

**MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST
DETERMINATION OF ELIGIBILITY FORM**

NR Eligible: yes no

Property Name: Weems Tobacco Barn Number Two Inventory Number: CT-1319
 Address: 2815 Solomons Island Road (MD 2-4) Historic district: yes no
 City: Port Republic Zip Code: 20676 County: Calvert
 USGS Quadrangle(s): Broomes Island
 Property Owner: Mr. Maurice and Mrs. Doris Weems Tax Account ID Number: 501026518
 Tax Map Parcel Number(s): 31 Tax Map Number: 28
 Project: MD 2 at MD 2/4 and MD 509 Stormwater Management Improv Agency: SHA
 Agency Prepared By: SHA
 Preparer's Name: Kathryn Barrett Date Prepared: 07/22/2008
 Documentation is presented in: MD SHPO
 Preparer's Eligibility Recommendation: Eligibility recommended Eligibility not recommended
 Criteria: A B C D Considerations: A B C D E F G
 Complete if the property is a contributing or non-contributing resource to a NR district/property:
 Name of the District/Property: _____
 Inventory Number: _____ Eligible: yes no Listed: yes no
 Site visit by MHT Staff yes no Name: _____ Date: _____

Description of Property and Justification: *(Please attach map and photo)*

Description:

Constructed in the late 1940s, the Weems Tobacco Barn Number Two is rectangular in footprint with a steeply pitched front gable roof clad in standing seam metal. The barn faces east and is surrounded by former tobacco fields to the west and north a house, Solomon's Island Road to the south and MD 509 to the east. A collapsed tobacco barn is positioned behind the barn (to the south). A gravel road leads from MD 509 to the barn, and encircles the building. Supported on concrete block piers, the frame barn is clad with red-stained vertical board siding affixed to the framing with wire nails. Characteristic hinged ventilation panels are found on the north and west elevations. The panels are tethered with wood latches. Two sets of large double doors leads from the front (east) façade into the barn. The back or south elevation features the same door configuration, which would allow for a truck to drive through the building. A brick scupper runs the length of the barn on the east and west sides. The barn is in fair condition.

Historical Context:

Established in the 18th century, the small community of Port Republic provided a central location for Christ Church (NR-343), one of the two early Calvert County parishes. The Port Republic community benefited from the rich soils for tobacco farming, and the

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MHT Comments:

Jim [Signature] ✓
 Reviewer, Office of Preservation Services
[Signature]
 Reviewer, National Register Program

9/15/08
 Date
9/15/08
 Date

close proximity to the Chesapeake Bay. Like much of Maryland, tobacco once dominated the Calvert County's agricultural landscape. The County's reliance on the crop is reflected in the use of a tobacco leaf of the County flag. In 1817, the shipping of tobacco (and other goods) in Calvert County was facilitated in part by Captain George Weems. George Weems utilized a steam-powered line, called the Weems Steamship Line, as the principle carrier between the Port of Baltimore and southern Maryland up until 1894 (Stein 1960: 169). George Weems may be a distant relative of the current owner, Maurice Weems though no direct relation was discovered during this research.

In 1990, a study was completed in the county documenting more than 150 tobacco barns, though the three Weems barns were not included in this study. Many tobacco barns, dating from the mid-19th century and 20th century are located in the Port Republic area. The barns vary in size, form, and construction period, though share the same purpose to shelter and dry tobacco leaves. Though construction techniques changed throughout the centuries, the basic form of a barn separated by bays with the upper levels occupied by numerous drying racks, in addition to provisions for air circulation, are consistent features of the tobacco barn. Tobacco barns were designed to provide an open and ventilated interior with long poles spanning the cavernous space on which to hang drying racks. Vertical hinged panels were opened to allow for cross-ventilation. There are some examples in Calvert County of tobacco barns that utilized flue-curing instead of ventilation, though this was not a common practice.

While many other Maryland counties began to diversify crops following the Civil War, Calvert County remained dependant on tobacco farming, though farm sizes decreased. The design and appearance of barns began to change during this period as well when the use of tractors became popular. Barn designs adjusted to accommodate the tractors by placing large doors on the gable ends of the barn to allow the tractors to drive through. By 1945, 85% of the cash value of the county's agricultural output was from tobacco and many tobacco barns continued to be constructed during this time and well after (Henry, et al 1995: 4-2).

The Weems Tobacco Barn Number Two is one of three tobacco barns on the Maurice and Doris Weems property. The barns date from the late 1940s during a time when tobacco farming was declining in the majority of the state, but remained the economic basis of Calvert County. The current 66 acre property was once part of a 130 acre property owned by Maurice's grandparents, John T. and Olive Weems. Following the death of John, the land, used for tobacco farming, was subdivided amongst their children in 1941. According to the current owner, Maurice Weems, his uncles Nelson and Archie operated a tobacco farm on the property, and hired Mr. John Mister, a local builder, to construct the three barns. Archie Weems also had his own small farm, where the Archie Weems tobacco barn once stood (CT- 168). In 1984, the 66 acres were deeded to Maurice and Doris Weems from Maurice's uncles Nelson and Archie Weems. The barn and surrounding tobacco fields were rented out until the year 2000, when the state of Maryland instituted a voluntary tobacco buy-out program to transition farmers out of tobacco production forever. The barn is currently used for storage.

Statement of Significance

The Weems Tobacco Barn Number Two is considered eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A.

Constructed in the late 1940s, the Weems Tobacco Barn Number Two is an architectural reference to the traditional tobacco farming culture of the Weems family and southern Maryland. The barn was constructed during a time when farms in central and northern Maryland were diversifying crops and moving away from tobacco farming. Though Solomon's Island Road bisects the property and has isolated the Weems Barn on a segment of land that no longer retains integrity of setting, feeling and association, the barn remains as a physical representation on the landscape of the dominant presence of tobacco farming during this later time period. This barn is directly associated with the events and trends that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of the local history of Calvert County, thus qualifying it for eligibility under Criterion A. The property is not associated with any person or group of persons of outstanding importance to the community, state, or nation. Therefore, the barn is not eligible under

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Criterion B. The barn embodies distinctive characteristics of mid-20th century tobacco barn, though is a somewhat ubiquitous type. The barn is also not associated with a farm or farmhouse, and is no longer utilized as a tobacco barn and is therefore not considered eligible under Criterion C. The barn was not evaluated under Criterion D. Therefore, it has been recommended that the Weems Tobacco Barn Number Two is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A.

The historic boundary of the barn is defined as the property line along MD 509 to the northeast, the property line within the MD 2/4 and Saint Leonard Road to the south, MD 2/4 to the southwest and the property line southeast of the MD 509 connector road to the west of the barn. This boundary also includes CT-1318, the Weems Tobacco Barn Number One, which contributes to the historic setting of the property. The collapsed Weems Tobacco Barn Number Three is also located within the historic boundaries of Weems Tobacco Barns Two (CT-1319) though it is not considered eligible and does not contribute to the historic setting of the barn. This boundary also includes former tobacco fields surrounding the barn to provide a historic setting and landscape buffer from the roadways.

References:

Stein, Charles Francis. A History of Calvert County, Maryland, Charles F. Stein and the Calvert County Historical Society, Baltimore, 1960.

Henry, Geoffrey, Stephan Del Sordo, and Friedman, Janet. Historic Sites Context Study and National Register Evaluation for Calvert County, Maryland, 1995.

Weems, Maurice A. Jr. Telephone interview conducted by the Author on July 15, 2008.

U.S. Federal Census records of 1920 and 1930

Calvert County Land Records

12/28/1999, 1236/233: Nelson K. Weems to Maurice Weems (Estate No. 6655 in Orphans Court). Nelson left a will Jan. 9, 1999 death.

8/29/1984, 1236/252: Nelson and Archie Weems to Maurice A. Jr. and Doris Weems (66 acres) (Uncle to Nephew)

8/29/1984, ABE 324/89: Archie Weems to Nelson Weems (97 acres) via will

7/24/1981, ABE 276/497: Archie and Nelson Weems deeded 27 acres to SHA

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MHT Comments:

Reviewer, Office of Preservation Services

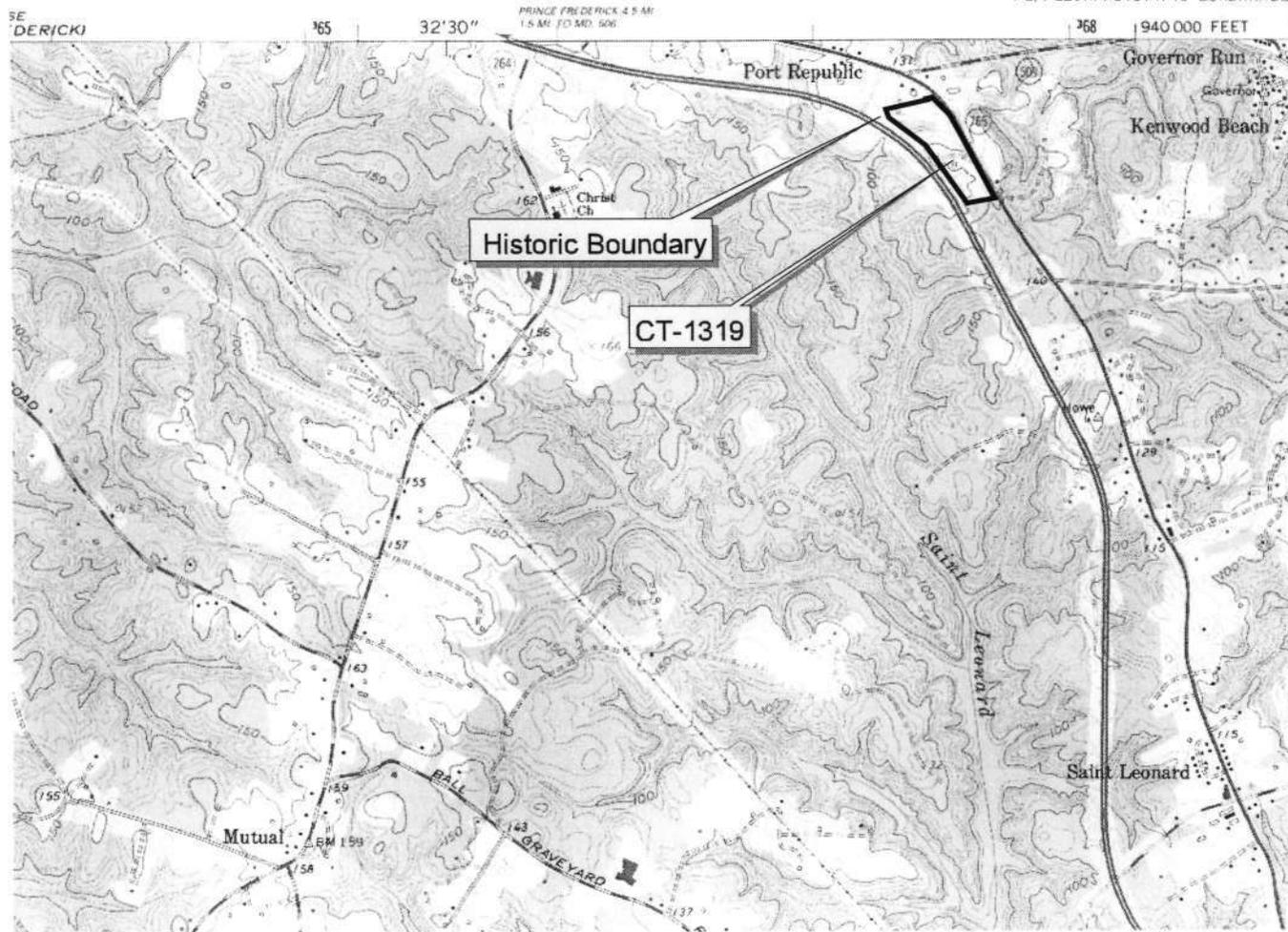
Date

Reviewer, National Register Program

Date

CT-1319 Weems Tobacco Barn Number Two 2815 Solomon's Island Road, Port Republic, MD Calvert County, MD

BROOMES ISLAND QUADRANGLE
MARYLAND
7.5 MINUTE SERIES (TOPOGRAPHIC)
NE/4 LEONARDTOWN 15' QUADRANGLE





GT-1319

Weems Tobacco Barn No. 2

Calvert CO., MD

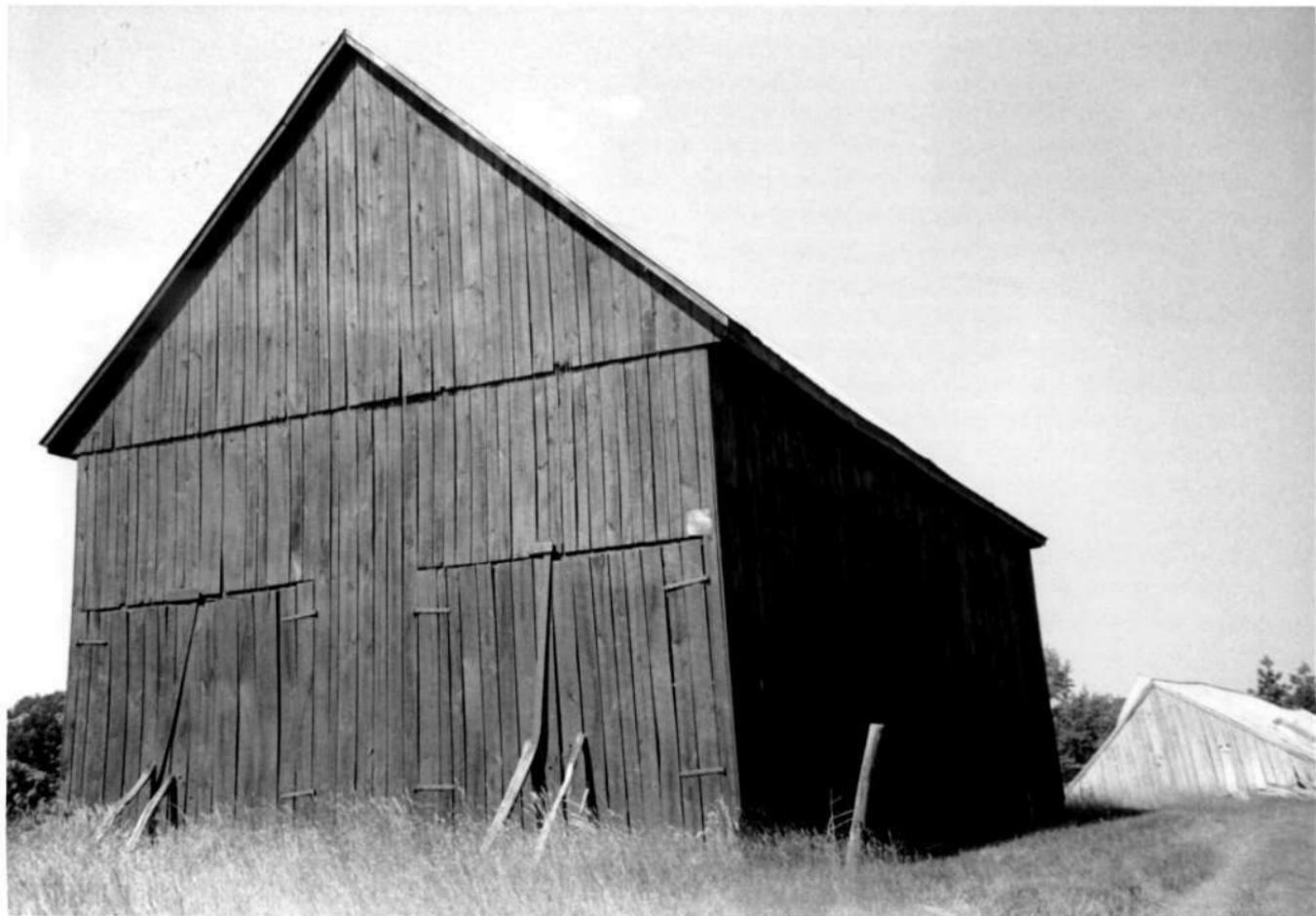
SHA

June 2008

MD SHPO

View of the front (east) elevation

1/5



CT-B19

Weems Tobacco Barn No. 2

Calvert Co., MD

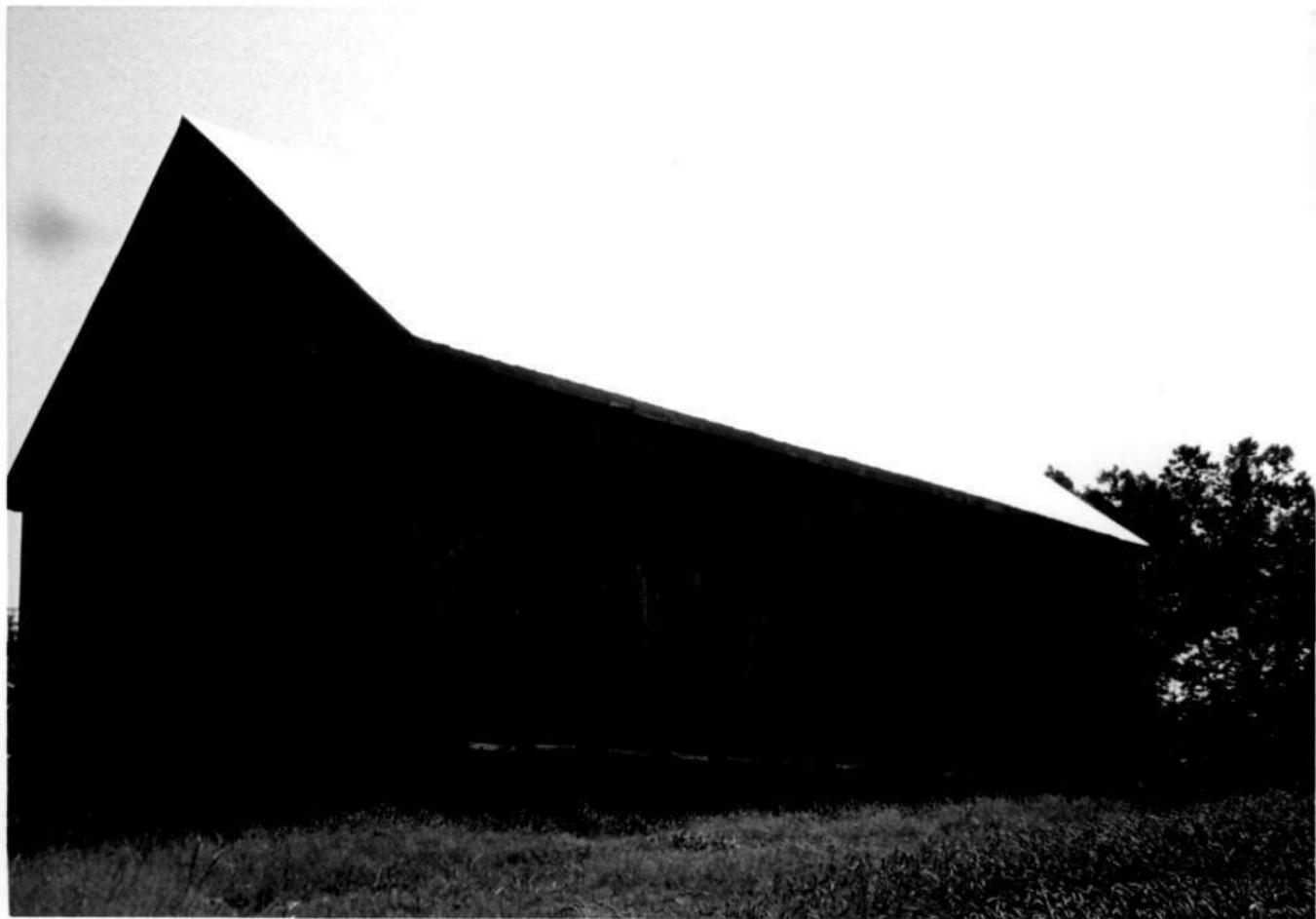
SHA

June 2008

MD SHPO



Views of the East and North (side)
elevation.



CT-1319

Neems Tobacco Barn No. 2

Calvert Co., MD

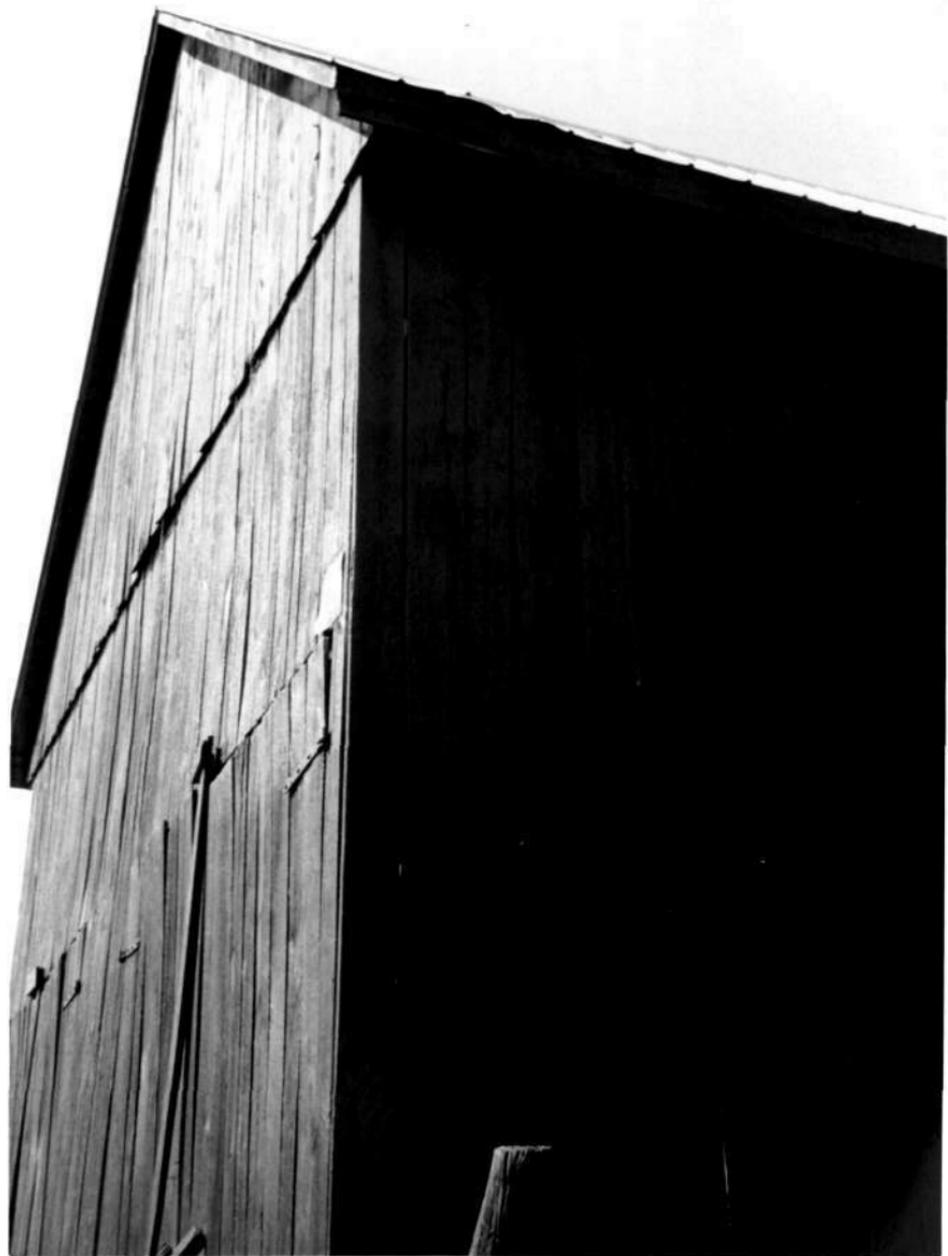
SHA

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MD SHPO

View of the south side of the barn,

3/5.



GT-1319

Weems Tobacco Barn No. 2

Calvert Co., MD

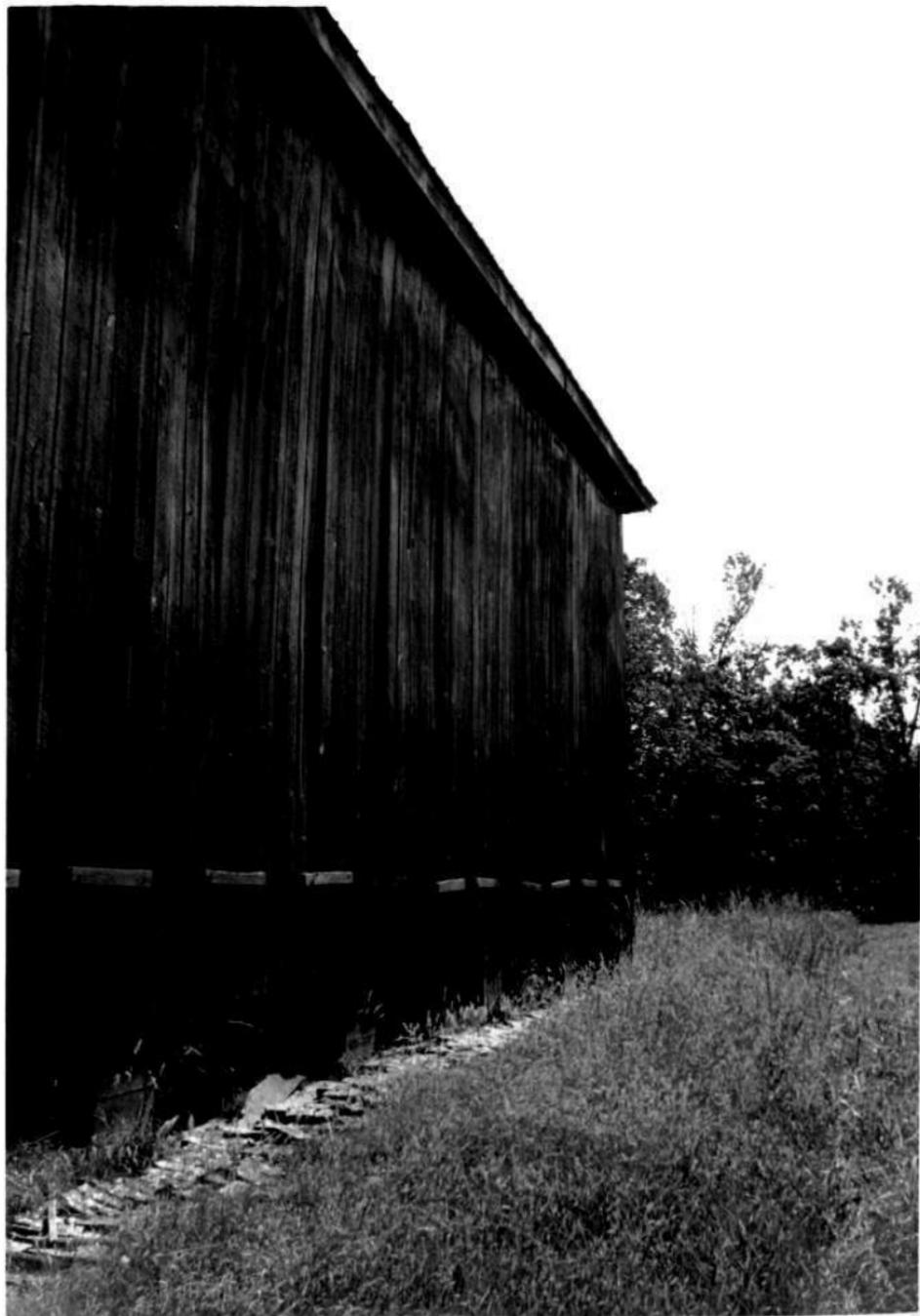
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View of the north side ventilation
panels.

4/5



CT-1319

Meems Tobacco Barn No. 2

Calvert Co., MD

SHA

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MD SHPO

View of the north elevation
foundation.

5/5