

# Maryland Historical Trust

## Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties Form

Survey No. M: 35-78

### 1. Name of Property (Indicate preferred name)

historic Cummings Farmhouse

and/or common Pleasant Grove

### 2. Location

street & number 3309 Cummings Lane  not for publication

city, town Chevy Chase  vicinity of

state Maryland county Montgomery

### 3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Present Use	
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> educational	<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site		<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object		<input type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
		<input type="checkbox"/> industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other:

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

name Albert & J.M. Meisal

street & number 3309 Cummings Lane telephone no:

city, town Chevy Chase state and zip code Maryland 20815

### 5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Montgomery County Courthouse Tax Map and Parcel HN352; Lot10, Bl.C

city, town Rockville state Maryland Liber and Folio 03570/0065

### 6. Primary Location of Additional Data

- Individually Listed in the National Register
- Contributing Resource in National Register District
- Contributing Resource in Local Historic District
- Determined Eligible for the National Register
- Recorded by HABS/HAER
- HSR or Research report at MHT
- Other:

## 7. Description

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### Condition

excellent     deteriorated  
 good         ruins  
 fair          altered

Prepare both a summary paragraph and a general description of the resource and its various elements as it exists today.

### Resource Count

See attached.

## CONTINUATION SHEET

M:35/78: Cummings Farmhouse  
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The Cummings Farmhouse has a vernacular center cross gable building form. The house is more substantial than typical Montgomery County examples, being five bays wide rather than the more typical three, and, judging by fenestration, has a central passage double pile plan, being two rooms deep rather than the one room deep plan of the more common I-house.

The symmetrical front (west) facade has 2/2 sash windows and a central door with transom. A front gable entry porch is supported by simple posts. The center cross gable is covered with fishscale shingle siding accented by an ocular window, while the rest of the structure has artificial siding. Covered with standing seam metal, the roof is punctuated by three internal chimneys: one on front (west) slope at the south gable end, and two on the rear (east) slope. The house rests on a stone foundation with crawlspace access.

Original interior details include door and window surrounds with fluted molding and bull's eye corner blocks. Original fireplaces have marblized stone surrounds and cast iron opening which, according to the present owner, once accomodated Latrobe stoves.

By 1952, a wrap-around porch had been replaced by a one-bay entry porch. A one-story rear porch extending across the center and northern bays was removed after 1952.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, Vol 1W, 1952.

# 8. Significance

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Period	Areas of Significance	Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/humanitarian	
	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> theater	
	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation	
	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)	
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention			

Specific dates	Builder/Architect
1893	

check: Applicable Criteria:  A  B  C  D  
and/or  
Applicable Exceptions:  A  B  C  D  E  F

Level of Significance:  national  state  local

HISTORICAL CONTEXT:

**MARYLAND COMPREHENSIVE PRESERVATION PLAN DATA**

Geographic Organization: Piedmont

Chronological/Developmental Period(s): Agricultural/Industrial Transition

Prehistoric/Historic Period Theme(s): Architecture and Community Planning

Resource Type: Individual

Category: Residential

Historic Environment: Suburban

Historic Function(s) and Use(s): Residential

Known Design Source:

## CONTINUATION SHEET

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The Cummings Farmhouse is significant to the history of agriculture in lower Montgomery County, having been the last operating farm in the Chevy Chase area. The working farm was a local landmark for residents who established homes in nearby Martin's Additions in the early 1900s. The site is also significant as a center for local political debate when it was the home of State Representative Andrew Jackson Cummings (D, 1909-1915). Though the house has been altered somewhat with a replacement porch and non-historic siding, it remains a fine example of a substantial center cross gable house.

The Cummings Farm, known as Pleasant Grove, was established in the mid-1800s by Irish immigrant brothers James and Patrick Cummings who, according to tradition, acquired 100 acres in 1848. When the U.S. Census was taken in 1850, 33 year old James and 32 year old Patrick shared a household in the area with four other family members. James and Patrick divided the property between them in 1864. Patrick's portion was located south of the district line. James' property was accessed off Brookville Road, an early and well-traveled north-south road.<sup>2</sup>

Mary Cummings built the Cummings House in 1893, replacing the original mid-19th century house. According to tradition, Mary had raised money for the house construction through the sale of land, after the death of her husband. Deed transactions do record an 1890 subdivision of 17 acres, located north of the house lot. The center cross gable building form was popular in Montgomery County, from the 1860s through the 1890s. The house includes architectural elements more typical of an earlier period, including flattened cornice returns and ocular window, and of a later period, including fishscale shingles and wrap-around porch (later removed). The original house on this site, shown on Martenet & Bond's 1865 map, was a modest structure valued at \$280. Mary Cummings lived at her house until her death in 1912.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup>In 1891, Deed JA 25:321 was recorded from the State of Maryland to James Cummings stating that he has held land in Resurvey for Pleasant Grove for more than 20 years. The same source mentions James Cummings' acquisition in 1864 of 42 acres from Patrick Cummings. The plat of 5-30-1867 mentioned in same is not found in the deed book. George W. Stone, Jr., "My Local Habitation and Its Name," 1990 manuscript, p.4. 1850 census, MCHS.

<sup>3</sup>Deeds JA 21:220; 236:424. Tax Assessment Records. All four architectural features mentioned here are found on the Harrison Ward House (#25/9), built c1885. Plat of the Estate of John Hopkins Anderson, 187.67 acres, in William LeoGrande, "No Gain," CCHS manuscript, 1997. Fava Naeff map, 1890.

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Cummings Lane was originally the access road to the Cummings Farm from Brookville Road, running through the No Gain property which fronted on Brookville Road north and south of Cummings Lane. Harry Martin attempted to rename the cedar-tree lined road Cedar Lane when he established his subdivision east of Brookville Road in 1905, but the name did not hold.<sup>4</sup>

For early residents of Martin's Additions, many of whom moved here from Washington D.C., the Cummings Farm was a landmark, remarkable for the uncommonly intimate look at agricultural life that it afforded its neighbors. George Winchester Stone, Jr., who moved to Martin's Additions in 1909, recalled, "I spent hours in my youth at the Cummings Farm-- watched the pig killing in November, the wheat harvested in July and the stable activity at other times." Stone describes learning to ride a horse at the farm, and first-hand experiences with the Cummings' cows, horses, and chickens when, over the years, they occasionally escaped into his family's yard.<sup>5</sup>

During the early to mid 1900s, the farm was managed and inhabited by Andrew Jackson "Cy" Cummings, a prominent politician and avid sportsman. Cy Cummings (born c1880) was a member of the Maryland House of Delegates for three successive terms, from 1909-1915. Cummings is said to have called his farmstead "Political Hill," in honor of the frequent gatherings to discuss local issues. On a smaller scale, the Cummings House was a place where the local newspaper boy was invited in for refreshments at the end of his route. In 1912, Cummings was one of only 22 residents in the Chevy Chase area (population 800) who possessed a telephone. He also was one of the earliest residents to acquire an automobile.<sup>6</sup>

Cummings and his wife Zelpha were active foxhunters, kept hounds at the farm, and hosted Hunt events. Winchester Stone remembered, "On hunt days, the hunters in red coats, black caps, riding boots and white pants moved up Cummings Lane...and off over the fields to the north, with a long line of hounds trailing behind them." Cy Cummings, described by historian Roger Brooke Farquhar as "an outstanding athlete" and good horseman, was Master of Hounds for the Dumblane Hunt Club. Cummings became president of the Laurel Track in later

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<sup>4</sup>Plat Book 1:70 (June 1905).

<sup>5</sup>George W. Stone, Jr., "My Local Habitation and its Name," 1990 manuscript.

<sup>6</sup>By the 1894 the 42-acre farm was owned by James W. and Mary E. Cummings. In 1917, 30.35 acres were conveyed to Andrew J. Cummings and his siblings. Hopkins Atlas, 1894. Deets and Maddox, 1917. District of Columbia Directory, 1912. Nelson's Suburban Directory, 1912. Caldwell Directory, 1915. Stone, p15.

## CONTINUATION SHEET

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years.<sup>7</sup>

The Cummings Farm remained open farmland into the 1940s. The farm was still thriving, in 1920, with assistance by employees including Farm Manager Eugene Hackett and Team Driver Lewis Collins. Cy and Zelpha had a son Andrew, Jr., born c1916, and were joined in residence by Cy's sisters, Alice, Agnes, and Cecelia. In 1941 the farmhouse retained its 30 acre setting, however, by 1952, the land was subdivided in a community called Chevy Chase Manor.<sup>8</sup>

Since 1966, the Cummings Farmhouse, located on a 9,347 square foot parcel, has been owned by Albert and Jean M. Meisel.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>7</sup>MacMaster and Hiebert, *A Grateful Remembrance*, p.405. Farquhar, *Old Homes and History of Montgomery County*, p66. Stone, pp. 13-14, 19.

<sup>8</sup>U.S. Census, 1920. Klingé Real Estate Atlas, 1931 and 1941. Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, 1927, Updated 1952.

<sup>9</sup>Deed 3570:65.

Cummings Farmhouse  
 Tax Assessment Records

Maryland State Archives, Series T221. Fourth Election District (Rockville & Bethesda)

**Vol. 1876-1896**

<u>1876</u>	Desc.	Land	Value	Improve ments	Live stock	Furniture	Other Property	Transfers
James Cummings	Clerincourse	56 acres	\$35/ac	\$280	\$170	\$50	\$65	

1878

James Cummings	Clerincourse	43 acres	\$35/ac	\$280	\$130	\$50	\$60	17.5 ac to Louis P & E Shoemaker
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1893

James Cummings	Clerincourse	43 acres	\$35/ac	\$280	\$130	\$50	\$60	
				Add '93: \$1800		Add'93 : \$500		

**Vol. 1896-1906**

1902

Mary E. Cummings	Clarincourse	29.5 acres	\$60/ac	\$1650	\$20	\$200		
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Clare Cavicchi  
 10-1998

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M:35-78

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

Survey No. M: 35-78

See attached

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property 9,347 Sq. Ft.

Quadrangle name \_\_\_\_\_

Quadrangle scale \_\_\_\_\_

Verbal boundary description and justification

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	code	county	code
state	code	county	code

## I. Form Prepared By

name/title	Clare Lise Cavicchi, Historic Preservation Planner		
organization	Maryland National Capital Park and Planning Commission	date	1/98
street & number	8787 Georgia Avenue	telephone	301-563-3400
city or town	Silver Spring	state	Maryland 20910-3760

The Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties 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  
DHCD/DHCP  
100 Community Place  
Crownsville, MD 21032-2023  
410-514-7600

## CONTINUATION SHEET

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Section 9:2

### BIBLIOGRAPHY

#### Primary Sources:

Census, U. S. Records of 1850, 1910, and 1920.

#### Directories:

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*District of Columbia Directory*, 1912.  
Nelson, Justus C. *Suburban Directory* (Washington, D.C.), 1912-1913.  
Polk, R. L. *Washington Suburban Directory*(Washington, D.C.) 1927-1928.

Land Records, Montgomery County Courthouse, Rockville, Maryland. Deeds and Plats.

#### Maps:

Caldwell, S.D. *Map of Bethesda District*, 1915  
Deets and Maddox, *Real Estate Atlas*, 1917.  
Hopkins, G.M. *Northern Virginia and Bethesda*, 1894.  
Klingé *Real Estate Atlas*, 1931 and 1941.  
Martenet and Bond, *Map of Montgomery County, Maryland*, 1865.  
Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps, 1927-1959.  
U.S. Geological Survey Map, 1917.

#### Secondary Sources:

Farquhar, Roger Brooke. *Old Homes and History of Montgomery County, Maryland*.  
Washington, D.C.: Judd & Detweiler, 1962.

Henry, Samuel J. *Old Days with Horse and Hound: The Story of the Chevy Chase Hunt, 1892-1916*. (1960)

Hiebert, Ray Eldon, and Richard K. MacMaster. *A Grateful Remembrance: The Story of Montgomery County, Maryland*. Rockville, Md: Montgomery County Government and Montgomery County Historical Society, 1976.

LeoGrande, William M. "No Gain: Portrait of a Yeoman Family Farm in Montgomery County, Maryland." Manuscript, Chevy Chase Historical Society, 1997.

M:35/78: Cummings Farmhouse  
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Section 9:3

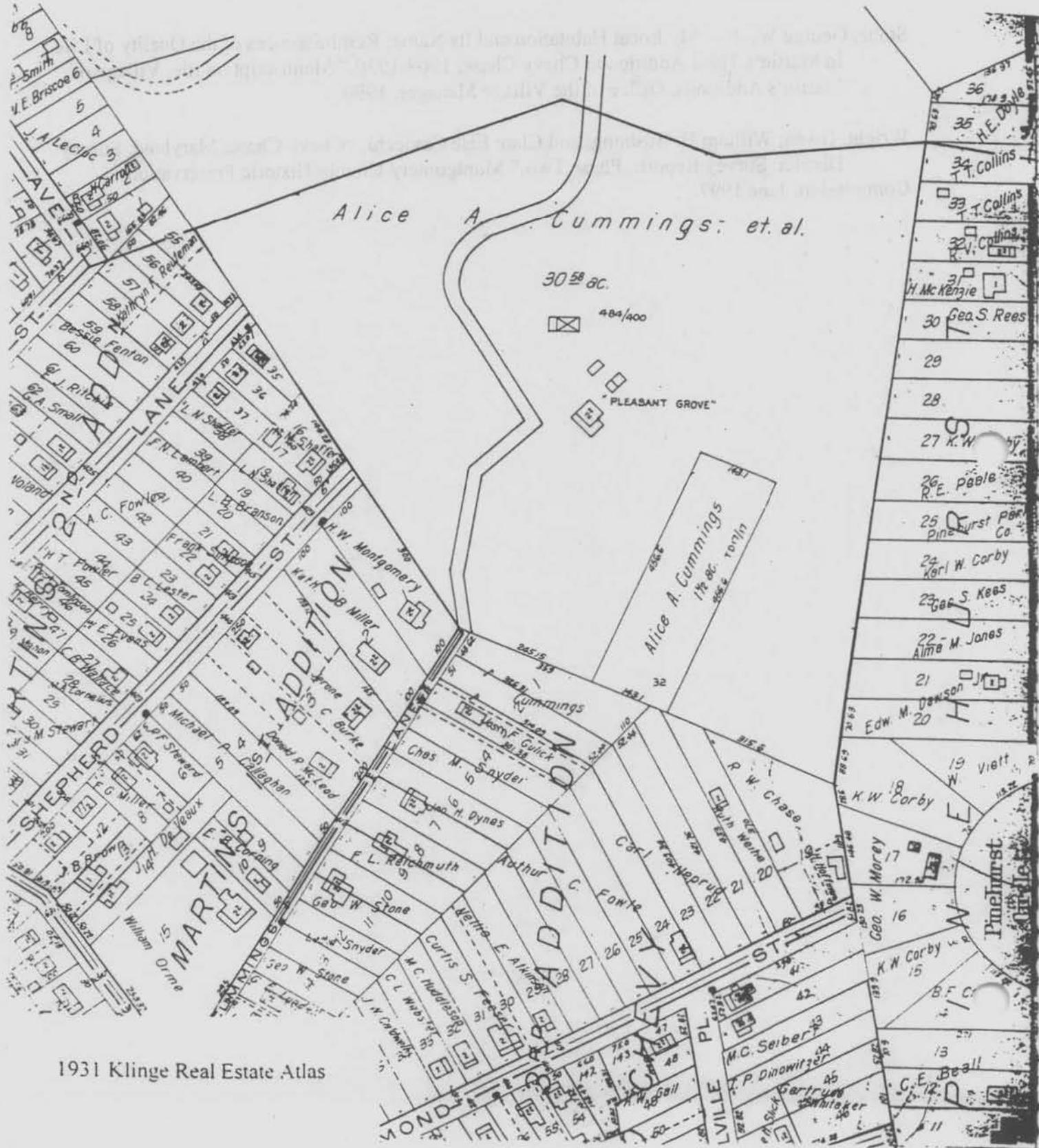
Offutt, William. *Bethesda: A Social History of the Area Through World War II*. Bethesda, Md: The Innovation Game, 1995.

Stone, George W., Jr., "My Local Habitation and Its Name: Reminiscences of the Quality of Life in Martin's Third Addition to Chevy Chase, 1909-1930." Manuscript on file, Village of Martin's Additions, Office of the Village Manager, 1990.

Wright, Gwen; William B. Bushong; and Clare Lise Cavicchi; "Chevy Chase, Maryland, Survey District: Survey Report: Phase Two," Montgomery County Historic Preservation Commission, June 1997.

CONTINUATION SHEET

M:35/78: Cummings Farmhouse  
Pleasant Grove  
3309 Cummings Lane



CONTINUATION SHEET

M:35/78: Cummings Farmhouse  
3309 Cummings Lane



Andrew Jackson Cummings and wife Zelpha Cummings, early 1900s, at their farm, with the front facade of the Cummings Farmhouse in view at far right. (CCHS photograph #518)

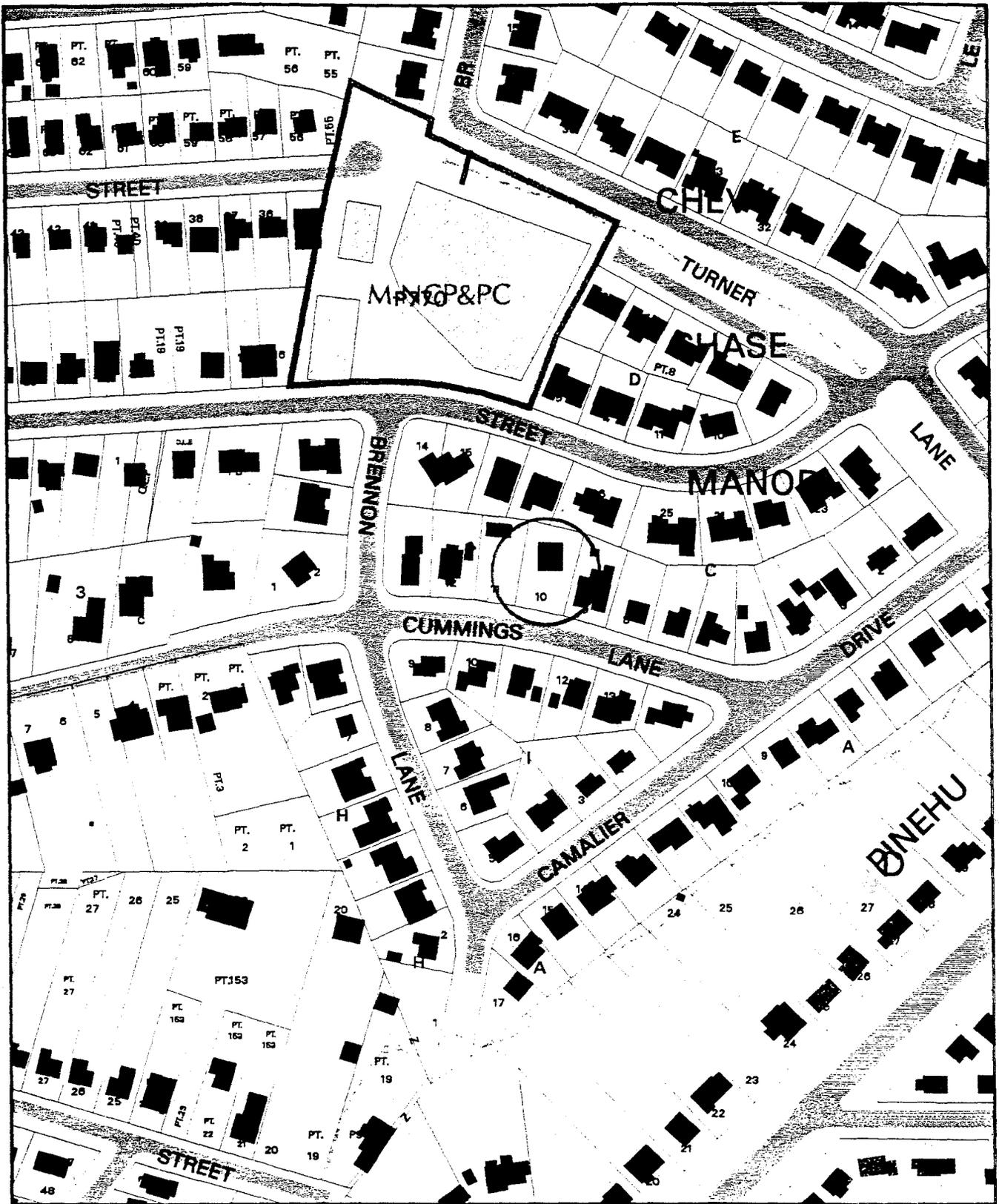
CONTINUATION SHEET

M:35/78: Cummings Farmhouse  
Pleasant Grove  
3309 Cummings Lane



# Vicinity Map for Cummings Farmhouse (35-78)

M:35-78



Map compiled on May 28, 1998 at 1:50 PM

## NOTICE

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Key Map



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Research & Technology Center

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**MONTGOMERY COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF PARK AND PLANNING**  
THE MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION

8787 Georgia Avenue - Silver Spring, Maryland 20910-3760