

**Milton Somers House**  
**CH-714**  
**LaPlata**  
**Private**

**1933**

The Milton Somers House, demolished soon after being field surveyed, was a typical example of Dutch Colonial Revival architecture in Charles County. Constructed in 1933, the dwelling stood on a 1.5 acre lot facing east onto Washington Avenue just beyond the Charles County Courthouse and Government Building. Characterized by its gambrel roof with a continuous dormer across the front, the house was two bays in width, two rooms deep and 2 ½ stories high with several additions to the secondary elevations. An exterior end chimney stood on the south gable end. The Milton Somers House was the home of the first Principal of LaPlata High School from during the 1920s and 1930s.



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## 7. Description

Inventory No. CH-714

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### Condition

|  |                                       |
|--|---------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> excellent       | <input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good | <input type="checkbox"/> ruins        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> fair            | <input type="checkbox"/> altered      |

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

The Milton Somers House, demolished soon after being field surveyed, was a typical example of Dutch Colonial Revival architecture in Charles County. Constructed in 1933, the dwelling stood on a 1.5 acre lot facing east onto Washington Avenue just beyond the Charles County Courthouse and Government Building. Characterized by its gambrel roof with a continuous dormer across the front, the house was two bays in width, two rooms deep and 2 1/2 stories high with several additions to the secondary elevations. Windows and doors are typical of the Craftsmen style consisting of 6/1 sash found in the windows, and a stylistically typical door with sidelights. An exterior end chimney stood on the south gable end.

The Somers House had a wooden frame sheathed with weatherboard siding and asphalt shingles. The foundation was concrete and concrete block. The front elevation includes an entry porch supported by thick, square wooden columns resting on brick piers. A grouping of three 6/1 windows was situated nearest the south corner. The second floor has two symmetrical pairs of 6/1 windows occupying the dormer.

The south elevation had single, centered 6/1 window in the attic story above two asymmetrical 6/1 windows in the second story. The first floor is obscured by a one story wing which may have been original to the dwelling. This wing consisted of a rectangular room covered with a hipped roof. It was lighted by two narrow 6/1 windows on the front elevation and four 6/1 windows on the south elevation. A 6/1 window is visible on the main wall.

The rear elevation included two extensions from the original form including a two story ell projecting from the northernmost bay and a one story hipped roof in the southernmost bay. The larger of the two includes a row of four narrow 6/1 windows on the second floor above a small 6/1 window on the first floor next to an altered doorway which is approached by a steep set of stairs. A 5-panel door closer to ground level stood at the interior end of this bay. The second story southernmost bay of the main structure includes a single 6/1 window. The one story addition below held a pair of 6/1 windows.

The attic story of the north wall includes a single 6/1 window. The second story had a full size 6/1 window near the front elevation and a smaller 6/1 window toward the rear where a second story bathroom is housed. The first floor has a 6/1 window near the façade which lights an interior stair passage and a pair of smaller 6/1 windows which lit the kitchen. The second story rear shed addition included a narrow pair of 6/1 windows.

The interior double-pile plan consists of a vestibule and living room fronting Washington Avenue and a kitchen and dining room to the rear. A rear door also gives access to the kitchen which is located in the northwest corner of the main block. The lighted vestibule has a stair passage and square Craftsmen-inspired newel. In addition to providing access into the living room, a passage to the rear adjoins the original kitchen. Appendices, which are believed to have been original extend the living space of the main block and include a sunroom adjoining the living room, a sitting room adjoining the dining room, a mudroom/pantry adjoining the kitchen on the first floor and an additional bedroom on the second floor.

## 8. Significance

Inventory No. CH-714

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

|                           |      |                          |         |
|---------------------------|------|--------------------------|---------|
| <b>Specific dates</b>     | 1933 | <b>Architect/Builder</b> | Unknown |
| <b>Construction dates</b> | 1933 |                          |         |

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 reports, complete evaluation on a DOE Form - see manual.)

The Milton Somers House was the home of the first Principal of LaPlata High School from during the 1920s and 1930s.

Milton Michael Somers was born on the Eastern Shore of Maryland near Crisfield. In 1920 he graduated from Western Maryland College and in 1924 completed a law degree from the National University Law School. From 1923 to 1927 he gained experience as the principal of Surratsville High School, before moving on to principal of the newly constructed LaPlata consolidated school. Beginning with five faculty and 224 pupils, Somers ended his career in the 1960's with 67 faculty and 1700 pupils. He helped organize the county council of parents and teachers and was vice president of the Maryland Congress of Parents and Teachers from 1928-1932. In 1943 he was appointed high school supervisor for all county schools. He was also active in many local organizations including the American Red Cross, the Children's Aid Society, the United Methodist Church of LaPlata. He volunteered as a fireman, served on the Town Council, as president of the County Bar Association, first president of the LaPlata Lions Club.

The town of LaPlata (CH-326) was established in 1873 as a stop along the Pope's Creek Branch of the Baltimore and Potomac Railroad on land which once included two large farms known as "The Hermitage" CH-?? And "LaPlata Farm". By 1887 the population of the village had grown to 120 and by 1896, the county seat was moved from the colonial village of Port Tobacco. By the turn of the century, LaPlata had emerged as the county's most prosperous town with new government buildings, multiple business and fine houses along the railroad. In the early twentieth century a new residential area emerged to the north of Charles Street. The lane next to the courthouse led from Charles Street to the Matthews family farm, the "Hermitage". After 1905 the Matthews family began to sell lots along this lane. By 1926 the town population had risen to 500

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## 9. Major Bibliographical References

Inventory No. CH-714

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## 10. Geographical Data

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Acreage of surveyed property 2

Acreage of historical setting 2

Quadrangle name LaPlata

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

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Verbal boundary description and justification

The Milton Somers House, now demolished, stood on Charles County Property Tax Map

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## 11. Form Prepared By

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name/title Cathy Currey/Historic Sites Surveyor

organization Charles County Planning Dept

date 9/17/01

street and number 200 Baltimore Street

telephone 301-396-5815

city or town LaPlata

state MD zip code 20646

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  
DHCD/DHCP  
100 Community Place  
Crownsville MD 21032  
410-514-7600

RESOURCE SKETCH MAP

Date: 5/2001

North arrow:



Name: MILTON SOMERS HOUSE, DEMOLISHED

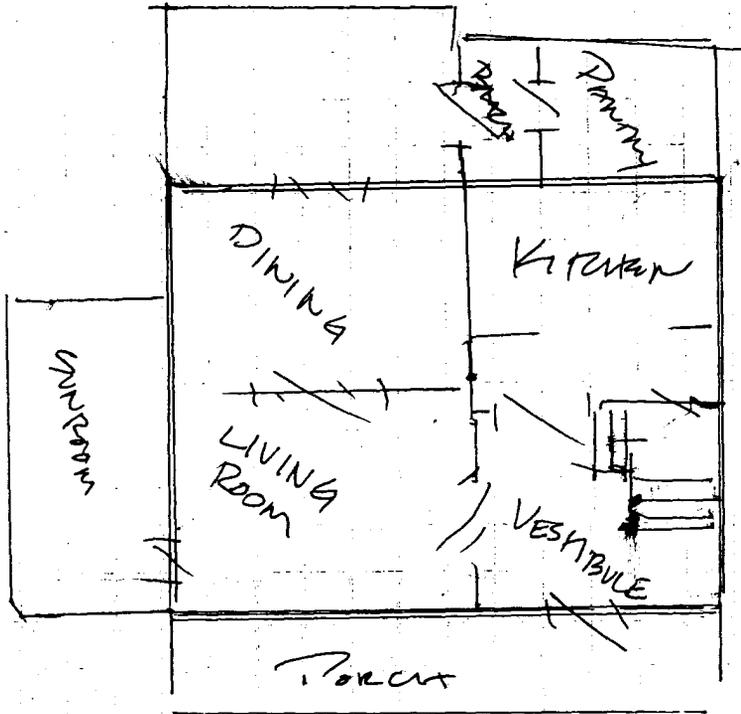
Address: W. SIDE WASHINGTON AVE.

CH - 714

Charles County, Maryland

LAPLATA

Vicinity



FIRST  
FLOOR  
PLAN

MARYLAND INVENTORY OF HISTORIC PROPERTIES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

Inventory No. CH-714

Section 9 Page 1

Milton Somers House  
name of property  
Charles County, Maryland  
county and state

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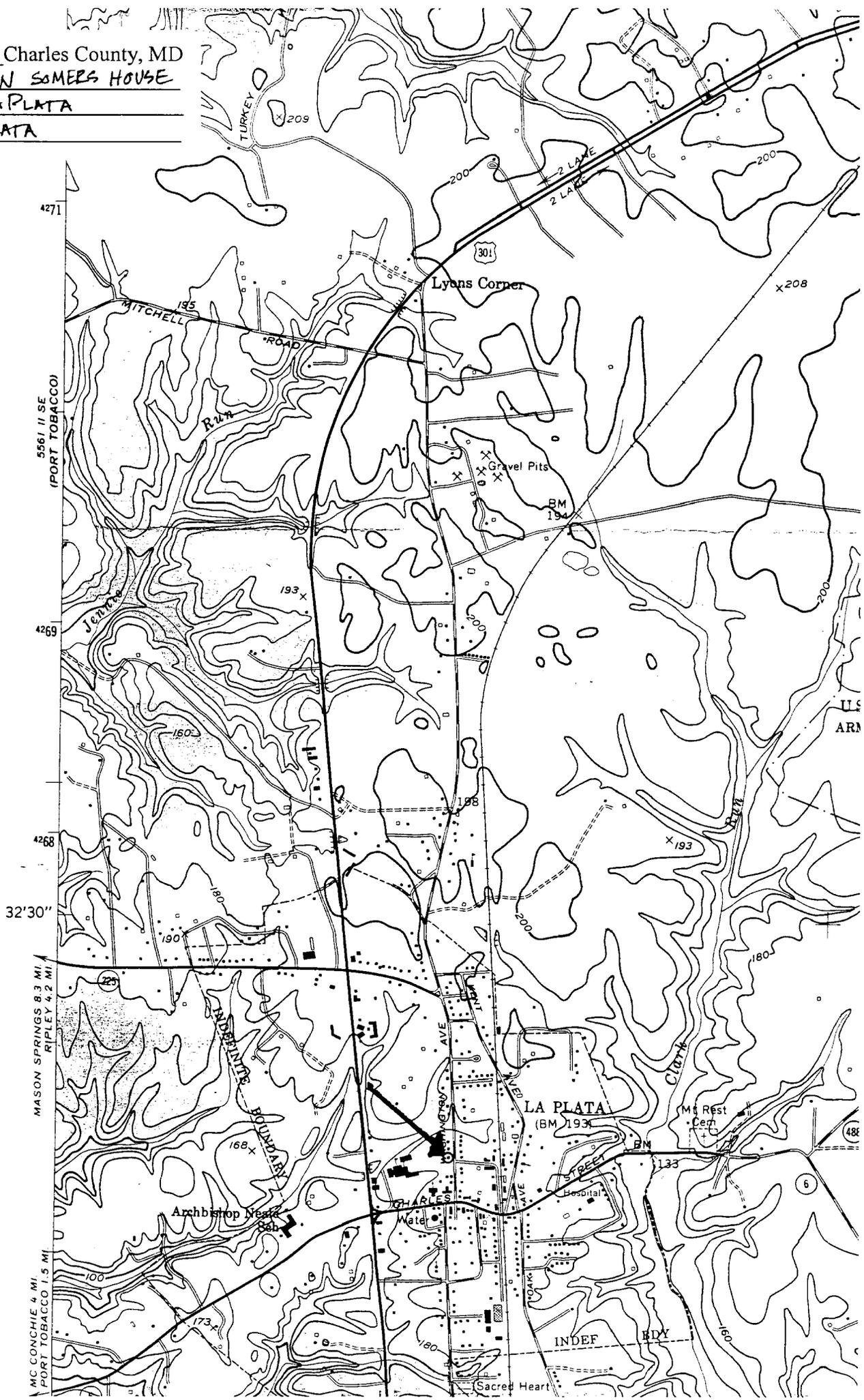
**Major Bibliographic References:**

Brown, Jack D., et al. Charles County, Maryland, A History.  
Charles County Bicentennial Committee, 1976.

Charles County Land Records, Charles County Courthouse, LaPlata, Maryland.

Klaphor, Margaret Brown. The History of Charles County, Maryland.  
LaPlata, MD: Charles County Tercentenary, Inc., 1958.

CH- 714 Charles County, MD  
Name: MILTON SOMERS HOUSE  
Location: LAPLATA  
Quad: LAPLATA





CH-714  
Milton Somers House  
Charles Co. Md.

C. Currey  
812001  
MD SHPO  
LOOKING W

1 of 7



CH-714

Milton Somers House

Charles Co. Md.

C. Currey

8/2001

MD SHPO

SOUTH ELEVATION

2 of 7



CH-714  
Milton Somers House  
Charles Co. Md.  
C. Currey  
8/2001  
MD SHPO  
WEST ELEVATION  
3 of 7



CH-714

Milton Somers House

Charles Co. Md.

C. Currey

8/2001

MD SHPO

NORTH ELEVATION

4 OF 7



CH-714  
Milton Somers House  
Charles Co. Md.

C. Currey

812001  
MD SHPO

STAIR, LOOKING N

5 of 7



CH-714

Milton Somers House

Charles Co. Md.

C. Currey

8/2001

MD SHPO

MANTLE, LOOKING S

6 of 7



CH-714  
Milton Somers House  
Charles Co. Md.

C. Currey  
8/2001  
MD SHPO

LOOKING W FROM DINING ROOM

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