

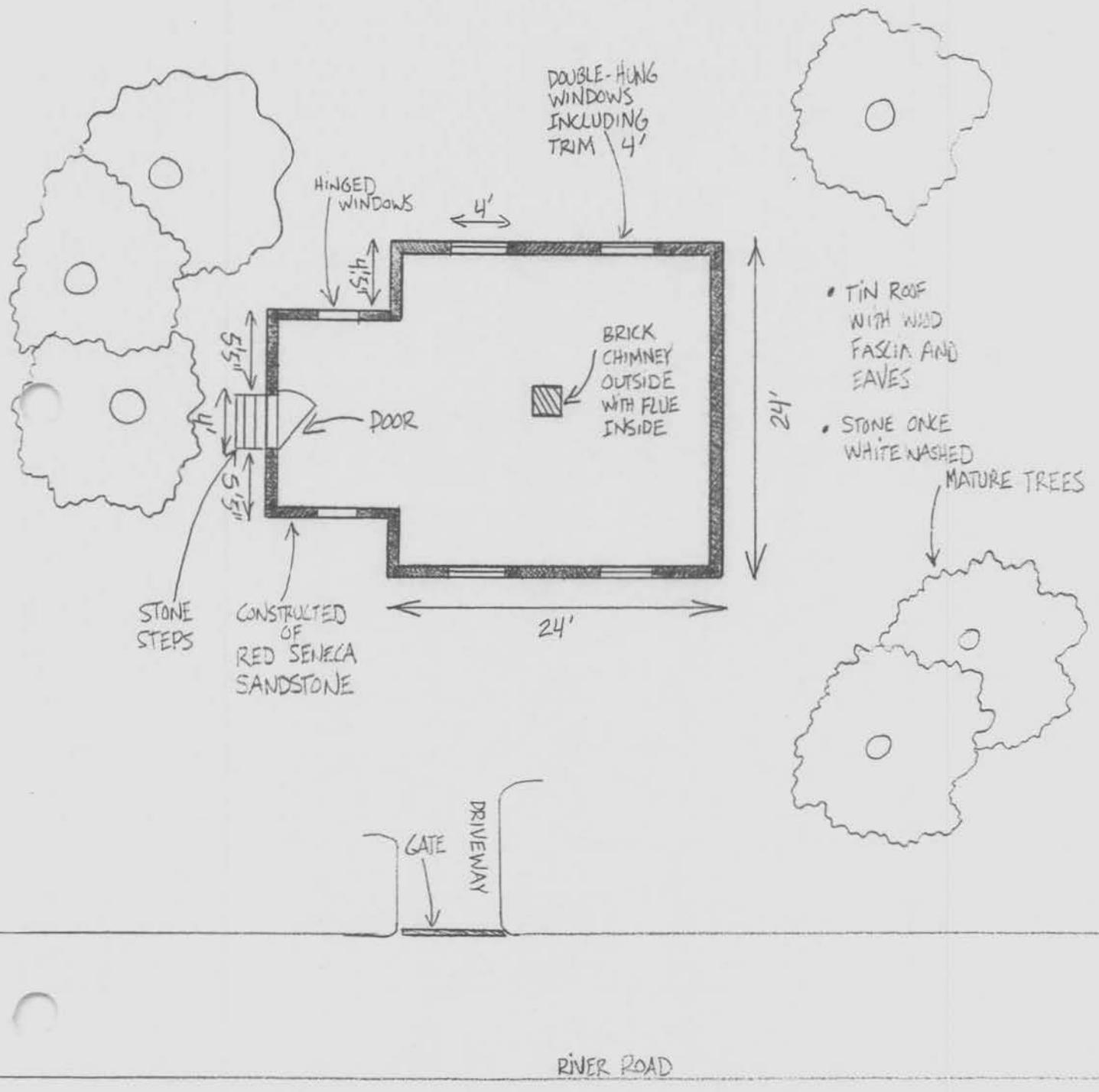
M 17-56  
Seneca Schoolhouse  
Montgomery Co., MD  
C. Mazurek  
October 3, 1997  
Section 8.1

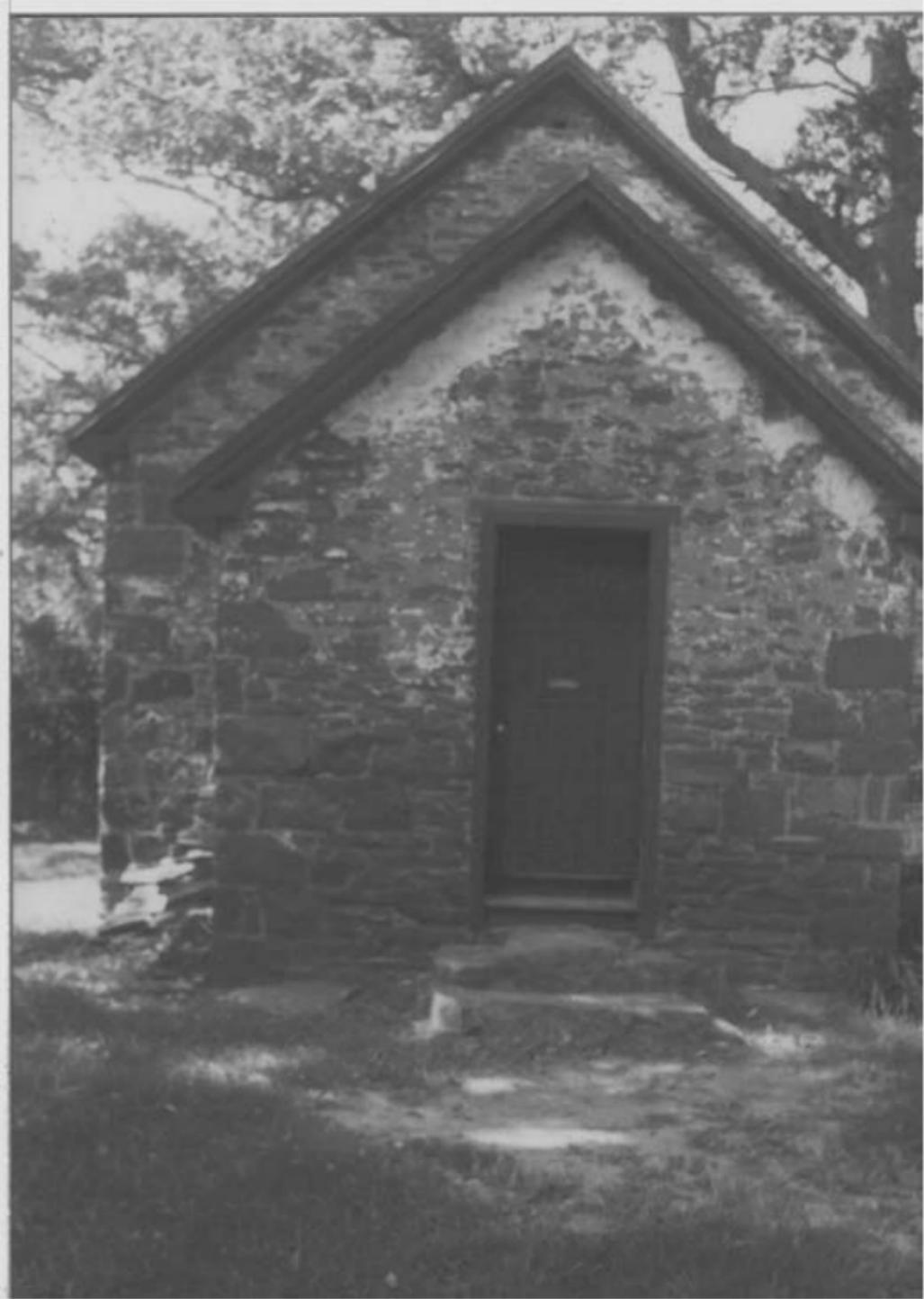
#### Addendum

The Seneca Schoolhouse is located off of River Road in Seneca Creek State Park. After years of disrepair it has been restored by the Historic Medley District, Inc. and is currently used as an interpretive center for groups of schoolchildren to learn about this one room schoolhouse.

SENECA SCHOOLHOUSE  
SENECA CREEK STATE PARK; MONTGOMERY CO, MD  
DRAWN BY C. MAZUREK, OCTOBER 3, 1997  
3/8" SCALE

M:7-56





M:17-56

SENECA CREEK SCHOOLHOUSE

MONTGOMERY CO., MD

C. MAZUREK

OCT 2, 1997

MD DEPT. OF NATURAL RESOUR

FRONT ENTRANCE

1 OF 4



M:17-56

SENECA CREEK SCHOOLHOUSE

MONTGOMERY CO., MD

C. MAZUREK

OCT 97

MD DEPT. OF NATURAL RESOURCES

EAST FACADE

2 OF 4



M: 17-56

SENECA CREEK SCHOOLHOUSE

MONTGOMERY CO., MD

C. MAZUREK

OCT 97

MD DEPT. OF NATURAL RESOURCES

FACING SOUTH

3 OF 4



M: 17-56

SENECA CREEK SCHOOLHOUSE

MONTGOMERY CO., MD

C. MAZUREK

OCT 97

MD DEPT. OF NATURAL RESOURCES

FACING WEST

4 OF 4

ACHS SUMMARY FORM

(Site No. 100-100)

1. Name: Seneca School House

2. Planning Area/Site Number: 17/56      3. M-NCPPC Atlas Reference: Map 13  
C-13

4. Address: River Road, East of Seneca Creek, Poolesville

5. Classification Summary

Category <u>building</u>	Previous Survey Recording <u>M-NCPPC</u>
Ownership <u>public</u>	Title and Date: <u>1976 Inventory of</u>
Public Acquisition <u>N/A</u>	<u>Historical Sites</u>
Status <u>unoccupied</u>	Federal <u>    </u> State <u>x</u> County <u>x</u> Local <u>    </u>
Accessible <u>no</u>	
Present use <u>park</u>	

6. Date: 1863

7. Original Owner:

8. Apparent Condition

a. fair      b. altered      c. original site

9. Description: This handsome one-and-a-half story Seneca sandstone school-house faces west. It is a three bay by one bay structure with uncoursed sandstone walls with corner quoins. There is a pavilion at the west end through which the schoolhouse may be entered. The windows are now covered by plywood sheets, but each had a sandstone sill and lintel. There is a gable roof above the pavilion as well as above the schoolhouse. The gable roofs have raised seam metal coverings.

10. Significance: The Seneca School is one of Montgomery's County's earliest public schoolhouses. It was built by Seneca Mills, a business owned by Upton Darby. Constructed in 1863 of rough-faced stone from the Seneca sandstone quarry, it was one of the better constructed early County schools. The school was heated by a central coal-burning pot-bellied stove; there were two privies and a coal house behind the schoolhouse.

Children from local families attended Seneca School; however, during the winter months attendance was augmented by children who lived on the canal boats, and by older boys who did spring and fall farmwork. These added numbers were welcomed as the school required an average attendance of 25 students to remain open. Teachers were paid \$300. a year and parents paid for all books and school supplies.

The exact closing date is unknown, but in 1900 Seneca Mills School opened, probably replacing the little stone schoolhouse.

Candy Reed

1. Researcher and date researched: Eileen McGuckian-10/79 Arch. Description

12. Compiler: Gail Rothrock      13. Date Compiled: 10/79      14. Designation Approval     

15. Acreage:

MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST

M: 17/56

MAGI:

INVENTORY FORM FOR STATE HISTORIC SITES SURVEY

**1 NAME**

HISTORIC Seneca School House

AND/OR COMMON

**2 LOCATION**

STREET & NUMBER River Road, East of Seneca Creek

CITY, TOWN Poolesville VICINITY OF CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT 8

STATE Maryland COUNTY Montgomery

**3 CLASSIFICATION**

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	<b>PUBLIC ACQUISITION</b>	<b>ACCESSIBLE</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY
			<input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PARK
			<input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
			<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
			<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
			<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
			<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER

**4 OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME Maryland Dept. of Natural Resources Telephone #:

STREET & NUMBER Taves Office Building

CITY, TOWN Annapolis VICINITY OF STATE, zip code Maryland 21401

**5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE, MONTGOMERY COUNTY COURTHOUSE  
 REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. Montgomery County Courthouse

Liber #: 4200  
 Folio #: 675

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN Rockville STATE Maryland 20850

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE M-NCPPC Inventory of Historical Sites

DATE 1976  
 FEDERAL  STATE  COUNTY  LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS Park Historian's Office

CITY, TOWN Rockville STATE Maryland 20855

**7 DESCRIPTION**

<b>CONDITION</b>		<b>CHECK ONE</b>	<b>CHECK ONE</b>
<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 handsome one-and-a-half story Seneca Sandstone school house faces west.

Built on fieldstone foundations, this three bay by one bay school house has uncoursed sandstone walls with corner quoins. The building has been white washed, but this has disappeared in many places, especially the west gable end.

There is a pavilion at the west end of the building. This has a simple wooden door frame and a paneled door. The windows of the school house have been boarded up completely by plywood. The gable roof has raised sear metal covering. The boxed cornice is returned into the gable ends of both the main block and the pavilion. There is one interior stove chimney.

The interior of the school is composed of two rooms. The west pavilion was used as an entry and cloakroom and the large rectangular room to the east was the classroom. There is random-width flooring and plaster over lath ceiling and walls. A blackboard is on the east interior wall.

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

# 8 SIGNIFICANCE

M.17-56

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 type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input checked="" 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY) Local History
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES            1863

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Seneca School is significant as one of Montgomery County's earliest public schoolhouses.

The school was constructed in 1863 of rough-faced stone from the quarry at Seneca. It was designed according to current educational philosophy, which was that a school should be beautiful for inspirational purposes. Proper light and ventilation were not then a major concern, and only two windows were placed on each side wall. Wooden wainscoting lined the bottom two feet of the walls to protect them from the ravages of children. The entrance vestibule provided a place to hang coats as well as separate doorways for each sex. Although it was not up to the standards recommended by Henry Barnard in his 1848 School Architecture, the Seneca School was one of the better-constructed early County schools.<sup>1</sup>

Seneca School was built by Seneca Mills, a business then owned by Upton Darby. It was insured in 1883 for \$400.

According to Lewis Allnutt, who was a student at Seneca in the 1880s and 90s, the school was heated by a central coal-burning pot-bellied stove; the coal was brought to Seneca on the nearby C&O canal, hauled to the school in horse-drawn wagons, and added to the stove by the teacher with the help of the larger boys. Water was supplied by a spring in the woods behind the schoolhouse, and there were two privies and a coal house behind the building. The children sat, segregated by sex, two to a desk, frequently being called to a long bench at the front of the classroom to "Have their lessons heard". Parents paid for all books and school supplies such as slates and slate pencils. The school program consisted of reading, writing, spelling, arithmetic, history, geography, and speaking. Recreational facilities were informal, but the children played many kinds of games.

Artificial lighting in the school was non-existent, and time was determined by the teacher's brass hand bell. Corporal punishment was permitted, usually administered with a switch; the dunce stool at the front of the room was another important piece of school furniture.

The children who attended Seneca School were primarily from local families. However, during the winter months attendance was augmented by children who lived on the canal boats and by older boys who did spring and fall farmwork. These added numbers were welcomed, as the school required an average attendance of 25 students to remain open. Teachers were paid \$300 per year, and many had no special training for the position.

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

Continued on Attachment Sheet .

**9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES**

See Attachment Sheet A

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

**10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA**

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 2 acres

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

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

STATE	COUNTY

**11 FORM PREPARED BY**

NAME / TITLE	Eileen McGuckian	Candy Reed
ORGANIZATION	Sugarloaf Regional Trails	Architectural Description
STREET & NUMBER	Box 87	DATE
CITY OR TOWN	Dickerson	October 1979
		TELEPHONE
		926-4510
		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

Seneca School House

The exact closing date of Seneca School is unknown, but in 1896 \$150 was allocated for repairs and \$60 for new furniture. On January 15, 1900 Seneca Mills School on the Seneca-Darnestown Road was opened, probably replacing the little stone school house.

FOOTNOTES:

1. Leavitt, Donald M., "Early Montgomery County School Houses".  
Montgomery County Story, Vol. 22, No. 2, May 1979.

BIBLIOGRAPHY:

Leavitt, Donald M., "Early Montgomery County School Houses", Montgomery County Story, Vol. 22, No. 2, May 1979.

Interview with Lewis Allnutt, Sr., former student at Seneca School, by members of Historic Medley District, Inc., January 1974.

Notes from the files of Historic Medley District, Inc.

Attachment Sheet B  
Seneca Stone School

As told to Mrs. Webb Hersperger by Mr. Lewis Allnutt, Sr. Jan., 1974

SENECA SCHOOLHOUSE

A Treasure That Should Be Preserved

About four miles from Poolesville on River Road near its intersection with Partnership Road and about one half mile west of Seneca stands an old stone school house. It was built in 1863 of sandstone from a quarry near the banks of the C&O Canal. It was built by Seneca Mills, a business then owned by Upton Darby.

According to records of accounts kept by Upton Darby in his mill books for Seneca School the cost of labor and materials is almost unbelievable. It was insured on December 15, 1883 for \$400.

One of the students who, at the age of six, entered this school was Mr. Lewis Allnutt who was born at Rockland, the present home of Mr. & Mrs. James Mann, on January 2, 1875.

In an interview with Mr. Allnutt a few weeks after his ninety-ninth birthday he was able to recall many interesting facts and anecdotes which give us real insight into the physical set-up of the interior of the building, the school grounds, its recreation facilities, student personnel and teachers.

The building was of unpainted stone with an entrance or vestibule where the children hung their wraps and kept their lunch buckets. Their wraps were hung on wooden pegs under the lunch bucket shelves.

The building was heated by a pot-bellied stove which stood near the center of the classroom. The coal that was burned in the stove was brought on the C&O Canal and hauled to school in horse-drawn wagons. There were no custodians to run this heating system, so the work of bringing in the coal and carrying out the ashes was done by the larger boys and the teacher who were also responsible for all other cleaning duties.

There was no water on the school premises. There was a spring in the woods behind the schoolhouse where the children took turns going for water. (That spring is still there and producing water.) The bucket of water was kept on a shelf built across one corner of the vestibule. The children drank from "a" dipper that was kept in the bucket.

The desks in the schoolroom seated two children. Boys sat with boys and girls sat with girls.

At the front of the classroom was a long bench where the children went to "have their lessons heard".

A blackboard extended across the front wall of the room.

On a raised platform stood the teacher's desk with a top that could be raised up. A brass hand-bell was kept on the teacher's desk and was used to "take in school".

SENECA SCHOOLHOUSE (Cont'd.)

Page 2

Woe to the boy or girl who misbehaved in class! The dunce stool at the front of the room was a most embarrassing piece of furniture.

On the outside of the building were two privies and a coal house.

There were no free school supplies at that time. Books and all other materials used by the children were paid for by their parents. They used slates and slate pencils.

When Mr. Allnutt was asked what he studied at school he chuckled and said, "Mostly devilment I guess". However, he added that the school program consisted of reading, writing, spelling, arithmetic, history, geography and speaking.

The students were not passed from grade to grade as they are now. Each child was required to complete one book before going to the next.

Reports were graded by numbers from 0 to 100.

There were no lights in the school. School was dismissed at 4 o'clock and everybody went home so lights were not needed.

Every Friday afternoon the children gave speeches and had spelling tests.

No expensive recreation facilities were provided but they had their fun playing horse-shoes, baseball, marbles, tag, hockey and other simple games. In winter they skated, snow balled and made snow men.

They did not have hockey sticks and balls like the ones we now have. They cut their hockey sticks from trees in the nearby woods. Each stick, of course, had to have a knot at one end. The hockey ball was whittled from wood.

Mr. Allnutt recalled that one hockey game they played brought them a week's vacation when he hit at the ball, missed it but hit the teacher in the mouth.

Teachers punished the children as they saw fit. There were no laws against corporal punishment. If a child was punished at school there was a real possibility that he would be punished again at home for the same offense.

The usual punishment was a whipping with a switch the boys were sent to cut from the woods---often to be used on themselves. Sometimes they cut notches under the bark so they could not be seen. Of course, the switch would fly into pieces when it was put into use.

Mr. Allnutt, himself, got a whipping that he well remembers. He was a very agile youngster and could put one foot behind his ear. One day when he was entertaining the children by displaying this skill, one of the boys pushed him out of the seat and into the aisle. The teacher, who hadn't been aware of his antics until then, was at once alerted to the situation and "the rod" was applied rather intensely.

## Seneca Stone School

## SENECA SCHOOLHOUSE (Cont'd.)

Page 3

Mr. Allnutt could not remember the exact length of the school term. He did remember, however, that the boys who were old enough to work on the farms attended school during the winter months but had to stay home to work in the spring and fall.

The boys and girls who attended school with him were from local families except during the winter months when the C&O Canal was frozen over. The boats could not move so the children who lived on the boats enrolled in the little stone schoolhouse. This enrollment was most welcome and much needed because one of the requirements for keeping the school open was an average attendance of 25 pupils.

When the ice thawed the boats moved on up and down the canal busily transporting their wares which consisted of coal, wheat, flour, building materials, etc. These commodities were brought to Violet's and Riley's Locks. Wagons drawn by horses, most of them six-horse teams, transported these supplies to and from the canal boats.

Mr. Allnutt remembered the names of several of the students who attended the little stone schoolhouse with him. He could not recall the names of the children from the canal boats but was able to recall the names of some of the local students, Robert, Joseph, Frederick, Charles, Lawrence, Benoni and Sadie Allnutt; Robert, Thomas, Joseph, Harry, Bessie and Louise Darby; Elmer, William and Samuel Hersperger; Jerome and Alice Marie Offutt; Mamie and Charles Cross; George, Harry, Morris and Ernest Willard; Edith Cross.

In the June 30, 1868 State Report 23 pupils were in attendance at Seneca School, with Alice Darby and Annie Criswell as teachers in different terms. Mr. Allnutt's first teacher was Mr. Ernest Darby. Other teachers he remembers were Messrs. Clem Saunders, Joe Dyson, Thomas D. Darby, Dr. Upton Nourse and Dr. Thomas Kelley.

At that time teachers had no special training. Any person who was interested and was acceptable to the parents was hired for \$300 a year--to be paid at the rate of \$75 quarterly.

We do not have the exact closing date of this schoolhouse but according to a May 28, 1896 record the sum of \$150 was spent for repairs and \$60 for new furniture. On January 15, 1900 Seneca Mills School on Seneca--Darnestown Road was opened. This school probably replaced the little stone schoolhouse.

The Historic Hedley District, Inc. is very interested in the preservation of this most unique building which is a valuable part of the heritage of our area. It is now included in Seneca State Park, of Md.

A youth group from St. Peter's Episcopal Church, Poolesville, and their leader worked with the park ranger to clean-up the building. Money from a barn dance sponsored by the Poolesville Area Citizens Assoc. will be used to help preserve the building until real and full restoration can be done.

INVENTORY FORM FOR STATE HISTORIC SITES SURVEY

**1 NAME**

HISTORIC  
Seneca Schoolhouse  
AND/OR COMMON

**2 LOCATION**

STREET & NUMBER  
River Road

CITY, TOWN  
Seneca Creek State Park      VICINITY OF

STATE  
Maryland      COUNTY  
Montgomery

**3 CLASSIFICATION**

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE	
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PARK
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL	<input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
<input 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 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  
Maryland Department of Natural Resources      Telephone #:

STREET & NUMBER  
Taylor Avenue

CITY, TOWN  
Annapolis      VICINITY OF      STATE, zip code  
Maryland 21401

**5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.  
Montgomery County Court House

Liber #: 5048  
Folio #: 362

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN  
Rockville      STATE  
Maryland

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE

DATE

FEDERAL    STATE    COUNTY    LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE

**7 DESCRIPTION**

M:17-56

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input 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**

The Seneca Schoolhouse, located on the south side of River Road, a few hundred yards from the highway and approximately 1200 yards west of the intersection of River Road and the small dirt road access to the Quarry Master's House, is a small, one-story, gable-roofed building constructed of red Seneca sandstone. Appended to the center of the east end is a gable-roofed vestibule, nearly square in plan, but lower in height, which houses the doorway and main entrance to the building.

The north and south facades of the principal section are two bays wide, each consisting of two elongated windows which are positioned at equal intervals below the eaves. All windows are presently boarded up, but consist of 6/6 sash with wide, plain-fasciaed wooden surrounds. There are no windows on the west gable end. The small vestibule windows, one each on the south and north sides, are characterized by surrounds similar to the larger windows' wooden lintels and sills.

Though the exterior walls are constructed of rubble sandstone, the corners of both the main block and the vestibule feature quoining, formed by the short and long alternation of irregularly shaped, unfinished sandstone blocks. A simple boxed cornice consisting of a flat wooden frieze encircles the main section of the building. The entire exterior surface area was once covered with a coating of white-wash which has subsequently weathered away.

**CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY**

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 checked="" 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 1868

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Seneca Schoolhouse is the prototypical one-room schoolhouse interpreted appropriately in the local building material of Seneca sandstone. It was built in 1868 by the workers of the nearby sandstone quarry to educate their children. This was a prosperous period for the quarry; the adjacent canal traffic was at its peak around 1871.<sup>1</sup> Members of the community contributed to the effort via subscriptions which funded the construction.

In 1876 the Maryland State Board of Education reported that there were 62 frame schoolhouses, one brick schoolhouse, and one stone schoolhouse statewide. The stone schoolhouse referred to was the Seneca Schoolhouse, its rarity and regional significance apparent even then.<sup>2</sup> Now it stands as one of the rare survivals of its type, one of two one-room schoolhouses in all of Montgomery County.<sup>3</sup>

Longtime local residents such as the Allnutts, Offutts and Darbys who populated the nearby stone manor houses and frame farmhouses attended and taught at the school. Attached is an interview with Lewis Allnut of Cloverdale (MHI # ), which contain his recollections of a one-room schoolhouse education at Seneca school.

<sup>1</sup>Cutchin, Janine B.: The Quarry Master's House, Seneca, Maryland, student paper, University of Maryland, p. 16, Spring 1978.

<sup>2</sup>Sween, Jane: "Dawsonville/Seneca", Vertical File, Montgomery County Historical Society, Rockville.

<sup>3</sup>Alexander, Jean: "Seneca Schoolhouse", Montgomery County Sentinel, 10/27/76.

**9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES**

Alexander, Jean: "Seneca Schoolhouse", Montgomery County Sentinel, 10/27/76.

Cutchin, Janine B.: The Quarry Master's House, Seneca, Maryland, Student Paper, University of Maryland, Spring 1978.

Hiebert, R.E. and MacMaster, R.K.: A Grateful Remembrance: The Story of Montgomery County, Maryland, Montgomery County Govt, Rockville, 1976.

Sween, Jane: "Dawsonville/Seneca", Vertical file, Montgomery Co. Historical Society, Rockville.

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

Ellen Coxe, Historic Sites Surveyor

ORGANIZATION

Maryland Historical Trust

DATE

March 1979

STREET & NUMBER

Shaw House, 21 State Circle

TELEPHONE

269-2438

CITY OR TOWN

Annapolis

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

to Mrs. Webb Hersperger by Mr. Lewis Allnutt, Sr. Jan., 1974

SENECA SCHOOLHOUSE

M:17-56

A Treasure That Should Be Preserved

About four miles from Poolesville on River Road near its intersection with Partnership Road and about one half mile west of Seneca stands an old stone school house. It was built in 1863 of sandstone from a quarry near the banks of the C&O Canal. It was built by Seneca Mills, a business then owned by Upton Darby.

According to records of accounts kept by Upton Darby in his mill books for Seneca School the cost of labor and materials is almost unbelievable. It was insured on December 15, 1883 for \$400.

One of the students who, at the age of six, entered this school was Mr. Lewis Allnutt who was born at Rockland, the present home of Mr. & Mrs. James Mann, on January 2, 1875.

In an interview with Mr. Allnutt a few weeks after his ninety-ninth birthday he was able to recall many interesting facts and anecdotes which give us real insight into the physical set-up of the interior of the building, the school grounds, its recreation facilities, student personnel and teachers.

The building was of unpainted stone with an entrance or vestibule where the children hung their wraps and kept their lunch buckets. Their wraps were hung on wooden pegs under the lunch bucket shelves.

The building was heated by a pot-bellied stove which stood near the center of the classroom. The coal that was burned in the stove was brought on the C&O Canal and hauled to school in horse-drawn wagons. There were no custodians to run this heating system, so the work of bringing in the coal and carrying out the ashes was done by the larger boys and the teacher who were also responsible for all other cleaning duties.

There was no water on the school premises. There was a spring in the woods behind the schoolhouse where the children took turns going for water. (That spring is still there and producing water.) The bucket of water was kept on a shelf built across one corner of the vestibule. The children drank from "a" dipper that was kept in the bucket.

The desks in the schoolroom seated two children. Boys sat with boys and girls sat with girls.

At the front of the classroom was a long bench where the children went to "have their lessons heard".

A blackboard extended across the front wall of the room.

On a raised platform stood the teacher's desk with a top that could be raised up. A brass hand-bell was kept on the teacher's desk and was used to "take in school".

Woe to the boy or girl who misbehaved in class! The dunce stool the front of the room was a most embarrassing piece of furniture.

On the outside of the building were two privies and a coal house.

There were no free school supplies at that time. Books and all other materials used by the children were paid for by their parents. They used slates and slate pencils.

When Mr. Allnutt was asked what he studied at school he chuckled and said, "Mostly devilment I guess". However, he added that the school program consisted of reading, writing, spelling, arithmetic, history, geography and speaking.

The students were not passed from grade to grade as they are now. Each child was required to complete one book before going to the next.

Reports were graded by numbers from 0 to 100.

There were no lights in the school. School was dismissed at 4 o'clock and everybody went home so lights were not needed.

Every Friday afternoon the children gave speeches and had spelling bees.

No expensive recreation facilities were provided but they had their fun playing horse-shoes, baseball, marbles, tag, hockey and other simple games. In winter they skated, snow balled and made snow men.

They did not have hockey sticks and balls like the ones we now have. They cut their hockey sticks from trees in the nearby woods. Each stick, of course, had to have a knot at one end. The hockey ball was whittled from wood.

Mr. Allnutt recalled that one hockey game they played brought them a week's vacation when he hit at the ball, missed it but hit the teacher in the mouth.

Teachers punished the children as they saw fit. There were no laws against corporal punishment. If a child was punished at school there was a real possibility that he would be punished again at home for the same offense.

The usual punishment was a whipping with a switch the boys were sent to cut from the woods---often to be used on themselves. Sometimes they cut notches under the bark so they could not be seen. Of course, the switch would fly into pieces when it was put into use.

Mr. Allnutt, himself, got a whipping that he well remembers. He was a very agile youngster and could put one foot behind his ear. One day when he was entertaining the children by displaying this skill, one of the boys pushed him out of the seat and into the aisle. The teacher, who hadn't been aware of his antics until then, was at once alerted to the situation and "the rod" was applied rather intensely.

Mr. Allnutt could not remember the exact length of the school term. He did remember, however, that the boys who were old enough to work on the farms attended school during the winter months but had to stay home to work in the spring and fall.

The boys and girls who attended school with him were from local families except during the winter months when the C&O Canal was frozen over. The boats could not move so the children who lived on the boats enrolled in the little stone schoolhouse. This enrollment was most welcome and much needed because one of the requirements for keeping the school open was an average attendance of 25 pupils.

When the ice thawed the boats moved on up and down the canal busily transporting their wares which consisted of coal, wheat, flour, building materials, etc. These commodities were brought to Violet's and Riley's Locks. Wagons drawn by horses, most of them six-horse teams, transported these supplies to and from the canal boats.

Mr. Allnutt remembered the names of several of the students who attended the little stone schoolhouse with him. He could not recall the names of the children from the canal boats but he could recall the names of some of the local students: Robert, Joseph, Frederick, Charles, Lawrence, Benoni and Sadie Allnutt; Robert, Thomas, Joseph, Harry, Bessie and Louise Darby; Elmer, William and Samuel Hersperger; Jerome and Alice Marie Offutt; Mamie and Charles Cross; George, Harry, Morris and Ernest Willard; Edith Cross.

In the June 30, 1868 State Report 23 pupils were in attendance at Seneca School, with Alice Darby and Annie Criswell as teachers in different terms. Mr. Allnutt's first teacher was Mr. Ernest Darby. Other teachers he remembers were Messrs. Clem Saunders, Joe Dyson, Thomas D. Darby, Dr. Upton Nourse and Dr. Thomas Kelley.

At that time teachers had no special training. Any person who was interested and was acceptable to the parents was hired for \$300 a year--to be paid at the rate of \$75 quarterly.

We do not have the exact closing date of this schoolhouse but according to a May 28, 1896 record the sum of \$150 was spent for repairs and \$60 for new furniture. On January 15, 1900 Seneca Mills School on Seneca--Darnestown Road was opened. This school probably replaced the little stone schoolhouse.

The Historic Hedley District, Inc. is very interested in the preservation of this most unique building which is a valuable part of the heritage of our area. It is now included in Seneca State Park, of Md.

A youth group from St. Peter's Episcopal Church, Poolesville, and their leader worked with the park ranger to clean-up the building. Money from a barn dance sponsored by the Poolesville Area Citizens Assn. will be used to help preserve the building until real and full restoration can be done.

MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST WORKSHEET

*1969/10/10*  
*See Pennsylvania*

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

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

<b>1. NAME</b>				
COMMON:				
AND/OR HISTORIC: School House at Seneca				
<b>2. LOCATION</b>				
STREET AND NUMBER: River Road, East of Seneca Creek				
CITY OR TOWN: Poolesville				
STATE Maryland		COUNTY: Montgomery		
<b>3. CLASSIFICATION</b>				
CATEGORY (Check One)		OWNERSHIP		STATUS
<input type="checkbox"/> District <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Object		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Structure <input type="checkbox"/> Public <input type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both		<input type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress
		Public Acquisition: <input type="checkbox"/> In Process <input type="checkbox"/> Being Considered		ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC Yes: <input type="checkbox"/> Restricted <input type="checkbox"/> Unrestricted <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)				
<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural	<input type="checkbox"/> Government	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Park	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation	<input type="checkbox"/> Comments
<input type="checkbox"/> Commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> Industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> Private Residence	<input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify)	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Educational	<input type="checkbox"/> Military	<input type="checkbox"/> Religious	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> Museum	<input type="checkbox"/> Scientific	_____	_____
<b>4. OWNER OF PROPERTY</b>				
OWNER'S NAME: Maryland State Department of Forests & Parks (Seneca State Park)				
STREET AND NUMBER:				
CITY OR TOWN: Annapolis			STATE: Maryland	
<b>5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION</b>				
COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC: Montgomery County Courthouse				
STREET AND NUMBER:				
CITY OR TOWN: Rockville			STATE: Maryland	
Title Reference of Current Deed (Book & Pg. #):				
<b>6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS</b>				
TITLE OF SURVEY: Historic Sites in the Bi-County Region				
DATE OF SURVEY: 1969 <input type="checkbox"/> Federal <input type="checkbox"/> State <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> County <input type="checkbox"/> Local				
DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS: The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission				
STREET AND NUMBER: 8737 Georgia Avenue				
CITY OR TOWN: Silver Spring			STATE: Maryland	

M. 7-56

7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION	(Check One)					
	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> Good	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> Ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> Unexposed
	(Check One)			(Check One)		
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Altered	<input type="checkbox"/> Unaltered	<input type="checkbox"/> Moved	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Original Site		

PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The building is a one story stone structure, with an end gable main (east) facade. There is a small stone entrance porch with windows on either side wall. Along either flank are three large windows. The boxed cornice is returned into the gable ends of both the main block and the porch.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

**2. SIGNIFICANCE**

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

Pre-Columbian       16th Century       18th Century       20th Century  
 15th Century       17th Century       19th Century

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known) C. 1850

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

<input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal	<input type="checkbox"/> Education	<input type="checkbox"/> Political	<input type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning
<input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> Engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> Religion/Philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify)
<input type="checkbox"/> Historic	<input type="checkbox"/> Industry	<input type="checkbox"/> Science	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> Invention	<input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> Landscape Architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> Social/Humanitarian	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Art	<input type="checkbox"/> Literature	<input type="checkbox"/> Theater	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> Military	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Communications	<input type="checkbox"/> Music		_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Conservation			_____

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Blank area for major bibliographical references.

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY			O R	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:

Blank area for acreage justification.

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

STATE:		COUNTY:	

11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE:  
Christopher Owens, Park Historian

ORGANIZATION: M-NCPPC      DATE: 4 Dec 73

STREET AND NUMBER:  
8787 Georgia Avenue

CITY OR TOWN: Silver Spring      STATE: Maryland

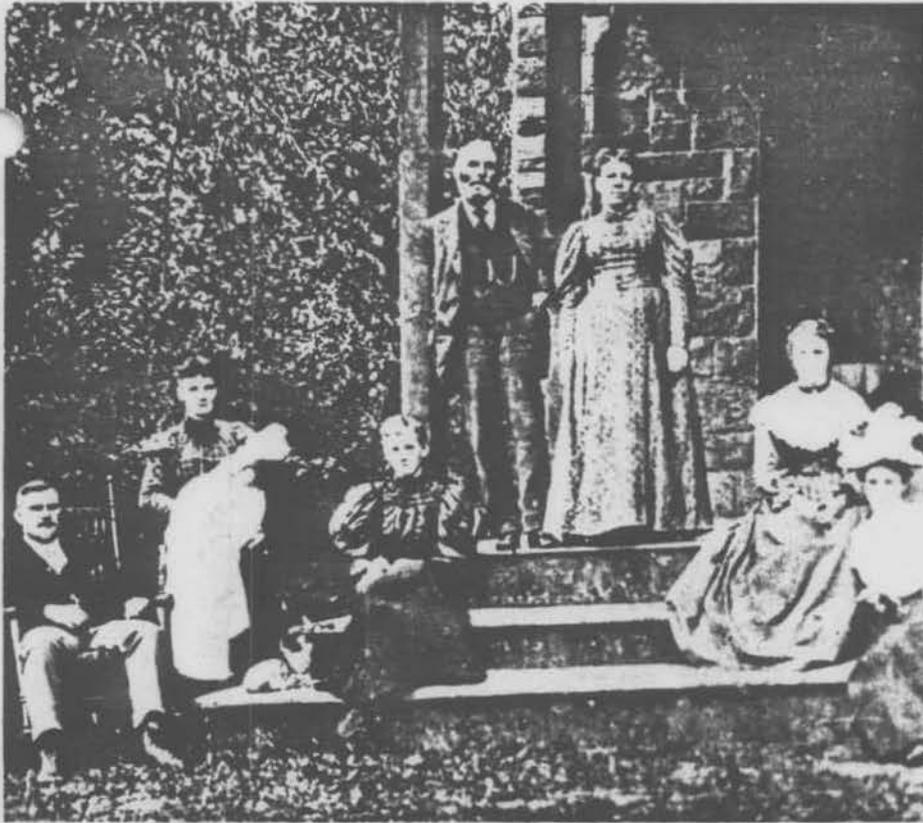
12. State Liaison Officer Review: (Office Use Only)

Significance of this property is:  
 National     State     Local

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

SEE INSTRUCTIONS





The building materials most often used in nineteenth-century Montgomery County were those that were closest to the site. Thomas Sullivan of Great Falls easily obtained Seneca sandstone, and he built his house with the same material that was used to build the original Smithsonian castle in Washington. In this picture, dated August 28, 1895, are, from left to right: Edgar R. Perry; Bertha L. Perry; the couple's one-month-old son, Ralph L. Perry; Cora Perry (Ball); Thomas Sullivan; Marian Hester Perry Sullivan, Thomas's wife; Susan Ball; and Lizzie Sullivan. Courtesy of Barbara Dangler



The local sandstone was also used to build Seneca School on River Road. In addition to the neighborhood youngsters, the sons and daughters of the C & O Canal employees attended school at Seneca. Lock keepers and

barge operators needed their children's help most of the year. But winter's ice closed canal operations and freed the children to attend school.

In 1981, through the efforts of

Mary Anne Kephart and other members of Historic Medley District, the crumbling schoolhouse was rescued from abandonment and restored as a school museum. Courtesy of Helen Riley Bodmer and Ray Riley

M:17-56

Coleman, Margaret Marshall and Anne Dennis Lewis  
1984 Montgomery County: A Pictorial History. Norfolk: Donning Company.



"Preservationist" was a word practically unknown in Montgomery County until 1976 when the nation's bicentennial celebrations awakened a sense of patriotism and pride in the past. Communities established historical societies to research local history and preserve significant aspects of the neighborhood architecture. Then, preservationists multiplied, delighted with the special something that made their towns unique.

County Executive Charles Gilchrist and the Montgomery County Council appointed a preservation commission and approved a masterplan and ordinance for historic preservation in Montgomery County. Capitol View Park became the first historic district to apply for and be granted a place on the masterplan.

Historic Medley District in Poolesville restored the mid-nineteenth century Seneca Sandstone Schoolhouse with grants from public agencies. Shown is the ceremony rededicating the schoolhouse as a school museum. Steve Tregoning and his Poolesville High School band performed for visitors, who were also attracted to the ancient school bus in the background.

At the present time, Seneca Schoolhouse is booked solid with classes of Montgomery County schoolchildren eager to experience the way it used to be. Photograph by Margaret Marshall Coleman

Coleman, Margaret Marshall and Anne Dennis Lewis  
1984 Montgomery County: A Pictorial History. Norfolk: Donning Company.

M.17-56



SENECA SCHOOLHOUSE; <sup>M 17-56</sup> SEN/DNR 32  
RIVER ROAD, SENECA CREEK S.P.

2/79 BMD

NORTH FAÇADE



M: #17-56

NAME SENECA SANDSTONE SCHOOLHOUSE

LOCATION RIVER Rd AT REDDICK Rd SENECA, Md

FACADE N

PHOTO TAKEN 12/4/73 M. DWYER



NAME SENECA STONE SCHOOLHOUSE

M: #17-56

LOCATION RIVER Rd AT REDDICK Rd SENECA, Md.

FACADE N

PHOTO TAKEN 12/4/73 M. DWYER

STATE OF MARYLAND  
DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

RESTORATION OF THE

SENECA SCHOOLHOUSE

STATE OF MARYLAND

DEPARTMENT OF GENERAL SERVICES

DEPARTMENT OF GENERAL SERVICES

J. MAX MILLER, SECRETARY

CONSTRUCTION COST

146,000.00

CONTRACTOR: DENVER CONSTRUCTION CO.

BOARD OF PUBLIC WORKS

HARRY HUGHES  
LOUIS L. GOLDSTEIN  
WILLIAM B. JAMES

GOVERNOR  
COMPTROLLER  
TREASURER

HARRY HUGHES GOVERNOR

**Kodak**

paper and equipment used  
to produce this picture.

July, 1981

M: 17-56

**Kodak**

paper and equipment used  
to produce this picture.

July, 1981

**Kodak**

paper and equipment used  
to produce this picture.

July, 1981

Project of combination of  
State and private sector  
working in cooperation



Devil - on its way to being  
a ruin

M: 17-56

Seneca School House

1976

(by Linda Harrell S.)

"Lady" X  
Failed Polyn H.  
D.C.



**KODAK** to produce this picture.

July, 1981

*W. Whorem installing  
duplicated windows*

**Kodak**

paper and equipment used  
to produce this picture.

July, 1981

**Kodak**

paper and equipment used  
to produce this picture.

July, 1981

M:17-56



**Kodak**

paper and equipment used  
to produce this picture.

July, 1981

Volunteers get furnishings  
ready

**Kodak**

paper and equipment used  
to produce this picture.

July, 1981

MI: 17-56

**Kodak**

paper and equipment used



**Kodak**

paper and equipment used  
to produce this picture.

July, 1981

State Park Ranger  
Checks up on grounds  
Security, etc.

**Kodak**

paper and equipment used  
to produce this picture.

July, 1981

M:17-56

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July, 1981