

Maryland Historical Trust Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties Form

Inventory No. BA-2540

1. Name of Property (indicate preferred name)

historic Berger House

other

2. Location

street and number 319 Gun Road not for publication

city, town Baltimore - vicinity

county Baltimore County

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

name Charles G. and Mary J. MacGill

street and number 319 Gun Road telephone

city, town Baltimore state Maryland zip code 21227

4. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Baltimore County Courthouse liber 4671 folio 360

city, town Towson tax map 108 tax parcel 503 tax ID number 1313202321

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
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce/trade	Noncontributing
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> defense	Contributing <u>2</u>
<input type="checkbox"/> site		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> domestic	Noncontributing <u>1</u>
<input type="checkbox"/> object		<input type="checkbox"/> education	Contributing <u>2</u>
		<input type="checkbox"/> funerary	Noncontributing <u>1</u>
		<input type="checkbox"/> government	Total
		<input type="checkbox"/> health care	
		<input type="checkbox"/> industry	
		<input type="checkbox"/> landscape	
		<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
			<u>1</u>

7. Description

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Condition

<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> altered

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

Constructed circa 1877, the five-bay wide Second Empire style building known as Berger House is located at 319 Gun Road. Cubic in form, the three story dwelling sits on a solid stone foundation and features a wood-shingled mansard roof with gabled wall dormers. The dwelling is further accented by a central projecting tower, which also displays a mansard roof and is accented with Italianate brackets. Clad in weatherboard, the building is also distinguished by a full-width one-story porch with Italianate style bracketed support posts. An interior end brick chimney with a corbeled cap rises from the roof.

EXTERIOR DESCRIPTION

The primary façade, facing southwest, measures five bays wide. A central square tower that projects from the second and third stories dominates the elevation. The ground story of the dwelling features a central double-leaf entry with single-light and two panel wood doors. The doors display a molded wood surround with floral motif caps, segmental-arch brick lintels, square-edged wood sills, a flush wood soffit, inset stained glass transoms, three-light and three-panel sidelights and wooden paneled storm doors. The entry is flanked on each side by two 2/2-wood windows with floral molded surrounds and arched segmental-brick lintels. A full-width three-bay porch shelters the first story, which consists entirely of the random rubble stone foundation. Square wood posts with scroll-sawn brackets, engaged turned posts, and a cross-braced wood balustrade support the porch. In addition, the porch features a square-tile covered solid foundation and a half-hipped asphalt-shingled roof. The second story is clad in weatherboard and features the central projecting tower. The weatherboard-clad tower displays a pair of wood 1/1 windows with a reeded mullion and shared Gothic-style pointed arch surround. A pair of 2/2 wood windows on each side flanks the tower. The third story is composed entirely of the wood-shingled mansard roof with flared asphalt-shingled eaves. The central tower rises just above the main block roofline and also features a mansard style roof, a molded wood cornice, bracket supports and wood cornerboards. A centrally located gabled wall dormer with a vertically oriented 2/2 window and a 1/1 window lights the tower. The third story also displays two symmetrically spaced gabled wall dormers with wood 2/2 windows on each side of the central tower.

The southeast elevation also displays a variety of cladding materials, differentiated by story. The ground level, built into the hill, is constructed with the random rubble stone foundation. The story is pierced with two-2/2 windows with segmental-arch brick lintels, molded wood surrounds with floral motif detailing, and square wood sills. The first story also has a similar detailed 1/1 window, with a slightly smaller configuration and a single-leaf inset wood door with two-panel and nine-light design. It is capped by a two-light transom and features an eight-light wooden storm door and molded wood surround. A one-story shed, built into the hill, projects at a perpendicular angle at the corner of the elevation. The shed is clad in pressed vertical board, features a stretcher-bond brick foundation and is capped by a shed asphalt-shingle roof. A single-leaf vertical board door accesses it. Four evenly spaced 2/2-wooden windows define the second story of the dwelling, which is clad in weatherboard. The windows all feature molded wood surrounds and square-edged wood sills. The

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elevation is capped by a wood-shingled mansard roof with asphalt-shingled flared eaves, which forms the cladding on the third story. Four evenly spaced gabled wall dormers light the space. Each features a 2/2-wood window and a molded wood surround and cornice.

The rear, or northeast, elevation consists primarily of only the second and third stories due to the building's construction into a hill. A central pair of single-leaf single-light and panel doors with a shared four-light transom accesses the weatherboard clad ground story. A shed-roofed overhang with scroll-sawn brackets, square-post supports, brick double-return steps and a wood post balustrade shelters the entry. The entry is flanked on each side by a 2/2 wood window with a molded wood surround. Five evenly spaced gabled wall dormers with 2/2 wood windows mark the mansard-roofed third story.

The northwest elevation features four 2/2-wood windows cut into the stone foundation, which reaches to the second story. The windows feature rowlock segmental arch brick lintels, molded wood surrounds with floral designs, and square-wood sills. The second story, clad in weatherboard, is also pierced with four 2/2 wood windows. Each of the windows features a molded wood surround and sill. A wood-shingled mansard roof with four evenly spaced gabled wall dormers with 2/2 wood windows and asphalt-shingled flared eaves caps the elevation. A stone retaining wall projects from the corner of the building defining the sloping landscape.

INTERIOR DESCRIPTION

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

OUTBUILDINGS

The circa 1940 garage has been completely restored. The two-story building sits on a parged concrete foundation and is clad in weatherboard siding with a double-shed asphalt-shingled roof. The two part structure features an off-center projecting block defined by two first-story vertical board sliding doors with square-edged wood surrounds. The second story, which is slightly overhanging, is pierced by a centrally located window with vertical board closed paneled shutters. The recessed wings of the building are clad in weatherboard. The more southern wing features a side single-leaf nine-light and two-panel entry sheltered by a bracketed shed overhang. The more northern wing features an off-center first story single-leaf nine-light two-panel entry that is sheltered by a shed-roofed porch supported by wood posts. The second story of the wing is pierced with an off-center 6/1 wood window with molded wood surround.

A circa 1990 clay tennis court sits on the hill to the northeast of the main house.

8. Significance

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Period	Areas of Significance	Check and justify below		
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" 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 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 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 1893 **Architect/Builder** Andrae and Walsh

Construction dates 1893

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 dwelling known as the Berger House is located at 319 Gun Road in Election District Thirteen of Baltimore County. The property is located near Avalon and the site of Dorsey's Forge and the later Avalon Nail and Iron Company. The property, originally owned by Edgar Treuth, was substantially enhanced with the erection of the Berger House by John Berger in 1893. It remained in the Berger family, with a life estate to the Treuths daughter, until 1926. The property passed into a number of families until the MacGills purchased it in 1966, who currently own it. The Berger House is fashionably detailed in the Second Empire style.

HISTORY

Ernest Treuth purchased the land where the Berger House was later erected in two separate deeds in 1849 and 1869. Treuth owned the property until 1891 when it was deeded to John Berger, with a life estate granted to Treuths daughter Mary. It appears, based on the increased tax assessments, architectural fabric, and historic map footprints, that John Berger erected the current dwelling, known as the Berger House, in 1893, which replaced an earlier dwelling. However, it is possible that some of the original structure was incorporated into the new design. A *Maryland Journal* article states that "John Berger has completed a new building to be used I suppose, for a conservatory. The addition is certainly a great improvement to this already pretty place."¹ A second *Maryland Journal* article dated September 23, 1893 states that "John Berger's house, built by Andrae and Walsh, who acted as architect and carpenter, is a gem and was finished about a week ago."²

The Berger House is a representative example of the Second Empire Style, which was popular in America between 1855 and 1885. Dominated by a mansard roof, characteristics of the style also include molded cornices, often with brackets, decorative cresting, dormer windows, decorative window hoods, projecting towers, and symmetrical fenestration. The style originated in Paris during Napoleon III's reign during the Second Empire period and was popular during the post Civil War period in America. Although a vernacular interpretation of the style, the Berger House displays many of the high style features, including a projecting central façade tower, mansard roof, molded cornice, dormers, and supporting brackets.

¹ As quoted in Lucy Merrill. "Gun Road—Cannon Track to Suburb" p. 14.

² As quoted in Maryland Historical Trust Inventory. District 13, BA-2540. Article dated September 23, 1893.

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Constructed in 1893, the Berger House is located in the Avalon area in the Thirteenth District of Baltimore County. The 1.64 acre tract of land was located along what is now Gun Road. The property appears on the 1915 *Bromley's Atlas of Baltimore* as the three-acre property of John Berger just north of the Avalon Station of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad and south of the eight-acre Alexander Robinson White property.³

The property is located in District Thirteen of Baltimore County, which is a 13.86 square mile area bounded on the east by the Middle Branch of the Patapsco River, on the south by the Patapsco River, and on the west by District One and Baltimore City. Gun Road, located in a section of the District known as Avalon, extends approximately one mile through rolling hills and wooded terrain. The road is said to be named for its construction as a route of troop and supply movement from Philadelphia to Virginia by George Washington.⁴ It begins at Rolling Road, crosses The Baltimore and Ohio Railroad tracks, and extends through the Patapsco Valley State Park to the Patapsco River, which defines Baltimore and Howard Counties. Originally known as Avalon Forge Road, the name was changed after an 1868 flood. Due to the river, the land was extremely fertile and numerous crops, including tobacco, were cultivated in the area and shipped from Elkridge, the port city located across the then navigable river. The area was also a manufacturing haven, beginning in 1761 with the establishment of an iron forge by Caleb Dorsey, who was also a part owner of the Elkridge Furnace. Dorsey's Forge, located in what is today the Patapsco State Park, produced crowbars, which were said to be the only iron tools produced entirely in Baltimore County.⁵ Whetcroft's slitting mill was added in 1776. The property was later sold to the prominent Ellicott milling family and in 1822 to Manning and Company, who established the Avalon Ironworks Company. It was said to have produced nails, iron barrel hoops, and train rails.⁶ With the company's incorporation, the area began to be referred to as Avalon. A small picturesque village, with dwellings and a church, emerged with the success of the industries, although many of the buildings were destroyed in the 1868 flood. The Baltimore and Ohio and the Potomac Railroads, which criss-cross the area, were particularly influential in the settlement and the economy. The 1877 Atlas lists the Treuth property as the first house north of the Ironworks and railroad tracks.⁷

With the establishment of the railroad, which provided passenger service, and seven trains a day to Avalon Station until 1949, the Avalon area began to be more densely settled. The area had become a popular retreat from city life in Baltimore and many built summer and weekend homes in the nearby wooded hills. This growth was described in a Towson new clipping dated 1891, which states: "Quite an extensive colony has grown up in the Thirteenth District known as Avalon. The place is situated on the Avalon Forge Road, which leads from Catonsville to Avalon Station, on the B. & O. R.R., and through the personal efforts of Mr. A. Robinson White, a well known and prominent member of the Baltimore bar, who moved from the First District of Howard County, several advantageous lots have been effected. Mr. White built a neat house for himself, and by his example was the means of encouraging a general and steady improvement. Among the purchasers were Mr. Frank M. Hildebrandt, who secured 20 acres of land, and is now putting a handsome dwelling and

³ Bromley's *Atlas of Baltimore*, 1915. Part of 1st and 13th Districts.

⁴ Merrill. "Gun Road—Cannon Track to Suburb" p.1

⁵ Merrill. "Gun Road—Cannon Track to Suburb" p.1

⁶ Neal A. Brooks and Eric G. Rockel, *A History of Baltimore County*. (Towson, MD Friends of the Towson Library, Inc., 1979) p. 40.

⁷ G.M. Hopkins. *Atlas of Baltimore County, Maryland*. (Philadelphia, PA: G.M. Hopkins, 1877), Thirteenth District.

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stable on it, and will reside on the property throughout the year.”⁸ John Berger erected his stylish dwelling in 1893, which included extensive vineyards.

Upon the death of John Berger, the property was transferred to Hermine Berger, widow of John and trustee of Mary Trueth lunatic, to George Gosnell. In 1926, the house was transferred from George Gosnell to Austin and Charlotte Hirst. It then was deeded in 1935 from Delaware C. Andre, Trustee for the Hirsts, to W. David and Margaret U. Tilghman. The same year the Tilghmans sold the property to E. Hamilton Hurst and Christine Halliday Hurst, who owned it until 1943. It was then deeded by the Hursts to Silvan M. and Irma Clayton. Between 1949 and 1957, the property was owned by George M. and Kathryn V. Boring, who renovated the dwelling. The Borings sold the property to Robert F. and Rita M. Barry, who removed many of the alterations. In 1960, Lennox Birkhead, Jr. purchased the tract. Birkhead held the property for five years. It was then transferred from Edward J. Brannan, Attorney, to Leeds Federal Savings and Loan Association. Charles G. and Mary Jane MacGill, who are the present owners, purchased the property in 1966.

Chain of Title:

Part 1:

May 18, 1869: John Chandler Smith to Ernest Trueth
Land Records of Baltimore County
Liber EHA 62 Folio 395

Part 2:

July 30, 1849: James B. Dorsey to Ernest Trueth
Land Records of Baltimore County
Liber AWB 418 Folio 32

All:

October 13, 1891: Ernest Trueth to John Berger
Land Records of Baltimore County
Liber JWS 188 Folio 374

November 10, 1926: Hermine Berger, widow, and Hermine Berger, committee of Mary Trueth lunatic, heirs to George Gosnell
Land Records of Baltimore County

⁸ As quoted in Lucy Merrill. "Gun Road—Cannon Track to Suburb" History Trails Newsletter. Vol 29. Spring-Summer 1995. No. 3-4, p. 11

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WPC 639 Folio 230

November 10, 1926: George Gosnell to Austin and Charlotte Hirst
Land Records of Baltimore County
Liber WPC 639 Folio 233

April 12, 1935; Delaware C. Andre, Trustee, to W. David and Margaret U. Tilghman
Land Records of Baltimore County
Liber 955 Folio 38

May 16, 1935: W. David and Margaret U. Tilghman to E. Hamilton Hurst and Christine Halliday Hurst, wife
Land Records of Baltimore County
Liber CWB, Jr. 956 Folio 126

July 3, 1943: E. Hamilton Hurst and Christine Halliday Hurst, wife, to Silvan M. and Irma Clayton
Land Records of Baltimore County
Liber RJS 1296 Folio 158

June 1, 1949: Silvan M. and Irma Clayton, Elvan H. and Eleonora N. Clayton to George M. and Kathryn V. Boring
Land Records of Baltimore County
Liber TBS 1757 Folio 251

January 11, 1957: George M. and Kathryn V. Boring to Robert F. and Rita M. Barry
Land Records of Baltimore County
Liber GLB 3088 Folio 507

March 1, 1960: Robert E. and Rita M. Barry to Carol C. and Lennox Birkhead, Jr.
Land Records of Baltimore County
Liber 3673 Folio 16

August 30, 1965; Edward J. Brannan, Attorney, to Leeds Federal Savings and Loan Association
Land Records of Baltimore County
Liber OTG 4517 Folio 584

September 12, 1966: Leed Federal Savings and Loan Association to Charles G. and Mary Jane MacGill
Land Records of Baltimore County
Liber 4671 Folio 360

9. Major Bibliographical References

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- Atlas of Baltimore County, Maryland*. Philadelphia, PA: G.M. Hopkins, 1877.
Bromley's Atlas of Baltimore County, 1915.
Brooks, Neal A. and Eric G. Rockel, *A History of Baltimore County*. Towson, MD Friends of the Towson Library, Inc., 1979.
Carley, Rachel. *The Visual Dictionary of American Domestic Architecture*. New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1994.
Merrill, Lucy. "Gun Road—Cannon Track to Suburb." *History Trails Newsletter*. Vol. 29. Spring-Summer 1995. No. 3-4.
Scharf, Thomas J. *History of Baltimore City and County From the Earliest Period to the Present Day: Including Biographical Sketches of Their Representative Men*. Philadelphia, PA: Louis H. Everts, 1881. Reprinted by Higginson Book Company, Salem, MA.

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of surveyed property 1.64 Acres
Acreage of historical setting 3 Acres
Quadrangle name Relay Quadrangle scale: 1:24,000

Verbal boundary description and justification

The Berger House is located at 319 Gun Road in Baltimore County, Maryland as noted on Tax Map 108, Parcel 503 and in the Deeds of Record Liber 4671 Folio 360, archived in Towson, Maryland. The Berger House has been associated with the site since its construction in 1893.

11. Form Prepared by

name/title	J. Bunting and A. Didden, Architectural Historians		
organization	EHT Tracerics, Inc.	date	February 21,2001
street & number	1121 5th Street, NW	telephone	(202) 393-1199
city or town	Washington, DC	state	

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.

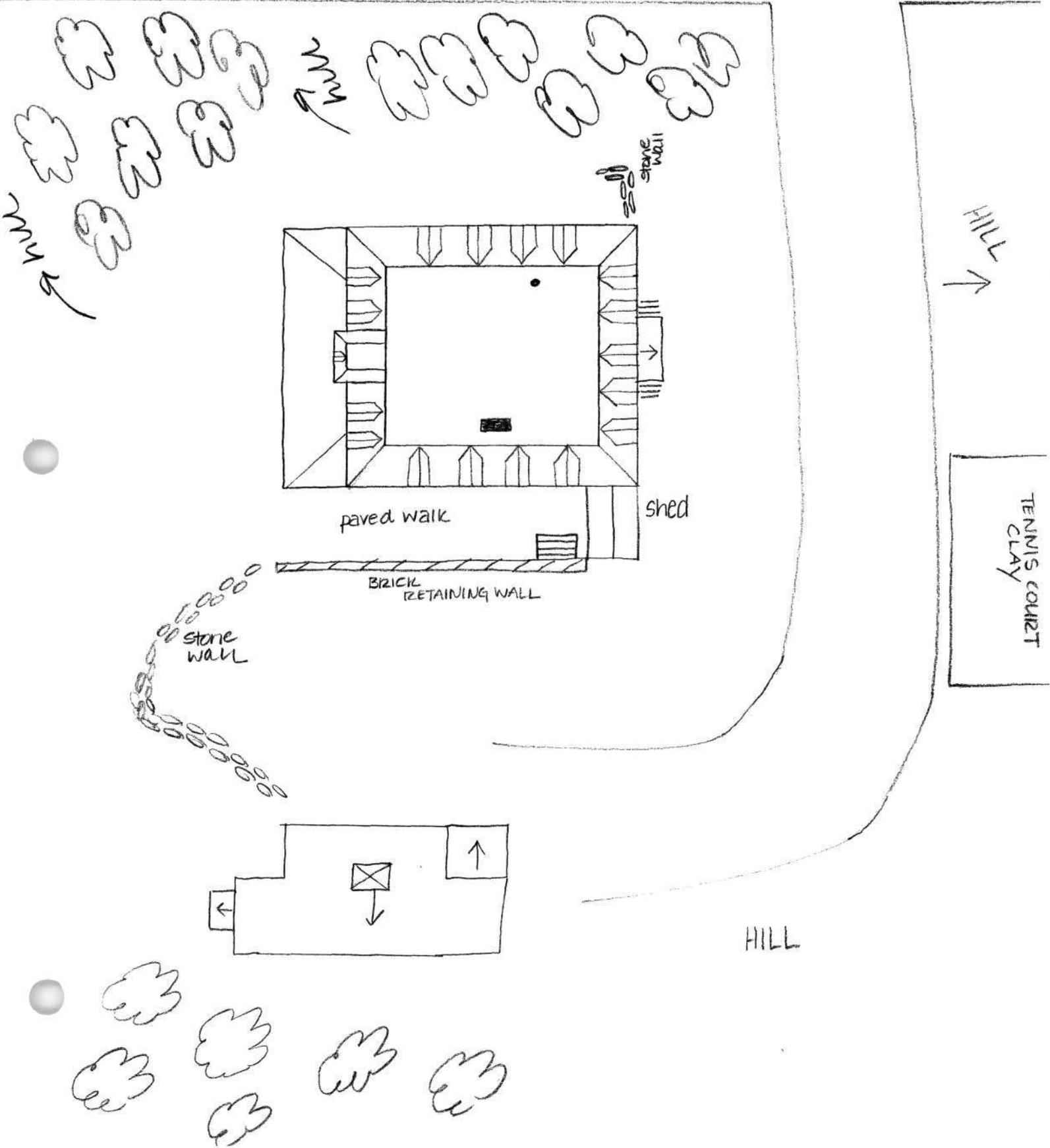
return to: Maryland Historical Trust
DHCD/DHCP
100 Community Place
Crownsville, MD 21032-2023
410-514-7600

BA 2540
Berger House
319 GUN ROAD
BALTIMORE COUNTY, MD
BALTIMORE

* RESOURCE SKETCH MAP *
(NOT DRAWN TO SCALE)



GUN ROAD



USGS Quad: Relay
Scale: 1:24,000

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
GEOLOGICAL SURVEY



45' 350000m.E 351 CATONSVILLE (JUNC. U.S. 40 ALT.) 1.7 MI. 42'30"

BA-2541
WHITE-MERRILL HOUSE
403 GUN ROAD
BALTIMORE, BALTIMORE COUNTY

4345000m.N

BA-1584
VALLEY VIEW FARM
324 GUN ROAD
BALTIMORE
BALTIMORE COUNTY

4344

BA-2540
BERGER HOUSE
317 GUN ROAD
BALTIMORE, BALTIMORE COUNTY

4343

BA-2515
LEOLA
1604 SOUTH ROLLING ROAD
BALTIMORE
BALTIMORE COUNTY

4342

12'30"

4341

0.27 MI.





BA 2540
Berger House
319 Gun Road
Baltimore, Baltimore County, MD
Traces

11/00
MD SHPO
Dwelling, southwest elevation, view looking northeast



BA 2540
Berger House
319 Gun Road
Baltimore, Baltimore County, MD
Tracenes
11/00
MD SHPO
Dwelling, southeast elevation, view looking Northwest



BA 2540
Berger House
319 Gun Road
Baltimore, Baltimore County, MD
Traceries
11/00
MD SHPO
Garage, view looking Southeast



BA 2540
Berger House
319 Gun Road
Baltimore, Baltimore County, MD
Traceries
1/00
MD SHPO
dwelling, Northwest elevation, view looking Southeast



BA 2540
Berger House
319 Gun Road
Baltimore, Baltimore County, MD

Traceries

1/00

MD SHPO

Dwelling, northeast elevation, view looking southwest



BA 2540
Berger House
319 Eun Road
Baltimore, Baltimore County, MD
Traceries
1/60
MD SHPO
garage, view looking northeast

319
BERGER HOUSE - 1893 - ~~401~~ Gun Road, Avalon. The news from Avalon reported, "John Berger's house, built by Andrae and Walsh, who acted as architect and carpenters, is a gem and was finished about a week ago." Maryland Journal, September 23, 1893. the house was shown on three-acre parcel as John Berger's, the first house above the Avalon Forge dwelling, in the 1915 Bromley atlas, Plate 5. Seems to be the replacement of the Treuth House shown on a small lot in the 1877 atlas. Three story, square, mansard-roofed house with shingle wall covering. Fairly close to the road. Only two full stories at the rear but three in front.

2542 IN "4"
between railroad
tracks

RELAY QUAD

