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United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

HA-154

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received

date entered

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 Prospect; Olney

and or common Olney (preferred)

2. Location

street & number 1001 Old Joppa Road N/A not for publication

city, town Joppa N/A vicinity of Second Congressional District

state Maryland code 24 county Harford code 025

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
___ district	___ public	X occupied	X agriculture	___ museum
X building(s)	X private	___ unoccupied	___ commercial	___ park
___ structure	___ both	___ work in progress	___ educational	X private residence
___ site	**Public Acquisition**	**Accessible**	___ entertainment	X religious
___ object	___ in process	X yes: restricted	___ government	___ scientific
	___ being considered	___ yes: unrestricted	___ industrial	___ transportation
	X not applicable	___ no	___ military	___ other:

4. Owner of Property

name Mr. and Mrs. C.B. Holden Rogers; Dr. William H.B. Howard; Mrs. Abraham Flatau

street & number 1001 Old Joppa Road

city, town Joppa N/A vicinity of state Maryland 21085

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

title Historic American Buildings Survey has this property been determined eligible? ___ yes X no

date 1936 X federal ___ state ___ county ___ local

depository for survey records Library of Congress

city, town Washington state D.C.

7. Description

HA-154

Condition		Check one	Check one
___ excellent	___ deteriorated	___ unaltered	X original site
X good	___ ruins	X altered	___ moved date N/A
X fair	___ unexposed		

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

Number of previously listed National Register properties included in this nomination: 0

Number of Resources

Contributing	Noncontributing	
14	2	buildings
1	0	sites
0	0	structures
0	0	objects
14	2	Total

Original and historic functions and uses:

X agriculture	___ museum
___ educational	X residential
___ entertainment	___ religious
___ government	___ scientific
___ industrial	___ transportation
___ military	___ other:

DESCRIPTION SUMMARY

Olney, originally patented as Prospect, is a 264-acre working pony farm located along old Joppa and Stockton roads in southern Harford County, Maryland. The tract contains a collection of fifteen structures whose range in style, use, and elegance of design is unsurpassed in Harford County are rare anywhere in Maryland. The main building on the property is a two-and-one-half-story brick house generally called "the mansion". Begun in 1810 as a typical five-bay, Flemish bond, center hall "I" house, with a lower kitchen wing to the south, and continuously dynamic for six generations, this house was evolved into a museum of Maryland architecture incorporating a c. 1850 formal parlor across the rear (east) and a summer kitchen to the south off the 1810 kitchen; these relatively ordinary shells have been embellished by high-style additions salvaged from demolished buildings in Baltimore and Philadelphia, including c. 1815 paneling from the Isaac Van Bibber House in Fells Point, Baltimore, the marble Ionic portico from William Small's c. 1830 Baltimore Athenaeum at Charles and Franklin streets, Baltimore, and a marble bas-relief plaque designed by L'Enfant for Robert Morris's great 1795 house in Philadelphia. Surrounding, and clearly subservient to, this wonderful assemblage is the patentee's early 18th century, two-and-one-half-story stone dwelling and a variety of still-functioning farm structures that in themselves range in style from simple stone stables and frame hay barns to an unusual two-story brick, blacksmith shop with gutter pilasters and a Palladian window,

See Continuation Sheet No. 1

whose present appearance is a result of a 1914 remodeling; in addition, a one-story, frame, gable roof structure, built in 1914 as the Union Chapel School, was moved onto the property in 1980 and re-outfitted as St. Alban's Anglican Church. Any potential dissonance in use or appearance at Olney has been eliminated thanks to a continuity based on property boundaries that have remained nearly intact since America became an independent nation, an intricate system of farm roads and bridle paths which help tie the place together functionally, and by superb landscaping which ranges from a grand boxwood allee' and a venerable cedar-lined driveway to informal clumps of specimen trees, vegetable plots, and cutting beds.

GENERAL

Patented as Prospect, Olney is a 264-acre farm just above the Fall Line in southern Harford County, Maryland, about four miles from the county seat, Bel Air. The property boundaries have remained virtually unchanged since the Revolution and the farm has gradually acquired a collection of buildings—and parts of buildings—and parts of buildings—that make the place a living museum of 200 years of architecture, from the pioneer dwellings of the early eighteenth century through the highest style Federal period architecture (L'Enfant and William Small) to the colonial revival of the 1920s and '30s. Indeed, one of the greatest practitioners of the colonial revival, William Lawrence Bottomley, wrote in 1921 that architects should try to make each facade of a building different, so that it doesn't look like a bandbox:[1] this principle has been thoroughly followed at Olney and the farm is filled with unique vistas and with buildings that do not—in the slightest sense—resemble band boxes. (Identification numbers for these structures follow their mention in the text and refer to their location as shown on the accompanying photogrammetric map of the farm; Maryland Historical Trust Historic Sites numbers—HA-xxx—are included whenever possible.) The photogrammetric map is labeled "sketch map."

[1]Quoted in Arthur Willis Colton, "The Work of William Lawrence Bottomley, Part I", Architectural Record, November 1921, p. 339.

See Continuation Sheet No. 2

The oldest building at Olney is a two-and-one-half story rubblestone bank house (Building No. 10 on the attached photogrammetric map; HA-881) probably built by the tract's patentee, and variously dated to 1720 (H. C. Forman), to "circa 1735" (Historic American Buildings Survey), to "the mid 1700s"[2], to 1758[3], and to 1765[4]. (That last date seems likliest: See Significance section.) The two-bay house measures 21' x 18' and is built over a spring and into a hillside, giving an extra story to the exposed (west) facade. The gable roof runs north-south; there is a single modern dormer window in the center of both slopes and a small, original, 4-light attic window in each end wall. The main windows, four on the west facade, three on the east, have 6/6 sash and square-cut frames, some of which are pegged. A modern, 1-story shed roofed addition spans on the east facade. Door placement has never been changed: entrance has always been gained from the east. Inside, the main floor contains one room with a large fireplace centered in the south wall between original cupboards and a winder stair (rising in the southeast corner). This room is further enriched by exposed ceiling joists and beaded vertical board paneling across the fireplace wall; other walls are roughly plastered. The second and attic stories have been altered slightly to allow 20th century sanitary facilities. The cellar, as noted, is one large room around a spring so that the builder could be sure of a safe and uninterrupted supply of fresh water.

This structure is attributed to John or Edward Norris, Quaker settlers; Edward patented the land in 1705. In 1810 a descendant, John Saurin Norris, "on whom by industry and marriage, greater fortune had smiled"[5], decided to build himself a house more commensurate with his increased wealth. The old house was, as noted, defensive in feeling with its location over the spring; by 1810 Harford County was thoroughly settled, and was

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[2]Jean Ewing, Maryland Historical Trust Historic Sites Inventory form, January 1970.

[3]C. Milton Wright, Our Harford Heritage, (Bel Air: privately printed, 1967), p. 275.

[4]J. Alexis Shriver, "The History of Old Olney", (Baltimore: Waverly Press, 1928), p. 5.

[5]Shriver, p. 5.

See Continuation Sheet No. 3

receptive to the higher style design principles John Saurin Norris would employ.

John Saurin Norris's new and grander house(1; HA-154) is located about 200 yards to the southwest of the old house. It is a 2½ story 5-bay center hall "I" house. Its gable roof runs north-south and each slope is pierced by two gable-roof dormers; tall, interior corbel-capped chimneys rise from each gable end. The five windows on the original entrance (west) facade have 6/6 panes, splayed jack arches, wooden lintels, and wooden shutters; there is a single window on the 2nd story of the north gable end and it is similarly treated. The ground floor has a centrally placed panelled door flanked by graceful, lead-paned sidelights and well-proportioned inset panels, all topped by a broad fanlight; the entire ensemble rests on a stone base and projects slightly to form a small entrance pavilion. Ground floor windows have the same dimensions as those above but, given their main floor location, are appropriately enriched by inset panels which continue from the bottom of the sash to the sill and give the impression of floor-to-ceiling windows.

This house was as straightforward in plan as in shell: two equally dimensioned rooms per floor are separated by a broad through stairhall. There is an original 2-story kitchen wing to the south, and an early 19th century 1-story meathouse/wood shed(2) to the east.

Historian J. Alexis Shriver has written that the 1810 house was built by redemptionist brick makers, masons, and carpenters and that "the bricks were fired from the clay underlying the fertile soil of Prospect, and a typical southern home of the period arose."[6]

In 1850 the farm--renamed Olney by John Saurin Norris's wife--left the Norris-Tyson family and was purchased by Mrs. Josiah Lee. She kept the main block in tact but expanded it to the east by means of a 3-bay, 2-story, flat roof addition to house a formal parlor on the ground floor and bedrooms above. The windows are treated similarly to those in the 1810 section. The addition, a bit ungainly on the exterior, gave Mrs. Lee the large parlor she wanted; it also allowed for views from the

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[6]Shriver, p. 5.

See Continuation Sheet No. 4

parlor to the elaborate gardens which flow from the parlor to the east. The gardens were originally laid out in a formal manner by the Norrises (see Significance), but Mrs. Lee apparently was dissatisfied and, seeking to be up-to-date, adopted a more informal method of planting. Shriver noted that the addition's somewhat ungraceful lines were "softened by the planting of magnolia trees and by the intimacy of the garden itself, with its roses and boxwood walks".[7] The garden with its clump planting, specimen trees, and rambling paths is in itself of note as a fairly early example of the picturesque method of landscaping advocated by men such as A. J. Downing in his Treatise on the Theory and Practice of Landscape Gardening (1841).

The Lee tenure here was brief and in 1861 John Alexander Shriver, father of J. Alexis and grandfather of the present (1986) owner, was looking for a safe Civil War investment, found Olney, and bought it. Shriver immediately added the 1-story L-shaped flat roofed porch which spans the entire west and north facades and rationalized the 3-bay Lee parlor by adding a 2-bay smoking room to give the house its present rectangular dimensions of 5 bays by 4. He also added a 1½ story summer kitchen to the south of the 1810 kitchen.

Shriver's son, J. Alexis Shriver, acquired Olney in 1898, and made it his main residence. He has been described as "Harford's greatest historian"[8] and his interest in Maryland's--indeed, in America's--past took physical form at Olney and resulted in the house one sees today. He had married Harriet Lewis Van Bibber; one of Mrs. Shriver's ancestors was Isaac Van Bibber, who had a great house in Fells Point. When that house was demolished (c. 1905 and no longer owned by either the Van Bibber or Shriver family), the Shrivers rescued the interior woodwork (panelling, mantels, door surrounds) and installed it at Olney where it still ennobles the main ground floor rooms. Of great delicacy and high sophistication, the Fells Point woodwork "can stand with the best of Baltimore's

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[7]Shriver, p. 7.

[8]Wright, p. 433.

See Continuation Sheet No. 5

Adamesque/Federal design".[9] The two most elaborate schemes are probably the arched opening now linking the library and parlor and the series of floor-to-ceiling pilasters and mirrors in the smoking room.

In 1928 Alexis Shriver wrote that "the necessity of making improvements in the rear wing had long been apparent on account of the obvious `period' incongruities and the exterior aspect of the Lee addition on the garden front" and that some work had to be done "in order to bring the house into a harmonious architectural whole".[10]

"Some improvements" is an understatement for what was a monumental undertaking. As noted, Shriver's interest in history was all-encompassing. And he had strong family and social connections with Baltimore. Thus it should be no surprise to learn that when Baltimore's famed Athenaeum Club at Charles and Franklin streets was demolished, Shriver decided to rescue what he could from the wreckage. What he was able to save were the "four monumental monolithic columns"[11] (sic: actually only one is a monolith; see Significance), Ionic in order and made from marble quarried at Beaver Dam near Cockeysville. The Athenaeum Club, without doubt one of the finest buildings ever erected in Baltimore (contemporary accounts describe it as "one of the most splendid buildings in the city" and of "the greatest taste and elegance"[12]) was designed by William Small (1798-1832). Small, who in his youth worked under Benjamin Henry Latrobe, was "the first Baltimorean to be professionally trained as an architect". Of his many commissioned buildings only two, "the Archbishop's Residence---and the McKim Free School" still stand.[13]

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[9]William Voss Elder, III, conversation with Christopher Weeks, February 11, 1986.

[10]Shriver, p. 7.

[11]Shriver, p. 9.

[12]Raphael Semmes, Baltimore as Seen by Visitors, 1783-1860, (Baltimore; Maryland Historical Society, 1953), pp. 98-99.

[13]John Dorsey and James D. Dilts, A Guide to Baltimore
(Footnote Continued)

See Continuation Sheet No. 6

The monumental columns are gracefully proportioned and are embellished with delicate anthemia and other then-fashionable Greek motifs. Shriver had the columns hauled up to Olney and got a Cornell classmate, Edward Donn, F.A.I.A., to give them a new home and to make Olney's garden facade one of the most imposing in this part of Maryland. Donn designed a pediment for the columns and a rich entablature for the Lee wing, cleverly executed to suggest Small's work at the Athenaeum.

In addition, Donn was able to incorporate another Shriver-saved, found-treasure onto the garden facade, a marble plaque, measuring about 5' by 8' and designed by L'Enfant for Robert Morris's great mansion just south of Independence Hall in Philadelphia. The plaque was designed to go over the main door at Morris's mansion and it represents "Art and Literature" by means of two cloud-borne putti, one holding a palette and brush and busily painting, the other reading from an open book. The plaque is further embellished by festoons of draperies and laurel leaves. Morris's well-known financial reversals kept his house from being completed and the plaque was moved to a house in Conshohocken. Shriver found it and brought it to Olney in 1926 (a pendant plaque was rescued and is now at Magnolia Gardens, near Charleston, South Carolina). Shriver and Donn placed the plaque over the door on the garden facade and such placement was "as originally intended by L'Enfant---for the first time since poor Jardella [the sculptor] brought...[it] into being".[14]

The main house also has a (replacement) summer kitchen wing, on the site of the 1861 summer kitchen. To the west of the 1810 kitchen and off the northwest corner of the smoking room is an early 19th century 1-story combination stone and frame meathouse and woodshed (mentioned above), joined to the kitchen by a free-standing arched arcade to create a working service yard. Adjacent and to the rear of the meathouse (still used for curing hams) are kitchen gardens and poultry pens.

A dirt service road leads northerly from the kitchen yard to the mid-19th century 1½ story brick blacksmith shop(3). This

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(Footnote Continued)
Architecture, (Centreville: Tidewater Publishers, 2nd edition, 1981), p. xxv.

[14]Shriver, p. 11.

amusing, high style whimsey measures roughly 20 feet by 15 feet and has a triple-window dormer in the eastern slope of its gable roof; after a 1914 fire, Alexis Shriver added a Palladian window on the ground floor (east facade) and corner gutters that take the form of fluted Doric pilasters.

The blacksmith shop is located where the kitchen service road meets the main farm road, after the latter passes the mansion house and turns 90 degrees to the west to get to six late 19th and early 20th century farm buildings. These include a long, low rubblestone stable and sheep barn(6), frame hay barns(4, 5, 7), and a milkhouse(8).

Proceeding southerly along this farm road, one passes a mid-20th century house(9), located in a grove of trees to the west of the road. This two-story dwelling, the residence of Dr. William H. B. Howard (one of Alexis Shriver's grandchildren) is not of particular architectural note but its casual design is sympathetic to the overall atmosphere at Olney and it certainly adds greatly to the sense of continuity that is so pervasive and important here. This house does not contribute to the significance.

Passing the Howard house and a low, rubblestone, 19th century spring house(11), and crossing a little stream, one arrives at the oldest building on the farm, the stone Norris house, already described.

Moving in the other direction from the mansion house, one crosses lawns and gardens by means of the main farm road to arrive at a secondary set of farm structures--stables(13), a hay barn(12), and a riding ring(14)--built in the early 20th century in connection with Olney's prize winning and internationally known ponies. Mrs. C. B. Holden Rogers (Alexis Shriver's daughter and owner of Olney) has been raising ponies on the farm since 1922 and "her longevity in the pony business is unique: at a recent meeting of the American Shetland Pony Club, she was recognized for raising Shetland ponies longer continuously than anyone in the country." [15] Finally, in 1980 Mrs. Rogers moved the 1914 abandoned Union Chapel School (HA-1528) from its original site across Old Joppa Road, placed it in a field at Olney and rehabilitated it for use as St. Alban's Anglican Church(15). The low,

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[15] The Havre de Grace Record, April 16, 1986.

See Continuation Sheet No. 8

one-story, frame building measures four bays by two and is sheathed in German siding; its gable roof is crowned by a small belfry. This building also does not contribute to the significance.

The complex of houses and buildings are united visually and functionally by a system of farm roads and service lanes and are set off by landscaping which ranges from a formal boxwood allee (on axis with the main house's center hall) and ancient cedars (lining the driveway), to picturesque clumps of specimen trees and rambling paths, to vegetable and cutting gardens. The boxwood garden or allee is shown as item number 16 on the sketch map. The boxwood garden and cedars along the drive are the only formal landscapes although the surrounding tilled and non-tilled fields, clusters of bushes and trees, and fence rows reflect man's design. The property has a rural working farm atmosphere.

8. Significance

HA-154

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

Specific dates c. 1720-1937 **Builder Architect** various

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

Applicable Criteria: B, C
Applicable Exceptions: none
Significance Evaluated: local

SIGNIFICANCE SUMMARY

The significance of Olney is derived primarily from the architectural character of the complex and association with J. Alexis Shriver (1872-1951), a man prominent in local and state historical and agricultural matters who lived at Olney from 1890 until his death. This 264-acre working farm, in continuous use and with virtually unchanged boundaries since the Revolution, contains an assemblage of buildings which together form a 200-year history of area architecture. These range from a simple stone house probably erected by the tract's patentee in the early/mid-18th century to an 1810 5-bay Flemish bond brick "I" house, as well as the rich variety of outbuildings traditionally associated with Maryland agricultural pursuits. In addition, during the first quarter of the twentieth century, Shriver brought to and installed at Olney a remarkable collection of material saved from historic buildings in the region. Included are a 1795 decorative marble panel designed by Pierre L'Enfant, monumental Ionic marble columns from the Baltimore Athenaeum designed by William Small, and delicate interior woodwork from the Federal Period Isaac Van Bibber House in the Fells Point section of Baltimore. These rescued bits are, generally, all that remain of these fine buildings and have turned Olney into a living museum of the building art. Further, all the houses and outbuildings are united visually and functionally by a complex system of farm roads and service lanes and are set off by landscaping which ranges from a formal boxwood allee on axis with the main house's center hall and ancient cedars lining the driveway, to picturesque clumps of specimen trees and rambling paths, to vegetable and cutting gardens. Most of these landscaping features date from the nineteenth century and early twentieth. Shriver, an amateur scientist, introduced agricultural advancements to Harford County, particularly the use of electricity and wrote a series of pamphlets for the U.S. Commerce Department on a variety of agricultural subjects. Shriver is also noted, and possibly most recognized, for his research and publication on local history and historic preservation matters on the state level.

For History and Support, see Continuation Sheet 8-2

HISTORY AND SUPPORT

Olney is a 264-acre working farm with a collection of buildings—and parts of buildings—which together form a 200-year history of regional architecture, from stone pioneer dwellings through high-style Federal period landmarks to early nineteenth-century Quaker "I" houses to the colonial revival of the 1920s. There are other, better known examples of this sort of evolutionary growth in Maryland; one thinks immediately of Wye House and Gross' Coate in Talbot County, Hopewell in Frederick County, and—pointedly—the Shriver Union Mills Homestead in Carroll County; in all these cases (and at Olney, too) one can see in the 1980s a cultural continuum stretching back through generations; in all these cases (and at Olney, too) this is possibly largely thanks to minimal changes in ownership. Finally, and at those better known landmarks, Olney has maintained its property bounds in largely unchanged state since the Revolution and has continually functioned as a working farm of great renown, with production gently shifting from grain to livestock (the famous Olney pony farm of today). In the last respect, Olney's agricultural development has reflected changes that occurred throughout Harford County and in much of adjoining Baltimore and Cecil counties as well.

Earliest data on the tract are elusive due to the lack of surviving primary source material: for example, the normally useful 1798 Federal Direct tax list is missing for this part of Harford County. All secondary sources, however, agree that the oldest building at Olney is the two-and-one-half-story, one room-per-floor rubblestone house, placed more or less in the center of the tract, and built (for excellent defensive purposes) above a still-bubbling spring. H. Chandlee Forman suggests that this house was built by Edward Norris in 1720 on the Prospect tract he patented in 1705, but 1720 would be almost unbelievably early for this part of the state. C. Milton Wright, in Our Harford Heritage claims that John Norris built the house in 1758 on the Prospect tract. Other authorities offer other dates. General stylistic features would tend to support the date c. 1765, which was suggested by the property's 20th century owner J. Alexis Shriver.

It is certain that the Norris', early settlers in the south-central part of Harford County, did patent the land and did

See Continuation Sheet No. 8-3

build the stone house some time in the middle of the 18th century. The Norrises were prominent Quakers and "by intermarriage with the Tysons and other Quaker families in the Gunpowder Falls Quaker district of Northern Maryland" the house and farm "remained in the Norris and Tyson name practically until the Civil War".[16]

The progenitor of the Norris-Tyson family was "Benjamin Norris, the elder, [who] settled in Harford County about 1690". His son, John, "was the father of a large family, seven of whom were sons". One, Bradford Norris, signed the famous Bush Declaration in 1775, "was also a soldier in the Revolutionary Army, and served with a company raised and operated by his brother", Jacob Norris. The brothers "were with Washington in his campaigns in Delaware and [New] Jersey". Another brother, "Benjamin Bradford Norris, was very highly esteemed by the people of his community and was appointed to represent them in the first Legislature that was convened after the State government was established".[17]

In 1803 yet another brother, John Norris, acquired the Olney tract (then still called Prospect) from his cousin Jesse Tyson of Baltimore (deed HDR/198, dated February 7, 1803); the price was £650. Norris was a prosperous Quaker (as were the Tysons; see below) but he evidently changed faiths at some point and became an Episcopalian for he "was one of the incorporators and represented the Church of England when Union Chapel was built near Wilna"[18] (originally directly across the road from Prospect/Olney, but moved onto the farm in 1980). John greatly expanded the estate left him by his father, John, Sr., and when he died in 1827 he owned personal property worth over $1,057, bank stock valued at $2,300, as well as a "lott and warehouse in Baltimore City on Pratt Street at the head of Smith's Dock".

In 1810, John Norris, the younger, began the brick house that has been, ever since, the main dwelling house on the farm. It was a sturdy, simple Flemish bond brick, 5-bay, 2½ story "I"

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[16] Shriver, p. 5.

[17] Walter J. Preston, History of Harford County, (Baltimore: 1901, the Sun Book office), pp. 210-211.

[18] Preston, History of Harford County, p. 210.

See Continuation Sheet No. 8-4

house with two equally dimensioned rooms per floor separated by a broad, through center stairhall.

John Norris was keenly interested in education, serving on Harford County's "first board of School Commissioners". In fact, when he died, he left his entire estate to his wife for her life, but the income was primarily intended to be spent "on the education of our children", not a usual proviso. (Will SR1/491; probated April 8, 1827; his cousin, Isaac Tyson, was Executor.) The appraisers of John Norris's estate made a thorough inventory of his goods, listing his personal property in a methodical, room-by-room manner: "Front Room (Parlour)", "Front Room Upstairs", "Old Dining Room", "Bedroom Over Old Dining room", "Garrett", "Kitchen", and "Sellar". These rooms nicely match those at Olney today. The farm was primarily grain producing, for the Inventory notes several lots of rye, wheat, and oats in varying degrees of maturity, as well as miscellaneous "huskers", scythes, "Wheat-fans", and so on. Livestock was limited to 9 sheep, "12 Hoggs", 5 shoats, a pair of oxen, and 8 cows and heifers. Norris lived in some style, for his furniture includes genteel items such as "1 eight-day clock (mahogany case)" valued at $50, a fair amount of silver, 64 books, and a mahogany sideboard ($20); Baltimore was then the American center for painted "fancy" furniture and Norris was keeping up-to-date for he owned "1/2 doz. yellow fancy painted chairs". The stair was carpeted ("stair carpet and rods") and the walls were given some pictorial enrichment: "9 small pictures" in the Dining Room, "1 Picture (Washington's Tomb)" and "4 small pictures" in the Parlor, as well as a variety of looking- and dressing glasses.

Norris also played an important role in the area's religious history. In 1821 "sundry inhabitants of Harford County had built a house for public worship called Union Chapel, free for all denominations of Christians: "the 1½ acre site, part of the original Prospect tract directly across Old Joppa Road from the entrance to Olney/Prospect was donated by Norris, who also served on the chapel's Board of Trustees. (It was an ecumenical board: Norris was an Episcopalian, as were fellow board members Benjamin Richardson and William Dimmitt; Ralph J. Lee of Jerusalem Mill was a Quaker; there were also two Methodists.) The board searched for a minister and found the noted "evangelist John McVey" who "was entertained in the home of John Norris, living a short distance from the church. Having discussed the 'New Testament Church' with the Norris family, he was persuaded by the

See Continuation Sheet No. 8-5

Norrises...to remain...."[19] The chapel, however, lost its ecumenical flavor quickly: by 1828 the Episcopalians had moved to churches of their own in Kingsville and Bel Air, the Quakers to Fallston, leaving Union Chapel for the Methodists, who have maintained a church on the site (HA-265) to this day.

The Norrises also gave the farm its present name: Mrs. John Saurin Norris (whose husband inherited the estate from his father, John Norris, in 1827) was an ardent admirer of the English poet William Cowper (1731-1800). According to The Cambridge History of English Literature Cowper "drew poetry back to the simple truths of ordinary human nature and the English countryside".[20] Around 1770 Cowper became caught up by the evangelist John Newton (an "evangelist of tremendous power and small tact")[21] and moved to Olney in Buckinghamshire to be near him. While there Cowper wrote his Olney Hymns (London, 1779). This collection contains "several hymns still in use, together with three or four which are still among the best known of English hymns".[22] The Olney Hymns were a great success and after their publication "Cowper entered upon what was probably the happiest time in his life. Carpentering, gardening, horse exercising, walking, and the simple pleasures kept him cheerful." Mrs. John Saurin Norris was a keen admirer of Cowper and changed "Prospect" to "Olney" to honor her favorite poet[23]. These poetic, nature-loving sentiments and sensations have remained appropriate to Olney, Maryland, up to the present day. Mrs. Norris was so smitten by Cowper and the Olney Hymns that she christened one of her unfortunate sons John Olney Norris; the other children were Isaac Tyson Norris and Charles Sydney Norris.

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[19] Harford County Directory, pp. 320, 323; Wright, History, p. 217.

[20] Sir A. W. Ward, ed., The Cambridge History of English Literature, (Cambridge: The University Press, 1964), p. 77.

[21] Ward, Cambridge, p. 80.

[22] Ward, Cambridge, p. 81.

[23] Shriver, "Olney", p. 5.

See Continuation Sheet No. 8-6

In 1842 John Saurin Norris became the first secretary of Harford Mutual Insurance Company, the first insurance company in Harford County and an institution which has been of continuous and great importance to Harford County's economy. Norris "served for the first ten years of the company's existence,...and Olney...has continuously been insured by the company".[24]

So it is clear that the early 19th century Norrises were gentlefolk, who had lived and prospered in Harford County for three generations and had more than rudimentary education and taste. Their fondness for natural beauty led to their beginning the still-extensive gardens here, and Shriver notes "these Norris boys of 1810 to 1840...laid out and planted a boxwood garden at the back to the new house. The original forest in front remained to shelter from the northwest winds; but new types of evergreens, Norway and native spruce, were planted by these young men as a setting for their formal garden".[25]

The land passed back and forth among members of the Norris-Tyson family for several years. The last members of the tribe to own Olney were Isaac Tyson, Jr. (son of the executor of John Norris's will), and his son, Jesse Tyson. These Tysons apparently viewed Olney as an investment. They grew rich in the chrome business and lived in Baltimore County, And, When Jesse Tyson inherited the family enterprises on his father's death, he sold Olney in 1861 to John Alexander Shriver for $10,000 (WHD15/153)[26] .

There was, however, one small break in the Norris-Tyson tenure here; that occurred when John Saurin Norris sold Olney to the Baltimore and Philadelphia banker Josiah Lee for $10,000 in 1850 (HDG36/348). The Lee stay at Olney was brief (Lee's widow sold it back to the Tysons and Norrises in 1857, again for $10,000; ALJ8/275) but it was nonetheless important because the

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[24]Wright, Harford, p. 331; see also Harford County Directory, (Baltimore: State Directories Publishing Company, 1953), p 339.

[25]Shriver, "Olney", p. 5.

[26]See Alan Fisher, County Walks Near Baltimore, (Boston: 1981, Appalachian Mountain Club), pp. 62-63.

See Continuation Sheet No. 8-7

Lees left a physical mark on the main house. Mrs. Lee apparently was dissatisfied with the dimensions of what the present (1986) owner has called "a simple Quaker farmhouse" and decided to put a brick addition across 3/5 of the rear of the house. This held a new and grander parlor on the ground floor and bedrooms above. Alexis Shriver notes, kindly, that "this addition, while delightful on the interior, had few architectural qualities on the exterior overlooking the garden"; Mrs. Lee relandscaped the more formal Norris garden and Shriver says she did this to "soften" the hard lines of her addition, an effect made possible "by the planting of magnolia trees and the intimacy of the garden itself, with its roses and boxwood walks". Most of these plantings--certainly the plans if not the actual plants--remain at Olney and stand as a very early example of the sort of picturesque garden Alexander Jackson Downing advocated in his 1841 Treatise on the Theory and Practices of Landscape Gardening. Downing encouraged rural homeowners to plant so as to provide "a certain spiritual irregularity" by creating "thickets, glades and underwood as in nature". Mrs. Lee did so, and the Shrivers have continued to do so.

Shriver goes on to note that "in 1855 Mrs. Lee's only daughter was married in the new back parlor to Secretary Thomas F. Bayard, and shortly after that, the house again passed to the Norrises and the Tysons"[27], who, as noted, turned around four years later and sold it to the Shrivers, who have owned Olney ever since.

John Alexander Shriver is described by his granddaughter (the present Olney owner) as "a Baltimore businessman who was looking for a safe investment to ride out the Civil War". Land proved to be a good choice. Shriver was born in town at 518 Cathedral Street (Cathedral and Centre; now a parking lot) and valued Olney as a rural retreat. This was the time when many prominent Baltimoreans were discovering the pleasures of spending the summers in Harford County and Shriver was among them. In keeping with this use, he added a low, rambling L-plan porch across two facades. He also squared up the L-shape plan of the house the Lees had created by filling in the open space off the Lees' new parlor: he built a smoking room on the ground floor and

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[27] Shriver, "Olney", p. 7.

HISTORY AND SUPPORT: (continued)

a bedroom above and gave the house its present, rectangular, 5-bay-by-4 dimensions.

Shriver's youngest Son, J (oseph) Alexis, acquired Olney in 1890 and made it his permanent, year-round home. He wrote that "the love of the place has descended [in the Shriver family] with the same intensity which held the Norrises,"[27a] and that seems to be a simple statement of fact, for the farm is still owned and lived on by his daughter, grandchildren, great-grandchildren, and now great-great-grandchild.

The history of Olney is peopled with interesting individuals, but none surpasses J. Alexis Shriver (1872-1951). Although he was educated in agriculture at Cornell, he was "never more than casually interested in farming; he'd keep some sheep and cows, and a few ponies and horses for us to ride, but his real interests were elsewhere".[28] Indeed they were, for Shriver led the life of a gifted gentleman amateur along lines that the greatest of the species, Thomas Jefferson, would have approved of.

Shriver had a real scientific streak in him which around 1905 led him to organize the first telephone company in Harford County (a purely local enterprise to serve Shriver and his immediate neighbors); around 1910, it also led him to build the county's first two electric plants, one near Olney at Wheel, the other two miles away at Lake Fanny; from these he generated electricity for Olney and for the surrounding farms.

Electricity and its possible farm-oriented uses seems to have been of special interest to Mr. Shriver. He was president (and organizer) of The Electric Development Company of Harford County and, at his own expense, he brought in outside experts to lecture county farmers. For example, on February 4, 1908, he wrote his Cornell classmate Jared Van Wagenen, a noted dairy farmer in Schoarie County, New York, "it would be of particular interest at this time to have you...lecture upon the uses of electricity on the farm and also the uses of the milking machine." On January 22 of that year, the Bel Air weekly, The Aegis, contained a story

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27a Shriver, "Olney," p. 7.

28 All conversations: Mrs. C. B. Holden Rogers to Christopher Weeks, July 10, 1986; all clippings and letters in J. Alexis Shriver files at the Harford County Historical Society, Bel Air, Maryland.

See Continuation Sheet No. 8-9

on a local farmer, a Mr. Hooper, who "has become one of Mr. Shriver's strongest disciples in promulgating the slogan `Lead the Electric Life'." Shriver lectured on such subjects himself; in 1915 he wrote Mother Leyori of Mt. St. Agnes College in Baltimore County, "I shall be glad to come to Mount Washington to explain the workings of the [milking] machine" to the nuns, and in 1909 the Wisconsin Experiment Society requested the loan of his milking machine for a fair out in the midwest. His other improvements and modernizations at Olney were well-known enough to cause the president of the James Manufacturing Company (maker of "Sanitary Barn Equipment") to write him on November 29, 1915, "we would like very much to secure good photographs of the exterior and interior of your dairy barn...from which we can make cuts for use in our advertising matter." He also served as President of the Towson and Cockeysville Electric Railway Company (loosely from 1908-1912, judging by letters).

His many talents were recognized by the U.S. Department of Commerce, in 1915, when they hired Shriver as a "special agent"; according to Shriver's daughter, her father often travelled about the world; on his 1915 trip he wrote a series of pamphlets for the Commerce Department on a rather astounding variety of agricultural subjects including the Canned-Tomato Industry in Italy, the Canned-Goods Trade in the Far East (touching on subjects as varied as "Restaurant Life in China", "The Japanese Home", "The Papya and its Uses", and "Trade in Condensed Milk"), and the Pineapple-Canning Industry of the World.

But his longest-lasting interest was American history. In the most recent (1967) history of Harford County, Shriver was described as "Harford`s greatest historian", and this is simply giving the man his due. he was responsible for the state system of historical highway markers ("to the late J. Alexis Shriver of Olney goes the credit for the formulation of plans for the erection of these tablets....[He] was appointed by the Governor of Maryland to search records and place markers with appropriate inscriptions throughout the state".)[29] While doing research, Shriver also discovered several historical curiosities such as the fact that "Havre de Grace was seriously considered for Capital of the United States in 1785". A voluminous writer, Shriver's published works include full-length biographies of

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[29]Wright, History, p. 433.

See Continuation Sheet No. 10

Maryland frontiersman Thomas Cresap (1936) and Dr. John Archer (1932; Archer, a Harford County native, was the first American to get an MD degree) and an account of local Revolutionary War action called Lafayette in Harford County (1931). In 1932 he was appointed head of the Commission for the Celebration of the 200th Anniversary of the Birth of George Washington and he published three volumes describing the "routes and houses visited by George Washington on his trips through Maryland"; there were 127 separate, documented trips and Shriver expanded his comments into a mammoth nine-volume work. (The original, mountain-size manuscript is on file in the Maryland Room of the Enoch Pratt Free Library, Baltimore.) He also served as "General Director of the Maryland Tercentenary Commission" and was responsible for all celebrations and events that marked that important milestone in Maryland's history.

The Baltimore Sun printed a small story on Shriver on December 4, 1933, and noted that "right now Mr. Shriver is devoting virtually all his time to things historical. The celebration of the Tercentenary keeps him busy, and, moreover, he has just been appointed director of historical markers...." C. Milton Wright elaborates:

> To the late J. Alexis Shriver of Olney goes the credit for the formulation of plans for the erection of these tablets. Harford owes to him its highest debt of gratitude for his laborious perseverance in accomplishing this project. His research, coupled with his own knowledge of Harford County, made possible the recording of pivotal events of the past and marked the very spots on which they occurred. Mr. Shriver, probably Harford's greatest historian, served for a time as secretary of the Harford Historical Society and was appointed by the Governor of Maryland to search records and place markers with appropriate inscriptions throughout the State.[30]

Shriver also kept busy as Maryland's advisor to the Historic American Buildings Survey. When HABS District Officer John H. Scarff had to write "the Maryland Historic American Buildings Survey will come to an end for lack of appropriated Federal funds

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[30] The Sun, December 4, 1933, clipping in the Maryland Room, Enoch Pratt Free Library, Baltimore; also Wright, History, p. 433.

See Continuation Sheet No. 11

on February 15, 1937", he took "the occasion to thank the advisory committee, consisting of Mr. J. Alexis Shriver, Mr. Gilman Paul, and Mr. L. H. Fowler, AIA, for their invaluable assistance and advice". In 1934, Shriver was appointed Corresponding Secretary of the Maryland Historical Society and was asked "to study the system of management and the various activities of the Society" and to make suggestions for improvement.

In 1932, Governor Albert C. Ritchie asked Shriver ("if it is not too demeaning") to head the Maryland Committee and to prepare an exhibit for the upcoming Chicago World's Fair, "A Century of Progress". Shriver agreed and proposed reproducing the Old Senate Chamber in Annapolis in plaster and shipping it to Chicago. On December 12, 1932, he wrote Ritchie that he had just returned from Chicago where he had "examined the character of 'period rooms' in the Art Institute and at the new Chicago Historical Society building, both of which were fine, but do not match our Maryland type of interior", and suggested that a reproduction Senate Chamber would "attract a crowd from the bizarre surroundings to something more peaceful and restful". He talked Potthast & Company, a Baltimore firm notable as an important early 20th century manufacturer of reproduction furniture, into providing period furniture free of charge and on January 11, 1932, wrote the Governor, "it might be possible to kill two birds with one stone by utilizing this furniture afterwards in actually refurnishing the Senate Chamber in Annapolis, providing the funds can be found to buy it". All in all, the exhibit would cost an estimated $35,000, which proved too high for on March 3, 1933, Ritchie wrote the World's Fair Commission that "there is no possible chance of this Legislature considering an appropriation". On March 30 a rather vexed Shriver wrote Ritchie, "I did not suppose there was any chance of our State having an exhibit at the Fair" and took the occasion to remind Ritchie about the highway marker program. "I trust that you have not overlooked or forgotten the providing of the $15,000 by some means for the historic section of the State Roads Commission so that we can continue the erection of markers throughout the State." In 1939 he served on the "General Committee" of the Star Spangled Banner Committee (to mark the 125th anniversary of the bombardment of Fort McHenry) and was an organizer and board member of "The American Friends of Lafayette".

He was an early member of the Maryland State Horticultural Society and was able--at least in one case-- to combine his love of nature and history. The wisteria that still rambles across Olney's north and west facades began as a clipping taken from

See Continuation Sheet No. 12

"the old wisteria vine which I got from Montebello". The origin is important for he later gave some cuttings to John W. Garrett at Evergreen; on May 18, 1936 he wrote a chatty note to Mrs. Garrett ("Dear Alice") to ask if the cuttings had taken, noting that because Montebello was "where John was born" the Garretts ought to have some wisteria from there. If the cuttings had died, "I can give you plenty of roots, which your gardener, even at this time of the year, can probably train over your tea house". (He must have been correct because two years later, on May 4, 1938, John Garrett wrote, "Dear Alexis/ The wisteria was magnificent....")

"Things historical" meant for Shriver buildings as well as documents, and he turned Olney into a museum of American architecture by salvaging what he could from some of the area's finest lost landmarks. He centered his efforts primarily on what he called "the obvious `period' incongruity of the exterior aspect of the Lee addition on the garden front" and he set about "to bring the house into a harmonious architectural whole". He got an old friend and Cornell classmate, Edward Donn, F.A.I.A., to help him, and Donn was certainly the man for the job, since he had been responsible for "the rebuilding of Wakefield, the birthplace of George Washington, the restoration of Kenmore...at Fredericksburg, and in whose care the Octagon House in Washington now [1928] rests".[31]

Their work at Olney makes a rather complex story. Around 1830 William F. Small (1798-1832), "the first Baltimorean to be professionally trained as an architect" erected a monumental, classic revival building--"the finest of its type in Baltimore"--at Charles and Franklin streets. This was the well-known Athenaeum Club, described by 19th century visitors as "one of the most splendid buildings in the city" and"of the greatest taste and elegance".[32] Small had been trained in Benjamin Henry Latrobe's "office for two years" and, tragically, while "he designed several structures in the city, only two remain: the Archbishop's Residence...and (with William Howard) the McKim Free School". Wilbur Harvey Hunter underscores this, noting that "Small produced such important buildings as Barnum's City Hotel,

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[31]Shriver, "Olney", p. 7.

[32]Semmes, Baltimore Visitors, pp. 98-99.

See Continuation Sheet No. 13

th Athenaeum, several churches, and a number of town houses--all now gone".[33]

The most striking feature of the Athenaeum must surely have been "the four fluted...columns which were to support the marble architrave"; they were carved from stone that came from the Beaver Dam quarry near Cockeysville[34] .

But the Athenaeum was closed around 1910 and "as the auctioneer disperses the club belongings and the wrecker begins to efface the well-known corner" Shriver came upon the scene. Shriver wrote that he had "a talk with a vandal who is destroying the building" which "brings forth the information that the marble portico will probably be broken into paving stones, leaving the memory only to survive. The offer to give the portico to any owner willing to take it is an attractive bait and the enthusiasm and approval of my architect friend determines that the future abode of the Athenaeun Club portico shall be at Olney".[35]

The journey out to Harford County wasn't without incident:

> The four-horse farm teams were dispatched to Baltimore....A different story unfolded, however, when the time arrived for the transportation of the monolith and its amputated sisters. [T]here were several [bridges] between Baltimore and Olney, none of which would carry even nine tons. Two flat cars on the railroad divided the load of our friend the monolith, and twelve horses and a special wagon transported them from the country railroad station to their final destination, overlooking the boxwood walks of the garden at Olney....
>
> Finally, after various vicissitudes, heatburnings and delays, the Athenaeum Club portico arose once more in the midst of the woods, approximately one hundred years

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[33]Dorsey and Dilts, p. xxv.

[34]Shriver, "Olney", p. 9.

[35]Shriver, "Olney", p. 9.

See Continuation Sheet No. 14

> after it had first started from its rocky bed at Beaver Dam. May it never more be disturbed.[36]

Shriver, in a self-deprecating moment, commented that

> some people never learn, even by experience. The rearrangement of doors, windows, boxwood walks and the moving of magnolia trees to make place for the portico should have been sufficient to close the book.
>
> Yet, when an opportunity arose to secure the original carved marble door-head made in 1795 for Robert Morris' Folly, Philadelphia, all past difficulties were forgotten and a new goal was in sight for the collector.[37]

In 1795 Robert Morris, the "Financeer of the Revolution", commissioned L'Enfant to design "the finest private residence ever constructed in America" on the block in Philadelphia bounded by Chestnut and Walnut streets and by Seventh and Eighth streets. Construction of the mansion went slowly, but L'Enfant was able to secure the services of an Italian stonemason to complete the "carved marble medallions...and other embellishments" including a pair of marble "door-heads" each measuring about eight feet by five; one represented "Art and Literature", the other "Music and Dancing".[38]

Then Morris suffered a rather severe financial reverse ("in accordance with the useless and foolish law of the day, Robert Morris was thrown in debtors' prison") and his unfinished house was "sold to William Sansom, who proceeded to open a street named after himself through the middle of the property, while the marble embellishments, copper roof, and other conceptions of L'Enfant were scattered to the four corners of Philadelphia". The twin door-heads "were taken by Mr. Potts, who owned Potts' Quarries near Conshohocken, fifteen miles north of Philadelphia, which quarries had furnished not only the foundation stones for Morris' Folly, but also at an earlier date for Independence

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[36] Shriver, "Olney", p. 9.

[37] Shriver, "Olney", p. 9.

[38] Shriver, "Olney", p. 9.

See Continuation Sheet No. 15

Hall". Potts put the putti-bedecked door-heads "in the side wall of a house which he was then erecting on his property....[and] from 1798 to 1926 the cupids looked down on all passersby...and the house was locally known as the Angel House".[39]

Re-enter Mr. Shriver. When the Conowingo Dam was being built, the Philadelphia Electric Company acquired a wide right-of-way for its power lines from the Susquehanna to Philadelphia and hired the historian Shriver to make title searches for all these tracts. While so employed, Shriver came across Potts's house, by then surrounded by industrial plants. The electric company destroyed the "Angel House" and used the land for power lines, but "the Angels, however, were saved from destruction by the same sentiment which saved the Athenaeum Club portico and were taken to Olney, where they were, as originally intended by L'Enfant, placed over a doorway for the first time since poor Jardella [the sculptor/stonemason] brought them into being"[40]. (Actually, Shriver was able only to salvage "Art and Literature" for Olney; the other, "Music and Dancing", was taken to Magnolia Gardens in South Carolina, where it remains to this day.)

Shriver performed similar sorts of salvaging for the interior. In 1900 he had married Harriet Lewis Van Bibber, whose ancestor, Isaac Van Bibber, had built a superb Federal period mansion in Fells Point, Baltimore. That mansion had long since passed out of the Van Bibber family when it was destroyed around 1905: the Shrivers, however, managed to save much of the interior woodwork--cornices, door surrounds, mantels, pilasters--and take the several pieces to Olney and reinstall them where they now grace the main ground floor reception rooms. In a similar move, when Shriver's parents' house at 518 Cathedral was destroyed, he was able to save the huge bookcase and remove it to Olney's library (the parlor in the 1810 part of the house). Shriver continues:

> The interior of Olney is another story--which deals with the more personal accumulation of the owner and his wife's family heirlooms....Its family furniture

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[39] Shriver, "Olney", pp. 9 - 10.

[40] Shriver, "Olney", p. 11.

See Continuation Sheet No. 16

from the combined ancestors, Shrivers, Van Bibbers and Archers, and even some of the original Norris pieces which have never left their places in the house, supplement the atmosphere of the exterior.[41]

Alexis Shriver died in 1951 after a lifetime of service to the Maryland historical community, and after a half-century spent creating at Olney a wonderfully idiosyncratic monument to the building arts.

His daughter, then Harriet Van Bibber Shriver Howard (now Mrs. C. B. Holden Rogers), took title in 1952 (GRG381/507) and has spent the past 35 years preserving her father's and grandfather's legacy, and the house--as well as the barns, stable, meathouse, and the old stone Norris house--have, under her care, remained in place, in tact, and in use.

But--and this is important--Olney isn't a fossilized museum. It remains very much a working farm. Back in 1922, Mrs. Rogers borrowed $400 from her parents and started the Olney Pony Farm and it and she have been in business ever since, raising champion Shetland and Welsh ponies for an international market. A recent newspaper article on Mrs. Rogers and Olney notes that "in her heyday...she ran a program for the severely retarded and a summer camp. `One for the underprivileged, the other for the overprivileged'". Her tenure in the pony business is remarkable, so remarkable, in fact, that the American Shetland Pony Club has presented her with a certificate honoring her for "raising ponies longer continuously than anyone in the country".

Religion re-entered life at Olney in the late 1970s when the Episcopal Church abandoned its 1928 prayer book in favor of a new and less poetic liturgy. This didn't go over well at Olney--steeped as the farm is with Quaker and Episcopalian traditions-- and in 1980, Mrs. Rogers gave a spot of ground on the farm to the congregation of the newly established St. Alban's Anglican Church, and moved the frame Wilna Chapel School across Old Joppa Road to Olney, where the re-outfitted building now meets the spiritual needs of an ever-increasing congregation.

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[41] Shriver, "Olney", p. 11.

See Continuation Sheet No. 17

The schoolhouse was built in 1914, but the school was established 60 years earlier, when "at the urging of Mr. Lloyd Morris [sic: Norris; a brother of John Saurin Norris] of Wilna" George G. Curtis "came to Harford County in 1852 and opened a private school at Union Chapel, or Wilna. From the beginning, Mr. Curtis was recognized as a leader in cultural matters and especially in the teaching of literature and science".[42]

Life at Olney in 1986: Why "it's all been great fun. I have two good kids, a bunch of descendants, and a nice little church where they still use the 1928 prayer book".[43]

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[42] Wright, History, p. 234.

[43] The Record, April 16, 1986.

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C. Milton Wright, Our Harford Heritage; (Bel Air; privately printed, 1967).

GEOGRAPHICAL DATA:

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION:

Olney consists of a 264-acre, working farm whose boundaries have remain unchanged since the Revolution. The large amount of acreage is necessary to take in all the features which make the estate important: the main house (1810; c. 1850; 1920), the original stone building on the property (c. 1765), the 19th-century farm buildings and outbuildings such as spring houses and meat houses and blacksmith shops, and the rural formal and informal landscaping that has been an essential part of Olney since at least the 1840s.

BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION:

The boundaries are drawn on the attached map labeled "Boundary Map" and drawn to a scale of 1" = 600'. The boundaries are the legal boundaries recorded in the Harford County land records; Book 867, p. 664; 381, 507; 1121, 948; 801, 230; 787, 196; and 867, 679 and also in parcel 180 and 264 on tax assessment map number 60.

9. Major Bibliographical References

HA-154

See Continuation Sheet No. 9-1

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property 264 acres

Quadrangle name Whitemarsh, MD & Edgewood, MD

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UTM References

	Zone	Easting	Northing
A	18	382250	4371060
B	18	383120	4370230
C	18	380500	4369820
D	18	381340	4370770
E			
F			
G			
H			

Verbal boundary description and justification

See Continuation Sheet No. 10-1

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	Harford County Planning Department	date	December 1986
street & number	220 South Main Street	telephone	(301) 879-2000, ext. 207
city or town	Bel Air	state	Maryland 21014

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

___ national ___ state X 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 National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature 6-9-87

title STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION Officer date

For NPS use only

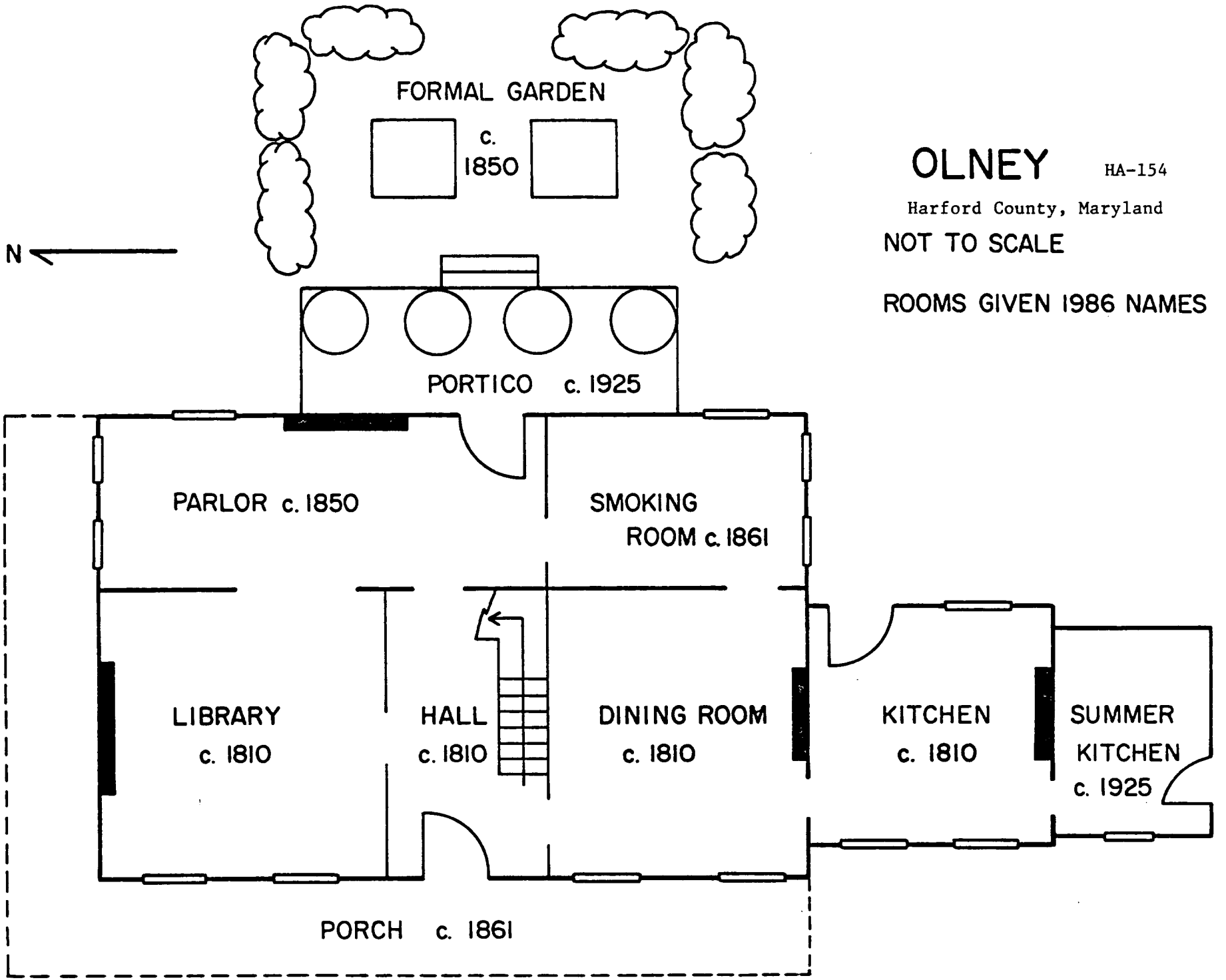
I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

date

Keeper of the National Register

Attest: date

Chief of Registration



OLNEY

HA-154

Harford County, Maryland

NOT TO SCALE

ROOMS GIVEN 1986 NAMES

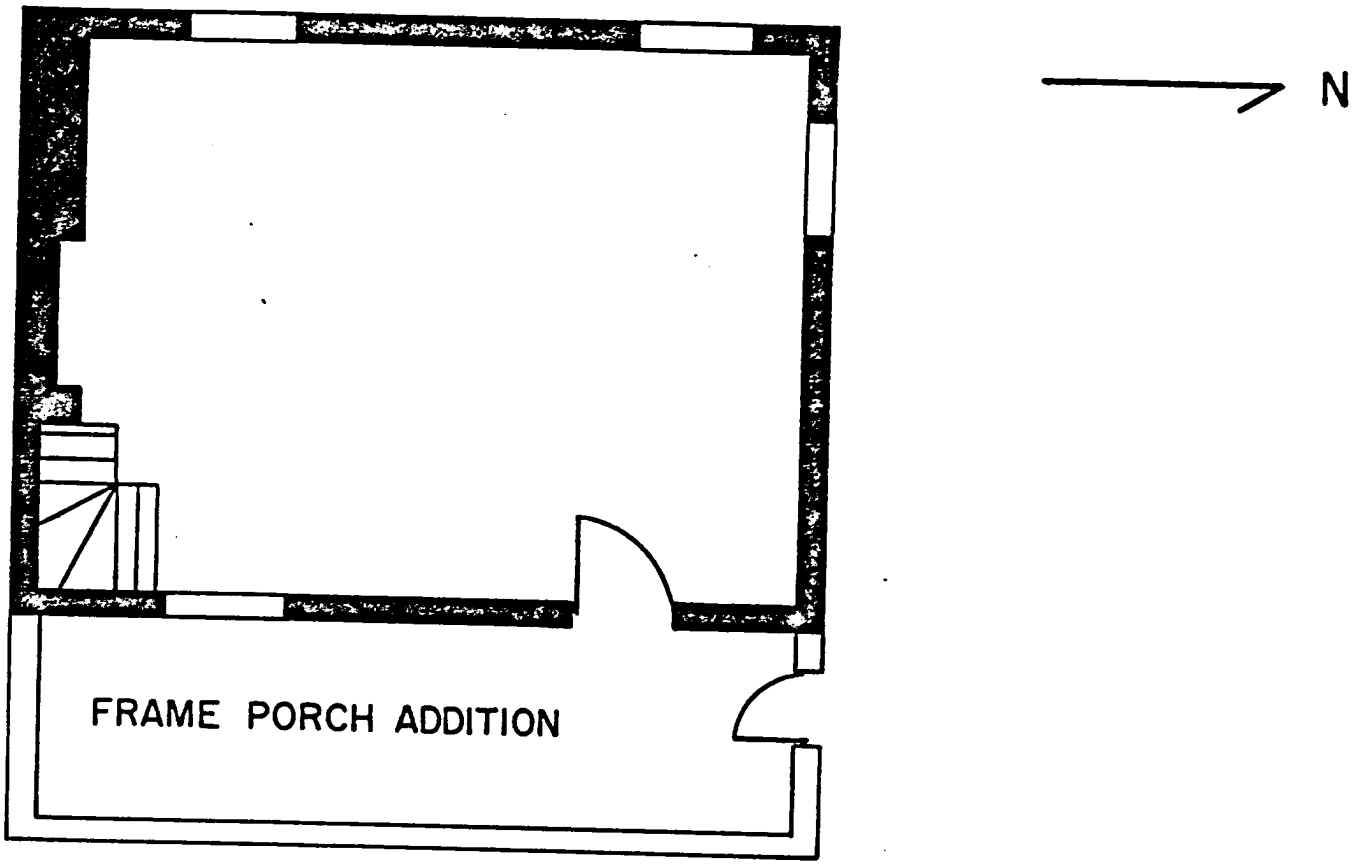
OLNEY

HA-154

Hardford County, Maryland

ORIGINAL NORRIS HOUSE

NOT TO SCALE



OLNEY HA-154

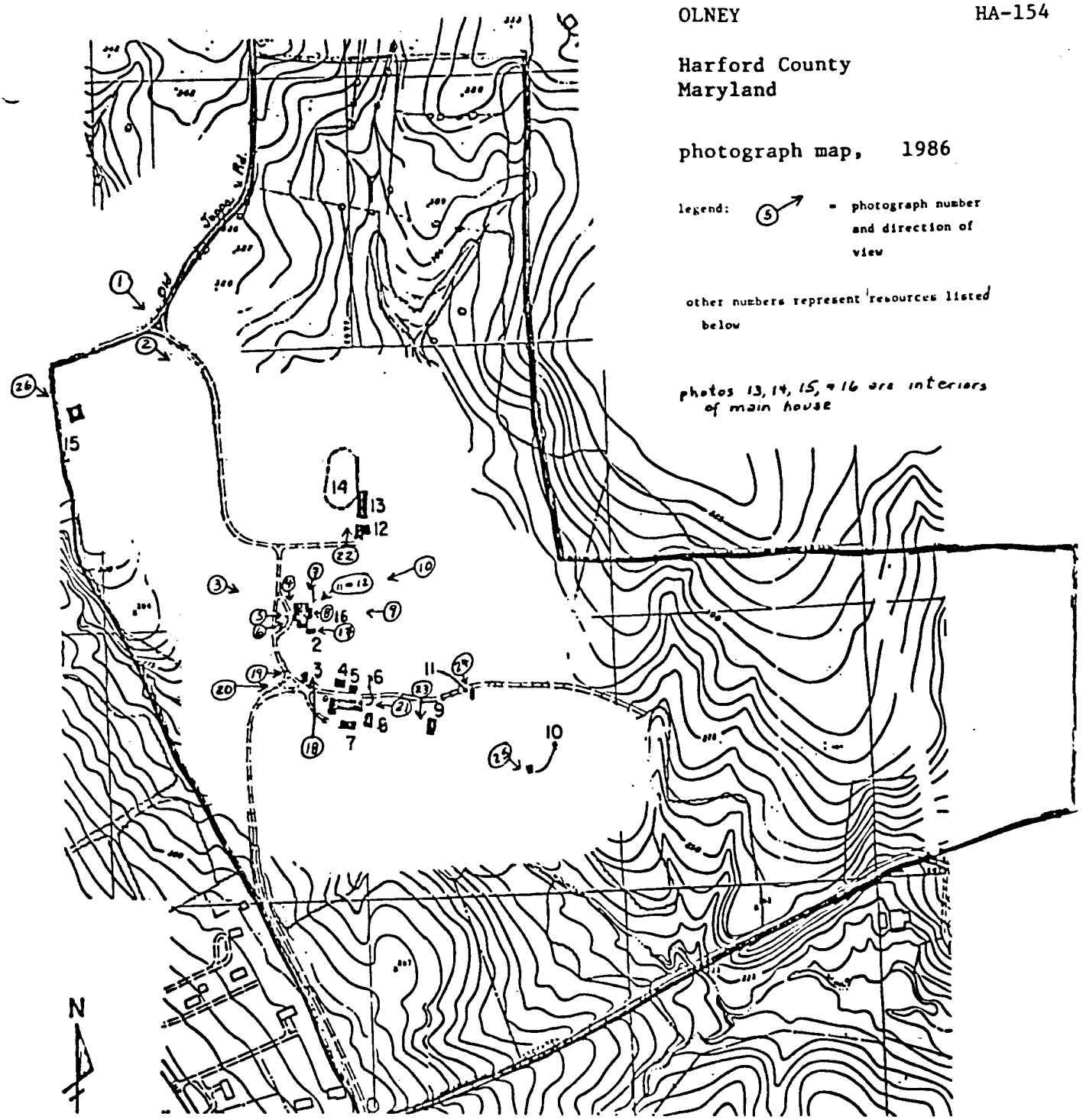
Harford County
Maryland

photograph map, 1986

legend: (5) = photograph number and direction of view

other numbers represent resources listed below

photos 13, 14, 15, + 16 are interiors of main house



1. Present Main House
2. Smoke House / Wood Shed
3. Blacksmith Shop
4. Barn
5. Shed
6. Barn
7. Barn
8. Barn
9. Howard House
10. Original Norris House
11. Spring House
12. Barn
13. Stables
14. Riding Ring
15. St Alban's Anglican Church
16. box wood garden

note: all resources contribute except numbers 9 and 15 (see form)

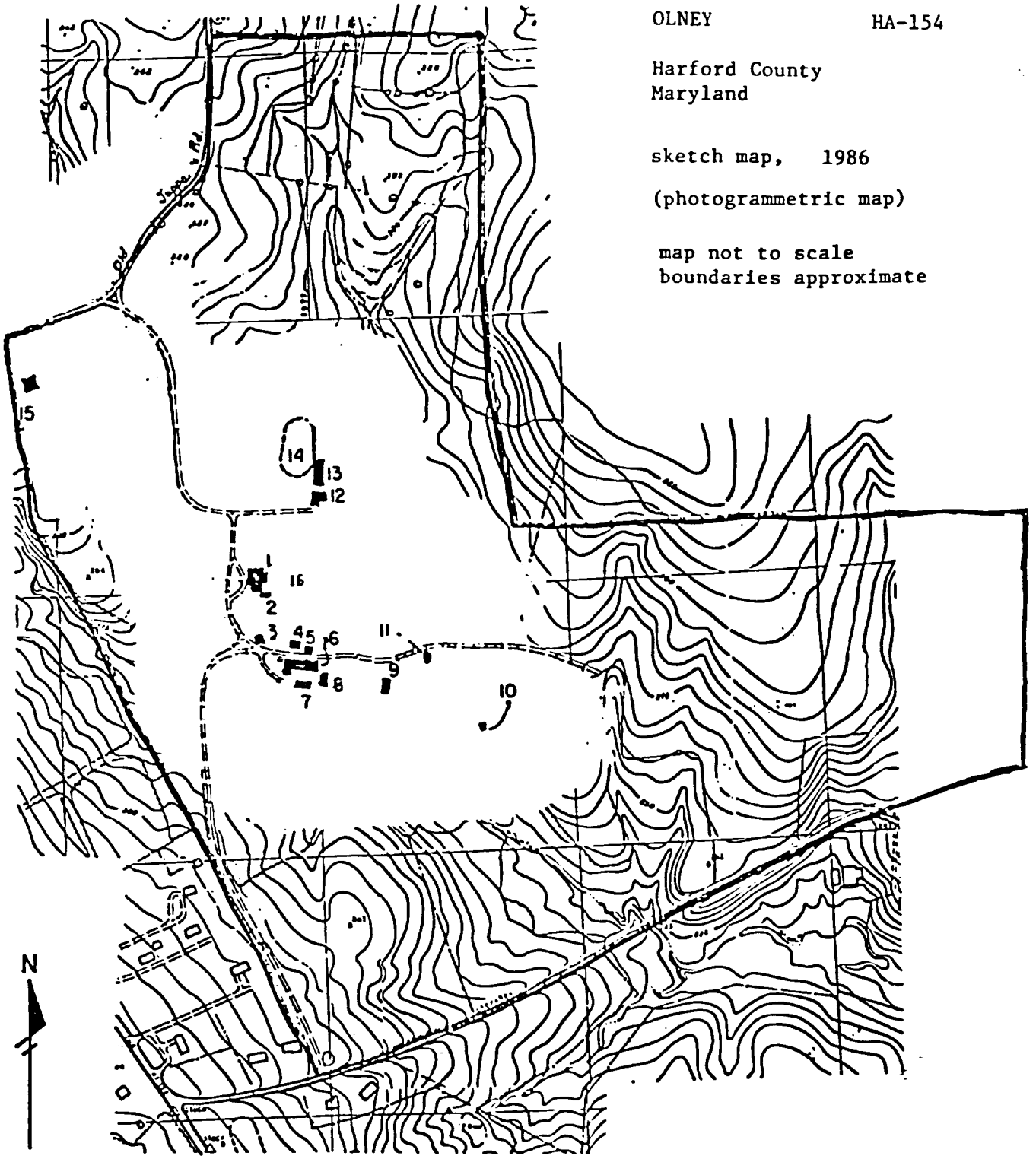
OLNEY HA-154

Harford County
Maryland

sketch map, 1986

(photogrammetric map)

map not to scale
boundaries approximate



1. Present Main House
2. Smoke House / Wood Shed
3. Blacksmith Shop
4. Barn
5. Shed
6. Barn
7. Barn .
8. Barn
9. Howard House
10. Original Norris House
11. Spring House
12. Barn
13. Stables
14. Riding Ring
15. St Alban's Anglican Church
16. box wood garden

note: all resources contribute except numbers 9 and 15 (see form)

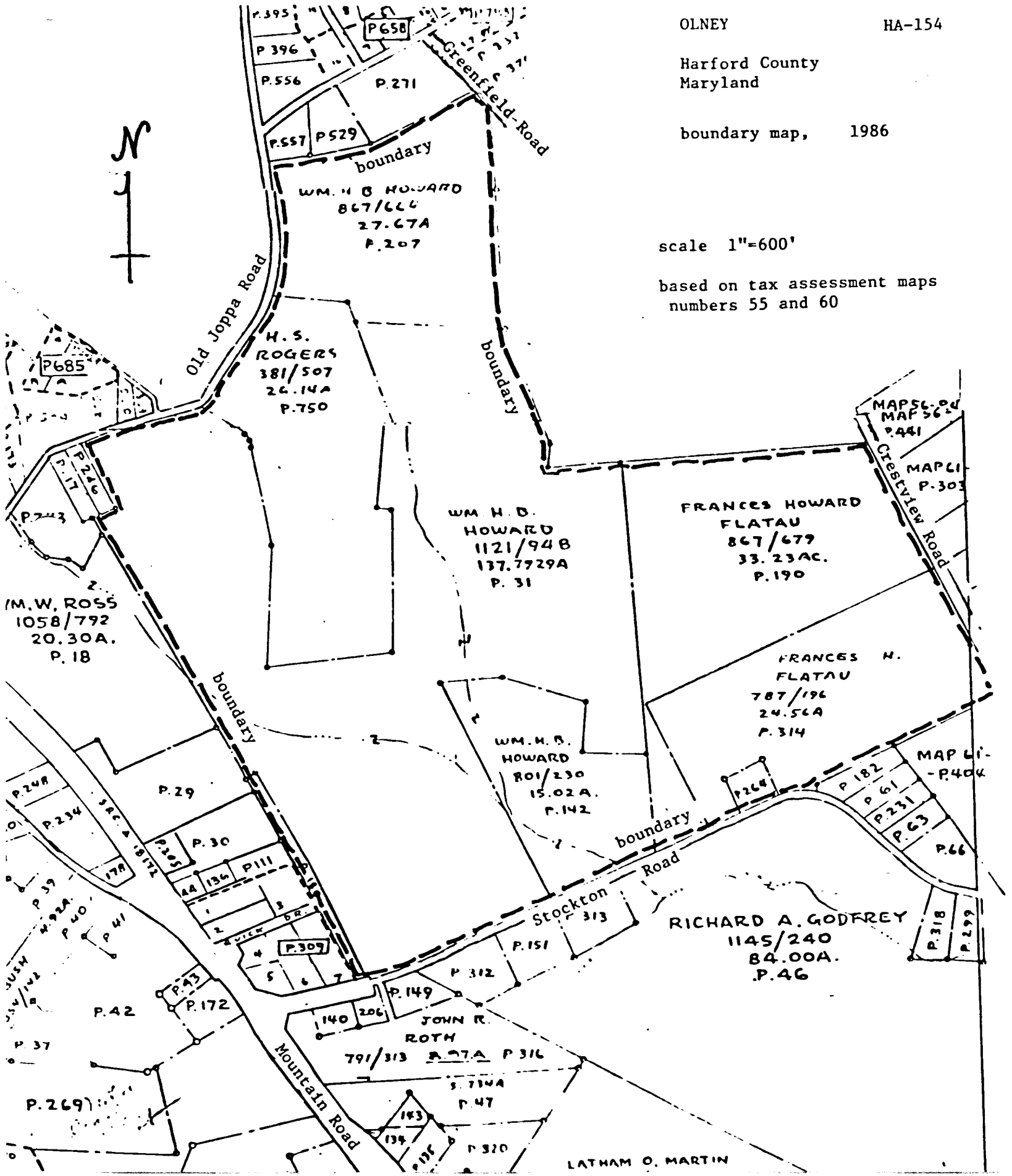
OLNEY HA-154

Harford County
Maryland

boundary map, 1986

scale 1"=600'

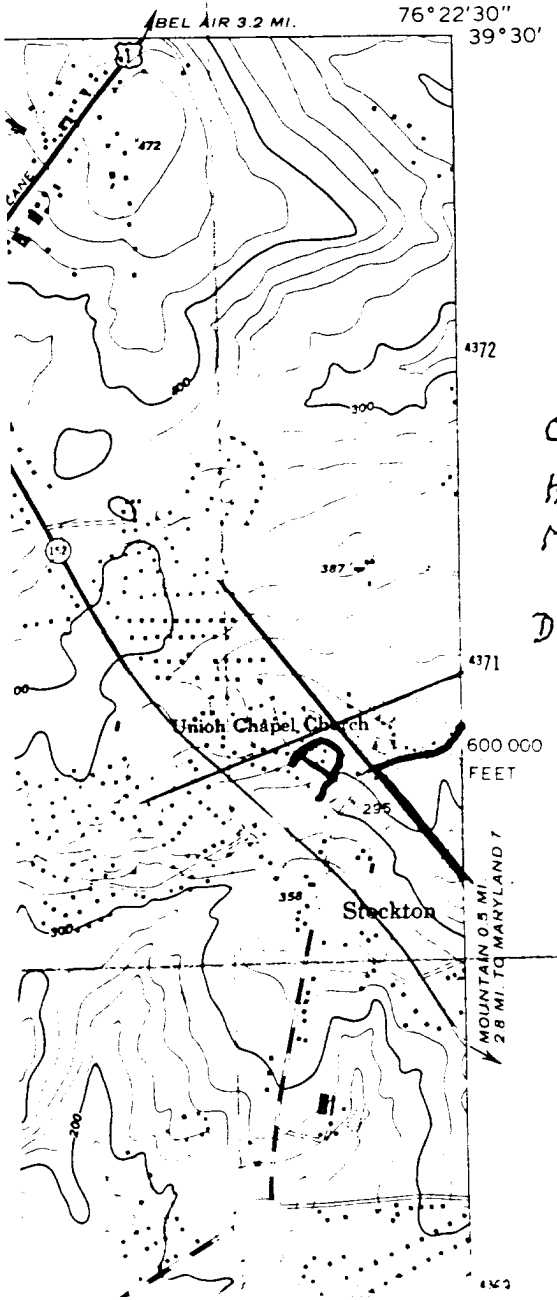
based on tax assessment maps
numbers 55 and 60



HA-154

TE MARSH QUADRANGLE
MARYLAND
INUTE SERIES (TOPOGRAPHIC)
NW/4 GUNPOWDER 15' QUADRANGLE

5763 III SE (BEL AIR)

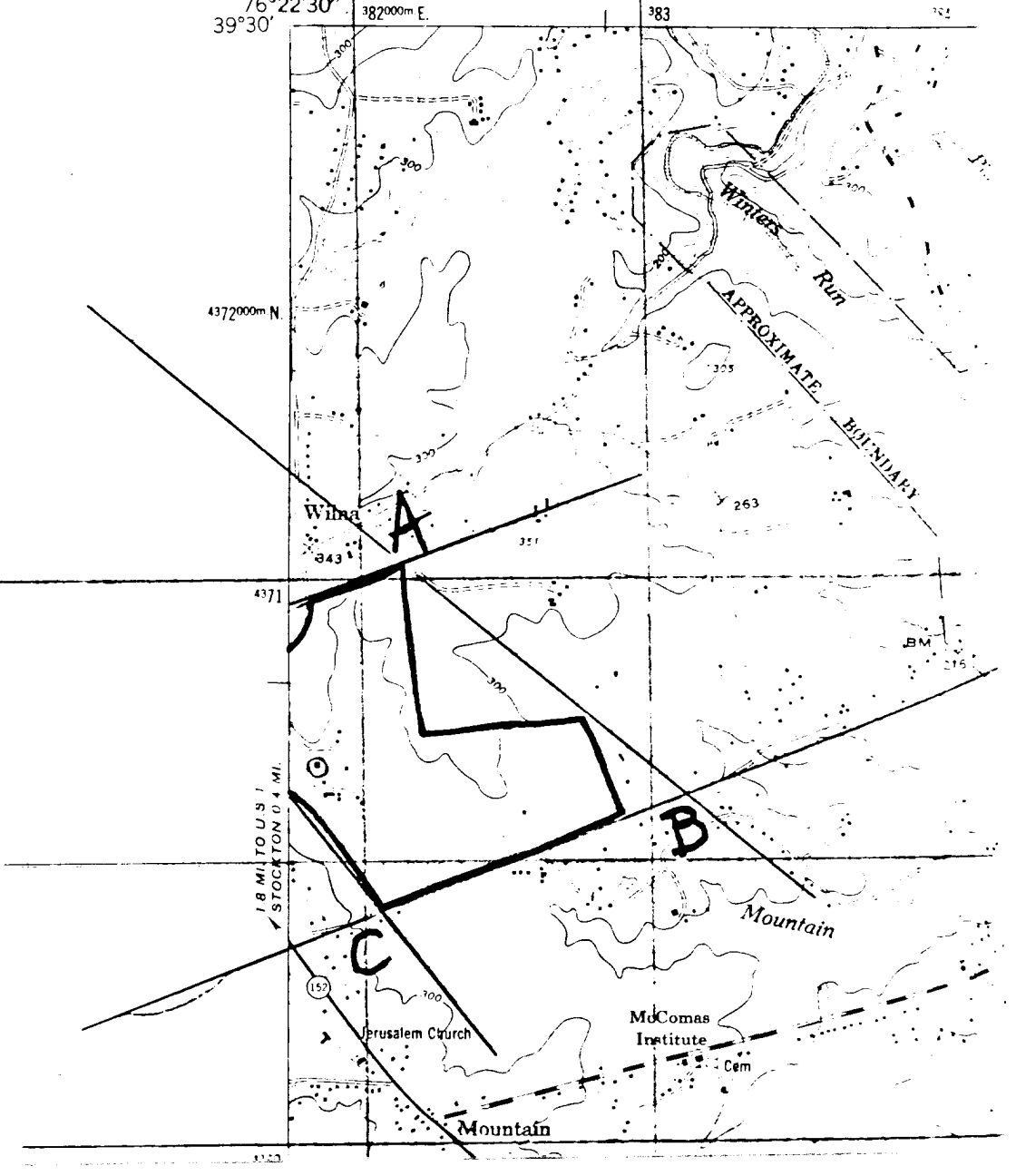


Olney HA-154
Harford Co
Maryland

D 18/381340/4370770

5763 III SW (JARRETTSVILLE)

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
GEOLOGICAL SURVEY



HA-154

HA-154

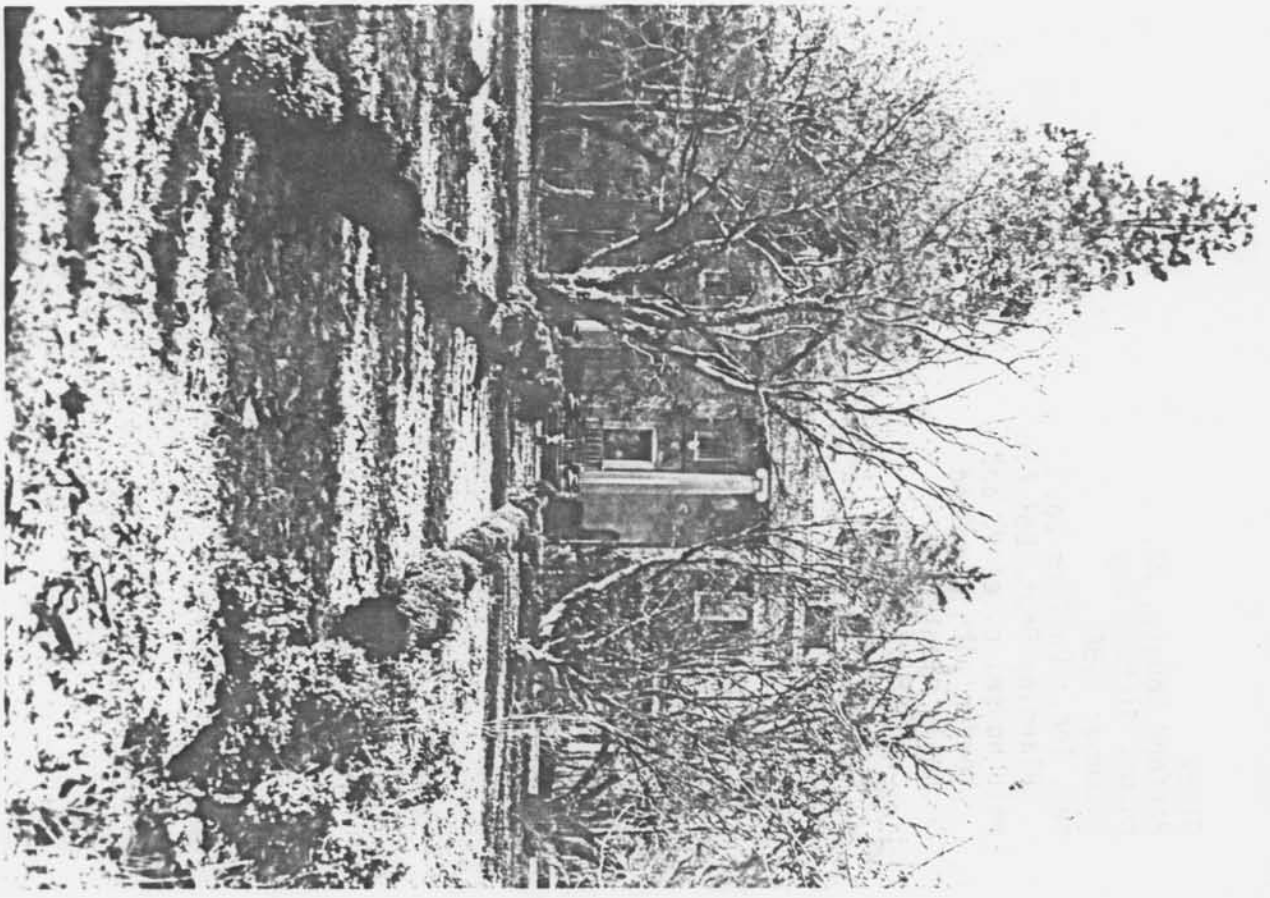
Olney
Harford County, Md.
photo: Michael Day
December 1986
neg. loc.: Harford Co.
Planning Dept. BelAir
entrance (looking s) with
State Roads Commission
historic site marker

1/26

Olney
Harford County, Md.
photo: Michael Day
December 1986
neg. loc.: Harford Co.
Planning Dept. Bel Air
entrance; looking se

2/26

HA-154



HA-154

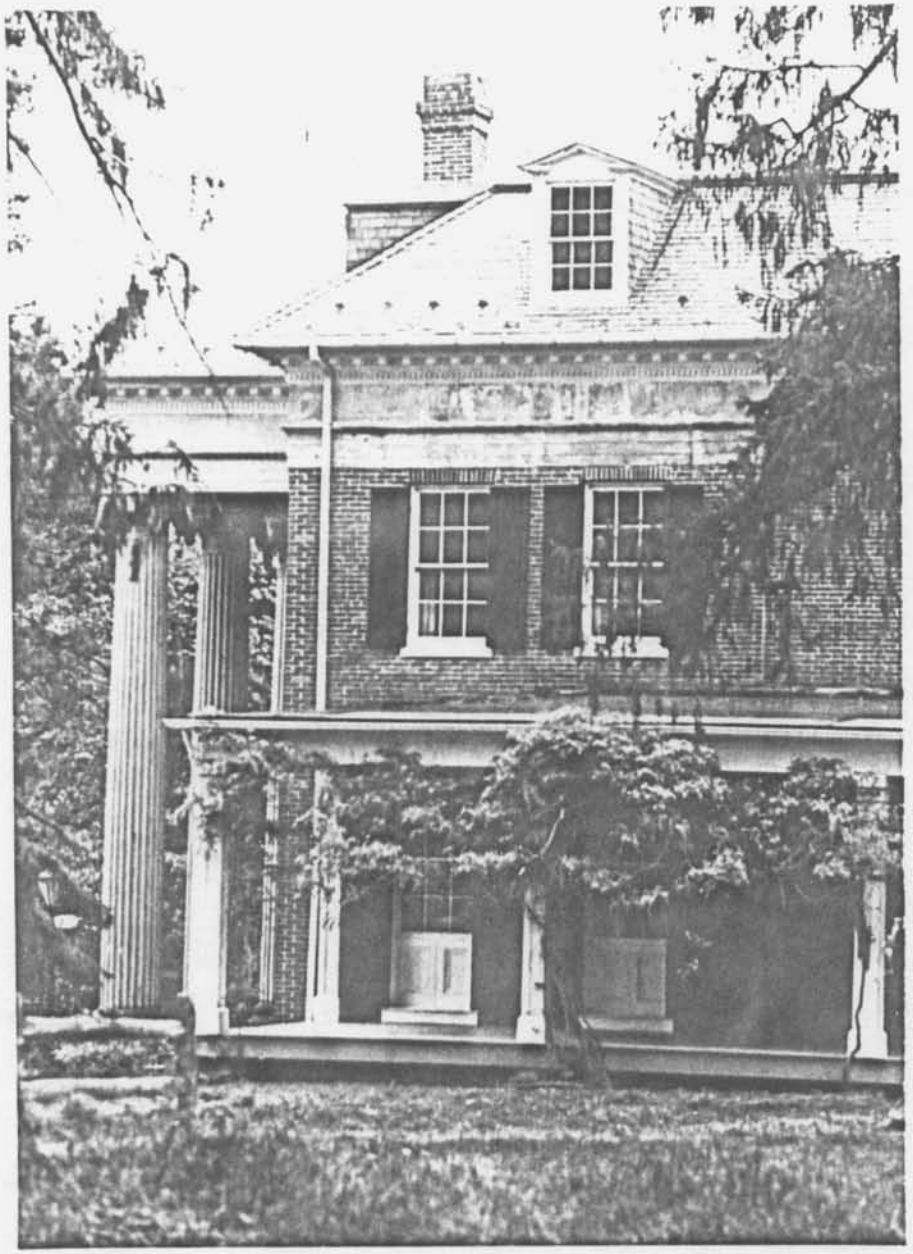
Olney
Harford County, Md.
phtot: Michael Day
December 1986
neg. loc.: Harford Co.
Planning Dept. Bel Air
main house; e. elev. and
garden path (boxwood
newly planted on
c. 1845 axis)

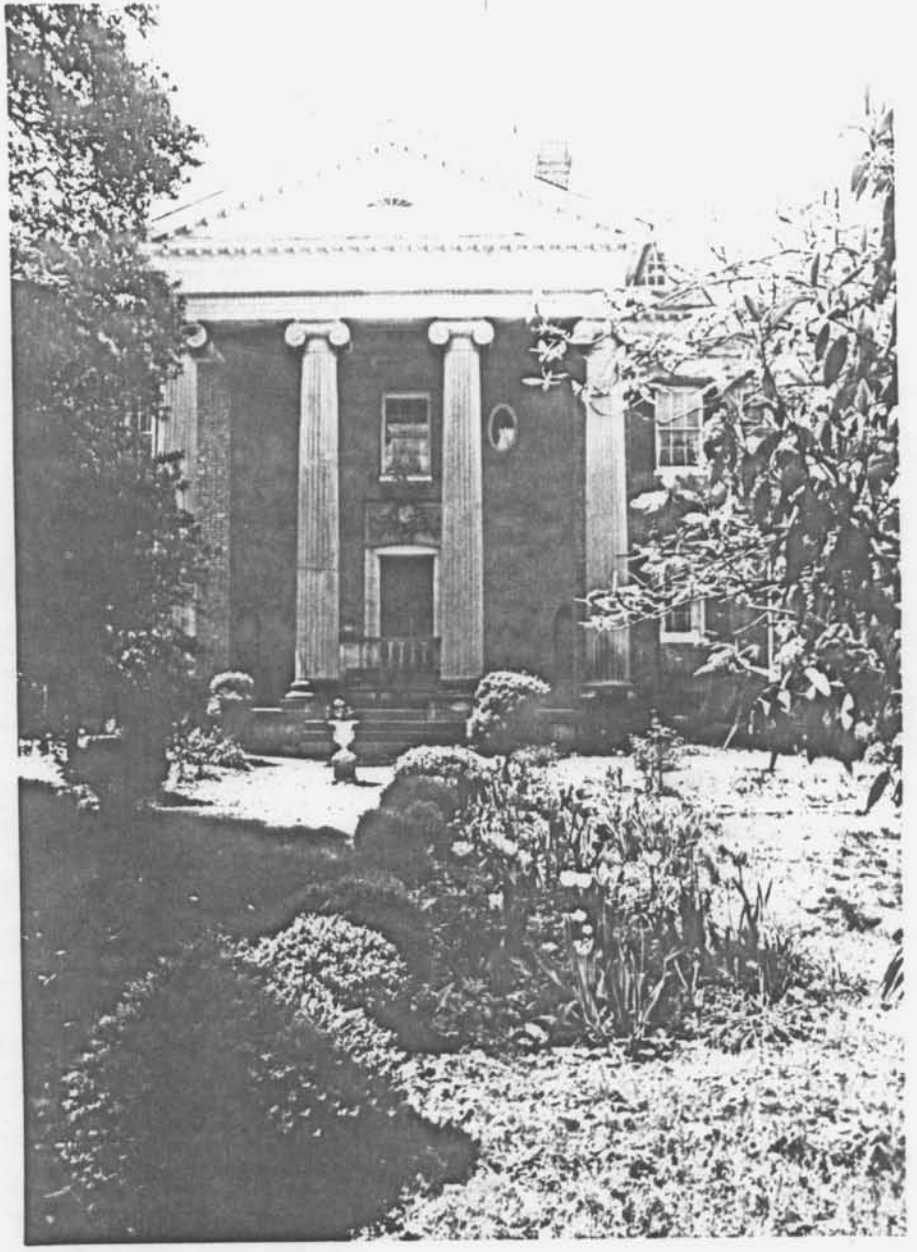
9/26

Olney
Harford County, Md.
photo: Michael Day
December 1986
neg. loc.: Harford Co.
Planning Dept. Bel AIr
main house; e. elev. and
garden

10/26

NA-154





Olney
Harford COunty, MD.
Harf. CO. Dept. Planning and Zoning Bel Air
William Small's Athenaeum portico
(east facade)

May 1986

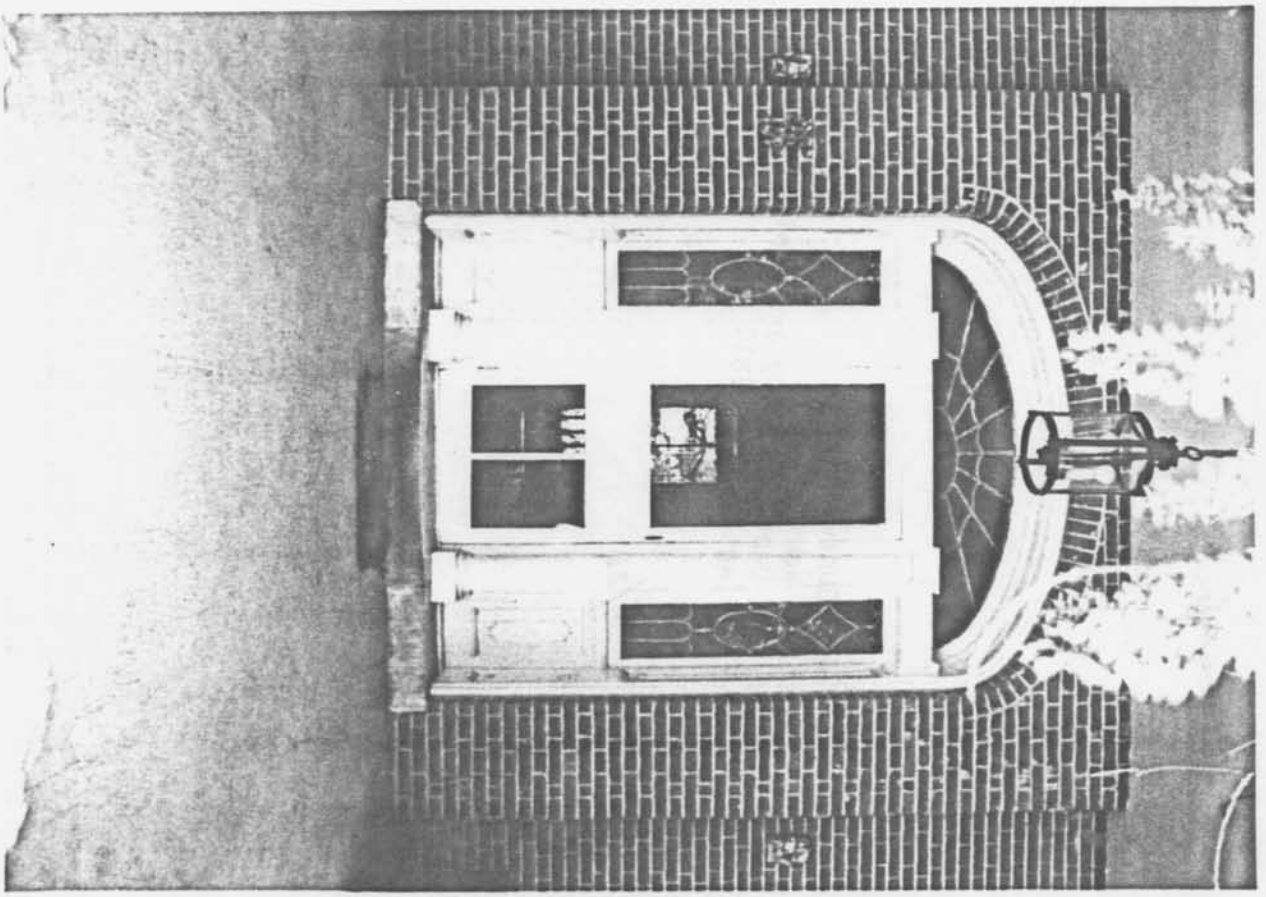
8/26

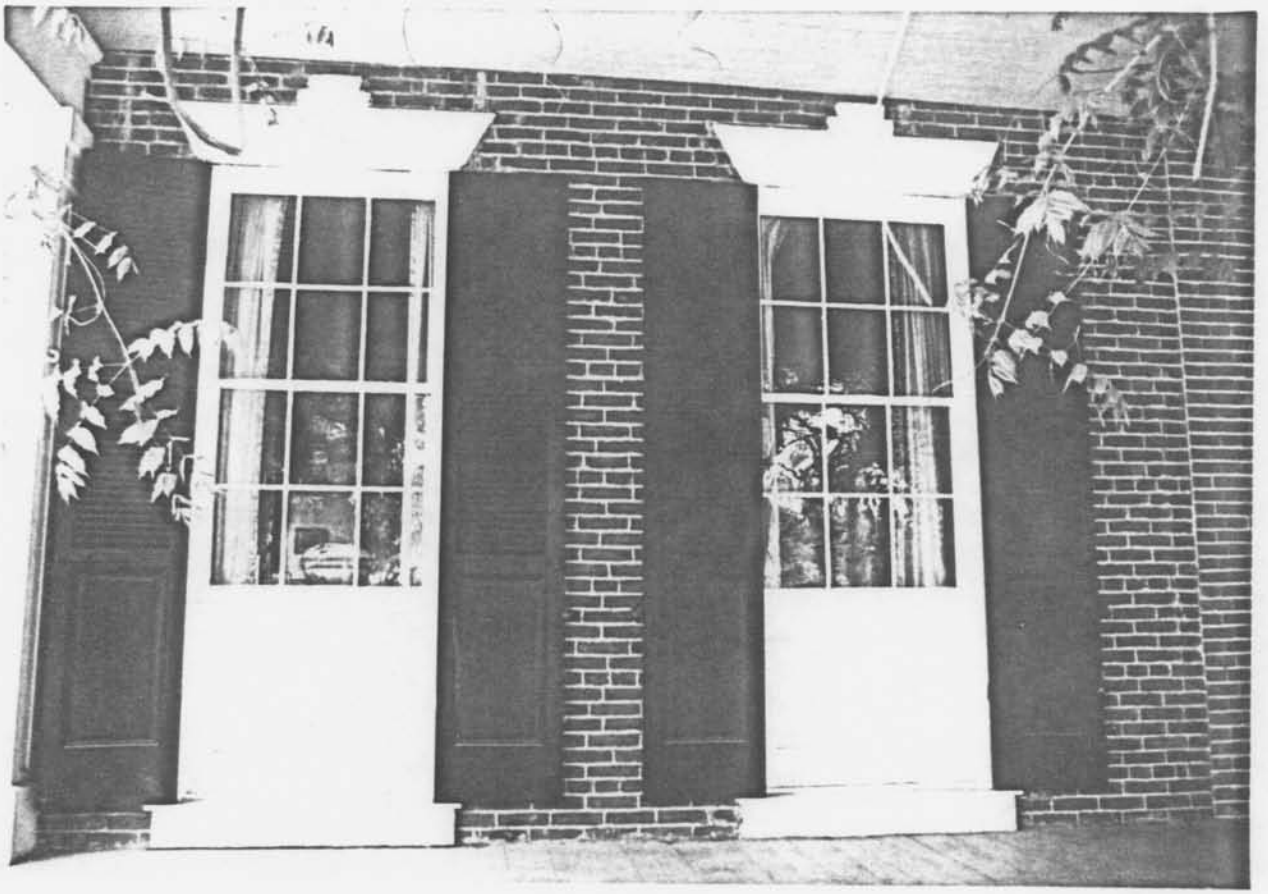
Olney
Harford COunty, MD.
photo: C. Weeks May 1986
Harf. CO. Dept. Planning and Zoning, Bel Air
North facade: 1851 parlor and 1925 porch

7/26

HA-154

HA-154





HA-154

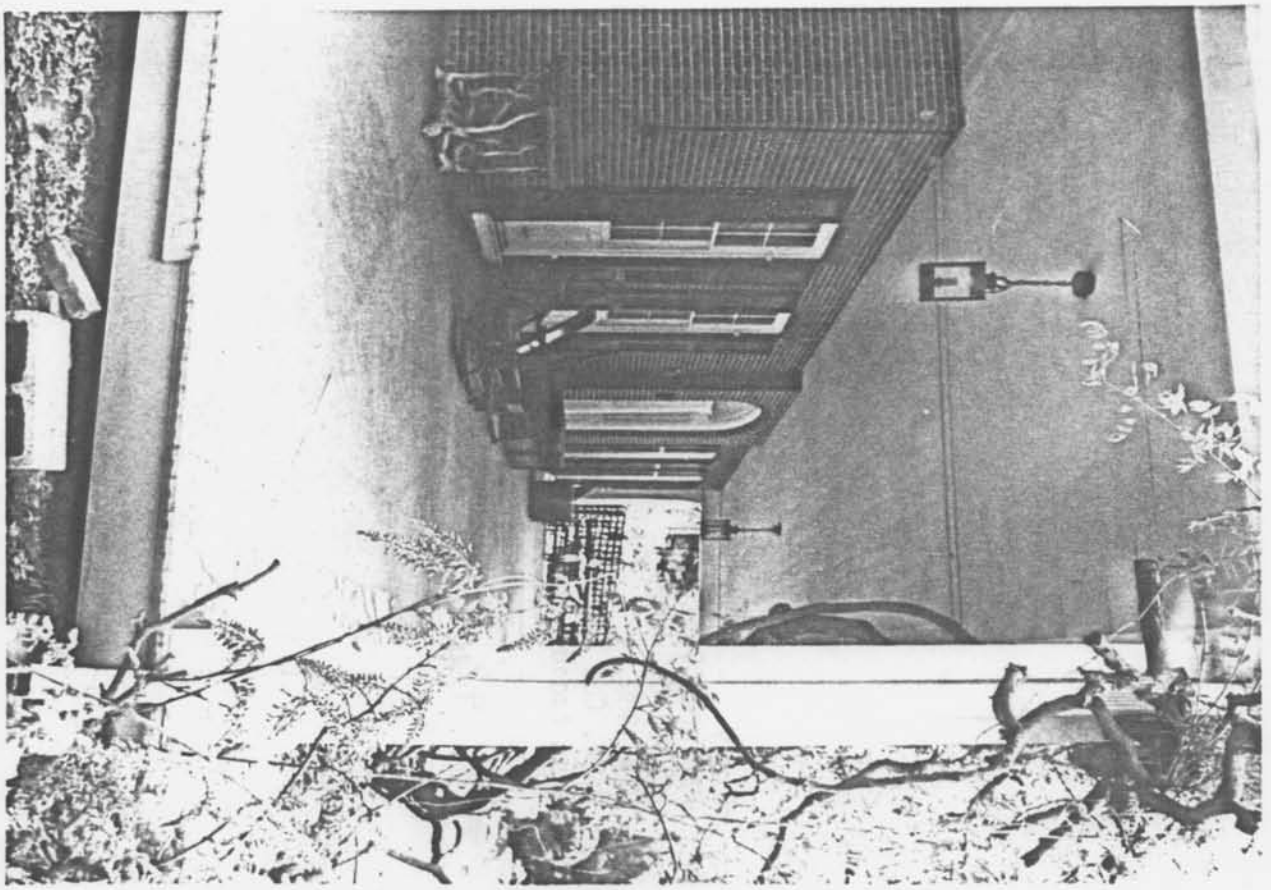
Olney
Harford COunty, MD.
photo: C. Weeks mar 1986
Harf. CO. Dept. Planning and Zoning Bel Air
entrance (west) door, 1810

5/26

Olney
Harford County, MD.
photo: C. Weeks mar 1986
Harf. Co. Dept. Planning and Zoning, Bel Air
ex 1851 addition, detail of windows

6/26

HA-154



HA-154

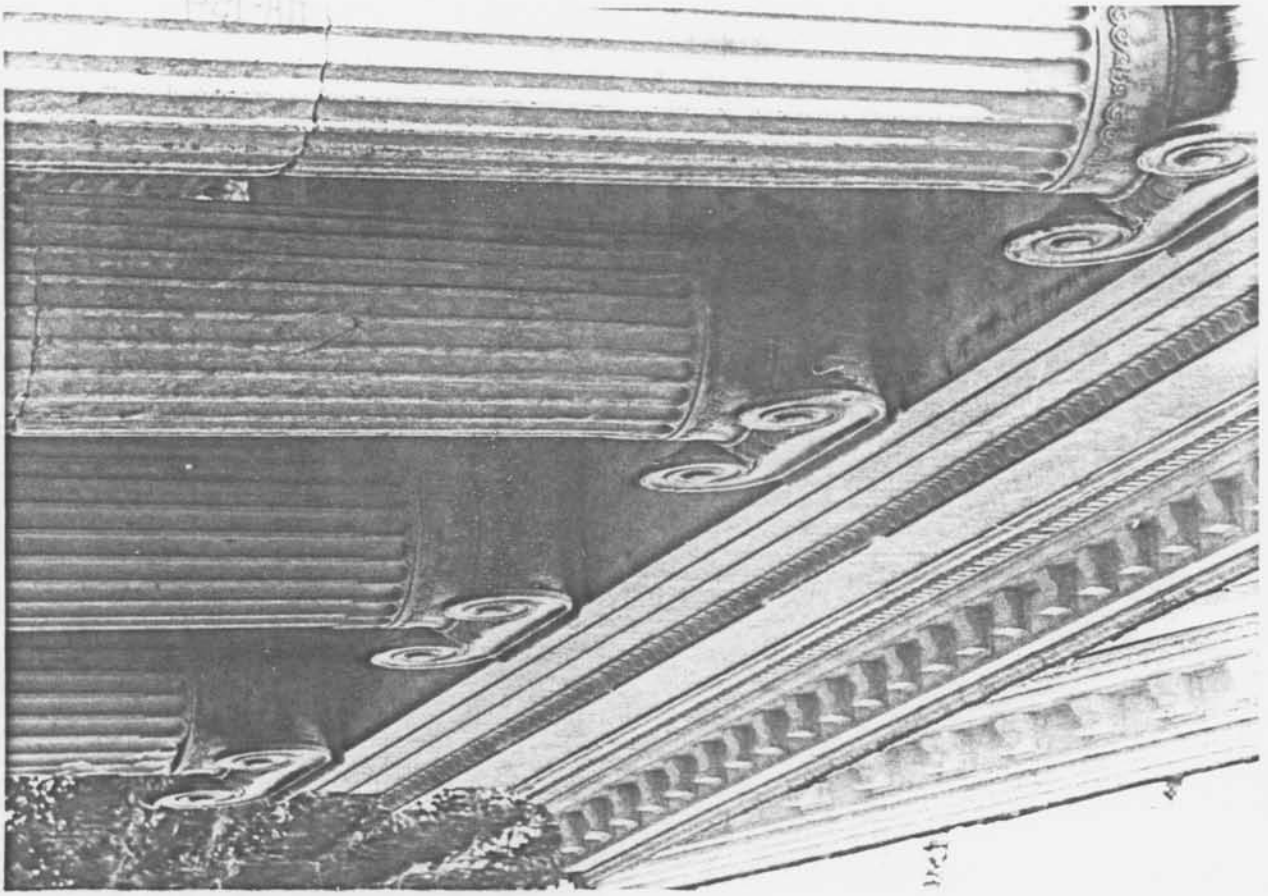
Olney
Harford COunty, Maryland
photo: C. Weeks
May 1986
Harford Co. Planning and Zoning Dept.
Bel Air
West elev. of 1810 house

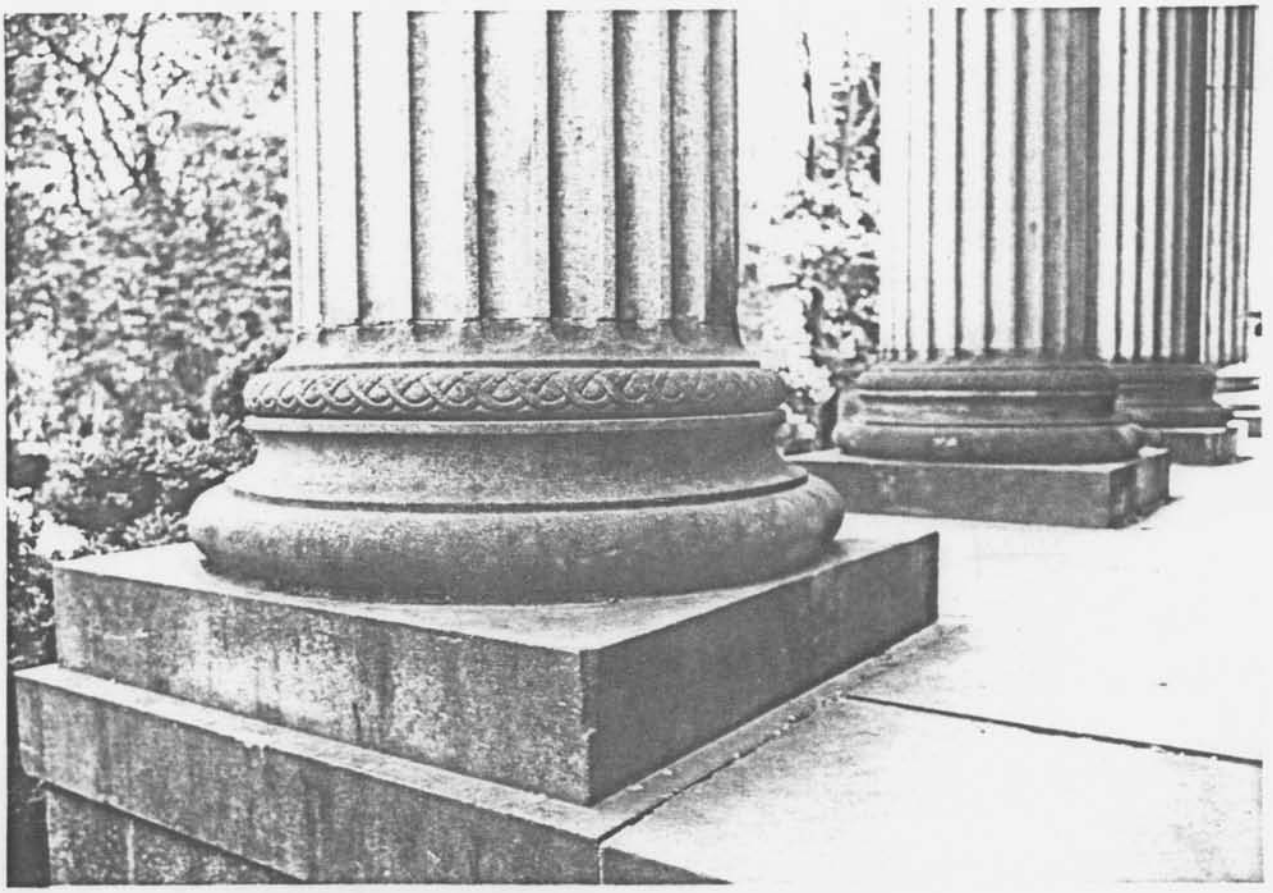
~~1/21~~ 3/26

Olney
Harford COunty, MD.
photo: C. Weeks
May 1986
Harf. Co. Planning and Zoning Dept.
West facade (1810) and porch (1861)

~~2/21~~ 4/26

HA-154





HA-154

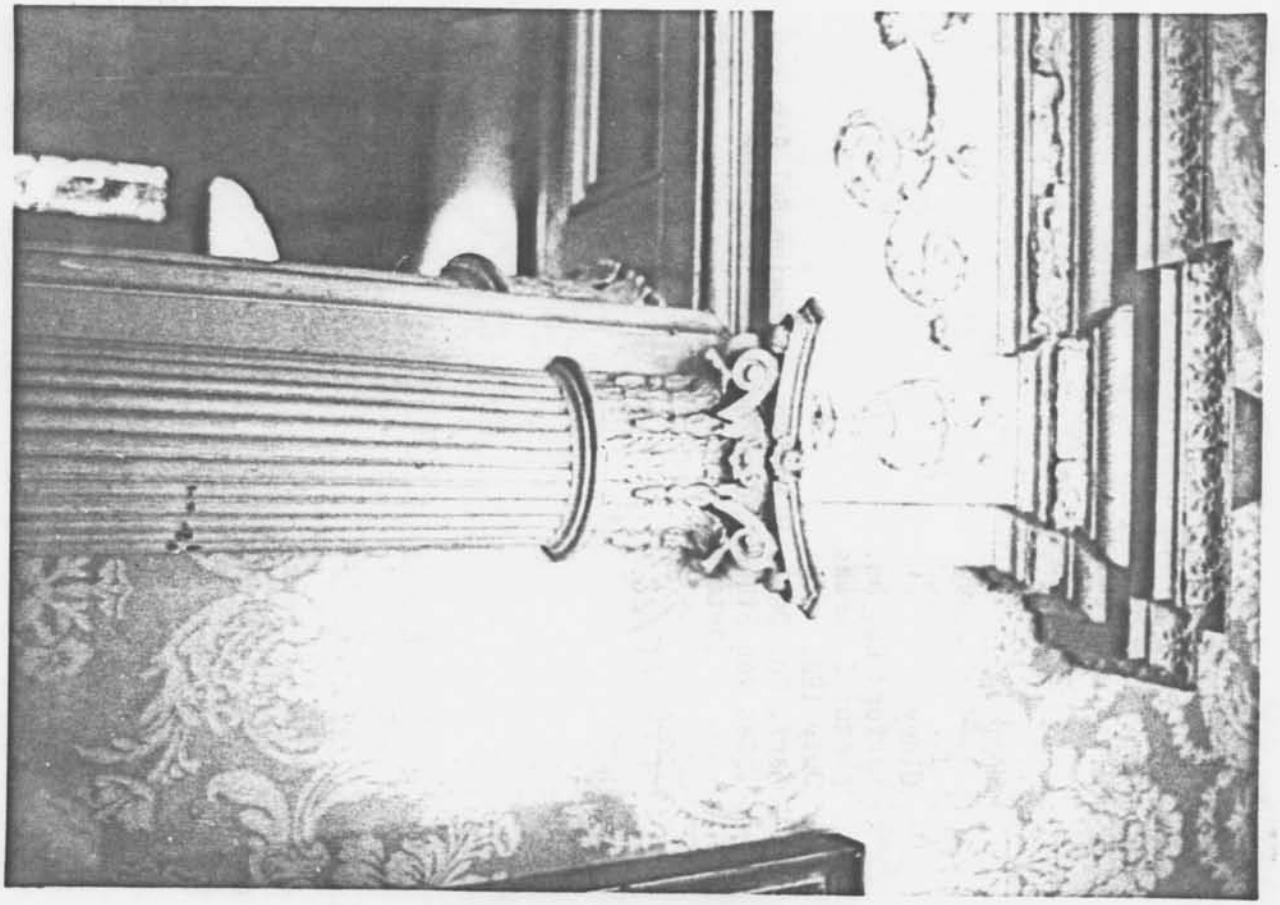
Olney
Harford COunty, MD.
photo: C. Weeks
Harf. Co. Dept Planning and Zoning, Bel Air
William Small Portico, detail
May 1986

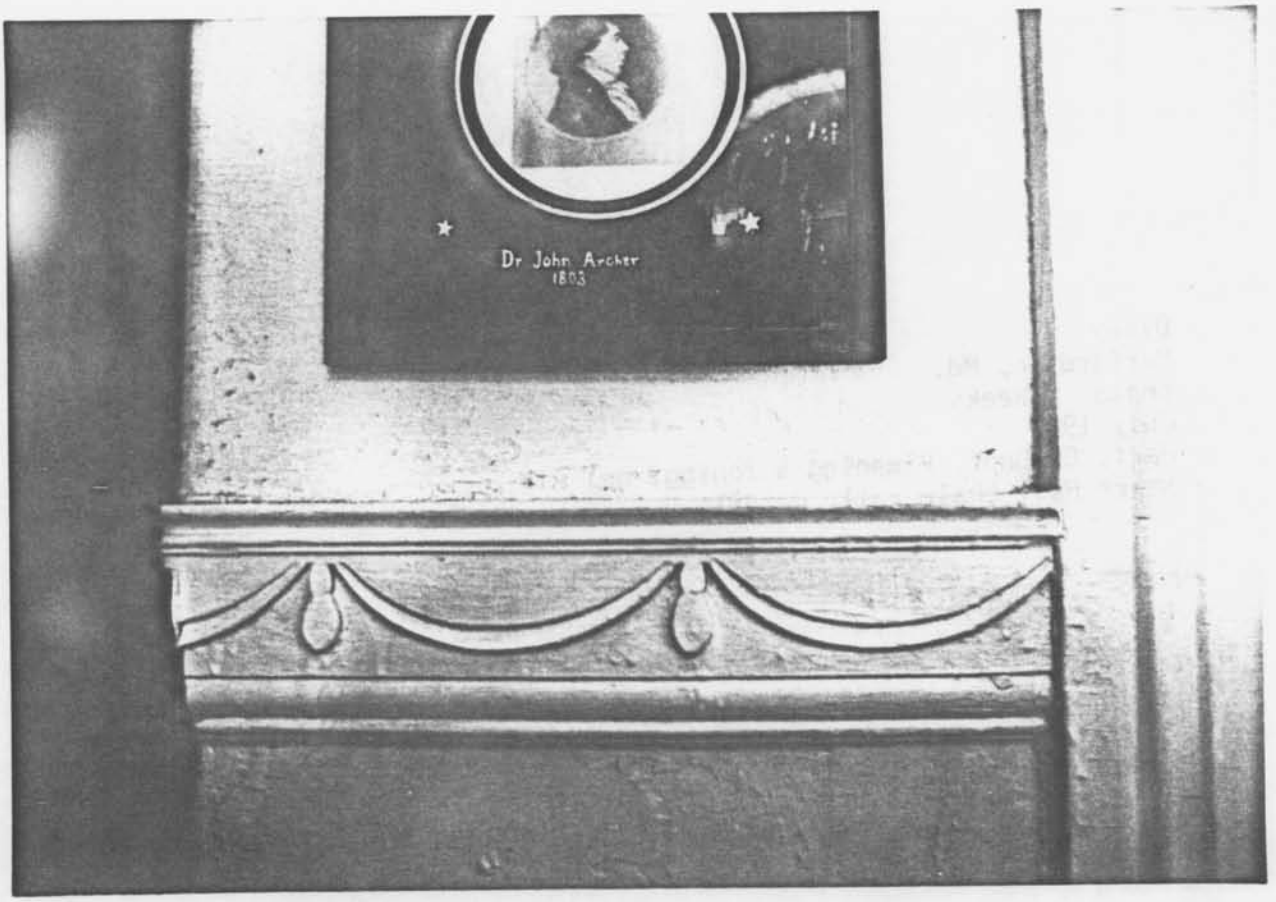
~~7/27~~ 11/26

Olney
Harford COunty, MD.
photo: C.Weeks
May 1986
Harf. CO. Dept. Planning and Zoning Bel Air
William Small portico, detail

~~7/27~~ 12/26

HA-154





HA-154

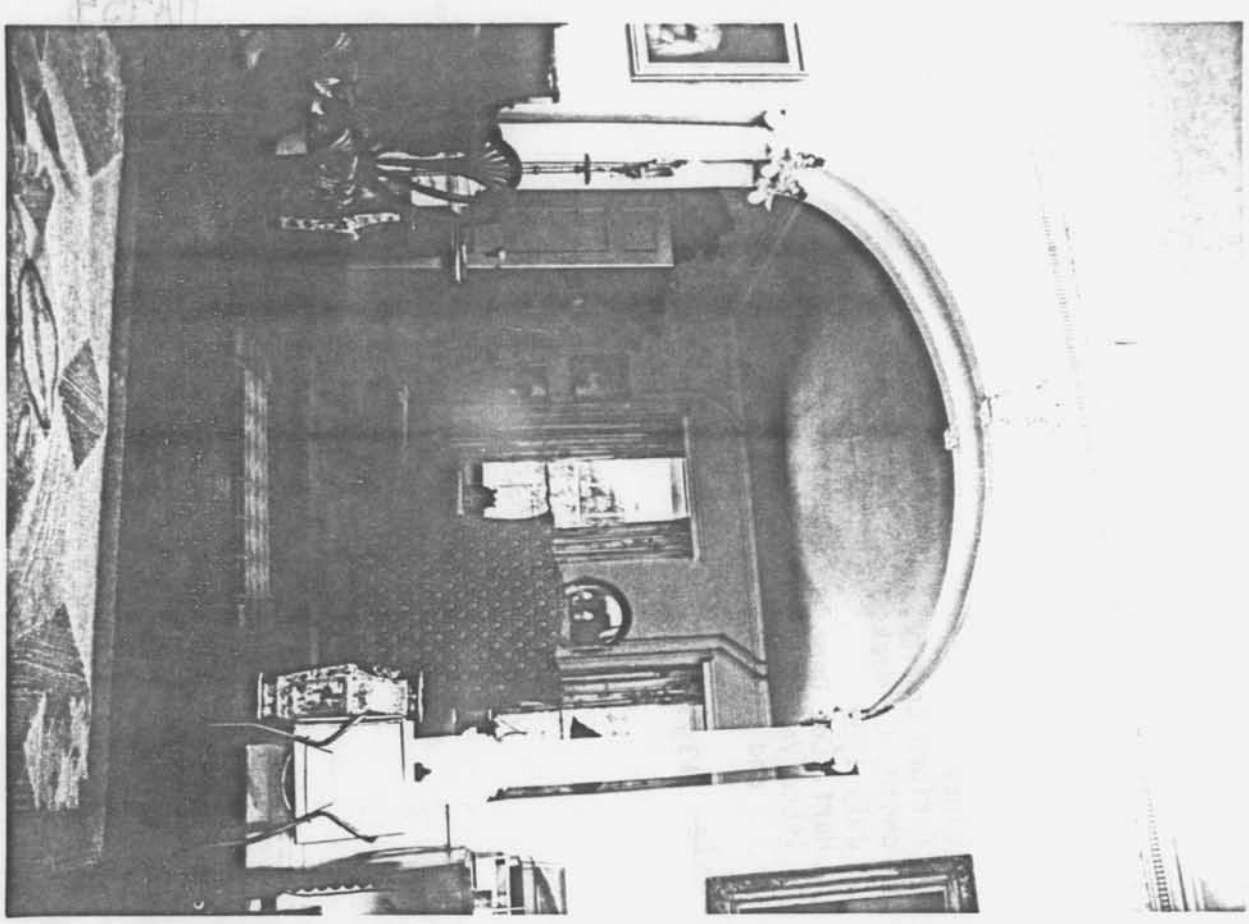
Olney
Harford Co. Md.
photo: C. Weeks
July 1986
Harf. Co. Dept. Planning and Zoning Bel Air
Isaac Van Bibber House woodwork in parlor
(detail)

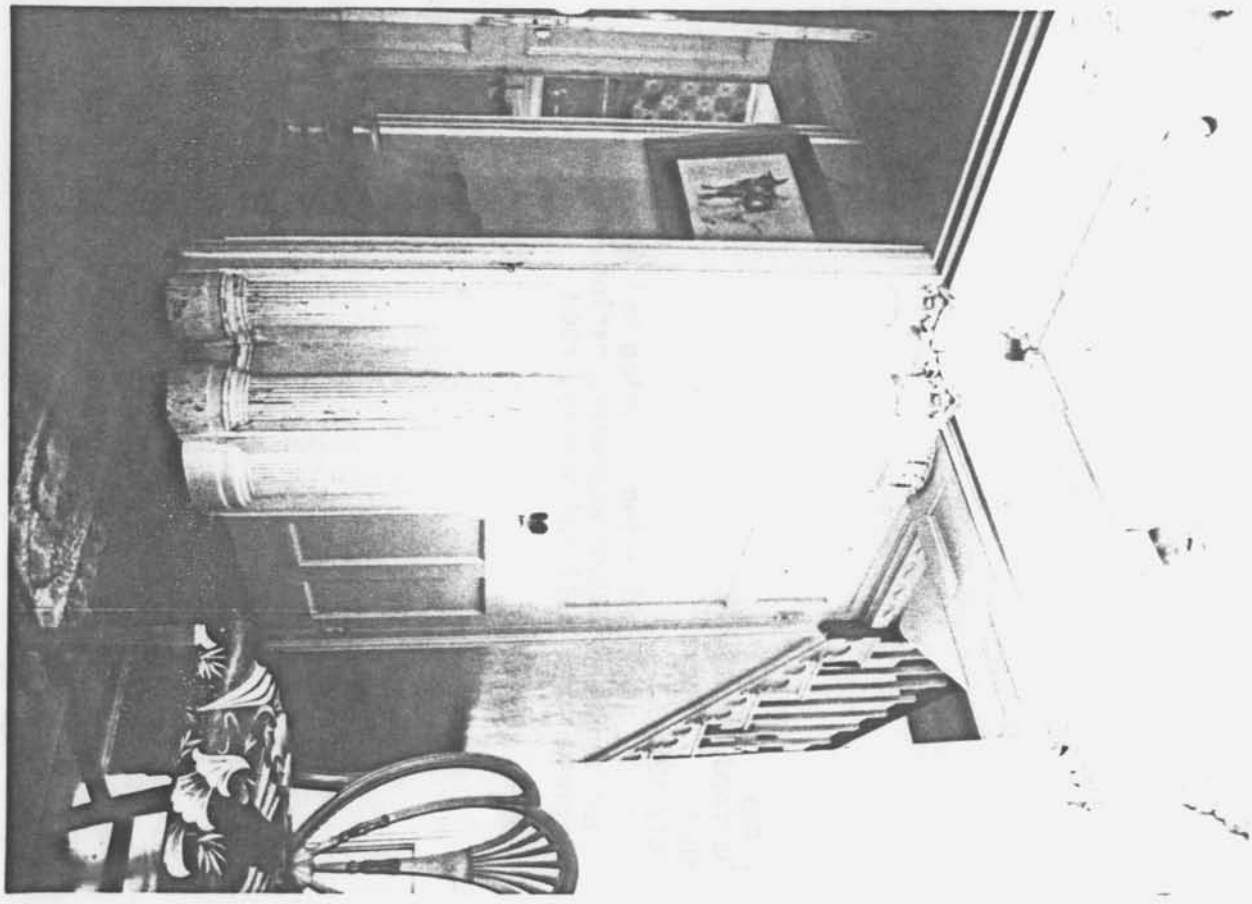
~~12/21~~ 15/26

Olney
Harford Co. Md.
photo: C.Weeks
July 1986
Harf. C. Dept. Planning & Zonigg, Bel Air
Starr Hall chair rail, detail

~~12/21~~ 16/26

HA-154





Olney
Harford County, MD?
photo: C. Weeks
July 1986
Harf. Co. Dept. Planning & Zoning Bel AIr
Isaac VanBibber House woodwork in parlor
and Library

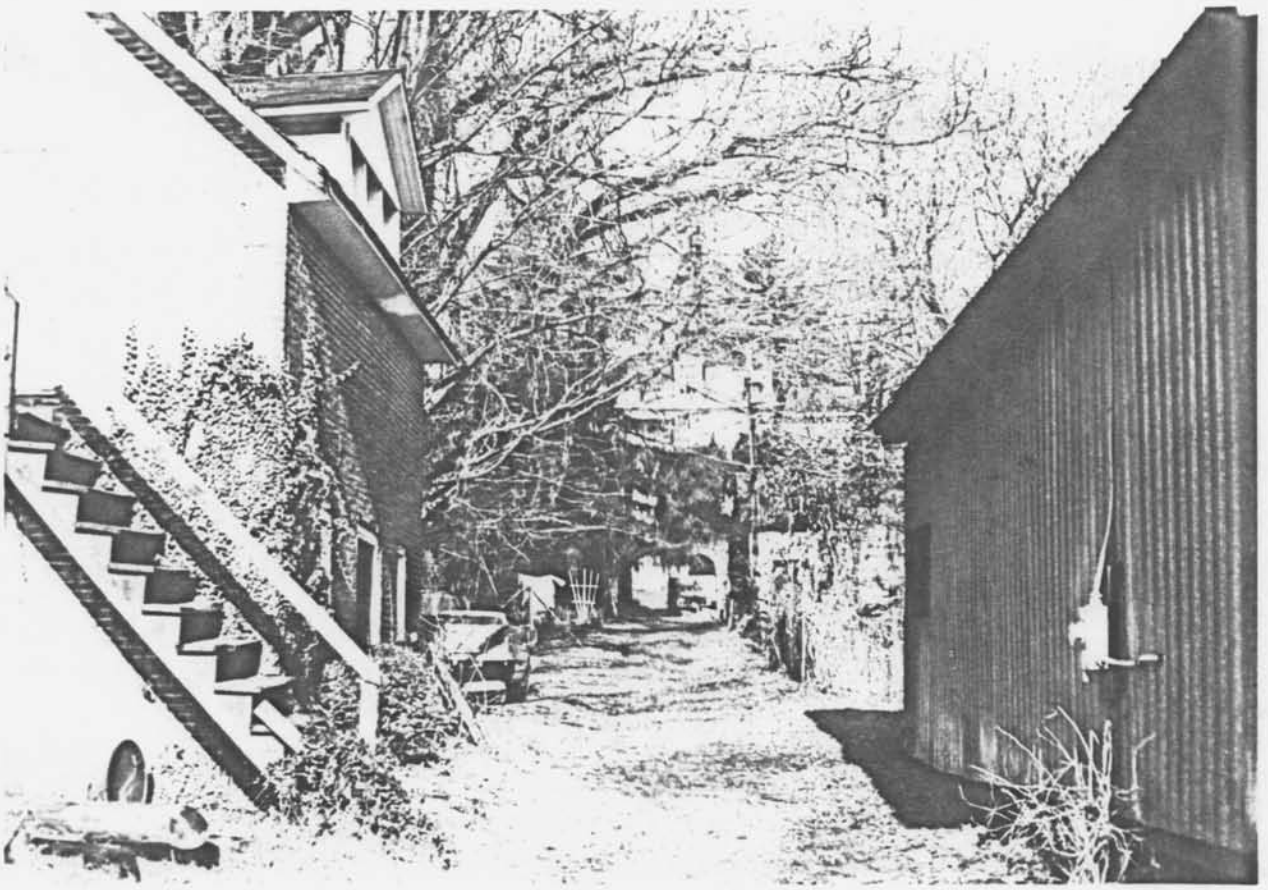
~~9/21~~ 13/26

Olney
Harford COunty, MD.
photo: C. Weeks
July 1986
Harf. Co. Dept. Planning & Zoning Bel Air
Isaac VanBibber HOuse woodwork, parlor look-
ing into stair hall and smoking room

~~10/21~~ 14/26

HA-159

HA-154



HA-154

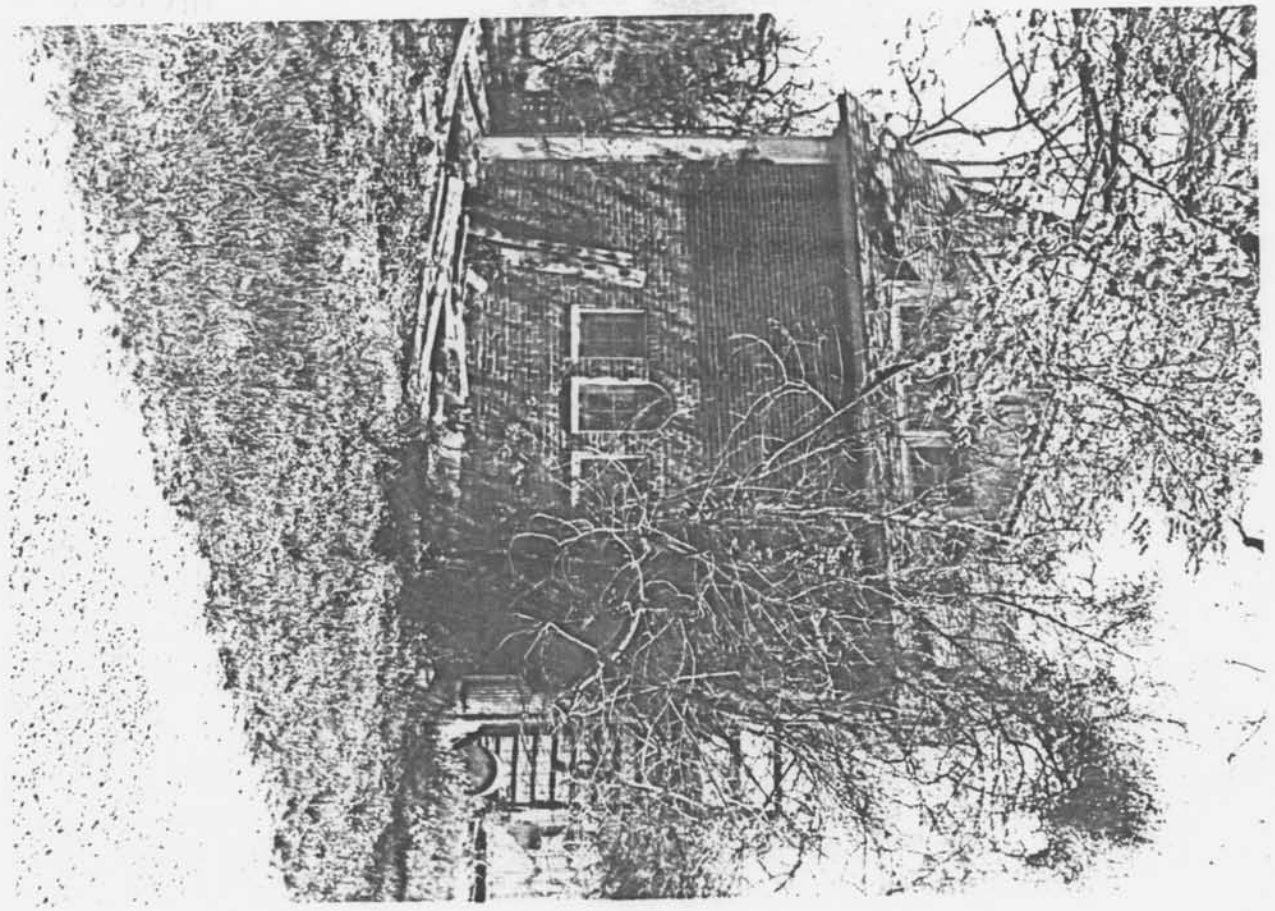
Olney
Harford Co. MD.
photo: C. Weeks
July 1986
Harf. Co. Dept. Planning&Zoning, Bel Air
c. 1810 smokehouse/wood shed

17/26

Olney
Harford County, Md.
photo: Michael Day
December 1986
neg. loc.: Harford Co.
Planning Dept. BelAir
blacksmith shop (left)
looking n. towards
main house

18/26

HA-154



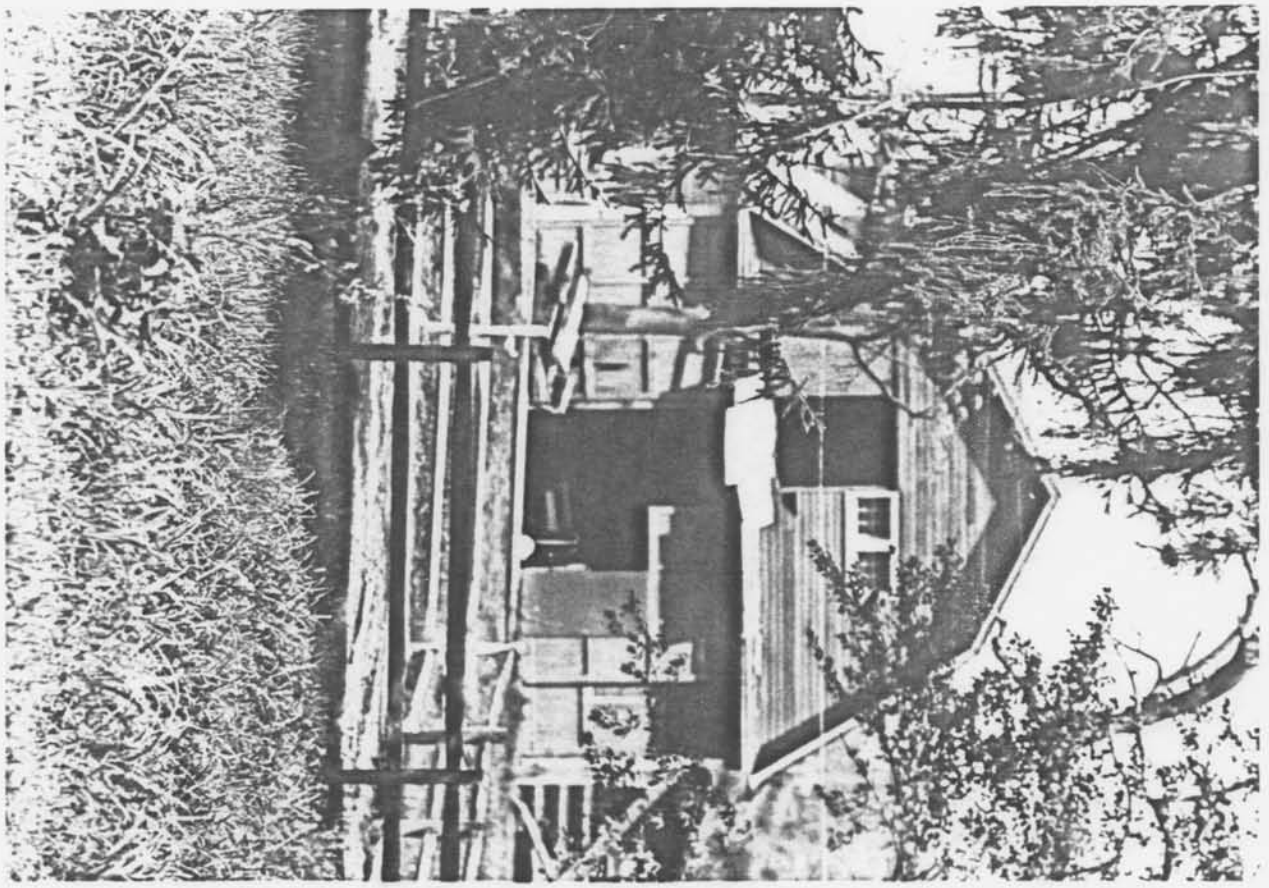
HA-154

Olney
Harford Co., MD.
photo: C. Weeks
May 1986
Harf. Co. Dept. Planning + Zoning, Bel Air
Blacksmith Shop
~~17/21~~ 19/26

Olney
Harford County, Md.
photo: C.Weeks
May 1986
Harf. Co. Dept. Planning&Zoning, Bel AIr
Sheep Barn

~~17/21~~ 20/26

HA-154



HA-154

Olney
Harford Co., Md.
photo: C. Weeks
May 1986
Harf. Co. Dept. Planning& Zonigg, Bel Air
Farm Lane, looking north

~~14~~ 21/26

Olney
Harford Co. Md.
photo: C Weeks
May 1986
Harf. Co. Dept. Planning&Zoning, Bel Air
Pony/Horse Barn

~~1~~ 22/26

HA-154

HA-154

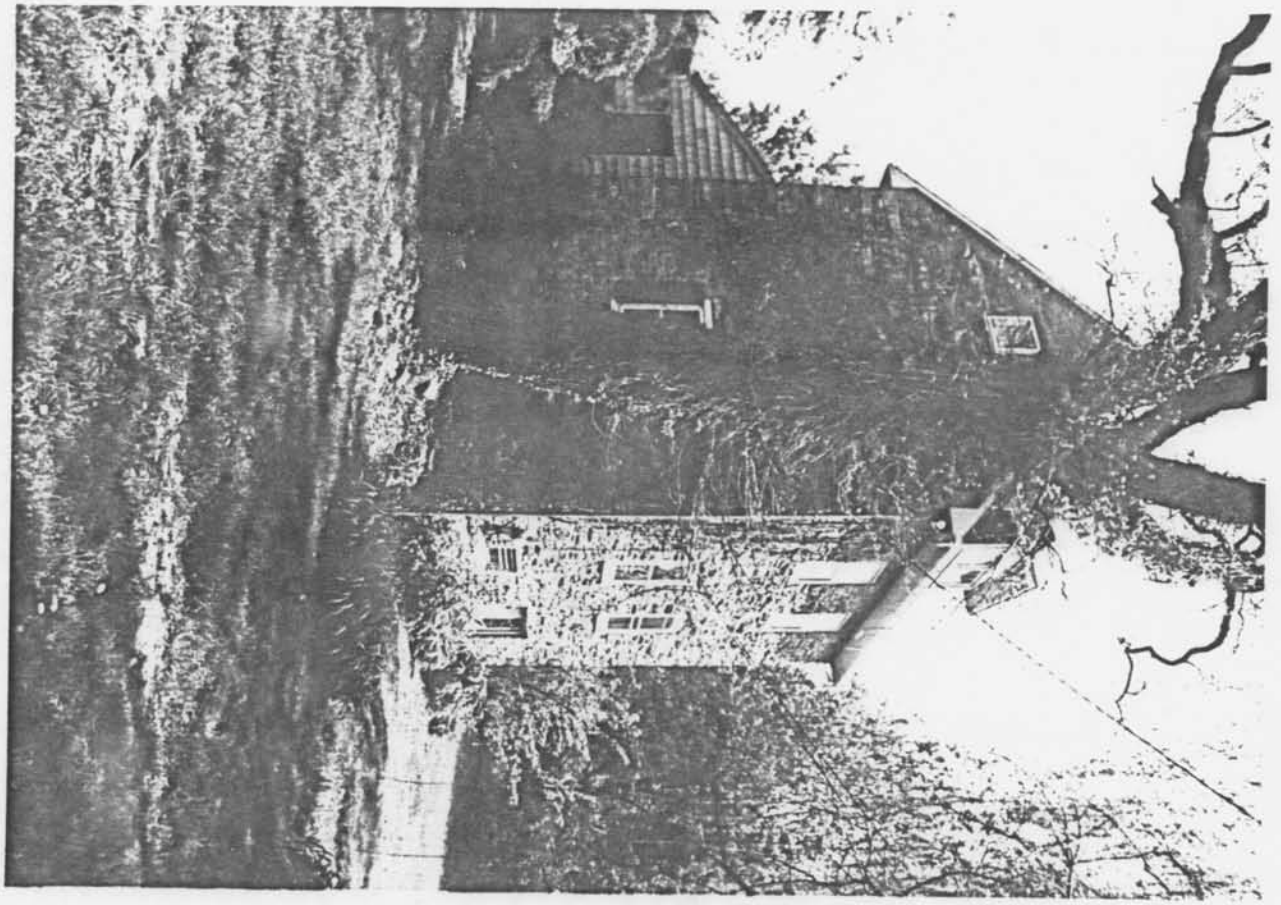
Olney
Harford Co. Md.
photo: C. Weeks
May 1986
Harf. Co. Dept. Planning&Zonigg, Bel Air
Dr. William Howard House from main Farm Lane

23/26

Olney
Harford Co. Md.
photo: C. Weeks
May 1986
Harf. Co. Dept. Planning&Zoning, Bel Air
~~Ice House~~ Spring House

24/26

HA-154



HA-154

Olney
Harford Co. Md.
photo:C. Weeks
May 1986
Hrf. Co. Dept. Planning&Zoning, Bel Air
John Norris House, ne facade

25/26

Olney
Harford County, Md.
December 1986
photo: Michael Day
neg. loc.: Harford Co.
Planning Dept.Bel Air
St. Alban's Anglican
Church, sw elev.

26/26

HA-154

Olney
Harford Co. Md.
photo:C. Weeks
May 1986
Hrf. Co. Dept. Planning&Zoning, Bel Air
John Norris House, ne facade

25/26

Olney
Harford County, Md.
December 1986
photo: Michael Day
neg. loc.: Harford Co.
Planning Dept.Bel Air
St. Alban's Anglican
Church, sw elev.

26/26