

G-V-A-143

General Benjamin F. Kelley House  
Gortner  
Private

ca.1865

The General Benjamin F. Kelley House is composed of two main blocks: a 2 story, 3 bay by 1 bay side hall plan of vertical plank construction, and a 1½ story single pen log structure measuring 14.5 feet square. The two sections, joined at their gable ends, have undergone several changes and additions that obscure much of the original fabric of the building.

This building gains its significance as the residence of General Benjamin F. Kelley, Civil War Union officer. Kelley bought six hundred acres of land at this site, known as Swan Meadows, for the purpose of convalescing injured and overworked army horses during the war. In 1865 he returned to Swan Meadows, where he lived out the remainder of his life.

MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST

G-V-A-143  
MAGI #1210905504  
NR

INVENTORY FORM FOR STATE HISTORIC SITES SURVEY

**1 NAME**

HISTORIC General Benjamin F. Kelley House

AND/OR COMMON  
Ralph D. Lichty House

**2 LOCATION**

STREET & NUMBER  
Blue Ribbon Rd. - W side, .3 mile S of U.S. Rt. 219S

CITY, TOWN Gortner CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT 6th  
VICINITY OF

STATE Maryland COUNTY Garrett County

**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	<b>PUBLIC ACQUISITION</b>	<b>ACCESSIBLE</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT <input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT <input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL <input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER

**4 OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME Ralph D. Lichty Telephone #: 301-334-2866

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN VICINITY OF STATE, zip code

**5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. Garrett County Courthouse

Liber #: 247  
Folio #: 584

STREET & NUMBER  
Third and Alder Streets

CITY, TOWN Oakland STATE Maryland 21550

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE  
None

DATE  
\_FEDERAL \_STATE \_COUNTY \_LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN STATE

**7 DESCRIPTION**

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 _____
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

**DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE**

The General Benjamin F. Kelly House is composed of two main blocks: a 2 story, 3 bay by 1 bay side hall plan of vertical plank construction, and a 1½ story single pen log structure measuring 14.5 feet square. The two sections, joined at their gable ends, have undergone several changes and additions that obscure much of the original fabric of the building.

The facade of the plank section is sheltered by a 2 story, full length porch, and has 3 evenly spaced openings with the door occupying the easternmost bay. The windows on both levels are floor to ceiling length 4/4 sash with molded elliptical-arched windowheads. The door frames have this same molding as well as single pane transom lights. The porch, which is supported by 5 chamfered posts on each level, may have been altered, as it interferes with the window and door moldings on the first floor. The building's gable roof is constructed of pole rafters and is covered with corrugated metal. A frame, 2 story, shed-roofed addition on a poured concrete foundation extends the entire length of the rear elevation serving as a storage shed.

The interior plan has been slightly altered. The first floor originally had a side hall, single room arrangement, however a bathroom now occupies the hall area and extends into the room. The staircase rises 9 treads along the northeast hall and terminates in a 3 tread corner winder at the upper level. The second floor is divided into 2 rooms and has a square hall space between the rooms and the stairs.

This section, which has a full basement below, rests on a foundation of coursed stone stacked with a soft mud-lime mortar. The basement is whitewashed and has a stone chimney base projecting approximately one foot out from the southwest wall. The fireplace and chimney above it have been removed, however. The sills are logs hewn on their top and bottom faces with bark remaining on the unhewn surfaces. Most of the log joists, which are hewn on their top faces only, have been replaced with various widths of machine cut lumber. The plank walls consist of two layers of board sealed on the exterior with chamfered battens and plastered on the interior. Asbestos shingles now cover the exterior walls.

The log wing rests on stone footings and is constructed with logs that are hewn on their interior and exterior faces and chinked with mud and small stones. The exterior is covered with board and batten siding on its northwest elevation (cut nails are used) with asbestos shingles on its northeast side. A one story, shed-roofed addition serving as a kitchen has been attached to its southeast side. There is little of the actual structure of the building that is observable.

**CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY**

**8 SIGNIFICANCE**

G-V-A-143

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

SPECIFIC DATES      ca.1865

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

**STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE**

This building gains its significance as the residence of General Benjamin F. Kelley, Civil War Union Officer.<sup>1</sup> Kelley bought six hundred acres of land of this site, known as Swan Meadows, for the purpose of convalescing injured and overworked army horses during the war. In 1865 he returned to Swan Meadows, where he lived out the remainder of his life.<sup>2</sup>

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

**9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES**

1  
The Glades Star. Vol. II, No. 5, March 31, 1951, p. 79.

2  
Stephen Scholosnagle. Garrett County, A History of Maryland's Tableland.  
(Parsons, WV: McClain Printing Co., 1978), pp. 236, 243.

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

**10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA**

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY \_\_\_\_\_

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

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

STATE	COUNTY
STATE	COUNTY

**11 FORM PREPARED BY**

NAME / TITLE	Valerie Cesna/Historic Sites Surveyor	
ORGANIZATION	Maryland Historical Trust/Bureau of Mines	DATE October 1981
STREET & NUMBER	Shaw House, 21 State Circle	TELEPHONE (301) 269-2438
CITY OR TOWN	Annapolis	STATE Maryland 21401

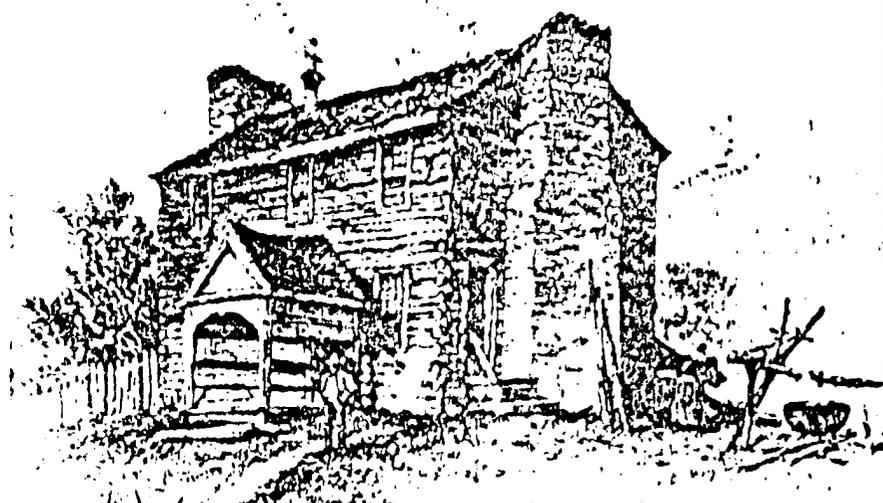
The Maryland Historic Sites Inventory was officially created by an Act of the Maryland Legislature, to be found in the Annotated Code of Maryland, Article 41, Section 181 KA, 1974 Supplement.

The Survey and Inventory are being prepared for information and record purposes only and do not constitute any infringement of individual property rights.

RETURN TO: Maryland Historical Trust  
The Shaw House, 21 State Circle  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401  
(301) 267-1438

3/31/51

GENERAL JOHN SWAN



JOHN SWAN'S HOME AT GORTNER

IN HIS TIME, General John Swan was the largest speculator in the lands of what is now Garrett county, Maryland.

In the assessment of this part of Allegany county, in 1798, Swan was assessed with over 35,000 acres, and later he owned as much as 50,000 acres.

John Swan was baptised in Torthorwald Parish, November 27, 1750, and was only a lad of sixteen years when he landed in the New World. In the Bible carried by him through the Revolutionary War he wrote:

"John Swan's book. Arrived at Annapolis, in Maryland, from Scotland, on 30th August, 1766."

He was the eldest son of John Swan of Cacklefield, hence the name of "Cacklefield," which John Jr. gave to one of his first land tracts; another he called "Dumfries," for his Scottish town.

Young John Swan came to America as the heir of his uncle, Robert Swan, who died, unmarried, in Annapolis, May 4, 1764. John soon removed to Frederick County and later to Balti-

more, where he resided until his death, August 21, 1824. The remains of John Swan, his wife and son James are interred in a vault in Westminster Presbyterian church, Baltimore.

Revolutionary War Services

Like most Scottish-Americans of 1776, John Swan was a revolutionist. In 1777 he became captain of the Third Continental Dragoons, recruited in Fredericksburg, Va., and in 1780 he was promoted to major in the First Dragoons. He served with gallantry until the close of the war, when he was made General of the Maryland militia.

Washington and Lafayette were his personal friends.

The Swan Lands

General Swan owned enormous tracts of land in Maryland and in Virginia, including 6,166 acres awarded him by Virginia for his Revolutionary services. In 1774, when Lord Baltimore opened the roads "westward of Fort Cumberland" for settlement, John Swan was one of the speculators who surveyed and patented extensive tracts in what is now Garrett county.

Later the State of Maryland patented to him large tracts, among them being "Swan's Meadows (1798); "Potomac Manor," 10,749 acres (1800); "Yough Manor," 8,613 acres (1799); Walnut Hills," at Avilton, 4,089 acres (1800); "Strawberry Plains," near Swallow Falls, 7,380 acres (1806).

When the Military Lots were allotted to soldiers of the Maryland Line in 1788 none of them went to live on their lots. General Swan bought many of these lots from veterans, such as Patrick Doreen, of Baltimore county "late sergeant," who, in 1798, deeded his lot, 1481, 50 acres, to John Swan for three pounds sterling or \$8.00. The General also bought tracts and lots from lesser speculators, such as the purchase in 1803 from David Lynn, of twenty-one Military Lots for 660. These lots included Muddy Creek Falls and valuable farm land near Gortner.

As this county became settled, the Swans leased or sold small tracts to settlers. William Chisholm, Jr., a fellow Scot, was their agent in the Yough Glades, and William Sharpless looked after the lands across the Great Backbone Mountain.

General Swan's Family

John Swan married July 12, 1787, Elizabeth, daughter of George Maxwell. They were the parents of four sons: Robert (born 1788); John (1790); George M. (1791), and James (1792).

John and Robert Swan resided for a time on the family lands in Garrett county.

JOHN SWAN, JR., lived with his family and a few slaves in a good log house on "John's Prospect," 992 acres, which includes the site of the village of Gortner. Swan's house was on the high ground west of the present Gortner Mill.

In his later years John Swan and his family, in summer, resided in Oakland at Oak and Fifth streets; after his wife's death he resided at "The

Rest" on Seventh street.

When past seventy years of age, Mr. Swan once remarked to his neighbor, Mr. Thayer, "Sir, I have spent three fortunes but never earned a dollar."

ROBERT SWAN resided on the "Swan's Meadow" tract southeast of Gortner. This homestead later became the residence of General Benjamin F. Kelley, where he died about the year 1891. It now belongs to Daniel Lichty.

GEORGE M. SWAN resided in the George's Creek Valley in Allegany county.

JAMES SWAN, the youngest son, remained in Baltimore. He was president of the Merchants' Bank there and one of the first directors of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad.



PFC. WILLIAM E. OTTO, son of William L. Otto, of Swanton, was recently killed in action in Korea.





Table Rock, MD-WV  
 USGS 7.5 minute series  
 Scale - 1:24,000  
 1948; photorevised 1974

Site #: G-V-A-143  
 Ralph D. Wierly House  
 Blue Ribbon Rd. - W side, .3 mile  
 S of U.S. Rt. 219S



G-V-A-143

General B.F. Kelly House

Garrett County, MD

Donna Ware 10-24-80

Facade SE porch



G-V-A-143

G-V-A-143

General B.F. Kelly House

Garrett County, MD

Donna Ware 10-24-80

Rear NW elevation