

K-174

Sunset Hall  
Cypress Street, Millington  
c. 1787

The most prominent old residence in Millington was called Sunset Hall by its mid-20th century owner. While it is not the only brick residence in town to remain from the 18th century, it is indeed the most significant.

Isaac Spencer, a gentleman, planter and merchant, lived at Marrowbone three miles down river. He purchased a 10 acre parcel of London Bridge Renewed from the town developer, Gilbert Falconer in 1776.<sup>1</sup> By 1783, the year of Spencer's will and the County Tax Assessment, the property included a log building. In 1785, after Spencer's death, the 10 acres became the property of his daughter, Charlotte.<sup>2</sup> In 1787, the 10 acre parcel was purchased by Dr. John Thomas for @300, a substantial sum for such a small parcel with only a log building on it.<sup>3</sup>

It is assumed that Dr. Thomas began building his new brick residence soon after his acquisition of the land. The house was on par with several new dwellings in neighboring Chestertown—a three-bay, two-story, two-room-deep residence with attached kitchen wing in the rear. Like the Nicholson, Houston, and Geddes-Piper Houses, Dr. Thomas' house had an entrance door on one side of the three-bay facade flanked by benches that were partially embedded in the wall. The door led into a long stairhall from which the two parlors were accessible.

The facade of the Thomas House was classically simple with brick laid in plain Flemish bond without decorative water table nor belt course.

Moreover, there were no decorative arch supports above the openings. The facade had the classic window relationship between floors with 9/9 sash on the first story and 9/6 sash on the second.

The west gable was built adjoining the log building that was listed in the tax assessment of 1783. The kitchen which was constructed perpendicular to the house and street, was bonded into the west gable, on the same plane. Originally the kitchen was two bays with a door and window on each side. The width of the kitchen wing was determined by the placement of the back door of the hall which is the only opening on the first floor of the north facade. Unlike the south facade, its northern counterpart's second floor had only one window, making a stark statement.

As mentioned above, the plan was a typical townhouse plan of the period, but unlike the referenced Chestertown houses, Dr. Thomas' was planned with a fireplace centered on the west wall of the south parlor and a diagonal or corner fireplace in its southwest corner of the north parlor. The same plan was used on the second story. The flues were joined above the attic and exited the roof as a single stack.

The south parlor was originally finished with a wall of paneling over the fireplace, with flanking cabinets or closets. Only the shadows left on the walls and ceiling are evidence of its original presence. Similar lines in its north parlor indicate a paneled wall over the fireplace and a corner cupboard in the northwest corner. One curious feature in the north parlor is the existence of a small window adjacent the kitchen door. It may have been a pass-through from the pantry of kitchen, like the opening which existed at Hebron.

On the second floor, instead of paneling over the fireplaces, there were fireplace surrounds similar to the door trim. Window trim was only the width of the backband. At the head or south end of the hall there was a small unheated room with the window centered above the front door.

Board partitions were used to separate the same number of rooms on the third floor. The doors were board and batten.

At the time of Thomas' death, an inventory was made of his personal belongings. It included enough furnishings for the house, tools for the garden, medical books, instruments, and medicines. Interestingly, Thomas also had 20,000 bricks, scantling and 17 slaves (an increase of 14 slaves since the Tax Assessment of 1783).<sup>4</sup> What exactly happened to the bricks has not yet been ascertained from the records, but it is not unlikely that they were employed to build the later addition to the kitchen.

That addition is a little smaller than the original kitchen. Two bays long, with a chimney in its north gable, the addition also included a small leanto on its east side. The loft was unfinished and contained two small casements flanking the chimney.

Nearly 50 years after Dr. Thomas had first purchased the property, Mary Cosden Thomas (probably his daughter-in-law) sold the property to Ebenezer Massey. While his main residence had been Gondomah (located near the village of Massey), he is known to have to been living in Millington at the time the insurance policy on Gondomah was written.

Eleanor F. Horsey purchased the house and land in 1844 and lived there until her death in 1858. Because she died intestate, the court appointed George Vickers as trustee to sell her real estate. Via Mr. Vickers, the house was sold again to another physician, Dr. Edward Rasin. Before Dr. Rasin could obtain title to the property, he passed away and the house and property was passed on to his family.

It was during the Rasin occupancy that the house was remodeled. At this point the house was about 70 years old and was most likely in need of some attention. The Rasins made changes to the facade by replacing the windows, adding a wide overhang to the roof with bracketed cornice, and adding a new front door with architrave and front porch. The porch necessitated the closing of the cellar bulkhead.

Inside, paneling was removed from the chimney breasts and the corner cabinet was removed, creating clean surfaces which could then be finished in the fashion of the day with wallpaper. The Rasins also enlarged the opening between the first floor rooms to a double door and converted the first kitchen into a dining room. Virtually nothing was changed upstairs.

The house remained in the possession of the Rasin heirs until 1940 when it was sold to Elizabeth Collins, an antique dealer. By this time the lot had been reduced to just 1.9 acres. Miss Collins lived there for the next 27 years and ran a fine antique shop from her home. It was she who removed the old log wing, as it had been consumed by ivy. Miss Collins also removed the porch which the Rasins had installed across the front facade. Since her death in 1967, the house has passed through three owners to the present owners in 1987.

1. Land Records, Lib. DD 5, fol. 154.
2. Land Records, Lib. 7, fol. 109.
3. Land Records, Lib. EF 7, fol. 125.
4. Inventories, Lib. 13, fol. 159.

K-174

Howard House, Sunset Hall  
Millington  
Private

Late 18th Century

The Howard House once known as Sunset Hall is a late 18th century brick townhouse with 19th century alterations, including the cornice and first floor detailing. Inside is a fine stair with turned balusters, which is unequaled in the Millington neighborhood. The main house is two and one-half stories tall and two rooms deep with a side hall; behind the house is a brick ell which includes a one and one-half story brick kitchen with wide fireplace.

INVENTORY FORM FOR STATE HISTORIC SITES SURVEY

1 NAME

HISTORIC

Sunset Hall

AND/OR COMMON

Howard House

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

Cyprus Street

CITY, TOWN

Millington

--- VICINITY OF

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

First

STATE

Maryland

COUNTY

Kent

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY

\_\_\_DISTRICT

BUILDING(S)

\_\_\_STRUCTURE

\_\_\_SITE

\_\_\_OBJECT

OWNERSHIP

\_\_\_PUBLIC

PRIVATE

\_\_\_BOTH

PUBLIC ACQUISITION

\_\_\_IN PROCESS

\_\_\_BEING CONSIDERED

STATUS

OCCUPIED

\_\_\_UNOCCUPIED

\_\_\_WORK IN PROGRESS

ACCESSIBLE

\_\_\_YES: RESTRICTED

\_\_\_YES: UNRESTRICTED

NO

PRESENT USE

\_\_\_AGRICULTURE

\_\_\_COMMERCIAL

\_\_\_EDUCATIONAL

\_\_\_ENTERTAINMENT

\_\_\_GOVERNMENT

\_\_\_INDUSTRIAL

\_\_\_MILITARY

\_\_\_MUSEUM

\_\_\_PARK

PRIVATE RESIDENCE

\_\_\_RELIGIOUS

\_\_\_SCIENTIFIC

\_\_\_TRANSPORTATION

\_\_\_OTHER

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

Paul S. Howard

Telephone #: (301) 928-5181

STREET & NUMBER

Cyprus Street

CITY, TOWN

Millington

--- VICINITY OF

STATE, zip code

Maryland 21651

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,  
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Kent County Courthouse

Liber #: EHP 24

Folio #: 207

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

Chestertown

STATE

Maryland 21620

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

DATE

\_\_\_FEDERAL \_\_\_STATE \_\_\_COUNTY \_\_\_LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE

K-174

# 7 DESCRIPTION

<b>CONDITION</b>		<b>CHECK ONE</b>		<b>CHECK ONE</b>	
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE		
<input checked="" 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 Howard House is located on Cyprus Street near the edge of Millington. It faces south.

The house is of brick, three bays wide with a Flemish bond front facade. The main entrance is located in the east bay; it has a three pane transom light and modern denticulated architrave trim. In the west gable is a wide brick chimney. The gable roof, covered with shingles, has an overhanging cornice and return with bold crown mold and closely spaced bracketts; and is probably a 19th century replacement. Windows have 6/6 sash and louvered shutters on both floors. Window frames consist of a 1" bead; wooden sills project slightly from the wall surface. The house is painted yellow, trim is white and shutters black.

Behind the main house is a two part ell; the first is two stories tall, and contains one room per floor; the second is one and one-half stories tall and contains the kitchen with pyramidal fireplace and loft room above. Both are common bond brick. Beside the kitchen is a lean-to extension. Chimneys in the addition are located in the gables. The kitchen fireplace and chimney are enclosed within the end walls.

The main entrance leads to a stair hall which contains a fine dog-leg stair with closed string and turned balusters. Newels and intermediates are also turned with block tops and a square base. There is an ogee handrail and single raised and beveled panel beneath the stair. The cellar entrance under the landing has a door with four raised and beveled panels.

The first floor rooms of the main house have corner fireplaces and are connected by a wide opening with a pair of double doors. The doors and the window and door trim are Victorian replacements of the originals and appear to date from the middle of the century. Doors are four panel with applied moldings; trim is wide and there are molded aprons beneath the windows. Mantles, which are quite recent, have rectangular openings and shelves, plain friezes and pilasters.

More of the early details remain on the second floor and in the attic. Several of the six panel doors retain their box locks. Mantles have three-part molded surrounds, shelves, and arched openings. Trim is either of the three part type with quarter round backband or plain with bead and backband. Random yellow pine floors are used throughout.

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

**8 SIGNIFICANCE**

K-174

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 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 checked="" 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 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**

Howard House is significant for its architecture. It is undoubtedly the finest early house remaining in the town; its stair is quite attractive, a good example of a late Georgian design in a fine but not grand house of the late 18th century. The only other stair of this type remaining in the town is in the Comegys House (K-171) which is as ambitious a design but not as skillfully executed. The mid-19th century alterations are not unattractive and are well scaled to the house. It is unfortunate that the first floor mantles, certainly very handsome, have disappeared.

Howard House stands on a portion of the second grant for London Bridge, 1702. The first owner of the property was a Mr. Gilpin. An early owner, and possible builder of the Millington Mill (K-175) was Thomas Gilpin who purchased the property soon after 1760. Other owners are listed below. Deed records make note of "Samuel Ringgold's "commissioning" (or approving) the construction of a house, possibly this one in 1774. If so the builder was Gilbert Falconer who only owned the property from 1774 to 1776.

7/22/1774 Thos. Gilpin to Gilbert Falconer

2/17/1776 Gilbert Falconer to Isaac Spenser (related to Clough or Ringgold families)

3/24/1787 Isaac Spenser to Wm. Ringgold

7/18/1798 Wm. Ringgold to John Thomas

6/5/1807 Willed to Wm. Thomas from John Thomas

11/16/1819 Wm. Thomas to James and Catherine Parker

7/11/1827 Jas. and Catherine Parker to Anna Thomas

3/18/34 Mary T. Thomas to E.T. Massey

2/10/45 E.T. Massey to Eleanor T. Horsey (this young lady and her sister wrote their names on the wall of what is now our third floor bathroom; it was taped over by the painters so the names are preserved.)

5/3/1873 Mortgage Eleanor Horsey to Dr. Ed Rasin

7/18/1909 Dr. Ed Rasin estate to Mary H. Rasin

1926 Mary H. Rasin to E. Hackett

1926 E. Hackett to Maria B. Powers

1940 Maria B. Powers to Elizabeth Collins

2/28/1967 Willed from Elizabeth Collins to J. P. Wilmer

10/2/1967 J. P. and P. G. Wilmer to Paul D. and Anna C. Howard

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

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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

Marsha L. Fritz, Consulnat

ORGANIZATION

Kent County Historical Society

DATE

August, 1977

STREET & NUMBER

Church Alley

TELEPHONE

CITY OR TOWN

Chestertown

STATE

Maryland 21620

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

1501745204

SUPPLEMENTAL INFORMATION AND PHOTOGRAPHS MAY BE ADDED ON SHEET OF SAME SIZE

1. STATE <b>Maryland</b> COUNTY <b>Kent</b> TOWN <b>Millington</b> VICINITY STREET NO. <b>Rt. 291, .2 mile west of Rt 313</b> <b>(north)</b> ORIGINAL OWNER ORIGINAL USE <b>dwelling</b> PRESENT OWNER <b>Paul L. Howard</b> PRESENT USE <b>vacant (being repaired)</b> WALL CONSTRUCTION <b>brick</b> NO. OF STORIES <b>two</b>	HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY INVENTORY <b>K - 174</b>
	2. NAME <b>SUNSET HALL</b>  DATE OR PERIOD <b>c. 1770's</b> STYLE <b>Georgian</b> ARCHITECT BUILDER
	3. FOR LIBRARY OF CONGRESS USE
4. NOTABLE FEATURES, HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE AND DESCRIPTION <span style="float: right;">OPEN TO PUBLIC <b>no</b></span>	
5. PHYSICAL CONDITION OF STRUCTURE    Endangered <b>no</b> Interior <b>fair</b> Exterior <b>fair</b>	
 6. LOCATION MAP (Plan Optional)	7. PHOTOGRAPH
8. PUBLISHED SOURCES (Author, Title, Pages) INTERVIEWS, RECORDS, PHOTOS, ETC. <b>Forman, H.C., Early Manor and plantation Houses of Maryland, 1934, p. 218.</b>	9. NAME, ADDRESS AND TITLE OF RECORDER <b>Michael Bourne</b>  DATE OF RECORD <b>March 11, 1969</b>

Sunset Hall appears to be the oldest existing building standing in Millington today. It is a three bay townhouse, two bays deep and two stories tall with a one story kitchen wing to the rear. The facade is laid in Flemish bond and has neither belt nor water table. The door is located on the east side of the house and has a 19th century trim, two panel door and four pane transom. The sash and frames of the south windows have been changed to 6/6 sash with narrow frames. Some of the original frames and sash remain on the other sides of the building and they have 9/9 and 6/9 and 4/4 on first, second and attic respectively. The chimney on the west gable is slightly off-center to the south in order to service regular fireplace in the south rooms and corner fire places in the north rooms of both floors. The main cornice is a late 19th century bracket cornice with wide overhanging eaves. The rear cornice retains some of its original molding. Basement windows are located only on the gables. The original entrance to the basement was in the center of the main facade, but this has been blocked up and access is had beneath the interior stair.

The kitchen wing is three bays deep with chimney plus a two bay other kitchen with leanto off the east side which may have been the earliest kitchen and later connected to the main house by the intervening section.

The interior has original interior doors and trim in the hall and second and attic stories. The two first story rooms have been stripped of their period woodwork. If the traces in the plaster ceiling and the floor are correct, there was a paneled fireplace wall on the west side and a corner cupboard in the north west corner of the second room and possibly above the corner fireplace. The two rooms are connected by double doors of the 19th century. The stair is close-string and has nicely turned balusters and newel posts; it extends to the attic in the northeast corner of the building. There is a small room above the front entrance on the second and attic floors. The attic is divided like the other floors but have vertical beaded boards instead of plaster walls.

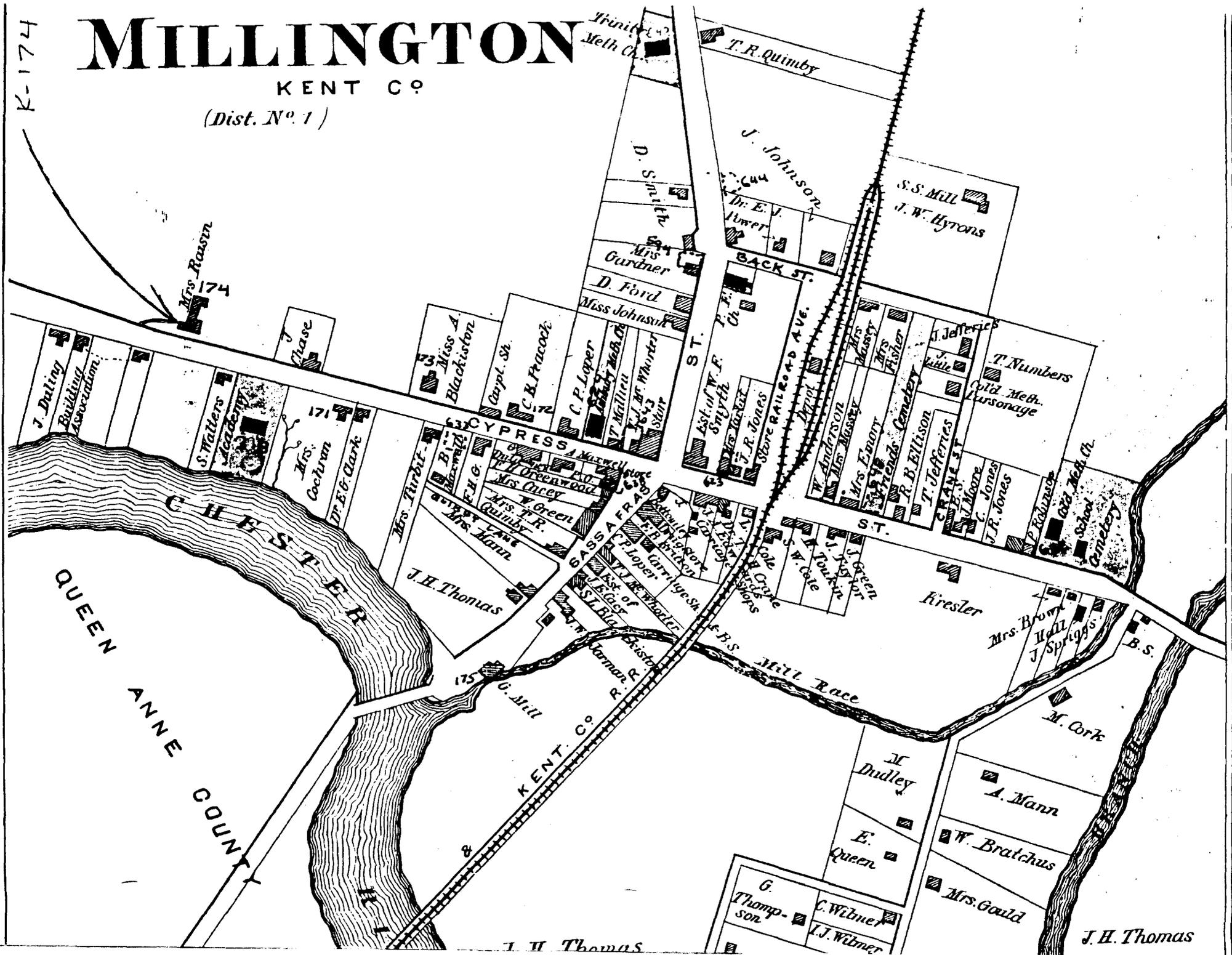
The present owners have bought the house as an investment property and are repairing it, but not restoring it. There is slightly over one acre of property with the house.

K-174

# MILLINGTON

KENT CO

(Dist. No. 1)



QUEEN ANNE COUNTY

CHESTER

KENT CO

G. Thompson

M. Dudley

E. Queen

A. Mann

W. Brachus

Mrs. Gould

J. H. Thomas

Kresler

Mrs. Brown  
Hall  
J. Springs

B. S.

M. Cork

J. Green

J. Toukin

S. W. Cole

J. W. Crute

School Cemetery

Old Meth. Church

J. R. Jones

Old Meth. Church

T. Numbers

J. J. Jeffries

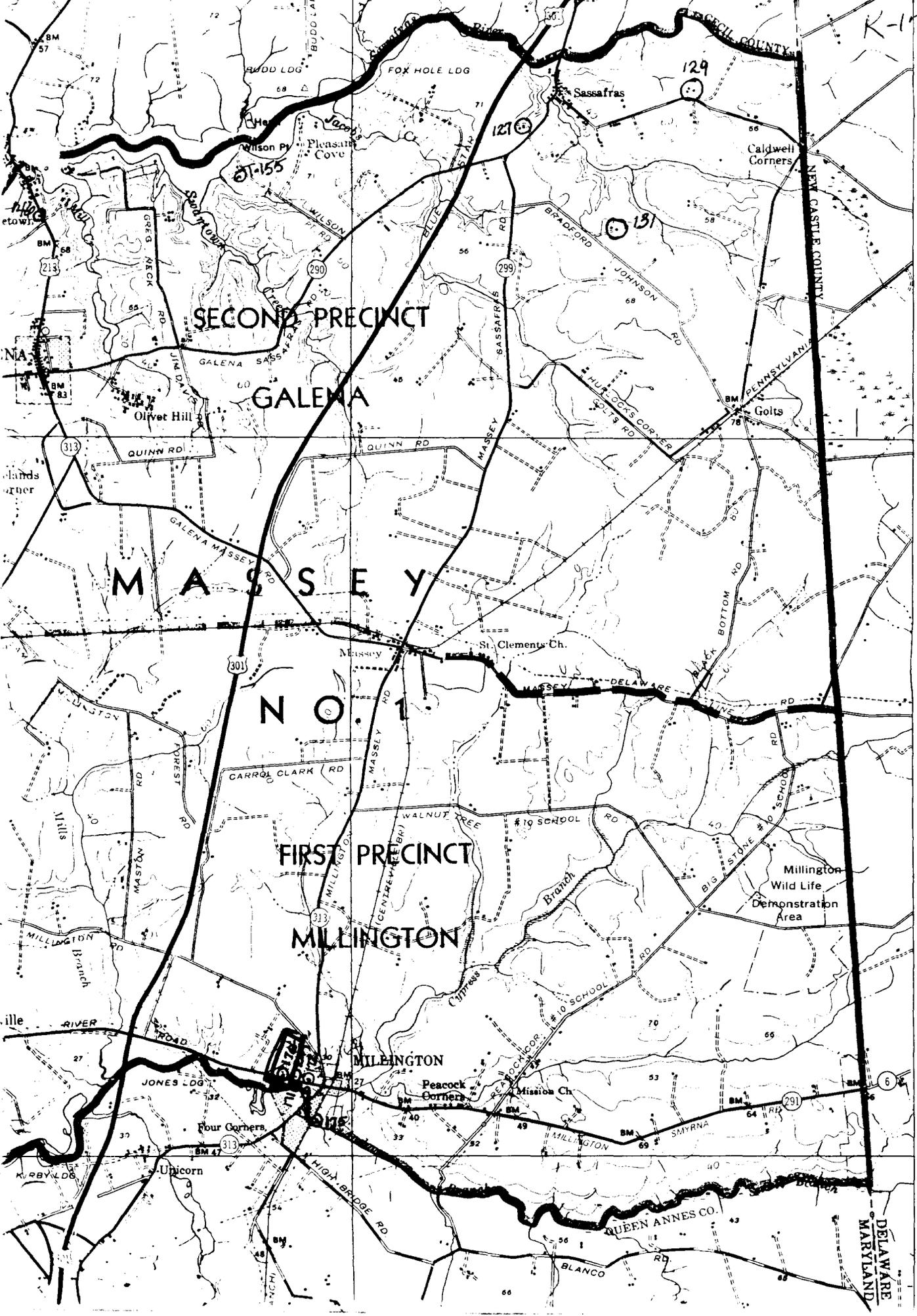
S. S. Mill

J. W. Hyrons

J. Johnson

T. R. Quimby

K-174



560  
550  
20'  
540  
530  
520  
15'



DR PAUL

HOWARD

K-174

J 9 0 7 7 5 1



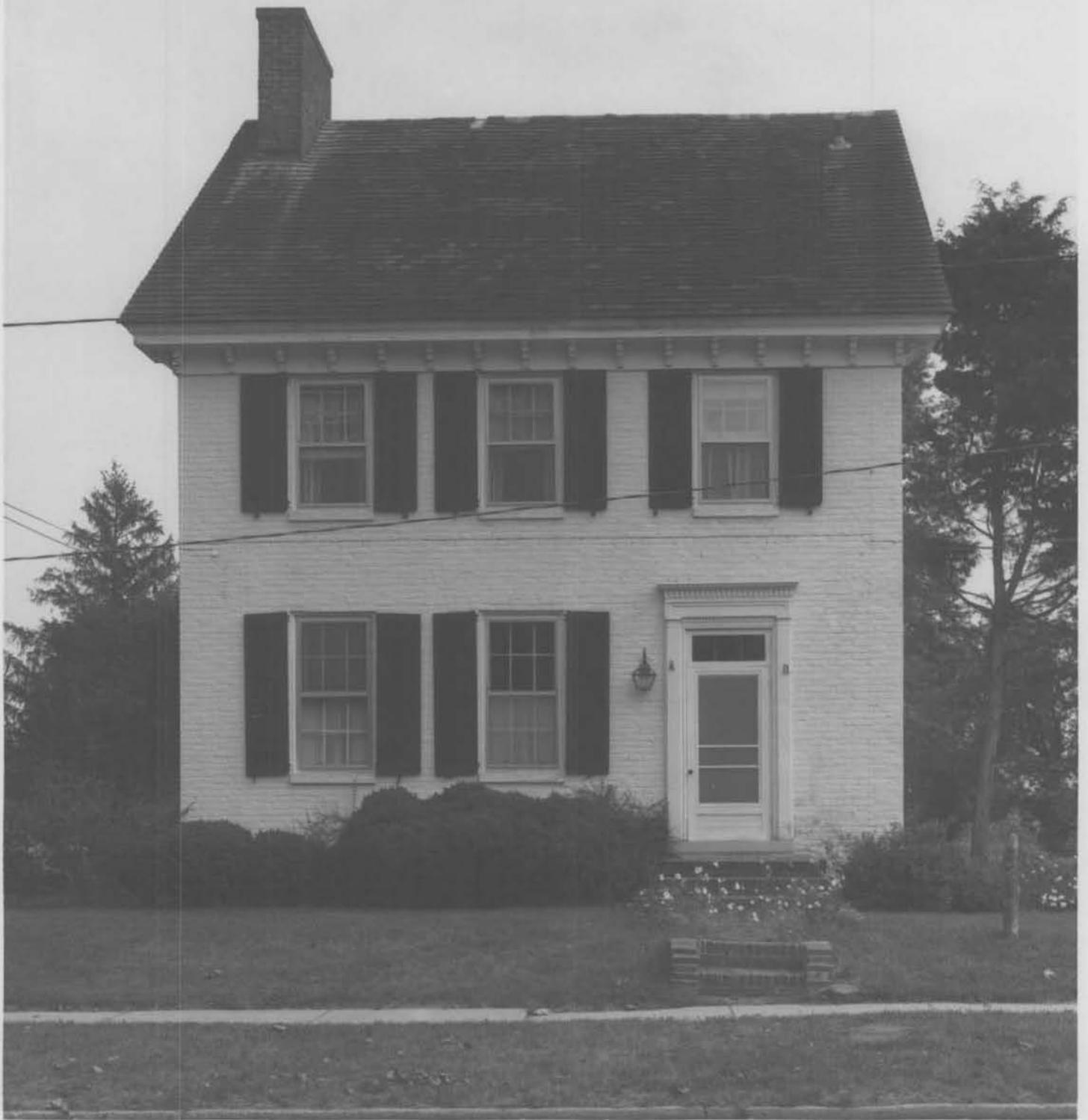
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K-174

Howard House

Mullington, Md

Cingstrom 8/77



Sunset Hall & HOWARD HOUSE

MHT-K174

ROUTE 291

MILLINGTON, MD.

FRONT FROM SOUTH

C. ENGSTROM AUG. 1977