

United States Department of the Interior
National Register of Historic Places

HA-356

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39

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic Joshua's Meadows

and or common

2. Location

street & number 300 North Tollgate Road N/A not for publication

city, town Bel Air N/A vicinity of congressional district Second

state Maryland code 024 county Harford code 025

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" 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"/> N/A	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name Mrs. Brodnax Cameron, Sr.

street & number Joshua's Meadows, 300 North Tollgate Road

city, town Bel Air vicinity of state Maryland 21014

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Harford County Courthouse

street & number Main Street

city, town Bel Air state Maryland 21014

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

name Maryland Historical Trust
Historic Sites Survey has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date 1982 federal state county local

depository for survey records Maryland Historical Trust

city, town Annapolis state Maryland

7. Description

Condition	Check one	Check one
_____ excellent	_____ unaltered	<u>X</u> original site
_____ good	<u>X</u> altered	_____ moved
_____ fair	_____ deteriorated	_____ date _____
	_____ ruins	
	_____ unexposed	

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

DESCRIPTION SUMMARY

Joshua's Meadows is basically a three-part house that sits on a hillock overlooking the Winters Run Valley, about one mile southwest of Bel Air, Harford County, Maryland. The two oldest sections are Flemish bond brick, T-shaped, gable roofed, circa 1750, and one of the half-dozen oldest extant structures in Harford County; the third section is native fieldstone, is attached to the eastern stroke of the T, dates to 1937, but is sympathetic with the older sections. The original T-shape house consists of two parts - a main two-and-one-half-story 20' X 40' house and a one-and-one-half-story 16' X 20' kitchen wing. The plan of both sections remains untouched. The main house has two rooms per floor on all floors (the plan being the same on all floors); all partitions are of brick; there are inside gable-end fireplaces in all rooms and there is an enclosed winder stair between each ground and second story room. The kitchen wing has one room per floor, a large, plain, walk-in fireplace in the south wall on the ground floor (the second floor was unheated) with an enclosed winder stair in the eastern half of the north wall. There are no cellars in the original sections. The stone wing has a full cellar (to contain the modern heating system), a modern kitchen on the ground floor, and a bedroom with bath above. To the side stands an eighteenth century two story plastered brick slave quarter. An early frame privy to another side.

GENERAL DESCRIPTION

The earliest mention of the house is in a deed dated November 22, 1752 in which Thomas Bond, who owned several thousand acres and many mills, gave his son, Joshua, one-half of the land patented as "Poplar Neck", the land being "where the said Joshua's dwelling is." On the same day Thomas gave the other half of Poplar Neck to another son, Jacob, and this conveyance makes no reference to any dwelling. (See also Significance section.) (Joshua had also received land from his father in 1747 and 1748, but the 1752 deed is the first to refer specifically to the house.) The 1798 Direct Tax cites Buckler Bond (one of Joshua's sons and Joshua's Meadows then-owner (see significance) as owning one house 20' X 40', one kitchen 20' X 16', and one out house 20' X 10'. These correspond exactly to the T-shaped house-cum-kitchen and the nearby out building known as the slaves quarters.

The kitchen was, as noted, originally a separate structure. Sometime in the nineteenth century the kitchen was joined to the main house by a connecting link and by a passage built along the east side of the kitchen and connecting link. (The roof of the link was constructed so that the roof seems to be an extension of the kitchen roof and the appearance from the outside does not belie this; the structural members, however, show this not to be so.) In 1937 the link was made into an entrance hall and the passage was opened to become a porch. The owners left all original woodwork - chair rail and closets in the passage; chair rail and mantel in the link - intact. In 1937 the kitchen was turned into the main living room. As it had only two very small casement windows still in place on the north wall, a bay window was put in the south wall and a single pane window was put in the west wall to face the extensive view. The old kitchen (now the living room) and the upstairs bedroom still have all their original wrought iron hardware: strap hinges on the (former) outside door, H & L hinges on the door to the stairs to the bedroom, and the cooking crane in the fireplace; the kitchen's original beaded beam ceiling was exposed.

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GENERAL DESCRIPTION (Continued)

The two downstairs rooms in the main section are now used as a dining room and study. Each room has its original mantel and both are surprisingly intricate for mid-eighteenth century Harford County (doubtless reflecting the Bonds' status and wealth). The study's mantel is the more elaborate and has fluted pilasters with rope-and-bead trim. The dining room mantel has 3/4-engaged fluted columns. All original hardware - including the signed mortis locks - is still in place, as are the original 6-panel doors. Originally the two ground floor rooms had fully-panelled fireplace walls. The panelling was removed in the nineteenth century but the Camerons reinterpreted the panelling in the study using motifs Mr. Cameron had seen during his youthful visits to pre-restored Williamsburg.

The second story in the main section has two bedrooms. The eastern one has its original mantel, but the door and closet trim dates to the mid-nineteenth century (bulls-eye blocks). Doors to the bedrooms have their original hardware; the mantel in the second bedroom was removed in 1937 to allow for the construction of a powder room.

The 1937 stone kitchen wing, built off the study, measures two-bays-by-two-bays and is roughly the same size as the original kitchen wing. All windows on both floors are casement and thus refer to the original casement windows in the original kitchen. The new wing has a kitchen on the ground floor and a bedroom (with sleeping porch) and bath above. The wing is fully sympathetic in scale, detail, and feeling to the rest of the house and was designed by Brodnax Cameron, Sr., when he and Mrs. Cameron bought the house; Mr. Cameron also planned the restoration and adaption of the entire structure, working with the notes of Baltimore architect Lawrence Ewell.

The other building identified in the 1798 tax records is a two-story, plastered brick, mid-eighteenth century slaves quarters which stands just south of the original kitchen. Currently used for storage, it has its original batten door and one-room-per-floor plan. There is a modern garage and storage area built to the south of it but they do not disturb the quarters' integrity.

The rest of the nominated acreage contains an early privy, now a garden shed.

3. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> social/
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	humanitarian
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates ca.1750 (1937 add.) Builder Architect Thomas Bond

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph) Criterion: C, B

SIGNIFICANCE SUMMARY

Joshua's Meadows is among the oldest and most structurally original structures in Harford County. It also has extremely sophisticated woodwork and detailing rare for its date in this back-water part of the county. This is not surprising, however, because Joshua's Meadows has had three principal periods of ownership - the Bond, Hays, and Cameron families - each characterized by figures who were pre-eminent in the agricultural, molinographical, commercial, industrial, legal, and social histories of Harford County in their respective periods: mid-eighteenth century, early-nineteenth century, and mid-twentieth century. The house's owners have, over the past 230 years, farmed thousands of acres, operated mills, run inns, supervised courthouse construction, founded libraries and schools, subdivided acreage to create modern Bel Air, opened turnpikes between Bel Air and Baltimore, contributed land for four Quaker meeting houses, and more. This is reflected in the house, whose owners have guided the county's change from its eighteenth century agricultural base through its early nineteenth century period of commercial growth, to the governmental service center it is today.

HISTORY AND SUPPORT

The Bonds, who built most of the house, were one of Harford (then Baltimore) County's great land-owning and milling families. The first Bond to take up land in what is now Harford County was Peter Bond who moved into the area from Anne Arundel County in 1660 (Preston 206). He patented tracts ranging from present day Bel Air to the banks of the Patapsco at Gwynn's Falls. Thomas died in 1705 leaving four sons: Peter (the eldest and heir), Thomas, William, and John (Preston 206).

Thomas had, however, already struck out on his own. In 1700 he had married Anna Robertson of Anne Arundel County, and in 1707 had patented Knave's Misfortune near present day Emmorton, Harford County. Thomas's other Harford County patents include Bond's Forest (1714, 3000 acres), Cheapside and Poplar Ridge (3000 acres), and Bond's Manor (1705, 5000 acres). Thomas sold part of that last tract to Captain Thomas Cresap (interestingly, an ancestor of Mrs Cameron, Joshua's Meadows present owner) and thus became involved with the Calverts' boundry dispute with William Penn.

According to Preston's History of Harford County, Thomas was "a member of the celebrated grand jury which protested against the removal of the county seat from the Forks of the Gunpowder to Joppa, denouncing it as 'a palpable, nefarious grievance to the county.'" (207)

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HISTORY AND SUPPORT (Continued)

Thomas also built Joshua's Meadows. On December 31, 1726, he purchased the 1000-acre tract, Poplar Neck, from Richard Dorsey for 130 pounds sterling (B. Co. Deed I.S. No. IK, p. 322). Poplar Neck encompassed lands on both banks of Winters Run and the Bonds used the land by the Run to build several prominent mills (shown on the 1794 Griffith map of Maryland). Presumably acknowledging his mortality, Thomas began to divide his holdings among his children in the mid-eighteenth century. In 1749 he conveyed part of Bond's Forest to his sons, Thomas II and John; that land included "a house now built intended for meeting house for the poeple called Quakers to worship God in, and also a school house already built." The records of the Gunpowder Meeting show acceptance of this deed in 1753 - this was the beginning of the Little Falls Meeting House (NR) (Preston 206, Papenfuse, 12). He divided the Poplar Neck tract on November 11, 1752, splitting it in half: to son Joshua "one half of Poplar Neck where the said Joshua's dwelling is. . ." (ref. Book TR No. D, page 465); the other half, with no mention of any dwelling to another son, Jacob (Book TR no. D, page 463). Joshua's Meadows was so close to the mills - about one-half mile - that it is impossible not to assume that Thomas intended the house to serve as the seat for Joshua to whom he gave the mills. Thomas had been giving land to Joshua since 1747; these deeds - and one patent - refer to Winters Run, to the mills, and to "Joshua's Meadows", BUT none specifically mentions a house until 1752 (note, for example Patent in book BT & BY #3, p. 146, 1747). Nonetheless, Preston, in his History dates Joshua's Meadows "near the tollgate, one mile west of Bel Air" to 1732 (p. 32). This would have been six years after Thomas bought Poplar Neck, so the earlier date would be possible. (Thomas's own seat was at Knave's Misfortune.)

Parenthetically, the most prominent of the Bonds was probably Joshua's brother (and recipient of the other half of Poplar Neck), Jacob, who died in November 1780. He was a member of the Committee of Harford County in the Revolution and was a captain of Company Eleven of the Harford Militia in the Revolution. Jacob represented Harford County in the convention that met in Annapolis in 1776 to prepare the state's constitution; he had earlier gone to Annapolis to attend the convention of June 22, 1774, which protested the tax on tea. (Preston 207)

More pertinent to Joshua's Meadows, Joshua willed the house and land to his son, James (ref. Will Book 12, page 68), who proceeded to sell it to his younger brother, Buckler, on September 29, 1790 (HAR CO DEEDBOOK JLG I/405) for £2500; the deed also included "5 lottes in Belle Air", re-emphasizing the Bonds' importance to the newly-founded county seat. The several Bonds' landholdings take in much of the present day town and the family is recognized in the name of one of the town's two principal north-south thoroughfares: Bond Street. It is Buckler Bond who is listed in the '98 Direct Tax as owning the two-part house.

SEE CONTINUATION SHEET #3

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The Bond brothers then began selling their patrimony. Marilyn Larew notes in her book, Bel Air: The Town Through Its Buildings: "The famous old Eagle Hotel across Bond Street from the courthouse, often reputed to have been built as early as 1718, was the first inn built in town. The hotel was part of a 52-acre parcel, part of Joshua's Meadows Enlarged, which Major William Richardson, veteran of the Defense of Baltimore in the War of 1812, purchased from Buckler and Joshua Bond for \$132.00 on July 30, 1821." Later in the 1820s, Buckler began selling his mills and, eventually, even Joshua's Meadows house, to Thomas Hays: on June 14, 1823, Buckler sold Hays "and on Winters Run about a mile and a quarter from Bel Air with all the appurtenances, to wit, the dwelling house and the mill . . . part of Joshua's Meadows, Joshua's Meadows Enlarged, Bond's Addition to Joshua's Meadows, Poplar Neck, all contiguous to each other . . ." for \$5000. (HD 7, p. 144; HD 7, p. 147)

Thus begins the second, the commercial, period in Joshua's Meadows's history. The Hays-Jacobs family was, without question, the pre-eminent family in Bel Air in the early and mid 19th century. Hays's activities are well documented in Larew's book; briefly, however, he was "Commissioner for building the fireproof edifices" (courthouse additions in town) between 1832-37; he owned the "inn at the northwest corner of Main Street and the Baltimore Pike". (p. 23) He was one of the "two first managers of the Baltimore and Harford Turnpike Company, which was chartered in 1816 . . . [In] 1818 Thomas Hays offered to buy a substantial block of stock if the road came into town [Bel Air] via Hays's Union Tavern rather than along Bond Street to the courthouse." (p. 26) In 1846 Bel Air's residents decided to pave the town's roads: Thomas Hays managed the project (28). The second story bedroom woodwork and the passage and link connecting the old kitchen to the main house date to the Hays era. (See Description.)

The Civil War years were less successful for Thomas who died in 1861; his brother Nathaniel acquired Joshua's Meadows but died in 1863. Nathaniel's heirs then got embroiled in a battle with his creditors and, on April 24, 1871, his estate was divided and sold. Of the five parts the Bond-Hays tract was split into, only the present Joshua's Meadows parcel remains undeveloped; the rest contains housing developments, bowling alleys, a Montgomery Wards shopping center, used car lots and all the other expressions of mid 20th century vernacular building.

This is doubtless due to the house's third (and present) set of owners, the late Brodnax Cameron, Sr., and his wife, Julia Duryea Sprigg Cameron. The land changed hands several times after 1871 and the house deteriorated rapidly until 1937 when Mrs. Cameron spied its irregular outline while riding the Maryland and Pennsylvania railroad from Bel Air to Baltimore. The Camerons bought the property on May 14, 1937 (Deed Book SWC 246. p. 56) and began the restoration process, which was finished that fall. (See Description.) They continued the practice of keeping Joshua's Meadows at the center of Harford County; among the Camerons' many pro bono activities must be numbered Mrs. Cameron's leadership in creating a public library system for the county and Mr. Cameron's involvement in founding the Harford Day School. Mr. Cameron, while trained as an architect, was a lawyer and was unnamed dean of the Harford County Bar; he included among his clients baseball magnate Larry MacPhail and the Bata Shoe Company (the county's largest private employer and on whose Board

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of Directors he sat from 1954 until his death in 1980). The Camerons reared their three sons at Joshua's Meadows and the oldest, Brodnax Cameron, Jr., Circuit Court Judge for Harford County, and his wife live in a modern house on part of the acreage (not part of this nomination).

Brodnax Cameron died on June 18, 1980; exactly one week later, Bradford Jacobs, a Hays descendant and an editor of the Baltimore Sunpapers, wrote a piece that appeared on the editorial page of the Evening Sun: "Brodnax Cameron: Harford Hero". Jacobs notes: "Brodnax Cameron . . . at the end last week of a long and fruitful life . . . stood foremost at the Bel Air Bar and throughout the now-vigorous Harford County community he had done much to stir to life . . . Never mind that he drew and held clients of national and international scope. He never let legal glitter blind him to life's simplicity . . . And if he was a lawyer who could crackle with the best, he was more than a lawyer, too. He was first of all a man of deep sensitivity and human perception . . . He led the fight to found an excellent new school on Harford, to start Bel Air's first library, to arrange a historical society for the county. A stream of younger lawyers found him jovially ready with professional advice. Three Cameron law partners under his tutelage made their way to the judicial bench, one of them [the late C. Stanley Blair] the federal. Another, closer partner was his wife, Julia, a fountainhead of bubbling energy. Some say Julia outdid Brodnax in chivvying Harford out of the almost colonial complacency--huntin', shootin', fishin', old family ruminations--they found there and into the lively sense of itself it now displays . . ."

"Embracing all was Joshua's Meadows, his 200-year-old Bel Air house set on a woody knoll off Tollgate Road. Its casualness was overriding but deceptive: in reality it was and remains a rare potpourri--here a brace of antique Spanish chairs fringed in handcut leather, there a serene Venetian painting, yonder an early American woodbox, its years softened by patina . . ."

"How tempting it is to boast of this remarkable man as a true-born Harford countian, a proper Marylander reared and published. But he was not. Instead, he was one of a thin trickle of first-family Virginians who made it north to Maryland before or between the two world wars, who then caught on and flourished and gave their adopted communities more than they got . . ."

Brodnax Cameron and his wife Julia, that "fountainhead of bubbling energy" are responsible for saving and restoring Joshua's Meadows, a house that has always been at the center of Harford County's goings-on. They have preserved the heritage of the Bonds and their agricultural interests, and of the Hayses and their civic and business interests, while adding an undefinable but unmistakable worldly sophistication.

(The Aegis, Bel Air's weekly paper, featured Joshua's Meadows in a June 15, 1961, article noting that "the Cameron hideaway has been featured on many Maryland House and Garden Pilgrimages . . . Spotted accidentally by Mrs. Cameron, restored and refurnished, Joshua's Meadows certainly belongs among Harford County's most distinguished homes."

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BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

The boundaries are drawn to maintain the somewhat formal landscape setting in which the house stands but to exclude the uncultivated fields that surround this area. The formally landscaped area is irregular in shape with edges blurred in some sections. The borders for the nomination are arbitrary lines drawn approximating the edges of the formally landscaped area.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Am 39

Maryland: A New Guide to the Old Line State, E. Papenfuss et al. (eds) (1976)

Bel Air: The Town Through Its Buildings, Marilyn M. Larew (1981)

Old House Book of Kitchens and Dining Rooms, L. Grow (ed), (1981)

History of Harford County, W.W. Preston (1901)

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property Approximately one acre

Quadrangle name Bel Air, MD

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

UMT References

A

1	8	3	8	2	6	6	0	4	3	7	5	3	4	0
Zone		Easting				Northing								

B

Zone		Easting				Northing								

C

Zone		Easting				Northing								

D

Zone		Easting				Northing								

E

Zone		Easting				Northing								

F

Zone		Easting				Northing								

G

Zone		Easting				Northing								

H

Zone		Easting				Northing								

Verbal boundary description and justification

The boundaries are delineated on the attached map.

For boundary justification, see Continuation Sheet #5.

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

state N/A code county code

state code county code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Christopher Weeks

organization Maryland Historical Trust

date February 1982

street & number 21 State Circle

telephone 269-2212

city or town Annapolis

state Maryland 21401

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national state local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature



title STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER

date 11-18-82

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I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

date

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

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 Harford Co., Md.
 A. 18/382660/
 4375340

