BA 1608 1940
Villa Pace
Valley Road
Stevenson, Md. 21153
private

Villa Pace has been carefully constructed in the mold of an Italian Villa. Its cross-shape form and elaborate interior detailing are completely in keeping with the professional occupation of its owner, Rosa Ponselle, a world-reknown opera star.

BA 1608
x-883.790
y-580.100

MAGI #0316082804

MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST

INVENTORY FORM FOR STATE HISTORIC SITES SURVEY

1 NAME

HISTORIC

VILLA PACE

AND/OR COMMON

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

1526 Valley Road

CITY, TOWN

Stevenson Post Office — VICINITY OF

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

Second

COUNTY

Baltimore

STATE

Maryland

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE	
__DISTRICT	__PUBLIC	X OCCUPIED	__AGRICULTURE	__MUSEUM
X BUILDING(S)	X PRIVATE	__UNOCCUPIED	__COMMERCIAL	__PARK
__STRUCTURE	__BOTH	__WORK IN PROGRESS	__EDUCATIONAL	X PRIVATE RESIDENCE
__SITE	**PUBLIC ACQUISITION**	**ACCESSIBLE**	__ENTERTAINMENT	__RELIGIOUS
__OBJECT	__IN PROCESS	__YES: RESTRICTED	__GOVERNMENT	__SCIENTIFIC
	__BEING CONSIDERED	__YES: UNRESTRICTED	__INDUSTRIAL	__TRANSPORTATION
		X NO	__MILITARY	__OTHER:

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

Rosa Ponselle

Telephone #: 484-4616

STREET & NUMBER

1526 Valley Road

CITY, TOWN

Stevenson — VICINITY OF

STATE, zip code

Maryland 21153

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Baltimore County Courts Bldg.

Liber #: 1761
Folio #: 296

STREET & NUMBER

401 Bosley Avenue

CITY, TOWN

Towson

STATE

Maryland

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

DATE

__FEDERAL __STATE __COUNTY __LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE

BA-1608

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
X EXCELLENT	__DETERIORATED	X UNALTERED	X ORIGINAL SITE
__GOOD	__RUINS	__ALTERED	__MOVED DATE_____
__FAIR	__UNEXPOSED		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

VILLA PACE is a rambling one and two storey stuccoed masonry house designed in the twentieth century to recall an Italian villa. The cross-shape of its principal section is masked by varying roof heights and other service wings to the east of the principal cross. Walls are all covered with stucco and roofs are of red tile. The several exterior angles are screened as court yards, one open to the north as the principal entrance, others private. Numerous small details are incorporated to recall the original period and place: windows of varying shapes; fountains and other terra-cotta decorations; arched chimneys; balconies and other iron details.

The principal entrance, at the end of the north transept, opens into a large two-storey foyer; the principal stair rises with an intermediate landing immediately above the entrance. A tall one-storey music room is in the west transept, a lower dining room is in the east and a library is in the south beneath the principal bed chamber. The relative plainness of the exterior surfaces contrasts with the exquisite detail of the interior. All details are carefully designed and wrought to recall the original period and style: tile floors, paneled or vaulted ceilings with painted decoration, carved stone mantels, ornamental wrought iron railings. Each room is different, each a lavishly executed composition. Most of the decorations relate in some way to music, or to flowers, primarily roses, recalling the life and name of the owner.

VILLA PACE was designed by Palmer and Lambden, architects of Baltimore.

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

BA-1608

8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
__PREHISTORIC	__ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	__COMMUNITY PLANNING	__LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	__RELIGION
__1400-1499	__ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	__CONSERVATION	__LAW	__SCIENCE
__1500-1599	__AGRICULTURE	__ECONOMICS	__LITERATURE	__SCULPTURE
__1600-1699	X ARCHITECTURE	__EDUCATION	__MILITARY	__SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
__1700-1799	__ART	__ENGINEERING	X MUSIC	X THEATER
__1800-1899	__COMMERCE	__EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	__PHILOSOPHY	__TRANSPORTATION
X 1900-	__COMMUNICATIONS	__INDUSTRY	__POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	__OTHER (SPECIFY)
		__INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Dating from the third decade of the twentieth century VILLA PACE is a unique, carefully designed and finely wrought example of an Italian villa, regular and irregular at the same time, full of detail at every turn, all planned and executed to reflect and recall the life of its famous owner.

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

VILLA PACE

BA-1608

Villa Pace has been carefully constructed in the mold of an Italian villa. Its cross-shape form and elaborate interior detailing are completely in keeping with the professional occupation of its owner, Rosa Ponselle, a world-reknown opera star.

The seventeen-room house was built by Miss Ponselle and her former husband Carle A. Jackson in 1940. Designed by Palmer and Lambden, Baltimore architects, it carried a post-war price tag of $500,000. Villa Pace was named after an aria Miss Ponselle sang on the night of her debut with the famous Caruso at the Metropolitan Opera.[1]

The house stands on a prominence overlooking the Valley, on the exact site of a pre-Civil War mansion known as New Stoneton built by Alexander Hamilton Stump on the land tract Lystra.[2] Later this house and considerable surrounding land were acquired by General Felix Agnus, a publisher and manager of the Baltimore American.[3] Under the name Nacirema (which is American spelled backwards), the house was the setting for many parties attended by prominent national political leaders, journalists and businessmen.

After Agnus' death, the house and 191.148 acres were sold in 1926 to James Walter and Margaret (Wolfolk) Carter for $85,000.[4] Carter razed the old mansion with the intention of building on the site. He did not and on October 9, 1937, the estate was divided into lots and auctioned. Subsequently the mansion site and 155 acres were sold to the Jacksons.[5]

When she purchased the Green Spring Valley property, Miss Ponselle had just retired from a long and distinguished career at the Metropolitan. At the time of her debut in 1918 she was the youngest dramatic soprano on record at the Met, and for twenty years she reigned supreme in the international opera world.[6]

Miss Ponselle has been a guiding light in the cultural development of Baltimore, having started the Baltimore Opera Company and serving as its artistic director. She has coached promising young artists, both local as well as those who have come to her from afar--Beverly Sills, Enrico de Giuseppi, Lili Crookasian, Spiro Malas, to name a few.

Over the years, the public has had the opportunity to tour the beautiful interior of Villa Pace. On such occasions the beneficiaries of her generosity have been the Baltimore Symphony, the Baltimore Opera and the Peabody Conservatory of Music.

BA-1608

Villa Pace - Footnotes

[1] Muriel Dobbin, "Golden-Voiced Mistress of Villa Pace," Sunday Sun Magazine, 8 November 1959.

[2] Baltimore County Wills, Liber J. L. R. no. 2, fol. 108, Towson Court House, Towson, Md. Baltimore County Land Records (BCLR), Liber H. M. F. no. 7, fol. 405, Towson. These records trace the property accumulations by Stump in building his estate and help to place a date on the mansion's construction.

[3] BCLR, Liber J. W. S. no. 162, fol. 350, no. 168, fol. 54, and no. 170, fol 455, Towson.

[4] BCLR, Liber W. P. C. no 638, fol. 1, Towson.

[5] "Real Estate Deals and Building News," undated newspaper article from the files of the Baltimore American library; "Nacirema Auction Saturday," Baltimore American, 3 October 1937; "Nacirema," Sun, 30 September 1937; see note 1.

[6] See note 1.

BA-1608

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Dawn F. Thomas and Robert W. Barnes. The Green Spring Valley: Its History and Heritage, 2 vols. (Baltimore: Maryland Historical Society, 1978)

Baltimore County Land Records, County Courts Bldg., Towson, Md.

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY _____

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	COUNTY
STATE	COUNTY

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE
James T. Wollon, A.I.A., Dawn F. Thomas, Sybl Brown, Research Historians

ORGANIZATION
Valleys Planning Council

DATE
April, 1980

STREET & NUMBER
212 Washington Avenue

TELEPHONE
828-7807

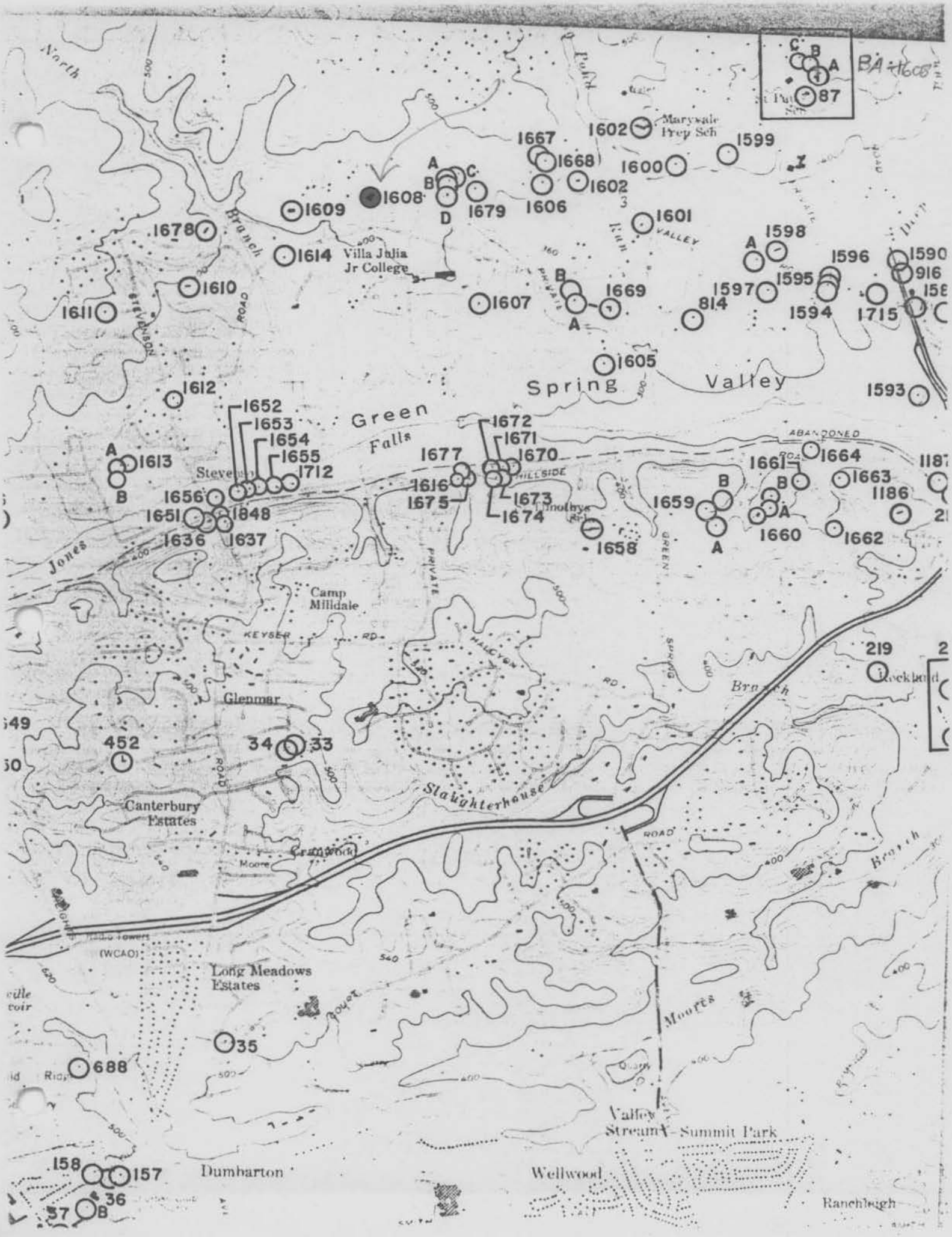
CITY OR TOWN
Towson

STATE
Maryland

The Maryland Historic Sites Inventory was officially created by an Act of the Maryland Legislature, to be found in the Annotated Code of Maryland, Article 41, Section 181 KA, 1974 Supplement.

The Survey and Inventory are being prepared for information and record purposes only and do not constitute any infringement of individual property rights.

RETURN TO: Maryland Historical Trust
The Shaw House, 21 State Circle
Annapolis, Maryland 21401
(301) 267-1438


North
Branch
Marysvale Prep Sch
Villa Julia Jr College
Spring Valley
Green Falls
Stevenson
Jones
Camp Milldale
Glenmar
Canterbury Estates
Slaughterhouse
Branch
Long Meadows Estates
Moores
Valley Stream
Summit Park
Dumbarton
Wellwood
Ranchleigh
Rockland
Timothys Rd
Hillside
Private
Halcyon
Keyser Rd
Green Spring Rd
Abandoned Road
Stevenson Road
Moore
Gramwock
(WCAO)
BA-1608

BA-1608

1608 Villa Pace G.S.V.H.D
Rosa Panselle
fr. S.E.
L. Eaton 4/80
Md. Hist. Trust

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