

HA-1810  
1943  
Bel Air  
Private

The James Wheeler House, 32 Hickory Ave., faces east on a rise over the street across from the Main Branch of the Harford County Library and the Bel Air Town Hall. An immaculate example of Bel Air's clapboard bungalows and one of the largest and latest, the house, built in 1943, is the ultimate extension of that popular style.

On the 1930 Sandborn Map this whole block of Hickory was vacant except for a chicken farm at this end (the south). There was nothing but farm land across the street where the Bel Air Town Hall and the Public Library now stand. Contractor Harry Orsburn acquired the block when he purchased a \$2000 mortgage assignment. He subdivided it, and it seems reasonable to suppose he built the houses. The house was built in 1943 for James Wheeler, the father of Ed Wheeler, who owned the lumber yard on West Broadway behind the Presbyterian Manse. (It was formerly Bull and Culp's and later became Kefauver's.) The younger Wheeler also owned the house at 26 West Broadway [HA-1787].

HA-1810  
James Wheeler House  
Bel Air, Harford Co.

FRAMEWORK FOR IDENTIFYING COMPREHENSIVE PLAN DATA

HISTORIC CONTEXT:

MARYLAND COMPREHENSIVE HISTORIC PRESERVATION PLAN DATA

Geographic Organization:

3. Piedmont

Chronological/Developmental Period:

11. Industrial/Urban Dominance 1870-1930

12. Modern Period 1930 - present

Prehistoric/Historic Period Theme:

2. Architecture, Landscape Architecture, and Community  
Planning

Resource Type:

Category: Architecture

Historic Environment: Urban

Historic Function and Use: Private Residence

Known Design Source: unknown

**Maryland Historical Trust  
State Historic Sites Inventory Form****1. Name** (indicate preferred name)

historic James Wheeler House

and/or common

**2. Location**

street &amp; number 32 Hickory Ave. n/a not for publication

city, town Bel Air \_\_\_ vicinity of congressional district 3rd

state MD county Harford

**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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> not applicable	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input type="checkbox"/> museum
			<input type="checkbox"/> park
			<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** (give names and mailing addresses of all owners)

name Mr. and Mrs. John H. Reed

street &amp; number 32 Hickory Ave. telephone no.: 838-3208

city, town Bel Air state and zip code MD 21014

**5. Location of Legal Description**

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Harford County Courthouse liber 464

street &amp; number folio 291

city, town Bel Air state MD

**6. Representation in Existing** Historical Surveys

title

date \_\_\_ federal \_\_\_ state \_\_\_ county \_\_\_ local

depository for survey records

city, town state

## 7. Description

Survey No. HA-1010

<b>Condition</b>		<b>Check one</b>	<b>Check one</b>	
<input checked="" 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 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: one

The James Wheeler House, 32 Hickory Ave., faces east on a rise over the street across from the Main Branch of the Harford County Library and the Bel Air Town Hall. An immaculate example of Bel Air's clapboard bungalows and one of the largest and latest, the house, built in 1943, is the ultimate extension of that popular style.

Everything about it is spacious, from its shed dormers to its light and airy interior. The corner porch is unusual, as is the fact that this is a two family dwelling. The ground floor has living room, dining room, kitchen, 2 bedrooms and a bath. Upstairs there is an apartment with living room, 2 bedrooms, kitchen, and bath, plus another bedroom that is connected to the ground floor. A lot of room for one bungalow.

The 3 bay house has large shed-roofed dormers front and rear (east and west) with 2 windows in front and 4 in back, the middle bay being occupied by double windows rather than single, all of which are 6/6 double-hung sash. The extension of the gable roof covers a porch with a square post and balustrade in the south bay and a (bed)room in the north. Front ground floor windows are double. Entry in the middle bay is directly into the living room. Similar shed-roofed structures on the side (north and south) elevations are (south) a large bay with 3 pairs of windows that constitutes a small room off the dining room and (north) the entrance to the apartment. A small porch on the rear has an almost flat roof carried on square posts linked by a balustrade with square balusters. The downstairs woodwork has a slight profile on the outer edge. Neither the bedrooms on the first floor or the upstairs were visited.

# 8. Significance

Survey No. HA-1510

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 type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input 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 type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates 1943 Builder/Architect Harry Orsburn

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.

On the 1930 Sandborn Map this whole block of Hickory was vacant except for a chicken farm at this end (the south). There was nothing but farm land across the street where the Bel Air Town Hall and the Public Library now stand. Contractor Harry Orsburn acquired the block when he purchased a \$2000 mortgage assignment. He subdivided it, and it seems reasonable to suppose he built the houses.

The house was built in 1943 for James Wheeler, the father of Ed Wheeler, who owned the lumber yard on West Broadway behind the Presbyterian Manse. (It was formerly Bull and Culp's and later became Kefauver's.) The younger Wheeler also owned the house at 26 West Broadway [HA-1787].

The present owners are only the second, and Mr. Reed carries on, in a small way, the chicken farm tradition: he has a rooster that is well known in that part of town, and he used to raise Banty hens.

The only alteration has been the enlargement of the kitchen by enclosing a porch to the north and adding the present small porch.

The second floor apartment was apparently original.

# 9. Major Bibliographical References

Survey No. HA-1810

Harford County Land Records.  
Site visit, 4 May 1993.

# 10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property \_\_\_\_\_

Quadrangle name Bel Air

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

UTM References do NOT complete UTM references

A 

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Zone Easting Northing

B 

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Zone Easting Northing

C 

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D 

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E 

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F 

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G 

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H 

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### Verbal boundary description and justification

Parcel 857 in the Town of Bel Air, 180' x 180'

### List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state code county code

state code county code

# 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Dr. Marilyn M. Larew

organization \_\_\_\_\_

date 5-27-93

street & number Rd 1 Box 219 New Park Rd.

telephone 717-993-3557

city or town New Park

state PA 17352

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

MAR 27 1993  
CROSS

HA-1810  
James Wheeler House  
32 Hickory Ave.  
Bel Air, MD 21014

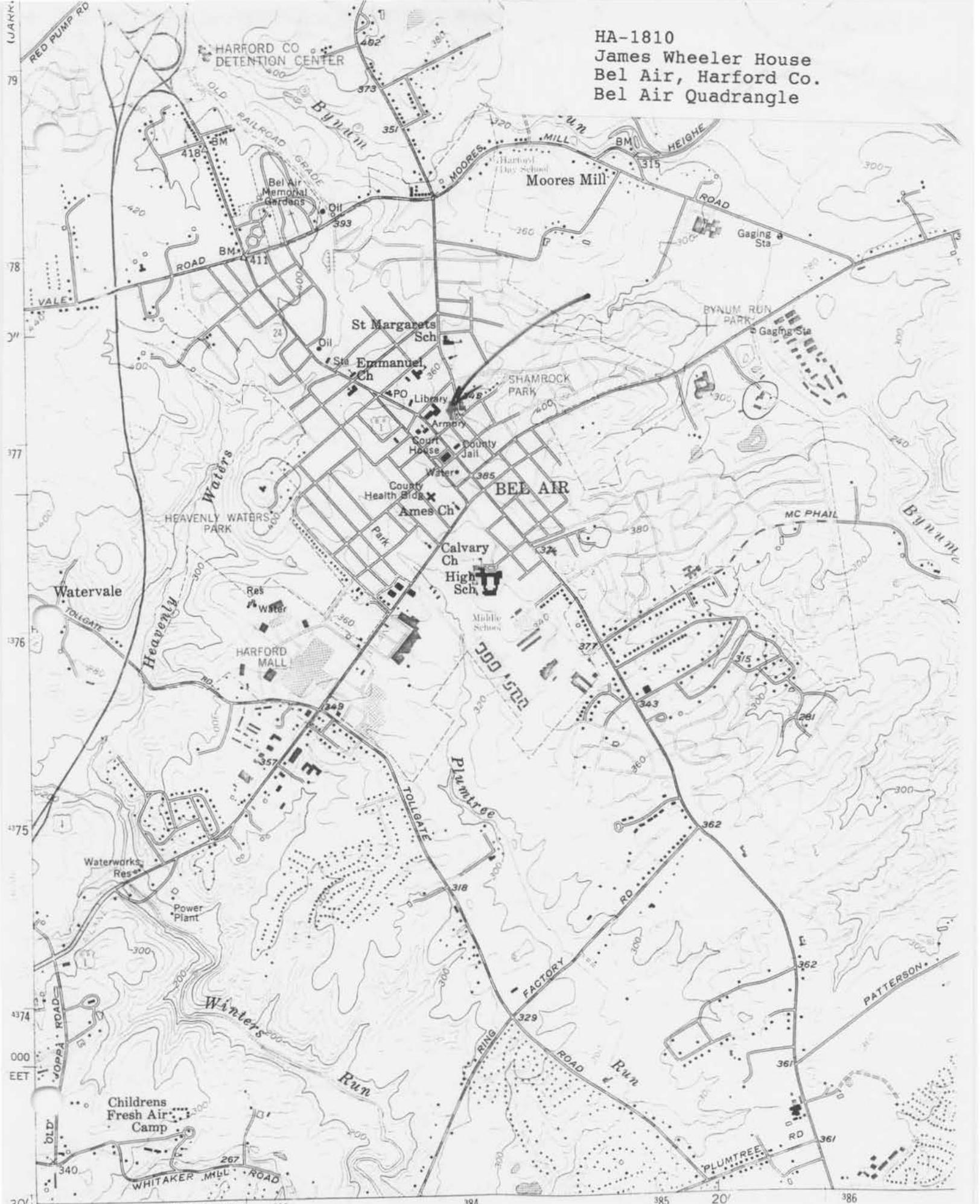
owner: John Henry Reed

454/291            17 Feb 1956  
                  James A. Wheeler and Melissa E.  
                  to  
                  John Henry Reed and Edna D.

278/369            26 July 1943  
                  Kenneth B. Smick and Myrtle L.  
                  to  
                  James A. Wheeler

                  part of:  
223/282            14 May 1932  
                  Harry W. Orsburn and Fern A.  
                  to  
                  Kenneth B. Smick and Myrtle L.  
                  Orsburn subdivided 4 acres he acquired by purchasing a  
                  \$2000 mortgage assignment 21 July 1931 by 221/49.

HA-1810  
James Wheeler House  
Bel Air, Harford Co.  
Bel Air Quadrangle





WA 1810

JANIE'S RIVER P.O. WENDE

W. L. RIVER P.O. WENDE

W. L. RIVER P.O.

32 HICKORY AVE.  
BEL AIR







LA 2-8-21

SA 11-1-28

11-2-21

517 E 17<sup>th</sup>S

3113

32 HICKORY AVE.  
BEL AIR