Rich Hill
Bel Alton, Charles County, MD
Circa 1729
Public

Inventory No. CH-177

Capsule Summary

Rich Hill is a side-gable, joined timber frame building that was constructed sometime during the first half of the eighteenth century. Located on Bel Alton-Newtown Road in Charles County, Maryland, Rich Hill is historically significant under National Register Criterion A for its association with the persons and events surrounding the flight of John Wilkes Booth through Charles County, Maryland to Virginia following the assassination of Abraham Lincoln on April 14, 1865. Rich Hill is included in the "Booth Trail," defined by published tour guides and marked by state historical markers that locate all stops Booth made starting with his exit from Ford's Theatre and ending with the barn and house of the Garrett Farm in Virginia where he was shot and killed by Union soldiers.

Rich Hill is also significant under National Register Criterion C for its architectural character. Although greatly altered in the 1970s, its original eighteenth century frame and original interior features, mostly on the second floor, make it a valuable source of information on eighteenth century southern Maryland architecture. The original floor plan was characteristic of the architecture of the Charles and St. Mary's County region throughout the eighteenth century; however it is one of only two known houses with this plan that were initially built as two-story dwellings. Rich Hill was listed on the National Register of Historic Places on November 12, 1975.

Maryland Historical Trust
Maryland Inventory of
Historic Properties Form

Inventory No. CH-177

1. Name of Property (indicate preferred name)

historic	Rich Hill, Rich Hill Farm
other	Samuel Cox Home

2. Location

street and number	9135 Bel Alton-Newtown Road	__	not for publication
city, town	Bel Alton	X	vicinity
county	Charles		

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

name	County Commissioners of Charles County				
street and number	PO Box 2150			telephone	301-645-0580
city, town	La Plata	state	MD	zip code	20646

4. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc.	Charles County Register of Deeds	liber 08503	folio 00516
city, town La Plata, MD	tax map 055-0026	tax parcel 0230	tax ID number 09 04 020774

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
__X__ Historic Structure Report or Research Report at MHT
__X__ Other: Rich Hill National Register Registration Form

6. Classification

Category
_____district
__X__building(s)
_____structure
_____site
_____object

Ownership
__X__public
_____private
_____both

Current Function
_____agriculture
_____commerce/trade
_____defense
__X__domestic
_____education
_____funerary
_____government
_____health care
_____industry
_____landscape
_____recreation/culture
_____religion
_____social
_____transportation
_____work in progress
_____unknown
_____vacant/not in use
_____other:

Resource Count

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	_____	buildings
_____	_____	sites
_____	_____	structures
_____	_____	objects
_____	_____	Total

Number of Contributing Resources previously listed in the Inventory
1

7. Description

Inventory No. CH-177

Condition

___ excellent ___ deteriorated
___ good ___ ruins
X fair ___ altered

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

Rich Hill is a side-gabled, joined timber frame building that was constructed sometime during the first half of the eighteenth century, probably 1729-1730. Although truly a one-and-a-half story dwelling with its rafters extending into the ceiling area of the upper story, from the exterior it appears as a two-story dwelling. The house is located on a 2.43-acre parcel 1-1/2 miles east of Route 301 on the north side of Bel Alton - Newtown Road in Bel Alton, Charles County Maryland. The house is oriented so that the principal façade faces southwest, thus the corners of the house point to the four cardinal directions. It has experienced substantial alterations, first around 1783, then between 1800 and 1849, again in the late-nineteenth century and finally in the late-twentieth century. The property was listed in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) in 1975 at which time the house experienced its most significant alterations. The original nomination form prepared by J. Richard Rivoire was brief and no Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties (MIHP) form was prepared at the time. This inventory form utilizes information gathered during the original NRHP nomination, primary research as well as information gathered during the preparation of an Historic Structures Report (HSR) in 2015-2016.

Exterior

The house appears to have originally been set solely on quarried sandstone block piers. There are also two concrete or perhaps parged stone piers present on each corner of the front of the building. Later brick infill now encloses nearly the entire foundation perimeter and likely now adds support to the framing members. Some of this brick infill was present in the nineteenth century and some appears to be of twentieth century origin.

The principal façade is four bays wide at the first floor level with the main entrance at the bay nearest the south corner. The three remaining first floor bays contain windows and the second floor of this façade has five window bays. The first floor of the rear façade has four bays with a door located at the east corner with the remaining bays being windows. The northwest gable end has a large double chimney with a two-story, windowed pent at the center. Brick is laid in common bond with three rows of stretchers between headers. The chimneys taper above the attic gable line making the two stacks free-standing beginning at the roofline.

The southeast gable end has two windows on each floor. There is a small interior brick chimney on the front roof slope at the southeast gable end. All windows and exterior doors are late-twentieth century replacements. The exterior siding is clapboard that was installed during renovations in the 1970s to simulate riven beveled siding. The roof, which is in stable but poor condition, is clad with asphalt shingles stylized to simulate wood shakes. Beneath the asphalt shingles lie remnants of earlier wood shakes.

Interior

First Floor

The first floor of the interior of the house is divided into four spaces. The front entrance opens into a hall that extends from the front entrance to the rear door. Plywood (oriented strand board or OSB) subflooring in this room, as well as the supporting floor joists are recent replacements by the County. About two-thirds the way from the front to rear entrance is a decorative archway that presumably covers the supporting beam for the second floor joists. The two outside corners of this hallway are rounded rather than having 90-degree corners, whereas the corners at these locations on the second floor had 90-degree corners prior to the removal of modern drywall. The rounded corners on the first floor appear to have been original to the house as the massive corner posts are beveled to accommodate the feature and the framing appears to be original material. A small interior chimney is located on the southeast wall of this hall.

The main room at the front of the house is located immediately to the left upon entering the hall. This room has a fireplace and small closet on the northwest wall within the chimney pent. Flooring in this room, as with the remainder of the first floor, is 4" tongue and groove. The flooring probably dates from the late nineteenth century. The fireplace mantle is similar to other late

eighteenth to mid nineteenth century examples, having Classical motifs including oval paterae and reeding and is probably a replacement mantle from the nineteenth century rather than the original early eighteenth century piece. Doors appear to date from the mid-to-late nineteenth century and the door frames are either late eighteenth century or early nineteenth century with a first layer of casing having beaded edges with some openings having additional built-up architrave trim that may have been added later. Centered on the northeast wall of the main room is an opening leading to the stair hall. A doorway on the northwest side of the stair hall leads to a small bedroom with a second fireplace having a slightly less decorative mantle than that of the large room. The door and trim in this bedroom match those on the rest of the first floor which all appear to be mid nineteenth century replacements.

Tucked beneath the dog-leg stairway is a small water closet that was constructed in the 1970s. The stairs and railing appear to be later replacements from the mid nineteenth and were probably salvaged from another location. The railing has signs of being retrofitted to the staircase and the underside of the railing has numerous holes for balusters that do not line up with any existing balusters and in some cases, the existing balusters utilized the nearest available hole which did not always lead to perfectly plumb balusters. Some early riven lath with plaster remains on the wall beneath the staircase. All principal exterior and interior walls on the first floor have original eighteenth century brick nogging between framing members.

Second Floor

The dog-leg stairs lead to a second floor hall with bedrooms located immediately to the right and left (north and east) corners. Prior to removal of the drywall, the attic was formerly accessed through a 2'x2' opening in the ceiling near the center of the hall. The room on the north corner has a fireplace with brick mantel dating from the 1970s renovations. Eighteenth or early nineteenth century brickwork of the outer hearth still exists but has been covered with brickwork from the 1970s. Any original mantel that may have existed is gone. The new brick fireplace was worked into the original brick chimney. A worker known only as "Russell" dated his work within the mortar to "10/3/75". One modern vinyl clad window is located on each of the two exterior walls. A small closet of 1970s construction is located in this room. The flooring in this room appears to be eighteenth century wide board pine as is true with all flooring on the second floor with the exception of the stairs and stair landings which closely match the original flooring but are comprised of a different species of wood. Baseboard has been removed as part of the process of removing twentieth century drywall, but has been preserved and labeled for inspection. Baseboard consisted of 1"x6" pine with oak quarter round at the floor and ogee molding as a cap. This was typical for the entire second floor. The baseboard appears to be modern replacement material and in some rooms the baseboard overlapped the original door trim. The door frame and trim date from the eighteenth century. The door has raised panels that extend beyond the plane of the rails and stiles. The door in this north corner room appears to have original wrought iron "H" hinges with trefoil patterns at the ends. The room at the east corner of the second floor is virtually identical to the north corner room with the exception of lacking a fireplace.

At the southwest end of the hall lies a small full bathroom that included a ca. 1975 toilet, bathtub and sink. The floor was covered with tile installed in the 1970s. Until its removal, the walls were clad with drywall, but the wall framing, including the interior wall of the bathroom appears to be chestnut with visible ghosts of removed lath. The door and door frame appear to date to the eighteenth century or at the latest, early nineteenth century. The door is identical to other original doors on this floor but it no longer has its wrought iron hinges.

The room at the south corner adjacent to the bathroom is similar to the other two rooms with original door and door trim, replacement windows and late twentieth century closet. The interior chimney in the first floor hall extends through this room to the attic, but no longer pierces the roof. This chimney has a terra-cotta lining and 4" opening into the room to accommodate a stovepipe. The room opposite the hall at the west corner is nearly identical to the room at the north corner, having original door trim but its entrance door is of nineteenth century construction. This room has a small closet within the pent section of the

chimney with an eighteenth century door identical to the other original doors on the second floor. The additional closet opposite the small closet dating to the 1970s renovations was removed in 2015.

The wall and ceiling junctions of each of the four bedrooms on the second floor were originally vaulted. The ceiling corners were boxed in during the 1975 renovations with drywall. This drywall and modern framing was removed in late July of 2015. Now visible are original remnants of roof rafters that were once covered with lath and plaster on the front and rear sides of the house with matching smaller dimension boards on the other sides of the bedrooms, creating an unusual vaulted ceiling that sloped down to the walls on each side. Although the smaller vaulting boards have been removed from the center wall of each room, evidence by way of nail holes, remaining forged nails, wood and ghosts of plaster and lath lines remain.

Roof and Framing

The roof is gabled, having 2-1/2" x 6" pit sawn rafters. They are spaced between 27" and 30" apart. Roof rafters are joined at the peak with bridle joints and pegs. Collar ties are joined with half dovetail joints and pegs at the midpoint of each rafter. Each rafter is set on a 2"x6" false plate which is itself set on 3-1/2" square outriggers that are attached to the original wall top plates with wooden pegs.

The present roof rafters appear to have been added during a later renovation. The lower portion of the original hewn rafters and original collar ties remain and continue to act as supports for the vaulted ceiling. At the south corner of the building, a single remaining section of a hip rafter remains in place with some connecting rafters intact. The outriggers and false plate may have once supported a flared roof configuration.

The oldest framing exhibits evidence of being axe hewn and smoothed with an adze, while later construction, such as seen with the roof rafters, have been pit sawn, dating these to the first half of the nineteenth century or earlier, as circular saws became prevalent after the mid nineteenth century. The earliest framing uses mortise joints for the studs and plate junctions, bridle joints for the roof peak and half dovetail joints for the collar ties. Earliest nails are hand forged, while nails used in the gable roof framing and other later construction are cut nails. Some of the earliest hewn framing members have the appearance of having been hewn with an axe after installation. This may have been an attempt to give visible framing members a "colonial" look during renovations during the 1970s.

Typical of the Chesapeake region, the house utilized downbraces at the exterior corners as well as less typical downbraces on interior walls. The house now has additional 2"x4" stud walls both inside and outside of the original timber framing.

Construction History

The present exterior appearance of Rich Hill is largely a result of renovations undertaken during 1975-1976 by then owner, Joseph Vallario. The original timber frame is presently behind modern 2"x4" frame walls on both the exterior and most of the interior. The siding, windows, exterior doors, brick stoops to the front and rear, and roof covering are all twentieth century additions. During the summer of 2015, the interior drywall and modern baseboard were removed in order that the original framing could be visible for inspection as an aid to interpretation and planning.

Construction Date

There is some question regarding the construction date of Rich Hill. Although it is known that Dr. Gustavus Brown lived in the house on the property sometime after 1714, there had been some thought that perhaps Rich Hill was constructed in 1783,

replacing an earlier structure either at the same location or possibly nearby the original dwelling. This theory was based upon tax records which describe the house in 1783 as "a large unfinished dwelling house with 3 brick chimneys and a new kitchen without a chimney". Recent dendrochronological research performed on six samples has dated the timber framing to approximately 1729.

Although property inventories for Dr. Gustavus Brown in 1762 and that of his son Rev. Richard Brown in 1789 bear some resemblance, there is no conclusive evidence regarding whether or not the house present in 1762 was the same house present in 1789. Given the dating of the timber and the tax records from 1783, it is likely that the house dates from the late 1720s or as late as 1730, having been constructed by Dr. Gustavus Brown, but that significant alterations and additions were made in the early 1780s to accommodate the Rev. Richard Brown and his new wife. These alterations possibly included a change of the roof from hip to gable as well as updating of the interior and the construction of a kitchen, which may have been the dependency formerly attached to the southeast side.

Foundation

The original house was supported by various posts that hold the main sill plates. The National Register nomination form states that these were originally all sandstone piers, however, the visible piers include both cut stone and piers at the front corners that are either concrete or brick/stone piers parged with mortar. There are several piers beneath the house constructed of brick and mortar that are unevenly located. The central summer beam appears to be supported by sections of round logs. It is unclear what is under the logs, but it may be stone or wood members. All of the brick infill between the exterior piers is of late-nineteenth or early-twentieth century origin.

Chimneys

The assessment in 1783 describes the house as having three brick chimneys. This may mean that the main house had three chimneys, perhaps a double chimney at the northwest end and a single chimney at the southeast end, or perhaps one double chimney at each end (each counting as one chimney) and a dependency with a chimney. The original chimney configuration is not presently known, but the style of the double chimney separated from the gable wall was in general use prior to 1800. The pent section interior closet also appears original as the door opening between the chimneys on the second floor has an eighteenth century frame and door.

There is evidence of possible chimney remains still present at the center of the southeast gable side of the house between the present two windows on the second floor. There is a remnant of brick that does not appear to be nogging, as all other nogging present within the walls has regularly spaced boards to help support the load of the brick, whereas this band of brick does not have any wooden supports. This central area of brick is the only brick remaining within the walls on the southeast side of the house. There is also a notch with nail remnants suggesting that was attached by joinery at a stud. This could have been part of a mantle. The idea of a chimney on this end matching the one at the opposite gable corresponds to an interview of Thomas Jones (foster brother of Samuel Cox) made in 1884 by George Alfred Townsend, reporter for *Century Magazine.* In that interview, Jones described the house as "a two-story house, with handsome piazzas front and rear, and a tall, windowless roof with double chimneys at both ends; and to the right of the house, which faced west (sic) was a long one story extension, used by Cox for his bedroom." He also described the house as having green shutters and a dark red roof.

In 1987, historian J. Richard Rivoire stated that evidence of a chimney on the southeast gable end was found in 1975 but he surmised that it was a single tiered chimney as opposed to a double chimney. The present interior chimney in the hall probably dates from the late nineteenth or early twentieth century as chimney liners did not come into common use until around 1900.

Entrances

Historian J. Richard Rivoire surmised that the house was originally of a rear stair hall configuration with the main entrance centered on the front of the house and a rear entrance also at the center within the stair hall. Mr. Rivoire was able to inspect the house during the 1975 renovations and therefore may have had access to physical information not presently available.

Recent examination of the original framing gives several strong points of evidence for the configuration of entrances. The framing at the central area of the front of the house shows no evidence of ever having had a doorway. Even where original studs are missing, there are evenly spaced mortises where framing members once existed between the central two windows in the main room. A cripple stud still remains at the top plate at this point. It appears to be at its original length, having a small bit of tenon remaining and forged nails. It is unsure what may have been at this location, given the mortise at the bottom plate, it would presumably have been a window and not a door. However, that would put a window very close to the others and would make as little sense as a door so close to the windows. Although no nogging is present between the windows today, there is some evidence of nogging having once been present at this location. Another possibility is that the mortise at the sill plate may have been a carpenter's mistake and that the mortise was not used.

The original front entrance appears to have been in the exact location of the present front entrance at the south corner of the house. The framing at this location does not look to have been altered after initial construction to accommodate the door. The corner was constructed so as to have the downbrace not interfere with the door opening and all nogging on both sides of the door frame are intact. Samuel Cox Jr. described the front entrance as being at the front of the hall and that there was a door to the wing about six feet from the front door.

Within the center wall of the rear (northeast side) of the house, beneath the stairway, is a door frame that appears to date to the buildings original construction. This door opening was covered up during renovations in 1975. At the site of the present rear entrance at the rear end of the hall, an original timber frame downbrace was cut to accommodate the door which serves as evidence that the door may have been moved to this location during the 1970s.

Room Configuration and Details

Mr. Rivoire conjectured that the present first floor hall was originally divided into two rooms, having a wall where the present arch exists. Although this is likely the case, no evidence for this is presently available. Careful inspection during future investigations that involve dismantling the arch for restoration and removal of the temporary plywood floor, may provide insight into this theory.

There is evidence that may indicate an original dividing wall in the main first floor room. This evidence consists of a regularly spaced toe joints on one of the ceiling joists that may be the remnants of studs joined along this joist to create a partition at this location. Again, careful inspection of beams beneath the present flooring boards may yield further evidence of this theory.

The original framing, as well as the presence of original doors and door trim on the second story indicate that the second story largely retains its original eighteenth century configuration, including the "T" shaped hall and room sizes. What is not known for certain is exactly where on the second story the stairs opened up to and whether the house originally had a dog-leg staircase. If the original rear door was centered, as existing evidence strongly suggests, it is possible that the stairs began at the rear door facing the southeast gable end and made one right turn to face the front of the house, opening to the second floor hall, but no clear evidence for this was found. The presence of a mortise joint on an exposed hewn beam at the "T" juncture of the hallway, however, is somewhat of a mystery and it is not presently known what purpose it served or if it is evidence that the stair hall

configuration was once different. During this period, it was not uncommon in the mid-Atlantic region to leave some structural members exposed.

The second floor room that recently functioned as an indoor bathroom appears to be part of the original house configuration. The framing and trim appear to be consistent with an eighteenth century date. Contemporary single-pile houses with center hall plans often had a small unheated room over the first floor entry that period documents refer to as "the little room over the entry", so this is likely just that sort of room on a double-pile house, utilized for storage.

Interior details within the house represent nearly three centuries of changes. Rivoire suggested that most of the major changes to the house occurred during its ownership by Hugh or Samuel Cox. These include: the change in the roofline, the removal of the end chimney, the insertion of a brick foundation between stone piers, the removal of riven board siding and replacement with random width beaded board siding, the addition of the interior arch within the hall, the addition of the present staircase, addition of porches to front and rear, and the addition of the one-story wing, suggesting that it was an earlier structure moved to this location in the mid nineteenth century. The wood fireplace mantles and updated doors as well as trim may have been introduced by the Cox's as well. While some of these changes undoubtedly occurred during the mid nineteenth century, it seems almost certain that there were major changes made by Rev. Richard Brown in the 1780s as well. In either case, these changes were present by 1865.

Windows

Original windows in the house were likely vertical sliding sashes of the type that began to be used in the American colonies around 1700. These early "single-hung" windows had only one moveable sash. Panes would have been much smaller than those seen in early photographs of Rich Hill, reflecting the state of the technology and style of the day. The larger paned two-over-two sashes depicted in early photographs are later replacements, possible dating to the mid-1800s. None of the windows from either the eighteenth or nineteenth century remain, although some of the nineteenth century wood jambs remain to support the 1970s replacement windows.

Southwest (Front) Façade

Although the framing and nogging of the front façade clearly point to the existing window locations being original on the first floor, the lack of symmetry and a remaining cripple stud at the center of this wall create un-answered questions as to how the original front appeared. Second floor windows are clearly in their original locations.

Northeast (Rear) Façade

The first story of the rear originally had a central entrance door with a window flanking each side. The present door opening near the east corner was a window opening identical to that near the north corner. Second story replacement windows retain their original locations.

Northwest Façade

Although it has been suggested that the first floor window on the gable end nearest the west corner was not an original window location, the presence of nogging below and above the window framing and the existence of the original wood frame suggests that a window was originally at this location, albeit one of a different size. The downbrace that abruptly ends at the window does not appear to have been cut to accommodate an additional window, rather it appears to have been terminated purposely within the

jack stud. As the original nogging and framing are intact on the second story, no window ever existed at this location on the second floor. Historical photographs and framing evidence indicate that there were windows on both the first and second floor at the rear of the northwest side.

Southeast Façade

Little evidence remains of the framing on this side of the house. The first floor area towards the front almost certainly held a doorway in 1865 as access to the wing would have been necessary. This is in agreement with the statement of Samuel Cox Jr. in 1891. There may not have been a window above this location on the second floor as it would likely have interfered with the wing. Photographic evidence shows that the two rear windows on this side existed in 1901 and probably existed in 1865 if not before.

Interior Doors and Trim

All of the interior doors on the first floor likely date from the early nineteenth century during its ownership by the Cox family. It is likely that the fireplace mantles date from this period as well if not later, and could possibly coincide with alterations made to the chimneys either in 1783 or later. Door trim on the first floor may be original to the house or may date to the early nineteenth century, but the flooring, window casing and all baseboards are all twentieth century additions. The archway in the hall likely dates from the early nineteenth century.

The second story retains its original floor as well as doors and door trim except for the door at the west corner which dates to the nineteenth century. All baseboard trim appears to date to the twentieth century as does all window casing.

Roof/Ceilings

At various times, Mr. Rivoire surmised that the roof may have originally been of a hip or jerkinhead (clipped gable) configuration. There is no evidence of a jerkinhead roof. Evidence is present for a former hip roof at the south corner of the building, where a small piece of the original hip rafter remains.

A great deal of interest has been focused on the original configuration of the ceilings. Rivoire noted that the second story is not full height as the tops of the second story windows meet the wall top plate. The exterior gives the appearance of extra height due to the outriggers and false plates adding height to the roofline. The vaulted ceiling gave the interior full height. It is clear that the present roof rafters, which rest on a false plate that itself rests on outriggers, are pit-sawn (not circular sawn or axe-cut) and likely date to the late-eighteenth or early-nineteenth century renovations by either Rev. Richard Brown (1783), Samuel Cox or Hugh Cox (1820-1830). What appear to be the original hewn rafters resting on the hewn top plates were apparently cut even with collar ties during the change in the roof from hip to gable to preserve the original vaulted ceilings while making way for the updated gable roof members. The vaulted ceiling thus most likely dates to the 1730 period.

Although the present false plate and rafters are not original to the house, it appears that the outriggers are. They are hewn framing members and are fastened with wood pegs and occasionally, wrought iron nails. Rivoire conjectured that they supported framing for a flared roof edge at the eaves. At present, they are supporting the weight of the newer gabled roof rafters and suffer this weight by sagging two to three inches in places.

Historical photographs alternately show the roof being clad with standing seam metal or asphalt roll roofing in the mid twentieth century. Underneath the present asphalt shingles, remnants of earlier cedar shakes remain. Rivoire also noted that the roof had once been clad with cedar shingles.

Stairs

Physical inspection of the interior stairs clearly shows that they were not originally designed for this house. The rails have multiple unused holes and the balusters are not all evenly spaced or plumb. The framing and original lath in the hall also appear to have been altered in order to accommodate the stairs. The wood used for the stairs and landing are clearly of a different species than the remaining original floor. The stairway appears to have been altered in the 1820-1830 period by either Samuel or Hugh Cox.

Porches

Historical photographs of the house dating from the late-nineteenth century through the mid-twentieth century all depict a full-length one-story porch on the front of the house, and at least one photograph clearly shows that there was also a nearly identical porch on the rear façade. This is consistent with descriptions of the house that describe front and rear piazzas, as porches were called at the time.

Former Dependency/Wing

Prior to 1975 the house had a dependency, or wing attached to its southeast gable end. The wing was approximately 26' in length and 14' deep. During the renovations in 1975, Mr. Joseph Vallario had this wing removed. There is some question as to whether this structure was original to the house, moved to the site or perhaps constructed soon after the construction of the original house. J. Richard Rivoire was of the opinion that although the framing and construction was similar to the main house, that it was moved to the site either from during renovations in the 1820s.

The 1783 tax description seems to indicate that this wing could have served as the kitchen. Given that dendrochronological research dates the original structure to around 1730, it appears likely that the dependency was constructed as a kitchen when Rev. Richard Brown began renovations on the house in the early 1780s. It seems plausible that he constructed the addition and then changed the roof to match that of the addition at this time.

Other dependencies existed further northeast of the house that can be seen in the 1901 photograph. There appears to be a large building with a chimney that may have originally been a separate building that was later connected by infill construction with the main house.

Landscape and Archeological Resources

In a description given by Thomas A. Jones in *Century Magazine* in 1884, he stated that there was "an outer and inner yard, to both of which are gates. With its trellis-work and vines, fruit and shade trees". Historical photographs seem to corroborate this statement. Deeds clearly note the presence of a family graveyard somewhere on the Rich Hill estate. When Samuel Cox purchased the property in 1807, the "grave place or graveyard" where Dr. Gustavus Brown was buried was reserved from the sale. It is likely that some of his sons who did not survive infancy are also buried in the cemetery. Tax records from 1798 indicate that there were five outbuildings on the property. An historical photograph from the mid-twentieth century depicts at least six outbuildings and dependencies associated with the house. These appear to include one that looks like a pyramidal roofed smokehouse and two barns as well as an equipment shed to the northeast of the house on the east side of the drive. There is a

large barn to the extreme east of the property near Bel Alton-Newtown Road. Ruins of this barn are still extant on the property. There also appears to be a small shed behind the wing. Earlier historical photographs (ca 1901) Show a string of buildings connected to the northeast side of the former wing, including a small porch or shed attached to a two-bay wide building by a framed arch.

Road Network:

Historical photographs depict a well worn drive or road parallel to the southeast gable end of the house that passed several outbuildings. Approximately 300 feet beyond the house at the end of the field within the woods is a well worn drive that map research has shown to be the original path of Bel Alton-Newtown Road that is now abandoned. A 1902 USGS map depicts this section of abandoned road as Bel Alton - Newtown Road. By 1953, maps show it as a dirt road going past the house in a northeasterly direction, making several curves before ending up back on the main road. This shows that originally, Rich Hill was directly off the main road and not set back from the road as it is today. The barns and outbuildings were originally on the south side of the road while the house was apparently on the north side of the road. Further USGS map research shows that the sometime between 1920 and 1943, the road was straightened making the original road simply a dirt drive.

Summary of house configuration and room usage in the eighteenth century:

Less is known about the house appearance in the eighteenth century than its appearance in 1865. Present evidence suggests that the house was originally a 1-1/2-story house with a fully hipped roof and end chimneys on each side. The house was supported on cut stone pillars with no infill between the pillars. The house likely did not originally have front or rear porches. The house was sided with riven clapboards that were probably no more than five feet long per board. The original hip roof appears to have been slightly steeper and flared at the eaves, having been altered to a steeper gabled roof around 1783. There was originally no wing. The wing appear to have been constructed later, possibly in 1783, and may have been constructed for use as a kitchen. Entrances seem to have been at the southern corner of the front of the house and in the center of the rear, leading to the staircase. The hall may have been divided into two rooms, with a wall and entrance door being where the present archway exists. There was not originally an interior chimney in the hallway. The original stair configuration and appearance is not known, as the present staircase is a later replacement re-purposed from another site. Windows were likely vertical sliding sashes, or "single-hung" windows with small individual panes. Interior doors were originally hand-planed four-panel doors with "H" style forged hinges. and the second floor ceilings were vaulted to give them full height. Original appearance of the molding and trim are unknown. We have no documentary evidence for room usage in this period. It is likely that the upstairs rooms were used as bedrooms and the small second floor room at the end of the hall was used for storage. The first floor north corner room may have been used as an office, or if the hall was originally separated into two rooms by a wall where the archway is now present, this area may have been used as an office. The large front room may have served as a family/living room, dining room, or both. It is likely that separate buildings were used for cooking and for servants quarters.

The 1762 inventory of Dr. Gustavus Brown's estate suggests that one room was used as an office as it lists a desk and bookcase with over £38.5.10 worth of books among his possessions. There were nine separate feather beds listed. Even with two beds in each upstairs room, it difficult to see how nine beds could fit in the house as well as the numerous tables, desks, dozens of chairs and other furniture. This suggests that some of the beds may have been in a separate building or perhaps stored away. One entry suggests the presence of a building called a "shop" as the inventory lists a quantity of medicines in the "shop" as well as another quantity of medicines in the dwelling house. There must also have been at least two slave quarters for the 13 slaves listed at the house. The list of livestock includes 11 cows as well as 10 steers, heifers, bulls and other cattle. The farm also had 12 sheep and seven ewes or lambs, suggesting that there was, at minimum, a barn and several other shelters for animals and the wide variety of

farm implements listed. The various pots, pewters, dishes, tureens, kettles and other cooking implements suggest that there must also have been a separate kitchen. The 1789 inventory of Rev. Richard Brown appears to contain many of the same items listed in his father's inventory such as the desk and bookcase, a gilt looking glass and some of the beds. At seems that only the slave named Carrall or Carrol appears on both inventories. Richard's inventory does not seem to yield any information above that of his father's in terms of the appearance or use of the house and grounds. The 1798 Federal Direct Tax simply list Samuel Cox as living on the property that at the time was owned by Rev. Richard Brown's heirs. The assessment lists the property as containing one dwelling house and five outbuildings at a low assessment value of $200.

Summary of house configuration and room usage in 1865:

For the Civil War period, we can gather some information as to the appearance of the house and use of the different rooms from the descriptions of both Samuel Cox Jr. and Thomas A. Jones. In 1865, the house was 1-1/2 stories with a side gabled roof and exterior end chimneys on both gables of unknown appearance. The front entrance to the house was near the south corner. The rear entrance was centered on the northeast side (rear). There were no dormers and the roof was clad with cedar shakes painted dark red. The windows had shutters. Both the front and rear of the house had full-length porches with shed roofs.

The former east wing of the house had a side gabled roof and was attached to the south end of the southeast gable end of the house. It had a centrally located interior brick chimney and was divided into two rooms. The dining room was closest to the hall of the main house, while the easternmost room in the wing was used by Samuel Cox and his wife for a bedroom. The servant girls, Mary and Martha were using the dining room as sleeping quarters.

The stairway seems to have been in its present location in 1865. Samuel Cox Jr. states that the stairs were accessed via a doorway midway down the hall. He also stated that his adopted father's mother in law, Mrs. Lucy B. Walker used the room "at the head of the stairs" as her bedroom. It therefore appears that the north corner room was used as a bedroom at this time. We also know that Samuel Cox Jr. was sleeping in the south corner bedroom above the front entrance in 1865. Presumably, his future wife, Ella M. Magruder, utilized one of the other two corner rooms as a bedroom at this time. The small room at the end of the second floor hall may have been used for storage. The north corner room on the first floor was evidently not used as a bedroom at this time, but may have served as an office for Mr. Cox. The main front room was probably a living room or family room.

8. Significance

Inventory No. CH-177

Period	Areas of Significance	Check and justify below		
__ 1600-1699	__ agriculture	__ economics	__ health/medicine	__ performing arts
X 1700-1799	__ archeology	__ education	__ industry	__ philosophy
X 1800-1899	x architecture	__ engineering	__ invention	X politics/government
1900-1999	__ art	__ entertainment/ recreation	__ landscape architecture	__ religion
__ 2000-	__ commerce		__ law	__ science
	__ communications	__ ethnic heritage	__ literature	X social history
	__ community planning	__ exploration/ settlement	__ maritime history	__ transportation
	__ conservation		__ military	__ other: _____

Specific dates **Architect/Builder** Dr. Gustavus Brown

Construction dates Circa 1729, 1783, Circa 1820, 1975

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.)

Constructed circa 1729 for Dr. Gustavus Brown, Rich Hill is significant architecturally and for its association with the escape of John Wilkes Booth through Southern Maryland after the assassination of President Abraham Lincoln in 1865. Rich Hill is historically significant under National Register Criterion A for its association with the persons and events surrounding the flight of John Wilkes Booth through Charles County, Maryland to Virginia following the assassination of Abraham Lincoln on April 14, 1865. For aiding Booth and David Herold in their escape, Samuel Cox and his foster brother, Thomas A. Jones, were sentenced to prison for seven and six weeks, respectively.

Rich Hill is also significant under National Register Criterion C for its architectural character. Although greatly altered in the 1970s, its original eighteenth century frame and original interior features, mostly on the second floor, make it a valuable source of information on eighteenth century southern Maryland architecture. The original floor plan was characteristic of the architecture of Charles and St. Mary's County region throughout the eighteenth century; however it is one of only two known houses with this plan that were initially built as two-story dwellings (the other being Marshall Hall). Additional important original elements that survive include the cut stone piers on which the house stands and the original doors and hardware of the second floor. Rich Hill was listed on the National Register of Historic Places on November 12, 1975.

History

Rich Hill was the colonial home of the Dr. Gustavus Brown and Reverend Richard Brown, the eldest son of Dr. Gustavus Brown. Reverend Richard Brown was also the half-brother of Dr. Gustavus Brown of Rose Hill, George Washington's friend and physician.

Dr. Gustavus Brown came to America as a surgeon or surgeon's mate in 1708. Brown started his medical practice in the Nanjemoy area of Charles County and by 1710, he had married Frances Fowke. The couple lived for a time with Frances' father in Nanjemoy. The Brown's association with Rich Hill dates to 1714, when Gustavus purchased 300 acres from Philemon and Mary Hemsley. The elder Dr. Brown established his principal residence at Rich Hill not long after its purchase. The Brown's may have lived in another dwelling on site prior to the construction of the presently existing dwelling, as records indicate that their first daughter was born in 1720 at "Rich Hills". Of the couple's twelve children, three died in infancy and are likely buried somewhere on the property.

Frances Fowke Brown died 1744 and was buried at the estate of her daughter and son-in-law in Stafford County, VA. Dr. Brown remarried a widow named Margaret Boyd in 1746. With Margaret, Dr. Brown had two more children. One child, named "Gustavus Richard Brown" born on October 17th, 1747, also became a doctor and the friend and physician of George

Washington. Dr. Brown's other child with Margaret was named after her mother and would later marry Thomas Stone, a signer of the Declaration of Independence from Maryland.

When Dr. Brown died at Rich Hill in 1762, his will and inventory show substantial holdings including many furnishings and a large library. He had 13 slaves at Rich Hill and the inventory also listed an additional 32 slaves as well as farm implements at his Nanjemoy plantation, "Middleton," and his estate at "Pomfret Quarter". At the time of his death, the overall value of his estate was listed as £2176.1.0.

Richard Brown was the eldest son of Dr. Gustavus Brown. He was born in Charles County in 1725 but was educated at the University of Edinburgh in Scotland. Reverend Richard Brown, returned to Maryland shortly after his ordination into the Church of England in 1750. For a period of time he was rector of King and Queen Parish in St. Mary's County. In 1783, he married Katherine (Smoot) Hawkins. At that time, Richard Brown appears to have been making significant changes to Rich Hill. The tax assessments for 1783 describe "566 acres, a large unfinished dwelling house with 3 brick chimneys and a new kitchen without a chimney, a corn house and several other houses in perfect condition, a small mill seat, a small apple orchard and a garden".

Richard Brown died in 1789. At the time of his death, his estate is listed as having 26 slaves and an estate value of £1743.7.10 . Following a series of transfers among the various heirs, the part of Rich Hill that encompassed the house was sold to Samuel Cox in 1807. Reserved from this sale was the "grave place or graveyard" where Dr. Gustavus Brown was buried. The 1798 Federal Direct Tax indicates that Cox may have resided at the house prior to his purchase, although at present it is not known whether he lived in the main house or somewhere else on the property prior to his purchase. Neither is it known when he first lived on the property, but he did witness the inventory of Rev. Richard Browns estate in 1789. The 1798 tax record shows him as having 1 dwelling house and 5 outbuildings situated on 2 acres. The owner of record at that time was recorded as Rev. Richard Brown's heirs. The assessed value of that portion of the estate occupied by Samuel Cox in 1798 was $200. At some time in the early nineteenth century, the property passed to Samuel Cox's daughter, Margaret Cox and her husband Hugh Cox. Hugh Cox served as sheriff of Charles County from 1824-1827.

Hugh and Margaret's son Samuel Cox began attending Charlotte Hall Military Academy at 15 years of age. Upon his graduation, he returned home to work at the plantation. In 1842, Samuel Cox married his cousin, Walter Ann Cox (sic). Walter Ann had been named for her recently deceased father. In 1849, Hugh and Mary Ann gave Rich Hill to Samuel Cox. None of Samuel's children with Walter Ann survived infancy. He eventually adopted his late sister's son, Samuel Robertson. Samuel who officially changed his name to Samuel Cox, Jr. in 1864.

It was Samuel Cox Sr. who aided both John Wilkes Booth and David Herold during their escape following the assassination of President Abraham Lincoln, arranging for their safe passage to Virginia. Although stories of the events differ, it is known that Booth and Herold sought refuge from Samuel Cox at Rich Hill. Samuel Cox Jr. and their servant Mary Swann claimed that Booth and Herold were never allowed entry into the house; they instead found refuge in a gully close to the house. According to Samuel Cox Jr., his father then had the farm overseer, Franklin Robey, guide the fugitives to a nearby pine thicket. Samuel Cox then sent Cox, Jr. to retrieve Thomas Jones, foster brother of Cox, who aided the fugitives during their time in the pine thicket from April 16 until April 21, 1865. Jones then procured a small boat for passage across the Potomac River to Virginia. In the trials that followed Booth's eventual capture in Virginia, Cox and Jones were convicted of aiding Booth in his flight and sentenced to brief imprisonments. Rich Hill is included in the "Booth Trail," defined by published tour guides and marked by state historical markers that locate all stops Booth made starting with his exit from Ford's Theatre and ending with the barn and house of the Garrett Farm in Virginia where he was shot and killed by Union soldiers.

Like his father before him, Samuel Cox, Jr. became a prominent member of Charles County society. In addition to Rich Hill he owned Cox's Station, a stop of the Baltimore and Philadelphia Railroad line. The name of Cox's Station was changed to Bel Alton when Cox sold the land to the Southern Maryland Development Company in 1891. When Samuel Cox died in 1880, Rich Hill passed to his wife. Upon his mother's death in 1894, Samuel Cox Jr. inherited Rich Hill and owned it until his death in 1906. Rich Hill passed to his son Walter Cox, who in turn sold to Lucy Beale Neale. Lucy Neale's husband, James F. Neale sold the property to Joseph Vallario in 1971. The County acquired 2.43 acres including the farmhouse and extant outbuildings in 2014.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Inventory No. CH-177

Berg, David
2016 Rich Hill Farmhouse, Historic Structures Report, Bel Alton, Charles County, Maryland. The Ottery Group, Inc., Kensington, MD.

See Continuation Sheet

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of surveyed property	2.43		
Acreage of historical setting			
Quadrangle name	Popes Creek, MD	Quadrangle scale:	7.5-minute

Verbal boundary description and justification

The Rich Hill Farm property boundary is the entire tax parcel, containing 2.43 acres, including the house and its immediate environs.

11. Form Prepared by

name/title	David C, Berg, Architectural Historian		
organization	The Ottery Group, Inc.	date	06/13/2016
street & number	3910 Knowles Avenue	telephone	(301) 946-0219
city or town	Kensington	state	Maryland

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
Maryland Department of Planning
100 Community Place
Crownsville, MD 21032-2023
410-514-7600

Maryland Historical Trust
Maryland Inventory of
Historic Properties Form

Inventory No. CH-177

Name Rich Hill
Continuation Sheet

Number 9 Page 1

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1953 *Popes Creek, MD* 7.5 Minute Quadrangle. Accessed Online at:

Maryland Historical Trust
Maryland Inventory of
Historic Properties Form

Inventory No. CH-177

Name Rich Hill
Continuation Sheet

Number 9 Page 2

Websites:

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Rich Hill
Bel Alton, Charles County, MD
Popes Creek Quadrangle

Inventory No. CH-177

Location Map

Popes Creek, Maryland 7.5-Minute USGS Quadrangle (2011).

Maryland Historical Trust
Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties Form

Inventory No. CH-177

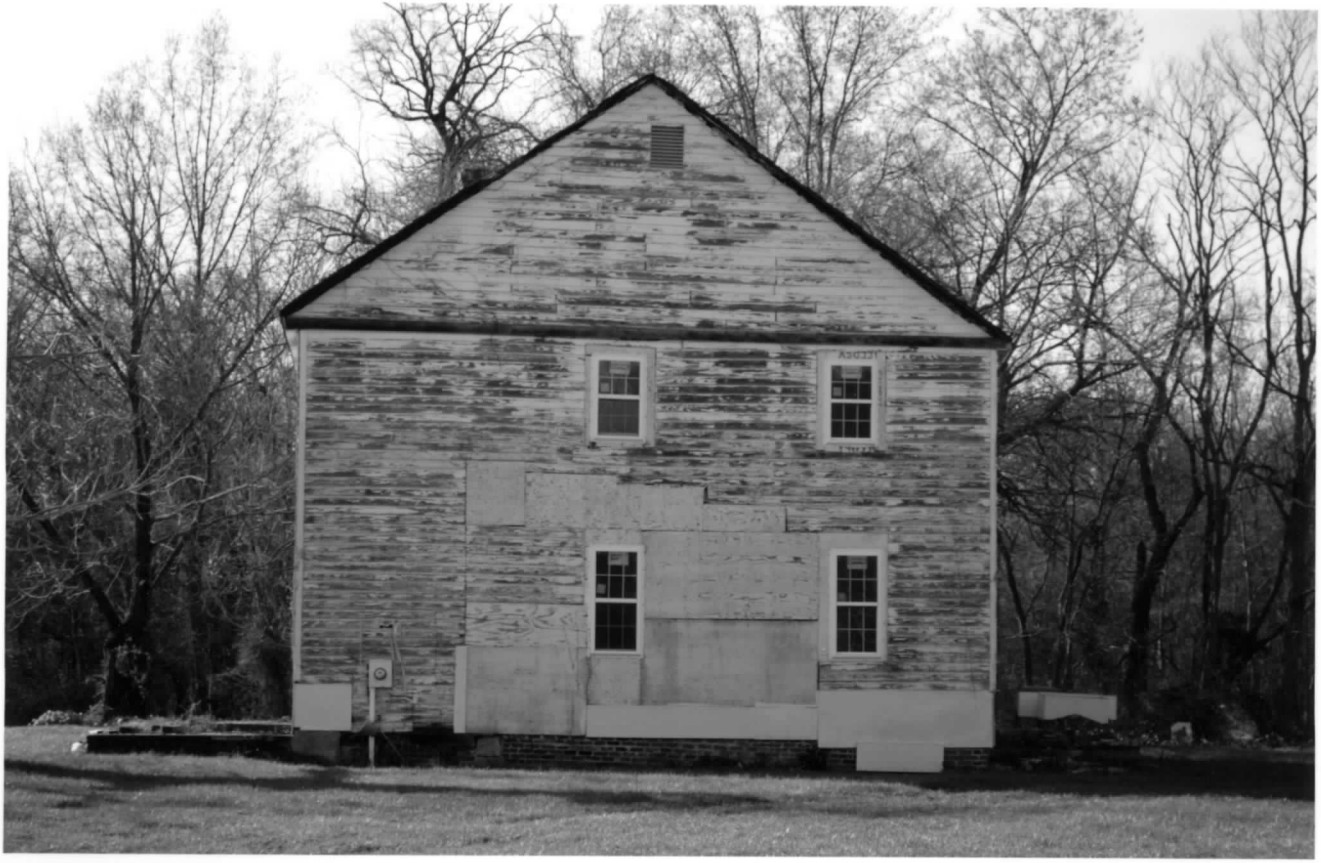
Name Rich Hill
Continuation Sheet

Photo Log
Rich Hill

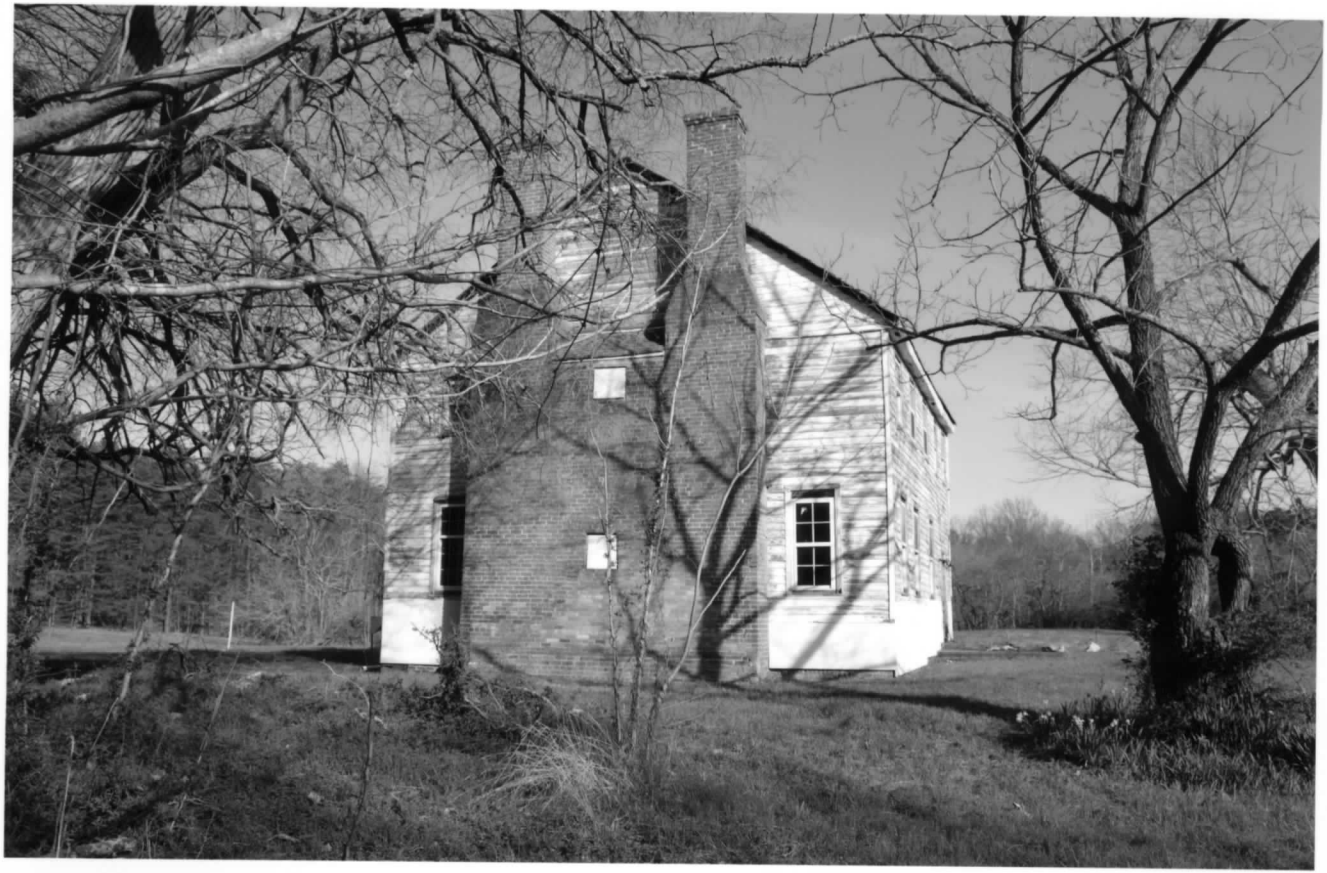
TIFF Image File Name	Description	Ink	Paper	Brand, Make & Dye Type of CD
CH-177_2015-08-13_01.tif	General Context from Bel Alton-Newton Road, View to Northeast.	Epson UltraChrome	Epson Premium Glossy	Verbatim Archival Gold CD-R, Azo
CH-177_2015-08-13_02.tif	Front (Southwest) and Northwest Façades, View to Northeast.	Epson UltraChrome	Epson Premium Glossy	Verbatim Archival Gold CD-R, Azo
CH-177_2015-08-13_03.tif	Southeast Façade, View to Northwest.	Epson UltraChrome	Epson Premium Glossy	Verbatim Archival Gold CD-R, Azo
CH-177_2015-08-13_04.tif	Northwest Façade, View to Southeast.	Epson UltraChrome	Epson Premium Glossy	Verbatim Archival Gold CD-R, Azo
CH-177_2015-08-13_05.tif	Rear (Northeast) Façade, View to Southwest.	Epson UltraChrome	Epson Premium Glossy	Verbatim Archival Gold CD-R, Azo
CH-177_2015-08-13_06.tif	Detail of Original Sandstone Pier and Later Brick Foundation Infill.	Epson UltraChrome	Epson Premium Glossy	Verbatim Archival Gold CD-R, Azo
CH-177_2015-08-13_07.tif	Interior View of East End Hall, View to Northeast.	Epson UltraChrome	Epson Premium Glossy	Verbatim Archival Gold CD-R, Azo
CH-177_2015-08-13_08.tif	Interior View of Dog-leg stairs from second floor, View to North.	Epson UltraChrome	Epson Premium Glossy	Verbatim Archival Gold CD-R, Azo
CH-177_2015-08-13_09.tif	Detail of Brick Nogging at Staircase, View to Northeast.	Epson UltraChrome	Epson Premium Glossy	Verbatim Archival Gold CD-R, Azo
CH-177_2015-08-13_010.tif	Detail of Original Door Hinge in North Room, View to East.	Epson UltraChrome	Epson Premium Glossy	Verbatim Archival Gold CD-R, Azo
CH-177_2015-08-13_11.tif	Interior View from First Floor Hall Looking Towards Front Room Fireplace, View to Northwest.	Epson UltraChrome	Epson Premium Glossy	Verbatim Archival Gold CD-R, Azo

MIHP CH-177
Rich Hill
Charles County, Maryland
David C. Berg
08/13/2015
MD SHPO
General Context from Bel Alton-Newton Road, View to Northeast
#1 of 11

MIHP CH-177
Rich Hill
Charles County, Maryland
David C. Berg
08/13/2015
MD SHPO
Front (Southwest) and Northwest Façades, View to Northeast
#2 of 11



MIHP CH-177
Rich Hill
Charles County, Maryland
David C. Berg
08/13/2015
MD SHPO
Southeast Façade, View to Northwest
#3 of 11



MIHP C#-177
Rich Hill
Charles County, Maryland
David C. Berg
08/13/2015
MD SHPO
Northwest Façade, View to Southeast
#4 of 11

MIHP CH-177
Rich Hill
Charles County, Maryland
David C. Berg
08/13/2015
MD SHPO
Rear (Northeast) Façade, View to Southwest
#5 of 11

MIHP CH-177
Rich Hill
Charles County, Maryland
David C. Berg
08/13/2015
MD SHPO
Detail of Original Sandstone Pier and Later Brick Foundation Infill
#6 of 11

MIHP CH-177
Rich Hill
Charles County, Maryland
David C. Berg
08/13/2015
MD SHPO
Interior View of East End Hall, View to Northeast
#7 of 11

MIHP CH-177
Rich Hill
Charles County, Maryland
David C. Berg
08/13/2015
MD SHPO
Interior View of Dog-leg Stairs From Second Floor, View to North
#8 of 11

MIHP CH-177
Rich Hill
Charles County, Maryland
David C. Berg
08/13/2015
MD SHPO
Detail of Brick Nogging at Staircase, View to Northeast
9 of 11

MIHP, CH-177
Rich Hill
Charles County, Maryland
David C. Berg
08/13/2015
MD SHPO
Detail of Original Door Hinge in North Room, View to East
#10 of 11

MIHP CH-177
Rich Hill
Charles County, Maryland
David C. Berg
08/13/2015
MD SHPO
Interior View from First Floor Hall Looking Towards Front Room Fireplace, View to Northwest

#11 of 11

Form No 10 300 (Rev 10-74)

0901772404

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED

DATE ENTERED

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

HISTORIC
Rich Hill, Rich Hill Farm

AND/OR COMMON
Rich Hill, Rich Hill Farm

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER
Bel Alton-Newtown Road
1 1/2 miles East of Rt. 301 on North side of/ __ NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN
Bel Alton __ VICINITY OF

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT
First

STATE
Maryland

CODE
24

COUNTY
Charles

CODE
017

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE	
__ DISTRICT	__ PUBLIC	__ OCCUPIED	X AGRICULTURE	__ MUSEUM
X BUILDING(S)	X PRIVATE	X UNOCCUPIED	__ COMMERCIAL	__ PARK
__ STRUCTURE	__ BOTH	__ WORK IN PROGRESS	__ EDUCATIONAL	XX PRIVATE RESIDENCE
__ SITE	PUBLIC ACQUISITION	ACCESSIBLE	__ ENTERTAINMENT	__ RELIGIOUS
__ OBJECT	__ IN PROCESS	__ YES: RESTRICTED	__ GOVERNMENT	__ SCIENTIFIC
	__ BEING CONSIDERED	__ YES: UNRESTRICTED	__ INDUSTRIAL	__ TRANSPORTATION
		X NO	__ MILITARY	__ OTHER:

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME
Joseph F. Vallario, Jr. and Mary T. Vallario

STREET & NUMBER
7801 Woodyard Road

CITY, TOWN
Clinton __ VICINITY OF

STATE
Maryland

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN
La Plata

STATE
Maryland

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

DATE

__ FEDERAL __ STATE __ COUNTY __ LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE

DESCRIPTION (continued)

(This revised description is submitted to reflect recent renovations carried out at Rich Hill).

Although greatly altered when acquired by Cox in the early 19th century, Rich Hill possesses many unique architectural features that establish it as one of the most significant surviving examples of regional architecture.

Rich Hill was probably built within the second quarter of the 18th century. Like Marshall Hall (National Register, Charles County) it is a true 1½-story building, although from the exterior both appear to be full two-stories. Its existing gable roof replaced the original hip-on-gable roof. The five second level rooms still retain their original doors, hardware and surrounds, and have ceilings sloped on all four sides, the latter unique in Southern Maryland. The first floor plan consisted of four rooms and a short rear stair hall. In the early 19th century this plan was altered to an end hall plan with a large front room and two small rooms to the rear of that. Today only the stair hall and northwest room retain their original dimensions. No original woodwork remains on this level.

The window and door locations of the first floor front and rear elevations were altered in the early 19th century to accommodate changes made to the floor plan. The original entrance was centered on the south front and was flanked by four windows. The five windows of the second floor occupy original locations though all were subsequently enlarged. An original rear door was removed during recent renovations but the three windows across the second level of this elevation occupy original positions.

When the house was renovated in the early 19th century the exterior was sheathed with random width beaded boards, replacing an earlier riven board covering. At this same time the formerly exposed eaves, showing chamfered joist ends, were enclosed by a boxed cornice with molded decorations. When first built the house stood on cut stone piers, the open areas between these, however, were later filled with brick.

Single large exterior chimneys of a type seen at Maxwell Hall

See continuation sheet #

DESCRIPTION (continued)

(Charles County) and Loch Leven (Charles County) formerly stood at the ends of the house. These were subsequently removed, probably in the early 19th century. The double chimney with two-story pent presently standing at the west end of the house dates from this time.

A one-story frame addition on the east end, torn down during renovations in 1975-76, was built in the early 19th century using materials possibly salvaged from a former kitchen or other dependency.

J. Richard Rivoire
Faulkner, Maryland
Summer 1976

[8] SIGNIFICANCE

CH-177

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
_ PREHISTORIC	_ ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	_ COMMUNITY PLANNING	_ LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	_ RELIGION
_ 1400-1499	_ ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	_ CONSERVATION	_ LAW	_ SCIENCE
_ 1500-1599	_ AGRICULTURE	_ ECONOMICS	_ LITERATURE	_ SCULPTURE
_ 1600-1699	X ARCHITECTURE	_ EDUCATION	_ MILITARY	_ SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
X 1700-1799	_ ART	_ ENGINEERING	_ MUSIC	_ THEATER
X 1800-1899	_ COMMERCE	_ EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	_ PHILOSOPHY	_ TRANSPORTATION
_ 1900-	_ COMMUNICATIONS	_ INDUSTRY	X POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	_ OTHER (SPECIFY)
		_ INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The historical significance of Rich Hill relates directly to its ownership by Col. Samuel Cox and the role Cox played in the flight of John Wilkes Booth through Charles County to Virginia following the assassination of Abraham Lincoln, April 14, 1865.

Samuel Cox, whose sympathy for the Southern cause was well known, hid Booth and his companion-in-crime, David Herold, on his Rich Hill farm after Booth and Herold were sent there upon being discovered in a nearby swamp by a neighbor's servant. Cox then proceeded to arrange for thei safe (and secret) passage to Virginia. Booth and Herold remained hidden in a pine thicket at Rich Hill until April 21, when Thomas A. Jones, foster brother of Colonel Cox and a former Chief Signal Agent for the Confederacy, provided them with a small boat in which they crossed the Potomac River to Virginia. In the trials that followed Booth's eventual capture at Pope's Creek, Virginia, Cox and Jones were convicted of aiding Booth in his flight and sentenced to brief imprisonments -- Jones six weeks, and Cox seven.

Rich Hill is included in the "Booth Trail," defined by published tour guides and marked by state historical markers that locate all stops Booth made from his exit from Ford's Theatre to the barn and house of the Garrett farm in Virginia where he was shot and killed by Union soldiers.

Although the present exterior and first floor appearance of Rich Hill reflects the period of Cox's ownership, its original early or mid-eighteent century skeleton and contemporary second floor treatment establish its architectural significance as well. The original floor plan was one characteristic of the Charles and St. Mary's County region throughout the eighteenth century. Marshall Hall, circa 1720; Greenwood, circa 1740; Sandgates, circa 1750-60; and, Maxwell Hall, circa 1760-70 are among the many documented eighteenth century Lower Southern Maryland houses having the same room configuration. However, Rich Hill and Marshall Hall are the only known and recorded houses with this plan that were initially built as two story dwellings. Important original elements that survive include the cut stone piers on which the house stands, the very handsome doors and hardware of the second floor, and the unique design of the second floor ceilings. Thus, although extensively altered in the early nineteenth century, Rich Hill provides much valuable information relative

(See Continuation Sheet #3)

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

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Pogue, Robert, F. T. Old Maryland Landmarks. Bushwood, Maryland: Private 1972. pp. 271, 273.

Klapthor, Margaret B. and Brown, Paul Dennis. History of Charles, County, Maryland. La Plata, Maryland: Charles County Tercentenary, Inc. 1958. pp. 122, 131.

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 15

UTM REFERENCES

	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
A	18	329,960	4260960
B	18	329,920	4260710
C	18	329,710	4260740
D	18	329,740	4260990

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE
J. Richard Rivoire, Architectural Historian sdh

ORGANIZATION
Maryland Historical Trust

DATE
May 1975

STREET & NUMBER
21 State Circle, The John Shaw House

TELEPHONE
(301) 267-1438

CITY OR TOWN
Annapolis

STATE
Maryland 21401

12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL X STATE X LOCAL X

As the designated State Historic Preservation 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.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

TITLE State Historic Preservation Officer DATE August 26, 1975

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

ATTEST: DATE

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

CH 177

N. R. FIELD SHEET

Form 10-300
(Dec. 1968)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

MD. HISTORICAL TRUST
BOX 1704
ANNAPOLIS, MD. 21404

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY – NOMINATION FORM

(Type all entries – complete applicable sections)

STATE:	
COUNTY:	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE

1. NAME

COMMON: NEAL HOUSE (RICH HILL) (COX FARM)

AND/OR HISTORIC:

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER: BEL ALTON - NEWTOWN RD.

CITY OR TOWN: BEL ALTON

STATE: MD | CODE: | COUNTY: CHAS | CODE:

3. CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP		STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
District ☐ Building ☑	Public ☐	Public Acquisition:	Occupied ☑	Yes:
Site ☐ Structure ☐	Private ☑	In Process ☐	Unoccupied ☐	Restricted ☐
Object ☐	Both ☐	Being Considered ☐	Preservation work in progress ☐	Unrestricted ☐
				No: ☑

PRESENT USE *(Check One or More as Appropriate)*

Agricultural	☐	Government	☐	Park	☐	Transportation	☐	Comments	☑
Commercial	☐	Industrial	☐	Private Residence	☑	Other *(Specify)*	☒	TENANT	
Educational	☐	Military	☐	Religious	☐				
Entertainment	☐	Museum	☐	Scientific	☐				

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNERS NAME: J. M. NEAL

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN: CHEVY CHASE | STATE: MD | CODE:

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC: CHAS. CO.

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN: LA PLATA | STATE: MD | CODE:

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY:

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY:

DATE OF SURVEY: Federal ☐ State ☐ County ☐ Local ☐

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN: | STATE: | CODE:

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

STATE: COUNTY: FOR NPS USE ONLY ENTRY NUMBER DATE

N. R. FIELD SHEET

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7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION	(Check One) Excellent ☐ Good ☑ Fair ☐ Deteriorated ☐ Ruins ☐ Unexposed ☐	
INTEGRITY	(Check One) Altered ☐ Unaltered ☑	(Check One) Moved ☐ Original Site ☑

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (*If known*) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

W. SIDE BEL ALTON RD. N. of TOWN + R.R. TRACKS.

MAIN BLOCK 2 STOREY, "A" ROOF + RIDGE RUNS E to W. 1 STOREY WING SLIGHTLY FORWARD to E GABLE END OF MAIN BLOCK. MAIN BLOCK (S ELE.) 4 BAYS WITH DOOR AT E. END. (W. W. W. D) 5 WINDOW 2ND FLOOR. WING (S. ELE.) 3 BAYS (WINDOWS).

LARGE DOUBLE CHIMNEY (WITH 2 STOREY PENT BETWEEN) AT W GABLE MAIN BLOCK. SINGLE 2 FLUE CHIMNEY CENTER of ROOF RIDGE of WING. (1st. 1/2 (W) of WING PROB. ORIG. KITCHEN).

2q. CHIMNEY W. GABLE MAIN BLOCK FLANKED ON 1ST. LEVEL BY 1 WIN. EA. SIDE. AT 2ND. FLOOR 1 WINDOW FROM NW COR. CHIMNEYS ⊂ FREE STANDING STACKS, STEPPED HIPS ON 3 SIDES (ABOVE 2ND FLOOR WINDOW LEVEL), STEPPED (2) BASE, 1 WINDOW AT 1st. + 2nd floor LEVELS IN PENT.

N. ELE. : 3 BAYS : 2 doors WITH WINDOW AT W SIDE (DOOR, DOOR, WINDOW) 3 WINDOWS ABOVE. WING HAS LEAN TO ROOFED ADDITION TO N WALL.

DEEP FARM PORCH front + REAR (N+S) WALLS of MAIN BLOCK.

CLAPBRD. REL. RECENT — BEADED EDGE.
EAVE MLDGS. GOOD.
WINDOWS 4/4
BRICK FOUNDATION

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

N. R. FIELD SHEET

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8. SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD *(Check One or More as Appropriate)*

Pre-Columbian ☐	16th Century ☐	18th Century ☐	20th Century ☐
15th Century ☐	17th Century ☐	19th Century ☑ (?)	

SPECIFIC DATE(S) *(If Applicable and Known)*

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE *(Check One or More as Appropriate)*

Aboriginal	Education ☐	Political ☑	Urban Planning ☐
Prehistoric ☐	Engineering ☐	Religion/Philosophy ☐	Other *(Specify)* ☐
Historic ☐	Industry ☐	Science ☐	
Agriculture ☐	Invention ☐	Sculpture ☐	
Art ☐	Landscape Architecture ☐	Social/Humanitarian ☐	
Commerce ☐	Literature ☐	Theater ☐	
Communications ☐	Military ☐	Transportation ☐	
Conservation ☐	Music ☐		

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE *(Include Personages, Dates, Events, Etc.)*

Cox FARM (?) WHERE BOOTH STAYED BEFORE flight to VA. After ASASSINATION of LINCOLN.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

N. R. FIELD SHEET

CH-177

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY									OR	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN ONE ACRE					
CORNER	LATITUDE			LONGITUDE						LATITUDE			LONGITUDE		
	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds				Degrees	Minutes	Seconds	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds
NW	°	'	"	°	'	"				°	'	"	°	'	"
NE	°	'	"	°	'	"									
SE	°	'	"	°	'	"									
SW	°	'	"	°	'	"									

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE

11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE: J. Richard Rivoire

ORGANIZATION: M.H.T.

DATE: 6/23

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN: Annap.

STATE: Md.

CODE:

12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION

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 _____

Title _____

Date _____

NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

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

_____
Chief, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date _____

ATTEST:

_____
Keeper of The National Register

Date _____

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

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RICH HILL

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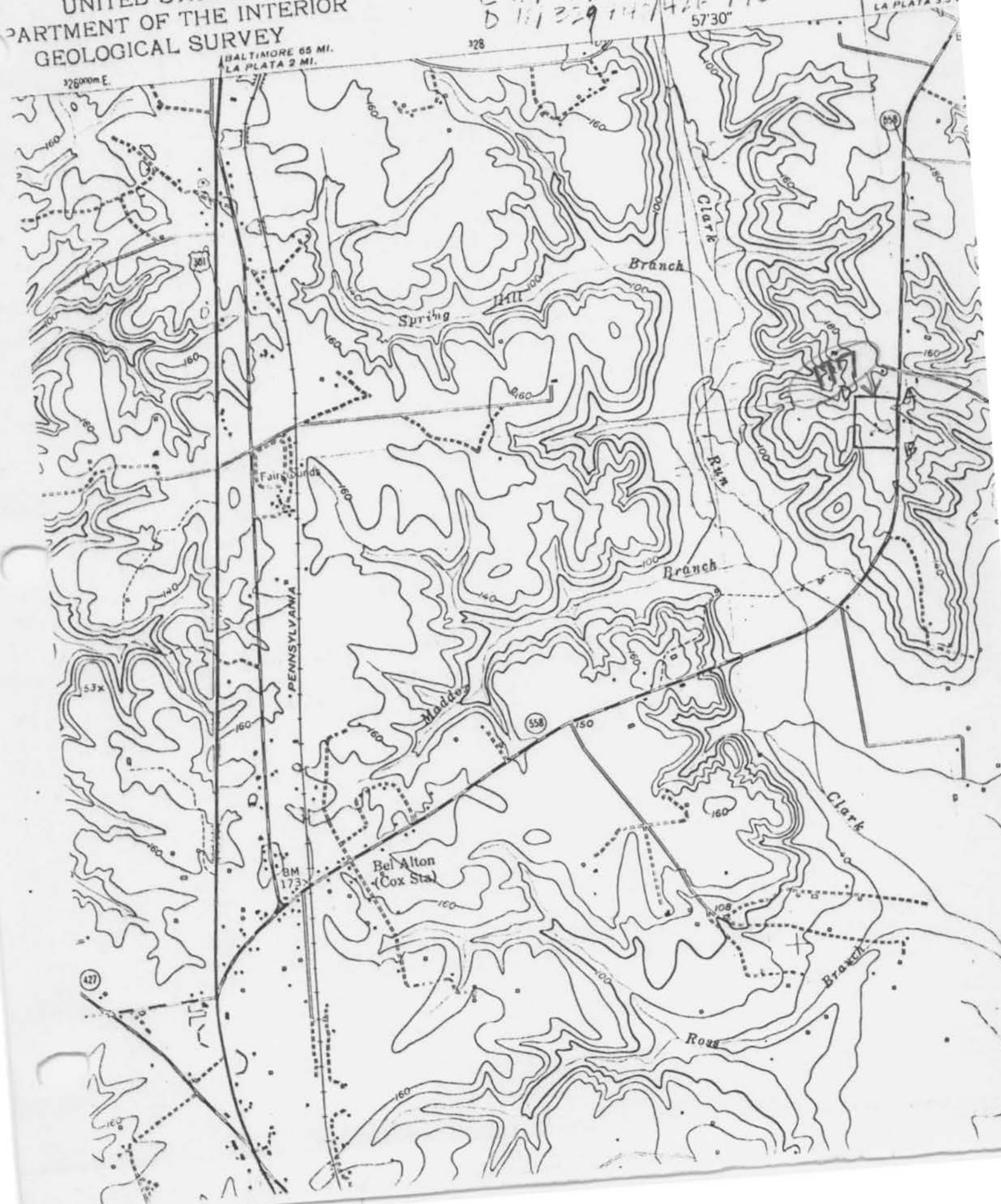
UTM References
A 18/329760/4260760
B 18/329120/4260710
C 18/329710/4260740
D 18/329740/4260190

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
GEOLOGICAL SURVEY



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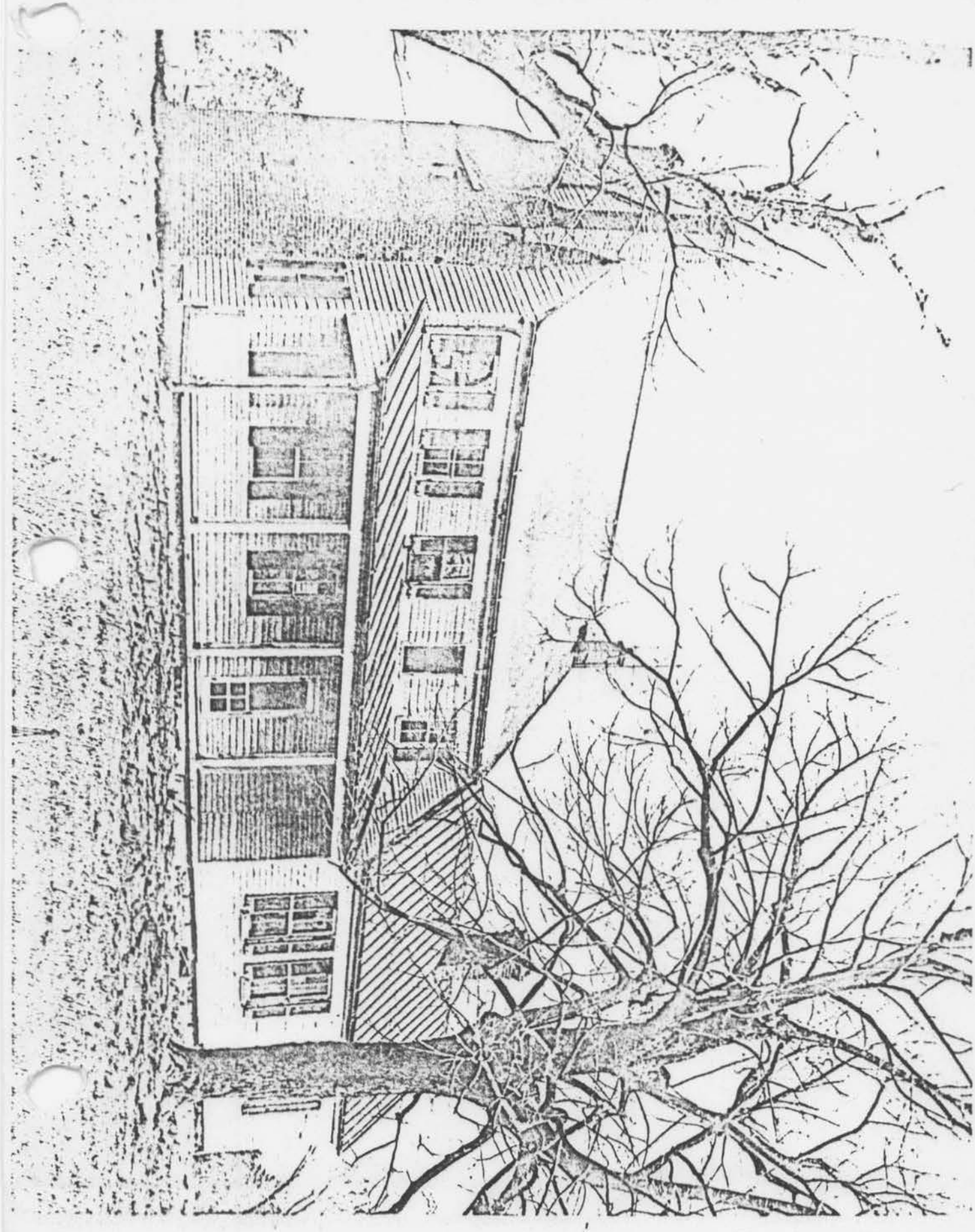

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