

Capsule Summary  
SM-502  
Phillis Wheatley School  
Hollywood vicinity  
Private

Circa 1915

The Phillis Wheatley School is significant as one of the few one-room schoolhouses to survive in St. Mary's County. Built around 1915, this building appears to have been the second schoolhouse constructed on the lot. Deeds for the property go back to the 1870s, a particularly early date for a school dedicated to the education of African-American children in St. Mary's County. Both the interior and exterior of the schoolhouse have been sheathed with modern materials. Only the exterior form of the building, with its distinctive hipped roof, suggests its former use as a schoolhouse.

John F. Magill transferred this quarter acre lot to the Board of County School Commissioners in 1877 "for the purpose of erecting...a school house for the use, benefit, and education of the colored people of St. Mary's County." The property ceased to be used for school purposes around 1951, and in 1954 both the property and the school building were purchased by Paul and Agnes Guy. From the Guys the property passed to the Curtis family. Louis E. and Mary H. Holley purchased the tract in 1979 and converted the former school house for use as a dwelling.

Phillis Wheatley (1753-1784), the school's namesake, is nationally recognized as the first published African-American poet. Born in Africa, she was sold as a slave to the family of a tailor in Boston. The first bound volume of her poetry was published in 1773.

SM-502, Phillis Wheatley School  
St. Mary's County  
Maryland Comprehensive State Historic Preservation Plan Data

Historic Context

Geographic Organization: Western Shore

Chronological/Developmental Period: Industrial - Urban Dominance, 1870 - 1930.

Historic Period Theme: Education

Resource Type

Category: Structure

Historic Environment: Rural

Historic Function and Use: School

Known Design Source: none

# Maryland Historical Trust State Historic Sites Inventory Form

## MARYLAND INVENTORY OF HISTORIC PROPERTIES

Survey No. SM-502

Magi No.

DOE  yes  no

### 1. Name (indicate preferred name)

historic

and/or common Phillis Wheatley School

### 2. Location

street & number Sotterley Gate Road  not for publicationcity, town Hollywood  vicinity of congressional district 5

state Maryland county St. Mary's

### 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	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<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 Louis E. and Mary H. Holley

street &amp; number P.O.Box 5 telephone no.: 301-373-3219

city, town Hollywood state and zip code MD 20636

### 5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. St. Mary's County Courthouse liber MRB 39

street &amp; number folio 268

city, town Leonardtown state MD

### 6. Representation in Existing Historical Surveys

title

date  federal  state  county  local

pository for survey records

city, town state

# 7. Description

Survey No. SM-502

<b>Condition</b>		<b>Check one</b>	<b>Check one</b>	
<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.

Contributing Resource Count: 1

The Phillis Wheatley School is located on the east side of Sotterley Gate Road near Hollywood in St. Mary's County, Maryland. Built as a one-room school house, the building has been converted for use as a dwelling and enlarged. The former schoolhouse faces west and is capped by a hipped roof.

Probably built around 1915, the school is a one-story building sheathed with aluminum siding and roofed with asphalt shingles. Modern one-story additions, constructed around 1991, are attached to the south and east elevations of the building. A basement has also been added underneath the structure.

The west (main) elevation of the building is pierced by a modern door with sidelights and is flanked on either side by two two-over-two sash windows. A hipped-roof porch with a cement pad floor extends across the full width of the first floor. The porch roof is supported by square wood posts. A modern, one-story kitchen addition is attached to the south elevation.

Both the south and east elevations are covered by modern additions.

The north elevation is pierced by two two-over-two sash windows with louvered shutters. A window also lights the basement.

The interior of the main block has been divided with partition walls and sheathed with modern materials. A stairwell, opposite the entrance door, provides access to the basement.

# 8. Significance

<b>Period</b>	<b>Areas of Significance—Check and justify below</b>			
<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 checked="" 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 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) African-Amer. Hist.
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		

**Specific dates** None **Builder/Architect** Unknown

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.

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John F. Magill transferred this quarter acre lot to the Board of County School Commissioners in 1877 "for the purpose of erecting...a school house for the use, benefit, and education of the colored people of St. Mary's County." The property ceased to be used for school purposes around 1951, and in 1954 both the property and the school building were purchased by Paul and Agnes Guy. From the Guys the property passed to the Curtis family. Louis E. and Mary H. Holley purchased the tract in 1979 and converted the former school house for use as a dwelling.

According to Mrs. Elmer Young, who attended the school in the 1920s, the interior of the schoolhouse consisted of one large classroom with a back closet for coats and a small vestibule for the teacher. Grades one through eight, totaling around forty students, were taught there by Miss Gertrude Bailey. In later years, Mrs. Alice Freeman Young and Mr. and Mrs. Henry Lee taught at the school. The school was heated by an iron wood stove and an outdoor privy was located behind the school building. Some students walked between eight and ten miles to school. Others arrived by skiff on the creek that ran behind the school. School attendance was not regular as many of the children's families were farmers and required the assistance of all family members during the planting and harvesting seasons.

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8.1 Significance

Chain of Title

TO: Louis E. Holley and Mary H. Holley  
FROM: John V. Curtis and John H. Curtis  
RECORD: St. Mary's County Land Record, Liber MRB 39, folio 263.  
DATE: March 30, 1979.  
NOTES: Transfer of 1/4 of an acre.

TO: John V. and John H. Curtis  
FROM: Agnes E. Guy, widow.  
RECORD: St. Mary's County Land Record, Liber DBK 218, folio 191.  
DATE: September 25, 1974.  
NOTES: Transfer of 1/4 of an acre.

TO: Agnes E. Guy and Paul D. Guy  
FROM: Board of Education of St. Mary's County  
RECORD: St. Mary's County Land Record, Liber CBG 218, folio 188.  
DATE: September 23, 1974.  
NOTES: Transfer of 1/4 of an acre (with this confirmatory deed the right of reverter is extinguished).

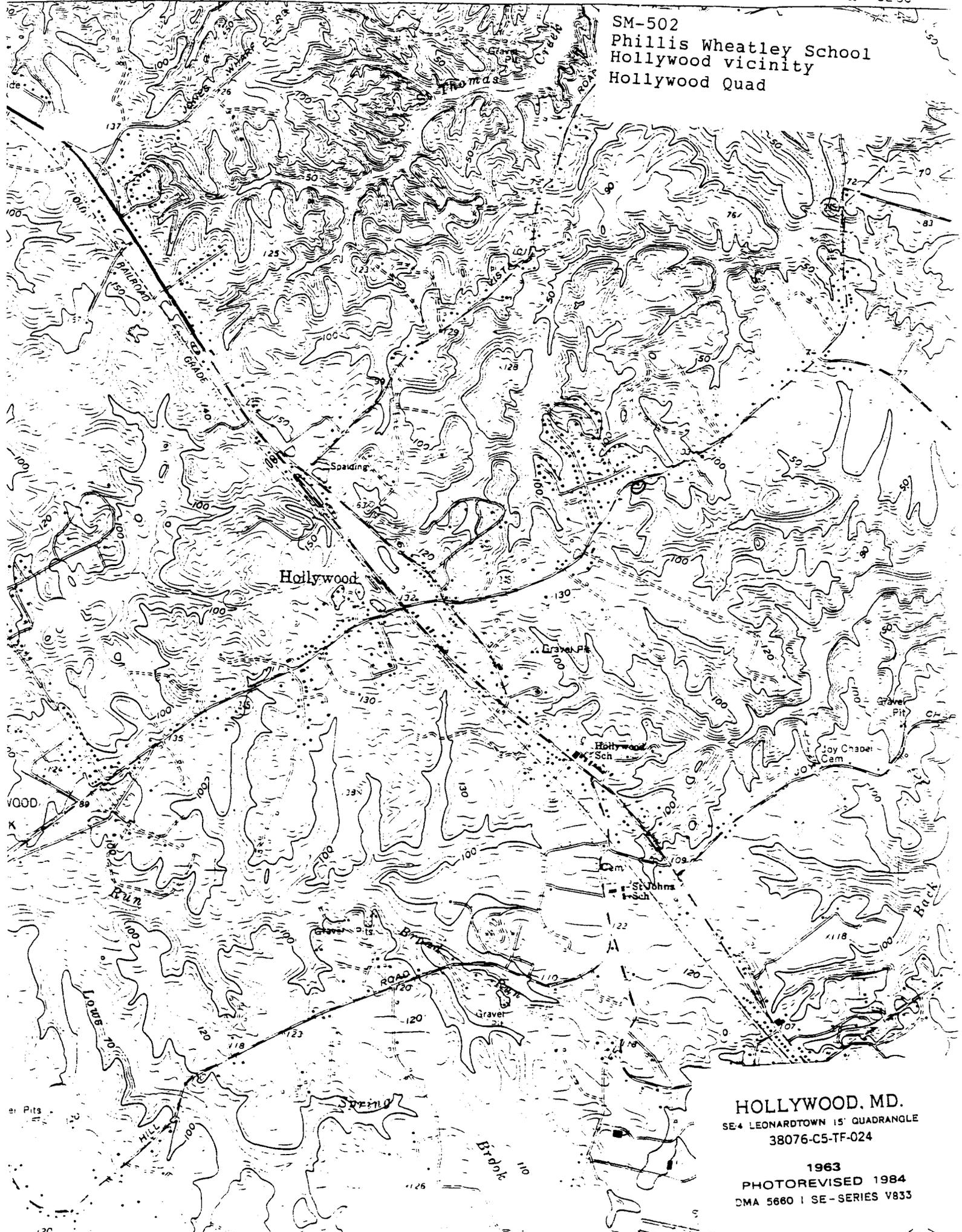
TO: Paul D. Guy and Agnes E. Guy  
FROM: Board of Education of St. Mary's County  
RECORD: St. Mary's County Land Record, Liber CBG 54, folio 42.  
DATE: November 9, 1954.  
NOTES: Transfer of a right to the buildings located on the 1/4 tract that formerly belonged to John F. Magill. The buildings have ceased to be used for educational purposes. The Guys are purchasing the tract of land from the heirs of John F. Magill.

TO: John F. Dent, William L. Thomas and Henry J. Carroll, being the Board of County School Commissioners of St. Mary's County.  
FROM: John F. Magill  
RECORD: St. Mary's County Land Record, Liber JFF 2, folio 433.  
DATE: June 29, 1877.  
NOTES: Transfer of 1/4 acre "for the purpose of erecting...a school house for the use, benefit, and education of the colored people of St. Mary's County...beginning for the same at a stone on the side of the public road leading from the Forrest Landing and Bonds Wharf to Leonardtown a corner boundry of the said John F. Magill's and James R. Thompson's lands and running thence with said road southwestward thirty yards to a small locust planted on the side of said road thence eastwardly thirty-eight yards to another small locust planted and thence eastwardly parallel with said John F. Magill and James R. Thompson and thence northerly with said line to the beginning." This

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8.2 Significance

deed contains the provision that once the land is no longer used for educational purposes, the property will revert to the grantor. The school buildings, however, will remain the property of the School Board.

SM-502  
 Phillis Wheatley School  
 Hollywood vicinity  
 Hollywood Quad



**HOLLYWOOD, MD.**  
 SE4 LEONARDTOWN 15' QUADRANGLE  
 38076-C5-TF-024

1963  
 PHOTOREVISED 1984  
 DMA 5660 I SE-SERIES V833



