

## SUMMARY

-1604

## Dembytown Schoolhouse

The Black community at Dembytown Road, often referred to as simply "Dembytown" was started in 1917 when the Federal government purchased the Gunpowder Neck for a military installation (Edgewood Arsenal). A number of families, the Dembys and Gilberts among them, purchased parcels of land from Joshua Hammond, built houses, and lived in close proximity to one another. There are still many descendents of these first families living there today.

The Schoolhouse, built about 1920 represents Harford County's earlier efforts to comply with State laws providing for the education of Black children. It functioned as a school until 1950, and as such was an important part of this early 20th century Black community. Relatively little of the Black experience in Harford County has been documented, and the Dembytown School as well as other Black schoolhouses throughout the County represent an important part of this often overlooked heritage.

INVENTORY FORM FOR STATE HISTORIC SITES SURVEY

**1 NAME**

HISTORIC **Magnolia Colored Schoolhouse**

AND/OR COMMON **Dembytown Schoolhouse**

**2 LOCATION**

STREET & NUMBER **East side of Dembytown Road, north of Trimble Road**

CITY, TOWN \_\_\_\_\_ CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT \_\_\_\_\_

VICINITY OF **Magnolia**

STATE **Maryland** COUNTY **Harford**

**3 CLASSIFICATION**

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE <input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input checked="" 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL <input 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL <input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OTHER: <b>Abandoned</b>

**4 OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME **Samuel and Lydia Lee C/O Lydia Veney**

Telephone #: \_\_\_\_\_

STREET & NUMBER **RD 14 Box 18**

CITY, TOWN **Baltimore** STATE **Maryland**, zip code **21220**

\_\_\_ VICINITY OF \_\_\_\_\_

**5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. **Harford County Courthouse**

Liber #: **GRG 422**

Folio #: **179**

STREET & NUMBER **40 South Main Street**

CITY, TOWN **Bel Air, Maryland 21014** STATE \_\_\_\_\_

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE \_\_\_\_\_

DATE \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_ FEDERAL \_\_\_ STATE \_\_\_ COUNTY \_\_\_ LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS \_\_\_\_\_

CITY, TOWN \_\_\_\_\_ STATE \_\_\_\_\_

# 7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input checked="" 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 type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

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

The Dembytown Schoolhouse is located on the east side of Dembytown Road just north of the frame church (HA-1605) on the northeast corner of the intersection of Trimble and Dembytown Roads. It is a frame building measuring 32'8" wide by 39'4" long. Set on concrete piers, and covered by a gable roof. When recorded on January 15, 1981, it had been vacant for sometime, and the roof had begun to collapse. While the school is to be dismantled, the man who is going to demolish it said he plans to salvage as much lumber as possible.

The southeast facade of the school contains two entrance doors; a 3' door in the west bay was sheltered by a canopy formed by extending the roof rafters, and accessible via a concrete porch with 5 steps. Also, a 4' door in the east bay is a simple board and batten type reached via wooden steps. The northeast and southwest elevations are characterized by the large windows, 6 in the former and 3 in the latter. These are 9/9 pane dim wood sashes that measure 3'4" X7'6". Also on the southwest facade in the south bay are two narrower windows that lit a teachers office on the interior. There is a single 6/6 window in the center by of the southeast wall, and a single 6/6 on the opposite (northwest) wall.

The school originally had 5" German siding which is now covered by asphalt shingles. The roof ridge is parallel to the northwest-southeast walls and is covered with asphalt shingles. The roof overhangs all 4 walls by about 1'2". In the gable ends, there are plain rake boards, and at the eaves, the projecting rafters are finished with a plumb cut, with the lower corner notched out. A brick chimney with a corbelled cap rises through the roof at the west bay of the southwest wall.

The interior is divided as follows. In southern half, there is a wainscoted room 9' X 14'6" in the southeast corner that was probably a teachers office, accesible from the more formal entrance. The wainscot is of vertical 4" boards grooved to resemble 2' planks, up to a height of 7'. One partition of this room was open from the floor to 7', possibly for a glass panel. In the center of the southern half is an open space 14' X 16', lighted by the three windows and with a small paneled storage closet. In the southwest corner is a 5'X7'room finished with 1"X10" rough sawn boards on the walls and ceiling. This may have been for coal storage, since next to this room is another small room with access to the brick chimney (taps were visible in two places.)

The north half of the school is one large space 23' X 31', (later divided by numerous partitions to make this building a two apartment dwelling.

All interior doors have 5 vertical panels; and like the windows they are trimmed with plain 1"X6" boards. The floor is of 2-1/2" tongue and groove planking with a 1"X6" baseboard with an ogee cap the ceilings and walls are of plaster over circular sawn lath. Ceiling height is 12', and 1'6" down from the ceiling is an ogee moulding that runs along the perimeter of all 4 walls and original partitions. In places where water has caused the ceiling to collapse, the roof framing system was observed. Sawn 1"X8" boards were used to create a single truss system attached to the sawn rafters. Roof sheathing are 1"X12" boards.

(See Description Continuation Sheet #1)

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

**8 SIGNIFICANCE**

PERIOD		AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
REHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input checked="" 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input checked="" 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 type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION	
<input checked="" 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			

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SPECIFIC DATES	Circa 1920	BUILDER/ARCHITECT
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STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

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**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

Phillip R. Lord, Historic Site Surveyor

ORGANIZATION

Harford County Department of Planning and Zoning

DATE

April, 1981

STREET &amp; NUMBER

45 South Main Street

TELEPHONE

838-6000 ext. 207

CITY OR TOWN

Bel Air

STATE

Maryland 21014

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-1604

Dembytown Schoolhouse

In the course of conversations with Jerry and Rhoda Gilbert, who are lifelong residents of Dembytown, it was revealed that their son Russell Gilbert attended school here and was one of the last pupils. The Dembytown School closed in 1951 when a consolidated school for blacks was opened in Hickory. They reported the school has been vacant for at least eight years. A title search reveals the land was purchased by the Harford County Board of Education in 1919 for the purpose of erecting a school for colored children. The school, that was constructed here served the purpose until 1951, when it was sold and ultimately converted to a two family dwelling unit. Plans afoot in early 1981 call for its demolition by the owner.

TITLE SEARCH

DEMBYTOWN SCHOOLHOUSE

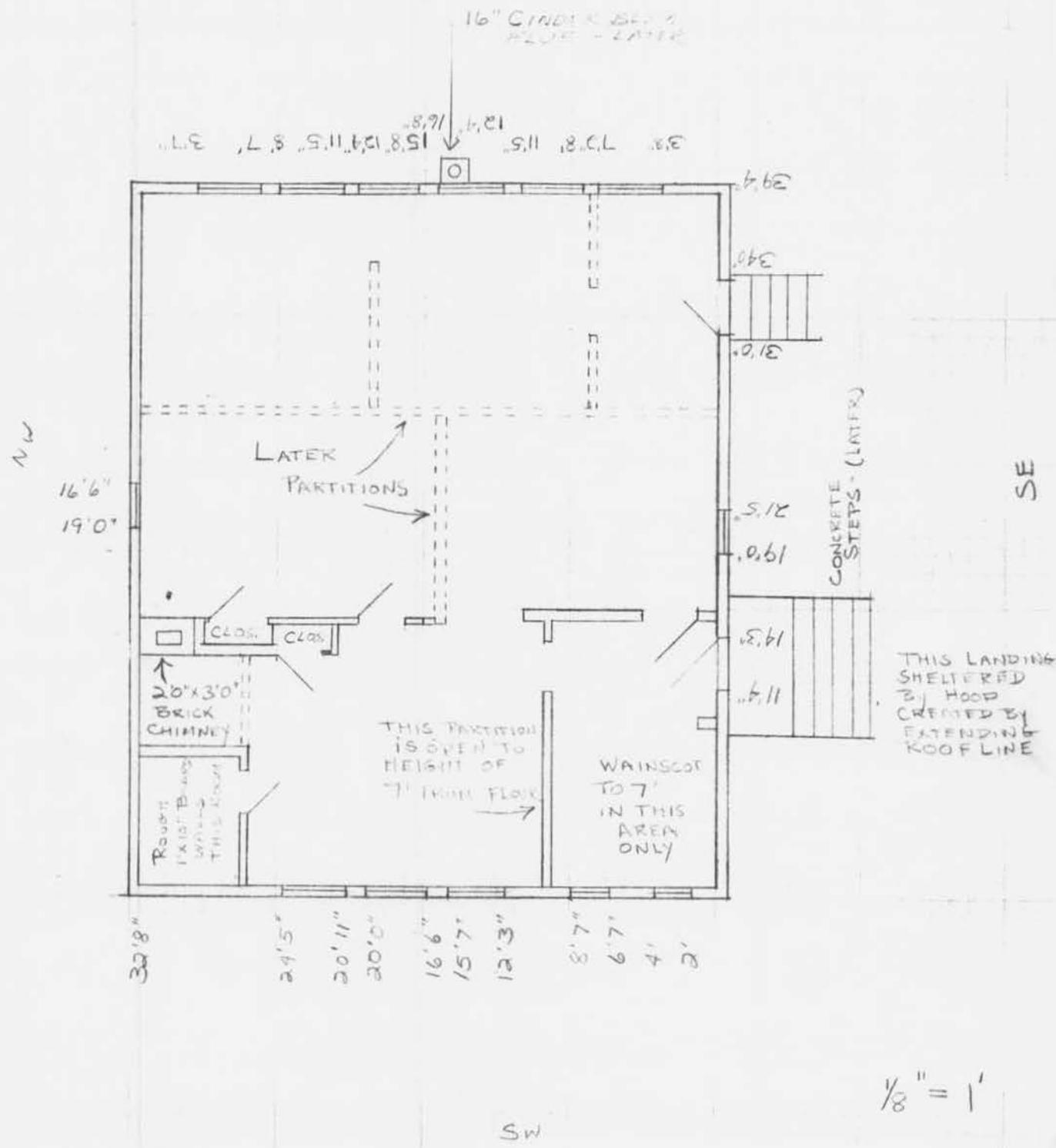
HA-1604

GRG 422/179	Oct. 13, 1954	Grantor: Arthur and Claire Kreiss Grantee: Samuel and Lydia Lee Acreage: 714/1000 acres Sum: \$1,637.73
GRG 375/507	June 28, 1952	Grantor: Adele Bailey Rees and husband Richard Grantee: Arthur and Claire Kreiss Acreage: "All of that lot or parcel of land formerly a Methodist Church (?) and later a County Public School property" .714 acre
GRG 353/378	February 12, 1951	Grantor: Board of Education of Harford County, Maryland Grantee: Hugh B. Bailey and M. Adele Rees purchases "Magnolia colored school property" Acreage: .714 acre These grantees also purchased the "Asbury School property" Churchville, Norrisville School property" and the "Carea School Property"
JAR 171/9	December 2, 1919	Grantors: The Gunpowder Station of the Methodist Episcopal Church of Magnolia of Harford County, Inc. and Joseph and Dora Leight Grantee: Board of Education of Harford County

Resolution passed December 1, 1918 by Gunpowder Station of Methodist Church to sell 1 acre of land to Board of Education to be used as site for school for colored children Sum \$1.00 - 0.714 acre.

being part of the land conveyed by Florence Jimerson et al, Trustee of the John Wesley Methodist Episcopal Church to the Gunpowder Station of the Methodist Episcopal Church of Magnolia, and part of JAR 160/285.

FRAME BUILDING 32'8" X 39'4" ON CONCRETE PIERS  
 LARGE WINDOWS ON SW & NE WALLS ARE 9/9 DH SASH  
 MEASURING 3'4" X 7'6" INTERIOR DOORS- 5 VERTICAL PANELS  
 INTERIOR WALLS & CEILINGS - PLASTER OVER LATH  
 • NE





82 980 000 FEET | 383 CHASE 1 MI. MIDDLE RIVER 5.7 MI. | 384

**EDGEWOOD QUAD.**

386 (GUNPO) SCAL

Army Map Service  
from USC&GS surveys



HA-1604

Magnolia Colored Schoolhouse  
Dembytown, Md.

Phillip R. Lord      1/81  
Southwest Corner



HA-1604

Magnolia Colored Schoolhouse

Dembytown, Md.

Phillip R. Lord            1/81

South Elevation