ACHS SUMMARY FORM

1. Name: Chiswell House

2. Planning Area/Site Number: 17/47

3. M-NCPPC Atlas Reference: Map 11 Coordinate L-11

4. Address: 21310 River Road
Poolesville, Md.

5. Classification Summary

Category Structure
Ownership Private
Public Acquisition N/A
Status Occupied
Accessible No
Present use private residence
agriculture

Previous Survey Recording MNCPPC
Title and Date: Historic Sites Inventory 1976

Federal ___ State x County x Local ___

6. Date: 18th century

7. Original Owner: Thomas Gatton

8. Apparent Condition

a. good b. altered c. original site

9. Description: This three bay by two bay braced frame house faces south. The house is sheathed in white clapboards and was built in two sections. The east two bay section is slightly higher than the west one bay, two story section. The south (front) porch has a shed roof supported by four fluted wooden columns. The house has two nine-over-six double-hung windows in the east section on the north and south elevations, first level. Remaining windows are six-over-six. All are flanked by black wooden louvered shutters. There is a one story bay window (modern) on the north elevation. The house has gable roofs with wooden shingles.

10. Significance : This house is significant for its early date, and for its association with the prominent Chiswell family.

In 1736 Thomas Gatton leased for 99 years, 200 acres of land from Annapolis lawyer, William Cumming. It appears likely that Gatton built a log house which formed the original part of this house. In 1789 another Gatton, Azariah, moved from the farm and sold his leasehold to John Baptist Pierce.

William and Sarah Chiswell obtained the lease on the property in 1819. Their son, Thomas, bought the property first leased from William Cumming a century earlier. He also purchased additional acreage, increasing the farm to 412 acres.

In 1830 the C & O Canal was laid through the farm. The resulting flush of well-being is marked by changes in the house which indicate prosperity and good taste.

The farm remained in the Chiswell family until 1928, and was purchased by the present owners in 1932.

The current owners restored the house, added to the acreage, and maintain pasture, a varied ecological balance with plantings, ponds and climax forests.

11. Researcher and date researched: Sheila Cochran/ 2/79

12. Compiler: Peg Coleman

13. Date Compiled: 7/79

14. Designation Approval ___

15. Acreage: 428 acres

M: 17/47
Magi #

MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST

INVENTORY FORM FOR STATE HISTORIC SITES SURVEY

1 NAME

HISTORIC: Chiswell House

AND/OR COMMON:

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER: 21310 River Road

CITY, TOWN: Poolesville ___ VICINITY OF

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT: 8

STATE: Maryland

COUNTY: Montgomery

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE	
__DISTRICT	__PUBLIC	X OCCUPIED	X AGRICULTURE	__MUSEUM
__BUILDING(S)	X PRIVATE	__UNOCCUPIED	__COMMERCIAL	__PARK
X STRUCTURE	__BOTH	__WORK IN PROGRESS	__EDUCATIONAL	X PRIVATE RESIDENCE
__SITE	**PUBLIC ACQUISITION**	**ACCESSIBLE**	__ENTERTAINMENT	__RELIGIOUS
__OBJECT	__IN PROCESS	__YES: RESTRICTED	__GOVERNMENT	__SCIENTIFIC
	__BEING CONSIDERED	__YES: UNRESTRICTED	__INDUSTRIAL	__TRANSPORTATION
		X NO	__MILITARY	__OTHER:

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME: Carlyle, Sheila and John B. Cochran, Jr. Telephone #: 656-4670

STREET & NUMBER: 8205 Kerry Road

CITY, TOWN: Chevy Chase ___ VICINITY OF

STATE, zip code: Maryland 20015

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.: Montgomery County Courthouse

Liber #: 3861
Folio #: 488

STREET & NUMBER:

CITY, TOWN: Rockville

STATE: Maryland

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE: MNCPPC Inventory of Historical Sites

DATE: 1976

__FEDERAL X STATE X COUNTY __LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS: Park Historian's Office

CITY, TOWN: Derwood

STATE: Maryland 20855

7 DESCRIPTION

M:17-47

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
__EXCELLENT	__DETERIORATED	__UNALTERED	X_ORIGINAL SITE
X GOOD	__RUINS	X_ALTERED	__MOVED DATE_____
__FAIR	__UNEXPOSED		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

This three bay by two bay house is located a considerable distance from River Road.

Built on sandstone foundations, it is a braced frame house sheathed in white clapboards facing south. The house was built in sections; the east two bay, two and a half story section is slightly higher than the west, two story section. The south (front) porch has a shed roof and is supported by four fluted metal columns. The south (front) door is wooden paneled and is surmounted by a four light transom. There is a glass and wooden paneled door on the north elevation.

The east section, first level, has nine-over-six double-hung windows. The remainder of windows in this house are six-over-six double-hung windows. These are flanked by dark green wooden louvered shutters. On the north elevation there is a bay window with multi-paned windows. The east gable has two small four light windows.

The east and west gable roofs are covered by wooden shingles. There are exterior end chimneys at the east and west gable ends. At the west end there is an exterior fireplace and sandstone foundations which mark the dimensions of a log house which is now gone.

The south (front) door opens into a central hallway. An open string, double-run stairway ascends from south to north along the east interior wall of the hallway. This stairway has a simple semi-circular cherry railing and newel post and square balusters. East of the hallway is the living room and west of the hallway is the kitchen.

The floors are random width boards. The living room and hall have plaster over lath walls and ceilings with crown molding. The kitchen walls have exposed the early brick nogging. There are bullseye door surrounds in the hall and dining room and paneled wooden doors. The east fireplace mantle has fluted engaged columns and a bowed fluted horizontal piece beneath the mantle. Many of the original wooden box locks are still to be found in this house. Each has a brass key to open the individual locks.

The original log cabin, which was 15' by 15'9" with a front and back door, was torn down a decade ago. It was attached to the west end of the present house.

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

M:17-47

8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
__PREHISTORIC	__ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	__COMMUNITY PLANNING	__LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	__RELIGION
__1400-1499	__ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	__CONSERVATION	__LAW	__SCIENCE
__1500-1599	__AGRICULTURE	__ECONOMICS	__LITERATURE	__SCULPTURE
__1600-1699	__ARCHITECTURE	__EDUCATION	__MILITARY	__SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
X 1700-1799	__ART	__ENGINEERING	__MUSIC	__THEATER
X 1800-1899	__COMMERCE	X EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	__PHILOSOPHY	__TRANSPORTATION
__1900-	__COMMUNICATIONS	__INDUSTRY	__POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	X OTHER (SPECIFY) Local History
		__INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES 18th century BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Chiswell House and the tract of land on which it stands, "Preston Marsh" or "Preston March",[1] were among the earliest established in this part of Maryland. The land patent dates from 1734, the earliest part of the house probably from about 1740. The structure is also significant for its association with the Fletchall and Chiswell families.

The land lies about a mile below Edwards Ferry, between the Potomac River and Mount Nebo Road. Cabin Branch forms part of its western boundary.

The original 1230-acre tract called "Preston March" was granted to William Cumming of Annapolis and James Edmonston of Prince George's County.[2] It comprised 130 acres of an earlier grant called "Edloe's Adventure" and 1100 acres of adjacent vacant land. William Cumming practiced law in Annapolis with Daniel Dulany, was in 1740 appointed Clerk for the Lower House of the General Assembly, and in 1749 became the first member of the Frederick County Bar.[3] It is not clear whether he ever resided on the property. Edmonston's interest seems clearly to have been that of an absentee landlord;[4] he became a Captain in the Colonial Militia and later a Justice for Montgomery County.[5]

In 1736 Cumming leased out 200 acres of his share of "Preston Marsh" to Thomas Gatton, a planter.[6] The lease was to run for 99 years. It appears likely that Gatton built a dwelling house on the property sometime during the next few years. In 1759 he divided the land into two equal tracts, leasing the northern half to his son Benjamin[7] and the rest to James Gatton.[8] At the time of this transfer improvements existed on both tracts; the original part of the present Chiswell house, a small dwelling, stood on the southern section.

It is not known whether James Gatton was, like Benjamin, a son of Thomas Gatton. It seems likely, for the lease was made the year he became 21,[9] and the property included the family home, which customarily passed to the eldest son. James Gatton died in 1777, leaving his land to his wife and, upon her death, to their son Azariah.[10]

In 1789, at the end of the Revolution, Azariah determined to move away from the farm where he was born, perhaps impelled by the infant republic's raging inflation, the collapse of the tobacco market, and the opening of new and richer lands to the west. He therefore sold his leasehold on the 100 acres with its "messuage or tenement" to John Baptist Pierce.[11] Pierce and his wife Elizabeth lived on the property for ten years, until his death in 1799. His widow then sold the lease for 15 shillings per acre to Thomas Fletchall.[12]

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

(continued on Attachment Sheet A)

M:17-47

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

See Attachment Sheet C

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 428 acres

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

This farm is about a mile below Edward's Ferry. The Potomac River is to the south; Mt. Nebo Road to the north; "Mt. Nebo" or the Summit Hall Turf Farm, owned by Frank Wilmot, to the east; and Cabin Branch forms part of the boundary to the west.

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

STATE	COUNTY
Maryland	Montgomery
STATE	COUNTY

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE
Sheila Cochran

ORGANIZATION
Sugarloaf Regional Trails

DATE
2/79

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: [redacted] Historical [redacted]
The Sha[redacted] State Circle
Annapoli[redacted] 21401
[redacted] 267-1438

SUGARLOAF REGIONAL TRAILS
Box 87, Sterling
Dickerson, Md. 20753
(301) 926-4510

PS-1108

Attachment Sheet A
Chiswell House

It is through Thomas Fletchall, a prosperous farmer who owned the neighboring Mt. Nebo property,[13] that the Chiswell family gained ownership of the house and surrounding land. Fletchall's daughter Sarah was the wife of William Chiswell. When her father died in 1819 he left her the leasehold on the house and 100 acres, together with an additional 115 1/4 acres of adjacent land.[14]

When William and Sarah's son Thomas Chiswell grew up he made a number of additions to the family properties -- first 243 1/4 acres purchased from George W. Peter,[15] then four years later, in 1843, 131 1/2 acres from the Cumming heirs.[16] This latter purchase included the house and acreage first leased from William Cumming more than 100 years earlier. Thus Thomas Chiswell created the entire 412 acre farm that exists today, which is made up of the 131.5 acre purchase from the Cumming heirs, the 115.25 acres left by Thomas Fletchall, and about 165 acres of the purchase from George Peter.

Even in the colonial era the Gatton/Chiswell farm had the advantages of good communications with the outside world, lying as it did on the Potomac and with River Road, one of the area's earliest highways, bisecting the farm. Despite these advantages, however, agriculture provided only a precarious living until after 1830.

In that year a strip of the Chiswell land was condemned to establish the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal,[17] and a new era of agricultural prosperity opened. Wheat and other produce was hauled up River Road to Edwards Ferry, where canal barges took it to market in Georgetown.

The resulting flush of well-being is marked by changes in the house which indicate prosperity and good taste. The structural workmanship is excellent, and the stair rail, which runs all the way up to the attic, and the mantels are unusual in such a small farmhouse. When the house was stripped of its plaster in 1964 it became apparent that originally there had been a simple structure approximately 15 feet by 15 feet 9 inches, with only one room downstairs and probably a loft above. This was later enlarged by lowering the ceiling and putting two bedrooms in the space upstairs, while adding about three feet to the length of the house and building enclosed stairs. At some other date the larger section to the east was built and joined to the smaller, older section to form one house as it is today.

After Thomas Fletchall Chiswell died around 1851, his widow, Mary E. Chiswell, lived in the house until her death in 1873.[18] Like most residents of the Poolesville area, she was an ardent supporter of the South in the Civil War. Raids by armed forces of both sides were frequent, and indications of earthworks dating from this period can still be seen along the part of the old River Road bed which runs through the property.

(continued on Attachment Sheet B)

Attachment Sheet B
Chiswell House

After Mrs. Chiswell's death the property passed through a number of hands but remained in the family until 1928, when it was sold to William M. Trittipoe.[19] It came into the possession of John B. Cochran and John B. Cochran Jr. in 1932.[20] In 1974 the Chesapeake and Ohio National Historic Park bought some of the farm acreage, leaving approximately 393 acres.[21]

The Cochran family still (1979) own the farm. Although they do not live there, they make every effort to maintain it well. No timber has been cut since the Cochrans bought the land. Mr. Cochran grew corn and lespedeza for quail cover and hay, and kept a few head of cattle, pigs, chickens and turkeys.

Since John B. Cochran's death in 1959 his son, Carlyle Cochran, has run the farm. In 1964 the Cochrans restored the old house. In 1975 Mrs. Cochran bought 35 acres of adjoining land to add dense wilderness habitat to the varied ecological systems already existing on the farm. Two ponds have been built in recent years, and white pine and tulip. poplar woods have been planted. About one third of the land is wooded. White-tailed deer, bobcats, great horned and barred owls, red-tailed hawks, wood ducks and wild turkeys live in these woods. The cleared land is used mostly for pasture. There is also a small corn field. At present this land supports two horses, a pony, a few chickens, and about 125 head of cattle. Because of the Cochrans' interest in wildlife, only a very limited amount of shooting is permitted. The Potomac Hunt uses the farm occasionally, as Mr. Cochran enjoys fox hunting. Mrs. Becky Keiffer, a whipper-in of the hunt, and her husband Russell Keiffer, a builder, live on the farm with their daughter.

FOOTNOTES:

1 The name "Preston refers to the scene of the Jacobite defeat in Lancashire in 1715. Apart from this, the significance of the name is not clear; it may merely refer to the wetlands on parts of the tract. The name is spelled variously in the land records.
2 Land patents, Liber AM folio 389.(certificate of survey); EI No.1/166(patent)
3 Scharf, J. Thomas, History of Western Maryland(Phila. 1882),p. 388, 416; Newman, Harry Wright, Anne Arundel Gentry(the author, 1970),p. 255; Archives of Maryland, Vol. XL, p. 526.
4 Archives of Maryland, Vol. XLII, p. 413, 415; genealogy files -- "Edmonston", Montgomery County Historical Society.
5 Montgomery County Historical Society, genealogical files, "Edmonston". Archives of Maryland, XLII, 413-415, lists Edmonston as one of the commissioners empowered to buy land to establish the town of Bladensburg.
6 cfLand Records of Montgomery County, H/463.
7 Frederick County Land Records, F/793.
8 Ibid., F/795.
9 Census of Frederick County, 1776(Hall of Records, Annapolis); see also Lawrence R. Guthrie, We Veitches, etc., p. 160.

(continued on Attachment Sheet C)

M: 17/47
Magi #

Attachment Sheet C
Chiswell House(footnotes)

FOOTNOTES: (continued)

10 Montgomery County Wills, A/50.
11 Montgomery County Land Records, D 195 (April, 1789).
12 Montgomery County Land Records, H/463(April 9, 1799).
13 Land Patents, IC No. R/632.
14 Montgomery County Wills, L/123.
15 Montgomery County Land Records, BS 9/291 (1839).
16 Ibid., STS 1/165 (1845); STS 4/370 (1848).
17cfMontgomery County Land Records, EBP 30/375.

18 Montgomery County, Register of Wills, Docket 5/10. The Martenet and Bond map of 1865 shows the house and lists Mrs. Chiswell as its owner.
19 Montgomery County Land Records, 458/157.
20 Ibid., CKW 668/277.
21 Ibid., 4534/189 (May 14, 1974).

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#17-47

MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST WORKSHEET

NOMINATION FORM
for the
NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES, NATIONAL PARKS SERVICE

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

1. NAME

COMMON:

AND/OR HISTORIC: Thomas Chiswell House

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER: Sheppard Road and River Road

CITY OR TOWN: Poolesville

STATE: Maryland

COUNTY: Montgomery

3. CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP		STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
☐ District ☒ Building ☐ Site ☐ Structure ☐ Object	☐ Public ☒ Private ☐ Both	Public Acquisition: ☐ In Process ☐ Being Considered	☒ Occupied ☐ Unoccupied ☐ Preservation work in progress	Yes: ☐ Restricted ☐ Unrestricted ☒ No

PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

☒ Agricultural	☐ Government	☐ Park	☐ Transportation	☐ Comments
☐ Commercial	☐ Industrial	☒ Private Residence	☐ Other (Specify)	
☐ Educational	☐ Military	☐ Religious		
☐ Entertainment	☐ Museum	☐ Scientific		

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNER'S NAME: Carlyle and Sheila Cochran

STREET AND NUMBER: 8205 Kerry

CITY OR TOWN: Chevy Chase

STATE: Maryland

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC: Montgomery County Chourthouse

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN: Rockville

STATE: Maryland

Title Reference of Current Deed (Book & Pg. #):

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY: None

DATE OF SURVEY: ☐ Federal ☐ State ☐ County ☐ Local

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN:

STATE:

M-17-47

7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION	(Check One) ☐ Excellent ☒ Good ☐ Fair ☐ Deteriorated ☐ Ruins ☐ Unexposed	
	(Check One) ☒ Altered ☐ Unaltered	(Check One) ☐ Moved ☒ Original Site

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (*If known*) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The house is a two story frame structure built in two sections. The main (east) block is two bays wide with the entrance in the western bay. On the east gable end is a two story brick chimney. The west block is smaller; it has a stone chimney with a brick stack.

The house sits on a stone foundation. The kitchen foundation and chimney stands to the west of the present house. To the northwest is a squared-log smokehouse.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

M:17-47

SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD *(Check One or More as Appropriate)*

- [ ] Pre-Columbian
- [ ] 15th Century
- [ ] 16th Century
- [ ] 17th Century
- [ ] 18th Century
- [x] 19th Century
- [ ] 20th Century

SPECIFIC DATE(S) *(If Applicable and Known)*

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE *(Check One or More as Appropriate)*

Aboriginal
- [ ] Prehistoric
- [ ] Historic

- [ ] Agriculture
- [ ] Architecture
- [ ] Art
- [ ] Commerce
- [ ] Communications
- [ ] Conservation
- [ ] Education
- [ ] Engineering
- [ ] Industry
- [ ] Invention
- [ ] Landscape Architecture
- [ ] Literature
- [ ] Military
- [ ] Music
- [ ] Political
- [ ] Religion/Philosophy
- [ ] Science
- [ ] Sculpture
- [ ] Social/Humanitarian
- [ ] Theater
- [ ] Transportation
- [ ] Urban Planning
- [ ] Other *(Specify)* _____

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

SEE SHOULDER STRIPS

M:17-47

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY							OR	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES					
CORNER	LATITUDE			LONGITUDE				LATITUDE			LONGITUDE		
	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds		Degrees	Minutes	Seconds	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds
NW	°	'	"	°	'	"		°	'	"	°	'	"
NE	°	'	"	°	'	"							
SE	°	'	"	°	'	"							
SW	°	'	"	°	'	"							

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY:

Acreage Justification:

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

STATE:		COUNTY	
STATE:		COUNTY:	
STATE:		COUNTY:	
STATE:		COUNTY:	

11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE: Christopher Owens, Park Historian

ORGANIZATION: MNCPPC

DATE: 4 Oct 73

STREET AND NUMBER: 8787 Georgia Avenue

CITY OR TOWN: Silver Spring

STATE: Maryland

12. State Liaison Officer Review: (Office Use Only)

Significance of this property is:

National ☐ State ☐ Local ☐

Signature

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

#17-47

NAME CHISWELL HOUSE

LOCATION OLD RIVER Rd AT CHISEL BRANCH - EDWARD'S FERRY, Md

FACADE S.

PHOTO TAKEN 10/4/73 M. DWYER

#17-47

NAME CHISWELL HOUSE

LOCATION OLD RIVER Rd. AT CHISEL BRANCH, EDWARDS FERRY, Md

FACADE W.

PHOTO TAKEN 10/4/73 M. DWYER

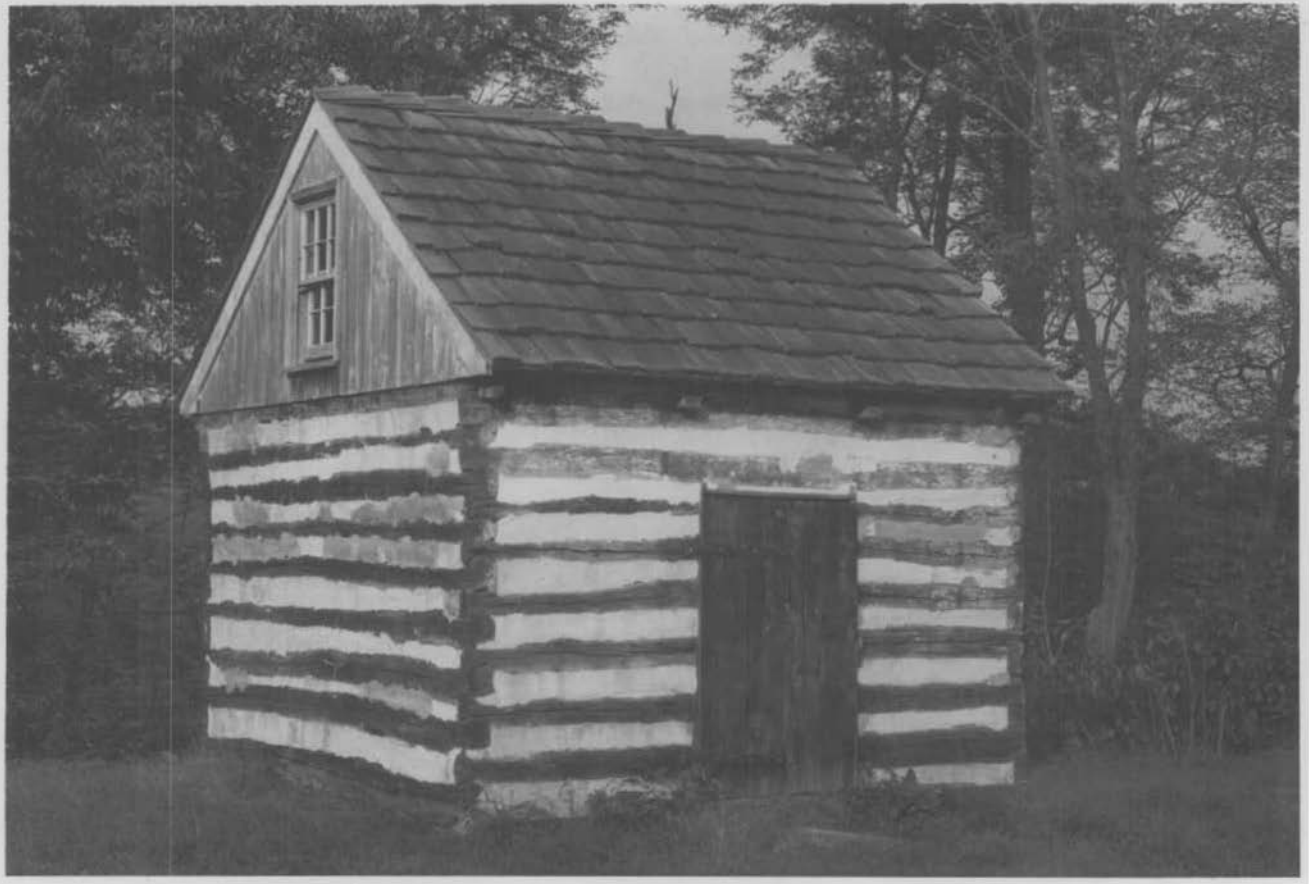
#17-47

NAME CHISWELL HOUSE

LOCATION OLD RIVER Rd. AT CHISEL BRANCH - EDWARD'S FERRY, Md

FACADE S.

PHOTO TAKEN 10/4/73 M. DWYER



#17-47

NAME CHISWELL HOUSE (COCHRAN PROP.) - SMOKEHOUSE

LOCATION OLD RIVER Rd. POOLESVILLE, Md.

FACADE SW

PHOTO TAKEN 10/4/73 M DWYER

#17-47

NAME OLD RIVER ROAD

LOCATION COCHRAN PROPERTY NEAR SHEPPARD Rd. EDWARD'S FERRY, Md

FACADE LOOKING W.

PHOTO TAKEN 10/4/73 M. DWYER