

M-12-42-2

Lewis Brown House  
Big Woods Community  
Private

c. 1873

This two story log house was built as the home of a Black landowner, Lewis Brown. Its facade consists of three bays. In plan, the interior contains two rooms down and two up, heated by wood stoves. Behind the house once stood the several small outbuildings essential to farm life. This small farmstead with its log house was typical of those occupied by landowning Black families in the last decades of the 19th century and into the 20th.

INVENTORY FORM FOR STATE HISTORIC SITES SURVEY

**1 NAME**

HISTORIC

Lewis Brown House

AND/OR COMMON

**2 LOCATION**

STREET & NUMBER

East side of Big Woods Road

CITY, TOWN

(Big Woods) Poolesville

— VICINITY OF

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

8

STATE

Maryland

COUNTY

Montgomery

**3 CLASSIFICATION**

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	<b>PUBLIC ACQUISITION</b>	<b>ACCESSIBLE</b>	<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"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
			<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT
			<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL
			<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OTHER

**4 OWNER OF PROPERTY**

Abandoned

NAME

M.G. Brown c/o Mrs. Sarah Burr

Telephone #: 202-581-8784

STREET & NUMBER

5901 E. Capital St.

CITY, TOWN

Washington, D.C.

— VICINITY OF

STATE, zip code

20019

**5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE,  
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Montgomery County Courthouse

Liber #: EBP 10

Folio #: 257

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

Rockville

STATE

Maryland

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE

None

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

## DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

This two story log house stands abandoned in the midst of woods on the west side of an old lane that led northward from the new Big Woods Road to the old Big Woods Road. The house is in increasingly deteriorating condition since it is open to the elements. Yet many of its timbers remain in good condition and the house gives us a glimpse into the construction and design of the houses of black landowners in the years following emancipation.

As with all of those houses in the 19th century, the grounds around the dwelling were used to support the family. The outbuildings and garden places around this house give evidence today of those use. In front of the house remains a portion of the old grape arbor and old pear and apple trees still stand along the northern side of the house. A hen house with yard, a privy, another grape arbor and a log outbuilding stand behind the house. The outbuilding measures 11' x 8'7", has no windows and was probably the meat house. In front of the house, as well as behind it are colorful, climbing rose bushes.

The dwelling itself is three bays in length with a door centrally located, flanked on either side by a window opening. This creates the bilateral symmetry that was popular to the last half of the nineteenth century. The windows contain double-hung sashes with 6 x 6 panes and were protected by wooden shutters. The massive logs measured approximately 8 to 11 inches in thickness and 6 inches in width. They were of hardwood either chestnut or oak. At the corners they were joined by V-notches. The chinking between the logs contained red sandstone rocks, perhaps chips from the Seneca Rock Quarry. The cornices were boxed with plain boards and the gable roof covered originally with wood shingles, now with tin. The entire exterior of the house had been whitewashed. There is no evidence of pegging; instead the logs were fastened to the frames of the openings by machine-cut nails.

In plan the house consists of two rooms and a hallway downstairs and three rooms upstairs. The house is large in size, measuring 25'4" x 20'2". One room downstairs (the parlor) measured 13'5" x 14'5", while the kitchen measures 9'8" x 18'. A central stove flue was built between the kitchen and parlor with openings for stove pipes in each room. All of the walls inside were lathed and plastered as was the ceiling. In the parlor the walls were wainscotted with 1" x 4" boards midway up the wall and were painted green. All of these features disguised the fact that this was a log dwelling.

In the kitchen was a small closet, 4'3" x 3'5", which probably served as a pantry. A door led from one gable end to the outside. Next to that door was the outside opening that led down to the cellar. Shelves still remain on the walls.

The stairs which are found at the end of the hallway in the rear of the house lead up to a small room (9' x 12'8") which may have been a bedroom. From this room two doorways lead into the other two rooms upstairs, one was a small bedroom measuring 9'9" x 12'6" with one window which looks out from the front of the house. The large room upstairs which extends from the front to the back of the house with a

(continued on Attachment Sheet A)

# 8 SIGNIFICANCE

M:12-42-2

PERIOD		AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW				
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input checked="" 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 checked="" 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)		
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		<b>Black History</b>		

SPECIFIC DATES c. 1873

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

### STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

According to the deed, EBP 10/257, Lewis Brown purchased this property of 6 acres from the Trustees of the Hempstone estate in 1873. This establishes Brown as one of the earliest of the Black landowners to have settled in the Big Woods area. He purchased the land directly from the representatives of the white family that had owned much of the future Big Woods community during the antebellum era. He bought this land at the same time as his neighbor, Henry Thomas Onley, whose deed was recorded on the preceding page in the deed book.

The log house that he built and lived in after purchase of this property still remains in relatively good condition even after abandonment. It has been described in considerable detail since it is one of the few log houses remaining in the Big Woods community and in upper western Montgomery County.

In terms of size the measurements of this log house are comparable to those of log houses of white families in the county, such as the Horine log house on Peachtree Road. These houses are evidence of the similarities in housing conditions of both black and white landowners of moderate means in the late 19th century.

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

**9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES**

Land Records of Montgomery County, Montgomery County Courthouse, Rockville, MD  
Oral Interviews (not taped) with Ida and Florence Hallman, Big Woods community, September, 1978.

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

George W. McDaniel, Surveyor Wesley Stubbs, Research Assistant

ORGANIZATION

Sugarloaf Regional Trails

DATE

Jan. 1979

STREET & NUMBER

Box 87

TELEPHONE

926-4510

CITY OR TOWN

Dickerson

STATE

Maryland 20753

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~~

SUGARLOAF REGIONAL TRAILS  
Box 87, Dickerson  
Dickerson, MD 20753  
(301) 926-4510

-Attachment Sheet A  
Lewis Brown House (Description)

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Magi #

window in each length wall measured 11'2" x 19'1". It is the only upstairs room that was heated and presumably was the parents' bedroom.

Florence Hallman of the Big Woods community remembers that the small front room was the bedroom of her friend, Matilda Brown, daughter of Lewis Brown.

Over the front door was a small shed porch supported by plain, rectangular posts. The back door was sheltered by an enclosed shed which served as storage space as well as an entranceway.



Lewis Brown House

N. E. Elevation : Facade

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Big Woods Community

Photograph by Anne Lewis

5/79

ADL 790502-1 #20



100  
100  
100

Lewis Brown House  
South Gable end  
M-12-42-2  
Big Woods Community  
Photograph by Anne Lewis  
5/79

KDL 790502-1 # 17



Lewis Brown House  
Near length's West

M - 12-42-2

Big Woods community  
photograph by Anne Lewis

ADL 798502-1 #19



Lewis Brown House

Loj Corner

M-12-42-2

Big Woods Community

Photographs by Anne Lewis

5/79

ADL 790502 -1 # 18