

LVT- 1101
GRAY HOUSE
Port Republic
Private

early 20th century

Built by John A. Gray and his son Thomas at the turn of the 20th century, this dwelling is one of the largest houses owned and built by a black family in Southern Maryland. A two-story frame house with a central gable pediment, it was constructed from local materials with assistance from the local community. Like many farmhouses built by blacks in the region, its gable ends are oriented on a north-south axis and do not have windows. The floor plan consists of a central stair hall flanked both downstairs and upstairs by two rooms, plus an "L" extension from the northern end.

INVENTORY FORM FOR STATE HISTORIC SITES SURVEY

1 NAME

HISTORIC THE JOHN A. AND THOMAS M. GRAY HOUSE

AND/OR COMMON

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER South side of Hance Rd., 0.25 mile west of Jct. of Hance Rd. and Broome's Island Rd.

CITY, TOWN

Port Republic

___ VICINITY OF

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

STATE

Md.

COUNTY

Calvert

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE <input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL <input type="checkbox"/> PARK
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	PUBLIC ACQUISITION	ACCESSIBLE	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT <input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT <input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL <input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

Telephone #:

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

___ VICINITY OF

STATE, zip code

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. Calvert Coutny Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER

Liber #: Liber: JLB 85
Folio #: Folio: 465

CITY, TOWN

Prince Frederick

STATE

Md.

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

NONE

DATE

___ FEDERAL ___ STATE ___ COUNTY ___ LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE

7 DESCRIPTION

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

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Though decrepit, uncared for, and inhabited by impoverished tenants, this large two story frame house was once the center of a well-tended farmstead. The former owner, Thomas Gray, lives in the vicinity and is now 83 years old. He said that he had helped his father, John Alexander Gray, to build the house when he was about fifteen, which would date the house to c. 1908. In those years, the front grounds of the house (east) were carefully maintained. To the east of the front drive were stables for animals. Close by the house to the south was the well and further from it was planted a large peach orchard, the produce of which was sold at the nearby wharves on the Patuxent River for shipment to Baltimore. In addition to providing the preceding information, Gray said that behind the house stood a complex of outbuildings, which included a meat house, a "corn house," a large vegetable garden, and at further distance hog pens and two tobacco barns. Except for the well, none of these remain.

The farm house is built in an L design. The principal block is 1 bay deep and has a symmetrical facade of three bays sheltered by a shed porch. The two story extension is 1 bay in length and 1 bay in width. The roof is crossed by a central gable pediment into which is let a 2 x 2 double hung sash window. The other windows in the facade are 3 x 3 and ^{have} ~~are~~ double hung sashes. These large windows provided much more sunlight than was available in the smaller farm houses of blacks surveyed elsewhere in southern Maryland. There were no windows on the gable ends.

In plan the interior consisted of two rooms downstairs flanking a central passage through which ascended a one flight of stairs to the two rooms upstairs. Brick stove flues ascended the interior of each gable end. The extension consisted of one room, the kitchen, and two rooms upstairs, which were used as bedrooms.

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

8 SIGNIFICANCE

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 checked="" 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 type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY) Black History
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES	<i>C. 1908</i>	BUILDER/ARCHITECT
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STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Will V.C.C. 1/146 (.887) and its codicil V.C.C. 1/149 (1888) show that Jennie Allsup and her future husband John A. Gray were given the two sections of land, which together comprised the 69 acre farm, by a Thomas Gray, whose relationship to them was not stated in the documents. According their son, Thomas Gray, his parents lived at first in a small, four room, one story house on this land. When his parents were able to save enough money, they decided to build this more spacious and impressive house. Rather ~~of~~^{than} hiring carpenters, the Grays built the house themselves with the occasional help of neighbors. Instead of buying materials for a balloon frame house, they hewed logs cut on their property for a heavy post and beam frame. Other pieces of timber they hauled to the mill to be sawn into boards and lathes. The result was one of the larger farm houses built and occupied by blacks at that ^{time} in southern Maryland and reveals the opportunity that land ownership offered when combined with other talents.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

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

George W. McDaniel, Historic Sites Surveyor

ORGANIZATION

Md. Commission on Afro-American History & Cultural

DATE

STREET & NUMBER

20 Dean Street

TELEPHONE

269-2893

CITY OR TOWN

Annapolis, Maryland

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