

The Dixon's Purchase dwelling is a late example of a traditional small planter's home. It measures only 20 by 16 ft. At first, it was divided into a heated kitchen-living room and an unheated bedroom. A corner stair led to an unfinished loft chamber. The structure is a two bay, 19th-century rendition of a Virginia house: a mortised and tenoned, braced, box frame; a tie beam ceiling jettied out to support flat false plates (2 by 6 inch planks); and collar-coupled common rafter roof trusses. The rafters are mitered and nailed at apex and false plate joints. The ground floor was weather-boarded with flush, bevel-edged, white pine plank; the gables were boarded with riven oak clapboards; and the roof covered with riven oak shingles. The wall interiors were sealed with tongue and groove white pine plank. All plank and lath new in 1858 was mill sawn. Interior and exterior white pine plank was sawn in a traditional reciprocal saw mill. The shingle lath was sawn in a newfangled circular saw mill. Most of the scantlings were salvaged from an earlier dwelling. New oak poles were used to support the ground floor, and these yielded the key year pattern for the structure.

A few years after construction of the house, an exterior log kitchen was added and connected to the house with a hyphen. Like the dwelling, the kitchen is a curious combination of traditional and modern lumber: hewn pine logs, riven gable boarding and roof shingles, and circular sawn shingle lath and loft flooring.

Still early, the dwelling was further enlarged through the addition of a front porch and a rear shed with two bedrooms. Probably at that time, the partition in the original dwelling was removed to create a larger living room.

William Dixon constructed the dwelling. The son of a small planter, he achieved respectable prosperity after a short stint as a tenant farmer. He purchased 108 acres of "Queen Tree" in 1854, another 66 acres in 1857, and the remaining 157 acres of the tract in 1870. Family tradition relates that after this third purchase, Dixon moved to the newly acquired part of the farm where he enlarged the existing one room log house into a four room Victorian dwelling.

.../contd.

During the second quarter of the 20th century, Dixon's Purchase or "Upper Queen Tree" was rented to George Washington Burch, a tobacco farmer, barn wright, and wood worker.

The dwelling and kitchen were in ruins when sampled.

References:

Carr, Lois G., and Raley, Barbara

"Dixon's Purchase on Queen Tree." St. Mary's County file, category 423, St. Mary's City Commission.

Morgan, J. Mitchell. Interviews given Garry Stone, 1976-1978. Transcripts, St. Mary's County file, category 173.1.

Perkinson, Jane

The House at Queen Tree. St. Mary's City, Maryland: St. Mary's Creative Arts Forum, 1978.

Wollen, James Thomas, Jr., et al.

"The House on Dixon's Purchase." St. Mary's City Commission, typescript historic structure report, 1978.

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

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SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*  
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

**1 NAME**

HISTORIC

Dixon's Purchase

AND/OR COMMON

Queen Tree Cottage; Dorsey-Burch Cottage

**2 LOCATION**

STREET & NUMBER East side of the north fork of Queen Tree Road, 1.7 miles  
northeast of Md. Rte. 235

CITY, TOWN

Laurel Grove

VICINITY OF

First

STATE

Maryland

CODE  
24

COUNTY

St. Mary's

CODE

**3 CLASSIFICATION**

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE	
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input checked="" 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 type="checkbox"/> SITE	<b>PUBLIC ACQUISITION</b>	<b>ACCESSIBLE</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input checked="" 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 type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OTHER

**4 OWNER OF PROPERTY**

abandoned

NAME

Queen Tree Landing, c/o Mr. Lloyd Needle, representative

STREET & NUMBER

401 M Street, SW

CITY, TOWN

Washington

VICINITY OF

STATE

D.C. 20024

**5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE,  
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC

St. Mary's County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

Leonardtwn

STATE

Maryland

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE

DATE

FEDERAL  STATE  COUNTY  LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE

# DESCRIPTION

SM-237

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED house	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GOOD barn	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED house	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED DATE _____
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The house, tobacco barn and sites at Dixon's Purchase are located on the east side of the north fork of Queen Tree Road, 1.7 miles northeast of Maryland Route 235, near Laurel Grove, St. Mary's County, Maryland.

The main block of the house is a 16' X 20', 1 1/2-story, wood frame structure, with later additions of back shed and front porch. Originally the house was divided into two rooms, each probably with one window; it had one exterior door and a loft window in one gable. The shed addition was superimposed over the entire north side of the original roof, which is fairly intact and covered with hand-split oak shingles.

Posts, studs, joists, sills, plates and braces are of a variety of woods--poplar, oak and a substantial amount of walnut, as found and cut by the builder or else salvaged from earlier construction. The latter appears to be the case from otherwise unexplained mortises and nail holes in some members. Wood members are variously straight-sawn, circular-sawn or hewn. The exterior was covered with wide flush siding, and the interior finished with painted, tongue-in-groove, horizontal boards. A chimney at one end is built of local ironstone lined and capped with brick.

As photographs show, the building has suffered with time. All but a few boards of siding have been removed, and most of the floor boards and loft beams sawn out, probably by scavengers. The studs framing the structure are largely intact. The exposed side of the shingled roof has been weather damaged. A few pieces of interior wall board remain, still attached to studs and showing traces of pink and blue coloring. Brick flues have disappeared from this and the kitchen chimneys, leaving only the ironstone bases.

The kitchen is of half-dovetailed log construction. It measures about 14' X 18', with a low (8' 7") ceiling and a loft. At one end is a stone chimney similar to that of the house; in later years a stove was installed in this fireplace. The other end retains its original gable of riven clapboarding. Although the log walls of this structure are nearly intact, the roof has caved in and the resulting exposure has damaged the loft floor.

The house and kitchen are connected by a covered area which encloses a set of stairs to the kitchen loft.

In the 1930s, the other buildings on this forest tenement were a privy, cornhouse, meat house, chicken and turkey houses, two tobacco barns and a stable. The garden and yard were enclosed with riven oak pales. One mid-19th century tobacco barn of post-in-the-ground construction, remains.

This tobacco barn measures about 18' X 32', with an early shed addition which was allowed for in the initial construction planning. It is completely constructed of cedar and pine--second-growth (old field) timber. At its major joints below the level of the false plate are mortise and tenon, with the exception of the diagonal braces, which are half-lapped and pinned. Shingle lathes in the roof construction are flattened pine poles.

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 checked="" 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 type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700 1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800 1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY) <b>Social</b>
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

history and folklore of Southern Maryland

SPECIFIC DATES built mid-19th century BUILDER/ARCHITECT unknown

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Although built in the nineteenth century, the Queen Tree dwelling and kitchen are typical of those built and used by small planters throughout this area of Southern Maryland in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, in their size, dimensions, technology employed (particularly with wood), and other features and details. (The reader is referred to Continuation Sheet 1, a statement of 31 March 1976 by Garry Wheeler Stone, Archaeologist for the St. Mary's City Commission.) A 1974 survey of St. Mary's County found the structures to be a rare, if not sole, surviving example of this house type. The tobacco barn, too, presents an example of its structural type unmodified by later technologies. It is a sole surviving example of post-in-the-ground buildings put together almost completely with mortise and tenon joints. It represents the survival of archaic practices on marginal farmland, construction with old field timber and minimal use of nails or other purchased hardware; it is, therefore, a socioeconomic document of a kind. Its situation at the edge of a hill has protected its post footings from rotting; lack of comparable drainage has destroyed most other known examples of post-in-the-ground technology in the area.

Title to the property has been traced back as far as 1799 (see Continuation Sheets 2ff.). Archaeological evidence, such as circular saw cuts on structural members, indicates that the present building probably dates from the mid-nineteenth century, and oral tradition has the owners of the property moving away to adjacent land some time after 1870.

A series of interviews held in 1976 with a county resident who lived for a time at the Queen Tree house has revealed much information about how the dwelling and kitchen and farm as a whole were used by its tenants in the early twentieth century. Mr. J. Mitchell Morgan, now in his 60s, spent several years as a young boy at the house during the mid-1920s, with his grandparents, two young aunts and an uncle. Morgan's information shows that the physical structure of the farm at that time, and its use by its tenants, were similar to its structure and use when it was owned and lived in by the family of a small but rising planter in the mid-nineteenth century.

Morgan's grandfather, George Washington Burch, and his family worked at raising crops of tobacco and supplemented their meager income principally by carpentry. Burch made tables and chairs, fence palings, riven shingles, watering troughs for animals, axe handles, woven baskets, cart wheels, and hoops for tobacco hogsheads. These last were made in large enough supply to be used not only for his own and neighbors' crops of tobacco, but also to be shipped to Baltimore for use in the tobacco warehouses there. Burch's own tobacco crops were processed in a tobacco prize hewn out of a large log. He was apparently extremely handy at fabricating farm and household implements in wood, although neither he nor his wife could read or write.

The main room of the dwelling house served both as the grandparents' bedroom and as the living room. Cooking was done here in the evenings as well, over the fire as the family sat around it. The young aunts and uncle had rooms in the shed addition and the boy slept in the loft -- as close to the warmth of the chimney as he could, except when the snow coming through the roof sent him downstairs to spend the winter nights (See Continuation Sheet 3)

SM-237

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NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

Dixon's Purchase  
St. Mary's County

CONTINUATION SHEET Maryland

ITEM NUMBER 8

PAGE 71

SIGNIFICANCE, continued

by the fireplace. His grandmother kept canned fruit from nearby trees, and sweet potatoes from her garden, in the dwelling loft; hens roosted and laid eggs in the covered areaway between the dwelling and the kitchen.

The kitchen houses a large homemade table where the grandfather had his special place, his chair and his knife (which was stuck in a ceiling beam when not in use). Morgan remembers helping in the kitchen to clean fish and to clean and stuff hog sausage (and also raccoon sausage, on at least one occasion). He remembers that at Christmas time, when family members from close by came to visit, the kitchen table needed to be set and served "seven to eight times" to get everybody fed.

The house never had electricity; an ice box was purchased and sat out on the front porch.

After George Burch died, his wife remarried. On the death of her second husband she left Queen Tree to go and live with a married son some miles away. Some of the furniture remained in the family, taken from Queen Tree by the various sons and daughters, but the house and land fell into disuse and abandonment.

The St. Mary's City Commission is considering the possibility of moving the structures to a site in St. Mary's City and restoring them as an exhibit to illustrate the traditional life style of a particular economic class in the nineteenth and twentieth century -- a life style with strong continuous links to earlier centuries in Maryland. Such a proposal is believed to be preferable to any plan for preservation or reuse of the structures on their present, remote site.

The relocation site selected for the exhibit would recall the original as closely as possible in its topography, orientation, relationship to nearby roads, and surrounding plant materials. Ideally, the farm setting would be reconstructed with tobacco barn, a small stable and cow barn, chicken house, other appropriate outbuildings, and fences. It might serve as a site where the visiting public could see ongoing practice of the simple wood and other technologies at which the Queen Tree tenant George Washington Burch was adept, and could experience the life traditional to small planters for nearly three centuries in Maryland.

SM-237

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Dixon's Purchase  
St. Mary's County

CONTINUATION SHEET Maryland

ITEM NUMBER 8

PAGE 2

EXCERPTS FROM STATEMENT BY GARRY WHEELER STONE, ARCHAEOLOGIST, 31 MARCH 1976

In the seventeenth century, most tobacco planters lived in miserable cottages of one and two rooms. Between the seventeenth and early nineteenth centuries, the standard of living rose, but this improvement made surprisingly little impact on houses of small planters and tenant farmers. Even in 1798, almost half the dwellings in Upper and Lower St. Mary's Hundreds measured 20 by 20 feet or smaller -- houses of one or two rooms. The most common size was 20 by 16 feet, and a few were as small as 16 by 12 feet. Some still lacked brick chimneys, glass windows, and wood floors. About one small house in four had an outside kitchen.

Manorial surveys, the 1798 Federal Assessment lists, and Orphan's Court valuations list many such houses in the St. Mary's City vicinity. James Taylor's house on Ivy Hills, Snow Hill Manor, was described as "old Clapboard Dwelling House 20 by 16 feet." Thirty years later the family on the adjacent tract, "Paw Paw Fields," was living in an 18 by 16 dwelling with a 16 by 12 "Log'd Kitchen."

All the one room seventeenth-century cottages and their eighteenth-century replacements have rotted. One -- and only one -- nineteenth-century example survives in St. Mary's County which superbly illustrates the kind of small home occupied by hundreds of small planters and tenants. This is the Queen Tree Cottage (Maryland Historic Trust Structure SM-237), a frame house 20'-3" by 16'-0" connected by a porch or "dog run" to a log kitchen 16'-4" by 14'-10". Many of the details -- stone and brick chimneys, exposed ceiling joists, and hand-riven oak shingles -- are comparable to these structures' colonial predecessors. The kitchen is an excellent example of half-dovetailed log construction. Its gables are boarded with riven clapboard. While both structures are derelict and badly vandalized, their very simplicity will make them easy to restore.

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NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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DATE ENTERED	

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

Dixon's Purchase  
St. Mary's County

CONTINUATION SHEET Maryland ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE 13

TITLE SEARCH AND CONJECTURED HISTORY

1799 Samuel DeButts of Washington County sells to Josiah B. Grindall.

1817 Susannah Brown purchases the same from Clement Dorsey (her son-in-law), trustee for the sale of the land of Josiah B. Grindall.

1820 Assessment book shows land in hands of heirs of Susannah Brown, with \$100 in improvement. Also circa 1600 acres of farm and other land. Vernon M. Dorsey genealogy shows that she has only one child, Dicandia Ireland Smith Dorsey, wife of Clement Dorsey.

1820-

1837 Dorseys live on Somerset or Summerseat, circa 1600 acres. Also own Queen Tree and other land. In 1832, Dorsey files bankruptcy. (But land is not his.)

1837 Susan Dorsey marries Sylvester Costigan. Receives Somerset as a marriage portion and it is settled on her.

1839 Dicandia Dorsey, and also her son William Dorsey, die.

1840 U.S. Census shows Clement Dorsey is still head of household. Costigans and he are living at Summerseat, Somerset.

Dorsey and Susan's half-sister Sarah Maria Dorsey Martin release all claims to estate of Susannah Brown, except for Queen Tree and three Negroes.

Costigans mortgage part of Somerset and, after the death of Clement Dorsey, Queen Tree, to James J. Gough and Henry Garner, who have signed five notes of Costigan's to Clement Dorsey to pay \$220 and interest a year for five years.

1841 Tax assessment records still show heirs of Susannah Brown holding Queen Tree and Somerset.

1842 Assessments show Costigans with Somerset and Dorsey with Queen Tree, per agreement of 1840. Dorsey now a widower aged 65. Seems unlikely that he moved out of Somerset.

Costigans mortgage all their land to J.J. and B. Gough, including Queen Tree, for a debt of \$1660.00 in March; then sell Queen Tree in June for \$3000.00 to Gough firm. Dorsey is dead? Assessment of 1845 still shows him with Queen Tree, but assessments are notoriously slow to catch up.

From at least 1817 to 1842, Queen Tree must have been leased, or farmed without anyone living there.

1842-

1850 No information

1850 John Claxton, rector of St. Andrew's Church, is sued by creditors, Samuel Hopkins et al., and judgment rendered to them.

1852 Via writ of venditione exponas, Queen Tree is sold to meet this judgment at public sale and bought for \$2500 by B.G. Harris.

1853 Harris sells to Mathew Stone.

1854 Stone sells to William Dixon 108 acres.

1857 Stone sells to William Dixon 66 acres.

William Dixon is the oldest son of Thomas Dixon, who died in 1844 owning 122 acres, Pt. of Delabrooke Manor, one male slave of prime age, and personal estate valued at \$882.55 3/4. Thomas left a widow Susannah; a son William, aged 19; a daughter Mary, aged 11; a son Martin L., aged 8; and a son Joseph, aged 3. In 1847, Susannah married George C. Newton, 16 years her junior, and a year later William Dixon married Mary Eleanor Thompson. The 1850 Census shows that they had a daughter, Victory, one year old, and were leasing a farm. In 1853, William and his sister Mary, now of age, deeded their share of their father's farm to George Newton for \$200 and in 1854 he bought 108 acres of Queen Tree from Mathew Stone for \$600. The price paid, about \$6.00 per acre, is the same that Stone paid Harris and that the Goughs had paid the Costigans. In 1857, Dixon bought another 66 acres at the same price per acre. The price suggests that there were no dwellings of consequence on any of the land. In 1820 there was a taxable improvement, but it must have been gone. It was probably at a landing on the waterfront and hence not on the Dixon parcel.

1860 Dixon may have been leasing more of Queen Tree, since the Census shows that he is farming 274 acres. At this point he is farming more heavily than at any time later. His wife, aged 29, is illiterate; his children are Victory, aged 11; Ann, aged 8; Daniel, aged 5, and Susan, aged 3. Elizabeth Thompson, houseworker, lives with them; possibly she is a sister-in-law.

1870 Census shows he is using only 135 acres, raising half the tobacco of 1860 and somewhat more corn; generally less diversified. There are three horses, two cows, four oxen, and one other, worth \$220; six swine. In November (after the Census has been taken), he purchases 157 acres of Queen Tree from Mathew Stone. Family tradition says he then moved to lower Queen Tree. The Dixon family is not on the population schedule for the Sixth District, but Daniel is only 15 and Ann 18, and Susan, if still alive, 13. Victory, aged 21 if still alive, may be married. Others are at home.

- 1875 Purchases 25 acres of adjoining land; sells 66 acres of waterfront, called one half of Tide Mill Point, to brother Martin.
- 1876 Assessment shows 265 acres with improvements worth \$500; two horses, five cattle, four hogs; furniture worth \$28; other, \$49; livestock, \$220.
- 1879 Lost three head of cattle.
- 1880 Census shows no children at home; Daniel Dixon is renting 157 acres, possibly part of his father's farm. William, aged 58, is farming only 66 acres with help of one full-time hired man. Has two horses, two oxen, two other, four swine, 24 barnyard poultry, three other poultry, valued at \$145. Total farm production valued at \$165, including 15 dozen eggs, 90 bushels of corn on five acres, 77 bushels of wheat on four acres, 1000 lb. tobacco on two acres. Value of farm, \$1500. If he is farming Lower Queen Tree, he is renting Upper Queen Tree.
- 1882 Loses one horse, acc. assessment book.
- 1883 Sells one acre.
- 1891 William Dixon adds \$200 worth of improvements.
- 1904 Gives 174 acres, his first purchases, to daughter Annie; 116 acres purchased in 1870 and 1875 to son Daniel.
- 1904 Anne M. and John McGinley sell to Harry O. Reeder.
- 1910 Assessment shows Reeder with improvements worth \$350, two horses, two oxen, cart, buggy and harness, household furniture worth \$50.00. Possibly was living there?
- 1918 Reeder not living there. Is of Laurel Grove. Assessments show no household furniture, but still horses and vehicles. Improvements are \$375, but dwelling house is only \$75.00.
- 1920 Reeder's trustee sells to Walter B. Dorsey.
- 1924 Assessment shows dwelling worth \$150, barns \$300, other \$25. No livestock or other property. Land is rented, dearly; presumably to George Washington Burch (see oral history based on interviews).

It is possible that Upper Queen Tree was rented from about 1870 if the oral tradition that Dixon moved to Lower Queen Tree after he purchased it is correct. The value of the house in 1918, \$75, contrasts with the value of Lower Queen Tree House that year, \$300. Possibly tenant of Upper Queen Tree was Daniel Dixon, but in 1883 the assessment book shows that he has purchased other land and has invested in livestock, furniture, vehicles, etc.; that are presumably on this land. If he also farms his father's land, he is not living there. The gift to him of Lower Queen Tree suggests he was not renting Upper Queen Tree.

# 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

SM-237

Land and probate records, tax assessments, census records for St. Mary's County, Maryland; Hall of Records, Annapolis, Maryland.

Forman, H. Chandlee. Old Buildings, Gardens and Furniture in Tidewater Maryland. pp. 15, 202.

## 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 10.33 acres

UTM REFERENCES

A	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING

B	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

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

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

## 11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME/TITLE

Jane M. Perkinson, Special Projects Officer

ORGANIZATION

St. Mary's City Commission

DATE

June & September 1977

STREET & NUMBER

TELEPHONE

(301) 994-0779

CITY OR TOWN

St. Mary's City

STATE

Maryland 20686

## 12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL

STATE

LOCAL

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

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER'S SIGNATURE

TITLE

DATE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

ATTEST:

DATE

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST

INVENTORY FORM FOR STATE HISTORIC SITES SURVEY

1 NAME

HISTORIC Dixon's Purchase

AND/OR COMMON Queen Tree Cottage; Dorsey-Burch Cottage

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER Queen Tree Road

CITY, TOWN Laurel Grove X VICINITY OF CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT First

STATE Maryland COUNTY St. Mary's

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	<b>PUBLIC ACQUISITION</b>	<b>ACCESSIBLE</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input type="checkbox"/> YES UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL
			<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OTHER Abandoned

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME Queen Tree Landing (Mr. Lloyd Needle, represent.) Telephone #: (202)488-8800

STREET & NUMBER 401 M Street, S.W.

CITY, TOWN Washington, D.C. VICINITY OF STATE, zip code D.C., 20024

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. St. Mary's County Courthouse

Liber #: 164 Folio #: 407 (page)

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN Leonardtown, Maryland 20650 STATE

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE STMA-237 - Maryland Inventory of Historic Places

DATE 1976 - present - FEDERAL X STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS Maryland Historical Trust/ St. Mary's City Commission

CITY, TOWN Annapolis/ St. Mary's City STATE Maryland

# 7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED (house)	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GOOD (barn)	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED (house)	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED DATE _____
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

## DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The main house block is a 16' x 20', 1½-story wood frame structure, with later additions of back shed and front porch which are considered expendable. Originally the house was divided into two rooms, each with probably one window; it had one exterior door and a loft window in one gable. The shed addition was superimposed over the entire north side of the original roof, which is intact and covered with hand-cut oak shingles.

Posts, studs, joists, sills, plates<sub>x</sub> and braces are of a variety of woods -- poplar, oak and a substantial amount of walnut, as found and cut by the builder or else salvaged from earlier construction (as appears to be the case from otherwise unexplained mortises and nail holes in some members). Wood members are variously straight-sawn, circular-sawn<sub>x</sub> or hewn.

The exterior was covered with wide flush siding, and the interior finished with painted horizontal board.

A chimney at one end is built of local ironstone, lined and capped with brick.

The kitchen is of half-dovetailed log construction. It measures about 14' x 18', with a low (5'-7"±) ceiling and a loft. At one end is a stone chimney similar to that of the main house; in later years a stove was kept in the fireplace. The other end retains its original gable of riven clapboarding.

The main house and kitchen are connected by a covered area which encloses a set of stairs to the kitchen loft.

In the 1930s, the other buildings on this forest tenement were a privy, cornhouse, meat house, two tobacco barns<sub>x</sub> and a stable. The garden and yard were enclosed with riven oak pales. One mid-19th century tobacco barn, of post-in-the-ground construction, remains.

This tobacco barn measures about 18' x 32', with an early shed addition (which was allowed for in the initial construction planning). It is completely constructed of cedar and pine -- second-growth (old field) timber. All its major joints below the level of the false plate are mortise and tenon, with the exception of the diagonal braces, which are half-lapped and pinned. Shingle lathes in the roof construction are flattened pine poles.

**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 checked="" 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 type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY) social history and folklore of south. Md.
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES ca.1810; rebuilt 1854 BUILDER/ARCHITECT See below \*

**STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE**

Although built in the 19th century, the structures on the Queen Tree tenement (house, kitchen, and tobacco barn) are typical of those built and used by small planters throughout this area of southern Maryland in the 17th and 18th centuries. A 1974 survey, however, found this structure to be the only surviving example in St. Mary's County of a house type that for hundreds of years represented the local economy and culture. The tobacco barn, too, presents an example of its structural type unmodified by later technologies. It is a sole surviving example of post-in-the-ground buildings put together almost completely with mortise and tenon joints. It represents the survival of archaic practices on marginal farmland, construction with old field timber and minimal use of nails or other purchased hardware; it is therefore a socioeconomic document of a kind. Its situation at the edge of a hill has protected its post footings from rotting; lack of comparable drainage has destroyed most other known examples of post-in-the-ground technology in the area.

Direct information about these buildings, and how they were used, modified, and furnished, is fortunately available from interviews with a County resident who lived there as a boy with his grandparents for a period of time.

An Historic Structures Survey Report is presently being conducted by the St. Mary's City Commission under a matching grant from the Maryland Historical Trust. Historical research carried on in the preparation of this report is expected to yield detailed information on the history of the building and its owners as well.

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

**9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES**

H.Chandlee Forman, Old Buildings, Gardens, and Furniture in Tidewater Maryland, pp. 15, 202.

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

**10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA**

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 174 acres

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION: "Beginning at a stone, a boundary of R.H.Reeder's land and on the roadside and running thence with the road south  $12\frac{1}{4}^{\circ}$  w. 12 ps., then south  $10\frac{1}{4}^{\circ}$  w. 12 ps., then  $s.9^{\circ}$  w. 33 ps., to the Queen Tree Road. Then with the said road  $s.82^{\circ}$  e.44 Ps., then  $n.70^{\circ}$ e.20 ps., then  $82\frac{2}{3}^{\circ}$  e.10 ps., then  $s.82\frac{1}{2}^{\circ}$  e.38 ps., then  $s.77^{\circ}$  e.21 ps. to a post near an old gate. Then leaving the road  $n.1\frac{1}{4}^{\circ}$  e.32 ps., then  $n.47^{\circ}$

~~VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION~~ e.32ps., down in a swamp on the right of a run, then crossing the run  $n.25\frac{3}{4}^{\circ}$  w.32 ps. on the top of a hill on the right of a ravine, then with the ridge of the hill  $n.61^{\circ}$  w.28 ps., then  $n.17^{\circ}$  w. $64\frac{1}{4}$  ps. to the holdings of Reeder's land. Then with the holdings, which is up a branch,  $s.74\frac{1}{4}^{\circ}$  w.12 ps., then  $n.89\frac{1}{2}^{\circ}$  w.8 ps. then  $85^{\circ}$  w.16 ps., then  $n.86^{\circ}$  w.8 ps., then  $n.69^{\circ}$  w.13 ps., then  $s.76^{\circ}$ w.20 ps., thence  $s.33\frac{1}{3}^{\circ}$  w.10 ps. with the fence up a branch, then  $s.11^{\circ}$  w.28 ps. with the fence and crossing the branch leaving it on the left, then  $s.3^{\circ}$  w.20 ps., then  $s.24^{\circ}$  e.11 ps., then  $s.8\frac{1}{2}^{\circ}$ w.26 ps then  $s.18\frac{1}{2}^{\circ}$  w. $7\frac{1}{2}$  ps to the beginning" (1904 deed by Wm.Dixon to his daughter)

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

STATE	COUNTY
-	-
STATE	COUNTY
-	-

**11 FORM PREPARED BY**

NAME / TITLE

Jane M. Perkinson, Special Projects Officer

ORGANIZATION

St. Mary's City Commission

DATE

June 8, 1977

STREET & NUMBER

-

TELEPHONE

(301)994-0779

CITY OR TOWN

St. Mary's City, (Maryland)

STATE

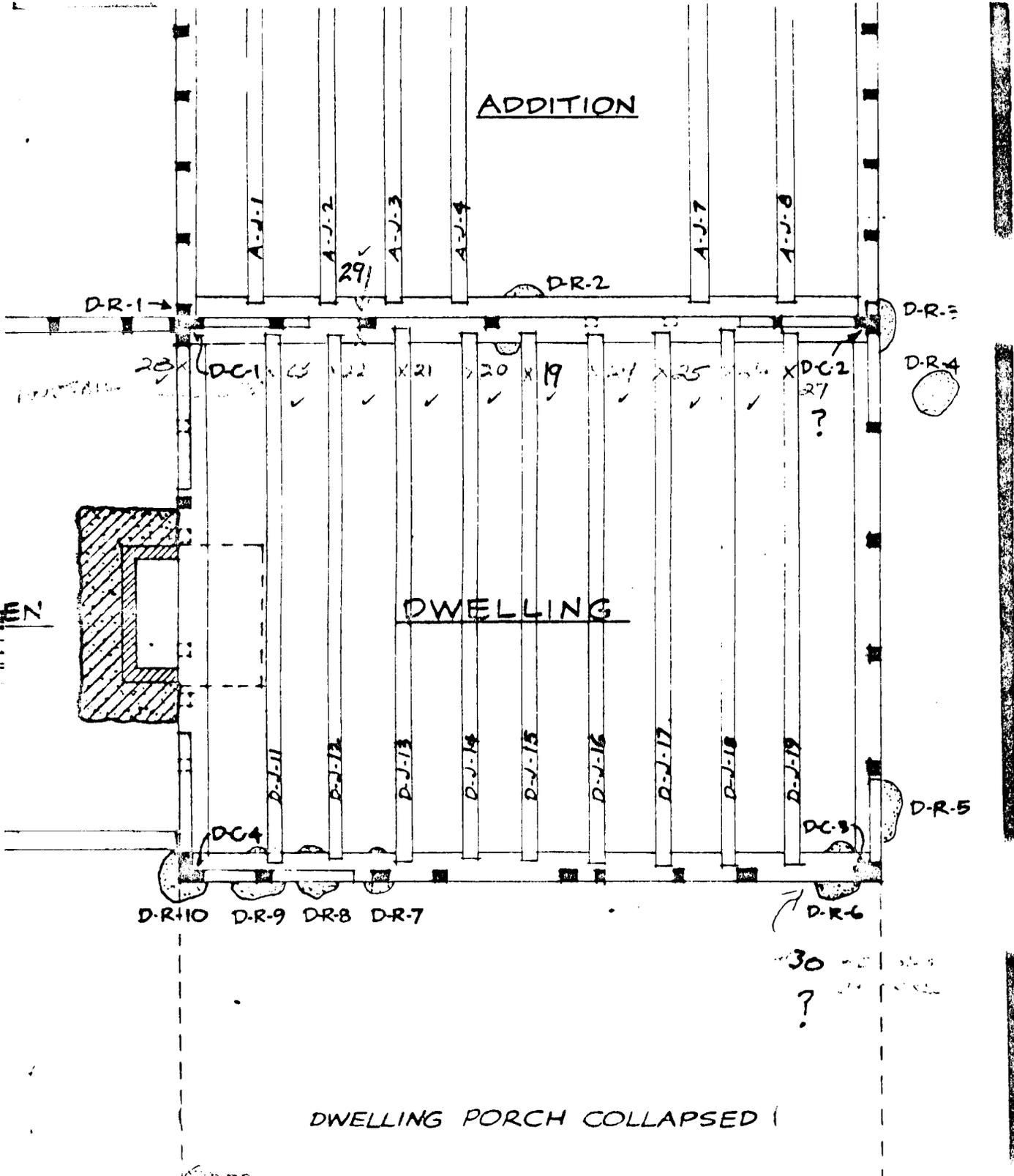
Maryland 20686

The Maryland Historic Sites Inventory was officially created by an Act of the Maryland Legislature, to be found in the Annotated Code of Maryland, Article 41, Section 181 KA, 1974 Supplement.

The Survey and Inventory are being prepared for information and record purposes only and do not constitute any infringement of individual property rights.

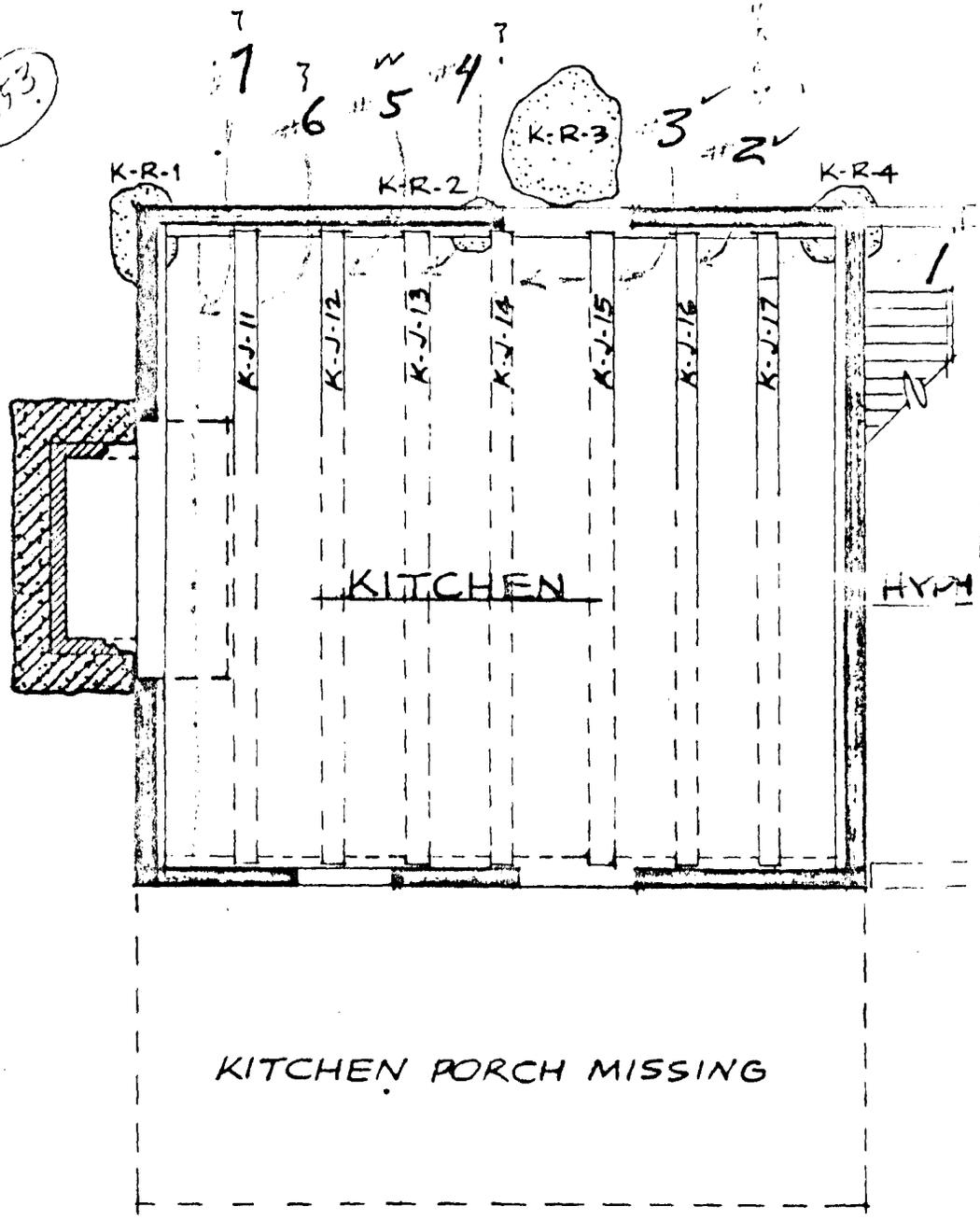
RETURN TO: Maryland Historical Trust  
The Shaw House, 21 State Circle  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401  
(301) 267-1438

SM-737

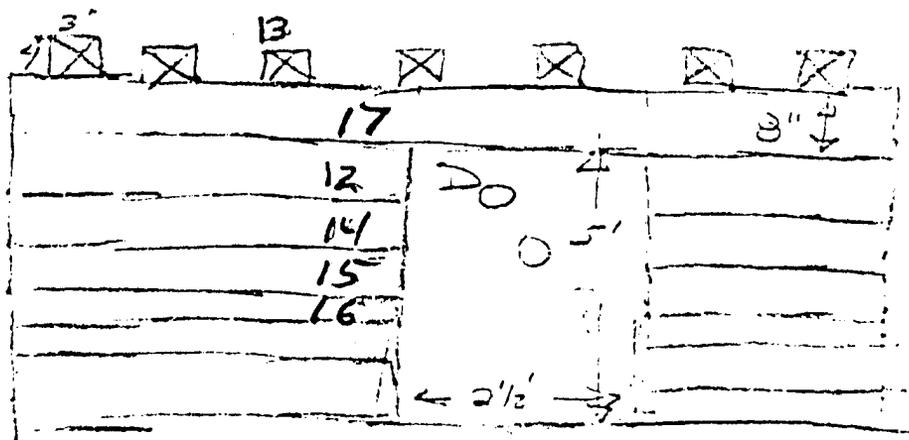


SM-237

1853

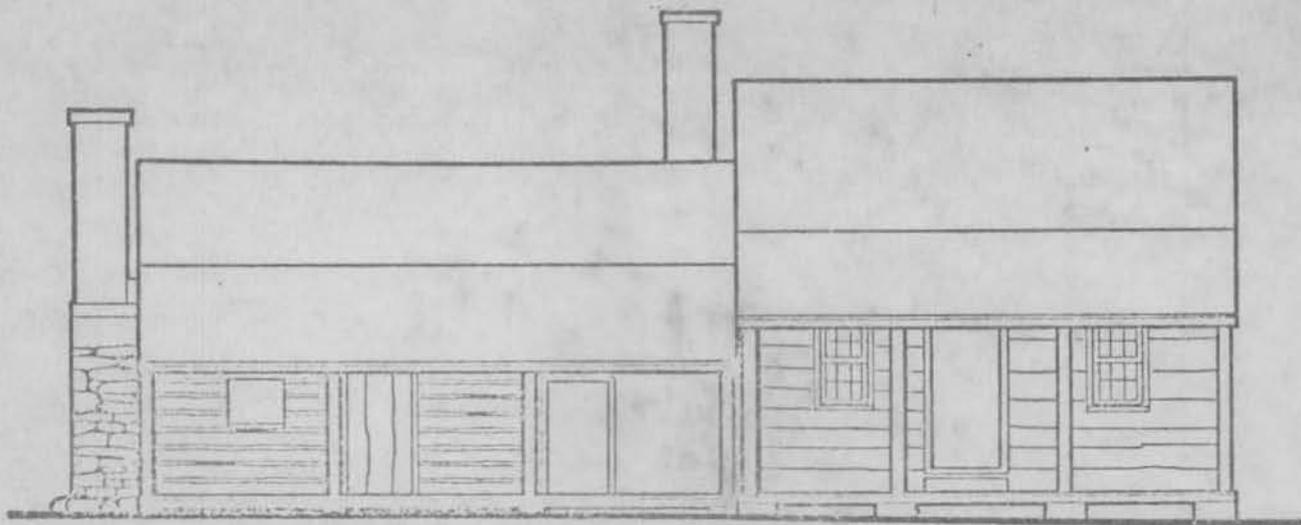






Dixon Purchase  
Log Kitchen

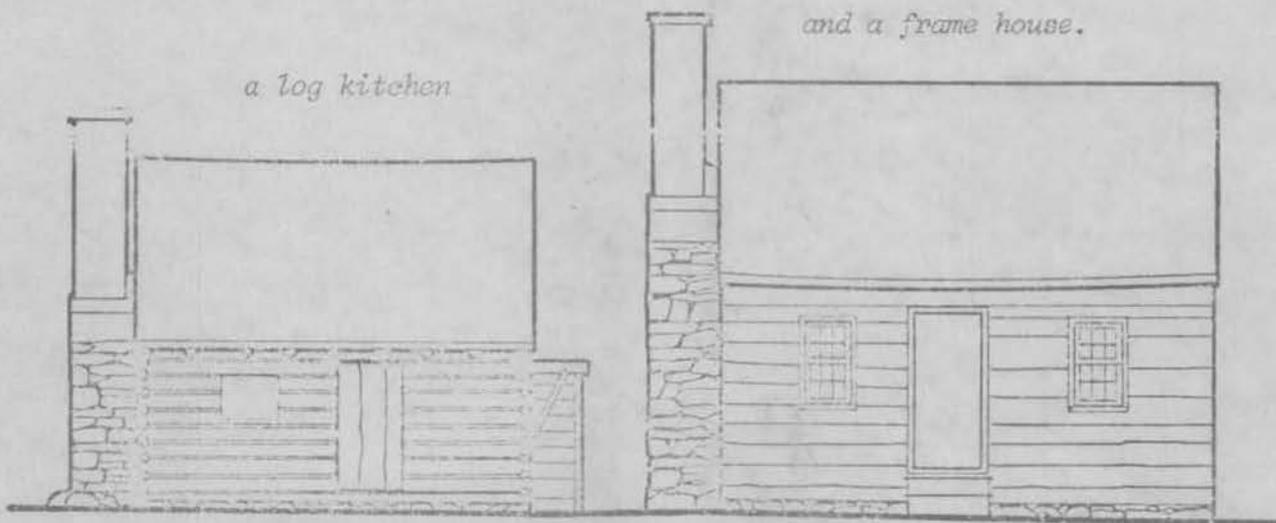
This is how it looked from the outside.



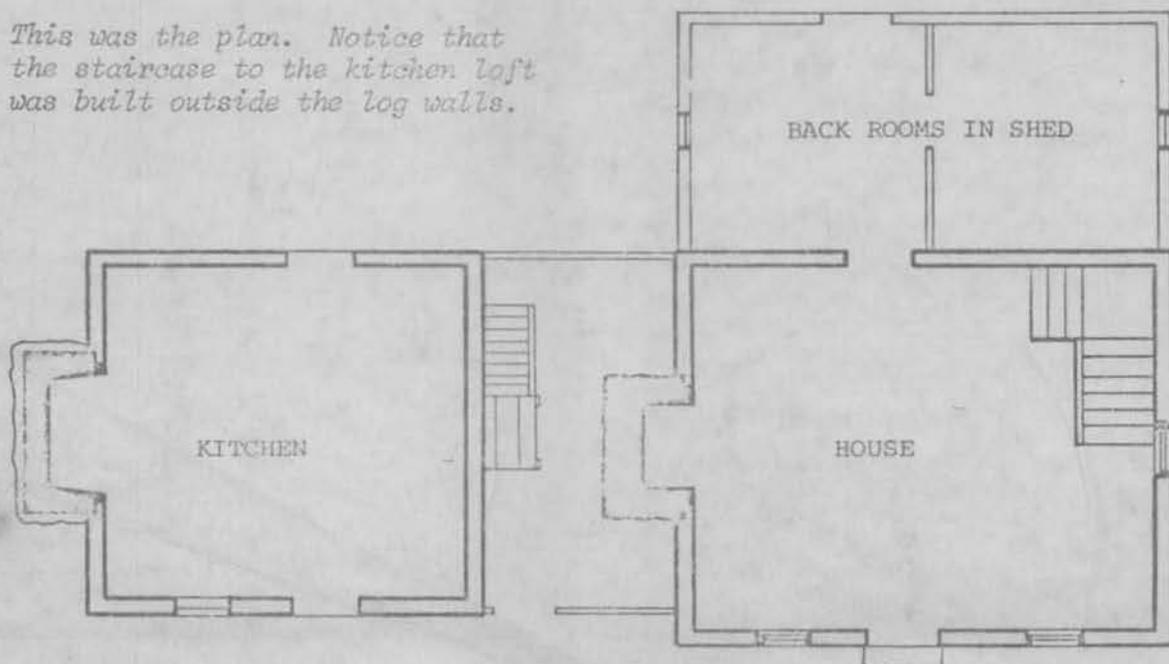
But underneath it was really two separate buildings . . .

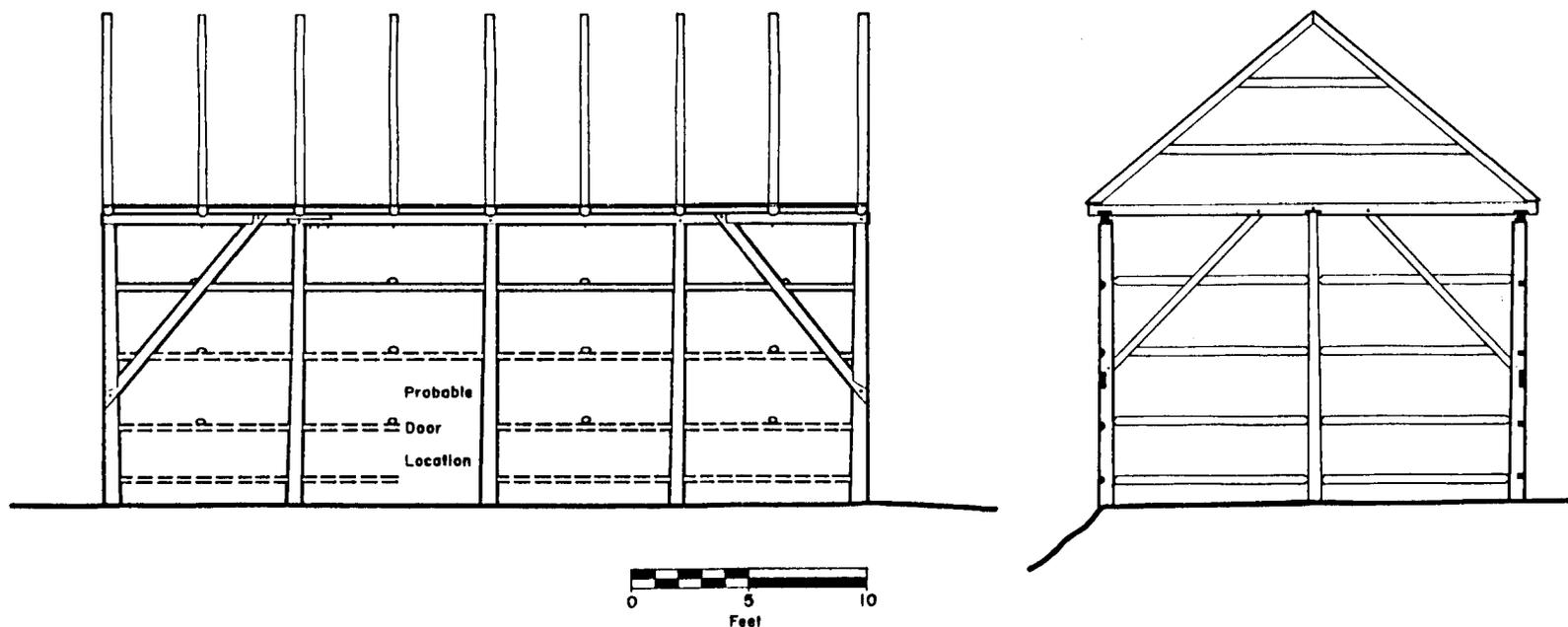
and a frame house.

a log kitchen



This was the plan. Notice that the staircase to the kitchen loft was built outside the log walls.





The frame of a post-in-the-ground tobacco barn of c.1860; exterior of east wall and interior of north gable. Bold lines accent the pre-assembled sidewall frames. The horizontal studs ("runners") are a 19th-century innovation. (The lower barn at Dixon's Purchase [18 ST 237] restored to period 1.)

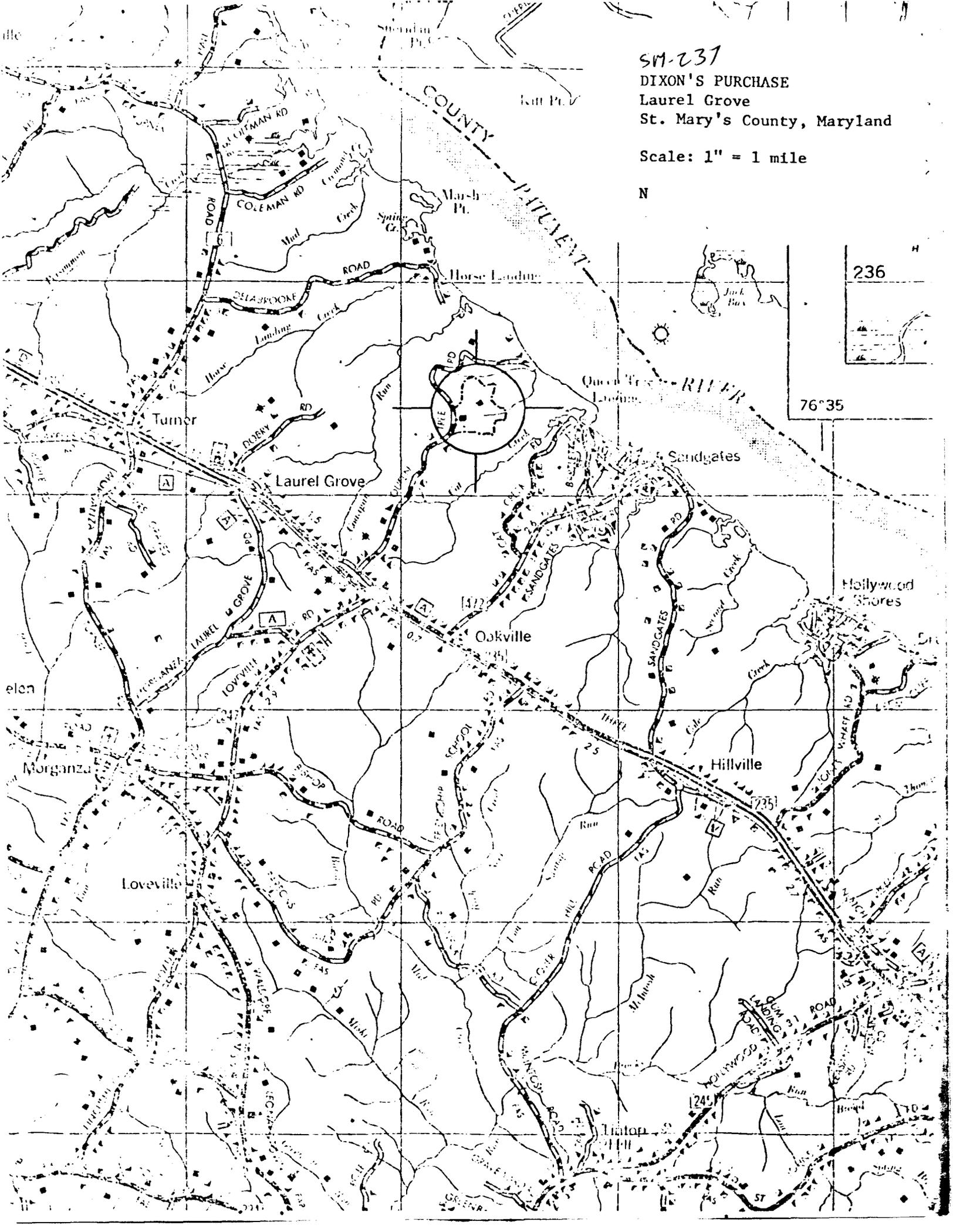
Garry Stone/Chinh Hoang  
March 1978

SM-231

DIXON'S PURCHASE  
Laurel Grove  
St. Mary's County, Maryland

Scale: 1" = 1 mile

N





C76-38  
[Sm 237]

Dixon's Purchase NOV 6 1978  
Foreground: southwest end of kitchen  
Background: main house  
Photograph taken in mid-1950's

50%



P. 149

Dixon's Purchase SM-237  
Front of log kitchen seen from south  
Photograph taken in mid-1950's



C76-34  
[SM-237]

Dixon's Purchase NOV 6 1978 SM-237  
Front (southeast) facade of kitchen  
Woman in center is present historical  
source.  
Photograph taken mid-1950's



C76-32  
[SM-237]

Dixon's Purchase  
Front (southeast) facade of main house  
Photograph taken in mid-1950's

SM-237