

HA-1585

Berry Farm Complex

Summary

This site contains much more than the log bank house recorded in this report. There are other buildings as well as a talented black man who perhaps belongs more to the 1890's than the 1980's. In 1980, this is perhaps one of Harford County's most important sites, since it represents the continuation of an aspect of agrarian society long since gone from the United States. Purely in architectural terms, the Berry Farm house is another example of the bank building so well suited to the hilly terrain of Harford County.

MAGI # 1315855535

INVENTORY FORM FOR STATE HISTORIC SITES SURVEY

1 NAME

HISTORIC
Berry Farm Complex

AND/OR COMMON
Albert Berry Farm

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER
1320 Rock Ridge Road

CITY/TOWN
Jarrettsville

___ VICINITY OF Rocks

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

STATE
Maryland 21084

COUNTY Harford

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	PUBLIC ACQUISITION	ACCESSIBLE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input type="checkbox"/> YES RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input type="checkbox"/> YES UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL
			<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
			<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
			<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
			<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
			<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME
Albert Berry, Jr.

Telephone #:

STREET & NUMBER
1320 Rock Ridge Road

CITY/TOWN
Jarrettsville

___ VICINITY OF Rocks

STATE, zip code
Maryland 21084

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC Harford County Courthouse

Liber #: 757

Folio #: 72

STREET & NUMBER
40 South Main Street

CITY/TOWN
Bel Air,

STATE
Maryland

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

DATE

___ FEDERAL ___ STATE ___ COUNTY ___ LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

CITY/TOWN

STATE

7 DESCRIPTION

HA-1585

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED DATE _____
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Berry Farm complex is located at the end of a dirt land running north off of Rock Ridge Road, in the vicinity of Rocks, Maryland. The entire complex consists of a late 19th or early 20th century farmhouse, and numerous outbuildings, as well as a log bank house. It is the log bank house which was examined in October 1980 and which is described in this report. Loss of survey funds prevented further intensive recording, an unfortunate circumstance since as the accompanying article reveals, much may be known of Albert Berry, the ax handle maker, but little is known of his environment.

This abandoned log bank house is built on the side of a hill, and faces south. It is 2 stories high with a raised rubble stone foundation, exposed on the north to the height of one story. Later frame sheds run off the west elevation.

The main block has a center entrance plan on the south, with a blind bay to the west and a 6/6 window on the east. There were two 6/3 windows at second floor level. There is a one story shed roof porch supported by 4X4 posts. The area sheltered by this porch was painted "barn red".

The east elevation is blind except for a small attic level opening that straddles the chimney. The logs are covered with wide (12") vertical boards attached with cut-nails except the gable end which has weatherboards. The north elevation has a symmetrical window placement - two 6/3 in the second floor, two 6/6 on the first floor, and two 6/3 in the basement level. The north elevation is covered with 9" rabbeted vertical boards, fastened with wire nails. The west elevation has one 6/6 window at first floor level, is blind at the second story, and has an attic light.

The house is sheltered by a gable end roof, with exposed rafters to which are attached plain boards, thus creating a simple cornice (soffit and fascia). The roof overhangs the gable ends by approximately 12" and there are plain rake boards.

The interior has a one room down one room up plan, (the latter divided into two rooms at a later time).

The basement has stone piers and a brick arch to carry the weight of the flue above, with a later flue tap above the arch. The basement floor has puncheons resting directly on the dirt, and the floor is of 2 1/2" tongue and groove planking, fastened with wire nails, suggesting a total floor replacement at some point. An unexplained feature of the basement is the frame wall on the west, which may be replacement work. However, the stone work on the ends of the north and south looks as though no alterations have occurred.

The first floor has a space heater tap in the brick flue and is lighted by windows on three sides. There is evidence of an earlier door on the west wall, now closed up. The room was trimmed out with 1 3/4" tongue and groove boards for the ceiling, and a 1 X 5 baseboard. The flooring is random width boards fastened with cut nails. In the east is a winding stairway enclosed with beaded tongue and groove panelling. The walls are plastered with no lathing, and two periods of white wash and a later covering of 'baby blue' paint were observed. The latter seems to have been a popular finish co'

(See Description continuation Sheet #1)

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
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 checked="" 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 checked="" 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

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Like many other farmsites visited during the Harford County Survey the Berry Farm is multi-faceted in its historical resources having in this case a particular ability to teach about more than one aspect of history. For instance, its many farm buildings which form a complex on a very hilly tract of land near Rocks, together with the antique agricultural equipment in them tell much about various phases of farming in Harford County. The oldest building on the farm is a log bankhouse built by Albert Berry Sr. for his father. Both men were slaves and this house says a great deal about the life-style of that first generation of freed slaves.

Albert Berry Jr., the present owner, represents yet another resource. At age 88 (Nov. '80) he is the human link with the people, objects and events which make this farm the extremely informative site that it is. In addition to informing us of the actual circumstances of his father and grandfather on this farm Mr. Berry is at the same time an authority on the craft of shaping handles for axes, mauls and other hand held tools. He has been crafting axe handles since he was 15 and his handles are still much in demand by Baltimore County's largest quarry, the Texas Limestone operation operated by the Campbell Family), a large farm co-operative and many local outlets. His shop complete with its 1910 tractor-operated belt-driven lathe is in itself an important site. The man, his shop and product are all a striking reminder that computerized productions of synthetic objects for the masses is still relatively recent.

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

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

Wayne Nield II, Phillip R. Lord, Historic Site Surveyors

ORGANIZATION

Harford County Department of Planning and Zoning

DATE

December 1980

STREET & NUMBER

45 South Main Street

TELEPHONE

838-6000 ext. 207

CITY OR TOWN

Bel Air, Maryland

STATE

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

Description Continuation Sheet #1

HA-1585

The Berry Farm Complex

in rural dwellings, according to one older oral informant in Harford County. The same wall treatment is found on the second floor.

The second floor has been partitioned into two small rooms, a hallway sometime in the early 20th century, judging by the materials. The following observations were made. The roof rafters are treepoles squared at the ends only, and mitred at the ridge with no ridgeboard. The attic joists rest on a hewn plate log, and the end joists are tied into the chimney stack. The second floor ceiling is created by the exposed attic joists and attic flooring. The gable end studs may be vertical mechanically sawn and are affixed to the plate log with cut nails.

Approximately east of the house is the foundation of a ice house, of poured concrete, measuring 12' X 13'. Approximately 88' north of the house (further downhill) are the foundations of a privy, 11'X15'. Pieces of glassware and crockery were scattered at the latter spot, which had also been used as a trash burning site in more recent times.

Berry Farm Complex

Addendum

This is a brief description of the abandoned frame house standing southwest of the main complex of buildings at the Berry Farm site.

It is a 1½ story frame bank house facing south into a hillside, with a rubblestone foundation. The basic plan is the same as the log bank house already described, ie. a 1½ story dwelling with a basement kitchen, including a cooking fireplace, and two rooms above. The stairway has the same relationship to the chimney as well, with winding steps to the half story (upper level) attached around the chimney.

The house incorporates hewn posts and beams, plates and sills, and joists, but has vertically sawn studs with cut nails. To the northeast are modern additions.

The decaying condition of this semi-collapsed house prevented a more detailed interior and exterior examination. Apparently the structure has been used for the storage of hay for many years, and this weakened the floor causing the inevitable collapse.

ALBERT BERRY

1. 757/72 Sept. 30, 1967 Grantor: Zero Inc.
Grantee: Albert and Edith (wf) Berry
2. 198/221 April 27, 1926 Grantor: Albert Berry and Martha A.
Grantee: son Albert H. Berry
Acreage: The farm on which they now reside
consisting of 4 parcels totalling
61 acres.
3. 134/242 Sept. 20, 1911 Grantor: Albert and Martha
Grantee: Albert Jr.
Acreage: 1. Part of "Streets Pleasant
Hills" (via 46/11a and 30/396)
2. 23 + ac. on Rock Ridge
(via 104/180)
4. 104/180 April 7, 1902 Grantor: Mary E. Rogers
Grantee: H. B. 23 + ac she inherited from her
father E. Stanley Rogers
5. 46/112 November 11, 1882 Grantor: Joshua and Eliza Jones
Grantee: Albert Berry
Acreage: part of Streets Pleasant Hills"
excepting 12 acres.
6. 30/396 June 13, 1874 Grantor: Ann Street
Grantee: Eliza Jones
Acreage: 37 + acres part of Streets Pleasant
Hills (Mortg. release)
7. 28/343 November 9, 1872 Grantor: Ann Street et al
Grantee: Josh. Jones and wf.
Acreage: - 1 ac, part of land conveyed
8. 30/387 Grantor: by will of father Wm. Street, Senior
Grantee: Ann Street
9. 30/272 Grantor: by will of father Wm. Street, Senior
Grantee: Ann Street
10. 29/390 Grantor: by will of father Wm. Street, Senior
Grantee: Ann Street
11. 28/343 Grantor: by will of father Wm. Street, Senior
Grantee: Ann Street
12. 16/299 Grantor: by will of father Wm. Street, Senior
Grantee: Ann Street
13. 7/101 Grantor: by will of father Wm. Street, Senior
Grantee: Ann Street

Marriage Records

Book 1/ 13 & 55

August 28, 1869 Albert Berry (col'd) and Sarah
J. Evans (Col'd)

Sept. 2, 1869 Albert Berry, 25 yrs, Blk, laborer
married Sarah, aged 23

(few if any identified colored names aren't until spring
spring or summer 1866 i.e.

Jarrett & Anna Butler Sept. 23, 1862

Lewis Fellman & Cordelia Wilson Jan. 31, 1866

Jon. Waters & Emeline Harris Feb. 21, 1866

plus

10 couples in 1866

17 couples in 1867

6 couples in 1868

23 couples in 1869

including the Berry's

Jan. 27, 1882 Albert Berry & Martha A. Cornish
no record

The Best Ax Handles Around

By KATY DALLAM

"I can't make 'em like I used to," Albert Berry of Rock Ridge road insists. But at 87, he is still producing numerous wooden handles for axes, sledge hammers, ball peen hammers, claw hammers and hatchets.

Drawn down the lane by the sound of a running engine, a stranger rounds a corner of an old-wooden building and spots Mr. Berry bending over a circular saw table. He looks up, smiles broadly, raises his hand in a country wave, and continues cutting.

His hands move with strength and familiarity, and the pile of sawdust on the floor grows as he finishes cutting the piece. He walks to the end of the shed to turn off the tractor which powers the saw. The building stops vibrating and settles into comfortable silence.

'Many A Thousand'

Mr. Berry gestures to the machinery around the shop. "I used to shave out handles with my Daddy. Shaved 'em with a drawing knife. I'd do 'bout a dozen a day. Before I lost the sight in one eye, I could do that many an hour by machine.

"Been many a thousand sent away from here. I've made these handles since I was 'bout 15. Been many a thousand sent away from here."

He picks up the rough-cut piece. "I used to cut the wood my own self. I'd go out into the woods, cut the logs, rip the wood into small pieces, and let it dry.

"See those piles? They're all different plank thicknesses for different handles." The cross-stacked piles tower over Mr. Berry. "I let 'em dry six months anyhow.

"Now I buy my wood at C.D. Miller or Johnson Saw Mill. You got to be careful when you pick out hickory. You can get some brashy stuff that ain't very good. It'll break easy.

"Course you got such awkward people now. Don't know

how to use tools. They break 'em by using the handle 'stead of the hammer. These young people don't want lessons, though."

Rough Cut

After the wood has dried properly, Mr. Berry rough-cuts it until its shape resembles a rifle. Then he puts the rough-cut piece and a pattern piece on an ax handle lathe and cuts it to its final shape. Finally, Mr. Berry smooths the piece on a sander and puts it in a pile with others of the same variety.

The machines in Al Berry's workshop are trusted working companions. The venerable ax handle lathe has been on Mr. Berry's property since 1910. Made by the Ober Manufacturing Company of Mt. Gilead, Ohio, it occasionally breaks down. "I fix it, but I can't get no more parts for it. That company's gone out of business."

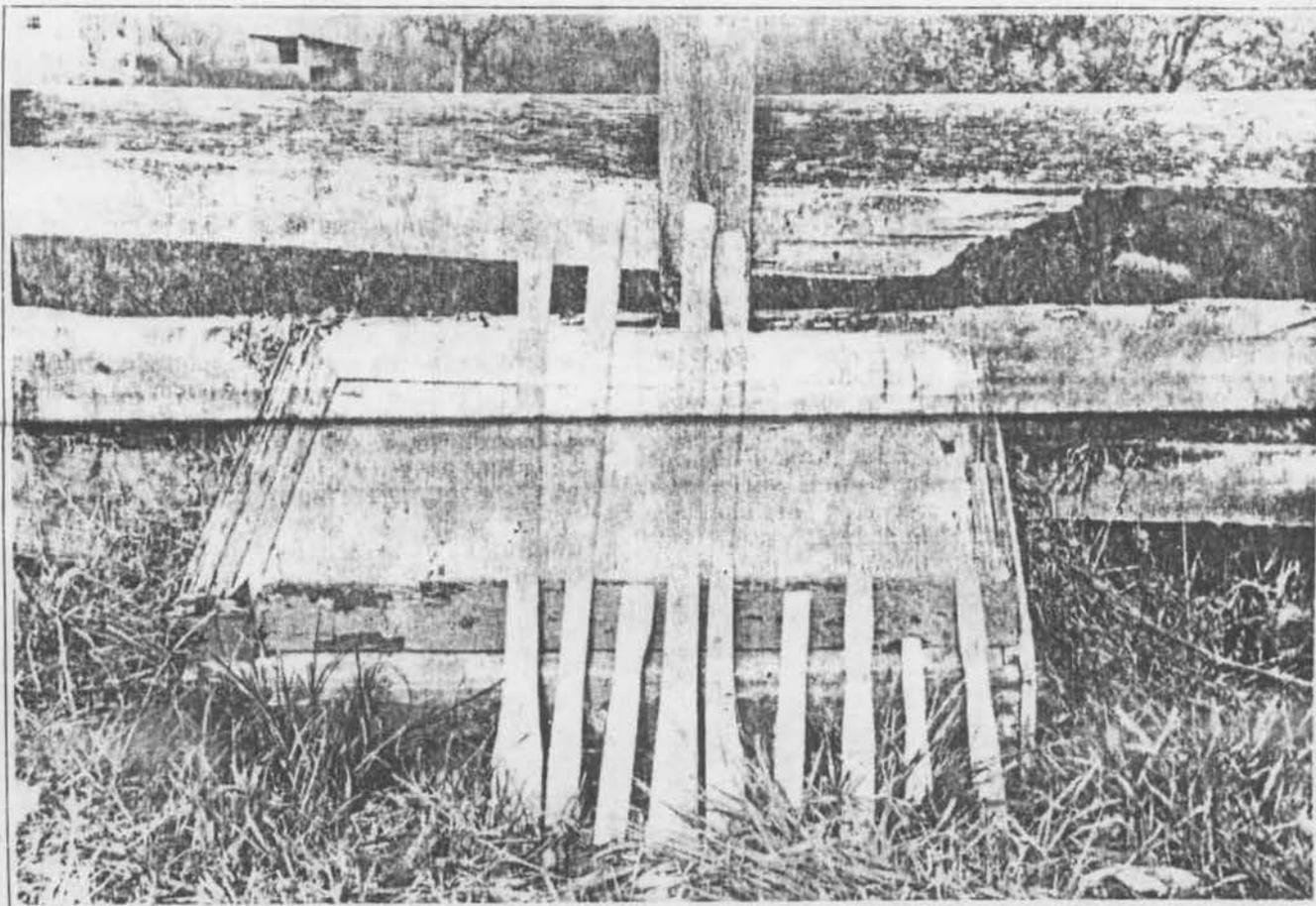
The saw and the sander are run by tractor. "I bought that John Deere in 1945 from J.M. Dooley at Cardiff. It still runs good."

Mr. Berry carefully but easily climbs over the motionless long belt running from tractor to saw. "I try to keep some handles made ahead. Then when orders come in, all I have to do is cut and sandpaper 'em," he says in tactful reference to the interruption of his morning's work.

"I supply Southern States in Whiteford, Cockeyville, Bel Air and over across the river in Rising Sun. I also sell to Klein's in Forest Hill. The Weaver Stone Company in Butler bought pick ax handles for breaking stone. My handles were used when the Conowingo Dam was built. The third dam up the river, the Safe Harbor Dam, they bought my handles to build it, too."

In Demand

Mr. Berry walks to a neighboring shed. "I got things out here for people. Over here, I'm supposed to put in new



SOME EXAMPLES of the highly refined work done by Al Berry.

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AL BERRY shapes an ax handle in his workshop located off Rocks Road.

shovel handles. Used to put in new handles for the County. And here 're more tools to fix. People come up here and leave off all kinds of things. Even come out of York County down here

"Miss Susan White come here with a TV crew to do a piece on me. Sat right there on that spreader tongue while I worked. After she was here, people went crazy wantin' my stuff.

"See that sled in the corner? We used that 60 years ago, hooked the horses to it. That's been here a long while."

He surveys the ridge and the meadows sloping down on either side. "I used to farm this place. That field there needs mowin'. I did it last year, but I don't suppose I'll get it done this year. I had corn and hay last year, but I haven't done 'em this year. I had corn and hay last year, but I haven't done 'em this year. I sold my cows; I couldn't tend to 'em.

"I was born on this land in 1892, lived here all my life." He points to a dilapidated log house. "That's where my grandparents lived over 100 years ago. A kind of cyclone come along and mashed the roof clean in. I should've kept it up, but I didn't."

At one time, Mr. Berry worked full time in addition to making wooden handles. "Years ago, I used to run a sawmill. Had it for seven or eight years. The first frame house I ever sawed is the one by St. Mary's, Pylesville. That was 60 years ago.

"Then I worked at Edgewood. We used to haul lumber on trucks. I was the boss on one of the trucks. And I worked with plumbing down there. I knowed where all the pipe lines was. I did, but I wouldn't now.

"I liked it down there, but the fellow who was working the farm here left, so I had to come home. I used to do a little blacksmithin' here, too, but I don't do it anymore," he says, pointing to an anvil on a stump.

A Changing County

Mr. Berry leads a quiet life. He rarely gets out at night, except to eat dinner and watch television with his son's family, who lives a few yards behind Mr. Berry's house. His wife died three months ago after a long stay in a nursing home.

Albert Berry is used to solitude. From his shop windows, no other house is visible. The splendid isolation in which he works is difficult to find elsewhere in Harford County. "They been wantin' to buy this, but I won't let 'em," he vows emphatically.

"Sometimes I feel blue. As I ate breakfast, I used to

watch the man at the place next door go to the barn. Now I don't even know the people there. I don't look out anymore.

"Lots of places I go, I don't recognize. They've changed North Bend over there, it's a regular town now. Why, some of these new places, you ain't got any more than enough room to get your car in."

He glances over the fields and outbuildings which no man living knows as well as he. "I ain't pestered with a lot of people," he declares reflectively. "Just the people who bring work up here for me to do."

Wilson and Betsy Smith of Bond's Forest Farm have often visited Mr. Berry's workshop. "You just can't get ax handles anywhere else as good as Al Berry's. Most handles are kiln dried for mass production. Al Berry makes sure the hickory trees are cut at the proper time, when the sap's lowest. Then he dries them naturally. That's why his handles are far superior," explains Mr. Smith.

"My Uncle George bought about 200 double trees (yokes) and single trees from Al Berry. He used them on the work horses. Beautiful pieces of work," Mr. Smith remembers admiringly.

"Albert Berry also makes adze handles and broad ax handles. Did he tell you that? Not many people make broad ax handles anymore. They have to have an offset, a crook, in the handle. The handles can be either right handed or left handed, depending on which side of the wood you're working. He really is an incredible man," asserts John Sullivan of Bon Air.

Many Contributions

An unprepossessing, dignified man, whose face has no trace of wrinkles, Albert Berry would never use a superlative in self-description. Only his repeated, "Been many a thousand sent away from here," betrays a justifiable pride in his lifetime craft.

Yet, this gently worded statement is awesome in retrospect. During the last 72 years, the work of a single man has been a significant factor in the life and growth of Harford County. His hands have been responsible for the tools which helped to build a hydro-electric dam; to quarry stone; to maintain roads; to chop firewood; and to erect houses. Harford Countians have used, in hundreds of ways, the tools of which Albert Berry's handles are a part.

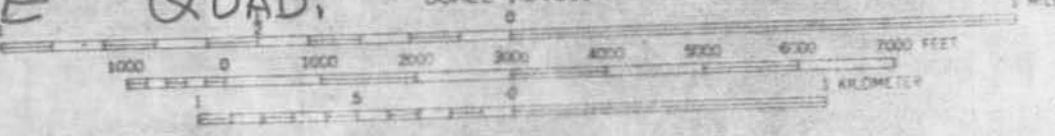
To what does Mr. Berry attribute his remarkable agility and productivity? He replies without hesitation. "I guess the Good Lord blessed me," Albert Berry solemnly acknowledges.

HA-1585



950 000 FEET (MD.) 27°30' 175 (JARRETTVILLE) 5763 III SW 1378 25'

FAWN GROVE QUAD, SCALE 1:24000



CONTOUR INTERVAL 20 FEET
DATUM IS MEAN SEA LEVEL



1943 AND 1950 TRIANGULATION NORTH DATUM AT CENTER OF SHEET

THIS MAP COMPLIES WITH NATIONAL MAP ACCURACY STANDARDS
FOR SALE BY U.S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, WASHINGTON, D.C. 20242
A FOLDER DESCRIBING TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS AND SYMBOLS IS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST



HA-1585

Berry Farm
Rocks, Md.
Phillip R. Lord
Northeast

11/80



HA-1585

Berry Farm
Rocks, Md.

Phillip R. Lord
South

11/80



HA-1585

Berry Farm
Rocks, Md.

Phillip R. Lord
Southeast

11/80

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