

PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY

HISTORIC SITE SUMMARY SHEET

Survey #: P.G. #79-31 Building Date: 1850's

Building Name: Site of Nihil

Location: 13100 Dille Drive, Upper Marlboro, Maryland

Public/Government/Unoccupied/Unexposed/Accessible

Description

All that remains of the site of Nihil is a wooded knoll which has been graded on both sides. On lower ground to the northeast are the County Detention Center and DWI facility; on lower ground to the southwest is the County Police automobile storage lot. Grading, construction and extension of the auto lots have obliterated the contours of the terraced gardens, and the house foundations have been buried in dense undergrowth at the top of the remaining knoll. The house at Nihil consisted of a mid-nineteenth century frame main block attached to a lower brick wing. It was demolished in March 1968, after the property was purchased by the County for use as a government complex. Two more buildings on the property stood for another decade: a gable-roof tobacco barn with attached shed, and a one-and-one-half story frame tenant house with board-and-batten siding. Both of these buildings have been demolished since 1978.

Significance

The house at Nihil was a good example of the side-hall-and-double parlor plantation house popular in mid-nineteenth century in Prince George's County. It was demolished, however, before the 1974 Survey of Historic Resources, and only a tenant house and a tobacco barn were identified in the course of that survey. Both of those buildings have since been destroyed, and the land is dominated by automobile storage lots on the west, and the County Detention Center on the east. The house at Nihil was built by George Graham in the 1840's; it stood on land which Graham had inherited from his brother, a short distance west of Upper Marlboro. During the second half of the nineteenth century, Nihil was one of the prominent social centers of the Marlborough area. The Grahams were wealthy and politically prominent, and were members and benefactors of St. Mary's Catholic Church in Marlborough. Part of the Nihil land was deeded to the church to serve as the parsonage property, and as Mt. Carmel Cemetery. Nihil passed at the end of the nineteenth century to a great-nephew of the Grahams, and in this century to the Dille family. Recent construction of the County Detention Center and extension of the Police automobile lots have substantially altered the site. The foundations of the mansion are no longer visible, and the contours of the terraced gardens have been destroyed. Although the Nihil farmstead was an important part of the historic Marlboro area, virtually nothing remains of it today.

Acreage: 132.69 acres

Magi No.

DOE yes no

Maryland Historical Trust State Historic Sites Inventory Form

1. Name (indicate preferred name)

historic Nihil

and/or common Site of Nihil, Dille Farm

2. Location

street & number 13100 Dille Drive not for publicationcity, town Upper Marlboro vicinity of congressional district 5

state Maryland county Prince George's

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public	<input type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture <input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" 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 type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input checked="" 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 checked="" 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"/> not applicable	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military <input type="checkbox"/> other:

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

name Prince George's County

street & number Room 3020 C.A.B. telephone no.:

city, town Upper Marlboro state and zip code Maryland 20772

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Prince George's County Courthouse liber 3630

street & number Main Street folio 945

city, town Upper Marlboro state Maryland

6. Representation in Existing Historical Surveys

title Prince George's County Inventory of Historic Resources

date 1974 federal state county local

depository for survey records History Division MNCPPC

city, town Bladensburg state Maryland

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input type="checkbox"/> original site
<input type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved date of move _____
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unexposed		

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

All that remains of the site of Nihil is a wooded knoll which has been graded on both sides. On lower ground to the north and east are the County Detention Center and DWI facility; on lower ground to the west and south is the County Police automobile storage lot. As recently as 1984 one could still see the brick foundations of the house at Nihil, and the contours of its terraced gardens; now, however, grading, construction and extension of the auto lots have obliterated the land contours, and the foundations of the house have been buried in dense undergrowth at the top of the remaining knoll.

The house at Nihil was a multi-part building, with a mid-nineteenth century frame main block attached to a lower brick wing which may have pre-dated it. The main block was two-and-one-half stories, side gabled, and of the side-stairhall-and-double-parlor plan; entrance was in the third (eastmost) bay of the main south facade through a panelled door with a three-pane transom. The cornice was embellished with bold jigsaw brackets. An unusual feature of this house is the fact that the parlor fireplaces are located in the interior wall, i.e., between parlors and stairhall, and the internal corbelled chimneys rising from both planes of the roof gave the house an unusual profile. (Trelawn, #79-17, is the only known example of this in Prince George's County; the Elliott-Beall House, #74B-16b, has similar internal chimneys, but its roof is hipped, so the roof profile is substantially different.) Rising to the third story was a free-hanging gracefully curving staircase, open string with heavy turned newel, turned balusters, carved railings and bracketed stairends.

The house at Nihil was demolished in March 1968, after the property was purchased by the County for use as a government complex. Two more buildings on the property stood for at least another decade. A gable-roof tobacco barn with attached shed stood on lower ground southwest of the house; a one-and-one-half story frame tenant house, with board-and-batten siding and corrugated metal covering its gable roof, stood to the north. Both of these buildings have been demolished since 1978.

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input 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 1840's **Builder/Architect**

check: Applicable Criteria: A B C D
and/or
Applicable Exception: A B C D E F G
Level of Significance: national state local

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

The Graham House at Nihil was a good example of the side-hall-and-double parlor plantation house popular in mid-nineteenth century in Prince George's County. It was demolished, however, before the 1974 Survey of Historic Resources, and only a tenant house and a tobacco barn were identified in the course of that survey. Both of those buildings have since been destroyed, and the land is dominated by automobile storage lots on the west, and the County Detention Center on the east.

The house at Nihil was built by George Graham; it stood on land (part of Brooke Grove and Beall's Chance) which Graham had inherited from his brother, a short distance west of Upper Marlboro. The brick section may have been standing before George Graham inherited the land; the frame main block was probably built by George Graham shortly after his marriage to Eliza Gaston in 1842. George and Eliza Gaston Graham were living in the house by 1850.¹

After this time, Nihil became one of the prominent social centers of the Marlborough area. The Grahams were wealthy and politically prominent, and were members and benefactors of St. Mary's Catholic Church in Marlborough. George W. Graham died in 1863, and his widow continued to live at Nihil. In 1872 she deeded seven acres of Nihil land to the Order of the Carmelites of the Catholic Church; this land on the north side of Washington-Marlborough Turnpike came to be the St. Mary's Church parsonage. In 1874, Mrs. Graham deeded two more acres on the south side of the pike to St. Mary's Church for a burial ground; it is today known as Mt. Carmel Cemetery.

After Eliza Graham's death in 1874, Nihil passed to her sister, Kate Gaston, and subsequently to their great-nephew, William Gaston Hawkes, who had been raised at Nihil by his two great-aunts. The house had been vacant for several years before its demolition in 1968.²

MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST
STATE HISTORIC SITES INVENTORY FORM
Statement of Significance (continued)

Survey No. PG#79-31
Section 8 Page 2

Recent construction of the County Detention Center and extension of the Police automobile lots have substantially altered the site. The foundations of the mansion are no longer visible, and the contours of the terraced gardens have been destroyed. Although the Nihil farmstead was an important part of the historic Marlboro area, virtually nothing remains of it today.

Notes

¹ Rinn, David F., A Survey of Existing 17th and 18th century buildings in Prince George's County, Md., 1968; Census for Prince George's County, 1850; Prince George's Post, 6 Feb 1969.

² Bowie, E.G., Across the years in Prince George's County, 1975; Prince George's County Tax Assessments, 1850, 1861-71; G.M. Hopkins, Atlas of Prince George's County, 1878.

Chain of Title
Site of Nihil
PG #79-31

#3630:945
31 July 1968
Deed
Marie Rice Stafford, surviving joint tenant with Mary A. Rice, who died January 1966, to Board of County Commissioners of Prince George's County; lots #1, #4 and #44 of the A.O. Dille Farm as shown in Plat BDS #1:100, 214.018 acres [mansion is on lot #1] as conveyed by #204:481

#204:481
7 Feb 1924
Deed
Alonzo and Sarah Dille of D.C. to Mary A. Rice of D.C., lots #1, #2, #4 and #44 of the farm acquired from Hawks by #50:589

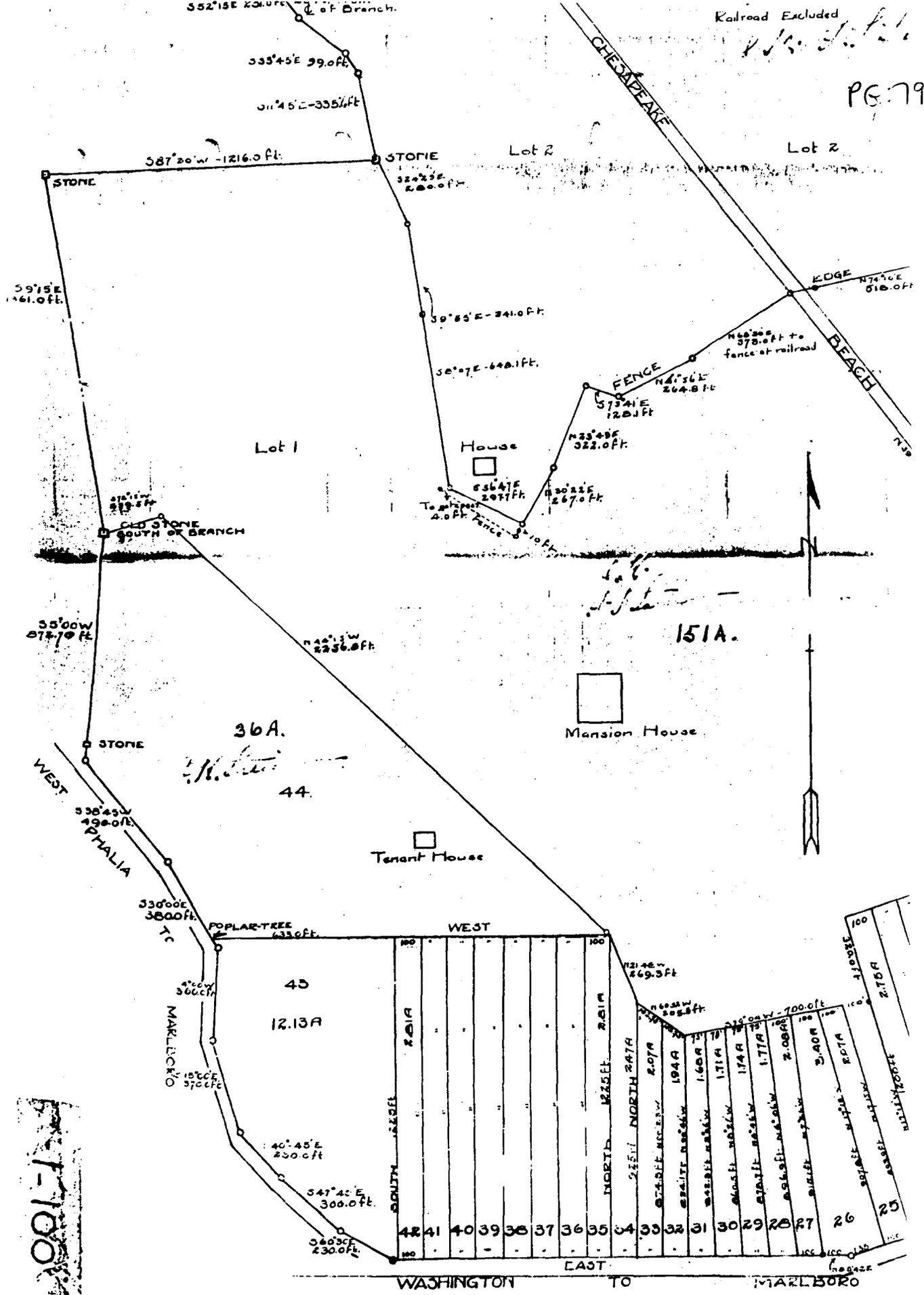
#50:589
18 Mar 1909
Deed
M.W. Gaston Hawks and Mary G. Hawks to William Weir and Alonzo O. Dille 446.23 acres known as Nihil; this property was conveyed in trust by Catherine J. Gaston to Francis T. Hawks, now deceased, for the benefit of his children M.W.G. Hawks and Mary G. Hawks (also Olive Hawks who has since died). These children now convey the property to Weir and Dille, cf. 1923 survey BDS #1:100

HB #12:276
6 Mar 1877
Deed
Catherine J. Gaston of P.G. to Francis T. Hawks in trust for his children M.W.G. Hawks, Mary G. Hawks and Olive Hawks, 413 3/8 acres of Nihil; this land was the farm of Eliza Graham, who devised the proceeds to her niece Hannah Hawks for the support of her three above-cited children; Hannah Hawks has since died, and Catherine Gaston has been appointed their guardian. To ensure her guardianship she conveys the land on which she resides to [the children's father] Francis T. Hawks, same land conveyed to John C. Graham by Zachariah Berry and Thomas Clagett.

WAJ #1:516
27 May 1874
Will
Testator, Eliza Graham, widow of George Graham: \$10,000 to niece Hannah Hawks for support of her children, all residue to sister Catherine Gaston

WAJ #1:257
1863
Will
Testator, George W. Graham; all real estate to wife, Eliza Gaston Graham

PC #1:90
10 March 1838
Will
Testator, John C. Graham; all land in Prince George's County (purchased from Z. Berry and T. Clagett) to brothers George W. and Richard H. Graham



1-100
100

Subdivision of Lots on A. O. Dille Farm near Upper Marlboro, Md.

Nov. 24, 1923

Latimer & Hill, Surveyors

MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST WORKSHEET

1703115504
P.A. #79-31

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

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

1. NAME				
COMMON:				
AND/OR HISTORIC: Nihil Site and Tenant House				
2. LOCATION				
STREET AND NUMBER: Ritchie-Marlboro Road				
CITY OR TOWN: Upper Marlboro				
STATE: Maryland			COUNTY: Prince George's	
3. CLASSIFICATION				
CATEGORY (Check One)		OWNERSHIP		STATUS
<input type="checkbox"/> District <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Structure <input type="checkbox"/> Object		<input type="checkbox"/> Public <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both		<input type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work In progress
		Public Acquisition: <input type="checkbox"/> In Process <input type="checkbox"/> Being Considered		ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
				Yes: <input type="checkbox"/> Restricted <input type="checkbox"/> Unrestricted <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)				
<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural	<input type="checkbox"/> Government	<input type="checkbox"/> Park	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation	<input type="checkbox"/> Comments
<input type="checkbox"/> Commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> Industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> Private Residence	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) <u>Vacant</u>	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Educational	<input type="checkbox"/> Military	<input type="checkbox"/> Religious	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> Museum	<input type="checkbox"/> Scientific	_____	_____
4. OWNER OF PROPERTY				
OWNER'S NAME: Prince George's County Government				
STREET AND NUMBER:				
CITY OR TOWN: Upper Marlboro			STATE: Maryland	
5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION				
COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC: Prince George's County Courthouse				
STREET AND NUMBER:				
CITY OR TOWN: Upper Marlboro			STATE: Maryland	
Title Reference of Current Deed (Book & Pg. #):				
6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS				
TITLE OF SURVEY: None				
DATE OF SURVEY: <input type="checkbox"/> Federal <input type="checkbox"/> State <input type="checkbox"/> County <input type="checkbox"/> Local				
DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:				
STREET AND NUMBER:				
CITY OR TOWN:			STATE:	

7. DESCRIPTION	
CONDITION	<div style="text-align: right; font-size: small;">(Check One)</div> <input type="checkbox"/> Excellent <input type="checkbox"/> Good <input type="checkbox"/> Fair <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated <input type="checkbox"/> Ruins <input type="checkbox"/> Unexposed
	<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> <div style="width: 45%;"> <div style="text-align: right; font-size: small;">(Check One)</div> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Altered <input type="checkbox"/> Uncolored </div> <div style="width: 45%;"> <div style="text-align: right; font-size: small;">(Check One)</div> <input type="checkbox"/> Moved <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Original Site </div> </div>
DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE	
<p>The house is a story and a half, frame building with board and batten siding. The main (east) facade is two bays with the doorway in the north bay; the south bay is a 6/6 double hung sash window. The rear facade has two windows. On the north end there is a large external chimney.</p> <p>In plan, the house is three rooms divided by vertical board partition walls. The north room runs through the house and has a boxed staircase in the northeast corner. The other two rooms are small and without fireplaces or chimneys. The building is brick nogged on the north end.</p> <p>There is also the site of Nihil. There is a Graham cemetery on the property.</p>	

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

8. SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- | | | | |
|--|---------------------------------------|--|---------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pre-Columbian | <input type="checkbox"/> 16th Century | <input type="checkbox"/> 18th Century | <input type="checkbox"/> 20th Century |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 15th Century | <input type="checkbox"/> 17th Century | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 19th Century | |

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known)

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- | | | | |
|---|---|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal | <input type="checkbox"/> Education | <input type="checkbox"/> Political | <input type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric | <input type="checkbox"/> Engineering | <input type="checkbox"/> Religion/Philosophy | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Historic | <input type="checkbox"/> Industry | <input type="checkbox"/> Science | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture | <input type="checkbox"/> Invention | <input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Social/Humanitarian | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Art | <input type="checkbox"/> Literature | <input type="checkbox"/> Theater | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Commerce | <input type="checkbox"/> Military | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communications | <input type="checkbox"/> Music | | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation | | | _____ |

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The house was the home of George William Graham, who married Elizabeth Gaston of Washington, D.C. Upon his death, George Graham left his estate to his wife. She gave the "Mt. Carmel" part of the tract to St. Mary's Church in Upper Marlboro, which used the land for a cemetery and rectory.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Blank area for Major Bibliographical References.

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY			O R	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES		
CORNER	LATITUDE	LONGITUDE		LATITUDE	LONGITUDE	
	Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds		Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds	
NW	° ' "	° ' "		° ' "	° ' "	
NE	° ' "	° ' "		° ' "	° ' "	
SE	° ' "	° ' "		° ' "	° ' "	
SW	° ' "	° ' "		° ' "	° ' "	

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY:

Acreeage Justification:

Blank area for Acreeage Justification.

11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE:
Christopher Owens, Park Historian

ORGANIZATION: MNCPPC DATE: 9 Oct 74

STREET AND NUMBER:
8787 Georgia Avenue

CITY OR TOWN: Silver Spring STATE: Maryland

12. State Liaison Officer Review: (Office Use Only)

Significance of this property is:
National State Local

Signature _____

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

R-S

P.G. COUNTY
DETENTION CENTER

LOT 48

114093

DILLE

DRIVE

R-R

0389

PG 79-31

9891

A. D. DILLE FARM

47

0389

RITCHIE MARLBORO RD.

R-R



0957

C-2

PIKE

ED15

MARLBORO

ANTIOCH
BAPTIST CHURCH
5443/602

WOOL-
FOLK

E.D.3
2.0A.
P.111

1.31A.
P.133

.71A.
P.112

6051/407
1.68 A.
P.113

0.92

1.3

P.114

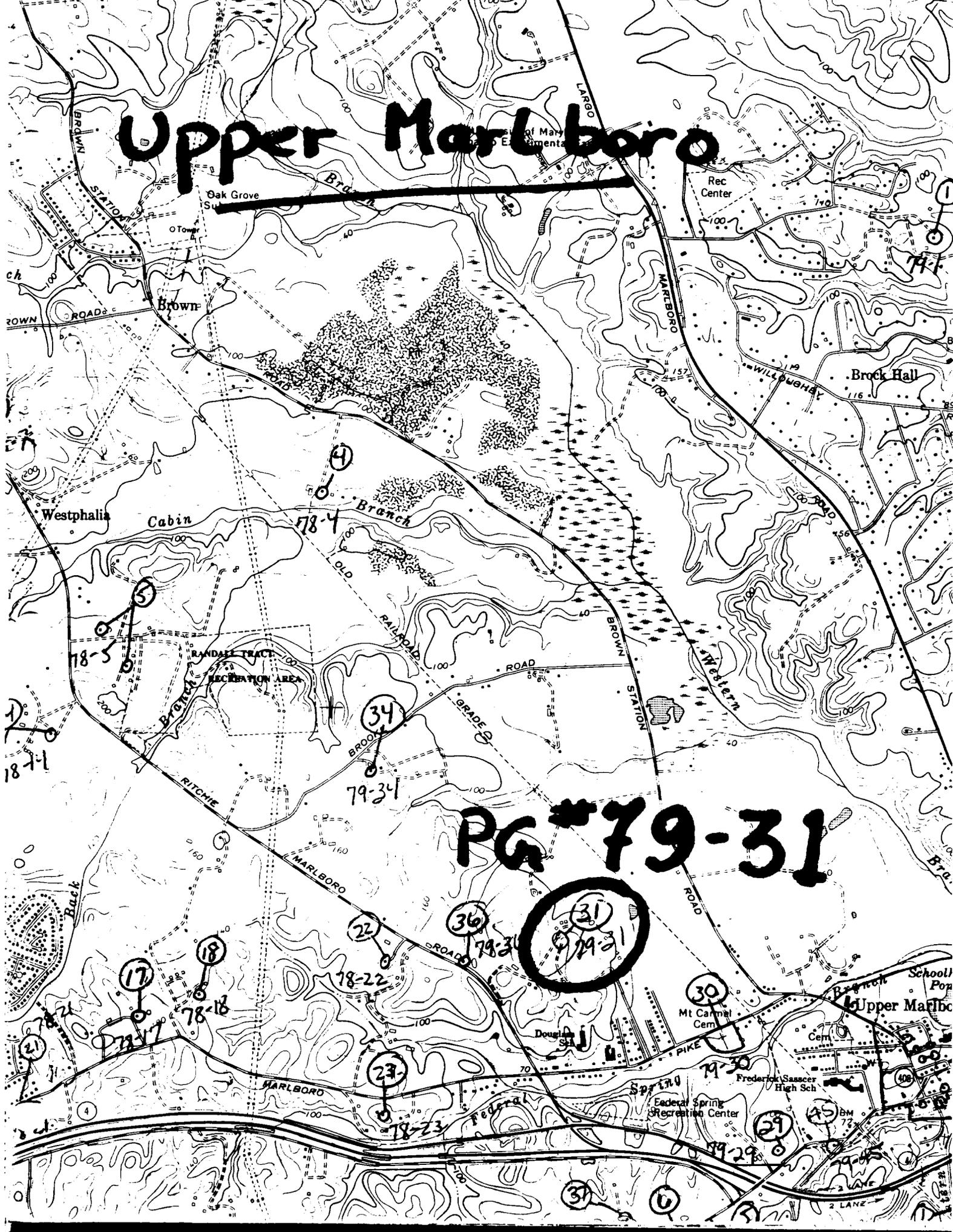
P

0.96 A.

0.030 0.023

PIKE

UPPER Marlboro



PG #79-31

31
79-31

34
79-34

17
78-17

18
78-18

22
78-22

23
78-23

30
79-30

29
79-29

37

36

35

38

18-11

19-1

116

156

100

100

100

100

100

100

100

200

100

200

100

100

100

100

100

Oak Grove

Brown

Westphalia

RANDALL TRACT

RITCHIE

17

21

100

Oak Grove

Brown

Cabin

RANDALL TRACT

RITCHIE

18

22

100

Oak Grove

Brown

Branch

RANDALL TRACT

RITCHIE

34

23

100

Oak Grove

Brown

Branch

RANDALL TRACT

RITCHIE

36

23

100

Oak Grove

Brown

Branch

RANDALL TRACT

RITCHIE

31

23

100

Oak Grove

Brown

Branch

RANDALL TRACT

RITCHIE

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Oak Grove

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RANDALL TRACT

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Oak Grove

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RANDALL TRACT

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Oak Grove

Brown

Branch

RANDALL TRACT

RITCHIE

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29

100

Nihil

May/June 1968



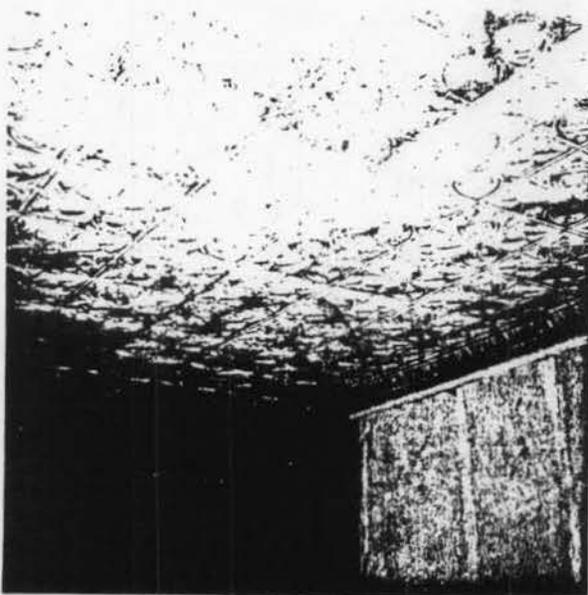
East end

35-11



South front

35-5



Metal ceiling in dining room

35-7



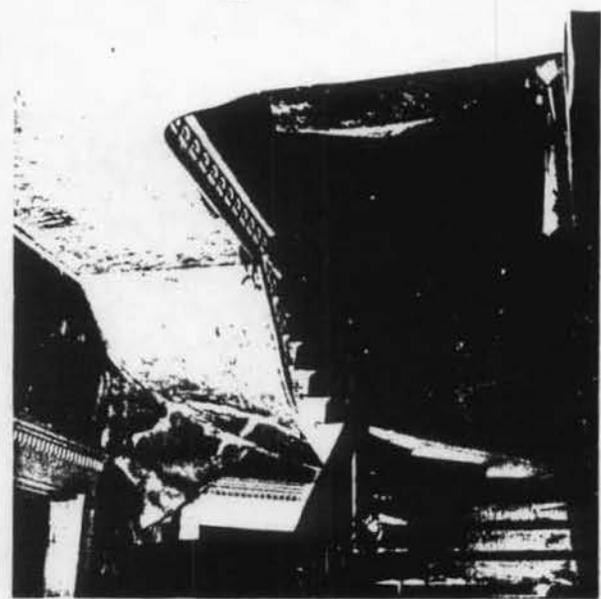
Original grave marker of George Graham. Later moved to Mount Carmel.

35-12

Nihil

May/June 1968

• MAY • 68



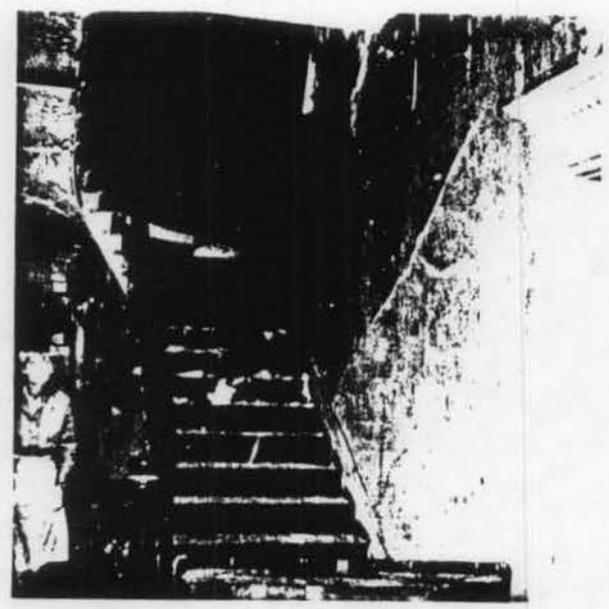
First to second floor stairs
35-4

• JUN •

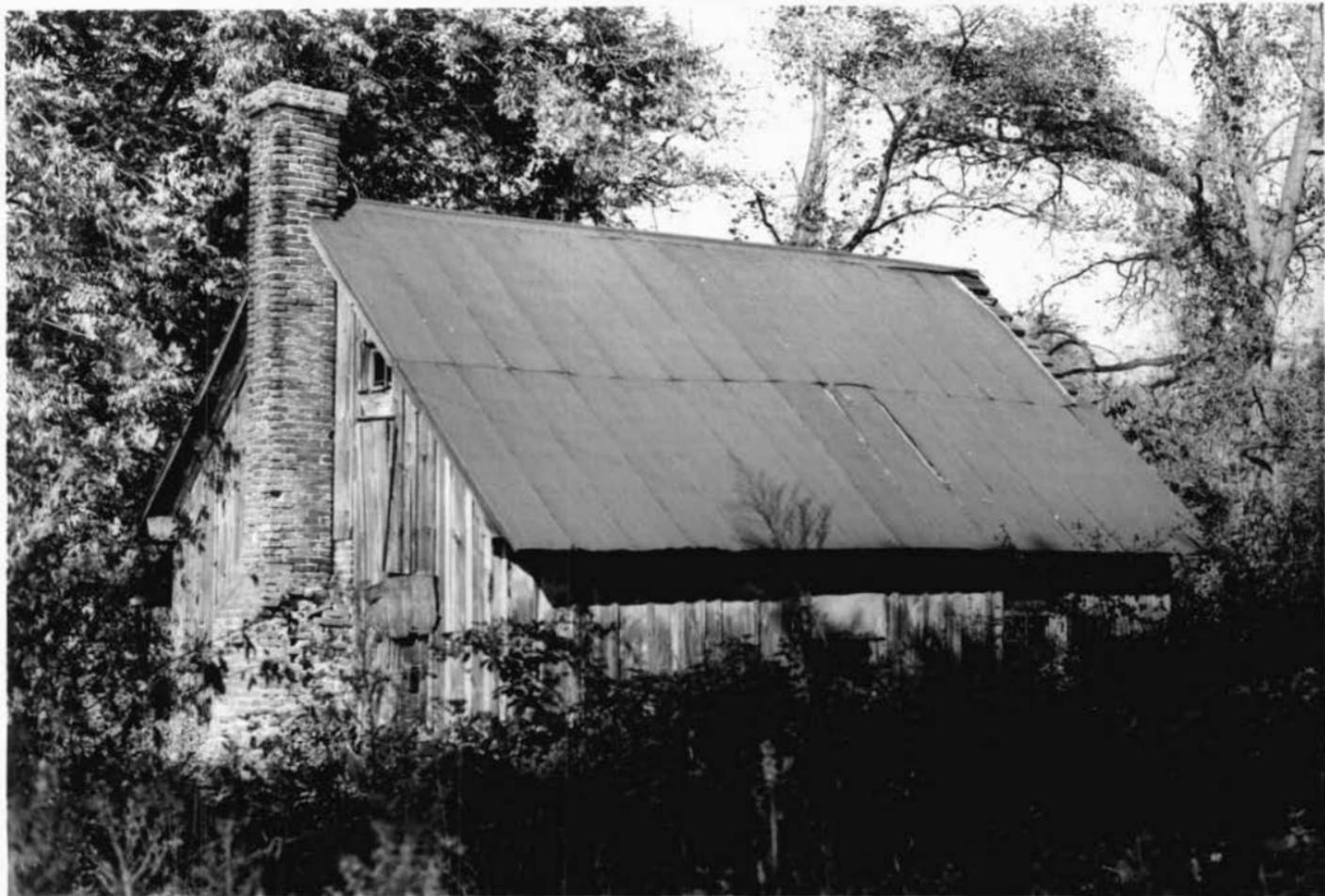


Second to third floor stairs
35-8

• JUN • 68



Main stair hall
35-6



NAME TENANT HOUSE AT "NIHIL" (CLAGETT) SITE (CO. PROPERTY)
LOCATION E SIDE RITCHIE / MARLBORO RD UPPER MARLBORO, Md
FACADE NW PG: 79-31
PHOTO TAKEN 10/9/74 MOWYER



NAME TOBACCO BARN- "NIHIL" SITE

PG: 79-31

LOCATION E OF RITCHIE - MARLBORO Rd UPPER MARLBORO, Md

FACADE S

PHOTO TAKEN 10/9/74 MDWYER