

S-1
Beckford
Princess Anne
private

c. 1803

Superbly built in the best craftsman traditions of the period, "Beckford" stands on the periphery of Princess Anne among mature shade trees and boxwood. The two-story, five-bay Flemish bond brick house is considered a fine example of the stylistic mixture of Georgian and Federal designs common to the turn of the nineteenth century, and the five-room plan house is finished on the highest order with elaborate woodwork and plaster decoration. The large proportions of the 45' by 38'6" brick block recall mid eighteenth-century Georgian architectural formulas as does the expansive gable-on-hip roof. Highlighting the window openings are expertly crafted limestone jack arches with projecting keystones and the base of the house is finished with a molded watertable, features commonly used in pre-Revolutionary War houses. By contrast, the entrance is framed by attenuated reeded pilasters that are topped by a decorative frieze and a delicate cornice. Instead of a projecting beltcourse, the space between the first and second floor windows is marked by a series of inset plaster panels, a feature not employed until the turn of the nineteenth century in Somerset County. The five-room plan first floor is fitted with the finest Federal style woodwork with a delicate period stair, flat six-panel doors, classically inspired mantels, and molded plaster cornices in each room. The southwest "drawing room" is especially noteworthy for its large ceiling medallion and cornice of grape clusters and tobacco leaves. Also noteworthy are the marble hearth surrounds, brass hinges and brass box locks.

Credit for the construction of this ambitious house has been awarded to various eighteenth-century owners of the Manokin River tract, but current research has indicated the brick house was raised during the early years of the nineteenth

century when John Dennis, Esquire, began purchasing the "Beckford" lands from his in-laws, George Wilson Jackson and Leah Jackson Gale, beginning in 1802. The Jacksons had owned the "Beckford" tract for a quarter of a century, since Henry Jackson had purchased the land in 1771 from John Anderson. In his will of 1795, Henry Jackson left the, "...plantation adjacent to Princess Anne Town..." to his son, George Wilson Jackson. As he was a minor in 1798, George Wilson Jackson's mother, Elizabeth Wilson Jackson, was listed on the federal tax assessment. At the time, the plantation, occupied by Dr. Ezekial Haney, was improved by,

1 Dwelling House 45 by 24 feet, wood one story high; 13 windows, 3 feet 8 inches long, 2 feet 4 inches wide; 2 windows 4 feet 10 inches long, 2 feet 4 inches wide; joining Princess Anne, 1 cook house wood, 18 by 16 feet with 1 window 3 feet 3 inches long, 21 inches wide; Colonnade (sic), 18 feet by 16 feet with 2 windows 3 feet 2 inches long, 21 inches wide; 1 smoke house 12 feet square; 1 stable 20 feet square

The 1798 description details a single-story frame house with an attached colonnade and kitchen that was evidently rented to Dr. Haney. After the turn of the century, John Dennis, one-time Maryland delegate and United States senator, assembled ownership of the "Beckford" lands by three purchases in 1802 and 1803. It is thought he directed the construction of his brick house shortly afterwards. John Dennis did not live long to enjoy his new house for he died in 1806. He devised lifetime estate rights to his wife, Elinor Jackson Dennis, and then the property was intended to pass to their son, Littleton James Dennis. After the deaths of Littleton and his brother, Henry, residual family interests in the property were acquired by another brother, John Dennis, Jr. in November of 1831. John Dennis, Jr. married Sallie E. Jones two years later, and the couple occupied the brick house until John's death in 1859. Sallie continued to reside on the property for the next twenty-eight years, when the estate, as the result of a court settlement, was transferred to Henry Fillmore Lankford in mid December of 1887. "Beckford" remained in the hands of the Lankford family until the early 1970s. In 1973 the current owners purchased the property.

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

STATE Maryland
COUNTY Somerset
FOR NPS USE ONLY
ENTRY DATE

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

1. NAME

COMMON:
Beckford

AND/OR HISTORIC:

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER:
Beckford Avenue

CITY OR TOWN:
Princess Anne

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT:
First

STATE:
Maryland

CODE:
24

COUNTY:
Somerset

CC: F
039

3. CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<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	Public Acquisition: <input type="checkbox"/> In Process <input type="checkbox"/> Being Considered	<input type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress
PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)			
<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial <input type="checkbox"/> Educational <input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> Government <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial <input type="checkbox"/> Military <input type="checkbox"/> Museum	<input type="checkbox"/> Park <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private Residence <input type="checkbox"/> Religious <input type="checkbox"/> Scientific	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) _____ _____ _____
Comments _____ _____ _____			

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNER'S NAME:
Freedom Ainsworth

STREET AND NUMBER:
27 West 10th Street

CITY OR TOWN:
New York

STATE:
New York

CC: F
36

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC:
Hall of Records

STREET AND NUMBER:
St. John's College Campus

CITY OR TOWN:
Annapolis

STATE:
Maryland

CC: F
24

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY:
Maryland Survey

DATE OF SURVEY: 1967

Federal State County Local

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:
Maryland Historical Trust

STREET AND NUMBER:
2525 Riva Road

CITY OR TOWN:
Annapolis,

STATE:
Maryland

CC: F
24

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

Maryland
Somerset

NPS USE ONLY

7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION	(Check One)					
	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> Good	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> Ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> Unexposed
	(Check One)			(Check One)		
	<input type="checkbox"/> Altered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unaltered		<input type="checkbox"/> Moved	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Original Site	

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Beckford, a fine late Georgian dwelling on the west side of Beckford Avenue, in Princess Anne, is five bays wide by three bays deep, two stories with a hipped roof and two large interior chimney stacks. The Flemish bond dwelling rests on a raised basement of common bond, three rows of stretchers to one of headers, with a molded brick watertable. The windows on the first story have nine panes over six and on the second story, six panes over six. Above each window is a flat, white stone, triple-key arch. Instead of a belt course there are slightly trapezoidal-shaped plaster panels between the first and second story windows. The center door is framed by finely reeded semi-circular, pilasters with an entablature of carved diamonds. A twisted rope molding surrounds the opening. A large screened porch of twentieth century date, covers the center three bays. A white wood cornice with paired brackets surrounds the roof, centered upon which is a 1920's dormer. To the north is a two-story, two bay wing of common bond and white clapboard with a hipped roof which was constructed in the second half of the nineteenth century. The east side is all brick with nine courses of stretchers to one of headers. The north end is part brick and part clapboard and the west side is clapboard.

The plan of Beckford has a large stair hall with one room to the north and south and two large rooms west of the hall. The two-run, open-string stairway has a ramped banister and half-rail along the wall. These are thin, square balusters, set on an angle, three per tread. The newel is a simple round post. The step ends are scrolled and there are recessed panels on the triangular wall under the stairway. This stairway conveys a feeling of great lightness. The southwest room is very elaborate and has some fine woodwork. The door and window frames and fireplace cornice have bead and reel moldings. The fireplace opening has a twisted rope edging. There is a very elaborate polychrome plaster cornice with a fruit motif. On the ceiling is a large circle in the center of which is an urn with vines encircled by floral swags. In the spandrels of the ceiling are vases of flowers with foliate scrolls. A chair rail surrounds the room and has a guilloche motif. Beneath the chair rail pilasters with recessed panels frame the window.

The northwest room is much less elaborate although still very fine. The fireplace, except for the applied carving, is identical to that in the southwest room. There are carved urns in the center tablet and end blocks with floral swags on the panels in between. Floral pendants grace the panelled

(See Continuation Sheet No. 1)

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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 | |

S-1

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Historic | <input type="checkbox"/> Industry | <input type="checkbox"/> Science | <u>local history</u> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture | <input type="checkbox"/> Invention | <input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture | _____ |
| <input checked="" 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

Situated on the crest of the slope rising from the eastern bank of the Manokin River, Beckford derives architectural significance from several sources. It is primarily a good example of late Georgian domestic architecture, especially noteworthy because its exterior and interior features have remained largely unchanged since its construction early in the nineteenth century. The interior is marked by particularly fine plasterwork and carved moldings, ornamenting the two principal rooms of the mansion.

In addition, Beckford has architectural importance because its appearance gives support to the concept that new architectural styles spread rapidly in pre-industrial America. Located in one of the more remote areas of nineteenth century Maryland, the mansion utilized architectural elements which were just coming into favor in more populous areas of the state. The plaster panels at the belt course level, for instance, are similar to those found at Homewood, in Baltimore, constructed at approximately the same time.

The contemporaneity of Beckford's architecture reflected the growing economic importance of the town of Princess Anne, a busy port on the Manokin River.

The tract called Beckford was originally surveyed for Colonel William Stevens in 1679, and patented to Edmund Howard in 1681, for five hundred acres. Colonel Stevens (1630-1687) was a successful merchant, with extensive landholdings in Somerset County. He served as a Commissioner of the Peace in 1665 and 1666, and became the presiding judge of the first court held under the newly-created county of Somerset in 1666, continuing in that position for twenty-two years.

In 1743 an Act of the Maryland Assembly set aside twenty-four acres of the Beckford tract, for the erection of a new town, to be called Princess Anne Towne. The town limits did not include the portion of the tract upon which Beckford was built. In 1771, Henry Jackson, a merchant and planter, acquired the

(See Continuation Sheet No. 1)

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

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(Number all entries)

#7 Description (Continued)

pilasters. The northeast room has a heavy cornice and molded chair rail. The projecting fireplace has pilasters en ressaute, plain panels, and dentil molding under the cornice.

The second story rooms are much simpler. The same treatment is given to the fireplaces in the northwest and southwest chamber. Both have simple architraves with dentil molding beneath the mantel shelves. Over the door leading from the northwest chamber into the stairhall in the wing is a three-light transom. The main stairway continues from the second story to the attic.

#8 Significance (Continued)

property, and it was his son, George W. Jackson who in 1803 deeded the tract to John Dennis, the probable builder (1771-1807). Although their overall architectural composition is quite different, there are striking similarities in architectural detailing between Beckford and the Teackle Mansion (c. 1803) in Princess Anne, indicating that Beckford was probably built about the same year by Dennis. The fine plaster work found at Beckford is echoed in the principal room of the Teackle Mansion, as are the plaster panels at the belt course level. In addition, the plain but elegant design of the front door in the two structures is very similar.

John Dennis, born at Beverly in Worcester County, was a prominent political figure in Somerset County. He served for two terms in the Maryland House of Delegates and, at the age of 25, was elected as a Federalist to the Fifth Congress. He sat in the three succeeding Congresses, serving from March of 1797 to March of 1805. He was one of the five Federalists who transferred their votes to Thomas Jefferson during the 1801 presidential election, thereby breaking the deadlock between Jefferson and Aaron Burr. In 1798 Congressman Dennis was a member of the committee appointed by the House of Representatives to conduct impeachment proceedings against William Blount, a Senator from Tennessee.

After his death, Beckford eventually passed to his son, John Dennis, II (1807-1859), who was born in the mansion. Also a prominent political figure, John Dennis, II, was elected to the Maryland House of Delegates, served in the 25th and 26th Congresses (March, 1837-March, 1841) as a Whig, and was a delegate to the state constitutional convention in 1850. He

(See Continuation Sheet No. 2)

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
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COUNTY		
Somerset		
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ENTRY NUMBER	DATE	

(Number all entries)

#8 Significance (Continued)

died at Beckford in 1859.

The name "Beckford" may be derived from the old meaning of the word "back" (creek) and "ford" (a shallow wading place), with "Beckford" referring to a wading place across the creek, or the Manokin River..

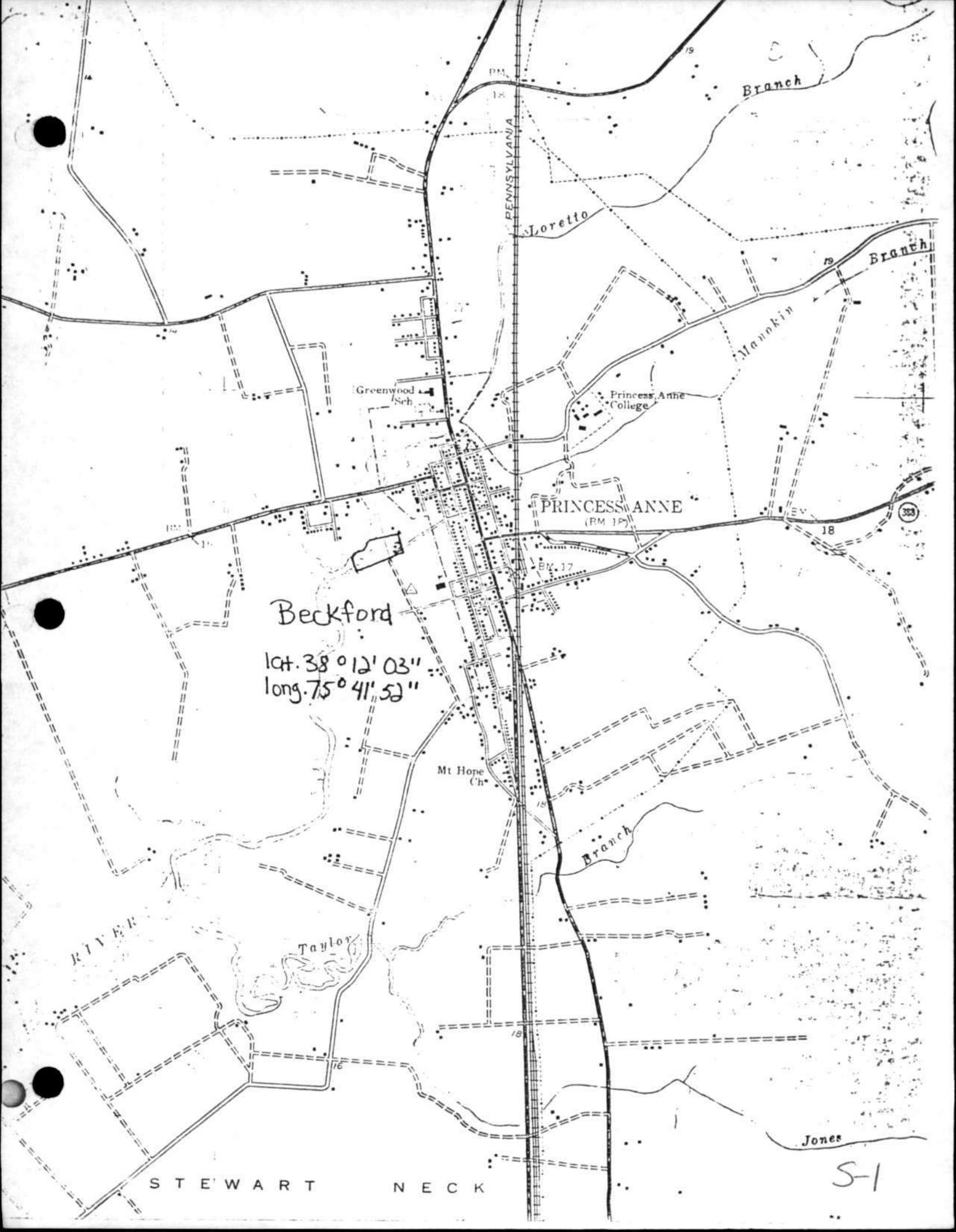
#9 Major Bibliographical References (Continued)

House of Document #442. Biographical Directory of the American Congress, 1774-1961. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1961.

Skirven, Percy G. and Swepson, Earle. Maryland's Colonial Eastern Shore. Baltimore: Munder-Thomas Press, 1916.

Earle, Swepson. The Chesapeake Bay Country. Baltimore: Thomas-Ellis Company, 1923.

Torrence, Clayton. Old Somerset on the Eastern Shore of Maryland. Baltimore: Baltimore: Regional Publishing Company, 1966.



Beckford

lat. 38° 12' 03"
long. 75° 41' 52"

PRINCESS ANNE
(RM 18)

Greenwood Sch

Princess Anne College

Mt Hope Ch

Taylor

STEWART NECK

Jones

51

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Primary Sources:
 Somerset County Judicial Records. Hall of Records, Annapolis, Md.
 Somerset County Land Records. Hall of Records, Annapolis, Md.

Secondary Sources:
 Board of Education of Somerset County. Maryland's Historic Somerset. Princess Anne: Board of Education of Somerset County, 1969.

(SEE CONTINUATION SHEET #2)

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				
	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds
NW	38°	12'	04"	75°	42'	02"	38°	12'	05"
NE	38°	12'	06"	75°	41'	51"	75°	41'	52"
SE	38°	12'	02"	75°	41'	50"			
SW	38°	11'	59"	75°	42'	01"			

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: ten

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE

11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE:
 Ann E. Hill, Summer Intern & Lois Snyderman, Research Assistant

ORGANIZATION: Maryland Historical Trust DATE: 7/73 & 11/73

STREET AND NUMBER:
 2525 Riva Road

CITY OR TOWN: Annapolis STATE: Maryland CODE: 24

12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

As the designated State Liaison 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. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

National State Local

Name: Orlando Ridout IV
 Title: State Historic Preservation Officer
 Date: January 21, 1974

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

 Director, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

 Keeper of The National Register

ATTEST: _____
 Date: _____

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

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Beckford
11700 Mansion Street
Princess Anne quad 1972



Tax Map 202, P. 30A

National Web Map Service 6" Orthophoto Map, c. 2010







Photographed by
DANIEL C. CHURCH

Beckford

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Beakford S-1

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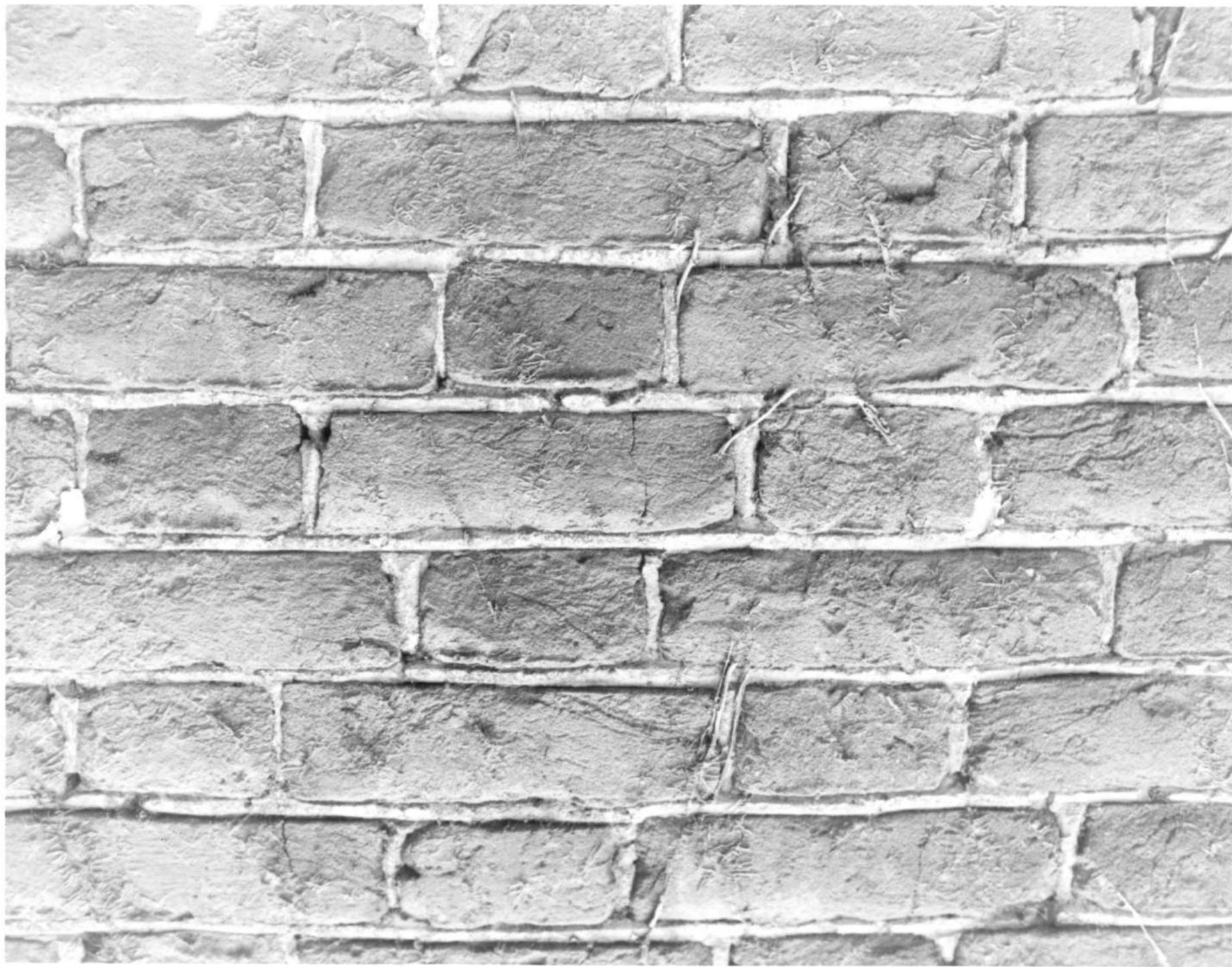
Beckford S-1

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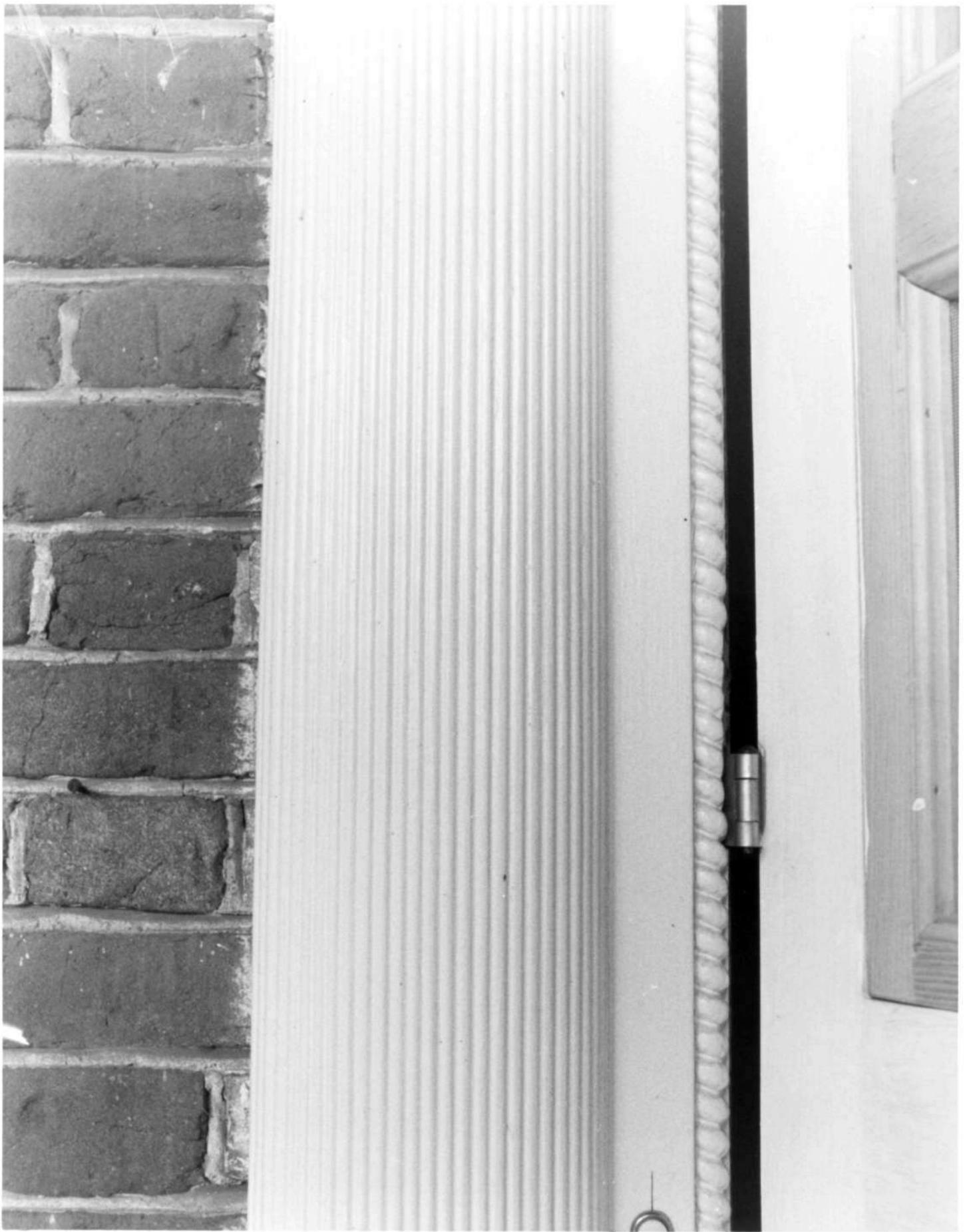
Beckford S-1

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Beckford S-1

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Beckford S-1

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Beckford S-1
Princess Anne, Somerset Co., Md.
Parlor Mantel
4/87, Paul Touart, Photographer
Neg./Md. Historical Trust

Beckford

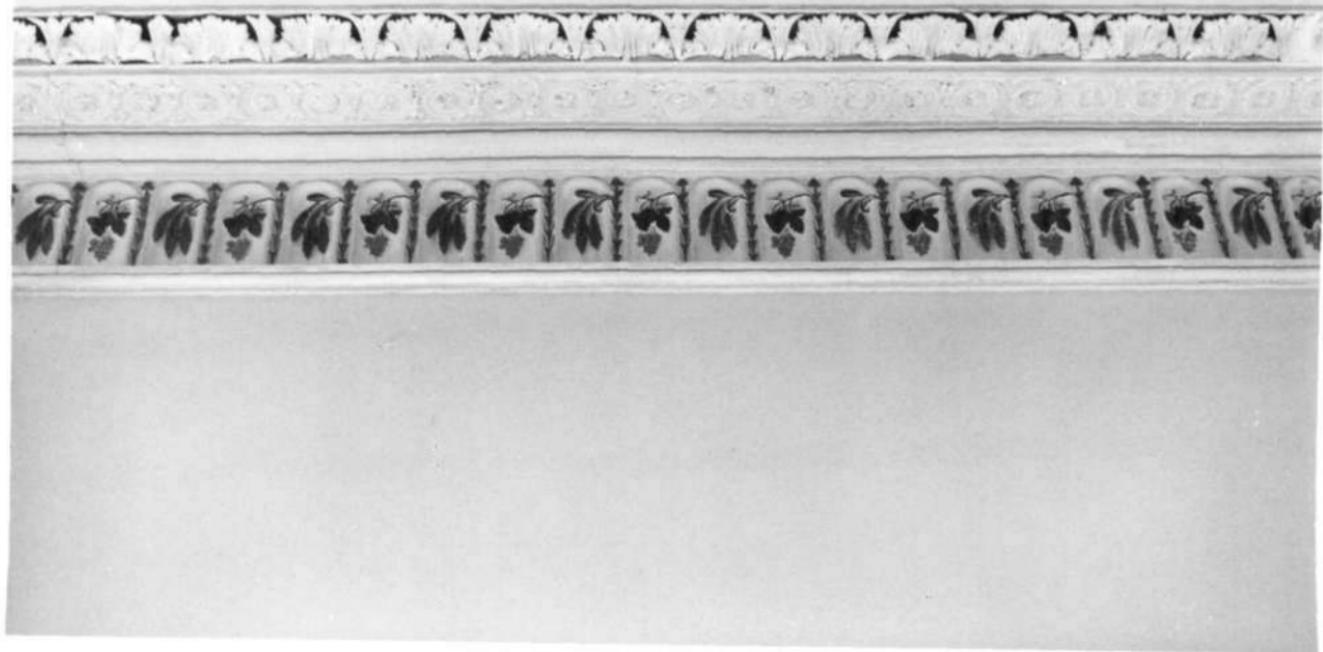
S-1

Princess Anne, Somerset Co., Md.

Window - East Wall

4/87, Paul Touart, Photographer

Neg./Md. Historical Trust



BECKFORD

S-1

Princess Anne vicinity, Somerset Co, MD.

CORNICE DETAIL

4/87, Paul Towart, PHOTOGRAPHER

NEG / MD HIST. TRUST



Beckford

S-1

Princess Anne, Somerset Co., Md.

Dining Room Mantel

4/87, Paul Touart, Photographer

Neg./Md. Historical Trust



Beckford

S-1

Princess Anne, Somerset Co., Md.

Plaster Medallion

4/87, Paul Touart, Photographer

Neg./Md. Historical Trust



Beckford

S-1

Princess Anne, Somerset Co., Md.

Parlor Mantel Detail

4/87, Paul Touart, Photographer

Neg./Md. Historical Trust



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