Oak Farm
517 Glenville Road
Churchville, MD 21028

Constructed in 1821 by the Reverend William Finney, "Oak Farm" was an unusually elegant rectory with its side hall plan, false windows, stone string course, and federal doorway. Finney was minister at the Churchville Presbyterian Church (HA-441) from 1813 until 1854.
# INVENTORY FORM FOR STATE HISTORIC SITES SURVEY

## 1 NAME

**HISTORIC**  
Oak Farm  
AND/OR COMMON  
James Finney House

## 2 LOCATION

**STREET & NUMBER**  
517 Glenville Road  
**CITY. TOWN**  
Churchville

**Easterly side of Glenville Road, north of Md. Rte 155, near Churchville.**

## 3 CLASSIFICATION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CATEGORY</th>
<th>OWNERSHIP</th>
<th>STATUS</th>
<th>PRESENT USE</th>
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<td>™ UNOCCUPIED</td>
<td>™ COMMERCIAL</td>
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<td>™ WORK IN PROGRESS</td>
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<td>_ PUBLIC ACQUISITION</td>
<td>™ ACCESSIBLE</td>
<td>X PRIVATE RESIDENCE</td>
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<td>_ OBJECT</td>
<td>_ IN PROCESS</td>
<td>™ YES RESTRICTED</td>
<td>™ ENTERTAINMENT</td>
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<td>_</td>
<td>_ BEING CONSIDERED</td>
<td>™ YES UNRESTRICTED</td>
<td>™ RELIGIOUS</td>
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<td>_</td>
<td>_</td>
<td>™ NO</td>
<td>™ GOVERNMENT</td>
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## 4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

**NAME**  
John Archer; Cornelia Archer  
**STREET & NUMBER**  
517 Glenville Road  
**CITY. TOWN**  
Churchville  
**Telephone #:**

## 5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

**COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC**  
Harford County Courthouse  
**STREET & NUMBER**  
40 South Main Street  
**CITY. TOWN**  
Bel Air  
**STATE, zip code**  
Maryland 21028

## 6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

**TITLE**

**DATE**

**DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS**

**CITY. TOWN**

**STATE**
This ca. 1820 stone house is located on the easterly side of Glenville Rd., north of Level Rd. (Md. Rte 155).

The two-story, gable-roofed fieldstone structure with stone quoins was constructed in two parts: the three-bay by three-bay main section, built first, faces south and has brick interior chimneys in each end; the rear section, which is two bays long and almost as wide as the older portion, is slightly off axis so that its west side extends beyond the west end of the front section. The rear section has a brick interior chimney in the center of its west side, although a photograph from the 1920's shows that the chimney was in the north end at one time. Most windows have 6/6 sash, panelled shutters (replaced) and flat brick arches. The roof with a boxed cornice with molding has been changed from the 1920--and perhaps original--roof with wide eaves. The two dormers in the south flank of the roof were shingled and are now covered in clapboards.

The principal--or south--facade has an entrance in the first story east bay, flanked by two windows on the west, with three windows in each of the second story three bays, underlined by a projecting stone string course. The entrance has a round-arched door frame with flanking tapered pilasters and panelled jambs and soffitt. The eight-panel door has a central vertical seam, as if it were a double-leaf door, and a fanlight.

The east end has one window in each story--sporadically spaced--and a small window in the gable.

The north wing covers most of the north side of the main section except for the window in the westernmost bay of each story.

The north wing appears to have been altered, n.b. the fenestration and the chimney. At present, the west side has windows in each of the two bays of both stories, flanking the chimney. The window in the first story south bay was an entrance at one time. The north end has a pair of 6/6 sash windows in the first story, a narrow 6/6 sash window in the second story, and two casement windows in the gable. With a central entrance flanked by windows in the first story and two windows in the second story, the east side with two dormers is spanned by a one-story porch, which also continues around the exposed portion of the southern end. The latter has an entrance, window, and trapezoidal opening, in the first, second, and third stories, respectively.

The interior of the main section has a side hall plan; the north wing has been rearranged and now has one room each along the east and west walls, with several smaller rooms in between. The trim of the main section has two recessed beads and corner rondels; windows have panelled jambs.

In the hall of the main section, the three-run staircase with square balusters and scalloped step ends is against the east wall, with an entrance to the basement underneath. The two parlors both have fireplaces in the west wall. The mantel

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY  (See Continuation Sheet No. 1)
There are two apocryphal stories about the Reverend William Finney, who is said to have built this house between 1820 and 1825. One relates to his career at Churchville Presbyterian Church, the other to this estate nearby.

The Bicentennial Program of the Churchville Presbyterian Church, published in 1938, tells us how the Reverend William Finney came to Churchville and ultimately served the Church for 41 years. "He was licensed to preach by New Castle Presbytery on October 1, 1812. At his licensure, according to custom, he had to preach a sermon before Presbytery. The evening before its delivery, he re-wrote it, but was not satisfied with it and threw it into the fire. The next day he preached extemporaneously and was heard by Zephaniah Bayless and James Fulton, two elders from Churchville Church, who were there in quest of a pastor. They were so pleased with his sermon and way of preaching that he was immediately asked to preach at Churchville and was soon called to the pastorate. He held the call for nearly a year..."

The second apocryphal story, told by the Finney family, picks up where this one ended. After his trial stint at Churchville, the Reverend William Finney returned to New London, Pennsylvania. En route, he was caught in a thunderstorm, found refuge under an oak tree, and resolved to build his home next to the tree if he were called to preach in Churchville permanently.

Indeed, Reverend Finney (b. 1788, d. 1873) was installed at the Churchville Presbyterian Church on November 17, 1813—ultimately serving 41 years there; and indeed, he did make his home next to the oak tree.

Beginning in 1822, Finney purchased various parcels of the tract "Aquillas Inheritance" flanking what is now Glenville Road. He acquired the land from various sources, including Joseph Husband, George Walker, Herman Stump, Samuel McGaw and Michael Sinnott, and continued his acquisitions well after he built this house. He built the front or south part of the stone house around that time (a plaque on the interior hall wall has the date 1821 on it) and, subsequently, the north ell. Almost simultaneously, the Churchville Presbyterian Church was building their new church, completed in 1824.

William & Margaret Irvine Finney (his second wife) had six children: Susan Corey Finney (b. 1822, d. 1894) whose footprints are in the third floor window arch; Ebenezer Dickey Finney (b. 1825, d. 1904), who was the first pastor at the Bel Air Presbyterian Church (now the Odd Fellows Hall) and served there again from 1872 until 1895; John Miller Finney, M.D. (b. 1823, d. 1896), who for 50 years was the Churchville...
MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES
Land, Will, & Equity records of Harford County
Interview with Mary Barada, 9/79
Finney Family records in possession of Mary Barada
Bicentennial Program of Churchville Presbyterian Church 1738-1938; 1938;
Churchville, MD

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

GEOGRAPHICAL DATA
ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STATE</th>
<th>COUNTY</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
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</table>

FORM PREPARED BY
NAME / TITLE
Natalie Shivers Historic Site Surveyor

ORGANIZATION
Historic District Commission of Harford County

STREET & NUMBER
45 South Main Street

CITY OR TOWN
Bel Air, Maryland

STATE
21014

DATE
10/79

TELEPHONE

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
in the south parlor has a U-shaped shelf set on a cavetto & ovolo cornice and panelled corner blocks, an architrave ornamented with four horizontal beaded bands, and fluted, in entasis columns flanking the opening. The mantel in the north parlor has a cavetto cornice, panelled architrave, and columns flanking the opening. The door to the north section has eight panels and a Dutch elbow latch.

In the east wall of the third floor landing is a marble plaque inscribed:

William  
Margaret  
Finney  
1821  
Tempus Fugit Irreparabile

In the third floor west window arch are the footprints of Susan Miller Finney, the 1st child of Reverend William & Margaret Finney, and the inscription:

WF  
MF  
SMW (Originally SMF, but altered later)  
1822

In the south room of the basement, a brick arch supports the fireplace above.
doctor; George Junkin Finney (b. 1830, d. 1906), a farmer; William Finney, Jr. (b. 1827, d. 1862), who was taken with "gold fever" and went off to California; and Charles McLean Finney (b. 1829, d. 1897), who also went off to what one biography called "the Eldorado of the West," but ultimately returned to Churchville.

In 1841, William Finney persuaded his friend, Joseph J. Beeman, to purchase Oak Farm and 200 acres for $8000\(^1\) while he built "Greenwood" next door. The Beemans lived in the house until 1897, at which point Arabella Barnes (at that time Arabella Steele) purchased it and 164 acres for $3000.\(^2\)

Her niece, Mary H. Steele of New York City acquired it in 1933\(^3\) and, in 1947, sold it to James Finney, great-grandson of the Reverend William Finney.\(^4\)

James Finney renovated the house extensively. A 1920's photograph shows a flat-roofed portico over the front (south) entrance, with a cluster of three columns flanking the steps. At that time, the dormers, now covered in clapboard, were shingled; the roof eaves had a wide overhang (the roof line is now flush with the end walls and has a boxed cornice); the north side of the south section had a one-story porch that led into an entrance in the south bay of the ell's west wall— the entrance was made into a window, and the porch is no longer there; the chimney in the ell was in the north wall. On the interior, James Finney re-arranged the ell, which is thought to have contained two rooms divided on a north-south axis. The fireplace and chimney were moved to the west wall, and two smaller rooms were carved out of the kitchen on the east.

This house is notable for several reasons: 1) its association with the Reverend William Finney, who presided over almost half a century of the growth of one of the oldest and most important centers of Presbyterianism in the county; and 2) its elegance and refinement, in a region where side hall plans and double parlors were relatively rare. The false arched windows, brick arches, stone string course, and Federal-style entrance, bespeak a familiarity with more cosmopolitan buildings than Harford County had to offer at that time.

1. Liber HD 25, Folio 142
2. Liber WSF 92, Folio 122
3. Liber SWC 227, Folio 148
4. Liber GRG 305, Folio 121
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Reference</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Grantor</th>
<th>Grantee</th>
<th>Acreage</th>
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<td>3.</td>
<td>GRG 305/121</td>
<td>April 26, 1947</td>
<td>Mary H. Steele, unmarried, of Manhasset, New York</td>
<td>James McC. Finney</td>
<td>159.13</td>
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<td>4.</td>
<td>SWC 227/148</td>
<td>August 17, 1933</td>
<td>Bennett H. &amp; Arabella S. Barnes</td>
<td>Mary H. Steele of New York City</td>
<td>164 Acres</td>
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<td>5.</td>
<td>DGW 186/217</td>
<td>September 22, 1923</td>
<td>Edwin H. Webster</td>
<td>Arabella S. &amp; Bennett H. Barnes</td>
<td>&quot;Aquilla's Inheritance = 164 Acres</td>
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<td>6.</td>
<td>DGW 186/216</td>
<td>September 22, 1923</td>
<td>Arabella S. &amp; Bennett H. Barnes</td>
<td>Edwin H. Webster</td>
<td>164 Acres</td>
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<td>7.</td>
<td>WSF 92/122</td>
<td>September 11, 1897</td>
<td>Mary C. Beeman of Baltimore, Exec. of estate of Joseph J. Beeman</td>
<td>Arabe &amp; Bennett H. Barnes</td>
<td>164 Acres</td>
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<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>HD 25/142</td>
<td>July 3, 1841</td>
<td>Wm. Finney</td>
<td>Joseph J. Beeman</td>
<td>$8000</td>
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<td>9.</td>
<td>(A) HD 5/517</td>
<td>January 5, 1822</td>
<td>Joseph Husband</td>
<td>Wm. Finney</td>
<td>$50</td>
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</table>

Note: The acreage for the last entry is 32 Acres, not 200 Acres.
Title Search (Cont'd.)

HA-149

9. (B) HD 6/78
   August 13, 1822
   Grantor: George Walker
   Grantee: Wm. Finney
   Sum: $1300
   Acreage: "Aquila's Inheritance"
            12½ A. 6 Rod

(C) HD 12/343
   September 28, 1825
   Grantor: Joseph Husband
   Grantee: Wm. Finney
   Sum: $500
   Acreage: "Aquila's Inheritance"
            26 A, 2 R, 1 P.

(D) HD 8/125
   March 7, 1825
   Grantor: Herman Stump of John Stump of Stafford
   Grantee: Wm. Finney
   Sum: $400
   Acreage: 2 tracts: 1.) Aquila's Inheritance=115A,3R,14P
              2.) Westwood

(E) HD 9/53
   December 12, 1825
   Grantor: Joseph Husband
   Grantee: Wm. Finney
   Sum: $100
   Acreage: "Aquila's Inheritance"
            12A, 77P

(F) HD 14/129
   February 3, 1831
   Grantor: Samuel McGaw
   Grantee: Wm. Finney
   Sum: $272
   Acreage: "Aquila's Inheritance"
            27A, 1R, 12P

(G) HD 15/285
   November 29, 1832
   Grantor: Joshua Guyton, Sheriff
   Grantee: Wm. Finney
   Sum: $161.61½
   Acreage: "Aquila's Inheritance"
            32 3/4 Acres
           (Mary Lee administrative of Parker H. Lee
            vs. Patrick Hawlin & Wm. Smithson)

(H) HD 15/204
   August 7, 1832
   Grantor: Joseph Husband
   Grantee: Wm. Finney
   Sum: $32
   Acreage: "Aquila's Inheritance"
           4A, 14.25P.

(I) HD 17/318
   November 3, 1834
   Grantor: Michael Sinnott
   Grantee: Wm. Finney
   Sum: $400
   Acreage: "Aquila's Inheritance"
            3 Acres; adjoining lot= 2½ Acres
Form 10-300

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(TYPE ALL ENTRIES - COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS)

1. NAME

COMMON: James Finney house

AND/OR HISTORIC:

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER: East side of Charlesville Road about 0.9 mi north

CITY OR TOWN: Charlesville

STATE: Maryland

3. CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY (CHECK ONE)

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OWNERSHIP:

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ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC:

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PRESENT USE (CHECK ONE OR MORE AS APPROPRIATE)

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4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNERS NAME: Dr. James Finney

STREET AND NUMBER: 360

CITY OR TOWN: Churchille

STATE: Maryland

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

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<th>STREET AND NUMBER</th>
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<td>Harford C. Courthouse</td>
<td>40 S. Main st</td>
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CITY OR TOWN: Bel Air

STATE: Maryland

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: Bel Air

STATE: Maryland

CODE:
This fine stone masonry house, 2½ stories high, faces east, its ridge line running north-south. Three bays by three, it has a stone wing running north along the east wall. A splendid addition is a well housed all-weather swimming pool in a modern south wing.

Comice, doorways, sash windows, favors panels in the brick arches on the north side, are all handsome details carefully restored.
8. SIGNIFICANCE

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<td>Transportation</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STANDARDS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Include Personages, Dates, Events, Etc.)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>This old masonry frame house lay abandoned after the Finneys got disgusted with poor tenant farmer upkeep, but when his parents died the Finney sold their more modern large Victorian frame house and updated this old treasure. Professional people in the country, they is outer suburbs of the metropolis too, though Mr. Finney manages several hundred acres of dairy farmland he is a bone surgeon in Haute-De Grace of Baltimore.</td>
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### 10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

**Latitude and Longitude Coordinates Defining a Rectangle Locating the Property**

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<tr>
<td>SW</td>
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**Latitude and Longitude Coordinates Defining the Center Point of a Property of Less Than One Acre**

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**List All States and Counties for Properties Overlapping State or County Boundaries**

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<thead>
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<th>State</th>
<th>Code</th>
<th>County</th>
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### 11. FORM PREPARED BY

**Name and Title:**

L. E. Pittman

**Organization:**

Maryland Historic Trust

**Street and Number:**

50 State Circle

**City or Town:**

Annapolis

**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:**
"Oak Farm"  
Southwest elevation  
Photograph taken ca. 1920.

Churchville, MD  
HA-149