Survey # F-2-98
Widow Tritt House
Street Address: 6220 Mountain Church Road
Town, State: Burkittsville, MD (vicinity)
private X, public ___

Approximate date September 14, 1862

This property is included in the survey of resources associated with the Civil War Battle of South Mountain, which occurred on September 14, 1862. Located on the west side of Mountain Church Road, the Widow Tritt House is a one and a half story log building on limestone foundations. The original section of the house has been added onto on several occasions, effectively tripling its size. Facing east and fronting directly on the west side of Mountain Church Rd., the house is sited on a one acre lot as it has since before the September 1862 battle for Crampton’s Gap. The Widow Tritt House was centrally located in the Confederate line of defense formed along the stone walls of Mountain Church Road during the battle at Crampton’s Gap. Regiments from Brigadier General William Mahone’s Brigade under the command of Colonel Thomas T. Munford occupied this central section. Situated as it is directly on the road the house undoubtedly had soldiers positioned on either side.

Photo Reference: Photo #

Form Prepared By: Paula S. Reed, PhD and Edith B. Wallace
Woodward-Clyde
200 Orchard Ridge Drive
Gaithersburg, MD 20878

Date: February, 1998
Maryland Historical Trust  
State Historic Sites Inventory Form

1. Name of Property  (indicate preferred name)
   historic Widow Tritt House
   and/or common

2. Location
   street & number  6220 Mountain Church Road
   city, town  Burkittsville
   state  Maryland
   congressional district 6

3. Classification

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Ownership</th>
<th>Status</th>
<th>Present Use</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>district</td>
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<td>X occupied</td>
<td>agriculture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>building(s)</td>
<td>X private</td>
<td></td>
<td>museum</td>
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<tr>
<td>structure</td>
<td>both</td>
<td></td>
<td>commercial</td>
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<tr>
<td>site</td>
<td>Public Acquisition</td>
<td>Accessible</td>
<td>educational</td>
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<tr>
<td>object</td>
<td>in process</td>
<td></td>
<td>entertainment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>being considered</td>
<td>yes: restricted</td>
<td>government</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>not applicable</td>
<td>X no</td>
<td>military</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4. Owner of Property  (give names and mailing addresses of all owners)
   name  Harold R. and Wanda M. King
   street & number  6220 Mountain Church Road
   city, town  Burkittsville
   state and zip code  MD  21718

5. Location of Legal Description
   courthouse, registry of deeds, etc.  Frederick County Courthouse
   street & number  100 W. Patrick Street
   city, town  Frederick
   state  MD

6. Representation in Existing
   Historical Surveys
   title
   date
   federal  state  county  local
   depository for survey records
   city, town  state
Located on the west side of Mountain Church Road, the Widow Tritt House is a one and a half story log building on limestone foundations. The original section of the house has been added onto on several occasions, effectively tripling its size. Facing east and fronting directly on the west side of Mountain Church Rd., the house is sited on a one acre lot as it has since before the September 1862 battle for Crampton’s Gap.

The east elevation of the old section of the house has three bays, with a central entrance and a central chimney. The stone foundation is partially above ground causing the first story to be above ground and accessed by a raised, hipped roof porch. Windows are two over two, with single pane or six light sash on the upper half story. The house is covered with insul brick siding, which probably conceals an earlier wooden siding. The roof is sheet metal. The central chimney is constructed of brick and may indicate 18th or early 19th century German building traditions. Several modern additions have been built in succession on the south elevation. A 20th century garage is located to the back of the property.

While exterior finished and features date from the 20th century, the actual structure could be much older.
The Widow Tritt House was centrally located in the Confederate line of defense formed along the stone walls of Mountain Church Road during the battle at Crampton's Gap on September 14, 1862 (see 1862 Engineer's Map, Crampton's Gap). Regiments from Brigadier General William Mahone's Brigade under the command of Colonel Thomas T. Munford occupied this central section. Situated as it is directly on the road the house undoubtedly had soldiers positioned on either side.

The stone wall which lined the east and west sides of Mountain Church Road was significant to the defense of Crampton's Gap. Colonel Thomas T. Munford reported, "...[I] instructed the officers commanding the two fragments of regiments (infantry) of Mahone's brigade to hold the post at all hazards. I posted the infantry behind a stone wall, at the base of the mountain, and running parallel with it..." This placement so impressed the Union commanders, they delayed three hours preparing for large assault, fearing greater numbers of Confederate forces. Colonel Joseph J. Bartlett, General Henry Slocum's Division wrote: "I was ordered by General Slocum to halt until he could mass his troops and arrange the plan of the assault, as the appearance of the mountain pass convinced all that artillery was of no avail against it, and that nothing but a combined and vigorous charge of infantry would carry the mountain...My line of skirmishers found the enemy at the base of the mountain, safely lodged behind a strong stone wall. Their entire line, being now developed, exhibited a large force."

While the placement of the Widow Tritt House on Mountain Church Rd. is incidental to the battle, no building still standing today within the Crampton's Gap battlefield saw as much direct action as this humble home.

The discovery on September 13, 1862 of General Robert E. Lee's Special Order #191, the Lost Order, in a field near Frederick where the Confederates had camped precipitated the march of the Army of the Potomac toward South Mountain along the Old National Pike. The turnpike crossed the mountain running west toward the center of Lee's divided army. Had Union commander,  

would to President Lincoln, the Battle of South Mountain might have ended differently."

The Special Order #191 detailed General Lee's deployment of the Army of Northern Virginia in September 1862. In addition to the siege of Harper's Ferry by three divisions under Stonewall Jackson from the west and two divisions under Lafayette McLaws from the northeast, the orders described the location of Robert E. Lee and James Longstreet with two divisions at Hagerstown and D.H.Hill's division, alone at Boonsboro, just below Turner's Gap. With the knowledge of the divided nature of Lee's army on the west side of South Mountain, and the small defensive line at the pass, McClellan felt confident in his army's ability to catch Lee's forces in this vulnerable position. However, McClellan's infamous cautiousness and over-estimation of the size of his opponent, delayed the movement of the Army of the Potomac for half a day. The result of his slow approach to the pass at South Mountain was to give the Confederate defenders time to reinforce their tenuous position and begin pulling their divided army together again at Sharpsburg.

The Widow Tritt House is secondarily significant as an example of regional vernacular architecture. The 1858 Isaac Bond Map of Frederick County shows "Mrs. Trit" at a dwelling at this location and Civil War maps identify the place as occupied by Widow Tritt. Log was the construction material of choice in the 18th and 19th centuries in central and western Maryland, especially for modest houses like this one. The massive central chimney could suggest that the house is older than it appears from the outside with its 20th century coverings and additions. According to Frederick County deed records, Susan Tritt acquired a one acre property called "Willard's Lot" from Samuel and Lydia Wetnight on July 7, 1857 (Liber ES 9, Folio 515). It was willed by Susan Tritt to Lydia A. Grams who acquired the property June 12, 1871. It remained in the Grams family until 1973, maintaining the same one acre size for the entire time.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT:

MARYLAND COMPREHENSIVE PRESERVATION PLAN DATA

Geographic Organization: Piedmont
Chronological/Developmental Period(s):
  Agricultural-Industrial Transition, A.D. 1815-1870
Prehistoric/Historic Period Theme(s):
  Military
  Architecture, Landscape Architecture and Community Planning
Resource Type:
  Category: Building
  Historic Environment: Rural
  Historic Function(s) and Use(s):
    Domestic/single dwelling
Known Design Source: None
9. Major Bibliographical References

**Books**


**Manuscripts**

- Rye, Dennis, National Register Nomination Form, South Mountain Battlefields F-4-17-A,B,C, 1986.

**Maps**


- Engineers Maps, 1862, National Register Nomination, South Mountain Battlefields F-4-17-A,B,C, 1986.

- Macombe Map, 1861.
10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property: approximately 1

Quadrangle name: Keedysville

Quadrangle scale: 1:24,000

UTM References: DO NOT COMPLETE UTM REFERENCES

Verbal boundary description and justification:

The property of 1 acre total is fronted along the eastern boundary by Mountain Church Road. The house is located in the southern eastern corner of the property fronting directly on the road. Frederick Co. Tax Map #74, parcel 175.

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>state</th>
<th>code</th>
<th>county</th>
<th>code</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Paula S. Reed, PhD and Edith B. Wallace

organization: Woodward-Clyde

date: 2/98

street & number: 200 Orchard Ridge Drive

telephone: 301-739-2070

city or town: Gaithersburg

state: MD 20878

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

People's Resource Center

100 Community Place

Crownsville, MD 21032-2023

410-514-7000
F-2-98 Widow Triff House
CRAMPTON'S GAP
(SEPTMBER 14, 1862)

- Federal Position, 3 p.m.
- Federal Position, 6 p.m.
- Initial Confederate Position
- Cultivated Fields
- Forest

Scale: 1"=1,000'
F-2-98
WIDOW TRITT HOUSE

KEEDYSVILLE, MD. - W. VA.

N3922.5-W7737.5/7.5
1953