

# Maryland Historical Trust State Historic Sites Inventory Form

## 1. Name (indicate preferred name)

historic Semmes Farm

and/or common

## 2. Location

street & number 11700 Glen Rd. \_\_\_\_\_ not for publication

city, town Potomac \_\_\_\_\_ vicinity of \_\_\_\_\_ congressional district 4th

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"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> religious
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> not applicable	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input type="checkbox"/> other:

## 4. Owner of Property (give names and mailing addresses of all owners)

name Harry H. Semmes, Jr., et al.

street & number 11610 Glen Rd. telephone no.:

city, town Potomac state and zip code Maryland, 20854

## 5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Montgomery County Court House liber 5261

street & number \_\_\_\_\_ folio 344

city, town Rockville state Maryland

## 6. Representation in Existing Historical Surveys

title MNCPPC Historic Sites Inventory

date 1976 \_\_\_\_\_ federal  state  county \_\_\_\_\_ local

depository for survey records

Park Historian's Office

city, town Rockville state Maryland

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7. DESCRIPTION	
CONDITION	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Good <input type="checkbox"/> Fair <input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated <input type="checkbox"/> Ruins <input type="checkbox"/> Unexposed (Check One)
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Altered <input type="checkbox"/> Unaltered <input type="checkbox"/> Moved <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Original Site (Check One)
DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE	
<p>The present modern house has enclosed a one-story log cabin on the east end. It is not visible from the exterior. There is a small, two-story tenant house, of ca. 1900 vintage, on the driveway east of the main house.</p>	

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

# 8. Significance

Survey No.

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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 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 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** circa 1860 **Builder/Architect**

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check: Applicable Criteria:  A  B  C  D  
and/or

Applicable Exception:  A  B  C  D  E  F  G

Level of Significance:  national  state  local

Prepare both a summary paragraph of significance and a general statement of history and support.

The Semmes farmhouse is significant as an example of vernacular architecture typical of that constructed by a poorer, subsistence-economy farmer of the Potomac area of Montgomery County during the mid-nineteenth century, and then substantially added on to during the late-nineteenth or early twentieth centuries. The early log section of this house was probably built by Leonard Green about 1860.<sup>1</sup> When Leonard died in November of 1866, he willed to his wife a life interest in the farm. Then, following her death, the farm was to become the property of John Tramill, Eriza Connell and the children of Susan Benton, deceased.<sup>2</sup>

In 1884, Eriza Connell sold the farm, described as being the same property on which Leonard Green resided on at the time of his death, to Capt. John McDonald.<sup>3</sup> John was the husband of Mary J. Benton who was a relative of Leonard Green. Capt. McDonald, a native of Ireland, had quite a distinguished background. He had defended the Union during the Civil War and had served as a representative to Congress. After retiring to another farm down the road from this one, in 1870 (which he also purchased from his wife's family), he became active in the grange movement and was at one time the president of the Montgomery County Agricultural Society.<sup>4</sup> John and his wife did not live on this farm but, rather, tenanted it out.

In May of 1897, John sold the 88 acre tenant farm to James L. Magruder for \$1200.<sup>5</sup> It was probably James that added the later frame section of the house about 1900. In December of 1935, the children of James Magruder, deceased, sold the farm to General Harry H. Semmes.<sup>6</sup> Harry and his family used the farm as a week-end retreat. After serving in World War II, Harry and his sons returned home to find that Juanita Semmes had converted their week-end retreat into a "lovely" home.<sup>7</sup> Their new home served as the headquarters of the Potomac Hunt Club during the 1930's. General Semmes himself was at one time the Master of the Hunt. Prior to General Semmes death in 1978, he had his estate put into trust for his wife and children.<sup>8</sup> The 88 acre estate is now the property of the General's children, Harry, Jr., John G., Raphall and David Semmes, who each hold a 1/4 interest.<sup>9</sup>

see attachment sheet A

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attachment sheet A

<sup>1</sup>Date given is based on the fact that the house appears (as the residence of Leonard Green) on the 1865 map and that Green died in 1866.

<sup>2</sup>Will JWS 1/203, Mont. Co. Register of Wills.

<sup>3</sup>Deed EBP 30/365, Mont. Co. Land Records.

<sup>4</sup>Portrait & Biographical Record of the Sixth Congressional District, New York: Chapman Publishing Co., 1898, p. 215-216.

<sup>5</sup>Deed JA 58/258, Mont. Co. Land Records.

<sup>6</sup>Deed 612/303, " "

<sup>7</sup>The Gaithersburg Gazette, "Potomac News" Oct. 13, 1977, p. 22.

<sup>8</sup>Will VMB 149/634, Mont. Co. Register of Wills.

<sup>9</sup>Deed 5261/344, Mont. Co. Land Records.



M#25-19  
160675604

MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST WORKSHEET

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

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

<b>1. NAME</b>				
COMMON: Semmes Farm/Great Elm Farm				
AND/OR HISTORIC:				
<b>2. LOCATION</b>				
STREET AND NUMBER: 11700 Glen Road				
CITY OR TOWN: Potomac				
STATE: Maryland		COUNTY: Montgomery		
<b>3. CLASSIFICATION</b>				
CATEGORY (Check One)		OWNERSHIP		ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both Public Acquisition: <input type="checkbox"/> In Process <input type="checkbox"/> Being Considered		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress 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"/> Commercial <input type="checkbox"/> Educational <input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment		<input type="checkbox"/> Government <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial <input type="checkbox"/> Military <input type="checkbox"/> Museum		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Park <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private Residence <input type="checkbox"/> Religious <input type="checkbox"/> Scientific
		<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) _____		<input type="checkbox"/> Comments _____
<b>4. OWNER OF PROPERTY</b>				
OWNER'S NAME: Mrs. Harry H. Semmes, Sr.				
STREET AND NUMBER: 11700 Glen Road				
CITY OR TOWN: Potomac			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:				
DATE OF SURVEY: <input type="checkbox"/> Federal <input type="checkbox"/> State <input type="checkbox"/> County <input type="checkbox"/> Local				
DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:				
STREET AND NUMBER:				
CITY OR TOWN:			STATE:	



B. SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

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

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known)

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

The present owners have been here about 40 years, but they cannot recall any previous history. This was the headquarters of the Potomac Hunt during the 1930's and '40's. General Semmes was the Master of the Hunt at one time.

This area was poor for farming, and was sparsely settled until the "horsey set" moved in during the 1930's and '40's. However, it appears that this was a tenant farm owned by Cap't. John McDonald in the late-19th Cen. Cap't. McDonald was a native of Ireland, veteran of the Civil War, and served as a U.S. Congressman from Potomac. (His home farm is nearby, on River Rd.) Before that time, it seems that one John Gillis lived here. (1878 Atlas.)

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

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9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

- 1) HISTORY OF POTOMAC, by the Potomac Almanac (1970).
- 2) Hopkins' 1894 map and 1940's Real Estate Map of Mont. Co.

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:

Acreeage Justification:

*(This area is mostly blank, intended for handwritten justification of the acreage.)*

11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE: Michael F. Dwyer, Senior Park Historian	
ORGANIZATION M-NCPPC	DATE 3/5/75
STREET AND NUMBER: 8787 Georgia Ave.	
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

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FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

See correspondence dated August 15, 1989

ACTION TAKEN

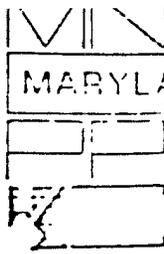
This amendment recommends 18 historic resources throughout Montgomery County for historic designation and protection under the County's Historic Preservation Ordinance, Chapter 24A of the Montgomery County Code. It also recommends that 4 other resources be found not to warrant historic designation and that they be removed from the Locational Atlas and from further protection under the Ordinance.

18 historic resources recommended for historic designation and protection:

M: 10-52	Charles Browning Farm
M: 10-57	Zeigler Log House
M: 12-11	Frederick Hayes House
M: 12-36	Oak Ridge/Eleven Brothers
M: 14-51	Woodburn/Blunt House
M: 16-1	Trundle Farm
M: 16-12	Warren M.E. Church and Martinsburg Negro School
M: 16/26	Nathan Dickerson Poole House/River View
M: 23-41	Musgrove/Hobbs/Gaither House
M: 23-47	Pleasant View
M: 23-84/1	Ellicott Mine
M: 25-8	Mt. Prospect
M: 25-10/1	Travilah Town Hall
M: 29/9	Dr. Willett House
M: 29-19	Joseph Magruder House (Offutt House)
M: 33-1	Drumeldra
M: 34-10	Conley House/Green Ridge
M: 36-3	Rock Creek Stables/Old Callahan Estate

4 resources to be removed from Locational Atlas.

M: 25-19	Semmes Farm	M: 37-1	Waterworks Site/Sligo Creek
M: 37-2	Presidents' Tree	M: 28-34	Mt. Pleasant II



M:25-19

FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

See correspondence dated April 25, 1989

ACTION TAKEN

This document contains the Montgomery County Historic Preservation Commission's recommendations on the designation of twenty-two (22) historic resources throughout Montgomery County. Twenty-one resources are recommended for historic designation and protection under the County's Historic Preservation Ordinance, Chapter 24A of the Montgomery County Code. One resource is not recommended for designation.

SITES RECOMMENDED

M: 10/52	Charles Browning Farm
M: 10/57	Zeigler Log House
M: 12/11	Frederick Hayes House
M: 12/36	Oak Ridge/Eleven Brothers
M: 14/51	Woodburn/Blunt House
M: 16/1	Trundle Farm
M: 16/12	Warren E.M. Church and associated bldgs.
M: 16/26	Nathan Dickerson Poole House/River View
M: 23/41	Musgrove/Hobbs/Gaither House
M: 23/47	Pleasant View
M: 23/84-1	Ellicott Mine
M: 25/8	Mount Prospect
M: 25/10-1	Travilah Town Hall
M: 28/34	Mount Pleasant II/Esther Scott House
M: 29/9	Dr. Willett House
M: 29/19	Joseph Magruder House
M: 33/1	Drumeldra
M: 34/10	Conley House
M: 36/03	Rock Creek Stables/Old Callahan Estate
M: 37/01	Waterworks Site/Sligo Creek
M: 37/02	The President's Tree

NOT RECOMMENDED

M: 25/19 Semmes Farm