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Masonic Building, Pinder Building
High Street, Chestertown
1827

The first published mention of Freemasonry associated with a Kent Countian can be found in an advertisement in the Maryland Gazette of the 25th of March 1763, in which Dr. John Scott was listed as a person from whom a lottery ticket could be purchased. The first lodge in Kent County was established at Georgetown in 1766 and known as Lodge No. 6, an offshoot from the Grand Lodge of Pennsylvania.

Lodge No. 7 was formed that same year in Chestertown. About 1780-81 dissension in the Georgetown Lodge was resolved by the Reverend William Smith of Chester Parish, who had recently come to Chestertown from Philadelphia. He was instrumental in the establishment of Washington College as well. His activities in Freemasonry culminated in his being named Master Mason in the 1780's.

Like many of the institutions of Kent County after the Revolution, Freemasonry seems to have had its ups and downs. Various lodge rooms around the county were utilized, including locations in Georgetown, Chestertown, Georgetown Crossroads and Millington. It was not until 1826 that the Maryland General Assembly granted a parcel of land to the Clinton Lodge on which they could build a Masonic Hall. It was located on the public square in Chestertown.

A notice in the May 18th issued of the Telegraph, 1827, states:

IT NOTICE

The subscribers being duly authorized by the Legislature of Maryland hereby give notice that on Saturday the 26th instant, at 10 o'clock A. M. at the office of William H. Barroll, Esq., they will open a book receiving subscriptions to a Capitol Stock of three thousand dollars, to be expended in the erection of a Masonic Hall, on the public square in Chestertown . . .

- IT William Barroll
- Timothy Clowes
- George W. Thomas
- Morgan Browne
- Peregrine Wroth

Soon after the establishment of the lottery, permission to lay the cornerstone was granted by the Grand Lodge. Apparently, the building was begun very soon after, for it was announced to the Grand Lodge of Maryland on May 15, 1828 that Clinton Lodge had completed the erection of a "neat and elegant Masonic Hall".¹

Later that year, Benjamin Greenwood announced in the Telegraph that he had established a "New Stand, having taken one of the spacious and beautiful store rooms in the Masonic Hall".²

The building which was constructed for Clinton Lodge was built on lot 40' x 60'. It was built over a full basement, and included three store spaces on the first floor and a lodge room on the second. Entrance to the lodge appears to have been gained through the last bay of the northwest gable from the Courthouse Yard. The stair to the lodge room rose within that gable. The lodge room itself occupied four of the five bay second floor

and had a high tray ceiling. The original ceiling is painted black, and still exists above a dropped ceiling.

The High Street facade is laid in Flemish bond brick with plain stone lintels above the openings, each store having its own door. In the center of the facade a gable rises bearing the Masonic emblem in a circular panel. The same motif is repeated in the two gable ends. The rear elevation differs from the front in that there are three windows on the first floor with five above. Each of the windows has a standard jack arch. The front gable is a forerunner of a feature found in residential structures in the last half of the 19th Century.

In 1836 the property was transferred to the Masonic Hall Company and remained in that ownership until the late 19th Century when it was purchased by William B. Usilton. It remained in the Usilton family until 1933 when it was sold. Since that time there have been three subsequent owners.

In Fred Usilton's History of Chestertown (1899), he lists several occupants of the first floor store rooms, including Mr. T. W. Eliason, who after 1854 moved across the street to what had been a tavern (The White Swan Tavern). During the Usilton ownership it was called "The Kent News Building".

1. Townsend, Rolph, Sr., History of Masonry in Kent County, Maryland, January 1952. Unpublished.
2. Telegraph, 14 November 1828.

K - 48 Masonic Temple or Hall
Chestertown

1826-1835

privately owned, used as offices of various businesses

The Masonic Temple ^{was} built at some point between 1826, when the General Assembly of Maryland granted the lot to the Masons, and 1835 when a deed from the Clinton Lodge to the President and Directors of Masonic Hall Co. refers to a building on the property. The date on the building is 1827, however, this may have been the period of subscriptions being out to build it. Masonic Temple is significant as an example of retardaire Georgian architecture and is situated in an important location in town.

INVENTORY FORM FOR STATE HISTORIC SITES SURVEY

1 NAME
 HISTORIC Masonic Temple
 AND/OR COMMON

~~titles on it change with names of owners, presently Pinder Bldg~~

2 LOCATION
 STREET & NUMBER lot of Court House property, near intersection of Park Row
 CITY, TOWN & Court St. (Lawyers' Row) CHESTERTOWN CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT
Chestertown VICINITY OF First
 STATE Md. 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	PUBLIC ACQUISITION	ACCESSIBLE on business	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL
			<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OTHER
			<input type="checkbox"/> PARK
			<input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
			<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
			<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
			<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY
 NAME Emma K. & Earl H. Pinder office 778-0881
 Telephone #: home 778-0882
 STREET & NUMBER
Chestertown, Md.
 CITY, TOWN STATE, zip code
Chestertown VICINITY OF Md. 21620

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION
 COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. Office of the County Clerk Liber #: EHP 52
 Folio #: 385
 STREET & NUMBER Kent County Courthouse
 CITY, TOWN Chestertown STATE Md.

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS
 TITLE none known
 DATE
 DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS
 CITY, TOWN STATE

FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

7 DESCRIPTION

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CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<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 <i>only a little</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED DATE _____
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The front of this 2 story brick building is 5 bays with 5 double hung 12/12 windows on the second floor. Facing the building, from left to right, on the 1st floor there is a door (extended from and narrowed from a window), a 12/12 double hung window, double front door with transom over it, pilasters flanking it and denticulated moulding, another 12/12 window (altered) and a door again made from a window.

All windows (and doors - except central one) on the front have stone lintels. The brickwork on the front is Flemish bond.

The rear of the building, facing the courthouse, is 5 bays with the 2nd story windows being double hung 12/12. The first floor windows from left to right are 12/12, 9/9, a small casement obviously in place of another, 9/9 and 12/12. The 12/12 and 9/9 appear to be the same size in height and width. The rear brick bond is American.

The north end is in American bond with a Masonic emblem in a medallion in the gable. It is 3 bays wide with lintels over the windows. The 2 story windows are 12/12, and the first floor are 6/6. Facing this side the left story bay is a door.

Only the south end gable is visible as a 2 story flat roofed frame addition has been tacked on. In the uppermost part of the gable there is a medallion with a Masonic emblem. Brick work again is American bond.

The A roof is of composition material and there is a painted white bargeboard.

On the front the roof is broken in the center by a pediment which bears a medallion with a Masonic emblem and the date of 1827. Both front and rear have painted white cornices.

8 SIGNIFICANCE

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 1826-1835 BUILDER/ARCHITECT unknown
date on bldg. is 1827.

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

"The Masonic Temple was built between 1826 when the lot was granted to the Masons by the General Assembly of Maryland and 1835 when a deed from Clinton Lodge to the President and Directors of Masonic Hall Co. refers to a building." (F.G. Usilton, History of Kent County)

The date on the front of the building in a medallion with a Masonic emblem is 1827.

F.G. Usilton refers to subscriptions being out in 1827 to build a Masonic Hall, and also to the building housing the Kent News. He also refers to the Second National Bank originating there.

The building is significant as an example of simple Georgian architecture and having housed many Kent County businesses, in addition to the Masons, over its past years. It is still in use as offices.

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9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Fred G. Usilton's "History of Kent County" and history of Chestertown

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 62' x 32' +

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

parallelogram 60' x 42' more or less as stated in deed dated 6/17/1835 from Master and Wardens of Clinton Lodge #83 to the President and Directors of the Masonic Hall Company - a lot of ground.

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE COUNTY

STATE COUNTY

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Kathleen B. White, Historic Site Surveyor

Sept. 1976

ORGANIZATION

Md. Historical Trust/City of Chestertown

DATE

STREET & NUMBER

TELEPHONE

CITY OR TOWN

STATE

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

- EHP 52/385 6/29/73 George B. and Eleanor B. Rasin to Emma K. and Earl H. Pinder. NW corner of High and Court on which is located the building known for many years as "Kent News Building" and formerly known as "Masonic Hall".
- WHG 31/253 11/19/53 Addie H. Usilton, widow (of Fred G. Usilton who willed it to her 3/21/42 WPJ 1/158), Frederick G. Usilton, Jr. and Patience P. Usilton, wife to George B. and Eleanor B. Rasin.
(see also Equity Cause #4007, Circuit Court of Kent County to determine if Addie Usilton had a good and merchantable fee simple title. Decision obviously was favorable.)
- ? 2/6/97 Wm. B. Usilton (father) sold to Fred G. Usilton "no deed ever found." This is mentioned in deed above. No record how Wm. received or bought it.
- ?
JNG 4/8 6/17/35 Master and Wardens of Clinton Lodge #83 to the President and Directors of the Masonic Hall Co.- a lot of ground, parallelogram 60' x 40'.
"Said lot having been granted by Chapter 143 of the Acts of the General Assembly of Md., Dec. Session 1826 and on part of which lot of land... the said President and Directors of the Masonic Hall Company of Chestertown have since erected a building."

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N

CEMETERY

VITA FOODS

FOODS (VIEW) FARM

COUNTY

LYNCHBURG

STREET

POPLAR

PROSPECT

COLLEGE

COLLEGE

WASHINGTON

AVENUE

AVENUE

STREET

ELM STREET

GREENWOOD

VALLEY

STREET

STREET

STREET

STREET

MT. VERNON

CAMPUS

COLLEGE

PINE

SCHOOL

BROWN VIEW

STREET

MILL

KENT

STREET

WASHINGTON

U.S. 213

RIVER

SCHOOL

SCHOOL

STREET

TERRACE

BYFORD DRIVE

WALDO DRIVE

DAVID DRIVE

BARROLL DRIVE

AVENUE

SPRING ST.

PHILOSOPHERS

KENT

CROSS

ROW

STREET

PARK COURT ST.

AVENUE

STREET

BYFORD

COURT

MORRIS

TWILLEY LANE QUEEN

CHURCH ST.

WATER CANNON

HIGH

STREET

MAPLE

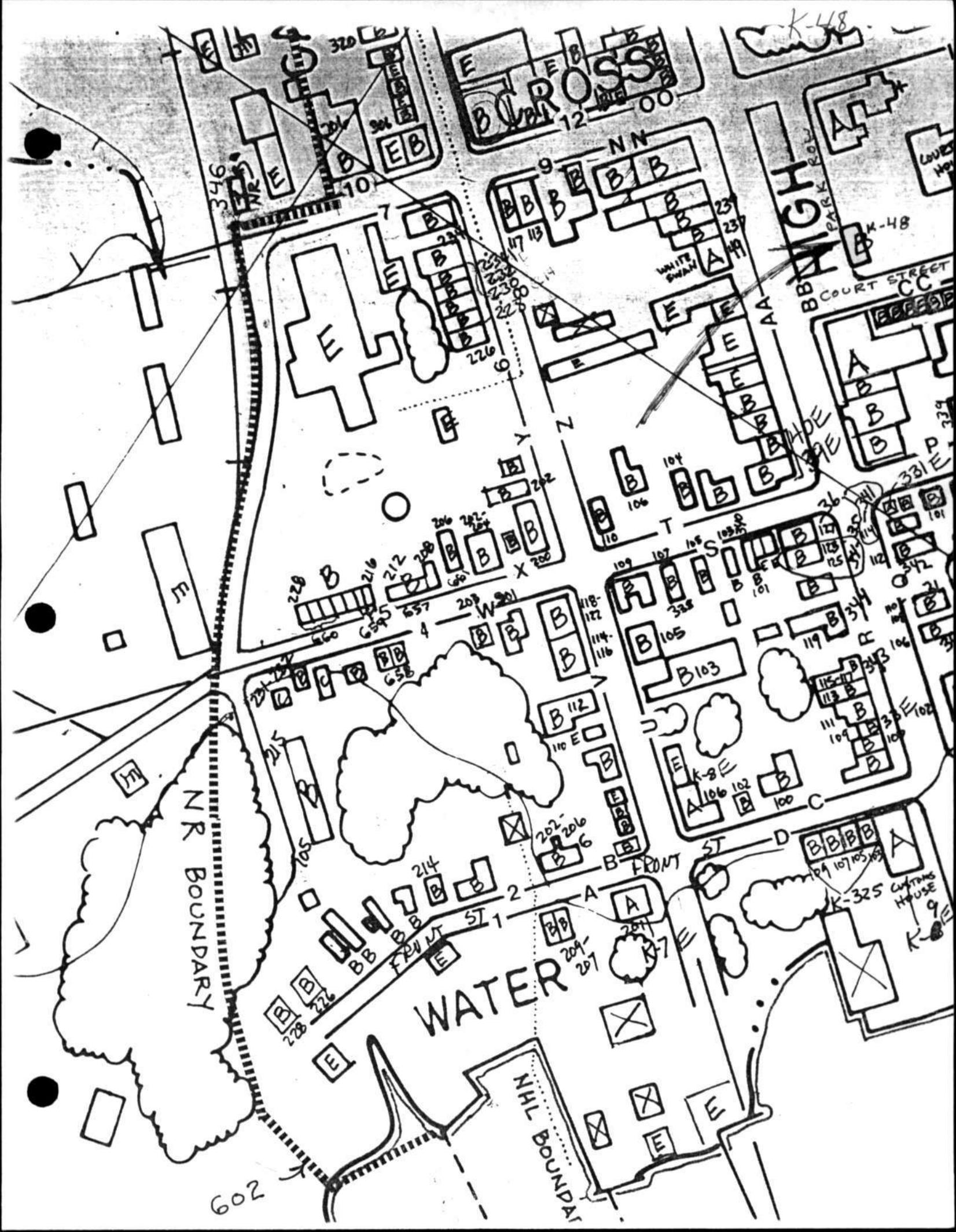
RIVERSIDE TERRACE

River

Chester

U.S. 213

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K-48
Masonic Temple
Park Row & Court St.
Chestertown
Chestertown Quad.
Kent County





K 48 Masonic Temple

1/77 S



K 48 Masonic Temple

S + W

1/77



K48 Masonic Temple

1/77 N