

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Type all entries complete applicable sections)

STATE: Maryland
 COUNTY: Calvert
 FOR NPS USE ONLY
 ENTRY DATE

1. NAME
 COMMON: Preston-on-the-Patuxent
 AND/OR HISTORIC:

2. LOCATION
 STREET AND NUMBER: Terminus of Turner Road, 1/2 mile Southeast of Sollers Mill Rd.
 CITY OR TOWN: Lusby CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT: First
 STATE: Maryland CODE: 24 COUNTY: Calvert CODE: 009

3. CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input type="checkbox"/> District <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Structure <input type="checkbox"/> Object	<input type="checkbox"/> Public <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both	Public Acquisition: <input type="checkbox"/> In Process <input type="checkbox"/> Being Considered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress
PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)			
<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial <input type="checkbox"/> Educational <input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> Government <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial <input type="checkbox"/> Military <input type="checkbox"/> Museum	<input type="checkbox"/> Park <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private Residence <input type="checkbox"/> Religious <input type="checkbox"/> Scientific	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) <input type="checkbox"/> Comments

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY
 OWNER'S NAME: Dr. John H. Cumberland
 STREET AND NUMBER: 4200 Clagett Road
 CITY OR TOWN: Hyattsville STATE: Maryland CODE: 24

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION
 COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.: Calvert County Courthouse
 STREET AND NUMBER:
 CITY OR TOWN: Prince Frederick STATE: Maryland CODE: 24

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS
 TITLE OF SURVEY: Maryland Historical Trust-St. Mary's City Commission Summer Survey of Tidewater Maryland Architecture
 DATE OF SURVEY: 1973 Federal State County Local
 DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS: St. Mary's City Commission
 STREET AND NUMBER:
 CITY OR TOWN: St. Mary's City STATE: Maryland CODE: 24

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7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION	(Check One)					
	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> Ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> Unexposed
	(Check One)			(Check One)		
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Altered	<input type="checkbox"/> Unaltered	<input type="checkbox"/> Moved	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Original Site		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (If known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Preston-on-the-Patuxent is located at the terminus of Turner Road, one-half mile south of Appeal Sollers Road, Lusby, Calvert County. Attractively situated overlooking the Patuxent River, it is a modest one and one-half story brick house that has had several later additions made to it.

The main part of the house, the earliest section still standing, faces southwest. Its principal facade is five bays wide and there are three pedimented dormer windows on the front roof slope. The four windows of the first floor, all slightly altered from their original dimensions, have flat arches of stretcher brick, nine over six doublehung sash, and surrounds that stylistically date from about the mid-eighteenth century. The main entrance door occupies a central position on the facade and was originally sheltered by a brick, one-story, pedimented porch that is believed to have been removed around the middle of the nineteenth century; the broken brick on the facing of the wall is still discernable, as is the porch ceiling line. (This porch is similar to that which once existed at "Parrott's Cage," further up-river from Preston-on-the-Patuxent, and also in Calvert County). The doorway, with a molded surround identical to those of the windows, frames an eight panel double door. At the base of the house is an eleven course watertable with an upper course of quarter round brick. Below each of the two end windows is a small wood barred cellar window. Fronting the main entrance is a brick stoop of relatively recent construction. The three dormers appear to be later additions, possibly introduced as late as a 1903 "restoration" of the house by Hulbert Footner. This opinion is based primarily on the fact that the original roof framing did not allow a proper spacing of the rafters on which dormers could be positioned. There are no marks on the rafters excepting those contemporary to the existing windows and the half rafters that were inserted to provide for their support date from this same period. At each end of the roof ridge are single enclosed chimneys and the eaves cornice is boxed and has double ogee and beaded moldings.

Although the brick of the facade is laid in Flemish bond, the end and rear walls are of common bond. Each of the end walls are broken by two small closet windows at the first floor and two smaller windows within the attic gable. The rear wall originally had but one opening, a door located toward the southeast end of the wall, that was later changed to a window. The lack of any other pre-1903 openings on this wall strongly suggests that there may have been an extension to the house in this area, probably one of frame construction, which the existing 1917 additions replaced.

(See Continuation Sheet #1)

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

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(Continuation Sheet) #1

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#7 Description (Continued)

The first floor plan initially consisted of a hall and parlor, divided by what is believed to have been a paneled partition wall. Both of the two rooms had paneled outside end walls with expansive fireplace openings, each chimney flanked by a small closet and an enclosed stair. The walls may have also been paneled or wainscoted, most probably the latter. When Preston-on-the-Patuxent was renovated by Footner the partition wall between the hall and parlor was removed, as was the paneling on the two fireplace walls. The woodwork was then reworked to provide for fully paneled side walls. Both of the chimneys were exposed and their coarse brickwork left untreated. The closets and shelves were removed, although evidence of both remain clearly identifiable. The two stairs were replaced by a single stair of the same basic design which is positioned in the northeast corner of the now single large room. In the attic are two rooms and a short hall. These attic rooms retain a mixture of early and mid-nineteenth century trim and hardware.

There is a full cellar beneath the house, revealing massive summers, tie beams, and joists beneath the first floor. A similar use of unusually large framing members is seen in the attic where six by six inch principal rafters separate the common rafters into sets of four.

The two-part rear wing of the house, giving it its present ell shaped plan, was built by Footner about 1917. Both their interior and exterior plans harmonize well with the basic plan of the earlier part of the structure. The wing contains a dining room, kitchen, bedrooms, and baths.

While Preston-on-the-Patuxent has a traditional construction date of circa 1651, there is no structural evidence to indicate a date earlier than about 1725. Judging from a comparison of its various construction features and detail with other similar houses in the region, a probable date of the second quarter of the eighteenth century appears more realistic.

There is a possibility that all or part of the brick shell may be earlier than the structural framing--as at Ocean Hall in St. Mary's County--but because the framing members so closely relate to the construction features of the brick walls it appears highly unlikely. Nevertheless, the plan of Preston-on-the-Patuxent is of interest, particularly in regard to the original front porch, and provides a useful example for the study of Tidewater Maryland vernacular architecture.

8. SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

<input type="checkbox"/> Pre-Columbian:	<input type="checkbox"/> 16th Century	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 18th Century	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 20th Century
<input type="checkbox"/> 15th Century	<input type="checkbox"/> 17th Century	<input type="checkbox"/> 19th Century	

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known)

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

<input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal	<input type="checkbox"/> Education	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Political	<input type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning
<input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> Engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> Religion/Phi-	<input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify)
<input type="checkbox"/> Historic	<input type="checkbox"/> Industry	osophy	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> Invention	<input type="checkbox"/> Science	_____
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> Landscape	<input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Art	Architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> Social/Human-	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> Literature	itarian	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Communications	<input type="checkbox"/> Military	<input type="checkbox"/> Theater	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> Music	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation	_____

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

Preston-on-the-Patuxent is popularly, if erroneously, known as the seat of the government of Maryland from 1654 to 1657 during the Puritan regime. The extant structure holds no architectural evidence to indicate that it dates to the mid-seventeenth century. However, documentation has been uncovered which places the structure in the second quarter of the eighteenth century making the-building an important example of the type of dwelling erected by Maryland's affluent tobacco planters. Documentation of any thesis about the property is difficult owing to the absence of Calvert County records prior to the 1870's. Provincial records which were kept on the capital do provide some source material prior to 1776.

The belief that Preston-on-the-Patuxent was the "capitol" comes from evidence that the Council, the Assembly and the Provincial Court met "at Patuxent" in the 1650's. Richard Preston, a participant in each of the three bodies, most probably hosted their meetings in his dwelling located near the Patuxent River. Preston's prominence in the Puritan community propelled him to a position of leadership of the government. After the restoration of the Calverts (1657-1658) Preston continued his political career as a member of the assembly. He changed his religious beliefs becoming a Quaker. George Fox purportedly visited Preston "at Patuxent." Preston died in 1669 leaving his extensive landholdings to his grandson Samuel Preston, who abandoned his Maryland inheritance for Pennsylvania where he became a mayor of Philadelphia.

By the 1680's Preston, the four hundred tract containing Richard Preston's dwelling, belonged to Nathaniel Ashcomb who lived elsewhere. After Ashcomb died (1687) his daughter and son-in-law Alexander Parran became the owners. Parran's inventory of 1729 describes a house similar to the configuration of Preston-on-the-Patuxent. Two decades later Young Parran was the owner of the property; after his death in 1772 his son Richard Parran inherited Preston.

(See Continuation Sheet #2)

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(Continuation Sheet) # 2

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#8
Significance (Continued)

The Parran family came to Calvert County at the beginning of the eighteenth century. Their prominence centers in local affairs. Young Parran was a county judge. Richard Parran served as a justice of the peace and a judge of the orphans' court; he participated in the administration of county affairs during the Revolution.

The history of Preston-on-the-Patuxent becomes more obscure in the nineteenth century. An 1827 map indicates that someone named Gant lived in the house. The transfer from the Parrans is usually explained locally through the marriage of Richard Parran's daughter to John Gant. The Gant family remained at the house for half a century.

For an equal period of time in the present century Hulbert Footner owned the house. An author, Footner wrote about his house and its environs in a book entitled Charles' Gift. Footner named the house Charles' Gift confusing the Patuxent River property with a tract of land Richard Preston owned on the Chesapeake Bay. Just as Footner altered the history of the house to suit his view of seventeenth century Maryland, so he altered the structure itself. He removed the partition in order to create the environment in which he believed Richard Preston hosted the Puritan government. Footner's approach to seventeenth century Maryland as evidenced in his book and his alterations to the structure illustrate the early twentieth century's view of our beginnings. His contemporary preservationists would have supported Footner's romantic description of the council meetings at Preston-on-the-Patuxent with both fireplaces blazing. Although such an approach to historic structures is laughable today, it represents the spirit in which the preservation movement began.

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Albert, Major J. J. and Major J. Kearny. "Map of the Patuxent and St. Mary's Rivers, Maryland." Surveyed 1824. Issue 1837. Assessments of 1783. Calvert County. Calvert County Land Records. Debt Books. Calvert County. Probate Records (Wills, Inventories, Accounts, Testamentary Papers).

(See Continuation Sheet No. 3)

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

Table with columns for Latitude and Longitude Coordinates. Left side: 'LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY'. Right side: 'LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES'. Includes sub-columns for Corner (NW, NE, SE, SW) and Degrees/Minutes/Seconds.

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: 52 acres

Table with columns: STATE, CODE, COUNTY, CODE. Header: 'LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES'. Multiple rows for listing overlapping jurisdictions.

FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE: Nancy Miller, Historian, and J. Richard Rivoire, Field Surveyor sh
ORGANIZATION: Maryland Historical Trust DATE: 1/74
STREET AND NUMBER: 2525 Riva Road
CITY OR TOWN: Annapolis STATE: Maryland 21401 CODE: 24

12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

As the designated State Liaison Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

National State Local

Name Orlando Ridout IV
Orlando Ridout, IV

Title State Historic Preservation Officer

Date May 3, 1974

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register.

Director, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date _____

ATTEST:

Keeper of The National Register

Date _____

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(Continuation Sheet) #3

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STATE	
Maryland	
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#9 Major Bibliographical References (Continued)

Provincial Court Deeds.
Rent Rolls. Calvert County.

Secondary Sources:

Briscoe, Betty Worthington. Know Your County. 1954.
Files of the Maryland Historical Trust, Annapolis, Maryland.
Footner, Hulbert. Charles' Gift A Salute A Maryland House of
1650. New York: Harper and Brothers, 1939.
Stein, Charles Francis. History of Calvert County. n.p.: the
Author and Calvert County Historical Society. 1960.

5600 (NE ISLAND)
(BROOMES ISLAND)

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
GEOLOGICAL SURVEY

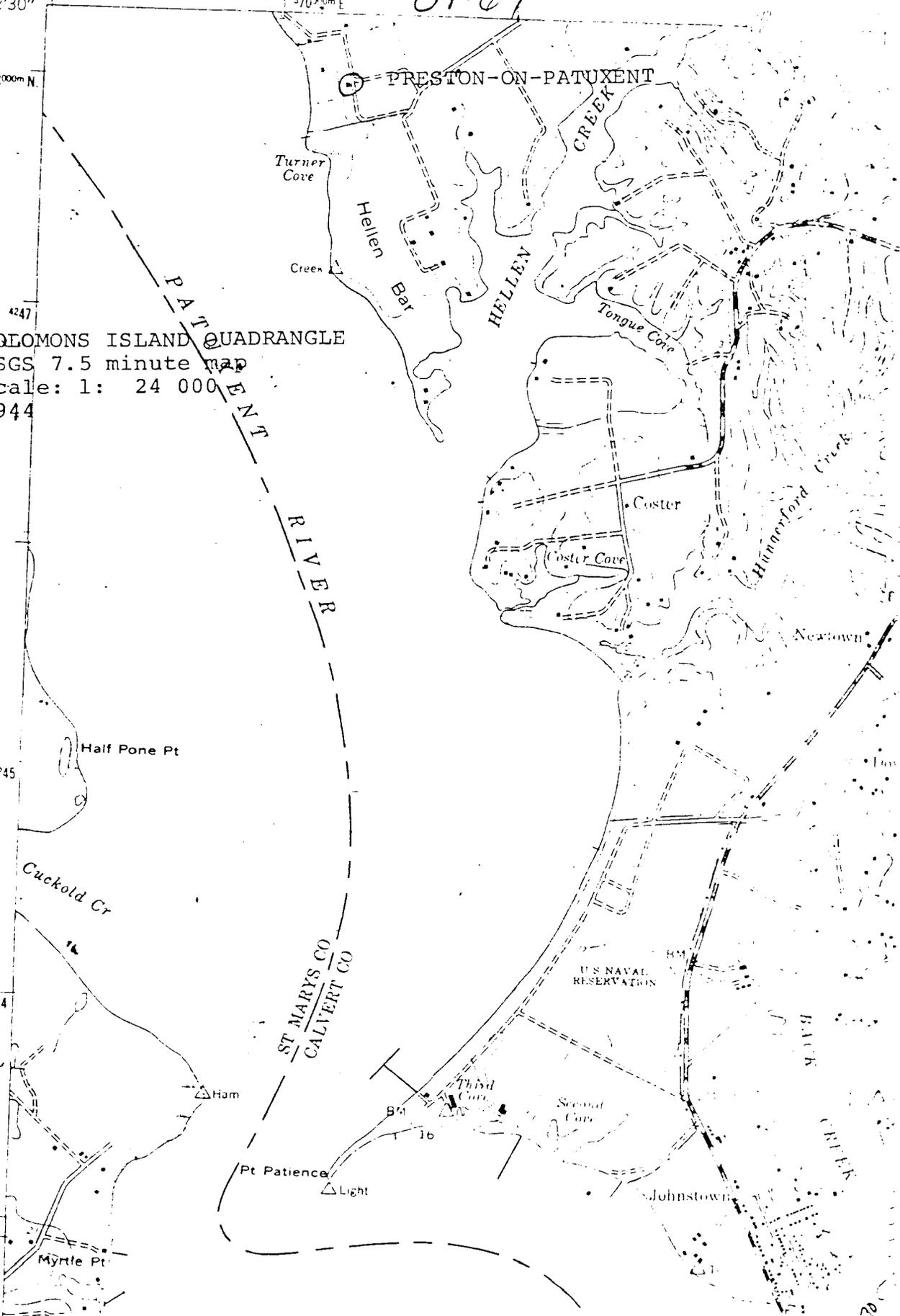
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76°30'
38°22'30"

3700m E

4248000m N

SOLOMONS ISLAND QUADRANGLE
USGS 7.5 minute map
scale: 1: 24 000
1944



** (CT-64 PRESTON-ON-THE-PATUXENT) **

Charles' Gift

*Salute
to a Maryland House
of 1650*

By HULBERT FOOTNER

ILLUSTRATED



HARPER & BROTHERS *Publishers*

New York and London

1939



Photo by Paul Braun

Charles' Gift in April

"Between the trees the plain old house of whitewashed brick looks out with its row of tall windows downstairs and three dormers in the steep roof, a big chimney at each end. It is a full century older than the handsome dwellings we are accustomed to term 'colonial' and it has no architectural pretensions except in its harmonious proportions."

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Photo by Paul Braun

*"The dreamed-of stairway with wide, shallow steps
and its big window framing the pear tree."*

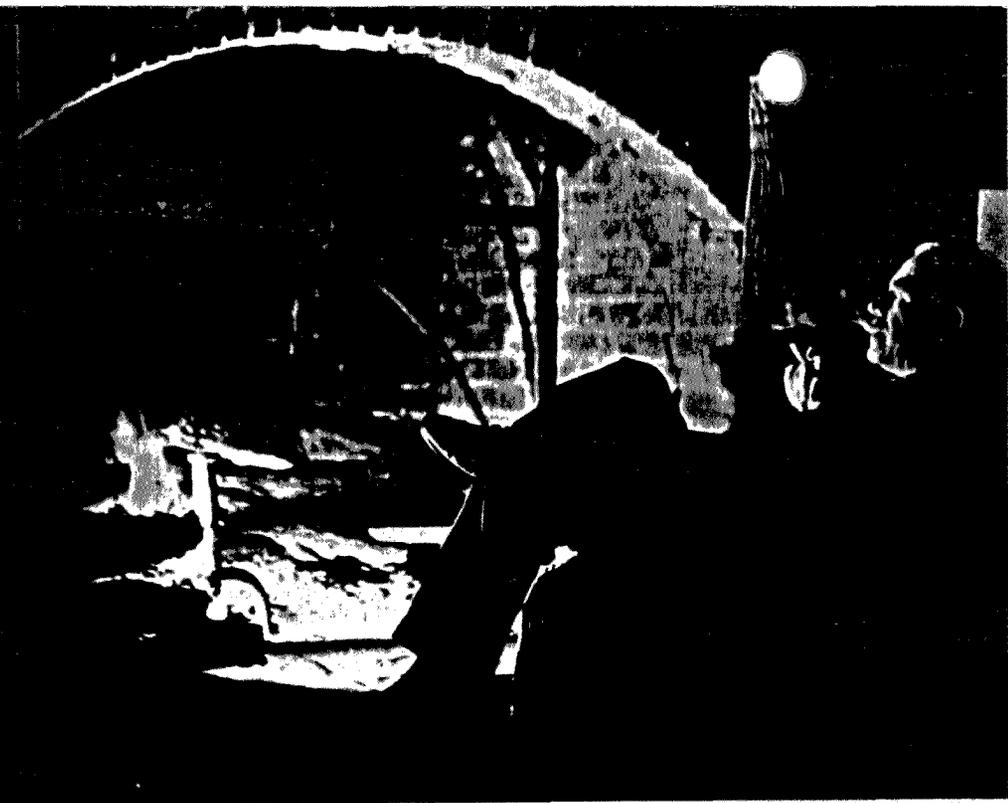


Photo by Paul B

*"In the big room at night the stillness is like balm
to the spirit. The far end of the room is lost in shadow;
a chair creaks to remind you that there is still sound
in the world, or a mouse scratches delicately behind
the wainscot."*

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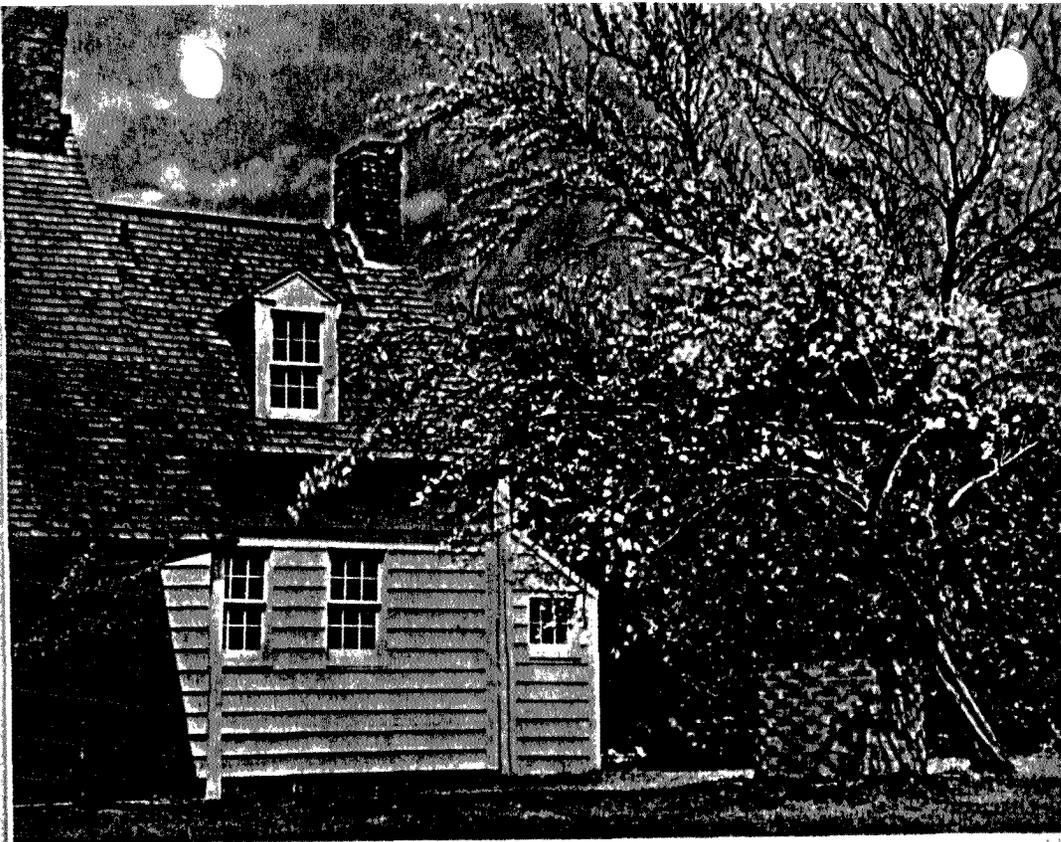


Photo by Paul Brann

*"The ancient Abundance plum which hangs over
the well in the side yard is always the first to bloom.
More than once we have had the choice experience
of seeing it bloom in a snowstorm; plum petals
vying with snowflakes."*

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Photo by Paul Brann

An end window in the big room looking south

*"It has windows in each of its four sides, each offering
a different rural vista. It's a help (to an author) to
have something pleasant to look at out of the window."*



Photo by Paul Braun

From the dormer in my bedroom; northwest wind on the river

"That little hollow used to be choked up with verdure, but lately I worked myself up to the point of clearing it and revealing the seascape to the house."

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Photo by Paul Braun

April sunset

"The house is built foursquare with the compass and the front windows look due west. Very fine sunset effects over the river especially when the trees are bare."

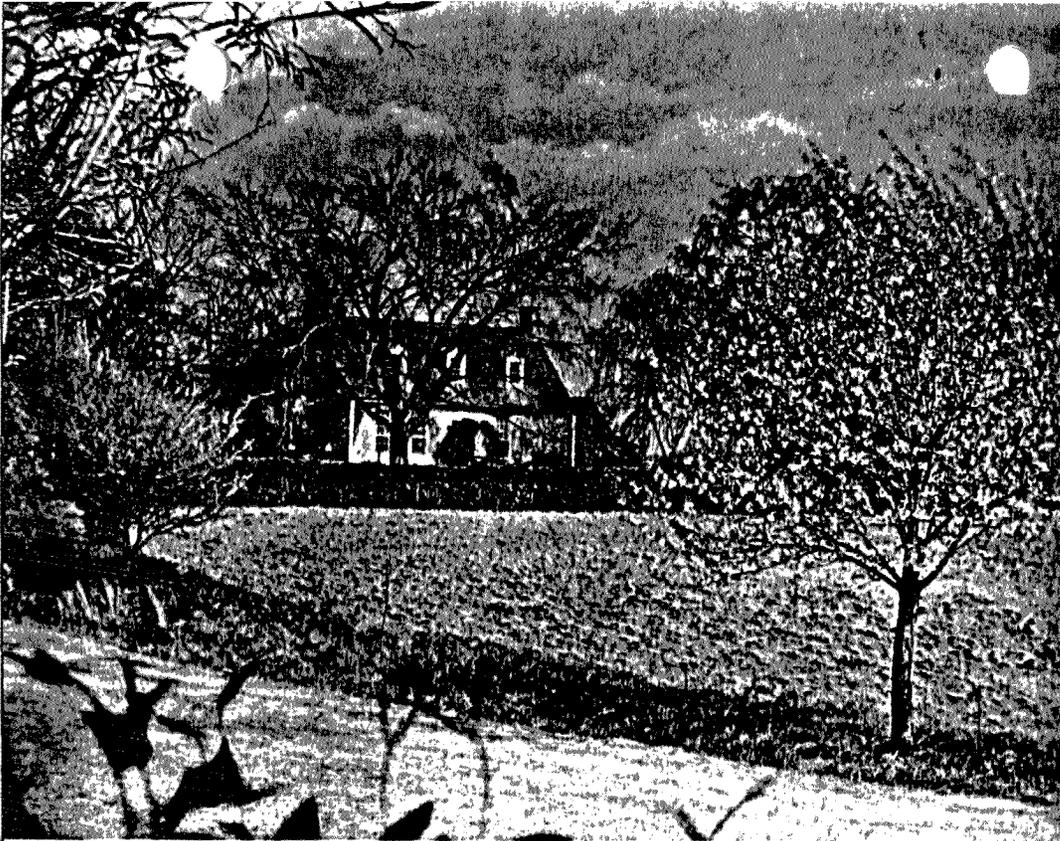


Photo by Paul Braun

The main house from the porch of the cottage

"The front yard is bounded by a dark arbor vitae hedge, and behind the hedge rise the big trees that I am so ridiculously fond of because I planted them myself; a pair of wide-spreading elms and a willow that looks a hundred years old whereas its real age is less than a quarter of that."

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Photo by Arthur Mooney

191 Easter oil plants and the miracle offspring. Nurse Ellen hiding behind the chair.

Photo by Arthur Mooney

1920

"We now had little naked children running up and down the beach at Charles' Gift, their pale, pretty bodies making a perfect complement to the white sand and the verdant background."





Photo by Historic American Buildings Survey

The south front including the "Casa de Playhouse"

"The first principle I laid down (in building the new wing) was that everything must be copied from the existing house; height, width and pitch of the roof; chimneys, dormers, even porch posts."

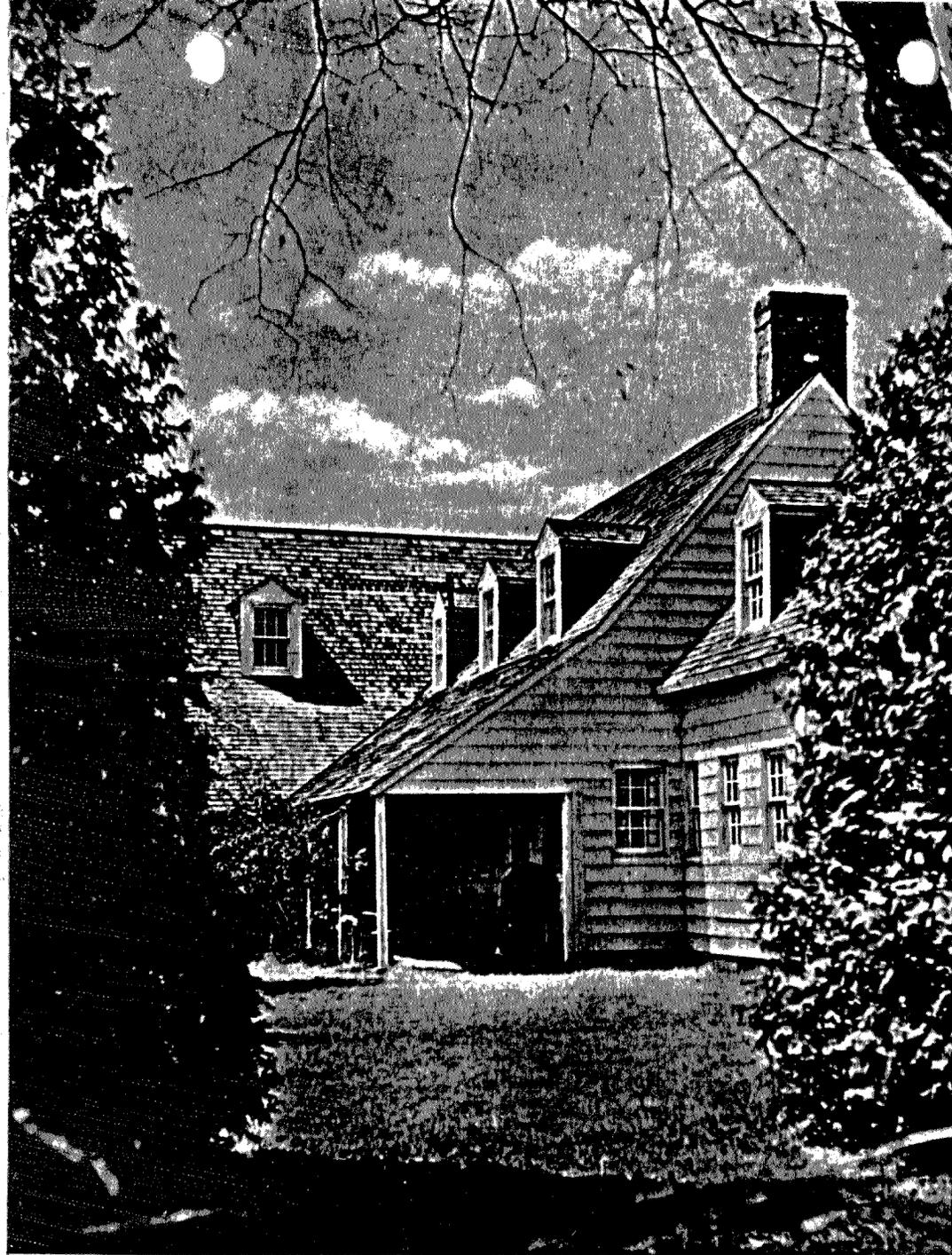
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Photo by Historic American Buildings Survey

The north end of the big room

"Each fireplace is big enough to make your bed in. The fact that they were not constructed by compass and plumb line gives them a special charm. They draw in towards the ceiling with many a casual curve and bulge. Both arches are a little cockeyed and one is bigger than the other."

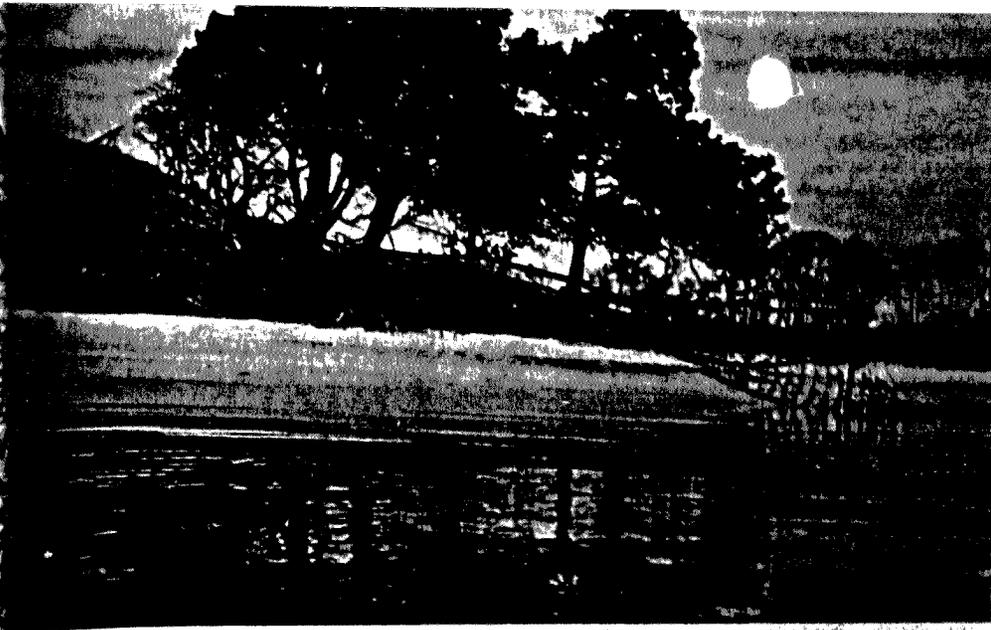


The break in the arbor vitae screen

"It serves the purpose of giving us a glimpse of arriving guests in time to make hasty adjustments."

Photo by Paul Brann

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The south end of the beach

"A nameless cove with its trees mirrored in the water . . . our boundary on that side is marked by a group of old eccentric cedars ever grateful to the eye."

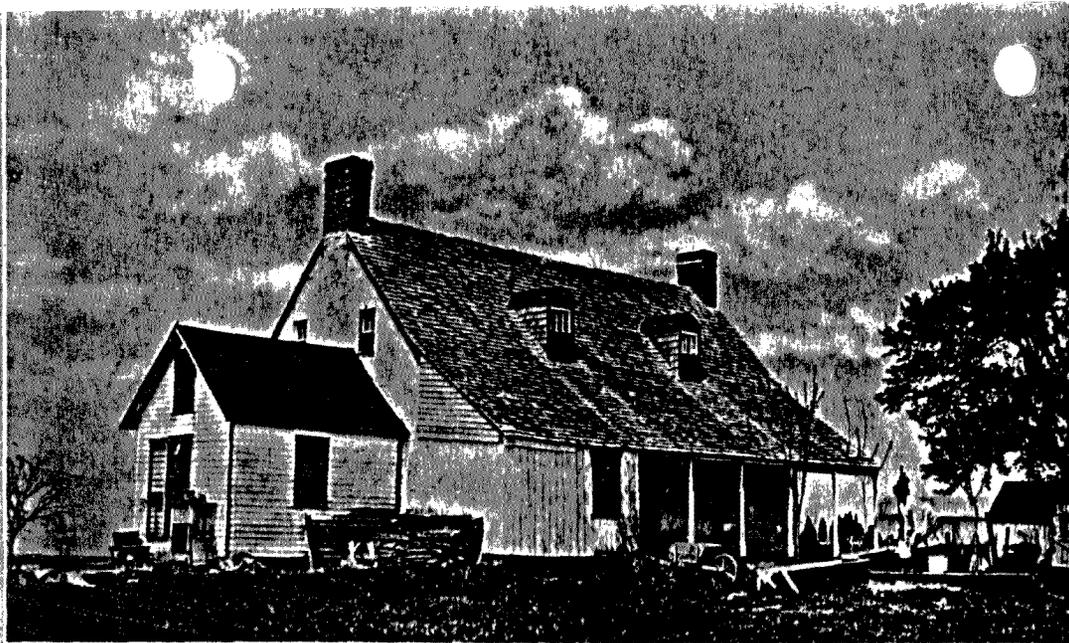
Photo by Arthur M.



In 1916 following the tornado

"The old house stood naked in the plowed earth with its single tree . . . to the left an ancient pear tree taller than the house."

Photo by Arthur M.



1915 After the tornado

"Every tree was blown down with the exception of the old pear."

Photo by Arthur Mooney



1915 The newly built cottage

"I have to pass it every time I go to the river, and that damned roofline has reproached me for twenty-three years."

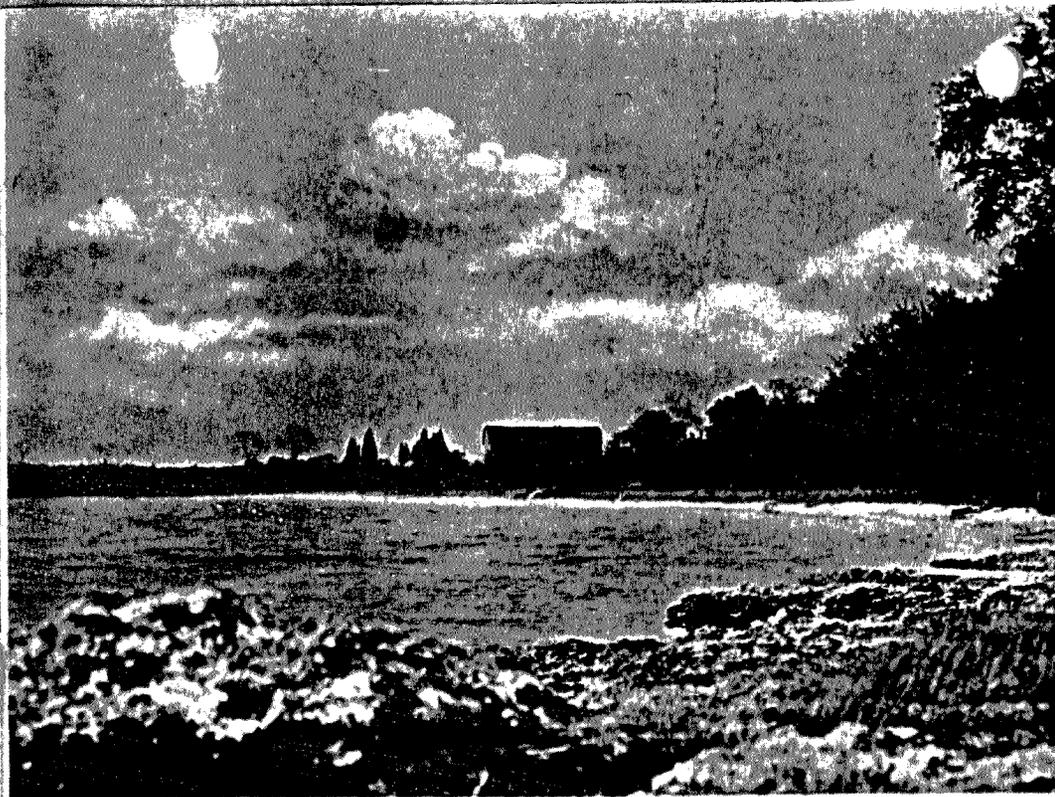
Photo by Arthur Mooney



1918 The cottage as seen from the beach

"Back of the beach stretches a small flat with a few locust trees and black walnuts festooned with honeysuckle. The bog myrtle grows here, also the big showy flowers of the marsh mallow pink or white."

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The beach at high tide, 1928; Fred Hampton's alfalfa barn in the distance

"A unique point of rock—there is no other rock anywhere about, which has the effect of forming a shallow curving bay beyond . . . a green and wooded bank."

Chapter I

ON THE FIRST OF APRIL EVERY YEAR I COME HOME. IN southern Maryland the sun is already striking warmly into the brown earth and the naked woods. Early spring has a bad name, but it is a pity to miss any of the show, the boisterous opening numbers have such delicate intermezzi. Our county, Calvert, is a long peninsula lying between Chesapeake Bay and the estuary of the Patuxent River, but during the whole journey down there is no place from which you can see big water, until you come to the brow of the last hill. Here, our arm of the sea is sprung on you with the effect of a fine surprise. It is not a very big hill, only a hundred feet, but as there is nothing higher anywhere about, you have all the feeling of being on top of the world. Even strangers are moved to exclaim with pleasure at the peaceful prospect below, and to one family, in summer or winter, in rain or sun, hazy or crystalline, it is the dearest prospect on earth; home lies down there at the edge of the river. The house used to stick up gaunt as a scarecrow; now it is draped with trees. Some of the fields will be in winter wheat and the sheep turned in to graze; green of young wheat, woolly sheep and sapphire blue of the sea; a very ancient effect and as lovely now as it was in the morning of the world.

[1]

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PRESTON-AT-PATUXENT was built in 1650 by Richard Preston, who was called by Gov. Charles Calvert "the Great Quaker". The property was surveyed for him on July 27, 1651. Another property surveyed for him was "Charles' Gift", laid out in 1652 on the Bay shore. "Preston" was the Capitol of Maryland in 1654.

PRESTON-AT-PATUXENT had at one time a "curtain" and kitchen wing, as may be seen in the plan. The present Living Room, which is forty-three feet long, was originally divided by a partition. The panelling is of the Eighteenth Century. The ceiling is very high for such an early house: ten feet and nine inches.



BROOKE PLACE MANOR was built in 1652 by Governor Robert Brooke, Lord of "De La Brooke Manor". It was patented in 1658 for his son Baker Brooke. The original roof line can be traced in the brick. There was a straight gable, with probably two chimneys at either end. Charles Brooke in 1671 left "Brooke Place Manor" to Robert, Baker, and William, sons of his brother, (Gov.) Robert Brooke.

Forman, H. Chandlee

1982 Early Manor and Plantation Houses of Maryland. Baltimore: Bodine & Associates, Inc.



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