

BA 1771

ST. JOHN'S PARSONAGE

After 1835

RUXTON

PRIVATE

The small, vernacular style parsonage at St. John's M.E. Church, Bellona Avenue, Ruxton, is a plain stone, stucco-covered building of almost primitive qualities, three bays wide with a center entrance. It is gable roofed with one large shed dormer lighting the upper story. This building cannot be found in the 1798 tax list and is very likely an addition to the grounds after the establishment of a cemetery in 1833 and a church (of logs) in 1835. Stone buildings (two) are mentioned in the 1876 tax ledger. This building forms a link with the original congregation of free men and slaves who assembled here in 1833. A fire of suspicious nature occurred here in March 1981, followed two days later by another fire. The roof was seriously damaged, much of the interior was scorched, and the rear annex was gutted. The loss was mainly to 20th Century materials that had been added to the basic stone rectangular cabin of the early period.

NOTE: FOR COMPLETE DESCRIPTION AND OTHER SUPPORTING MATERIALS, SEE SURVEY FORM FOR BA-1559, ST. JOHN'S M.E. CHURCH.

## CAPSULE

The handsome structure on Bellona Avenue called "St. John's Church" is a fine example of Victorian vernacular church architecture being a board-and-batten building made decorative by fishscale shingles, stained glass and stylized lancet-arch windows. Although constructed in 1886, it is not the original church on this site. The present building replaces an earlier church of undetermined date.

Both the Chiffel map of 1852 and the Taylor map of 1857 indicate a "Coloured Methodist Meeting House" on this site and there is every reason to believe that blacks have been worshipping here since quite a few years before Emancipation.

In addition to the church building itself the site contains two dwellings and quite a few graves.

What is known locally as a "parsonage" is a small stone house, one room down and one above with a frame addition on the rear (west). No positive proof of its age has been found but it is said to be the oldest of the three buildings on the site and contemporary with the original church. Not the least interesting structure here is a frame bungalow which in its original state was a board-and-batten longitudinally oriented residence very similar in appearance and plan to designs offered by Gervase Wheeler in the 19th century.

As a collection, these buildings and the accompanying graveyard are scarce evidence of the fact that blacks have been living, working and worshipping on this site for over one-hundred years and probably much longer. Before there was a Ruxton or a Lake Roland this area was farmed in the manner of a plantation and these buildings appear to be testimony to that fact.



BALTIMORE COUNTY  
OFFICE OF PLANNING & ZONING  
TOWSON, MARYLAND 21204  
494-3211

MIKE

BA-1771

JOHN D. SEYFFERT  
DIRECTOR

July 2, 1980

Mr. Mark Edwards  
Maryland Historical Trust  
21 State Circle  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Dear Mark:

The correct owner of some properties surveyed by  
Historic Towson has turned up. For the sites:

BA 1559  
→ BA 1771  
BA 1772

at 7534 Bellona Avenue, are part of the St. John's Methodist  
Church complex. The state tax map does not show the parcel  
at all. It belongs to St. John's Church, and tax bills are  
mailed to:

Ms. Esther E. Scott  
6201 Falls Road  
Baltimore, Maryland 21209

The proper deed reference of 1866 is GH 51:134. None of these  
parcels belong to anyone named Hughes.

Sincerely,

JOHN W. McGRAIN  
Executive Secretary  
Landmarks Preservation Commission

JWM:vh

INVENTORY FORM FOR STATE HISTORIC SITES SURVEY

**1 NAME**

HISTORIC

Stone Dwelling

AND/OR COMMON

**2 LOCATION**

STREET & NUMBER

Bellona Avenue

CITY, TOWN

Towson

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

STATE

Maryland

VICINITY OF

COUNTY

Baltimore

**3 CLASSIFICATION**

**CATEGORY**

- DISTRICT
- BUILDING(S)
- STRUCTURE
- SITE
- OBJECT

**OWNERSHIP**

- PUBLIC
- PRIVATE
- BOTH
- PUBLIC ACQUISITION**
- IN PROCESS
- BEING CONSIDERED

**STATUS**

- OCCUPIED
- UNOCCUPIED
- WORK IN PROGRESS
- ACCESSIBLE**
- YES: RESTRICTED
- YES: UNRESTRICTED
- NO

**PRESENT USE**

- AGRICULTURE
- MUSEUM
- COMMERCIAL
- PARK
- EDUCATIONAL
- PRIVATE RESIDENCE
- ENTERTAINMENT
- RELIGIOUS
- GOVERNMENT
- SCIENTIFIC
- INDUSTRIAL
- TRANSPORTATION
- MILITARY
- OTHER

**4 OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME

Mary E. C. Hughes

Telephone #:

STREET & NUMBER

Unknown

CITY, TOWN

VICINITY OF

STATE, zip code

**5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE,  
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

County Courts Building

Liber #: 5477

Folio #: 481

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

Towson

STATE

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE

DATE

FEDERAL  STATE  COUNTY  LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE

BA-1771

**7 DESCRIPTION**

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		DATE <u>Feb., 1979</u>

**DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE**

Both the Chiffelle 1852 and Taylor 1857 maps show a "Coloured Methodist Meeting House" in this spot along the Old Powder Mill Road (Bellona Avenue). There are the remnants of a black community there today, the survivors being three houses, a church, and a graveyard. A family rents one of the houses, the church is only used occasionally and the other two houses are empty and deteriorating. The graveyard is overgrown and is disappearing. While it seems certain that there was at least a church on this spot in the mid-19th century (prior to Emancipation) the extant buildings do not appear to date prior to that period. The stone dwelling looks like the oldest in this group of buildings, however, no materials can be seen in it that are definitely earlier than the late 19th century.

**Stone Dwelling:**

A true one and one half story dwelling with a plan of one room up / one down with a single room added to the rear (West).

The walls are made of uncoursed brownish fieldstone that has been stuccoed. The stone rises to the apex of the gables. There is a gable-end roof which has an almost oversized shed roof dormer. There are no eaves on the ends and even the sides have only a 10 to 12 inch overhang. While the dormer appears to be original to the present roof its six light casements are not compatible with the four light casements of the gables. Machine sawn rafters and cut and wire nails suggest that if this building is more than 80 or 90 years old its roof has been changed.

Each end of the building is windowless except for a small casement window in each gable. That of the north is centralized but the south window is off center to the West. It is interesting to note that these deep casements are presently mounted on the inside of the opening. The main facade faces East like the church. It has three bays to it consisting of a centrally located door flanked by windows. The south window, however, is not as large as the north and it may be an alteration. The door and north window share the same wooden jack arch and the taller north window has a large fieldstone sill.

The west facade is nearly obliterated by the frame shed roofed addition. Interior examination suggests that it once had a door on the north side and a single window on the south side of it (original appearance of east facade?).

The single room downstairs is characterized by the windowless north wall and the presence of the enclosed stairs on the south wall. A flue chimney occupies the center of the west wall and separated the door and window.

The original mouldings in this room are a plain architrave that is not unlike that design seen in some Federal period houses.

It appears that the south window of the east wall was cut through to light the stairs. The enclosure of those stairs is not original and one

wonders what relationship there is, if any, between this fact and the off center gable window at the top. The placement of that window and the protruding beam on the exterior of the south end could be indicative of a fireplace, however, the south side would be an odd place for one:

The second level is characterized by its knee walls and trapezoidal ceiling. The room is divided transversely by a partition. That wall bisects the dormer which gives each half an east window and a gable window.

Deterioration in this area allows one to see machine cut laths and parts of the roof construction. The roof consists of vertically sawn timbers cut by machine. Rafters are joined at the top by a ridgeboard and the trusses are nailed to flat false plates in some instances with wire nails. The upper half of each knee wall is frame.

**8 SIGNIFICANCE**

BA-1771

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES      mid - 19th century

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

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CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

**9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES**

Baltimore County Land Records  
 Baltimore County Tax Assessment Records

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

**10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA**

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY \_\_\_\_\_

**VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION**

See Attachment

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

STATE \_\_\_\_\_ COUNTY \_\_\_\_\_

STATE \_\_\_\_\_ COUNTY \_\_\_\_\_

**11 FORM PREPARED BY**

NAME / TITLE

ORGANIZATION

WAYNE C. NIELD, II  
 HISTORIC TOWSON, INC.

DATE

STREET & NUMBER

TELEPHONE

CITY OR TOWN

STATE

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

BA-1771

Tax Assessments

1876 Tax Assessment Record for Baltimore County District 9

St. John's Methodist P. Church

Tract of land E. Side N.C.R.Rd. near Lake Roland

1 acre, lefs (less) church occup.

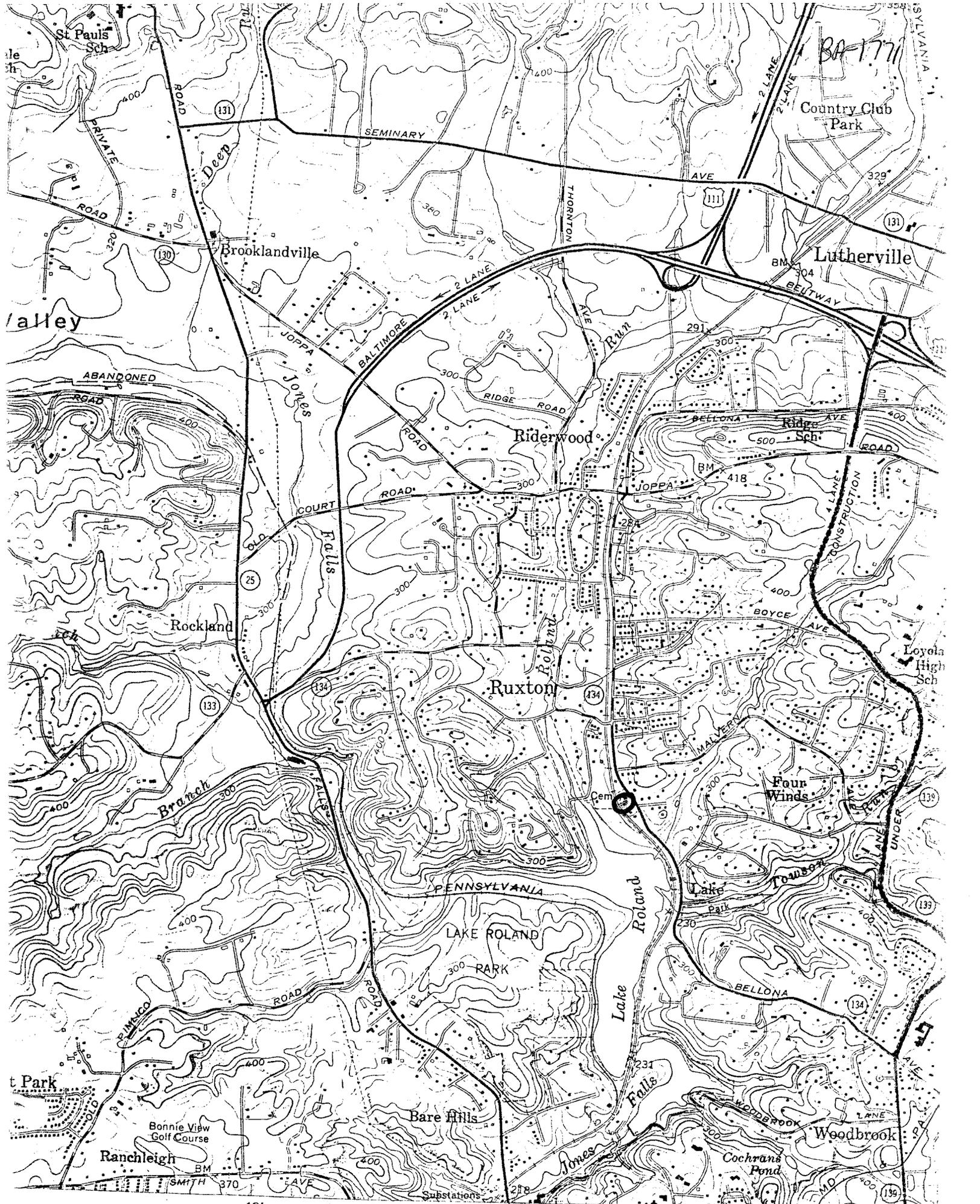
Improvements - 2 small stone houses.

BA-1771

St. Johns Church/  
Coloured Methodist Meeting House Site

<u>LIBER</u>	<u>FOLIO</u>	<u>DATE</u>	<u>GRANTOR</u>	<u>GRANTEE</u>
5477	431	September 9, 1974	Mary Edyth C. Hughes	Mary Edyth C. Hughes Thomas John Hughes
<p>Lot # 2 on Plat of Montrose...northeast side of Northern Central Rail Road with the northwest side of public road...northwest binding on Rail Road...South 2° East line of wable tract of land ...reversing ...24 - 65/100 perches to a stone...North 85 3/4° East 5 1/2 perches to northwest side of road...southeast on road till beginning...2 acres, 1 road and 13 square perches.</p>				
5297	60	January 15, 1958	William F. Mckewen	Mary E. C. Hughes
534	212	November 15, 1920	Charles J. Bouchet	William F. Mckewen- & wf
534	210	November 15, 1920	William F. Mckewen & wife	Charles J. Bouchet
498	59	April 5, 1918	James R. Warman	Henry & William Mckewen
455	477	December 29, 1915	James B. Finman	Mary Mildred Wright (Also Helen Mckewen)
433	109	July 21, 1914	Bridget Roddy (Finman's daughter)	Helen Mckewen
39	365	January 4, 1864	James L. McDaniel	Owen Finman





BA-1771

Country Club Park

Lutherville

Riderwood

Ruxton

Four Winds

LAKE ROLAND PARK

Bare Hills

Woodbrook

Ranchleigh

Bonnie View Golf Course

Cochran's Pond

40' BALTIMORE (JUNC. U.S. 1) 5 MI.

INTERIOR-GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, WASHINGTON, D. C. 1958-NS MR 4867 359000m E BALTIMORE (JUNC. U.S. 1) 4.5 MI.

176°37'



BA-1771

ST JOHN'S CHURCH PARSONAGE

BALTIMORE COUNTY, MD

K. CULANE

2/2000

NO S&P

3/4 view of parsonage, view to north west.

PROJEC2000< 2010  
220 82\*\* N N H-1 05 2(040)



EN. 1771  
St. John's Church parsonage  
Baltimore County, MD

K. Culbert  
2/2000  
NDSHPD

3/4 view from cemetery towards  
rear of parsonage. View to north

PROJEC2000 < 2015  
220 07\*\*N N N 2 10 2(040)



BA. 111

St. John's Church Burial Ground

Baltimore Co., MD

K. COLLIER

2/2000

MDS-40

REAR ELEVATION. VIEW TO EAST.

PROJEC2000 < 2012  
220 02\*\* N N N 29 2 (040)

3 OF 3



ST. JOHN'S PARSONAGE BA 1771

Baltimore County, Maryland

J. McGrain April 1, 1981

Neg. located at MHT

Main or east facade from east

~~Photo 8 of 42~~



ST. JOHN'S PARSONAGE      BA 1771  
Baltimore County, Maryland  
J. McGrain,      April 1, 1981  
Neg. located at MHT  
South gable end from south  
~~Photo 9 of 12~~



ST. JOHN'S PARSONAGE

BA 1771

Baltimore County, Maryland

J. McGrain

April 1, 1981

Neg. located at MHT

South gable end; rear; burned-out  
annex; from SW

~~Photo 40 of 42~~



ST. JOHN'S PARSONAGE BA 1771  
Baltimore County, Maryland  
J. McGrain April 1, 1981  
Neg. located at MHT  
Interior; charred laths on south  
wall near stairs  
~~Photo 44 of 12~~



BA-1771

STONE DWELLING -  
NEAR ST. JOHN'S CHURCH.  
S. E. CORNER

W. NIELD  
3/79



BA-1771

STONE DWELLING  
NEAR ST. JOHN'S CHURCH  
N.W. CORNER

W. NIED  
3/79



BA-1771

STONE DWELLING  
S.W. CORNER

J. CORCORAN  
7/79