

S-473
Old Freemantown School
Freemantown
Private

c. 1900

The old Freemantown School is a distinctive two-story frame structure for this historic black community. Dating around the turn of the twentieth century, the weatherboarded frame building served as a school for black children during the period from around 1900 to 1938 when the property was sold by the Somerset County Board of Education to Edgar W. and Florence P. Riggin. The deed describes the site as, “the land hereby conveyed being in a triangular shape and formerly used as a colored school.” It is uncertain when the Board of Education acquired the lot, but this two-story, rectangular frame school was not the first to serve the Freemantown community. The Lake, Griffing, and Stevenson Atlas (1877) indicates that a “Col’d School” was located well north of the present location on the east side of what is currently called “Freedomtown” Road. The “Freedomtown” designation is an obvious corruption of Freemantown. The old school is an important survivor of educational buildings in Somerset County since few black schools survive and no others repeat the size and prominence of this structure. It contributes as well to the historic character of Freemantown and its early twentieth century appearance.

HISTORIC CONTEXT INFORMATION

Resource Name: FREEMANTOWN SCHOOL

MHT Inventory Number: S-473

MARYLAND COMPREHENSIVE HISTORIC PRESERVATION PLAN DATA:

- 1) Historic Period Theme(s): ARCHITECTURE
EDUCATION
- 2) Geographic Orientation: EASTERN SHORE
- 3) Chronological/Development Period(s):
INDUSTRIAL/URBAN DOMINANCE
1870-1930
- 4) Resource Type(s): Former school

Maryland Historical Trust State Historic Sites Inventory Form

MARYLAND INVENTORY OF
HISTORIC PROPERTIES

Survey No. S-47 B

Magi No.

DOE ___yes ___no

1. Name (indicate preferred name)

historic

and/or common FREEMANTOWN SCHOOL

2. Location

street & number 3501 Freedomtown Road ___ not for publication

city, town Crisfield ___x vicinity of congressional district First

state Maryland county Somerset

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 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 Harrison and Ruth Lee Ball

street & number 3501 Freedomtown Road telephone no.:

city, town Crisfield state and zip code MD 21817

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Somerset County Clerk of Court liber 268

street & number Somerset County Courthouse folio 24

city, town Princess Anne state MD 21853

6. Representation in Existing Historical Surveys

title

date ___ federal ___ state ___ county ___ local

pository for survey records

city, town state

7. Description

Survey No. S-473

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

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

The Old Freemantown School is located at 3501 "Freedomtown" Road in the historic black community of Freemantown, Somerset County, Maryland. The two-story gable front frame structure faces west with the roof oriented on an east/west axis.

Estimated to date around 1900, this two-story, two-bay by one room frame building is supported by a covered masonry foundation, and the exterior is clad with plain weatherboards. The steeply pitched roof is sheathed with asphalt shingles.

The west gable end, currently serving as the front of the building, is marked by a centrally positioned door opening sheltered by a shed roofed hood. Smaller replacement sash windows have been inserted in the larger window openings that are outlined by the old board surrounds. The gable end is finished with an extended eave and the wall is pierced by a long louvered vent.

The south side is marked by an asymmetrical fenestration. Another entrance is located in the left (west) bay and single-pane sash windows light the first and second floors.

The north facade is defined by single-pane sash windows as well, and a single-flue stuccoed stove chimney rises through the side wall.

The interior was not seen, but the old school was converted into two apartments after the Somerset County Board of Education sold the property.

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input checked="" 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 type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates **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 old Freemantown School is a distinctive two-story frame structure for this historic black community. Dating around the turn of the twentieth century, the weatherboarded frame building served as a school for black children during the period from around 1900 to 1938 when the property was sold by the Somerset County Board of Education to Edgar W. and Florence P. Riggin. (Somerset County Land Record, JMT 115/231) The deed describes the site as, “the land hereby conveyed being in a triangular shape and formerly used as a colored school.” It is uncertain when the Board of Education acquired the lot, but this two-story, rectangular frame school was not the first to serve the Freemantown community. The Lake, Griffing, and Stevenson Atlas (1877) indicates that a “Col’d School” was located well north of the present location on the east side of what is currently called “Freedomtown” Road. The “Freedomtown” designation is an obvious corruption of Freemantown. The old school is an important survivor of educational buildings in Somerset County since few black schools survive and no others repeat the size and prominence of this structure. It contributes as well to the historic character of Freemantown and its early twentieth century appearance.

S-473
FREEMANTOWN SCHOOL
3501 Freedomtown Road
Crisfield vicinity, Somerset County, Maryland
Chain of title

268/24 Edgar W. Riggin
 Florence P. Riggin

to

7/ /1972 Harrison L. Ball
 Ruth Lee Ball

JMT 115/231 Board of Education

to

9/19/1938 Edgar W. Riggin
 Florence P. Riggin

the land hereby conveyed being in a
triangular shape and formerly used as a
colored school

(There is no deed reference prior to this
transaction)



S-473
OLD FREEMANTOWN SCHOOL
Freemantown, Somerset Co., Maryland
Lake, Griffing, and Stevenson Atlas
1877



S-473

Old FREEMANTON SCHOOL

FREEMANTON, CRISFIELD VIC., SUMMIT

COUNTY, MARYLAND

SOUTHWEST ELEVATION

6/95 PAUL TOURANT, PHOTOGRAPHER

NEG. 1 IN D. HISTORICAL TRUST

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