

Poplar Hill  
Fairlee  
mid-19th century

When Colonel Joseph Wickes' properties were listed in the 1852 Tax Assessment, "Poplar Hill Resurveyed" (220 acres), "Pt. St. Tantons" (3 1/2 acres), and "Pt. Fairlee & Bishford" (32 acres) were included in the 939 acres he owned. The Assessor described them as "Buildings in Bad Repair."<sup>1</sup>

In 1857, William Crow purchased the farm from Colonel and Mrs. Wickes. The deed describes its location as "on the east side of the road from Bel Air to St. Paul's."<sup>2</sup> Twenty-three years later, Crow sold the farm to John Parr Nicholson, but as Nicholson's name appears next to the property in the 1877 Atlas, it is likely that he began farming the land for Crow prior to his acquisition.

The form of the house is early and resembles Locust Grove, a house northeast of Chestertown. It was one-and-a-half stories tall and five bays long with a lower service wing. Behind the room adjoining the wing there was a leanto, similar to that at Shepherd's Delight, as well as that at Locust Grove.

In 1905, the Nicholsons gave the old house to a person who moved it to nearby Georgetown. The house which replaced it remains on the farm today.

1. Kent County Tax Assessment, First District, 1852.
2. Land Records, Lib. JKH 1, fol. 36.
3. Land Records, Lib. SB 1, fol. 38.

Maryland Historical Trust  
State Historic Sites Inventory Form

MARYLAND INVENTORY OF  
HISTORIC PROPERTIES

Survey No. K-479

Magi No.

DOE  yes  no

**1. Name** (indicate preferred name)

historic Poplar Hill

and/or common

**2. Location**

street & number 8603 Rock Hall Road  not for publication

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input 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 checked="" 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 Howard and Ann Townsend

street & number 23124 Old Fairlee Road telephone no.:

city, town Chestertown state and zip code MD 21620

**5. Location of Legal Description**

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Kent County Courthouse liber WHG 68

street & number Cross Street folio 68

city, town Chestertown state MD

**6. Representation in Existing** Historical Surveys

title Kent County Survey

date  federal  state  county  local

depository for survey records Maryland Historical Trust

city, town 100 Community Place, Crownsville state Maryland

## 7. Description

Survey No. K-479

<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 type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved	date of move _____
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unexposed			

Prepare both a summary paragraph and a general description of the resource and its various elements as it exists today.

The site is significant as an illustration of a type farmhouse that was used for two centuries in this rural area. It was a type that is in form and plan like the above mentioned Locust Grove and Shepherd's Delight, existing buildings, and another for which there is documentation at the pre-revolutionary Tilden House at Green Hill or Handy Point.

Nicholson family photographs show a house five bays long with a central entrance covered by a flat-roofed porch. The windows all have 6/6 sash and louvered blinds, all appearing 19th century in origin. One curious feature pictured is a large window on one side of the chimney and a smaller casement on the other. This feature along suggests the possibility that the larger window was installed when the house was "remodeled" rather than an original design.

In 1905, the old house was moved to Georgetown (near Fairlee) and was replaced by a large frame house still standing on the farm. The old house in the Georgetown location was demolished years ago.

# 8. Significance

Survey No. K-479

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input 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 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**

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.

The Nicholsons gave the old house to a person living in nearby Georgetown where it was moved in 1905. It was replaced by the house which still stands on the farm.

When Col. Wickes' properties were listed in the 1852 Tax Assessment, "Poplar Hill Resurveyed" (220 acres), "Pt St. Tantons (3 1/2 acres), "Pt Fairlee & Bishford" (32 acres) were included in the 939 acres he owned. The Assessor stated "Buildings in Bad repair."

William Crow purchased the farm in 1857 from Col. and Mrs. Wickes "on the east side of the road from Bel Air to St. Paul's," and apparently farmed the property until 1880 when it was sold to John Parr Nicholson.

The form of the house is early and resembles Locust Grove, a house northeast of Chestertown, in many ways. It was one-and-a-half-stories tall and five-bays long with a lower service wing. Behind the room adjoining the wing there was a leanto, similar to Shepherd's Delight.

# 9. Major Bibliographical References

Survey No. K-479

Kent County Land Records

# 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property \_\_\_\_\_

Quadrangle name \_\_\_\_\_

Quadrangle scale \_\_\_\_\_

UTM References do NOT complete UTM references

A     
 Zone Easting Northing

B     
 Zone Easting Northing

C

D

E

F

G

H

Verbal boundary description and justification

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 Michael Bourne

organization Historical Society of Kent Co. date March 1996

street & number P. O. Box 665 telephone 410-778-3499

city or town Chestertown state Maryland

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

MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST  
 DHCP/DHCD  
 100 COMMUNITY PLACE  
 CROWNSVILLE, MD 21032-2023  
 514-7600

# Maryland Historical Trust State Historic Sites Inventory Form

## 1. Name (indicate preferred name)

historic Nicholson Farm

and/or common Townsend Farm - Current

## 2. Location

street & number RD # 2, SE side of Rt. 20, .7 mi. south of Fairlee ~~not for publication~~

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
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	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> not applicable	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other:

## 4. Owner of Property (give names and mailing addresses of all owners)

name Howard F. and Ann H. Townsend

street & number RD # 2 telephone no.: 778-3158

city, town Chestertown state and zip code Maryland 21620

## 5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Kent County Court House liber WHG68

street & number folio 68

city, town Chestertown state Maryland

## 6. Representation in Existing Historical Surveys

title

date  federal  state  county  local

depository for survey records

city, town state

# 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 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.

Built about 1895-1900, all three gable-roofed sections of this large farmhouse were built at the same time. Visible while approaching the house are two three-window bays. A broad central gable in the "main section" balances the gable end of the parlor wing. A wide front porch also ties those two sections visually.

# 8. Significance

Survey No. K-479

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
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<input 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	Builder/Architect
check: Applicable Criteria: <input type="checkbox"/> A <input type="checkbox"/> B <input type="checkbox"/> C <input type="checkbox"/> D and/or	
Applicable Exception: <input type="checkbox"/> A <input type="checkbox"/> B <input type="checkbox"/> C <input type="checkbox"/> D <input type="checkbox"/> E <input type="checkbox"/> F <input type="checkbox"/> G	
Level of Significance: <input type="checkbox"/> national <input type="checkbox"/> state <input type="checkbox"/> local	

Prepare both a summary paragraph of significance and a general statement of history and support.

The plan of this three-part late Victorian house is unusual for Kent County. More typical of the Midwest than of Kent County, it very likely was constructed from a plan book or a purchased plan of the time using catalogue components available locally. The most imposing of these are the originally "golden oak" stair components and in particular the massive newel. The plan combines symmetry with asymmetry. There are similar bay windows, but one is in a west gable end while the other is in another house section, in a south gable end. There is a central gable in the section with the main entry, but that entry is not in the central bay, but a side bay. This central gable is less prominent visually than in the more usual Kent County central gable houses because it is balanced by the gable end of the same size and with the same roof slope of the adjacent section on the approach facade of the house. Because of its size and various components this must have been an expensive house for its time.



## CONTINUATION SHEET

## 7.1 DESCRIPTION (continued)

Building Form and Material

1. Size - Main Section: 2½ stories, 3 bays wide, 1 bay deep (1 bay window with 3 windows)  
 Wing A: 2 ½ stories, 1 bay wide (bay with 3 windows), 2 bays deep (25' - 30'); to north end of main section.  
 Wing B: 2½ stories, 2 bays wide, 3 or 4 bays deep (to rear of main section).
2. Plan type - Main section as used here includes only side entry and stair hall and large room (originally the dining room). On the other side of the hall, under a roof perpendicular to the main section's roof, are 2 rooms, on the first floor - front and rear parlor. The house's three parts were conceived and built as a whole, with the 2 front portions utilizing two axes and intended to be the "main", public portions.
3. Roof type - Main section: gable  
 Wings: gable
4. Chimneys - Located in the 1) center east gable end of Wing B: small, for stove. 2) thru roof ridge of main section between center and northern bay. 3) about 7 ft. to the north of chimney #2 just within Wing A but still through ridge line of main section. These 2 chimneys serve fireplaces in rooms on each side of the main entry hall. The northernmost chimney serves two first-floor corner fireplaces.  
 Materials: brick
5. Decorative elements: 1) 2 course band 2) corbelled cpas
5. Material/Walls - Main Section: Frame - Aluminum siding applied over weatherboard about 1976. Until this residing all gable typm-pannum were shingled with decorative shingles, perhaps half rounds.  
 Wings: same
6. Material/Roofs - All sections are asphalt shingles.
7. Material/Foundation - Main section: brick basement (see History)  
 Wing A: brick (crawl space)  
 Wing B: brick (partial basement)
8. Age - Main section: circa 1895-1900  
 Wings: Same - the entire house appears to have been built at the same time.
9. Style - Late Victorian 2-axis farmhouse for approach appearance while retaining central gable in one section.

## CONTINUATION SHEET

## 7.2 DESCRIPTION (continued)

Building Elements and Details

1. Doors - Main entry: located in the approach side, left(or east) bay with access by porch. Wooden knobs at this door.  
 Secondary entries: 1) from wing B side. Frame trim is covered. Door - 1 large upper light; 6 small raised and beveled panels below. Lock rail has horizontal decoration of central reeding flanked by shallow ogees. Panel and glass moldings are quarter round. Knob on exterior has attractive, detailed embossed back-plate. 2) rear of main entry hall, under stair - 4 raised and beveled panels on one side 3) Rear of wing B from kitchen to shed-roofed porch - door has 4 raised panels.
2. Windows - Main section: type - double hung  
 lights - 2/2; central gable and gable end upper sash are round headed  
 details - plain wood sills; 1" fillet at sides and head. Additional trim may originally have been present but removed at the time of aluminum siding application. In gable end bay (to south) windows are narrower and 1/1.  
 shutters - removed  
 Wings: type - double hung  
 lights - 2/2; gable end attic windows are round-headed. West gable window upper sash is round headed. East gable frame is round headed while sash is rectangular.  
 details - plain wood sills: 1" fillet and sides and head. One very narrow 2/2 at rear gable end of Wing B. Bay of Wing A has 2/2 windows.  
 shutters - removed
3. Dormers - Total of 5 (2 in north slope of Wing A; 2 in south slope of Wing B and one in north.). Steep gable roofs of asphalt shingles with eaves overhang about 4-6" and gable end overhang about 8". Double-hung sash with upper slightly segmentally arched. Cyma recta with fillets crown molding and simple small bed molding at gable end. No eaves returns. Plain pilasters with smooth seam into tympanum. Pilasters flared at bases. Cheeks now of aluminum siding.
4. Roof details - Main section: Box cornice with cyma recta with fillet crown molding and bevel bed molding. Central gable is pedimented with broken cornice forming the base. At central gable, south gable end of main section, and west gable end of wing A, about 8" fascia board underlies the bevel bed molding.  
 Wings: Box cornice with cyma recta and fillets crown molding (except plain double verge boards at east gable end of Wing B). Bevel bed molding. Eaves and gable end overhang of about 12". One roof return about 20-24" - at east gable end of Wing A - outside corner.

## CONTINUATION SHEET

## 7.3 DESCRIPTION (continued)

5. Porches - Located: 1) 3-bay porch (1 bay deep) on approach side of main section for its full width. No steps to 20" elevated wood floor (T & G pine) at present. Floor is on brick piers. Shallow hip roof. Three turned catalogue posts. 2) Wing B, south side, left bay - 1 bay wide and one deep with very shallow hip roof. Corner posts are same as front porch. Now has concrete block foundation and concrete floor. Plain box cornices. 3) entire width of Wing B's rear gable end. Shed roof of asphalt shingles. Porch appears to have been formerly mostly enclosed by vertical boards and horizontal weatherboard, some of which has now been removed above the mid-point (sawn off). Set on continuation of Wing's foundation wall (added) and brick piers. Concrete steps. Tongue and Groove pine floor.

6. Color - Current: white aluminum siding with white trim  
Historic: white weatherboard

7. Other - 1) There is a "bump-out" with a shed roof on the 2nd floor to the rear of the 2nd floor stair landing, with access to that space, which has a window at the rear, via a wide plastered, arched opening from the landing as well as via a door (and down several steps) from the bedroom over the rear parlor and via a door leading to a bedroom in Wing B. Looking quite inelegant from the exterior, a means was thus provided for direct access to each bedroom and for a secondary traffic route through the middle of the house. The "bump-out" provides a covered entry for the stair halls' rear door. 2) 4 finished rooms on 3rd floor and 1 unfinished (known as the sausage room - it does smell like it); 4 rooms (and large bathroom) on 2nd floor; 4 rooms and service rooms on first floor. 3) Originally there was no access between the rear servants' quarters and the rear family portion. Until a door was cut recently on the 2nd floor, servants had to use only the rear-most of the 3 stairs.

Interior Description

1. Major stair - massive oak newel with square base with lambs tongues, composite turned central portions and large square (7 $\frac{1}{4}$ " portion with bulls eyes each side beneath large, turned cap. Smaller rectangular intermediates with bull eyes. Oak railings. Open string with 2 turned oak balusters per tread. Carriage and/or facing of oak, as are simple step brackets. Modified dogleg style; except for the last 3 steps the entire run between 1st and 2nd floor is straight. Run to 3rd floor is above 1st run and is split almost equally. At landing between 1st and 2nd floors is a plaster arch opening to a "bump-out" in the building with a small hall, window and steps and doors to the rear bedroom of Wing A and the bedrooms of Wing B. This is all original to the building. Spandrel - open - door underneath for access to rear parlor. Opposite there is a side door in the rear hall for a 2nd hall entry to the former dining room.

## CONTINUATION SHEET

## 7.4 DESCRIPTION (continued)

- Other stairs - 1) Rear family stairs from entry hall at side of Wing B - enclosed straight run; one wall of narrow beaded board; 2) Rear of Wing B = gable end - kitchen corner stairs for servants.
2. Major mantles - 1) Wing A - front parlor, across corner - rectangular opening with marbelized slate mantle. Shelf with brackets at each end. Frieze and pilasters incised with simple pattern - 2) Angled into same corner of rear parlor - marbelized slate (black and white mostly) with pink and grey marbelizing on pilasters and frieze. Plain shelf. Incised outlining work 3) former dining room - painted-over marbelized slate
3. Major trim - Windows/doors: . . . . . Same 4" wide trim used thruout - outside fillet, reeding, flattened half round, reading, and inside fillet. This trim also used as window aprons. Modified bulls eyes used at junction with heads.  
Baseboards: 7" varnished . board capped with modified ogee.  
Cornices & Chair rails: None
4. Major doors - grained pine (4 raised panels) to appear as oak. Some knobs wooden, some metal. Double sliding pocket doors (4 panels) in Wing A between front and rear parlors.
5. Floors - medium-width pine
6. Walls/ceiling finished - plaster with paint or paper, modern plywood paneling in old front parlor; tile ceiling in parlor (following fire).

Outbuildings/Site Description

1. Major outbuildings - Numerous outbuildings - oldest appear to be:  
Barn - early 20th century? . Metal gambrel roof - vertical weatherboarding.  
Stable? - late 19th or early 20th century. Gable roofed. Walls-vertical boarding.
2. Site Description - Standing on high ground in an area which is gently rolling, the house is immediately surrounded by a lawn with large trees. A three-sided but partially enclosed pole shed stands to the rear (about 30 feet) of the house. To the south and south-east are numerous farm outbuildings, including two metal grain dryers, a large mid-20th century metal building, a corn crib, an early 20th century gambrel-roofed barn, and several others.

## CONTINUATION SHEET

## 7.5 DESCRIPTION (continued)

3. Views to/from Site - Between the house and Route 20 (and beyond) cultivated fields are seen, beyond which there are trees in the distance. Beyond the outbuildings to the southeast the land slopes down to a woods. To the east, behind house and outbuildings, the land slopes quite abruptly to a large low area, during some seasons more or less filled with water. Beyond it are trees and cultivated fields. To the southwest of the house the AT & T transmission tower is clearly visible at the side of Route 20. To the north in the distance a few houses of the village of Fairlee and the village water tower can be seen. A large business-use building about  $\frac{1}{2}$  mile to the north on the southeast side of Route 20 is also visible.

Use of Building

Current - Residence/rental  
 Historic - Residence/farmhouse

History of Building/Past Ownership

Built by a Nicholson (according to local informants), the 1877 atlas of Kent County shows a J. P. Nicholson as owner of a house on what appears to be the same site. This may account for the unusual foundation of the main section and part of Wing B. The section view is: See below.

Because of the integration of the two basement entrances and the common stair for both into the basic plan of the house, it does not appear that the present house was built with only a crawl space which was later dug out. A dumb waiter from pantry to basement (possibly for transport of home-canned goods) also appears to be original to the house. It is possible that the present house rests on an old foundation that surrounded a crawl space which was dug out (and the walls buttressed) at the time the present house was built. The brickwork was too heavily whitewashed to provide much information.

brick

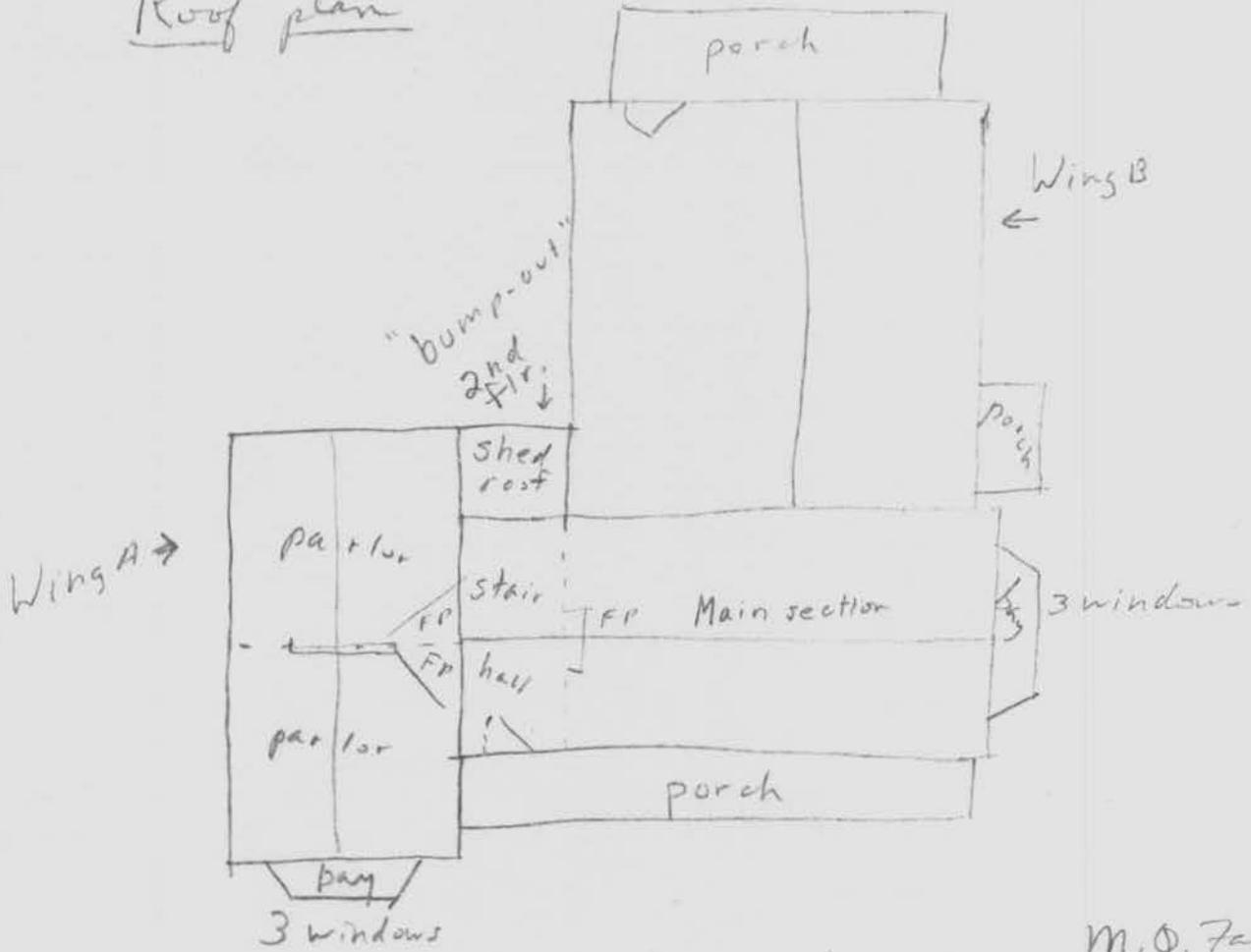
brick

appears to be thin layer of  
 concrete over earth



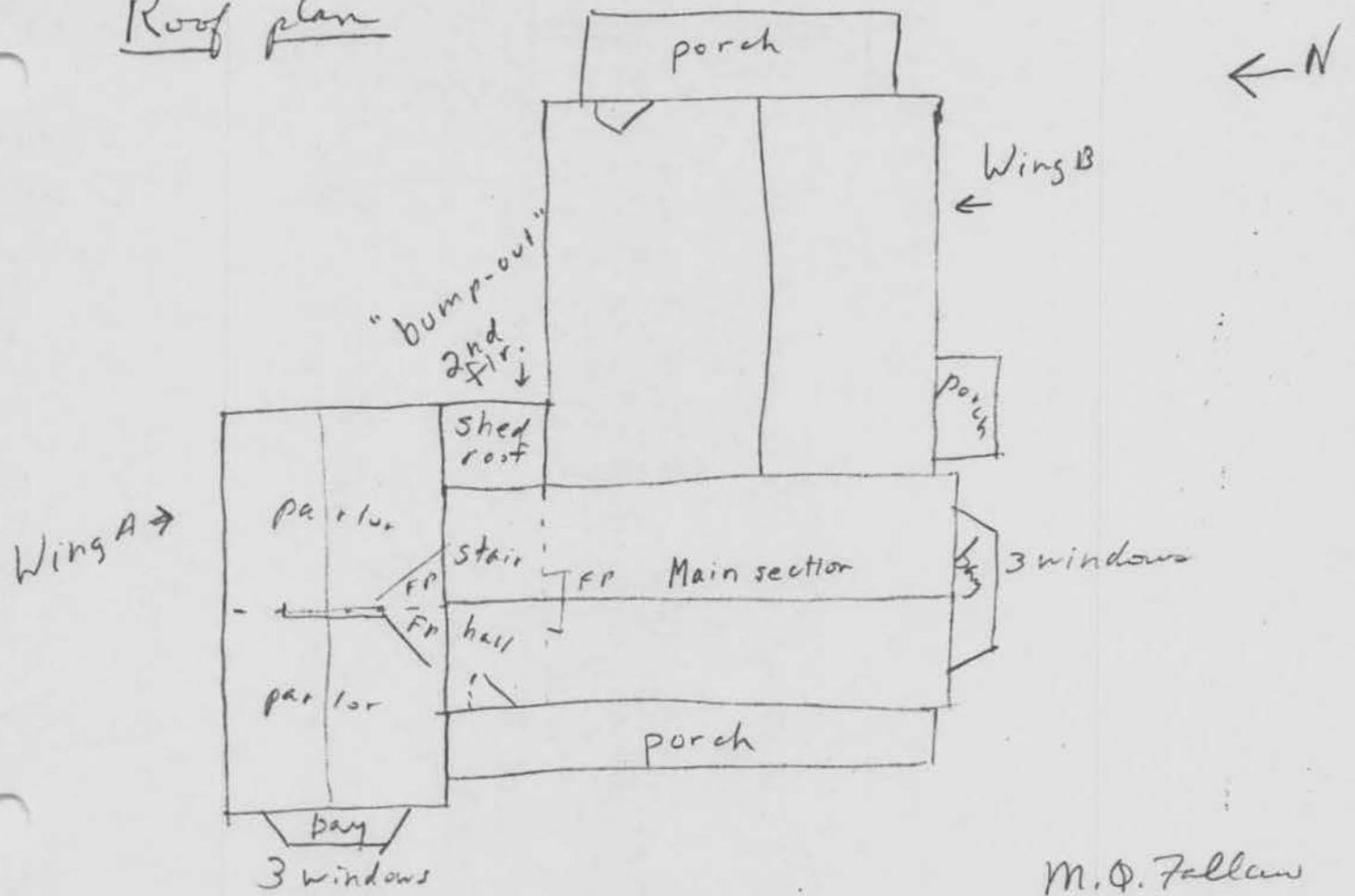
Roof plan

← N



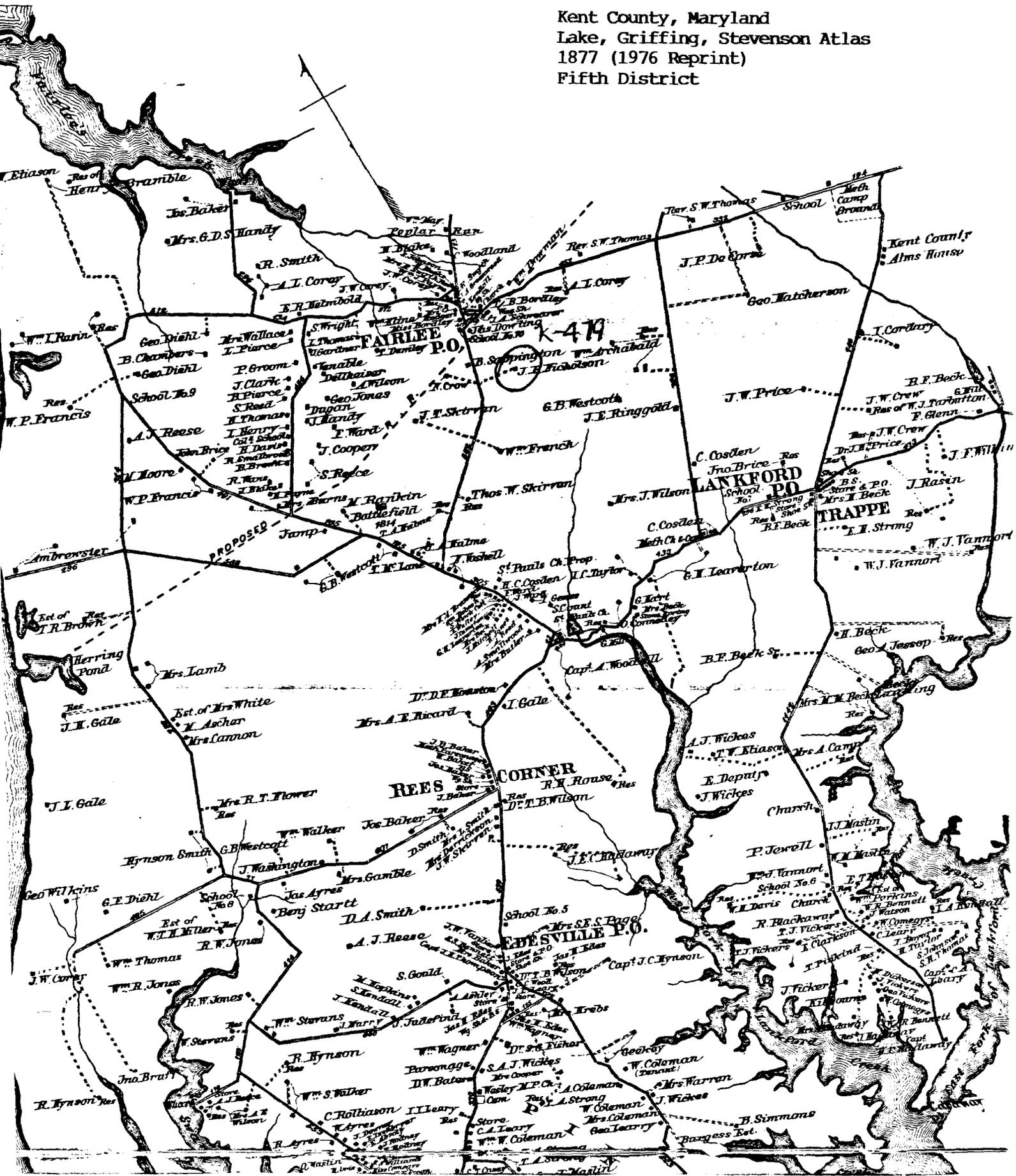
M. O. Fallows  
7/2/51  
K-479  
Townsend Farm

Roof plan

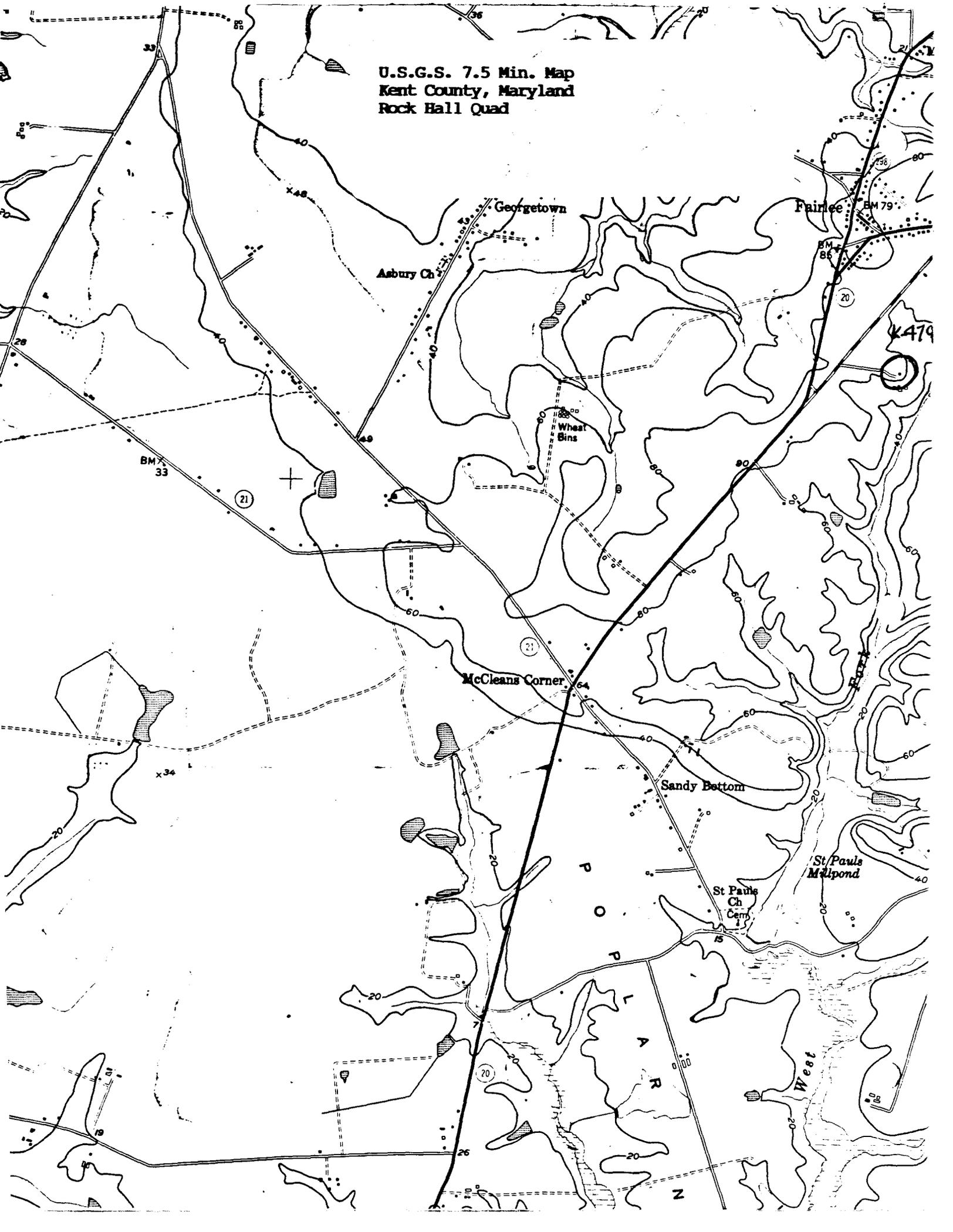


M. Q. Fallaw  
7/2/81  
Townsend Farm K-479

Kent County, Maryland  
Lake, Griffing, Stevenson Atlas  
1877 (1976 Reprint)  
Fifth District



U.S.G.S. 7.5 Min. Map  
Kent County, Maryland  
Rock Hall Quad





Poplar Hill K-~~511~~ - The John Parr Nicholson Family - taken before 1905 MSA SC 4138-7  
479



View to Northeast

NICHOLSON/TOWNSEND FARM (K-479)

Fairlee, Chestertown, Kent County

Photograph: M. Q. Fallaw, July 1981