

M: 13-41

Lyles Family Log House (Site)  
Lewisdale Vicinity  
Private

late 19th century

This one and a half story log house contained two rooms down and two up, in general, resembled the other log houses of Black families in Montgomery County of the last third of the 19th century. In 1912 it was purchased by a Black farmer, Jeremiah Lyles. His descendants continue to live on the property, forming a small community of dwellings of different types and periods.

INVENTORY FORM FOR STATE HISTORIC SITES SURVEY

**1 NAME**

HISTORIC

Lyles Family Log House Site

AND/OR COMMON

**2 LOCATION**

STREET & NUMBER

North side of Smith Road

CITY, TOWN

Lewisdale

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

8

X VICINITY OF

STATE

Maryland

COUNTY

Montgomery

**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 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> SITE	<b>PUBLIC ACQUISITION</b>	<b>ACCESSIBLE</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input checked="" 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
	No	<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER

**4 OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME

J.F. Dorsey

c/o Arthur Randolph  
Telephone #: 253-2432

STREET & NUMBER

Smith Road

CITY, TOWN

Lewisdale

VICINITY OF

STATE, zip code  
Maryland

**5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE,  
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Registry of Deeds

Liber #: 518

Folio #: 497

STREET & NUMBER

Montgomery County Courthouse

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**

M:13-41

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 type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

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

Though this log house has been demolished, evidence still remains of it in the family photographs of the Lyles family. See the two photographs of the house with Benjamin Lyles standing in front.

According to the Lyles descendants and to Arthur Randolph from nearby Purdum, this house was a plain log dwelling, one and a half stories in height. They remember it as the photographs show: without board siding over the logs and without mud daubing covering the rocks in the spaces between the logs. The interior was lathed and plastered, but still there would have been strong drafts through the wall without the mud daubing to stop the cold wind. The walls were in this condition while it was occupied by Benjamin Lyles in the second quarter of the 20th century, so the absence of daubing was not the result of the house having been abandoned. This is unusual for log houses recorded in this survey, and Arthur Randolph recalls that most log houses that he knew in the Clarksburg-Purdum area were well insulated with daubing.

The facade contained a front door and a window with double hung sashes with six over six panes. These were typically found in log houses of the late 19th century, instead of the larger, two over two panes. The logs rested on a foundation of unmortared, random rubble stones. The house was completely underpinned, providing a measure of insulation. During the occupancy of Benjamin Lyles -- the nephew of Jeremiah Lyles, the first Black landowner -- the logs on the facade were covered with tin along two thirds of the length of the house. One front window was covered, probably to improve the insulation. There was no porch along the front. Two plank steps led up to the door. Based upon the photograph, the logs appeared to have been V notched at the corners, the type of notching common in Montgomery County.

According to Arthur Randolph & to his wife -- who is a direct descendant of the Lyles family -- the interior consisted of two rooms up and two down. Downstairs, the front door led into the dining room and sitting room. A door in one gable end opened into the kitchen. The rooms were heated by wood stoves piped into a stove flue. There was no fireplace. The roof was covered with tin.

Across the road from the house was the privy. Arthur Randolph recalls there were other buildings essential to farm life -- such as a hen house, hog lot, and meat house -- on the property.

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

**8 SIGNIFICANCE**

M:13-41

PERIOD		AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW				
PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION		
1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE		
1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE		
1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN		
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		
1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)		
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION				

*Black History*

SPECIFIC DATES

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Deeds 226/342 shows that Jeremiah Lyles purchased this tract of five acres from John R. Gue in 1912. No one recalls the identity of John Gue, but all informants agree that Jeremiah Lyles was the patriarch of the present owner. Since his purchase, he subdivided the tract among his heirs, giving them each an acre, and on that inheritance more houses have been built so that today, the Lyles homestead is a small community of dwellings.

According to the informants, this log house was already on the property when Lyles purchased it. Since it has been destroyed it cannot be dated precisely. Nonetheless, its appearance in the photograph resembles the log houses of the Black landowners in the Sugarland and Jerusalem communities in upper western Montgomery County that were built in the last third of the 19th century. All informants agree that this house is "old", so it is probably contemporary to those houses.

The principal significance of this house resides in the photographs of it. They show a type of house that was common for many Black families in this area of Montgomery County.

While a few log houses do remain in the Clarksburg vicinity, they have been drastically altered in appearance, and only earlier photographs, such as these, can convey the appearance of a type of house that was once integral to the Black rural experience.

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

**9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES**

- 1) Land Records, Montgomery County Courthouse, Rockville, Md.
- 2) Oral interviews, not taped, with Mr. and Mrs. Arthur Randolph and Julia Dorsey, Lewisdale-Furdum, Md., Nov. 78

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; Karen Sewell, Research Assistant

ORGANIZATION

Sugarloaf Regional Trails

DATE

Jan. 79

STREET &amp; NUMBER

Box 87

TELEPHONE

926-4510

CITY OR TOWN

Dickerson

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  
The Shaw House, 21 State Circle  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401  
(301) 267-1438~~

SUGARLOAF REGIONAL TRAILS  
Box 87  
Dickerson, MD 21022  
(301) 926-4510



Benjamin Lyles in front of his  
house on Lyles homestead

Purdum, Md.

copy of family photo

swm 11/72

13-41

M-13-10-8



Benjamin Lyles in front of log  
house on Lyles homestead

b. ~~c. 1889~~ Sept. 7, 1889

13-41

~~M-13-10-8~~

Purdum, Md.

copy of family photo

2 wms 11/28

Original: see Dr. Helen Kuntolphy  
Purdum