

Capsule Summary
BA-1151
Bleak Hill
20814 York Road
Parkton, Baltimore County
ca. 1868
Private

Constructed circa 1868, the five-bay wide Gothic Revival dwelling known as Bleak Hill at 20814 York Road is located in Parkton, Maryland between Hereford to the south and Maryland Line to the north. At the time of construction, the property comprised 100 acres. The house was built in the Gothic Revival style fashionable at the time and displays 19th century formal English gardens. The Lewin family, who owned the property for three generations, was responsible for having the imposing dwelling constructed. Previous documentation indicates an architect named Mr. Dice, with a Mr. Rutledge serving as the builder, designed the building.

Bleak Hill is two-and-a-half stories in height. As originally constructed the wood frame building features a central hall/single-pile plan with a central entry. The house is clad in weatherboard siding and sits on a solid stone foundation. A central gable pierced with a lancet window provides a strong stylistic link to the Gothic Revival period. The pitch of the gable also provides a visual tie to the to the pedimented Colonial Revival style full-width porch, which adorns the façade. A boxed cornice with returns, overhanging eaves and a modillion course accents the side gable roof. Operable louvered shutters also detail the window openings on the dwelling. Two interior end chimneys with pierced brick caps top the asphalt-shingled roof of the main block. A two-story ell clad in weatherboard siding with a two-story shed-roofed addition and a one-story balustraded hyphen were added circa 1970. The house sets in a wooded area to the west side of York Road. The property is enhanced by formal gardens with an historic gazebo and four historic outbuildings. These include a circa 1900 privy and granary, a circa 1865 tenant house and a circa 1920 garage.

Maryland Historical Trust

Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties Form

Inventory No. BA-1151

1. Name of Property (indicate preferred name)

historic Bleak Hill (preferred)

other

2. Location

street and number 20814 York Road not for publication

city, town Parkton vicinity

county Baltimore County

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

name Robert G. Fordi and Rani C. G. Fordi

street and number 20814 York Road telephone 410.337.7117

city, town Parkton state MD zip code 21120-9244

4. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Baltimore County Courthouse tax map and parcel map 7, parcel 259

city, town Towson liber 11931 folio 561

5. Primary Location of Additional Data

- Contributing Resource in National Register District
- Contributing Resource in Local Historic District
- Determined Eligible for the National Register/Maryland Register
- Determined Ineligible for the National Register/Maryland Register
- Recorded by HABS/HAER
- Historic Structure Report or Research Report at MHT
- Other: _____

6. Classification

Category	Ownership	Current Function	Resource Count
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	Contributing Noncontributing
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> landscape	5 _____ buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce/trade	_____ _____ sites
<input type="checkbox"/> site		<input type="checkbox"/> defense	1 _____ structures
<input type="checkbox"/> object		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> domestic	_____ _____ objects
		<input type="checkbox"/> education	6 _____ Total
		<input type="checkbox"/> funerary	
		<input type="checkbox"/> government	
		<input type="checkbox"/> health care	
		<input type="checkbox"/> industry	
		<input type="checkbox"/> recreation/culture	
		<input type="checkbox"/> religion	
		<input type="checkbox"/> social	
		<input type="checkbox"/> transportation	
		<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	
		<input type="checkbox"/> unknown	
		<input type="checkbox"/> vacant/not in use	
		<input type="checkbox"/> other:	
			Number of Contributing Resources previously listed in the Inventory
			6 _____

7. Description

Inventory No. BA-1151

Condition

excellent deteriorated
 good ruins
 fair altered

Prepare both a one paragraph summary and a comprehensive description of the resource and its various elements as it exists today.

The original two-and-a-half story, five-bay wide, single-pile portion of the circa 1868 Gothic Revival style dwelling was constructed circa 1868. This original portion of the wood frame building features a central hall/single-pile plan with a central entry. The house is clad in German siding and sits on a solid random rubble stone foundation. The side gable roof of the main block is intersected by a central gable. Spanning the width of the façade is a hipped-roof porch with a centered, pedimented front gable. A molded boxed cornice with a dentil frieze accents the roof, which is clad in asphalt shingles. Two interior end chimneys rise through the gable ends of this main block. Extending nearly flush with the north elevation of the house is a two-and-a-half story wood frame ell that appears to date to circa 1868. Mostly clad in asbestos shingles, the ell also features a molded boxed cornice. Two central interior brick chimneys pierce the standing seam metal-clad roof of the ell. In the first half of the 20th century, a two-story shed-roofed addition was constructed on the south elevation of the ell. A one-story addition, which dates to circa 1970, was constructed between the early 20th century addition and the main block. Operable louvered shutters detail many of the window openings on the dwelling. The house sets in a wooded area to the west side of York Road. The property is enhanced by formal gardens with an historic gazebo and four historic outbuildings. These include a circa 1900 privy and granary, a circa 1868 tenant house and a circa 1920 garage.

EXTERIOR DESCRIPTION

The symmetrically fenestrated façade, or east elevation, is five bays wide. The central entry with a paneled single-leaf door is crowned by a 2-light transom and flanked by 3-light sidelights. The entry is framed by a molded wood surround. Four 6/6 windows flank the entry. Five 6/6 windows pierce the second story of this elevation. A 4/2 single-hung lancet window, typical of the Gothic Revival style, accents the central gable. All openings on this elevation have wood surrounds and sills. A one-story Colonial Revival porch with a half-hipped roof clad in standing seam metal dominates the facade. Below the dentiled frieze there are Tuscan columns that, on the central bay only, are grouped to support the projecting central pediment clad in beaded board. The south bay of the porch is rounded and features a low conical roof surmounted by a copper ball finial. The columns that support this rounded bay sit on a low concrete half-wall. The porch ceiling is finished with beaded board and the floors have been replaced with a poured concrete deck.

The north elevation comprises the single-pile main block and a four-bay deep ell. The first and second stories of the main block are each pierced by one 6/6 window. The central interior end chimney is flanked by two 2/2 windows. Three 6/6 windows and one sash-and-paneled single-leaf door pierce the first story of the ell. A small half-hipped roof clad in standing-seam metal shelters the door. There are four 6/6 windows on the second story. A 3-light casement window and two 6/6 windows pierce the foundation. All openings on this elevation have wood surrounds and sills.

The west elevation comprises the ell and a shallow, shed-roofed addition to the south side of the ell. A paneled single-leaf door pierces the foundation of the ell. A small gabled roof, clad in standing seam metal and supported by square wood posts, shelters the entry. Only two 2/2 windows pierce the attic story of the ell.

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The south elevation comprises the main block, ell, and additions to the ell. The roof of the circa 1970 one-story addition features a wood balustrade. Two 2/2 windows pierce the attic story of the main block. The original portion of the ell, visible on the east end at the second story level, is detailed with a 6/6 window. A replacement 2-light single-leaf door leads from the second story of the ell to the balcony above the one-story addition. The south elevation of the addition is pierced by six 12-light vinyl casement windows. Four 9-light vinyl casement windows and one sash-and-paneled single-leaf door pierce the two-story addition to the ell. A circa 1990 wood deck was constructed on this elevation.

INTERIOR DESCRIPTION

The interior of Bleak Hill was not accessible at the time of the survey.

OUTBUILDINGS

There are four historic outbuildings, including a privy, washhouse, granary and garage, and a gazebo associated with the property. The gable-roofed privy, circa 1900, has board-and batten cladding and is built on a stone foundation. The wood-shingled roof is accented with overhanging eaves and exposed rafter tails. Circular sawn boards and machine-cut nails are visible. A three-hole privy is located on the interior. The doors and windows, located on the south side, have slightly arched lintels.

A small one-story gable roofed granary, clad in German siding, faces east. Dating from circa 1900, it has gable peak window opening, a one-leaf entry and a paired window opening on the first floor. A modern metal ventilator crowns the standing seam metal roof with exposed rafter tails. Hand-hewn logs are located on the interior. Portions of the granary have been rebuilt, including a poured concrete floor, although the stone foundation remains.

A circa 1868 one-story tenant house is located to the northeast of the main building. It is constructed with board and batten siding and is two bays long. The wooden shingled roof with overhanging eaves is failing. A single-leaf door and a window opening are present on the south elevation. The interior evidences sash-sawn and hand-hewn beams. A carved wooden mantel suggests that the building was used as a tenant house.

A circa 1920 garage, originally constructed as a barn, displays weatherboard siding and rests on a concrete block foundation. The overhanging side-gabled roof is clad in standing seam metal. There are two garage door openings with wood surrounds and lintels and a one-leaf single-light and two-panel door.

A small one-story enclosed gazebo, circa 1900, has weatherboard siding and cornerboards and sits on a random fieldstone foundation. There is a central single-leaf entry with a square-edged wood surround. A flared

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pyramidal roof clad in wood shingles crowns the structure. The roof has a boxed wooden cornice, overhanging eaves with exposed rafter tails and displays a three-light eyebrow dormer. The gazebo is located in elaborately landscaped English gardens that were conceived at the time Bleak Hill was constructed.

The formal gardens include a sculpted boxwood vista between the Queen Anne style gazebo and a fountain with a brick back and semi-circular basin. This cross-axis path leads to a boxwood labyrinth inspired by English garden design.

8. Significance

Inventory No. BA-1151

Period	Areas of Significance	Check and justify below		
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> health/medicine	<input type="checkbox"/> performing arts
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> invention	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-1999	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment/ recreation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 2000-	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> ethnic heritage	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/ settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> social history
	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning		<input type="checkbox"/> maritime history	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation		<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other:

Specific dates	ca. 1868, 1920	Architect/Builder	Dice (architect) / Rutledge (builder)
Construction dates	ca. 1868, 1920		

Evaluation for:

National Register

Maryland Register

not evaluated

Prepare a one-paragraph summary statement of significance addressing applicable criteria, followed by a narrative discussion of the history of the resource and its context. (For compliance projects, complete evaluation on a DOE Form – see manual.)

The 20814 York Road property known as Bleak Hill is located in Parkton, which lies between Hereford to the south and Maryland Line to the north. Constructed circa 1868 on a property originally comprising approximately 100 acres, Bleak Hill was designed as a Gothic Revival dwelling, a popular late 19th century architectural style. The property displays late 19th century formal English gardens. The Lewin family, who owned the property for three generations, was responsible for having the imposing dwelling constructed. Previous documentation indicates an architect named Mr. Dice, with a Mr. Rutledge serving as the builder, designed the building.

HISTORY

The property, which later became Bleak Hill, was originally owned by the Sampson family in the mid-19th century. According to a Maryland Historical Trust file on the property, graves of three Sampson family relatives are still located there.¹ (This cemetery was not located at the time of the on-site survey). The Lewin family purchased the property in 1865. It is recorded that upon Mrs. John Lewin's wintertime visit to the property from Baltimore City, she declared that it was the coldest place she had ever seen.² After this encounter, her husband purchased the tract of land and built the house, which Mrs. Lewin declared that she was going to call "Bleak Hill."³ The residence was designed by an architect known as Dice from Glen Rock, PA and was contracted by Mr. Rutledge of Maryland Line.⁴ Bleak Hill was retained by the Lewin family until 1987, when the last remaining heir, John Henry Lewin, Jr. sold the property to Bee Tree Partnership for \$450,000. The organization sub-divided the land, and the house was sold independently. At present, Robert and Rani Ford own the property, which they purchased for use as rental housing in 1987.

Bleak Hill is a representative example of vernacular dwellings that were embellished with details of the fashionable Gothic Revival style. Constructed of wood frame, the L-shaped building has stylistic detailing

¹ John McGrain., Maryland Historical Trust District File. District 7, p. 19.

² Amalie Adler Ascher, "Parkton Gardener Seems to Have a Magic Partnership with Nature." *The Sun*, October 17, 1982, p. T9.

³ Ascher, p. T9.

⁴ McGrain, p. 19.

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tying it specifically to the subtype known as Carpenter Gothic Revival, popular in the last half of the 19th century. Reflective of this style are the steeply pitched center gable, decorative bargeboard, scroll-sawn brackets, and wide entablature. Although introduced to the United States in the 1830s by architect Alexander Jackson Davis, the Carpenter Gothic Revival was popularized during the last half of the 19th century by Andrew Jackson Downing (1815-1852), a landscape architect and promoter of the cottage residence. Downing's *Victorian Cottage Residences*, which was published numerous times between 1842 and 1873, touted the advantages of the inexpensive, detached dwelling. He claimed that the English cottage style was "so generally admired for the picturesqueness evinced in its tall gables ornamented by handsome verge-boards and finials...showing how the genius of pointed or Gothic architecture may be chastened or molded into forms for domestic habitations."⁵ Wood frame dwellings with horizontal cladding, such as that seen on Bleak Hill, dominated in the Carpenter Gothic Revival style. According to Downing, the setting for cottage residences was particularly important. In keeping with the style, Bleak Hill is set on a hill, overlooking pastures and has views toward the nearby Gunpowder Falls. The property is enhanced by formal English gardens.

Prior to the organization of turnpikes in Baltimore County, many of the county's roads were considered unfit for use. Earlier efforts to incorporate turnpike companies originated from the county government, yet, by the turn of the 19th century, efforts to create better roads emanated from the state government's efforts to better serve the growing rural population. This action resulted in laying of a road from Baltimore, Maryland to York, Pennsylvania that would replace the winding, indirect Old York Road.⁶ The privately organized York Turnpike Company was incorporated in 1805. Work on the new road ceased in 1810, when the thirty-five miles of road from Baltimore to the Pennsylvania Line was completed. This route soon became one of the primary north/south corridors in Baltimore County. Taverns in Maryland Line, Wiseburg, Philopolis, and Timonium served travelers along the route.⁷ In 1838, the Baltimore and Susquehanna Railroad Company began construction of a line that would run northward from Baltimore nearly parallel to the York Turnpike.

Appearing on maps as early as 1850, the town of Parkton is situated in the Seventh Election District of Baltimore County. Located near the intersection of York Road and the Northern Central Railroad, Parkton was home to 50 inhabitants in 1881. Due to its location, Parkton was, in the late 19th century, a center for trade and shipping in the rich agricultural region. Wiseburg is located to the south, near the Big and Little Gunpowder Falls and also had a population of just fifty in 1881. In addition, the 1868 Maryland legislature charted a \$60,000 survey to extend the Parkton and Manchester Railroad. In 1870, however, the company folded and the

⁵ Andrew Jackson Downing, *Victorian Cottage Residences*, (New York, NY: Dover Publications, Inc., 1981), p. 42.

⁶ Sherry H. Olson, *Baltimore: The Building of an American City* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997), 172; see also S. B. Clemens and C. E. Clemens, *From Marble Hill to Maryland Line: An Informal History of Northern Baltimore County* (np: C. E. and S. B. Clemens, 1976), p.10.

⁷William Hollifield, *Difficulties Made Easy: History of the Turnpikes of Baltimore City and County* (Cockeysville, MD: The Baltimore County Historical Society, 1978), p.51; see also *Atlas of Baltimore County, Maryland* (Philadelphia, PA: G. M. Hopkins, 1877),pp. 44-49.

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railroad extension into Carroll County was not completed. The town of Maryland Line, named for its location on the Pennsylvania boundary, was located to the north of Parkton. Maryland Line was settled in the late 18th century as New Market. Since the early 20th century, however, that name has fallen out of use in preference for the name of the Maryland Line Post Office. The town was laid out along the York Road corridor, with the majority of its residential and commercial structures fronting that road. There appears to have been little industry in and around the town of New Market/Maryland Line. Records indicate that there existed only one gristmill west of the town along the Gunpowder Falls in the late 19th century, yet there were at least fourteen houses by 1877 in this small community south of the Pennsylvania line. The importance of the town, therefore, was as a traveler's stop along the turnpike.⁸

The Seventh Election District, which was one of the largest and most populated regions of the county in the latter part of the 19th century, had an area of 59.93 square miles and a population of 3,074 in 1870. The area historically consisted of rolling hills, traversed by major transportation corridors, such as the railroad and York Turnpike. Arable fields for plantings of wheat, corn, oats, and fruits supported the district. It was known for its dairy production and the breeding of cattle. In addition, the waterpower of the Gunpowder Falls and its tributaries supported numerous mills throughout the district.

Chain of Title:

Isaac Sampson left the property to David Sampson, according to land record EHA 57/441.

- March 11, 1868: James Bond and Thomas G. Rutledge, executor under the last will and testament of David Sampson to John H. Lewin
Land Records of Baltimore County
Liber EHA 57 Folio 441
- December 31, 1975: Frances Parr Lewin, trustee, to John Henry Lewin and Frances Parr Lewin, surviving trustees under the will of Corinne Hooper Lewin, deceased
Liber 5598 Folio 782
- September 22, 1987: Frank P. K. Somerville and John Henry Lewin, Jr., substitute trustees, to Bee Tree Partnership
Land Records of Baltimore County
Liber 7692 Folio 253
- December 9, 1987: Bee Tree Partnership to Yoshie Shinomoto
Land Records of Baltimore County
Liber 7756 Folio 174

⁸ Clemens and Clemens, p.22; see also *Atlas of Baltimore County, Maryland* (Philadelphia, PA: G. M. Hopkins, 1877), p.45.

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January 10, 1992: Yoshie Shinomoto to John M. Wildman and Catherine D. Wildman, tenants in common
Land Records of Baltimore County
Liber 9086 Folio 726

December 20, 1995: John M. Wildman and Catherine D. Wildman to First American Properties of Maryland, Inc.
Land Records of Baltimore County
Liber 11412 Folio 197

December 3, 1996: First American Properties of Maryland to Robert G. and Rani C.G. Ford, wife
Land Records of Baltimore County
Liber 11931 Folio 561

9. Major Bibliographical References

Inventory No. BA-1151

- Ascher, Amalie Adler. "Parkton Gardener Seems to have a Magic Partnership with Nature." *The Sun*, October 17, 1982.
Atlas of Baltimore County, Maryland, Philadelphia: G. M. Hopkins, 1877.
Clemens, S. B. Clemens and C. E.. *From Marble Hill to Maryland Line: An Informal History of Northern Baltimore County*, C. E. Clemens and S. B. Clemens, 1976.
Downing, Andrew Jackson, *Victorian Cottage Residences*, New York, NY: Dover Publications, Inc., 1981.
Hollifield, William. *Difficulties Made Easy: History of the Turnpikes of Baltimore City and County*. Cockeysville, MD: The Baltimore County Historical Society, 1978.
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10. Geographical Data

Acreage of surveyed property 3.99 Acres
Acreage of historical setting approximately 100 acres
Quadrangle name New Freedom Quadrangle scale: 1:24,000

Verbal boundary description and justification

Since circa 1868, Bleak Hill has been associated with the 3.99 acres known as parcel 259 of grid 16, map 7 in the Baltimore County Tax Assessor's Office.

11. Form Prepared by

name/title	L. V. Trieschmann, J. J. Bunting, and A. L. McDonald, Architectural Historians		
organization	EHT Tracerics, Inc.	date	10 January 2001
street & number	1121 5th Street NW	telephone	202.393.1199
city or town	Washington	state	DC

The Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties 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
DHCD/DHCP
100 Community Place
Crownsville, MD 21032-2023
410-514-7600

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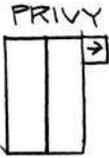
Name Bleak Hill, 20814 York Road, Parkton, Baltimore County
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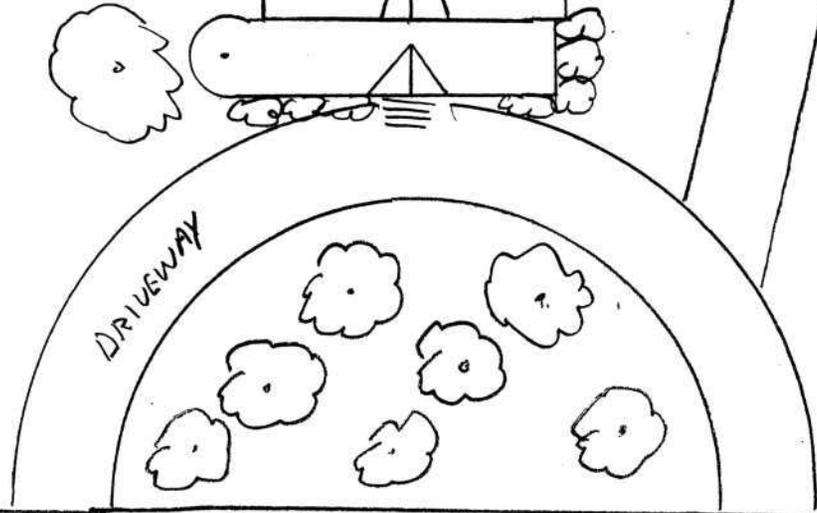
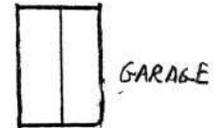
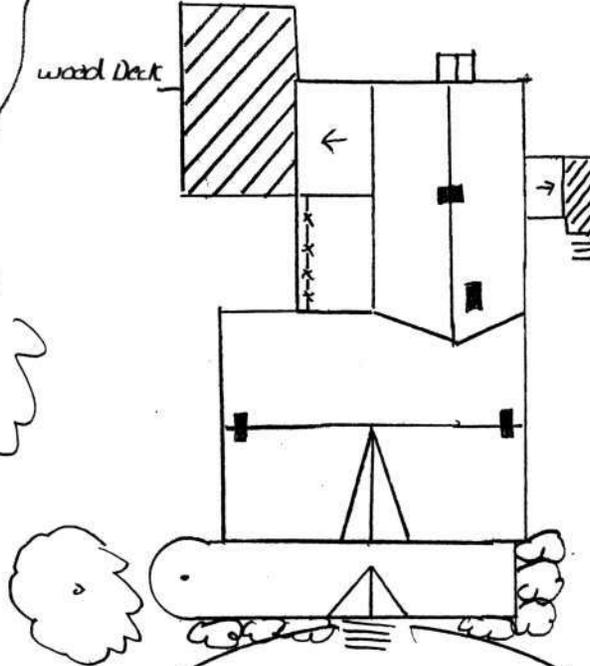
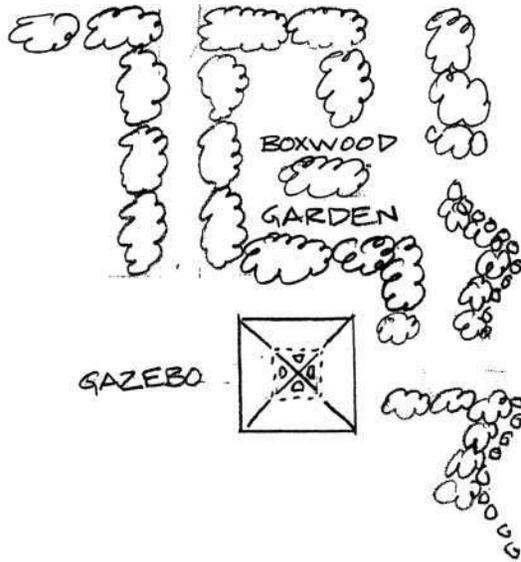
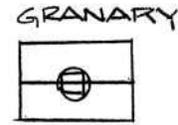
McGrain, John. Maryland Historical Trust District File. District 7.

Olson, Sherry H. *Baltimore: The Building of an American City*. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997.

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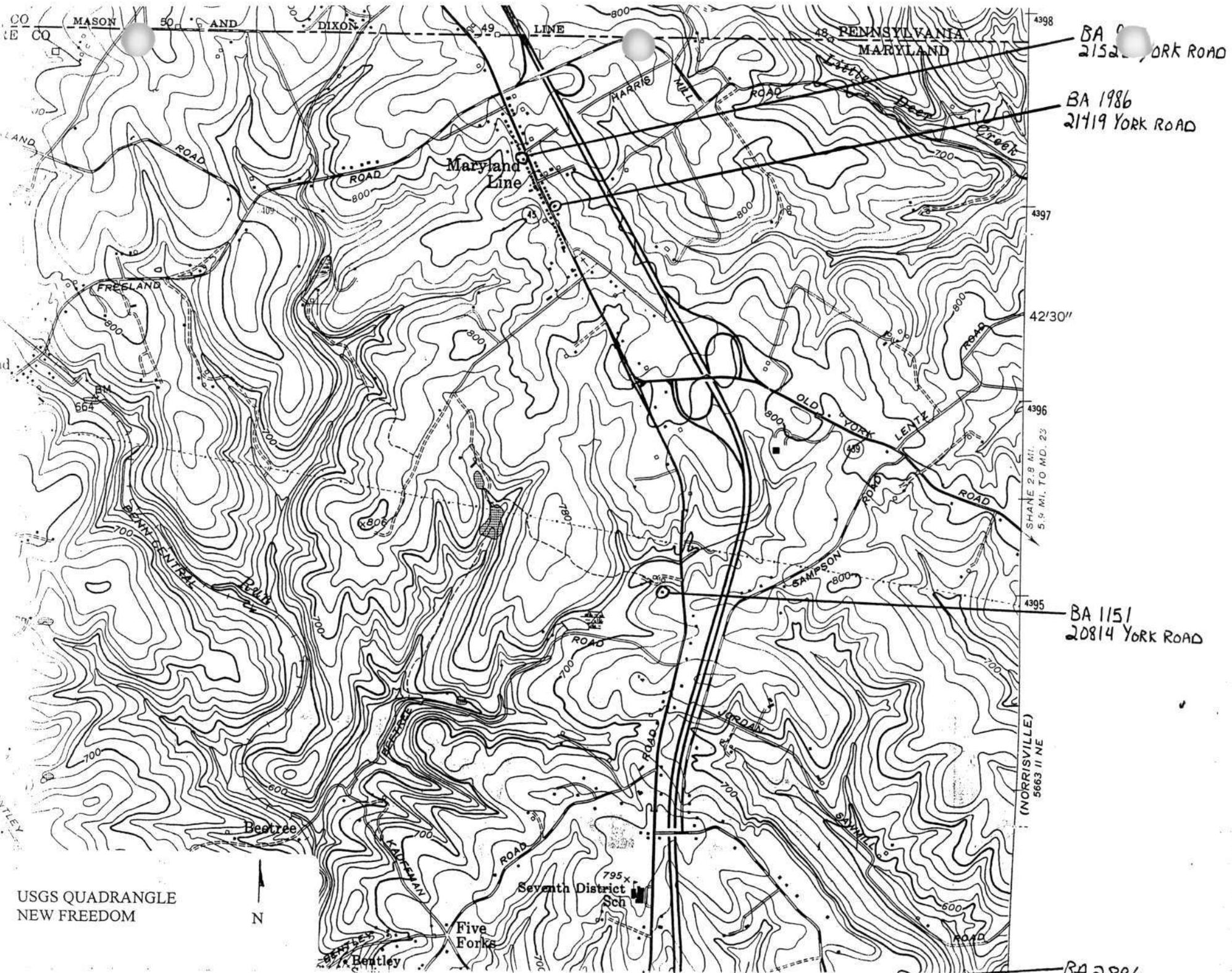


SHRUBS



BA 1151
BLEAK HILL
20814 YORK ROAD, PARKTON
BALTIMORE COUNTY
NOT DRAWN TO SCALE

YORK ROAD



USGS QUADRANGLE
NEW FREEDOM



BA 2152 YORK ROAD

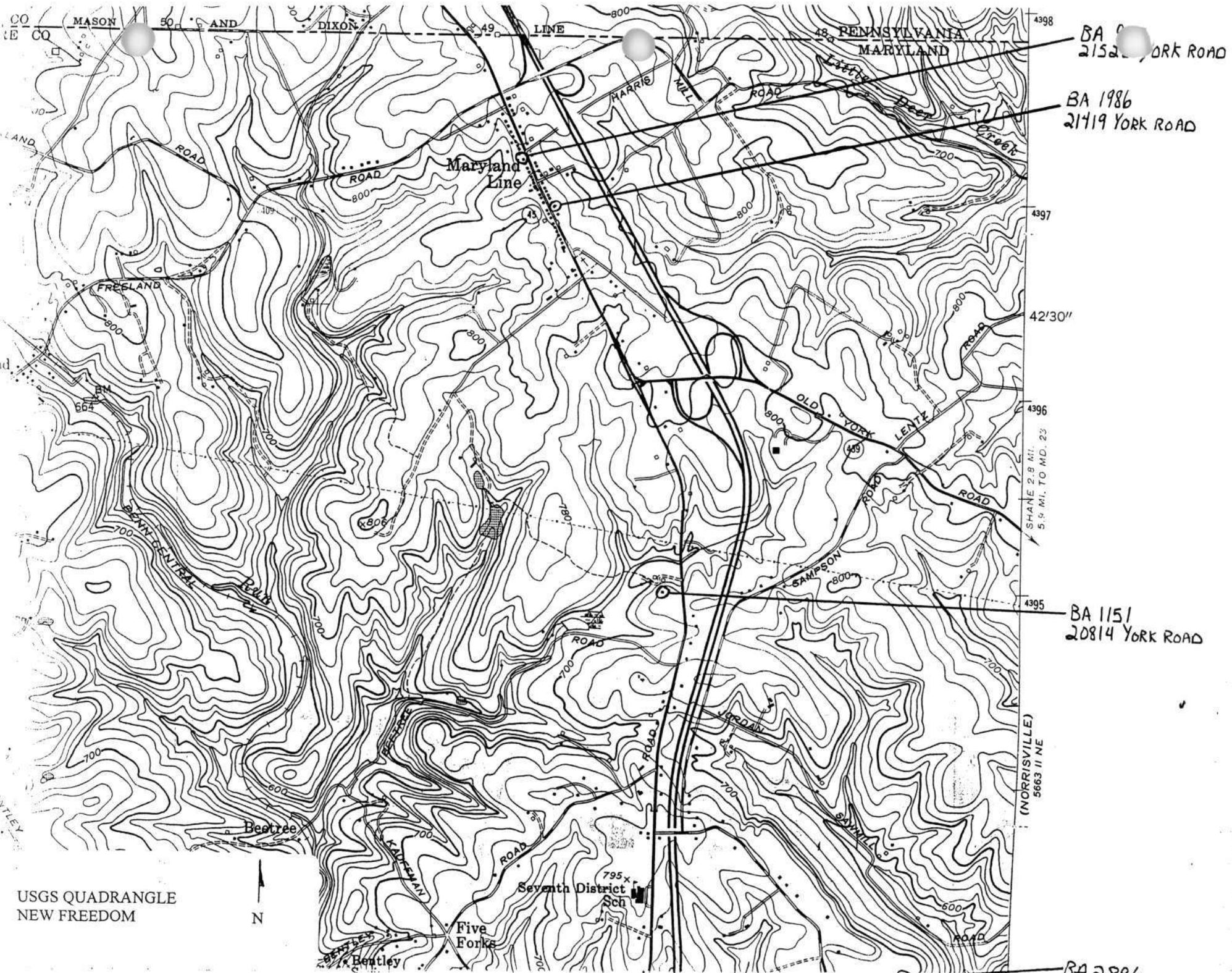
BA 1986
2179 YORK ROAD

BA 1151
20814 YORK ROAD

RA 2894

SHANE 2.8 MI.
5.9 MI. TO MD. 23

(NORRISVILLE)
5663 II NE





BA 1151

20814 YORK RD

BALTIMORE COUNTY, PARKTON

TRACERIES

5/00

MD SHPO

NORTHEAST CORNER. 2001-8 SOUTH WEST

1 of 8



BA 1151

20814 YORK RD

BALTIMORE COUNTY, PARKTON

TRACERIES

5100

MD SHPO

SOUTHWEST CORNER, LOOKING SOUTHEAST

208



BA 1151
20814 YORK RD
BALTIMORE COUNTY, PARKTON
TRACERIES

5100
MD SHPO
NORTHEAST CORNER, LOOKING SOUTHWEST

30F8



BA "51

20814 VERT RD

BALTIMORE COUNTY, PARKTON

TRACERIES

5/00

MD SHPO

SOUTHERN ELEVATION, LOOKING NORTH

A of 8



BA 1151

20814 YORK RD

BALTIMORE COUNTY, PARKTON

TRACERIES

5/00

MD SHPO

GAZEBO, NORTHERN ELEVATION, LOOKING SOUTH

5 of 8



BA 1151

20814 YORK RD

BALTIMORE COUNTY, PARKTON

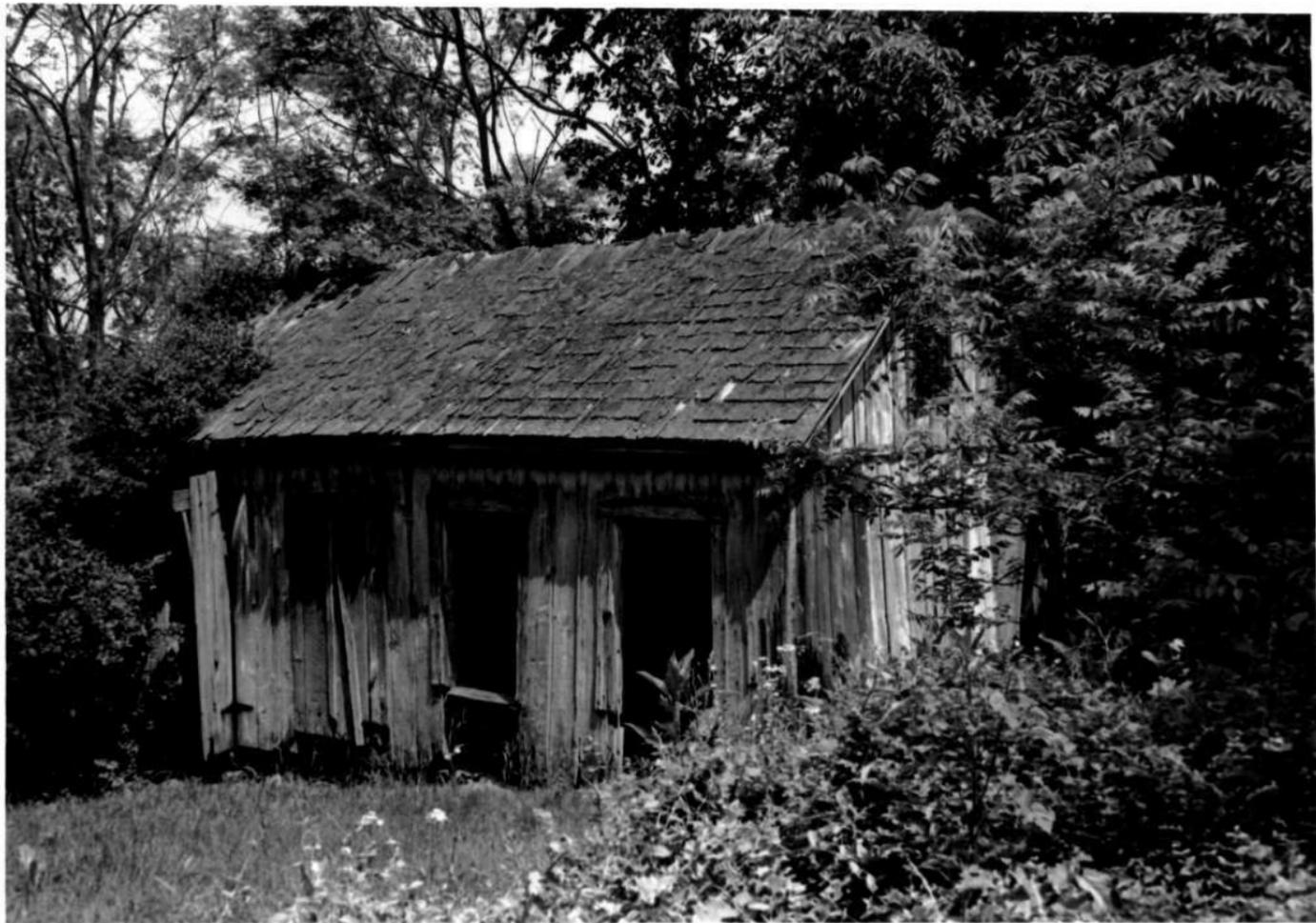
TRACERIES

5/00

MD SHPO

WASH HOUSE

6 of 8



BA 1151

20814 YORK RD

BALTIMORE COUNTY, PARKTON

TRACER'S

5/00

MD 5110

PRIVY; SOUTH ELEVATION, LOOKING NORTH

7 of 8



BA 1151

20814 YORK RD

BALTIMORE COUNTY, PARKTON

TRACERIES

5/00

MD 54PO

SOUTHERN ELEVATION, LOOKING NORTH

GRANARY

8 of 8

BA-1151

BLEAK HILL - 1865 - West side of York Road, 1.9 miles south of Maryland Line village. Two-and-a-half story frame and clapboard house in Victorian style, now painted white. Gable roofed with lancet window set in cross-gable peak. Frame rear wing. Front porch with pediment over stairs. This land had been in the Lewin family for three generations when this spacious and comfortable mansion was built for John Henry Lewin by an architect from Glen Rock, Pennsylvania, named Dice. The contractor was a Mr. Rutledge of Maryland Line. John J. Lewin was shown in 1877 atlas, and the 1898 and 1915 atlases showed Frank P. Lewin. "Bleak Hill" was a name selected by "Grandmother Lewin" who lived in Baltimore and deplored the climate on her winter to Northernmost Baltimore County. In the back yard is a log and plaster house. Also the graves of Abraham, Isaac, and Sarah Sampson.