

INVENTORY FORM FOR STATE HISTORIC SITES SURVEY

**1 NAME**

HISTORIC

Pleasant Hill Site & Cemetery

AND/OR COMMON

**2 LOCATION**

STREET & NUMBER

dirt road, north of Brookeville, near power lines

CITY, TOWN

Brookeville

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

VICINITY OF

STATE

Maryland

COUNTY

Montgomery

**3 CLASSIFICATION**

CATEGORY

- DISTRICT
- BUILDING(S)
- STRUCTURE
- SITE
- OBJECT

OWNERSHIP

- PUBLIC
- PRIVATE
- BOTH
- PUBLIC ACQUISITION**
- IN PROCESS
- BEING CONSIDERED

STATUS

- OCCUPIED
- UNOCCUPIED
- WORK IN PROGRESS
- ACCESSIBLE**
- YES: RESTRICTED
- YES: UNRESTRICTED
- NO

PRESENT USE

- AGRICULTURE
- MUSEUM
- COMMERCIAL
- PARK
- EDUCATIONAL
- PRIVATE RESIDENCE
- ENTERTAINMENT
- RELIGIOUS
- GOVERNMENT
- SCIENTIFIC
- INDUSTRIAL
- TRANSPORTATION
- MILITARY
- OTHER:

**4 OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME

Nathan N. Lubar et al

Telephone #:

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

VICINITY OF

STATE, zip code

**5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE,  
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Montgomery County Courthouse

Liber #:

Folio #:

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.23-67

<b>CONDITION</b>		<b>CHECK ONE</b>	<b>CHECK ONE</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED    DATE _____
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

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

This was the site of the ancestral Riggs home—a stone house built about the mid-18th Century. The house is long gone, but the Riggs family cemetery remains, and several stone markers are visible.

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

# 8 SIGNIFICANCE

M:23-67

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
REHISTORIC	<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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input checked="" 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

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

See Farquhar's OLD HOMES AND HISTORY OF MONT. CO., MD.  
(1961) pp. 247-249.

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

M:23-67

**9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES**

Farquhar, R.B. OLD HOMES AND HISTORY OF MONT. CO., MD.  
(1961) pp. 247-249.

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

Michael F. Dwyer, Senior Park Historian

ORGANIZATION

M-NCPPC

DATE

8/15/75

STREET & NUMBER

8787 Georgia Ave.

TELEPHONE

589-1480

CITY OR TOWN

Silver Spring

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.

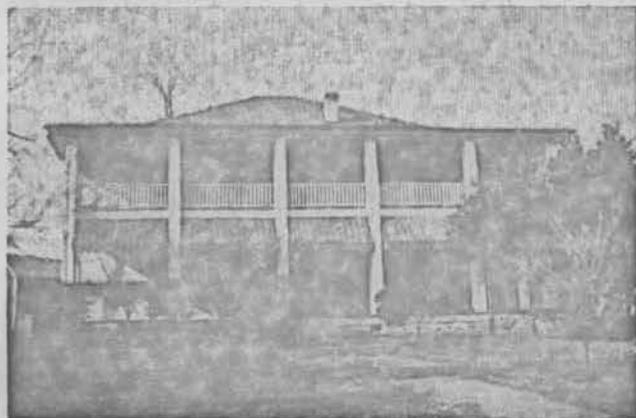
The Survey and Inventory are being prepared for information and record purposes only and do not constitute any infringement of individual property rights.

RETURN TO: Maryland Historical Trust  
The Shaw House, 21 State Circle  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401  
(301) 267-1438

## Pleasant Hill

**T**HE ancestral home of the Riggs family, in Montgomery County, is now deserted, and the house is falling into decay. No member of that illustrious family has lived here for more than half a century.

On account of the great importance of this family, in the County, State and Nation, the author has decided that some reference to the members of the family should be made in this, his Second Edition, including an old photograph of the house. Therefore what follows, is a revised excerpt of the personalities, of the past, at Pleasant Hill.



NO. 87 D-9 SAMUEL RIGGS CA. 1769 BRICK

Situated on a hill, overlooking the village of Brookeville, this site offers a view of beautiful expanses of countryside for miles around.

It was two centuries ago, on September 11, 1751, that John Riggs, a planter residing in Anne Arundel County, purchased the thousand acre tract of Bordley's Choice on which this house stands.

The Bordley's Choice tract formed part of the residuary portion left to the younger brother, Beale, who held the property but a few years before selling it to John Riggs in 1751, for the sum of £200 Sterling. Beale Bordley was a widely known jurist, agriculturist, and social leader in Maryland and Philadelphia until his death in 1804.

Though Montgomery County never became the home of this eminent citizen, John Riggs, the new owner of Bordley's Choice, was the progenitor of a numerous and honored family ever

afterward identified with this region. Earlier members of this family were in Virginia and Maryland during the seventeenth century, but it was not until 1723 that "Mr. John Riggs of Anne Arundel County, Gent." appeared as a patentee of land which he called Riggs' Hill. His marriage to Mary, daughter of Thomas Davis, of the same county, took place on January 16, 1721. Her family was of Virginia origin, identified with the very earliest years of the Jamestown settlement.

The Bordley's Choice tract adjoined Greenwood, the estate of John's brother-in-law, Thomas Davis, Jr. By 1756 Thomas and John Riggs, Jr., the two eldest sons, were living on the land, then included in Newfoundland Hundred, of recently formed Frederick County; but their father remained across the Patuxent at the family home near the present Annapolis Junction, where he died in 1762. By his will Bordley's Choice was divided equally among five of his sons: Thomas, John, James, Samuel, and Elisha Riggs. The youngest son, Amon, received the parental lands in Anne Arundel.

The chronicle of Pleasant Hill as a family residence begins with Samuel Riggs. Born October 6, 1740, the ninth child of John, he grew to manhood in Anne Arundel County. Early in life he became a surveyor, probably receiving his first instruction from an uncle, Robert Davis, who divided Bordley's Choice among the five brothers. He was also active in local affairs, and records show Samuel Riggs as Tobacco Inspector for Queen Caroline Parish in 1766-67. Philemon Dorsey was a district surveyor, the owner of thousands of acres in what is today Howard County, member of a numerous and influential family, and the father of five daughters by his marriage to Catharine Ridgely. The youngest of these, Amelia, born August 23, 1749, became the bride of Samuel Riggs in 1767. This young couple established their home at Pleasant Hill.

Pleasant Hill was a typical plantation home of its day, a modest building of frame and stuccoed stone, one and a half stories, with a long piazza across the front.

Within a few years after Samuel and Amelia Riggs had commenced their life at Pleasant Hill, the first shots of the Revolution were fired.

Like other militiamen, he and his neighbors were at once identified with the patriots' cause. On May 14, 1776 he was commissioned a second lieutenant in the Middle Battalion of Montgomery County Militia, led by Colonel Zadok Magruder. The *Maryland Archives* indicate that he was in the Seventh Company of the Upper Battalion of the same militia on July 15, 1780.

After the Revolution he continued to buy land in Montgomery County. Pleasant Hill was increased to a plantation of about 500 acres before he died.

Samuel Riggs and Amelia Dorsey had seven sons and five daughters: Mary, wife of Henry Griffith 3d of Retirement; Henrietta, wife of Daniel Gaither of Gaither's Rocks on Hawlings River; Thomas; Anna, who married her first cousin, Colonel John Hammond Riggs; Reuben; George Washington; Elisha; Eleanor (died unmarried); Romulus; Julia (died unmarried); Samuel, Jr.; and Remus Riggs. Samuel Riggs, Jr., was the only unmarried son; he died in 1805. Two years later, on August 6, 1807, Amelia Riggs, the mother, died and was laid to rest near this son's grave in the family cemetery behind the house. Samuel Riggs died at Pleasant Hill on May 25, 1814, and was buried beside his wife.

By the time he died it is evident from family papers that the cultivation of tobacco, had all but ceased. The lands had been given over to the raising of grain and livestock. His comfortable estate was divided chiefly among his sons. Thomas, Reuben, and Remus Riggs were the sons identified exclusively with Montgomery County. George Washington, Elisha, and Romulus, left the parental roof, and established themselves in Georgetown about the year 1800.

George Washington Riggs, born August 4, 1777, third son of Samuel, though he married Eliza Robertson, a native of the county and a member of an important landowning family, started his career as a silversmith in Georgetown. After accumulating a comfortable fortune he retired to his country-seat, Woodville, in Baltimore County, where he died in 1864. His first wife died in 1819, and he remarried in 1820. On his wedding day he settled what has since been called the Goshen Farm on his new bride. Their son, the late Remus D. Riggs of Goshen, inherited the property (Fertile Meadows).

Elisha Riggs, born June 13, 1779, fourth son of Samuel, left the most notable record of the

brothers. He was one of the first natives of Montgomery County to become a millionaire. When a youth he went to Georgetown to seek his fortune. In 1815 George Peabody was taken into partnership, and the firm of Riggs & Peabody prospered from the outset. In the second war with Britain, and the attack on the City of Washington, the young Elisha was active in the ill-fated attempt to halt the invaders at Bladensburg, where he served as aide to General Winder.

Elisha Riggs was twice married. First, in 1812, to Alice, daughter of James Lawrason of Alexandria, Virginia, by whom he had two sons: George Washington Riggs, the most noted banker of his family, partner of W. W. Corcoran, and founder of Riggs & Co. of Washington, D. C.; and Lawrason Riggs, also a capitalist of high repute in New York, St. Louis, and Baltimore. He married secondly, in 1822, Mary Ann, daughter of Joseph Karrick, a Baltimore privateer associated with Simon Bolivar in the struggle for South American independence. By this marriage there were three notable sons: Joseph K. Riggs and Elisha Riggs, Jr., bankers in Washington, New York, and Paris; and William Henry Riggs of Paris.

Remus Riggs, born January 12, 1790, youngest child of Samuel, inherited Pleasant Hill, and lived there until his death on December 18, 1867. In 1830, at the age of forty, he married an eighteen year old wife, Catharine Adams, daughter of John Adams of Baltimore County, and heiress to a shipping fortune. Six children were born to them; the late John H. Riggs of Locust Grove, near Brookeville, who married Annie Eliza Hutton; Remus G. Riggs, who entered the banking house of Riggs & Co. and died at Washington in 1866; William C. Riggs, inheritor of Pleasant Hill; and two daughters, Catharine and Amelia.

Remus Riggs held a commission as Captain in the state militia, and served during the War of 1812. He was a trustee of the Brookeville Academy for forty-four years (1823 to 1867). His sons, John H. and Thomas D. Riggs, and grandson, the late Lawrason B. Riggs, carried on this tradition of membership until the dissolution of the Academy about a generation ago. In 1848 he became a director of the Mutual Fire Insurance Company of Montgomery County, organized at Brookeville in that year.

Upon the marriage of his son William in

1882, to Annie S. Hallowell, daughter of James S. Hallowell of Oak Grove, the widow of Remus Riggs moved to the Madison House in the village, where she died in 1893. William C. Riggs resided at the old homestead for a number of years before retiring to live at Brookeville. He

died in 1906 in an accident, and was the last of his family to be buried at Pleasant Hill. The property passed to his daughters, Florence and Margaret, who sold it in 1913 to Mr. and Mrs. Austin T. Powell, whose heirs sold to a corporation owner in 1961.

## Pleasant Hills



NO. 86 F-5 PROBABLY BY A GASSAWAY CA. MAIN SECTION 1765 EAST WING JOHN T. KELLEY  
CA. 1900 WEST WING DR. JOHN T. KELLEY, 1918 ALL BRICK

THE old saying, "What's in a name?" is emphatically answered when one surveys the surroundings and inspects the interior of this charming Colonial brick house. The main part of it has stood in its quiet dignity for nearly 200 years, surveying its rolling hills, dales and meadows. It was no doubt built about 1763-1765 as its details of construction, together with other evidence, indicate that it belonged to that period.

The name was given to the plantation in 1799 by Charles Gassaway, who asked for a new patent for about 1700 acres, to be made up of

parts of several tracts, including Good Will, Partnership, and others.

Pleasant Hills has been the home of the Kelley family since 1864. When John T. Kelley moved into the home, his son, J. Thomas Kelley, Jr., was an infant. This son became an eminent surgeon of Washington, was hale and hearty at 85 in 1950 and the writer had the pleasure of a long visit with him to look over the home and its surroundings.

Dr. J. Thomas Kelley obtained his medical degree in 1890 from Columbian College, now George Washington University, and in 1950