

K-202

Thornmar, "Broadneck"
Near Chestertown
c. 1780

"Thornmar" is a recent name given to one of the oldest houses standing along the shores of Morgan Creek. It stands on a tract called "Broadneck," a 700 acre farm patented to John Edmondson in 1666.¹

At least as early as 1756, John Gleaves purchased a small part of the tract.² By the 1783 Tax Assessment, he owned 290 acres of Broad Neck and 490 acres of the adjoining "Batchelor's Resolution." On the assessment list the following items were recorded:

- " – one large Brickdwelling House & kitchen
- one Grist Mill, 7 out houses
- on Morgans Creek
- soil thin
- 350 (acres) arable; 430 (acres) woods"

The large brick dwelling mentioned above refers to the large dwelling that has stood on the land referred to as the "Brooks Farm," "Biddle Farm," "Old Revolutionary" and the "Bonwill Farm" in the land records.

It is moreover the same farm which first appeared in the Maryland Gazette, December 20, 1792, described as follows:

"One of the most valuable tracts of LAND on the eastern shore of Maryland, lying in Kent County, within three miles of Chester-town

this farm contains about 1000 acres of land . . . there is on the premises a large brick dwelling house, with four rooms on a floor, a brick kitchen, a good barn, stable, and other outbuildings. There are also, on the premises, the most valuable grist-mill and saw-mill in the county, situate on Morgan's creek, which empties into Chester river, and not more than three miles distant from it. A vessel of more than 1000 bushels burthen can lay at the mill door, and receive her load. There are also, on the above farm, a most valuable shad and herring fishery, and a great abundance of natural meadow ground . . . ”

Only a month later on 24 January 1793, another advertisement in the Maryland Gazette stated that the farm was part of the estate of John Gleaves, but within the month one half of the tract had been purchased and the part remaining had been reduced to 500 acres.

“William Barroll became purchaser of the House and Lot with five hundred acres . . . part of Bluff Point, Worth's Folly, Broad Neck and Bachelor's Resolution . . . containing 520 acres . . . ”

The transaction had been approved by the Court in 1793, but the actual deed was not recorded until 1800³, just prior to Barroll's sale of the farm to John Ward, son of John Ward of Cecil County.⁴ A short time later, William Barroll purchased Fancy Farm which he improved and kept until the time of his death.

When Frances Biddle (widow of Raymond Biddle) wrote her will in 1861, she referred to the farm as the “Brooks Farm” or “Home Farm” and bequeathed it to her unmarried daughters.⁵ In the settlement of her estate, a plat of the farm was prepared and recorded with the deed to the three

unmarried daughters. In 1864, one of the three daughters sold her share to the others⁶ and by 1881 it was sold out of the Biddle family. It had been reduced by this time to 338 acres.⁷

James W. Lambert owned the "Biddle Home Farm" between 1882 and 1917. Between 1919 and 1950 it was owned by Emory Bonwill and heirs.⁸ In 1961 the name was changed to "Rosemont" and in 1972 to "Thornmar."

The house standing on Thornmar Farm was standing by the time of the 1783 Tax Assessment. It would have been built for John Gleaves who owned farmland on both sides of Morgan Creek, as well as the grist and saw mills mentioned in the settlement of his estate. There are several unusual or unique features in the design and construction of the house.

First, the building was designed on a large scale with large rooms, tall ceilings, etc. On the exterior, the use of rubbed and gauged brick for the string course and jack arches and the semi-circular fanlight above the principal entrance are unique features on this otherwise common five bay two story house. Secondly, the plan and form of the building are sufficiently different to have been highlighted by previous recorders of Kent County's Georgian architecture. The plan consists of a central stairhall with large room on the west and two rooms on the east, the rear room jutting about ten feet behind the plane of the back wall. The back room is not in a more typical leanto, but is also two stories tall with a corner fireplace. The plan was the prototype of Bachelor's Resolution next door, but that is where the similarity ends.

Thornmar's interior possesses some original woodwork of fine quality. The stair is a large structure with raised panel spandrel under the first flight. Like Knock's Folly, the landing extends across the entire width of the hall and also like Knock's Folly, the balustrade has delicately turned newels and a railing which rises above the intermediate newels and terminates in the newel cap. It also has a corresponding half tail in the wall with paneled pilasters rather than half newels. Three rectangular balusters per step are much plainer than those at Knock's Folly.

The interior of the large room was removed and reworked in the 1930's, but the den and dining room retain original chimney breasts, recessed panel dado, window jambs and seats. The trim, however, was replaced in the early 19th Century with reeded work having corner blocks.

In the kitchen wing the majority of original millwork was replaced in the 1930's when the house had its one major remodeling. At that time a two bay extension was constructed.

1. Certificates, Lib. 10, fol. 3.
Patents, Lib. 10, fol. 132.
2. Land Records, Lib. JS 27, fol. 279.
3. Land Records, Lib. TW 1, fol. 308.
4. Land Records, Lib. TW 1, fol. 311.
5. Wills, Lib. JF 1, fol. 216.
6. Land Records, Lib. JKH 4, fol. 523.
7. Land Records, Lib. SB 3, fol. 542.
8. Land Records, Lib. APR 6, fol. 71.

K-202

Thornmar, Old Revolutionary House, Rosemont, Bonwell House 18th Century
Chestertown
Private

Thornmar's L-plan and that at Providence Plantation (K-84) add an extra room per floor without changing the basic character of the building. The five bay front facade is symmetrical reflecting the central hall plan and the gable roof is extended to a catslide to cover the rear rooms. The house retains a good amount of its original interior, including a fine stair and a fireplace with a tabernacle overmantle.

INVENTORY FORM FOR STATE HISTORIC SITES SURVEY

1 NAME

HISTORIC

Old Revolutionary House, Rosemont, Bonwell House

AND/OR COMMON

Thornmar

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

U.S. 213, across from Chestertown Animal Hospital

CITY, TOWN

Chestertown

VICINITY OF

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

First

STATE

Maryland

COUNTY

Kent

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	PUBLIC ACQUISITION	ACCESSIBLE	<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 type="checkbox"/> MILITARY <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

Charles R. & Cynthia McDennis

Telephone #: (301) 778-1116

STREET & NUMBER

Thornmar Farm

CITY, TOWN

Chestertown

VICINITY OF

STATE, zip code

Maryland 21620

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Kent County Courthouse

Liber #: EHP 43

Folio #: 439

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

7 DESCRIPTION

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"/> MOVED	DATE _____
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED			
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED	little			

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The house on Thornmar Farm has at least three old names; Old Revolutionary House, Bonwell, Rosemont. The present name was given the house by its owner in honor of her father.

The house was probably constructed in the late 18th century. It is a massive building with tall ceilings and a high basement. Although the building has a central entrance hall, its plan is unusual; a rear extension under a catslide roof adds one two bay wide room per floor. There is a fireplace and tall chimney stack in the corner of these rooms. Other wide chimneys are enclosed within the gable walls of the main house.

The five bay, two story building faces southeast over Morgan Creek. The extension is on the northwest or approach facade. An old one and one-half story, four bay wing with a gable roof and dormers was constructed on the north gable. It was extended two bays in the 1930's.

Main facades of the house are Flemish bond. A water table is used on three facades of the house; it is ovalo in shape on the main facade and stepped elsewhere. Also on this facade is a three course belt course of tiny rubbed brick. Flat splayed window arches are rubbed brick; they are one and one-half stretchers tall on the main facade, first floor, and one stretcher tall elsewhere. Flemish bond is used on the main facade of the wing; common bond is used elsewhere.

The L-plan, like that at the Trew House (K-84), appears to be original to the house. It is, however, detailed more simply with smaller 6/6 sash windows and a plain box cornice with very simple moldings.

The main house has 12/12 sash windows, a window at the stair landing, rear, and a main entrance with a fan overlight. The asphalt shingle gable roof is finished with a fine modillion cornice which has been in place at least since the 1930's. Window frames are beaded and have a quarter-round backband. There are basement windows in all window bays. The main entrance is sheltered by a modern gable roofed entrance porch with round columns and a vaulted ceiling. The door itself, has six raised and beveled panels and frame with three part trim and a keystone.

The old wing (whether it pre-dates or post-dates the house is uncertain) is one and one-half stories with gable dormers in the roof and a central chimney. Ceiling beams have been exposed inside but no other antique details remain inside.

Thornmar's stair is very fine. Originally open to the third floor, the upper portion has been closed off. It is an open string stair with three plain balusters per step and wave step bracketts. The hand rail is oval; it has an ease at the landing and meets the newel cap below. Newels and intermediates are slender and round with a turned cap and base. There is a shadow with plaster dado and paneled pilaster and six raised and beveled panels on the spandrel. A six panel door leads to a closet beneath the landing.

Doorways leading to the main first floor rooms have paneled

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

8 SIGNIFICANCE

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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/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 late 18th century
with later additions

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

This is one of Kent's fine old houses with a beautifully designed interior and unusual plan. Its facade is quite imposing, well proportioned and detailed.

The L-plan here and at the Trew House (K-84) add an extra room per floor without changing the basic character of the house. The main facade remains symmetrical and the roof form is gable with a catslide extension covering the extra rooms. The houses are different, however, at Thornmar there is a grand central hall; the Trew House is a variation of the earlier hall and parlor plan with only enclosed corner stairs.

Thornmar retains a good amount of original detailing. The present living room is the most greatly altered; replacement trim and most modifications date from the 1930's.

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

K-202

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, Consultant

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

7 Continued

jambes and three part trim with backband moldings, quarter-round in the stair hall and ovolo in the dining room. Doors have six panels on both sides. In the present living room, trim is ribbed with sunburst cornerblocks. There is a chair-rail with recessed panels and mantle with quarter-round crossette surround and a molded broken shelf which rests on plain frieze bevels. Window jambes are splayed and enriched with recessed panels and a ribbed apron.

In the present dining room the wainscoting is of recessed panels with composit edges. The three part window trim and trim around a cupboard have an ogee backband. There is a very bold cornice and molded baseboard. The rectangular fireplace opening has a quarter-round crossette surround and a molded shelf resting on two fluted console blocks. The overmantle has crossette panel defined by a cove molding.

The rear extension room, like the Trew House, originally had an enclosed corner stair. It has been removed but the corner fireplace with quarter-round surround and shelf with console frieze remain. Windows have splayed plain jambes and seats. The cornice is modern.

Upstairs in the parlor chamber is a mantle with broken shelf and ribbed surround. In the other major bed room is a mantle with quarter-round crossette surround and a chair-rail. The corner fireplace in the extension room has a bold shelf with three bracketts and a recessed panel overmantle.

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Form 10-445
(5/62)

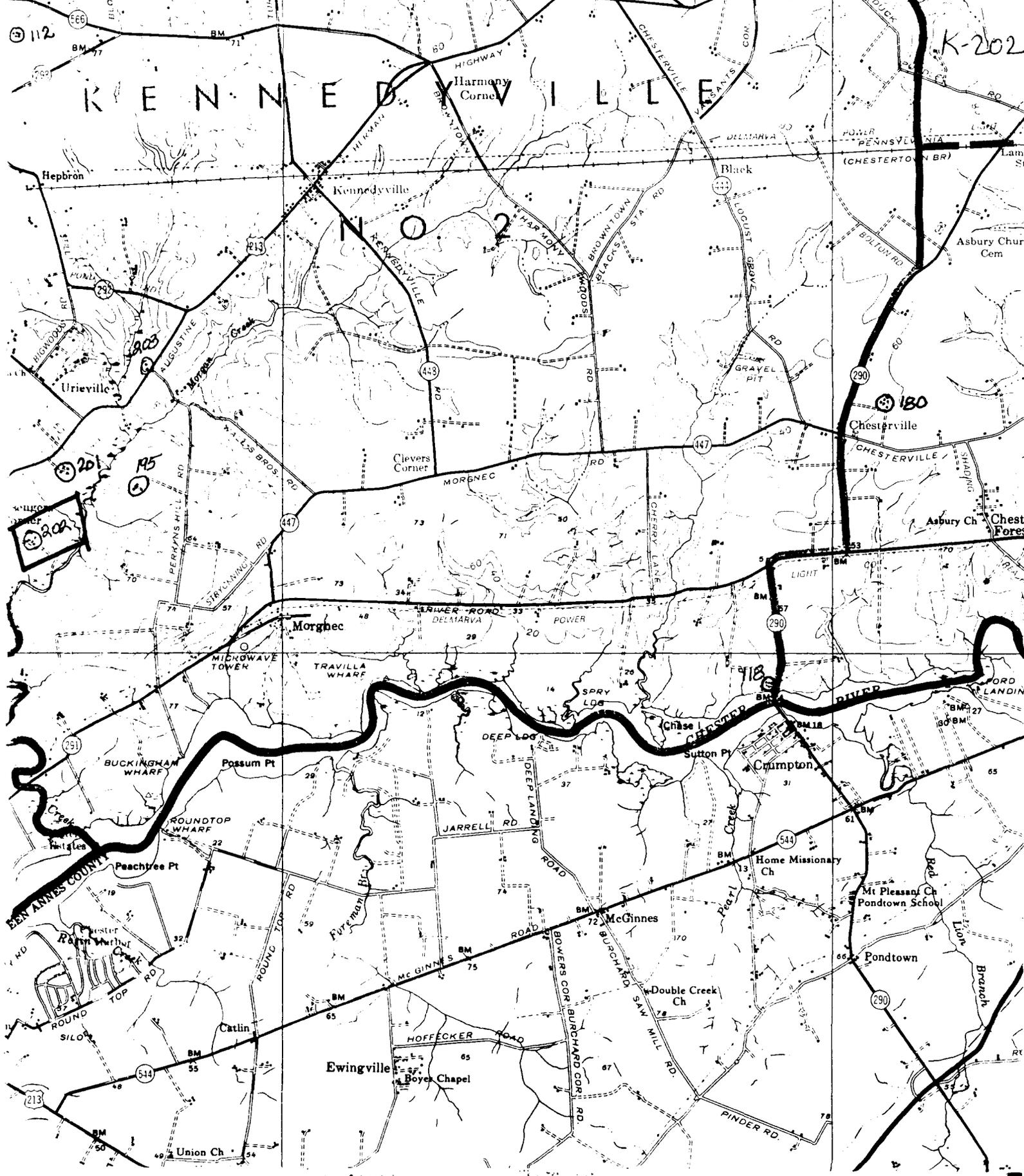
1. STATE Maryland COUNTY Kent TOWN Chestertown VICINITY Urieville STREET NO. Rt. 213, & Rt 561, (east) ORIGINAL OWNER ORIGINAL USE dwelling PRESENT OWNER Mrs. Morton Johnston PRESENT USE dwelling WALL CONSTRUCTION brick NO. OF STORIES two	HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY INVENTORY K - 202 2. NAME Rosemont (or Bonwill or Old Revolutionary) DATE OR PERIOD c. 1740 STYLE Colonial ARCHITECT BUILDER 3. FOR LIBRARY OF CONGRESS USE
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4. NOTABLE FEATURES, HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE AND DESCRIPTION <p>Rosemont is one of the fine early houses of Kent County. It is a five bay long structure, two stories tall with an "A" roof and a portion with a catside roof. There is a large 1 1/2 story kitchen wing which may be earlier than the main house. The proportions of the building are very large for this rural area. The entire structure is laid in Flemish bond (painted white) and there is a water table, partially molded and partially stepped, a rubbed brick string course and rubbed flat arches above the windows of the south facade. There is a large chimney in each gable and in the northwest corner of the 'outsnut' (covered by the leanto roof). The center entrance has paneled jamb and door, semicircular transom with keystone trim. There is a hooded porch of unpleasing proportion. Windows on both stories have 12/12 sash except in the outsnut which has 6/6 sash, all with louvered shutters. The wood cornice has shaped modillions and the roof is covered with asphalt. The wing is five bays long, 1 1/2 stories tall; 6/6/6/6 four bays brick with a very tall chimney and one bay frame on the extreme end. On the south of the wing is a screened porch.</p> <p>The house is well situated on a 400 acre farm near Chestertown.</p>	OPEN TO PUBLIC NO
5. PHYSICAL CONDITION OF STRUCTURE Endangered NO Interior Exterior good	

6. LOCATION MAP (Plan Optional)	7. PHOTOGRAPH
8. PUBLISHED SOURCES (Author, Title, Pages) INTERVIEWS, RECORDS, PHOTOS, ETC. Forman, H.C. Early Manor and Plantation Houses of Maryland, privately printed, 1934, p. 217, 231.	9. NAME, ADDRESS AND TITLE OF RECORDER Michael Bourne DATE OF RECORD Sept. 18, 1968

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

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112

N O 2

180

201
202

195

118

EN ANNES COUNTY

213

290



THORNTON K.202

REAR FAÇADE

L. Engstrom 8/77

Maryland Historical Trust



Thornmar.

MHV K202

Route 213 - Chestertown Ind.

Stair way.

C. Engstrom

Aug 1977