

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name Streett, Col. John, House
other names/site number HA-1517

2. Location

street & number Holy Cross Road N/A not for publication
city, town Street vicinity
state Maryland code MD county Harford code 025 zip code 21154

3. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resources within Property	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	Contributing	Noncontributing
<input type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input type="checkbox"/> district	<u>1</u>	<u>1</u> buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site	<u>1</u>	<u> </u> sites
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<u> </u>	<u> </u> structures
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	<u> </u>	<u>1</u> objects
		<u>2</u>	<u>2</u> Total

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet.

[Signature] 5/29/90
Signature of certifying official Date
STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet.

Signature of commenting or other official Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

entered in the National Register.
 See continuation sheet.

determined eligible for the National Register. See continuation sheet.

determined not eligible for the National Register.

removed from the National Register.

other, (explain:)

Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

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National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

*file
to be signed as
part of ~~nomination~~
form*

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SUPPLEMENTARY LISTING RECORD

NRIS Reference Number: 90001022

Date Listed: 7/16/90

Col. John Streett House
Property Name

Harford
County

MD
State

Multiple Name

This property is listed in the National Register of Historic Places in accordance with the attached nomination documentation subject to the following exceptions, exclusions, or amendments, notwithstanding the National Park Service certification included in the nomination documentation.

for Patrick Andrews
Signature of the Keeper

7/16/90
Date of Action

=====

Amended Items in Nomination:

This property is nominated under National Register Criterion B for its association with John Streett, but there is no Area of Significance provided to reflect his importance. Ron Andrews with the MD SHPO says that Politics is the appropriate Area of Significance. The form is now officially amended to include this information.

DISTRIBUTION:

- National Register property file
- Nominating Authority (without nomination attachment)

6. Function or Use

HA-1517

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC/single dwelling

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

VACANT/work in progress

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(enter categories from instructions)

Federal

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation stone

walls brick

roof slate

other wood

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

DESCRIPTION SUMMARY:

The Colonel John Streett House stands on a slight rise in the midst of a large, open field on the north side of Holy Cross Road just east of Deer Creek. The house is composed of three sections, two of which are original and one a late 19th-century addition; all are brick. The original c. 1805 dwelling consists of a 2 1/2-story, five bay, gable roofed main section and a two-story, two-bay attached kitchen. South facades on both sections are laid in Flemish bond with beaded mortar joints. The main section has a through center stair hall separating two equal-sized rooms (each with a flush, gable-end chimney); the plan is identical on all stories. The kitchen wing has two unequal-sized rooms on the ground floor and a large loft room above, reached by a closed, corner stair. Interior finishing is of excellent quality and is also remarkably well preserved and unaltered. Notable features are the six-panel doors (complete with architrave molding and backband), paneled jambs, chair rails, dining room and second-story bedroom cupboards, and four excellent mantles, at least one of which retains its original gray marblizing. Several doors also retain their original mahogany-grained finish and brass hardware.

8. Statement of Significance

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Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally statewide locally

Applicable National Register Criteria A B C D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions) A B C D E F G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

Architecture

Period of Significance

c. 1805-1834

Significant Dates

c. 1805

1814

1834

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Significant Person

Streett, Col. John

Architect/Builder

unknown

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

SIGNIFICANCE SUMMARY:

The Colonel John Streett House is important for its architecture and for its association with Colonel Streett (1762-1837), a man prominent in local politics and a hero of the War of 1812. Architecturally, the house is among Harford County's best and most intact examples of Federal style. While not as ambitious as the extremely elegant Sion Hill (HA-525) it is locally comparable in scale and material to the main section of Olney (HA-154; National Register) although the Streett house is arguably a better representative of the Federal era than Olney since it remains virtually unchanged and intact while the 1810 portions of Olney are overshadowed by later, even grander additions which make that slightly eccentric house truly sui generis. Moreover, the details of the Streett house -- such as the marblized mantles and grained doors -- are unsurpassed in the county. Historically Colonel Streett, the builder of this house was a prominent man in Harford County. He came from a family of landowners and farmers who remained for generations influential in Harford and Baltimore counties' political affairs. Streett himself ran a 3,000-acre estate, one of the largest estates in the county at the time. He secured a distinguished political career by serving in the Maryland Legislature for nearly a quarter of a century including twelve consecutive terms. Colonel Streett occupied the house until 1834.

See continuation sheet No. 8.1

for HISTORIC CONTEXT and MARYLAND COMPREHENSIVE HISTORIC PRESERVATION PLAN data.

9. Major Bibliographical References

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- C. Milton Wright, Our Harford Heritage, (Bel Air: Privately printed, 1967).
- Walter W. Preston, History of Harford County, (Baltimore; The Sun Book Company, 1901)
- Frederick Lee Cobourn and Brodnax Cameron, Sr., Portraits of the Court House, (Bel Air; Privately printed, 1942).
- Land and Probate Records of Harford County, Court House, Bel Air.
- Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties - Harford County, Maryland Historical Trust, Annapolis, MD.

See continuation sheet

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- State historic preservation office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Specify repository: _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property approximately 3 acres
USGS quad: Fawn Grove, MD/PA

UTM References

A	<u>18</u>	<u>376950</u>	<u>4390530</u>	B	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
C	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	D	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

The boundary consists of a rectangle formed by lines parallel to the gross footprint of the house. On the east, north, and west sides, the line is 100' from the building. On the south, the line is 300'.

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

The boundary was drawn to maintain the flat rural setting of the property which is the historic character but to eliminate the vast open acreage surrounding the house which contains no contributing resources. There are no obvious historic or natural boundaries. The drive is non-historic.

See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Christopher Weeks, Preservation Planner
organization Harford County Government date November 30, 1989
street & number 220 South Main Street telephone 301-879-2000, ext. 207
city or town Bel Air state Maryland zip code 21014

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GENERAL DESCRIPTION

The Colonel John Streett House, abandoned for 40 years, stands unoccupied in a large open field on the north side of Holy Cross Road, just east of Deer Creek, in the rural northern section of Harford County, Maryland. The house faces south and consists of four sections, all of brick on low fieldstone foundations: the 2 1/2-story main (west) and attached two-story kitchen sections are original and date to c. 1805; there are two late-19th-century, two-story, shed-roofed additions to the rear (north); the house, remarkably intact and well-preserved despite its long years of neglect, is about to undergo a complete restoration during which the rear additions will be removed. Similarly, one late-19th-century owner spanned the south facade of the main section and kitchen wing with a one-story porch; it has recently been removed and the brick will be repaired.

Both the south (main) and west facades of the original house's main block are laid in Flemish bond with exquisitely beaded mortar joints. This block measures 46' 7" by 22' 3" and is five bays wide and two deep beneath a slate covered gable roof. The cornices of the main facade and of the rear facade are notable, being corbeled and of molded brick, a treatment exceedingly rare in Harford

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County. There is a centrally placed, eight-panel door with a three-light transom; all windows (five on the second story, four on the first) are regularly placed and have 6/6 panes with jack arches; nearly all framing is original although the frames have been removed for restoration and the window spaces boarded over. The three-bay 24' by 17'4" kitchen wing (attached to the east wall of the main section, see plan) has a Flemish bond main (south) facade with a corbeled brick cornice.

The interior of the main block has a through center stair hall dividing twin parlors, each with a gable-end fireplace. The high-ceilinged rooms (roughly 10 feet) abound in original details remarkable for their sophistication and state of preservation. These include six-panel doors complete with architraves and backboards, chair rails, dining room cupboard, and stair rail and turned balusters. Floors, walls, and ceilings are also intact. The graceful open string stairway is largely intact, although vandals have recently pulled some of the railing apart. (The pieces remain and will be repaired.) Perhaps this superb house's best features are to be seen on the interior; these certainly include the doors, stained and grained to resemble mahogany and complete with their original brass hardware; further, all mantles are well proportioned and at least one has its original bluish-gray marblizing. The

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center hall plan and the integrity of detailing are repeated on all other stories; the attic floor is of interest: it is entirely covered in plaster, some two inches thick.

Set back about six feet from the main block, the kitchen wing has two unequal sized room on the ground floor and a single bedroom above, reached by a corner winder stair. The large cooking fireplace is centered in the east wall and is crowned with a segmental arch formed by a double row of header bricks. The chimney is flush with the exterior wall.

Restoration architect James Wollon, AIA, inspected the house and grounds in November 1973, shortly after the present owner acquired the property, and determined that "the south front lawn, now a pasture, was shaped with a definite curving fall defining a terrace on which the house is built, with a set of stone steps down to the fall on axis with the house." The steps are still in place--although in a sorry state of repair--but it is difficult to discern the other

1

Report by James Wollon, AIA, on file at the Harford County Department of Planning and Zoning, Bel Air.

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landscape features, although such details would have been in keeping with the sophistication evinced in the house itself. It is certainly not unreasonable to suppose that the taste that created the grained doors and marblized mantles would have demanded a garden designed and planted to complement the architecture. The house is now approached off-axis from the west by means of a rutted farm road.

Also included on the property are a circa 1900 frame barn and a metal mobile home. Both resources do not contribute to the significance of the property.

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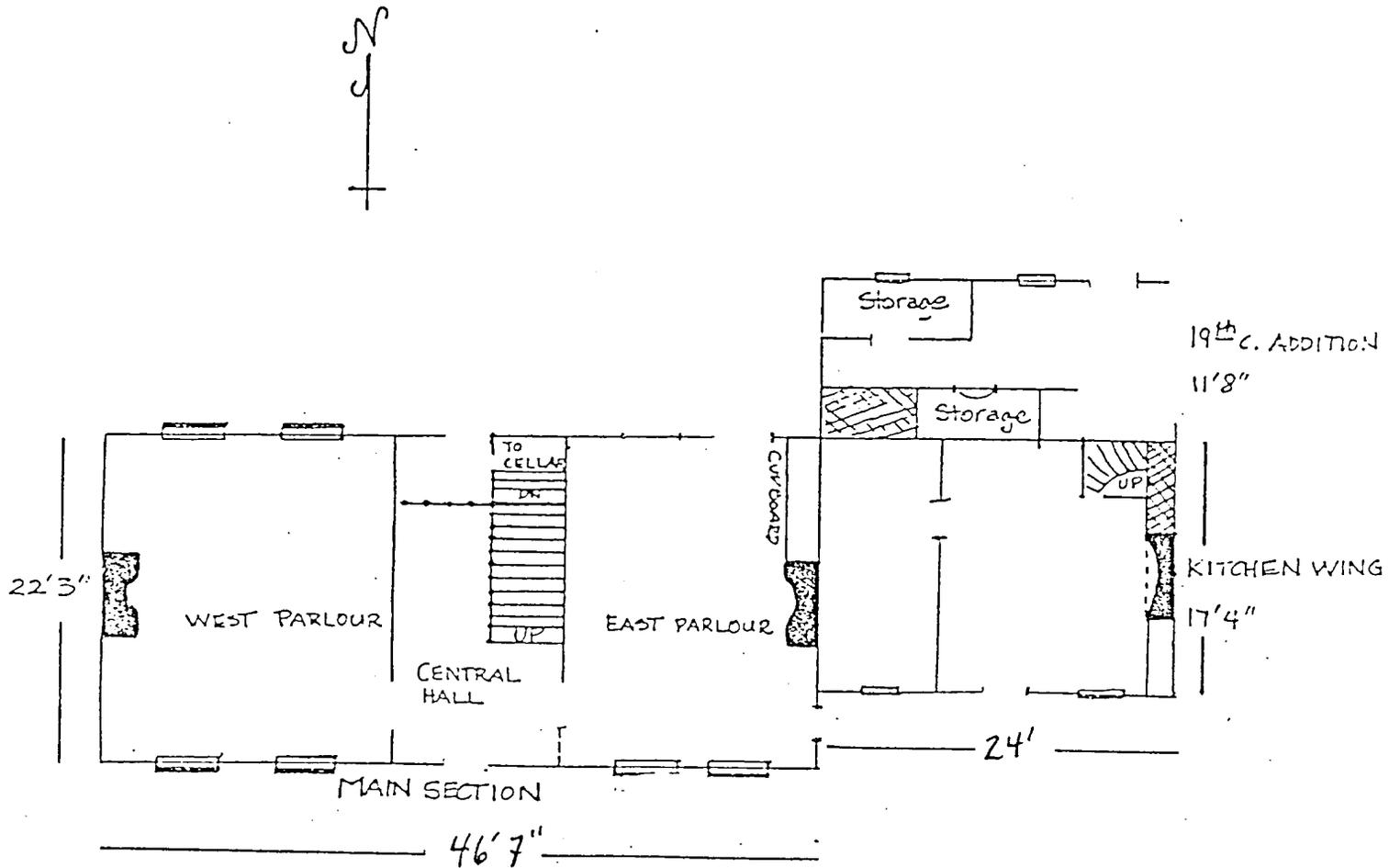
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First Floor Plan

1989



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HISTORIC CONTEXT:

MARYLAND COMPREHENSIVE HISTORIC PRESERVATION PLAN DATA

Geographic Organization: Piedmont

Chronological/Developmental Periods:

Rural Agrarian Intensification	A.D. 1680-1815
Agricultural-Industrial Transition	A.D. 1815-1870

Prehistoric/Historic Period Themes:

Architecture, Landscape Architecture, Community Planning
Government/Law

Resource Type:

Category: building

Historic Environment: rural

Historic Functions and Uses: DOMESTIC/single dwelling

Known Design Source: none

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HISTORY AND SUPPORT

Colonel John Streett was a son of Thomas Streett, who emigrated to what is now Harford County from England in the early 18th century. Thomas amassed large landholdings--roughly 1500 acres² -- in the still-unsettled northern reaches of the county including his 1759 patent for 700 acres called "Street's Hunting Ground." It was on this tract that John Streett was born in 1762.³ Streett seems to have embarked on a farming career and began acquiring land in his own right; by the time of the Federal Direct Tax of 1798, he had put together by purchase and patent 1320 acres. (He would inherit Thomas's holdings in 1823.) He was then cited as living in an "11 x 28 1-story house, wood." In 1801 he purchased the land--then unimproved--on which he would build this house.⁴

In 1786 John Streett had married Martha St. Clair, and both surnames are perpetuated in the area: note St. Clair Bridge over

²

1798 Federal Direct Tax, typescript on file with Planning and Zoning.

³

C. Milton Wright, Our Harford Heritage, (Bel Air, Privately Printed, 1967), pp. 84, 86, 89, 226.

⁴

Harford County Deed Book JLGP Page 540.

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Deer Creek (roughly 1000 yards from the John Streett house) and the post office hamlet of Streett (zip code 21154).

John Streett's vast landholdings naturally thrust him into a leadership role in the county; he regularly served throughout the '90s on the county Grand Jury⁵ and it was almost inevitable that he should eventually enter politics, which he did and was elected to represent Harford County in the Maryland legislature in 1799. He was re-elected continuously. In 1811 the Bel Air Academy was incorporated as the county's first school; its first Board of Trustees was appointed in 1812, and John Streett was among them.⁶ The Academy's "curriculum was soundly classical following the traditional American practice for college-bound boys" and, thanks at least to Streett and the other trustees, the school "produced some of Harford County's most prominent citizens."⁷

⁵ Walter W. Preston, History of Harford County, (Baltimore: The Sun Book Company, 1901), pp. 84, 86, 89, 226.

⁶ Preston, Harford, p. 276.

⁷ Marilyn M. Larew, Bel Air: The Town Through its Buildings, (Bel Air: Town of Ble Air, 1981), pp. 28-29.

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When the War of 1812 broke out, Streett resigned his seat in the legislature and joined the army, "commissioned as Lieutenant Colonel of the 7th Regiment of Cavalry,"⁸ which was made up of men from Harford and Baltimore counties.⁹ After taking Washington, the British moved on Baltimore in September, 1814. To save the city "a call was made for troops from the surrounding counties. Colonel Streett marched with his cavlary from Harford County to the defence of that city, and served with the brigade of cavalry at North Point,"¹⁰ there "joining Howard's troop from Baltimore County."¹¹ The British invasion of Baltimore was two-pronged and amphibious; the Battle of North Point halted it on land just as Fort McHenry halted it on water; Colonel Streett's action at that crucial time resulted in his being "commended by Major General Smith for his bravery and efficiency in action."¹² The commendation reads: "Fatiguing as were the duties imposed on the United States Cavalry

⁸ Wright, Harford, p. 421.

⁹ Frederick Lee Cobourn, Brodnax Cameron, Sr., et al., A Short Biography of Those Whose Portraits Adorn the Walls of the Court House, Bel Air, (Bel Air: Harford County Bar Association, 1942), p. 51.

¹⁰ Preston, Harford, P. 226.

¹¹ Cobourn and Cameron, Portraits, p. 51.

¹² Wright, Harford, p. 421.

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under Lieutenant Street [sic], they were performed with alacrity¹³ and promptness highly honorable to officers and men." Peace secured, Streett retired to his Harford County estate and spent his remaining years farming and bringing up his brood of nine children. He was also re-elected¹⁴ as a member of the General Assembly.

It is certain that Streett built this house around 1805. He bought the land the house is on from one Nathan Smith on November 17, 1801; Smith had patented the vacant land in 1795.¹⁵ By the time of the 1814 Tax, Street was listed as being worth \$20,662 with a two-story house measuring 42' by 21' and a kitchen and these dimensions corresponds nicely with those of the existing house, i.e., 46' by 22', plus kitchen. Streett sold the house and 300 acres ("which forms the farm on which the said John Streett now resides" and is the "same and all" as the land Streett bought from

13

Cobourn and Cameron, Portraits, p. 51. See also an article in the August 23, 1989 AEgis on "Harford's Colonel John Street was a Hero in War of 1812."

14

Cobourn and Cameron, Portraits, p. 51.

15

Patent recorded in the Maryland Hall of Records, Annapolis.

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Nathan Smith in 1801) to his son Abraham in 1834¹⁶ thus ending its period of significance.

Many local historians have commented on the fact that Streett's house dates to his years of service in the state legislature, and attribute the house's high style and "sophisticated details" (in architect James Wollon's words) to influences Streett would have¹⁷ experienced "in the fashionable city of Annapolis."

He certainly wouldn't have drawn inspiration from his rural and remote Harford County neighbors. The grander 18th-century houses in the county, i.e., the better known grand center-hall houses such as Sion Hill (c. 1795; HA-525) and Sophia's Dairy (1769; HA-5; National Register), were both near navigable water and important ports (Havre de Grace and Bush, respectively) making importation of fashionable designs easy while the Streett house is far inland: Streett almost had to have drawn inspiration first-hand from his travels. Further, those earlier houses have a monumentality that is

16

Harford County deed HD17/262.

17

Natalie Shivers, Historic Sites Survey Form for the Streett House, March 1980.

See Continuation Sheet No. 8.7

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quite different from the Streett house's attenuated proportions; moreover, neither can match the Streett house's grained doors and marblized mantles.

Nor do any of the county's smaller colonial-era dwellings such as the Rigbie House (c. 1750; HA-4; National Register) and Joshua's Meadows (standing by 1747; HA-356; National Register) resemble the Streett house: their scale is too diminutive; their plans are too "folk"; their masonry lacks flourishes such as the Streett house's beaded mortar joints.

Olney (referred to above) when built was similar in scale and material but the present Olney is the product of several remodelings and enlargements. Oak Farm (1821; HA-149; National Register) and Woodside (1823; HA-693; National Register) are later, smaller, and of stone. (It should be pointed out that Woodside, in its baseboards, boasts the county's only other known example of Federal marblizing.) The frame Mount Adams (HA-1074; 1817; National Register) was built by Streett's fellow War-of-1812-hero, Captain John Adams Webster but in plan and construction it lacks any attempt at the high style Street achieved in his house.

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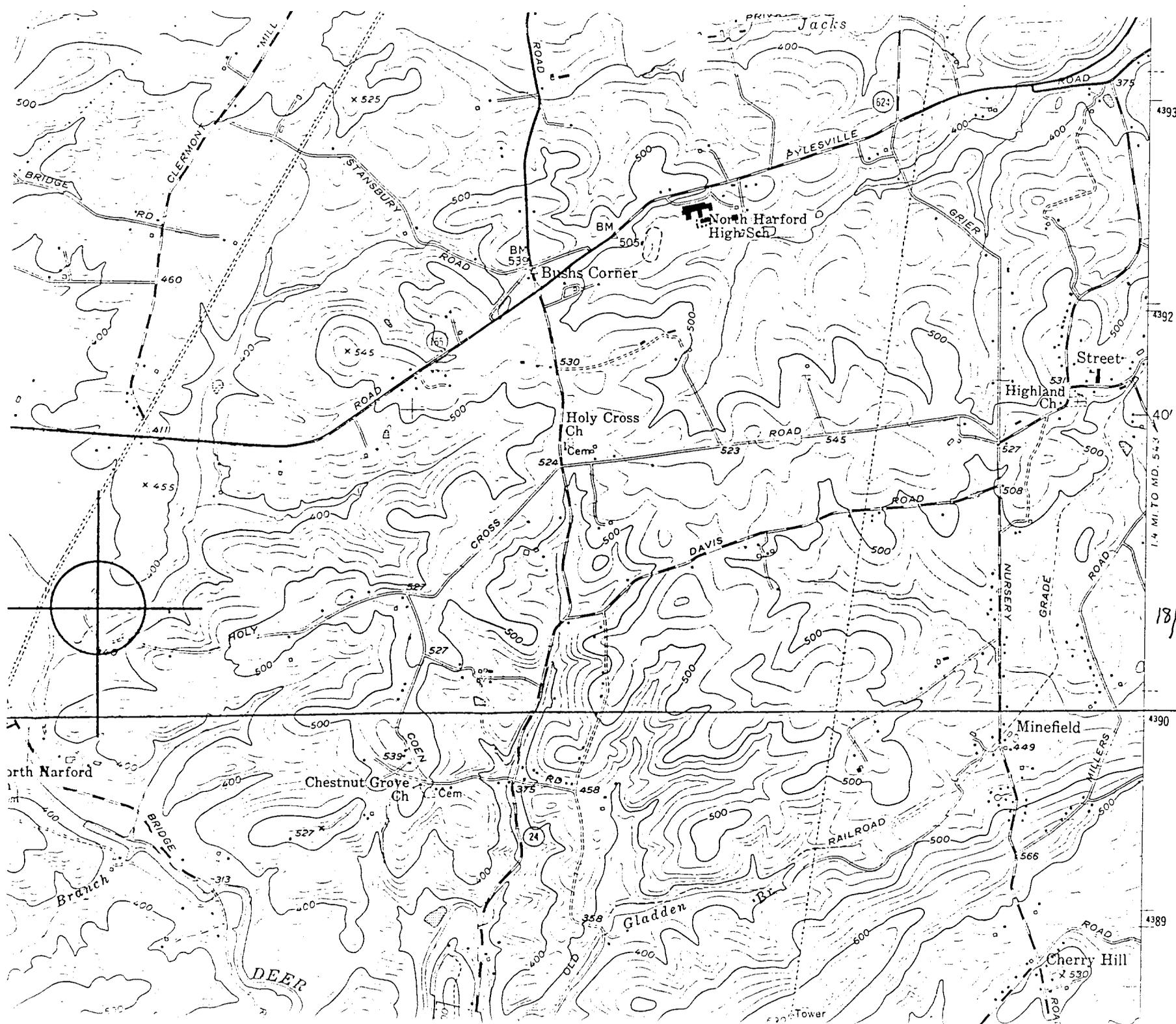
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Colonel John Street's son, Abraham, died in 1867 and his children had to resort to an equity case to divide the property. The Colonel John Streett House--called "the Home Farm" in the case¹⁸ --managed to remain in the Streett family until 1955, when Joseph M. Streett sold the 276-acre farm to Bower C. and Floretta T. Reeves; the¹⁹ Reeves' son and daughter-in-law aquired the property in 1972 and are planning the important yet little-known house's long overdue restoration.

18
Harford County Equity Case #1815.

19
Deed HDC915/848.



Streett, Col.
John, House

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Harford Co.
Maryland

18/376950/4390.530