

HA-826  
RIFFLE HOUSE  
Havre de Grace, Md.

c. 1843

The Riffle House is a large late Federal Brick townhouse with its facade laid in Flemish bond. The house is two and a half stories high and five bays wide with a long ell on the rear. An unusual arched entry way pierces the wall of the house. This archway also known as a sally port is a very urban feature. This house appears to have been built with the expectation of other similar townhouses being constructed on either side of it. Today the house sits on an empty lot-a townhouse without a town. In the 1840's when the house was built, the commercial success of Havre de Grace, a water front town served by steamboats, a canal and the railroad seemed assured.

MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST

1308265404

INVENTORY FORM FOR STATE HISTORIC SITES SURVEY

1 NAME

HISTORIC

Riffle House

AND/OR COMMON

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

817 Juniata Street.

CITY, TOWN

Havre de Grace, ,Md. VICINITY OF

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

sixth

STATE

Maryland

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 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 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> OTHER

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

George Klair

Telephone #: 939-4628

STREET & NUMBER

743 Ontario Street.

CITY, TOWN

Havre de Grace VICINITY OF

STATE, zip code

Maryland 21078

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Harford County Courthouse

Liber #: 713

Folio #: 436

STREET & NUMBER

45 S. Main St.

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-826

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		

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

The Riffle House is a two-and-a-half story, five-bay, brick town house with a prominent two-story, six-bay ell on an above grade, lighted basement, on the rear, north side. The building now rental units, is at 817 Juniata St., near the corner of Erie St., facing west. The facade is Flemish bond pointed with very thin, white mortar joints. The flanks and ell are laid in common bond.

A four-bay porch on a high cinder block foundation extends across the facade ending at the fifth bay. It has a shed roof supported with ragged board eaves supported by chamfered and turned posts on a shingled balustrade. It is entered from the south side.

Windows are placed uniformly on the facade and the south elevation of the ell. The entire north wall and south gable end are blank while there is one window on each floor of the east gable end of the ell. All window openings have brick jack arches and wide stone sills. Although there are no shutters, wrought iron shutter fasteners remain in the wall near all the window openings. Because of their placement, the two dormers on the front appear to have been added later.

Two entrance doors are on the facade: one in the first bay and one in the fourth. Both entrances are recessed and contain six-panel doors with recessed four-light transoms above them. Most of the exterior doors are the same; some of them have glass replacing their upper panels. There are two doorways on the south elevation of the ell and one on the rear (east elevation), main block. The doorways in the ell have narrow transoms while the transom on the door of the rear main block is identical to those on the front. One of the outstanding features of the house is the arched passageway piercing the south end of the front elevation and leading to the ell.

The building has an unusual half-hip, half-gable roof. Viewed from the front the roof is gable-flank on the south side and hipped on the north. The ell roof is gabled except where it joins the main block on the north side and forms a hip. Both roofs are covered with slate. Two large but short, stucco covered chimneys straddle the ridge on the interior of the ell roof. No chimneys are on the main block.

A molded wood cornice with a fascia board beneath it extends across the facade and around the north elevation. The eaves of the roof are narrow on the southern and eastern sides of the structure and wide on the northern and western sides.

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

**8 SIGNIFICANCE**

HA-826

PERIOD		AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW				
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<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 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 checked="" 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				local history

SPECIFIC DATES

C. 1843

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Riffle house is a late Federal townhouse with a side hall plan and a long ell to the rear. Because of its unusual appearance and its location on the main route into Havre de Grace, it is one of the buildings most noticed and remarked upon by visitors to the town. Several features make the house unique to the area. The most unusual feature is the brick archway or sally port that pierces the south side of the west wall. The archway, a feature of urban convenience, would provide access to the long ell at the rear (east) if there was another structure next to the house. However the building or buildings that were expected to flank or abutt the north and south walls were never erected. The Riffle house with its urban appearance, flemish bond facade and empty lot next to it can be called the townhouse with out a town. This building, probably built by Mathias Riffle c. 1843, shows more than any other that Havre de Grace was at one time thought to be a town with a future as a mercantile center due to its location on the Susquehanna River and Chesapeake Bay served by canal, railroad and steamship. The Haudecoeur map of 1799 and the Septimus Norris map of 1836 are both speculative town plans showing Havre de Grace as a kind of Philidelphia. The major importance of the house lies in the fact that it, like the two maps just mentioned, is a piece of historical evidence adding to our knowledge of the growth of the town.

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

**11 FORM PREPARED BY**

NAME / TITLE

Marion Morton, Architectural Surveyor

11/15/76

ORGANIZATION

DATE

Maryland Historical Trust

STREET & NUMBER

TELEPHONE

21 State Circle

CITY OR TOWN

STATE

Annapolis, Md.

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

#7 (Con'd)

The size and scale of the building are emphasized by its position on an empty lot with no buildings to the south of it. The lot is about 2' above the grade of the sidewalk. There are no outbuildings.

**Interior:**

Internally the house, with a long ell at the rear, has a side hall plan with one room on the front and three rooms in the ell on the first floor. All of the rooms, with the exception of the two on the second over the archway, have fireplaces with simple mantle shelves. A large cooking fireplace is in the west wall of the east room in the ell. It has a large, 6' wide opening with a mantle shelf above it at a height of 6'. The main stairway, is open string with square balusters. The stairs located on the north wall and cut-up and altered on the second floor rise to the third floor. In the ell an enclosed box stair is on the north wall of the east room. Doors and windows in the front room have a deeply molded trim with bulls eye corner blocks. In the rest of the rooms the enframements are similar with plain corner blocks.

## LAND RECORDS

RIFFLE HOUSE HA-826

GRG 713 436 June 22, 1966  
Grantor: G. Arnold Pfaffenbach  
Grantee: George W. Klair  
The intersection of the north side of Erie St. with the east side of Juniata St. Being all as lots no. 220-222 and part of lot no. 223-226 in square no. 187.

GRG 374 503 June 10, 1952  
Grantor: Louis Klair  
Grantee: George A. Pfaffenbach

NSF 125 301 December 23, 1908  
Grantor: E. Madison Mitchell for Mary Mitchell  
Grantee: Louis Klair  
\$1950.00

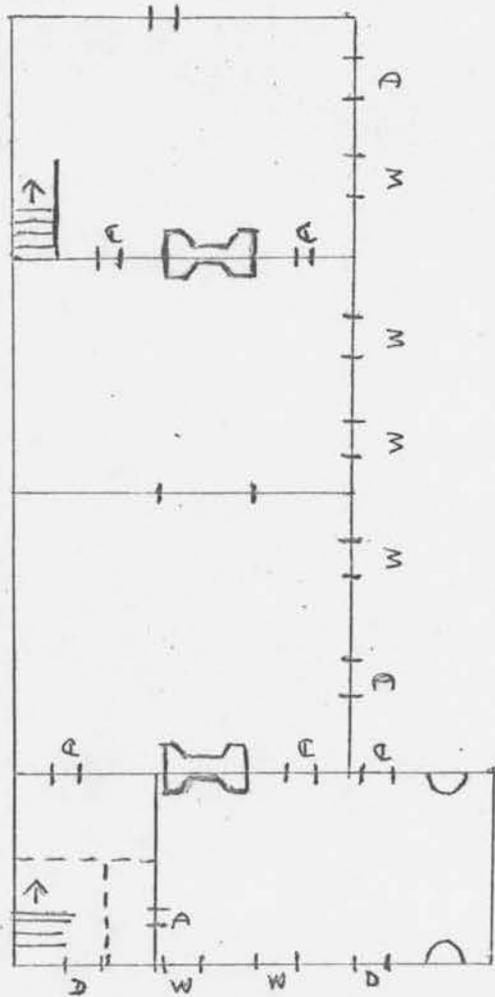
ALJ 60 300 June 13, 1888  
Grantor: John Mitchell, Sr.  
Grantee: Mary Mitchell

WG 10 96 April 6, 1858  
Grantor: Thomas Riffle (from Mathias Riffle, his father, by will)  
Grantee: John Mitchell  
\$1200.00 Beginning at the s.w. corner of Philips Square, fronting on east side of Juniata St. Buildings mentioned.

HD 28 11 January 12, 1843  
Grantor: Mathias Riffle  
Grantee: John McColgan and Charles McColgan  
Mathias Riffle was indebted to John and Charles McColgan of Baltimore for the sum of \$528.89 to be paid within two years.  
The debt was apparently paid by Thomas Riffle. Buildings mentioned.

HA-826

N. ←



Riffle House

APPROXIMATE FIRST FLOOR PLAN  
NOT TO SCALE



Garrett Island

Perry Point

HA-826

# HAVRE DE GRACE

Concord Pt Lighthouse

NATIONAL GUARD RESERVATION

Oakington Sta

Havre de Grace Consolidated Sch

Sand



RIFLE HOUSE                      HA-826  
817 JUNIATA ST, HAVRE DE GRACE  
WEST FACADE  
Marion Morton                      August, 1976

37



Riffle House HA-826

817 Juniata St

Harre de Grace, Maryland

Marion Norton Sept, 76

southeast elevation

K  
C