

K-7

The Capt. James F. Taylor House, Whitsitt House, Fort Belvedere
Water Street, Chestertown
c. 1857

Captain James Frisby Taylor is credited with the construction of this Italianate house located on the corner of Front and Cannon Streets, sometime after his purchase of Lot No. 22 in 1857.¹ Captain Taylor also built a wharf in front of his residence and leased it to the Chester River Steamboat company of which he was general agent.

Being in a position of observing what was currently being built around the bay and particularly in Baltimore, it is not surprising that he chose to build a very "modern" dwelling in the latest Italianate style. The large rectangular frame structure was built over a full basement which originally housed the kitchen and other service rooms. Its low-pitched roof, over two stories is adorned with an open cupola or belvedere in the center. The lyre pattern balustrade, bracketed cornice and square columns of the cupola are repeated on the front and rear porches of the house. At the corners of the house there are tall paneled pilasters. Both facades are five bays long with bold double doors having sidelights and transom. Each of the windows has a bracketed cornice with fretwork in the frieze, like those at Brampton and Pentridge.

The floor plan consists of a central stair passage with two rooms on the southwest side and one large room on the northeast. The latter, although one room, is divided by a wide arch and has a fireplace in either section – representative of the 19th century desire for larger spaces in which to entertain. There are plaster cornices in all of the first story rooms.

The fireplaces have marbled black slate mantels.

The fine stair with its massive turned walnut newel post decorated with applied fretwork, walnut railing and oak balusters is representative of the finest quality millwork which could be purchased from companies in the major cities of the time.

Since Taylor's construction and ownership, the house has passed through the hands of 9 subsequent owner/occupants. It was known locally for many years as the Whitsitt House in honor of Dr. and Mrs. Anderson Whitsitt who resided there from 1948-1971.² After Dr. Whitsitt's death, the house was sold to Dr. and Mrs. Neil Brayton.³ Interestingly, shortly after their purchase in the 1970's, the ownership of the house was exchanged with that of Rye Hall in Queen Annes County, property of Judge and Mrs. Stephen Collins who then occupied the house in Chestertown.⁴

1. Land Records, Lib. JNG 4, fol. 433.
2. Land Records, Lib. WHG 7, fol. 630.
3. Land Records, Lib. EHP 58, fol. 346.
4. Land Records, Lib. EHP 64, fol. 433.

Easement

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K-7 Whitsitt House

1857

Chestertown

private

This is one of the town's richest examples of high Victorian style, notable particularly for its marriage of Greek Revival and Italianate styles. A 2-story frame dwelling with a low hip roof and cupola and with full width matching porches at front and rear, it also boasts two of the most impressive Greek Revival frontispiece entrances in the county.

The house was built for James F. Taylor in 1857 and at that time had ~~an~~ ~~expansive~~ an expansive view of the river from its point of high ground at the foot of Cannon Street. It has had its original clapboard covered with aluminum but is otherwise undefiled.

Easement K-7

MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST

MHT# 1500072504

INVENTORY FORM FOR STATE HISTORIC SITES SURVEY

1 NAME

HISTORIC

AND/OR COMMON

Whitsitt House

K-7

2 LOCATION

(201 South Water Street)

STREET & NUMBER
201 Front Street

(Water Street below High Street is called "Front Street"--original name of whole street)

CITY, TOWN
Chestertown

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT
First

VICINITY OF

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

Stephen R. Collins

Telephone #: 778 2208

STREET & NUMBER

201 Front

CITY, TOWN

Chestertown

VICINITY OF

STATE, zip code

Maryland 21620

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Office of the County Clerk

Liber #: EHP 64
Folio #: 433

STREET & NUMBER

Kent County Court House

CITY, TOWN

Chestertown

STATE

Maryland

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

none

DATE

FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE

7 DESCRIPTION

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CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input checked="" 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 type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

201 Front Street is located on the southeast (river) side of Front Street at the intersection of Cannon and Front Streets in Chestertown. It is on part of Water Lot 22, ad designated on the Original Plot of Chestertown, 1730. That part of the lot between the house and the Chester River has been sold off and is now occupied by the Chestertown Electric Company and Kibler's Marina.

It is a 2-story frame ~~high~~ Victorian style house, five bays wide and two deep, with single story full-width flat roofed porches across the front and rear, and low hip tin roof with an open arcade cupola on the deck.

The house sits on a high brick basement, which extends extends/toward the street and across the front between the front yard and street, forming a waist high wall; the wall is capped with cement and a wrought iron decorative rail runs along the top. At the front is an iron gate.

The house is presently sided with aluminum clapboard. There are semi-projecting pilasters at the corners of the building which are two full stories high and which rest on brick piers. The front and rear porches are virtually identical. The porch itself is wood and the steps are brick. There is an iron hand rail. There are six square columns scross the front connected by a lyre-patterned railing, and there is a pilaster at either end against the facade. (Both columns and lyre-patterned rail are repeated in the cupola.) The cornice of the porch has modillion brackets.

The front (and rear) double doors are paneled and are framed with full Greek Revival trim. Moving out from the doors, first there are pilasters with scroll brackets; outside the pilasters are 3-paned sidelights with single panels beneath. Outside the sidelights there are two larger pilasters which are topped by enlarged versions of the scroll brackets, which in turn support a cyma reversa cornice. There is a third pair of scroll brackets, the smallest of the three sets, located directly over the first pair and which further support the conrice. Below the cornice is a freize which bears a raised decoration: a foliated garland with a disc at the center. Below the freize is a transom.

All of the windows, including two basement windows on each side of the house, are double hung sash, 2/2, and have louvered shutters. The basement windows have wood lintels and sills. All of the windows on the house above the basement have hoods whose cornices closely approximate the cornice above the entrance. The four windows on the first story (front and rear) have panels beneath them, carrying the window treatment to the porch floor. There are freizes above each of the second story windows and the first story windows on the side elevations, with decorations which resemble that over the entrance but which are further embellished by the suggestion of a cross. The middle second story window (front and rear) is framed by double hung sidelights and pilasters, echoing the treatment of the main entrance directly below it.

The main cornice of the house has modillion brackets. The soffit is slightly enlarged as are the brackets. There are four chimneys wit hin the corners of the low hipped roof. The cupola on the platform, as mentioned above, carries smaller versions of the porches' square columns and lyre-patterned rail. There are rectangular arches over
 CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY the columns; the cornice of the cupola has modillion brackets. The cupola's roof is flat.

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 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 1857

BUILDER/ARCHITECT not known

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

This is one of the town's richest examples of high Victorian style. It is notable particularly for its marriage of Greek Revival and Italianate styles. The elaborate ornamentation is arranged with a painstaking degree of symmetry, even to the point of reproducing the Greek Revival frontispiece entrance, sidelighted and pilastered middle second story window, and front porch on the rear facade (which had a better view of the river in the nineteenth century than it has today). It's classical aspect is emphasized mainly by the low horizontal profile achieved by the low hip roof and the flat roof of the twin porches.

The house's most arresting feature is its highly decorated Italianate cupola, which--as the description suggests--the builder has taken particular pains to relate to the rest of the house: virtually all of its decorative details repeat effects prominent elsewhere on the building. The arcading with its rectangular arching is the principal Italianate feature of the house: the deep soffited cornice and large brackets,--both the main cornice and that on the cupola--and the lyre patterned rail--also both in the cupola and elsewhere--~~work~~ bear out the Italianate style.

The house was built in 1857 for James F. Taylor, who bought all of Water Lot 22 and the remainder of the land on down to the Railroad Wharf, Water Lots 23-26 at the same time. The house lot and the wharf property, upper and lower halves of Lot 22, were separate pieces when Taylor bought them. He split them apart again in 1865 when he sold the wharf property off to James H. Thompson and Thomas Lee: soon after it became Thompson's Wharf. The house was sold in 1868. Taylor paid \$500 for the house property in 1857 and sold it, with the house on it in 1968 for \$4250.

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9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY _____

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

A part of Water Lot 22, as designated on the Plot of Chestertown. Beginning at the south corner of the junction of Front Street and Cannon Street, and running thence with Cannon Street, South 45 1/4 degrees, East 147 feet, thence South 44 3/4 degrees West, 81 feet, thence North 45 1/4 degrees West 147 feet, thence with Front Street North 44 3/4 degrees East 81 feet to the beginning.

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

STATE	COUNTY
STATE	COUNTY

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Robert Neill Historic Site Surveyor

ORGANIZATION

Maryland Historical Trust / Town of Chestertown

DATE

February, 1976

STREET & NUMBER

TELEPHONE

CITY OR TOWN

STATE

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

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Title Search of Witsitt House

Hugh Jenkins to James F. Taylor JFG 4 433 (1857) \$500
Eastern Shore Steamboat Co. to J.F. Taylor ~~SB 1 150?~~ (wharf property)

James F. Taylor to Sarah H. Pearson JKH 7 161 (1868) \$4250
James F. Taylor to James H. Thompson and Thomas Lee JKH 5 433 \$4000 (wharf property)

Sarah H. Pearson to William H. Pennell SB 2 310 (1881) \$2450.

William H. Pennell to Edward T. Comegys SB 7 217 (1885)

Edward T. Comegys to Margaret A. Burchinal SB 15 355 (1892) \$3000.
(formerly Margaret A. Brown)

Passed several times through Brown and Burchinal families in 1890's and early 1900's. Descends finally to Mary Burchinal, formerly a Brown.

Mary M. Burchinal to James T. Anthony APR 3 253 (1918)

Estate of James T. Anthony to Fannie C. Kreeger RRA 1 243 (1922)

Fannie C. Kreeger to Anderson F. and Catharine Leamy Whitsitt WHG 7 630 (1948)

Whitsitt to Elizabeth Rollison WHG 53 475 (1958)

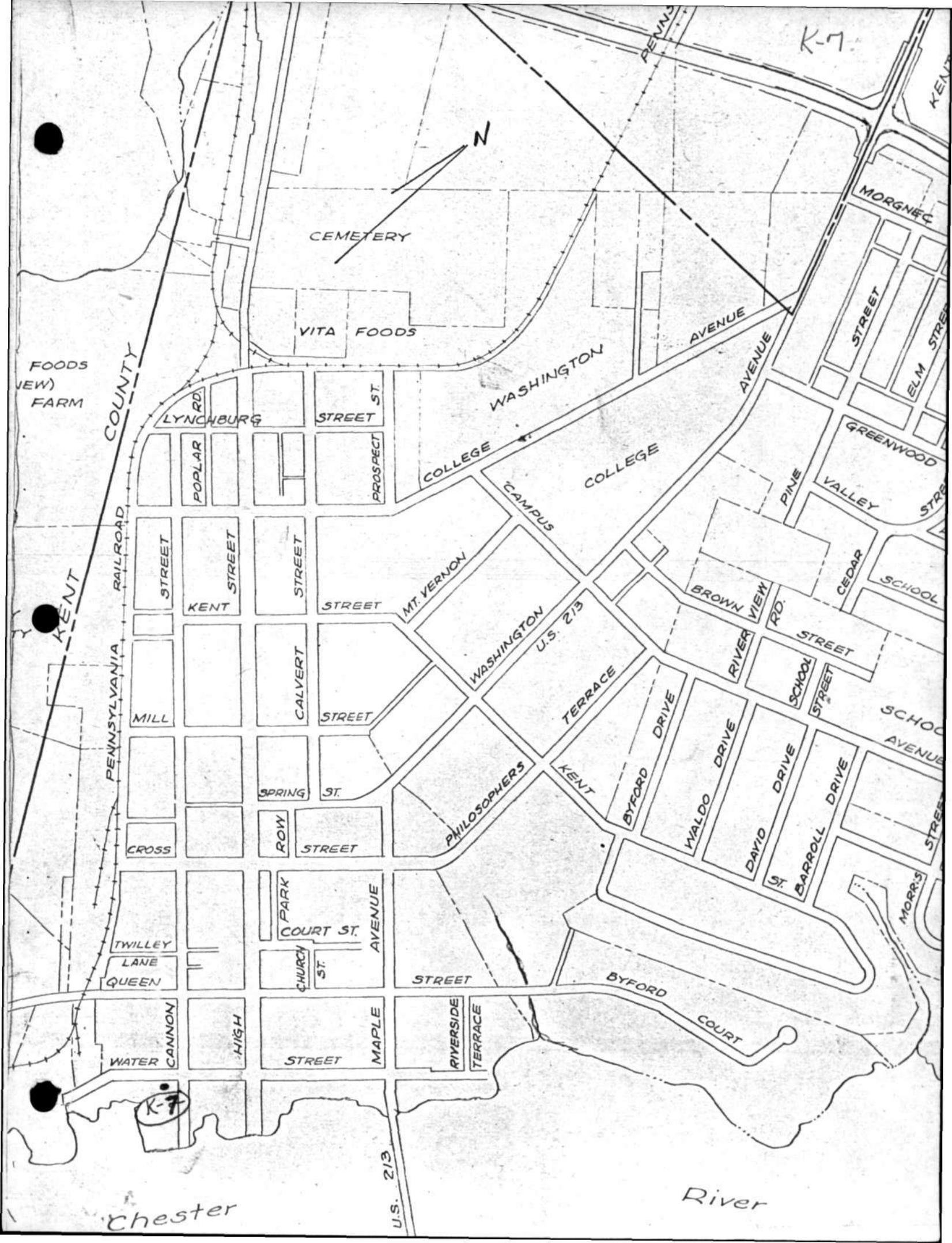
Elizabeth Rollison to Whitsitt WHG 53 478 (1958)

Anderson F. and Catharine Whitsitt to Minor Crager EHP 41 735 (1971)

Minor Crager to Barry Smith EHP 51 843 (1973)

Barry Smith to Neil Brayton EHP 58 346 (1974)

Neil Brayton to Stephan R. Collins EHP 64 433 (1975)



K-7

N

CEMETERY

VITA FOODS

FOODS (VIEW) FARM

COUNTY

PENNSYLVANIA RAILROAD

KENT

LYNCHBURG

STREET

POPLAR

PROSPECT

STREET

STREET

STREET

KENT

STREET

MT. VERNON

CAMPUS

COLLEGE

COLLEGE

WASHINGTON

U.S. 213

TERRACE

PHILOSOPHERS

KENT

BYFORD DRIVE

WALDO DRIVE

DAVID DRIVE

BARROLL DRIVE

BROWN

RIVER

STREET

SCHOOL

STREET

SCHOOL

AVENUE

MILL

CALVERT

STREET

SPRING

ST.

ROW

STREET

PARK

COURT ST.

CHURCH

ST.

AVENUE

STREET

TWILLEY LANE QUEEN

WATER CANNON

HIGH

STREET

MAPLE

RIVERSIDE TERRACE

BYFORD

COURT

MORRIS

Chester

River

K-7

U.S. 213

MORGNEC

STREET

ELM STREET

GREENWOOD

VALLEY

CEDAR

SCHOOL

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Capt. James F. Taylor House (Whitsitt House, Fort Belvedere

201 W. Water St.

Chestertown

Chestertown Quad.

Kent County





Photo: R. Neill
Processing: C. Engstrom



K 7 Whitsett House, 201 Front St. Charleston
spring 1976 Cabell Keill NW front + side



K-7

Shutout

Photo: R. Neil

Processing: C. Engstrom



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5/74

S. Whitcomb

Please Credit to: J. M.

Kilvington

Maryland Historical Trust

2525 Riva Road

Crofton, D. 21114



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5/74

Please credit to: J.M.
Kildington
Library and Historical Trust
25 5 R va Road
Annapolis, D. 21401



K.-7 5/74

JMK



Whitsitt House

K.-7 5/74

Jmk

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Maryland Historical Trust
21 State Circle
Shaw House
Annapolis, MD 21401

(chestertown)



K.-7 5/74

JMK

Shittitt