 1894 list shows nine acres of unimproved land in Somerset and one house and lot, also in Somerset. The nine unimproved acres were valued at $4,500, while the house and lot were valued at $4,800.[18] In addition to his Somerset property, Wiley listed two other real estate investments in 1894 by name, but not by location. By 1904, Wiley had completely divested of his Somerset investment, but retained ownership in his other two real estate ventures (locations unknown).

As one of the founding members of the "colony," Harvey Wiley built the house with the intention, not of living there himself, but of bringing his parents to live there from Indiana.[19] Unsuccessful in his attempts to lure his parents to Somerset Heights, Dr. Wiley instead rented the house out for income. He thus retained ownership of the property until 1901, the year he sold the house to Mabelle L. Michener. Michener lived at the house throughout the first decades of the 20th century. In 1938, Mabelle Michener sold the property to Arthur Cuming Ringland (1882-1981) and his wife, Dorothy Ringland.

Arthur Cuming Ringland was a distinguished and long-time resident of Somerset. Best known as the principal founder of CARE, Arthur Ringland led a variety of government programs that ranged from conservation work to refugee relief. Born in Brooklyn, N.Y., Ringland was educated at Yale University. Ringland joined the U.S. Forest Service in 1900 and helped establish the national park and national forest system. After World War I service as a captain in the Army in France and Belgium, he went to work for the American Relief Administration under Herbert Hoover. When he returned to the Forest Service, Ringland held a number of positions concerning national parks, forests, outdoor recreation, flood control and the Civilian Conservation Corps. In World War II, he became executive director of the President's War Relief Control Board, later the Advisory Committee on Voluntary Foreign Aid. In 1945, he originated the concept of the private voluntary organization that became CARE. He thus became known as "the father of CARE," and was honored for his efforts by the United Nations in 1958.

[18] Assets of Harvey W. Wiley in the Harvey Washington Wiley Papers. These 1894 assets are compared to Wiley's 1892 assets which list 10 acres or 1/5 interest in Somerset, valued at $5,000, clearly indicating that the house was built between 1892 and 1894.

[19] Dorothy O'Brien and Helen H. Jaszi, "The Town of Somerset," *The Montgomery County Story*, vol. 20, no. 2 (1977), p.3.

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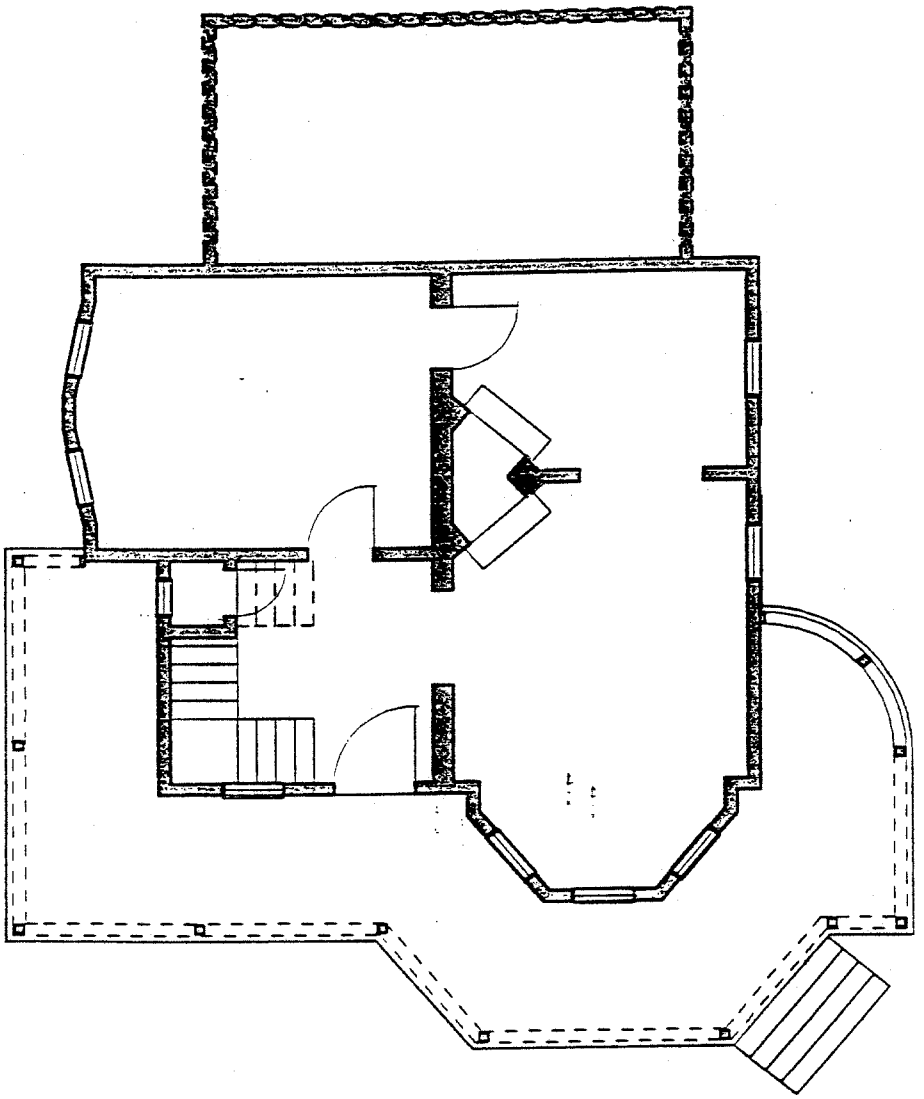
Arthur and Dorothy Ringland raised their two children at 4722 Dorset Avenue, and remained at the house through retirement. In December 1978, a fire which originated in the kitchen of the house, caused extensive damage, and the elderly couple moved out, leaving the house abandoned and vacant. The house remained in Ringland family ownership following the deaths of Arthur and Dorothy Ringland, but was left vacant, unoccupied and unrepaired. In 1990, the property was included within the boundaries of the Somerset Heights Historic District, listed on the Montgomery County Master Plan for Historic Preservation, and designated "an important contributing resource" within the district, despite its threatened state. In the mid-1990s, the owner pressed for the demolition of the house, but was denied a demolition permit due to its historic significance. The property has recently been bought by Joe Lipscomb and Laura Will, who are proposing a complete renovation of the house, along with a proposed addition to it. Their efforts are being fully supported by the Montgomery County Historic Preservation Commission and the Town of Somerset.

M: 35-XXX 131
Wiley-Ringland House
Montgomery County, MD



FIRST FLOOR PLAN

1/8" = 1'-0"

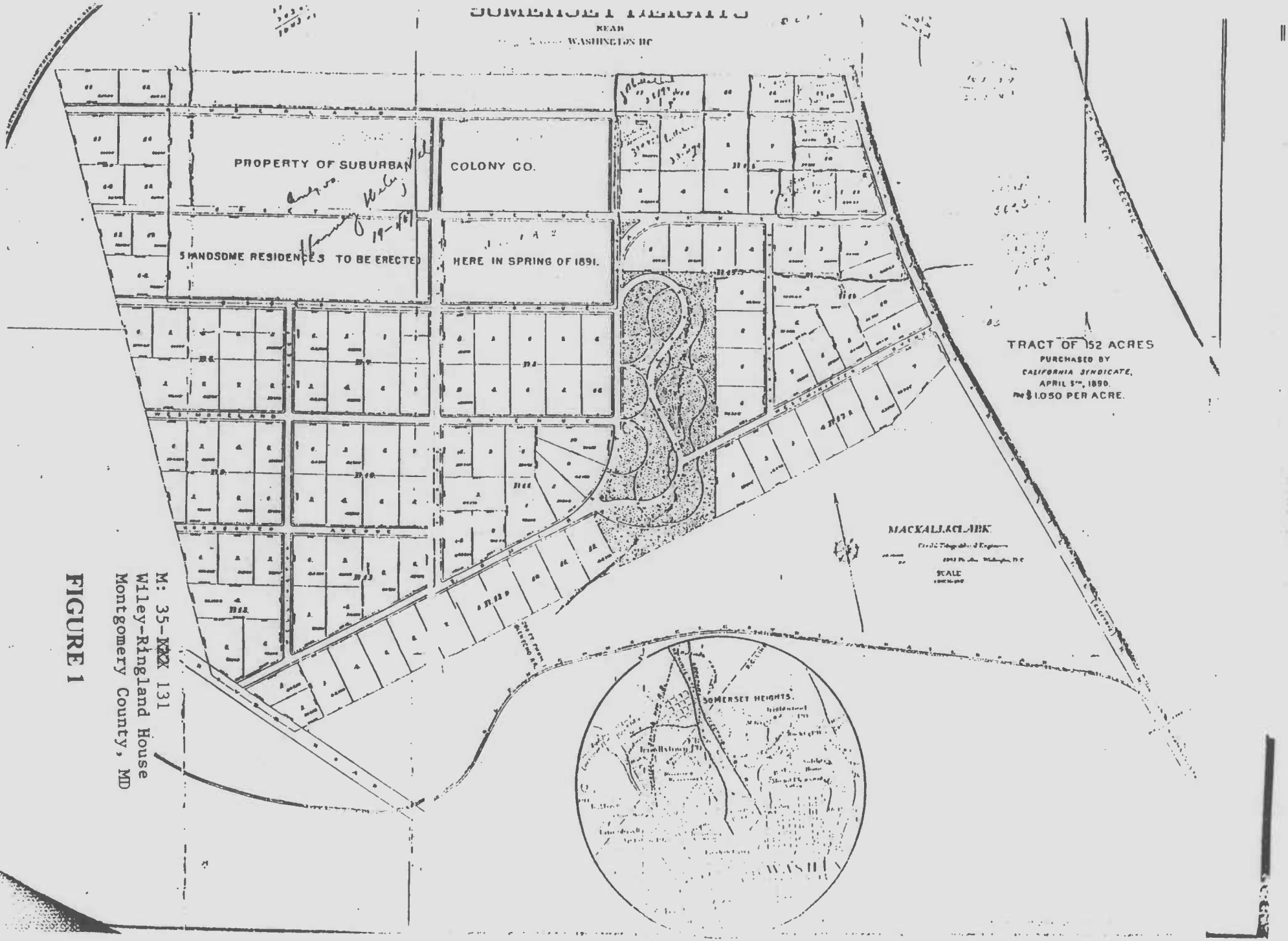
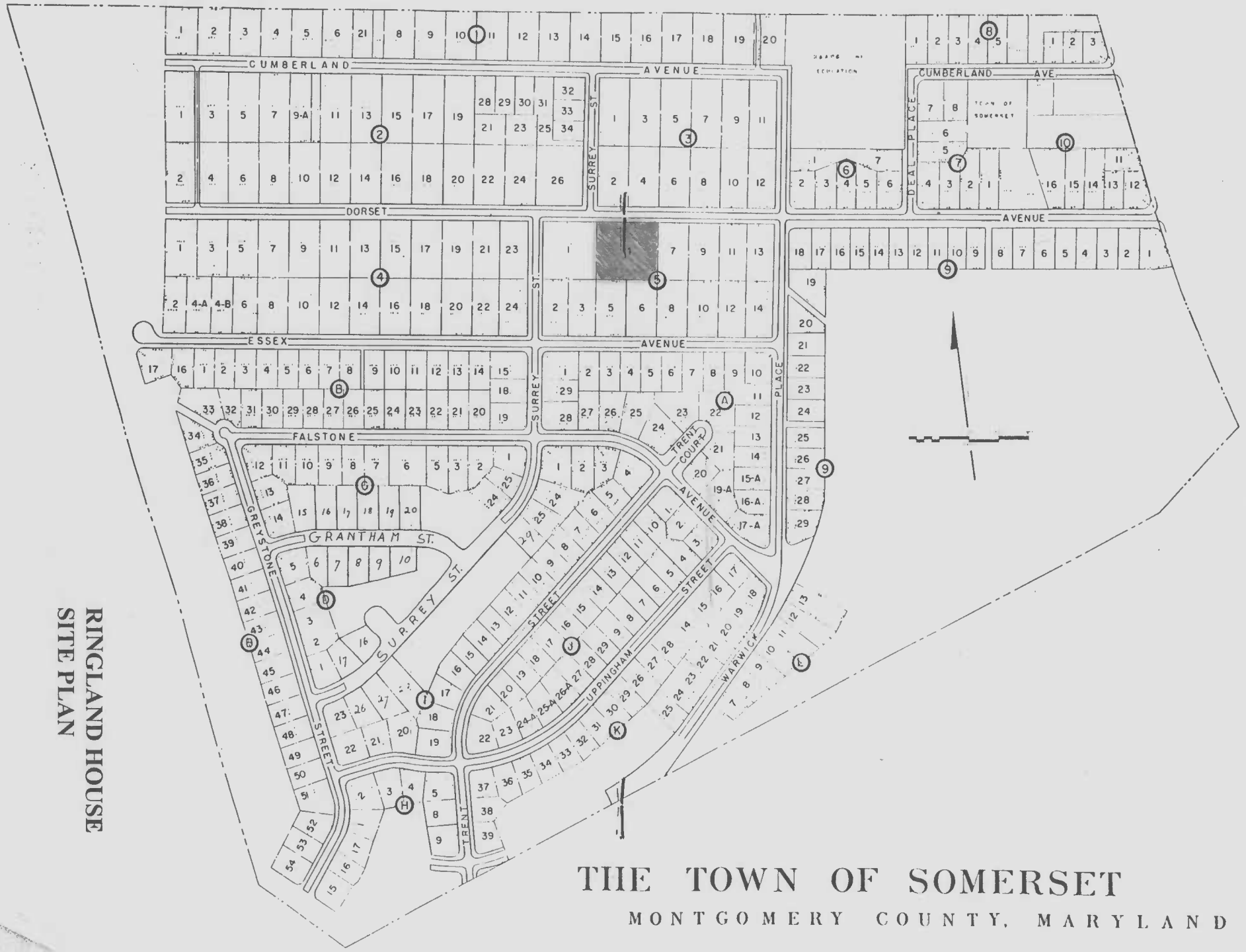


FIGURE 1

M: 35-XXX 131
Wiley-Ringland House
Montgomery County, MD

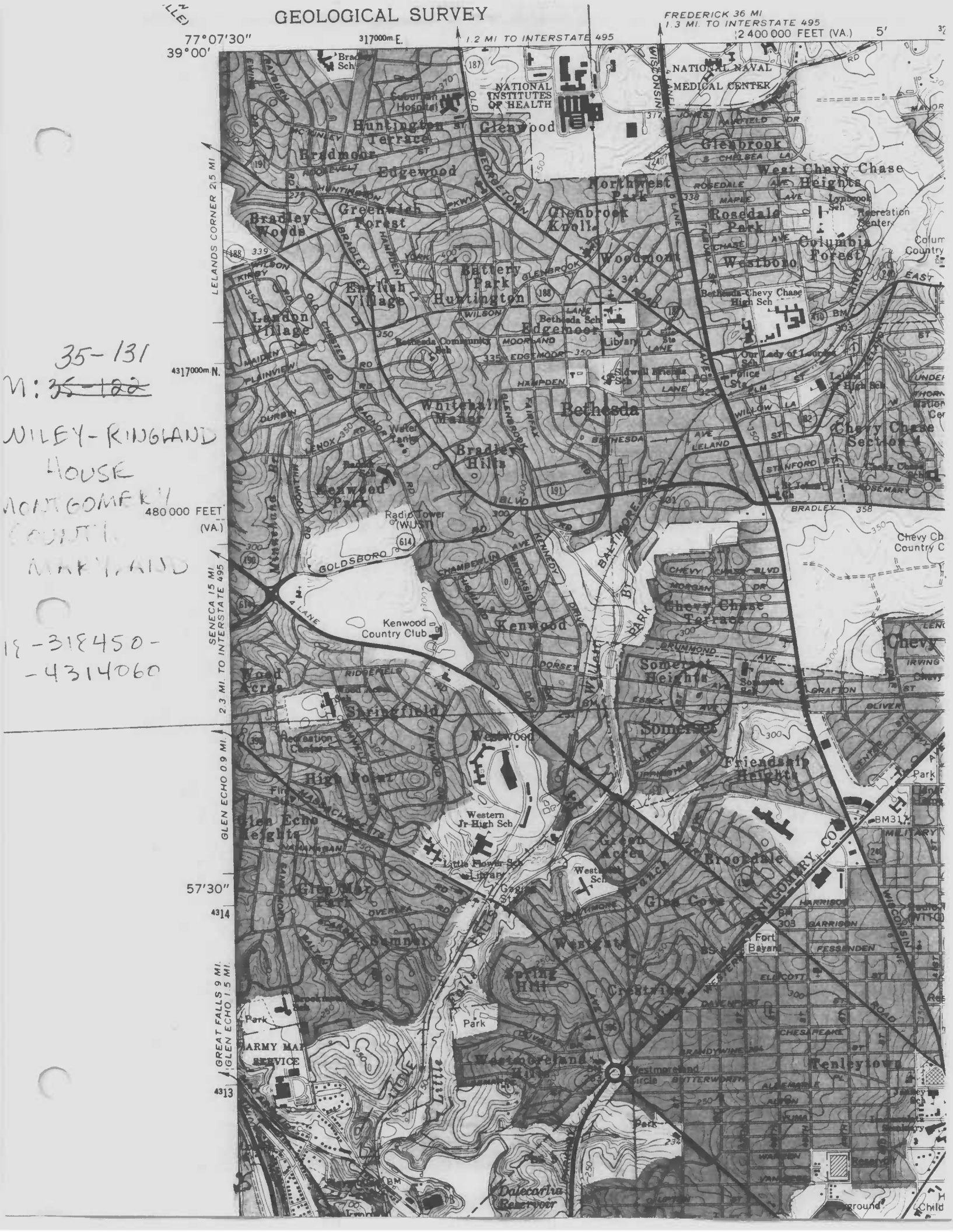


THE TOWN OF SOMERSET

MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MARYLAND

RINGLAND HOUSE
SITE PLAN

M: 35-131



35-131

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NILEY-RINGLAND HOUSE

MONTGOMERY COUNTY MARYLAND

18-318450-4314060

M: 35-12-1
RINGLAND HOUSE
MONTGOMERY COUNTY
KIM WILLIAMS
JULY 2000
MD SHPO
NE CORNER SHOWING NORTH AND EAST ELEVATIONS
1/4

M: 35-13-
RINGLAND HOUSE
MONTGOMERY COUNTY
KIM WILLIAMS
JULY 2000
MD SHPO
NE CORNER SHOWING EAST ELEVATION
2/4

M: 35-131
RINGLAND HOUSE
MONTGOMERY COUNTY
KIM WILLIAMS
JULY 2000
MD SHPO
SOUTHWEST CORNER SHOWING SOUTH AND WEST ELEVATIONS
3/4

M. 35-131
RINGLAND HOUSE
MONTGOMERY COUNTY
KIM WILLIAMS
JULY 2000
MD SHPO
INTERIOR, STAIR
4/4