

F-3-77

James Johnson House; "Springfield"
Lewistown vicinity
Private

Ca. 1775

The James Johnson House, or "Springfield", is a 2-1/2 story stone dwelling built about 1775 with a lower height 2-1/2 story stone wing on the north gable end. The upper half story on each section was added during the period about 1820-1840 and is defined by a brick frieze and sliding sash windows with Greek fret details. A stone springhouse built about 1775 is located near the northeast corner in a location suggesting that a Palladian composition of symmetrical wings and pavilions may have been originally planned. Other outbuildings include a frame and stone bank barn built about 1900-1910, a log barn of about 1850, a frame wagon shed/corn crib of about 1900, and a frame garden shed of about 1890-1900. The house is significant for the Georgian architectural influences, scale, and plan which reflect the wealth and prosperity of James Johnson (1736-1809), one of the three Johnson brothers who founded the Catoctin Furnace in 1774. The Furnace supplied iron products to the Continental Army during the Revolutionary War and was one of the most important industries in Frederick County during the late 18th century. The brothers built at least three large houses in the vicinity of Catoctin Furnace, Springfield, Auburn, and the Manor House, the last now in ruins. Both Auburn and the Manor House site are in the Catoctin Furnace National Register District. Springfield retains the most integrity as a representative of the Johnson brothers' successful industrial enterprise.

F-3-77

James Johnson House; Springfield
Lewistown
Frederick County

HISTORIC CONTEXT:

MARYLAND COMPREHENSIVE HISTORIC PRESERVATION PLAN DATA

Geographic Organization: Piedmont
(Harford, Baltimore, Carroll, Frederick, Howard, Montgomery
Counties, and Baltimore City)

Chronological/Development Period:
Rural Agrarian Intensification, A.D. 1680-1815
Agricultural-Industrial Transition, A.D. 1815-1870
Industrial/Urban Dominance, A.D. 1870-1930

Prehistoric/Historic Period Themes:
Architecture, Landscape Architecture and Community Planning
Economic (Commercial and Industrial)

Resource Type:

Category: Building

Historic Environment: Rural

Historic Function and Use:
Domestic/single dwelling/residence
Domestic/secondary structure/other dependencies
Agriculture/subsistence/animal facility/barn
Agriculture/subsistence/agricultural outbuilding/wagon shed

Known Design Source: None

Maryland Historical Trust State Historic Sites Inventory Form

MARYLAND INVENTORY OF
HISTORIC PROPERTIES

Magi No.

DOE yes no

1. Name (indicate preferred name)

historic James Johnson House; Springfield

and/or common

2. Location

street & number 11836 Auburn Road not for publication

city, town Lewistown vicinity of congressional district 6th

state Maryland county Frederick

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture <input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial <input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment <input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government <input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial <input type="checkbox"/> transportation
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> not applicable	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military <input type="checkbox"/> other:

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

name Nick J. & Margaret M. Chaconas

street & number 11836 Auburn Road telephone no.:

city, town Thurmont state and zip code Md. 21788

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Frederick County Courthouse liber 975

street & number 100 W. Patrick Street folio 163

city, town Frederick state Md.

6. Representation in Existing Historical Surveys

title James Survey of Frederick County F-20-8

date C. 1968 federal state county local

pository for survey records Md. SHPO

city, town Crownsville state Md.

7. Description

Survey No. F-3-77

Condition		Check one	Check one	
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved	date of move _____
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed			

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

CONTRIBUTING RESOURCE COUNT: 6

The James Johnson House, or "Springfield", is a 2-1/2 story stone mansion in the Georgian style built about 1775, with a lower 2-1/2 story stone side wing, both of which were altered by the raising of the roof to add the half story in the period about 1820-1840. The house has 5 outbuildings remaining from a much larger farmstead which existed in the early 19th century. The outbuildings are a circa 1900-1910 frame and stone bank barn, a circa 1900 wagon shed/corn crib, a circa 1890-1900 frame shed, possibly a tool and feed shed, a small log barn of about 1840-50, and a stone springhouse of about 1775-1800. The building dates are estimated by architectural features, references in local histories, and land records. The house and outbuildings are located on a rise near the eastern slope of Catoclin Mountain on a broad expanse of lawn, formerly agricultural fields, with a panoramic view toward the east across the Monocacy Valley. The site is on the west side of Auburn Road which parallels U.S. 15 about 2 miles northwest of Lewistown, Frederick County, Maryland. The Catoclin Furnace National Register Historic District (F-6-45), which is historically linked to James Johnson, the builder of "Springfield", is located about 1-1/4 miles north of the site on both sides of U.S. 15.

The house's principal elevation faces east and is fronted by several large trees, including an Osage Orange and lindens, which, according to Mrs. Chaconas, one of the present owners, were imported from Germany. The source of this information is unclear. The main section of the house has five bays with a center bay entrance. A one-story, pedimented entry porch over the center three bays has square, tapered posts in which the profile of a railing, now removed, can be seen in sockets in each post. The date of the porch is unknown, but it has been repaired several times, most recently by the present owners. The pediment is covered with flush boards and the roof is composition. The walls of the house are laid in random rubble style, with grapevine pointing, undoubtedly a late 19th or early 20th century repair. The stone is currently painted buff. The wall under the entry porch is covered with stucco. The roof is slate and interior end chimneys rise from the north and south gables. Two one-story additions are on the west elevation, one probably built about 1920 being covered in rusticated concrete block and attached to the main section and the other a recently built frame section on the rear of the wing.

The top story of the house appears to have been added during the period 1820-1840 and a faint variation in the stonework on the south gable end and the west elevation confirms a change in height. The side wing adjoining the main section on the north was also altered in the same way. The half story on the main section was finished with a brick cornice with two projecting belt courses forming a frieze. Small horizontally sliding windows are located just under the boxed cornice. On the east elevation of the main section, these frieze windows have Greek fret muntins, some of which are deteriorated. The brick frieze on the wing is simpler, with a single projecting belt course at the lower edge, and the windows have no muntins. On both sections, the brick frieze is painted green. The other window openings have

(Continued on separate sheet)

8. Significance

Survey No. F-3-77

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates C. 1775 - C. 1910 **Builder/Architect**

check: Applicable Criteria: A B C D
and/or
Applicable Exception: A B C D E F G

Level of Significance: national state local

Prepare both a summary paragraph of significance and a general statement of history and support.

The James Johnson House, "Springfield", is significant for the late Georgian style of the stone mansion, built about 1775, and for its association with James Johnson (1736-1809), one of the founders of the Catoclin Furnace. The iron foundry was located about one mile north of Springfield and was built beginning about 1774, supplying cannonballs, shot, and other iron products to the Continental Army during the Revolutionary War. The house was one of at least three built in the vicinity by the Johnson brothers, Thomas, Baker, and James, who together established the Catoclin works as well as several other forges in Washington and Frederick Counties, and Loudon County in Virginia. Their success and prosperity as a result of the iron industry is reflected in the scale and finish of Springfield, as well as that of "Auburn", built about 1778 by Baker Johnson and located in the Catoclin Furnace National Register Historic District (F-6-45). The third house, the Manor House, may have been the oldest of the three, begun in 1774 to house the ironmaster, but only foundations and scattered ruins remain on the site within the National Register District boundary. Springfield retains the most integrity of the three Johnson houses associated with the early period of economic success of the Catoclin Furnace. The later Greek Revival alterations of the house were done possibly in the 1820's or 1830's during the ownership of John Brien, a subsequent owner of the Furnace, and Frederick A. Schley, who purchased the house in 1834 as the result of an equity sale. The alterations support the original feeling of a wealthy country estate established by the siting of the house on a hill with an expansive view and the possible Palladian plan suggested by the stone smokehouse siting in relation to the house.

One of the unresolved mysteries of the James Johnson House is the local tradition that the writer Edgar Allan Poe inscribed his name on a window pane in the house while visiting on his honeymoon. The glass pane has been removed and retained by the current owners. The glass has two signatures of "James (or James L.) Johnson", and one each of "Sheppard" and "Poe". An illegible initial preceding the name Poe might be an "A". No dates are given. According to Jeff Jerome, curator of the Edgar Allan Poe House in Baltimore, there is no information about the writer's having family connections in Frederick County which suggest that he and his wife Virginia would have visited Springfield in 1835, the year of their marriage. The Johnson family had long since sold the Furnace and Springfield itself by that date. It is known that the Poe name was well established in the Lewistown area from the 18th century until the early 20th century, and there was intermarriage between James Johnson's descendants and the Poe family, as documented by a Johnson genealogy in

(Continued on separate sheet)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Survey No. F-3-77

Bond, Isaac. Map of Frederick County, 1858.
 Delaplaine, Edward S. The Life of Thomas Johnson. New York: Frederick H. Hitchcock, The Grafton Press, 1927, pp. 13 & 351.
 Johnson Family Genealogy, Monroe Johnson, compiler. Manuscript dated 1987 at Frederick County Historical Society. (Continued on separate page)

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property 40 acres
 Quadrangle name Catoctin Furnace, Md. Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UTM References do NOT complete UTM references

A	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	B	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
C	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	D	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
E	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	F	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
G	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	H	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

Verbal boundary description and justification

Approximately 40 acres centered just in front of the dwelling on Tax Map 32, Parcel 24. This would set off a large part of the open setting of the house and remaining outbuildings, providing both a panoramic view toward the east and a backdrop to the buildings

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries against the forested slope of Catoctin Mountain.

state	code	county	code
state	code	county	code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Janet L. Davis, Historic Sites Surveyor

organization Frederick County Planning & Zoning Dept. date September 1992

street & number 12 E. Church Street telephone 696-2958

city or town Frederick state Md. 21701

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
 Shaw House
 21 State Circle
 Annapolis, Maryland 21401
 (301) 269-2438

REC'D COMMUNITY DEPT
 CROWNSVILLE, MD 21032-2020
 514-7600

8.1 Significance (Continued)

the Frederick County Historical Society. There was even an Edgar Allen (note spelling) Poe among the late 19th century descendants. However, it seems more likely that the names on the glass were inscribed prior to 1835, possibly by James Johnson or his son James Johnson Jr. and a local member of the Poe family.

Some sources in the Frederick County Historical Society files on the Johnson family in Frederick County and the Catoctin Furnace state that a fourth house, "Prospect" (F-3-74), located south of the James Johnson House on a portion of the original Springfield tract, was also built by the Johnson brothers in 1776. Conclusive land record research has not been completed on Prospect to confirm this; however, a 1776 date stone in the wall of Prospect and some of its remaining architectural features place it in the same period. The 1910 Williams and McKinsey History of Frederick County attributed the building of Prospect to Jacob Cronise, whose family retained ownership well into the 19th century and a family cemetery on the property contains Cronise and other related family members' graves. Research in Johnson family records in the Maryland Historical Society and land and tax records should clarify the facts regarding the relationship between Springfield and Prospect.

7.2 Description (Continued)

parts of the stone foundation may be earlier. The siding is tongue-and-groove with louvred vents on the north and south elevations. On the east elevation is a concrete block enclosure at the stall level. A concrete paved area fronts the stalls. The roof is standing seam metal. The barn is currently under rehabilitation and much of the west elevation exterior, roof, and some of the inner structure have been exposed and replaced.

Log barn: North of the bank barn is a small, one-story exposed log barn with vertical board siding on the north, west, and south elevations. The east elevation has a wide opening, possibly wider than the original opening. The roof is standing seam metal. This building probably dates from about 1840-50 and is scheduled to be removed or relocated in the near future.

Wagon shed/corn crib: The frame wagon shed/corn crib may date from about 1900. It is in deteriorated condition and is also scheduled to be demolished. The siding is vertical boards and the roof is corrugated metal, partly missing. Above the drive-through in the east elevation is a window opening covered with chicken wire.

Frame shed: A two-section frame shed is located west of the house and is the last surviving structure of a larger group of frame and log outbuildings in this general location associated with the domestic group. It was probably built about 1890-1900 as a garden shed and feed shed and may have been two separate buildings joined at a later time. It is deteriorated and has both vertical and board-and-batten siding. A 3/3 window without glass is located in the north elevation and a vertical board door is in the east elevation. The corrugated metal roof is partially missing.

7.1 Description

wide plain frames with wood sills. Shutter keepers are still in place, but the shutters have been removed. The sash is 6/6. The doorway in the main section has a transom and sidelights. The door has four panels with double recesses, a design suggesting the Greek Revival influence, where the original late 18th century door would likely have been in the Georgian style with beveled or raised panels. The side wing is slightly recessed from the wall plane of the main section on the east and a one-story porch with a composition roof extends across the elevation. The wing has basically four bays in the east elevation, but the window sizes have been altered, with three smaller windows with varied sash to the right of the doorway and two 2/2 windows on the left of the doorway. The second story has 6/6 sash.

The interior of the main section has a center hall with flanking parlors. The stairway has scroll closers and a simple newel. The interior doors are mostly 6-panel types with raised panels. At the landing between the runs is a 6/6 window. The south parlor has a simply molded mantel of the period 1800-1820 with a "Catocin" Franklin stove, the type produced by the Catocin Furnace in the first quarter of the 19th century. The walls are plastered and the floors are original wide boards. French doors of mid-20th century lead to the small parlor in the southwest corner, where the mantelpiece has crossette molding and is flanked by a paneled built-in cupboard on the left side. The north parlor has another simple molded mantelpiece similar to that in the south parlor. Above the doorway to the dining room in the northwest corner of the house is a barred vent opening. The dining room has a large floor heat register near the door to the hall, probably dating from the late 19th century. The walls in the dining room have a tongue-and-groove wainscot, also of the late 19th century. The mantel in this room is flanked by a built-in cupboard with arched raised panel doors. The interior of the north wing has been the most altered area of the first floor. It has two rooms, with the center room currently the kitchen, with a modern corner fireplace. The north room in the wing is currently under restoration. The original floor has been removed and the level lowered and a concrete slab laid. The wall structure is revealed and is being insulated. A large brick fireplace modeled on the fireplace at Raleigh Tavern in Williamsburg has recently been finished.

Outbuildings:

Springhouse: The square plan stone springhouse has walls similar to those of the main house and is sited just northeast of the north wing. The location suggests a Palladian plan with hyphens and pavilions framing the main house, which was not completed. The springhouse has a deteriorated hipped shingle roof and a vertical board door in the south elevation. In the north elevation is a three-light window; the windows on the east and west elevations are missing. The interior is whitewashed plaster. A frame enclosure in the southeast corner surrounds the cooling trough. Based on the similar stonework of the springhouse, its date may be contemporary with the main house, about 1775.

Bank barn: The bank barn is located south of the house. Its structure, exterior siding, and features are clearly of the period 1900-1910, although

James Johnson House; Springfield
Frederick County

SURVEY No. F-3-77

9.1 Bibliography (Continued)

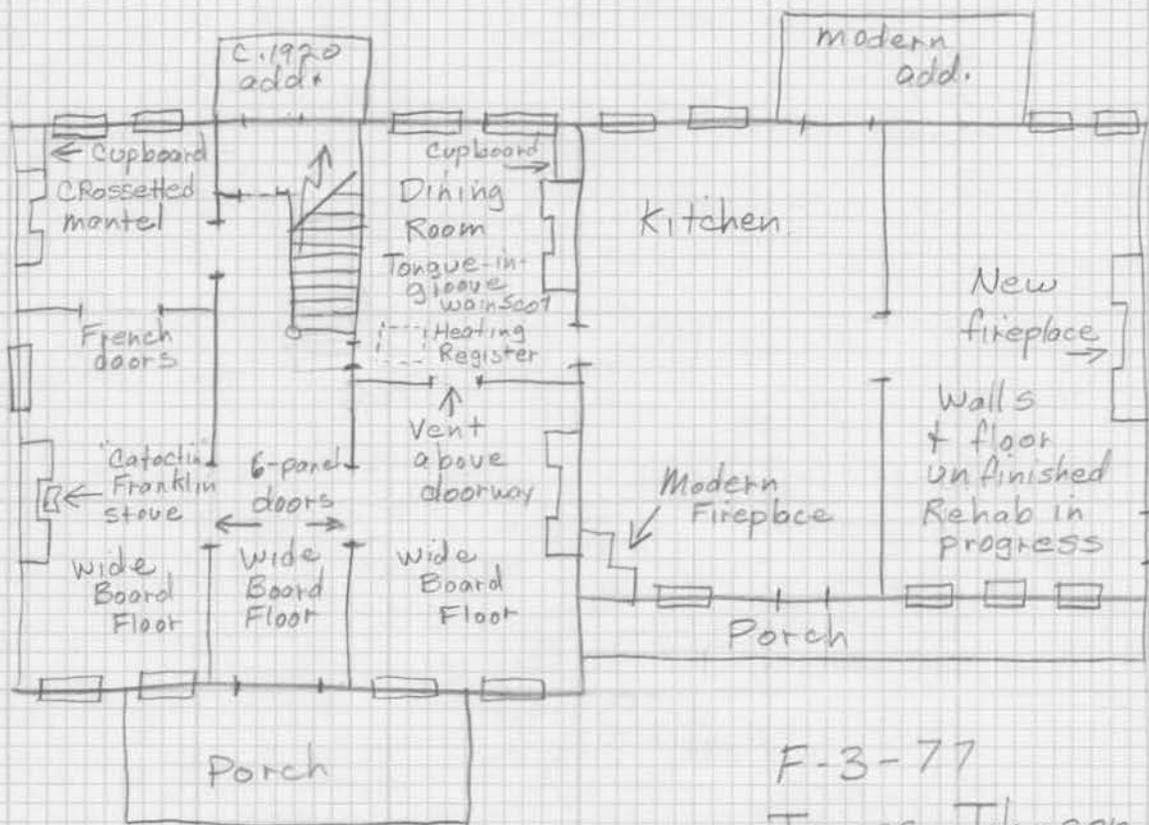
Titus, C.O. Atlas of Frederick County, 1873.

Williams, T.J.C., and Folger McKinsey. History of Frederick County, 1910.
Reprinted Baltimore Regional Publishing Co., 1979, p. 883, 1589.

LIBER/FL. NO	GRANTEE	GRANTOR	ORIGINAL TRACTS	COST	DATE
975/163 21 Nov 75	Nick J. & Margaret May Chaconas	Mary K. Long, trustee, exec. us Frances C. Leatherman Equity 25,314	138.855A.	\$126,000	
879/32 4 Nov 71	John D. & Frances C. Leatherman	Dorothy E. Keyes	139A. "Springfield" "Neighbors Agreed" "Mountain Tract"		
879/29 4 Nov 71	Dorothy E. Keyes	John Daniel Leather- man	139A.		
Mill Record TME 6/203 12 Aug 64	John Daniel Leatherman	Orestes F. Leatherman	"the Home Farm known as "Spring- field Farm"		
296/50 25 Mar 11	Orestes F. Leather- man brother of 3 Leather- man sisters (grantors)	Amanda C. Isanoglo widow, et al heirs of Daniel Leather- man	138A.	\$8,000	
AF 11/287 10 Aug 1885	Daniel Leatherman	Catoctin Iron Co. of Frederick Co.	"Springfield" "Neighbors Agreed" "Mountain Tract" 138 1/2 A.	\$6,167.70	
JWLC 1/367 21 May 1864	Valentine S. Brunner	Henry C. & Margaret Norman	138 1/2 A. tracts above	\$9,250	

LIBER/F O	GRANTEE	GRANTOR	ORIGINAL TRACTS	COST	DATE
JWLC 1/517 2 May 1864	Henry C. Norman	George Sahley & James M. Sahley Equity 2781	"Home Farm" or "No. 1 of Springfields" Improvements thereon consisting of a double 3-story stone dwelling house with a stone wing building, attached barn, lime kiln, etc, etc.	\$10,000	
HS 8/508 29 Apr 1839	Frederick L. Sahley	John McPherson Equity Farmers Bank of Md. vs. John McPherson, adm. of John Brien, dec. 23 Dec 1854 2/442/1399	"Springfield" resurveyed for Col. James Johnson 6 Dec 1802 1,030 a. description mentions lane to mansion house total 707 a.	\$16/a.	
JS 18/628 25 Oct 1823	John Brien	James Johnson	335 a.		

N →



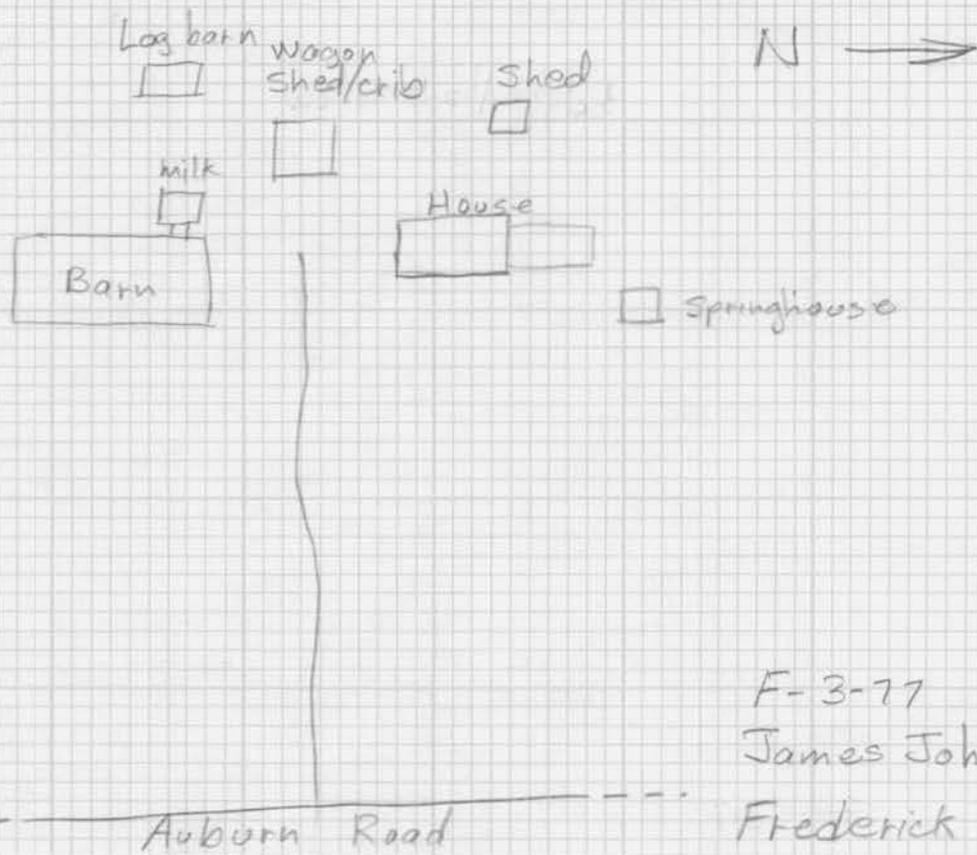
F-3-77

James Johnson House
Frederick County

Janet Davis

September 8, 1992

Not to Scale



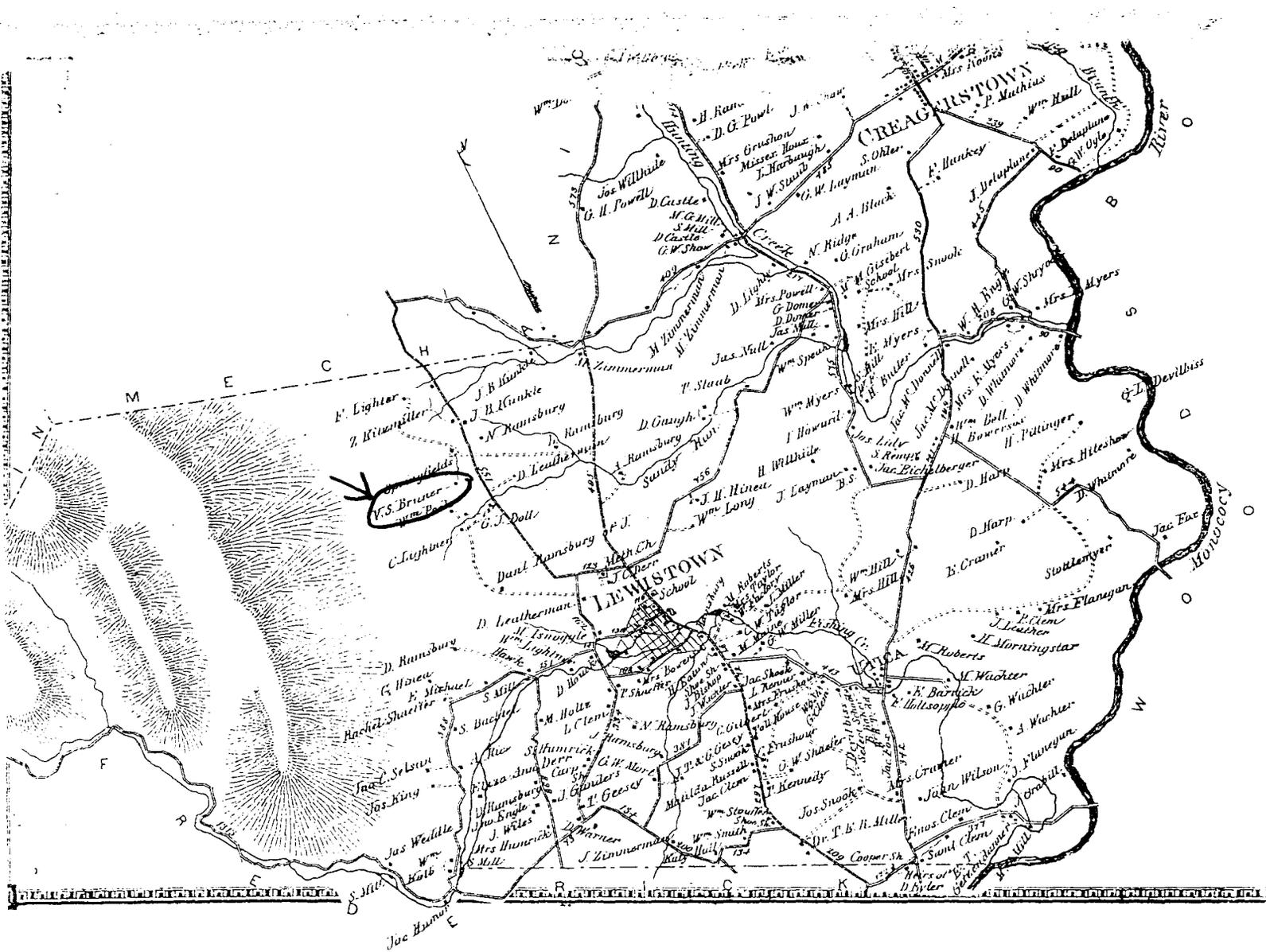
F-3-77
James Johnson House
Frederick County

Janet Davis
September 2, 1992

Not to Scale

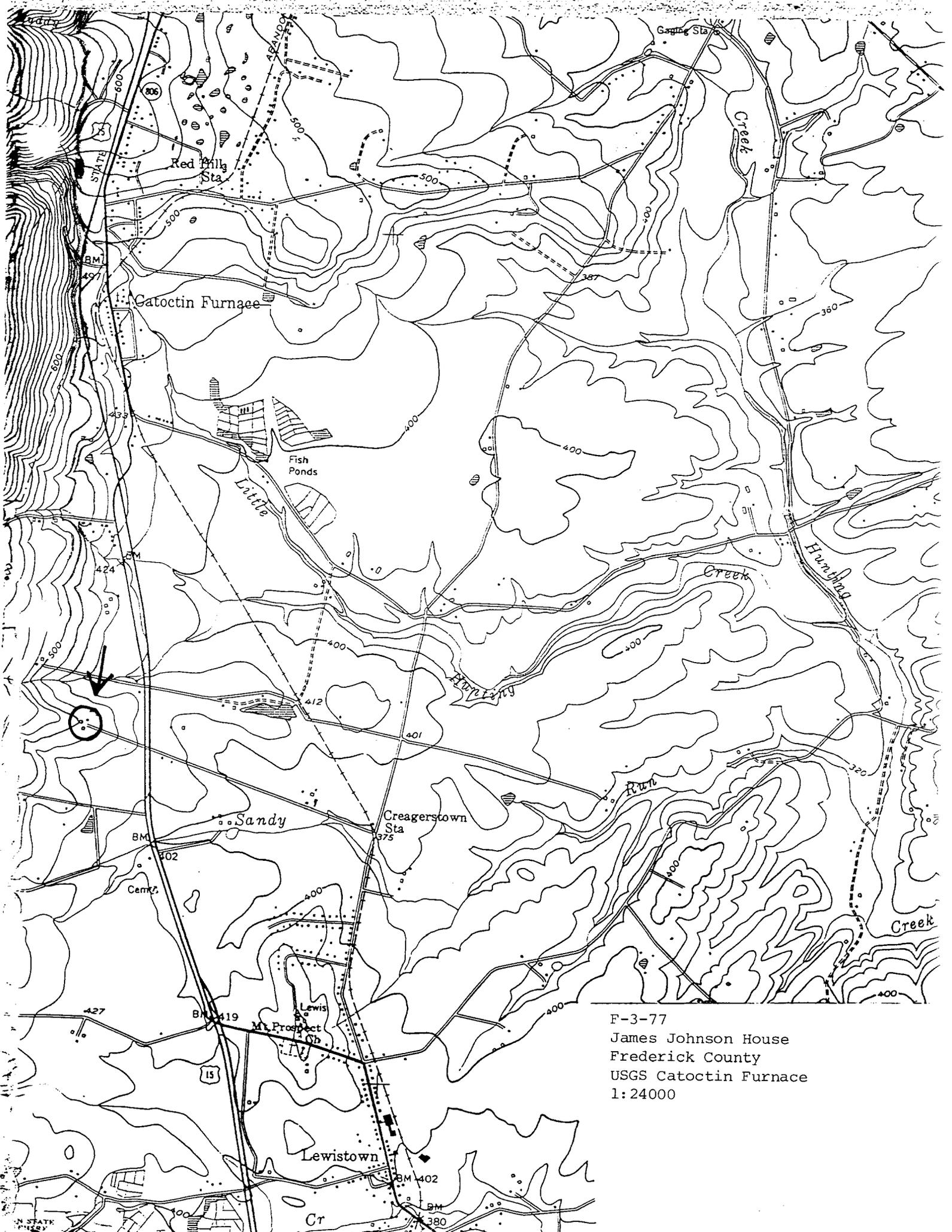


F-3-77
 James Johnson House
 Frederick County
 Isaac Bond, Map of Frederick
 County, 1858



lagerstown F.D. 1873

F-3-77
 James Johnson House
 Frederick County
 C.O. Titus, Atlas of Frederick
 County, 1873.



F-3-77
James Johnson House
Frederick County
USGS Catocctin Furnace
1:24000



F-3-77

James Johnson House

Frederick County

Photo: Janet Davis

September 1992

Neg. loc.: Md. SHPO, Crownsville, Md.

East elevation

1/7



F-3-77

James Johnson House

Frederick County

Photo: Janet Davis

September 1992

Neg. loc.: Md. SHPO, Crownsville, Md.

Southeast corner view

2/7



F-3-77

James Johnson House

Frederick County

Photo: Janet Davis

September 1992

Neg. loc.: Md. SHPO, Crownsville Md

Southwest corner view

3/7



F-3-77

James Johnson House

Frederick County

Photo: Janet Davis

September 1992

Neg. loc.: Md. SHPO, Crownsville, Md.

Wing, northeast corner view

4/7



F-3-77

James Johnson House

Frederick County

Photo: Janet Davis

September 1992

Neg. loc.: Md. SHPO, Crownsville, Md.

Main entrance door

5/7



F-3-77

James Johnson House

Frederick County

Photo: Janet Davis

September 1992

Neg. loc.: Md. SHPO, Crownsville, Md.

Main hall, 1st floor

6/7



F-3-77

James Johnson House

Frederick County

Photo: Janet Davis

September 1992

Neg. loc.: Md. SHPO, Crownsville, Md.

South parlor mantel with "Catoctin" Franklin stove

7/7