

CAR-18

The Plains of Benjamin Sylvester (Site)

Circa 1870's

Ridgely

Semi-public

The Plains was constructed by Mary Purnell Bourne on property inherited from her grandfather, Benjamin Sylvester, who built and resided at White Hall (now Oak Lawn) in the last quarter of the eighteenth century. The Plains was constructed around 1870 as a summer house, but it also possessed many barns and outbuildings of the period. A blend of the "Stick" and Italianate Styles, the house was very well developed with conveniences of the period. It was demolished in the 1970's.

The estate was purchased from Mrs. Bourne's heir, one time editor of the North American Review, Allen Thorndike Rice, by the Sisters of St. Benedict. An academy for educating young women was operated between 1896-1958. It was superseded by the Benedictine School, a facility dedicated to the education and training of the mentally handicapped.

INVENTORY FORM FOR STATE HISTORIC SITES SURVEY

**1 NAME**

HISTORIC

Site of The Plains of Benjamin Sylvester

AND/OR COMMON

St. Gertrude's Academy, Benedictine School

**2 LOCATION**

STREET & NUMBER

Md. Rt. 312, approximately .4 mile north of Sparks Rd.

CITY, TOWN

Ridgely

— VICINITY OF

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

First

STATE

Maryland

COUNTY

Caroline

**3 CLASSIFICATION**

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE <input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL <input type="checkbox"/> PARK
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL <input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	<b>PUBLIC ACQUISITION</b>	<b>ACCESSIBLE</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT <input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input 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

St. Gertrude's Academy

Telephone #:

STREET & NUMBER

The Benedictine Sisters

CITY, TOWN

Ridgely

— VICINITY OF

STATE, zip code

Maryland 21660

**5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE,

REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Caroline County Courthouse

Liber #: 51

Folio #: 451

STREET & NUMBER

Market Street

CITY, TOWN

Denton

STATE

Maryland 21629

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE

DATE

FEDERAL     STATE     COUNTY     LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE

**7 DESCRIPTION** CAR-18

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

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DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)		Demolished
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION				

SPECIFIC DATES

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Plains of Benjamin Silvester was destroyed by the Benedictine Sisters in the early 1970's. It had been located at St. Gertrude's Academy Benedictine School on Maryland Route 312, .4 mile north of Sparks Road, in the vicinity of Ridgely, Caroline County. Before the demolition of the building, the furnishings and some architectural artifacts were dispersed at a public auction.

Pictures of the frame house show that it was an excellent example of the Victorian style in Caroline County. Particularly appealing is the country interpretations of the exterior ornamentation and wood trim.

Swepson Earle states in Maryland's Colonial Eastern Shore that Mrs. Mary M. Bourne built The Plains, a magnificent summer house, on property that she inherited from her grandfather, Benjamin Silvester. After her death it was converted into St. Gertrude's Convent of the Benedictine Sisters.

**9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES**

Earle, Swepson, Maryland's Colonial Eastern Shore, 1916, p. 172.  
 Caroline County Public Library, vertical files, "Historic Homes".

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

Michael Bourne, Architectural Consultant, & Joe Getty

ORGANIZATION

Maryland Historical Trust

DATE

February, 1977

STREET & NUMBER

Shaw House, 21 State Circle

TELEPHONE

CITY OR TOWN

Annapolis

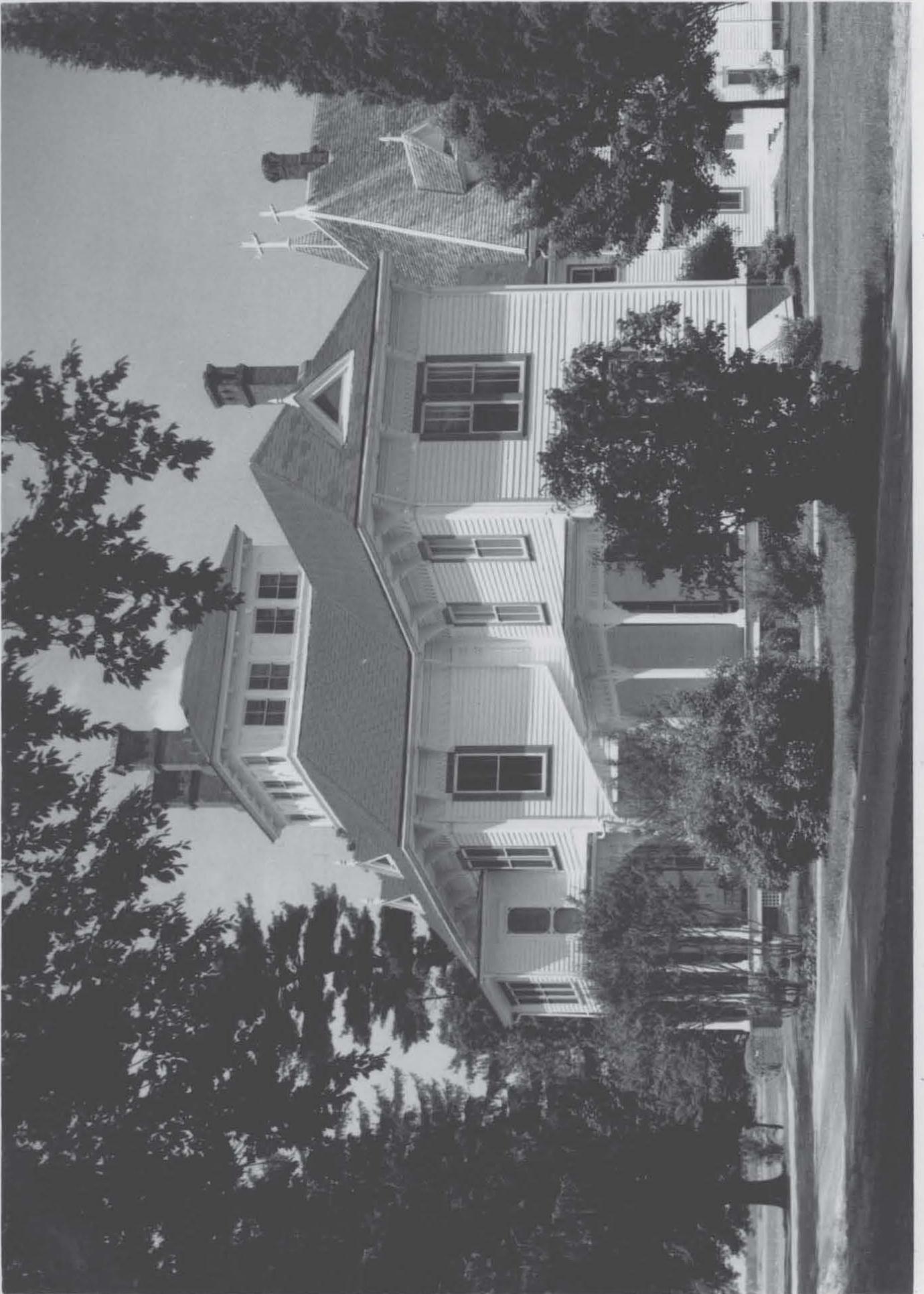
STATE

Maryland 21401

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



Benedictine School

CAR 18

(site)



M. Bourne

5/70