

Capsule Summary
SM-574
Ewings
Oakville Vicinity
Private

c. 1870's

"Ewings," located off of Queentree Road near Oakville, St. Mary's County, Maryland, is a significant example of post-Civil War architecture and farm organization. Constructed c. 1868 by Dr. L. James Sutton and his wife Susan Reeder Costigan, the two story, three bay, frame dwelling was modestly decorated on the interior as it featured a formal single-pile, center-passage plan. The main block, however, did not originally feature an attached kitchen ell. A log, one story kitchen with an exterior end stone and brick chimney is located about 20 feet east of the house. This kitchen represents a common arrangement for domestic service even into the later nineteenth century. The informal appearance of its log construction, however, was hidden by a covering of clapboard. The interior was likewise covered with vertical boards and then whitewashed. A trap door, now removed, once led to an excavated root cellar.

While the removal of the buildings' architectural decoration has diminished the integrity of the complex, the farmstead remains important for its association with nearby "Summerseat" (SM-181) the home of the locally prominent Costigan family. Born in Dublin, Ireland, Sylvester John Costigan and his wife Susan Reeder Dorsey moved to Summerseat in the mid-nineteenth century. In 1847 Mrs. Costigan gave birth to Susan Reeder Costigan. As one of seven children, Susan Costigan was married to Dr. Lewis James Sutton, a graduate of the University of Maryland Medical School, on July 28, 1868. Soon after their marriage, Sylvester and Susan Costigan gave the couple a large 200 acre farm call Ewings on the east side of Queentree Road. Dr. and Mrs. Sutton then erected a two story frame dwelling and a log kitchen on the tract. Today, the house

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remains a relatively intact example of post-Civil War architecture, illustrates how the county's landscape remained tied to pre-abolition domestic sensibilities, and has important associations with the locally prominent Costigan family.

SM-574, Ewings
St. Mary's County
Maryland Comprehensive State Historic Preservation Data

Historic Context

Geographic Organization: Western Shore
Chronological/Developmental Period: Industrial-Urban Dominance, 1870-1930
Historic Period Theme: Architecture

Resource Type

Category: Building
Historic Environment: Rural
Historic Function and Use: Dwelling
Known Design Source: None

Maryland Historical Trust State Historic Sites Inventory Form

MARYLAND INVENTORY OF
HISTORIC PROPERTIES

Survey No. SM-574

Magi No.

DOE yes no

1. Name (indicate preferred name)

historic Ewings (pref.)

and/or common Dr. James Sutton House

2. Location

street & number 0.2 miles N of int of Queentree and Oakville Roads, on SE side of Queentree Roads not for publication

city, town Oakville vicinity of congressional district 6

state Maryland county St. Mary's TM-14, P-83

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 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 Arthur C. and Elizabeth Davidson, Emil W. Hynowitz

street & number 1203 Fort Hill Court

POC: Arthur C. and Elizabeth Davidson
telephone no.: 410-798-0761

city, town Annapolis state and zip code Md 21403-4359

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. St. Mary's County Courthouse liber MRB 12

street & number folio 291

city, town Leonardtown state Maryland

6. Representation in Existing Historical Surveys

title

date federal state county local

depository for survey records

city, town state

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one	
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site	
<input 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: 2

"Ewings" is located 0.3 miles north of the intersection of Queen Tree and Old Three Notch Road. Situated on the east side of Queen Tree Road, the Sutton House is approached via a rutted farm lane that lies perpendicular to the main dwelling. The main dwelling is oriented on an east/west axis and presently lies amidst a stand of trees and overgrowth in the middle of 127 acres of agricultural land--barely visible from the road. Several other structures located near the dwelling include a log outkitchen, two tobacco barns, and a work shed or tenant house.

Constructed in the late-1860-1870s, Ewings is a two-story, braced-frame, three-bay, center-passage, single pile dwelling with a gable roof and a later one bay, two-story kitchen ell. The building rests on a foundation of brick piers and is clad with lap siding fastened to the hewn framing members by wire nails. The cornice is enclosed and the roof is covered with corrugated metal. A large exterior end chimney with one set of shoulders lies at both gable ends of the main block.

The west or primary elevation of the main block is pierced by three symmetrically placed bays; a centrally located door flanked on either side by a window (all of the sashes and doors for the house have been removed). The kitchen ell is pierced by a window on the first floor. The main block's second floor is pierced by three windows, while the kitchen ell features a smaller window located near the eaves.

The south elevation is blind except for the centrally located stretcher bond chimney that features a single set of shoulders and is stepped back from the body of the dwelling just above the joists for the second floor.

The main block's east elevation is identical to the west elevation. It features a centrally placed door flanked on either side by a window while the second floor is pierced by three windows. The kitchen addition is pierced by a door on the first floor and a small window on the second floor that is situated just under the eaves. The first floor of this entire elevation is shaded by a shed roof porch supported by a series of square posts.

The north elevation features the gable end of the later two story kitchen ell and the main block. An exterior end chimney rises from the juncture of the ell and main block.

The main block's interior is characterized by a central stair passage with a parlor on either side. Each of these rooms was originally plastered using circular sawn lathe. The stair passage features a stair decorated with regular 4" beaded boards. The newel and banisters have been removed. Both the north and south parlors were decorated with mantles that have also been removed. The north parlor contains a pair of closets located on either side of the door from the central passage. Another door in the north parlor leads to the kitchen ell. The second story of the dwelling was inaccessible during the time of the visit due to the presence of buzzards, but from the exterior it appears as if the second floor mimics the floor plan of the first floor.

Located about ten yards to the east of the house is a one story, clapboard covered log outkitchen with a gable roof and an exterior end stone and brick chimney. Probably constructed contemporary to the house, this one room building is constructed of hewn logs joined at the

8. Significance

Survey No. SM-574

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 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 type="checkbox"/> 1900–	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		

Specific dates	Builder/Architect
check: Applicable Criteria: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> A <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> B <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> C <input type="checkbox"/> D and/or Applicable Exception: <input type="checkbox"/> A <input type="checkbox"/> B <input type="checkbox"/> C <input type="checkbox"/> D <input type="checkbox"/> E <input type="checkbox"/> F <input type="checkbox"/> G Level of Significance: <input type="checkbox"/> national <input type="checkbox"/> state <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> local	

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

"Ewings" is a significant example of post-Civil War architecture and farm organization. Constructed in the 1870s, the two story, three bay, frame dwelling was modestly decorated on the interior as it featured a formal single-pile, center-passage plan. The rooms were all plastered and lathed and both first floor parlors featured a mantle. The main block, however, did not originally feature an attached kitchen ell. A log, one story kitchen with an exterior end stone and brick chimney is located about 20 feet east of the house. This kitchen represents a common arrangement for domestic service even into the later nineteenth century. The informal appearance of its log construction, however, were somewhat hidden and diminished by a covering of clapboard. The interior likewise covered with vertical boards and then whitewashed. A trap door, now removed, once led to an excavated root cellar. Together, the rear or east elevation of the house and the kitchen formed a courtyard.

The dwelling was most likely constructed in the 1870s with the marriage of Dr. Lewis James Sutton and Susan Reeder Costigan at St. Joseph's Church in Morganza. Susan Costigan was the daughter of Dublin, Ireland born Sylvester John Costigan and Saint Mary's County native Susan Reeder Dorsey who owned the sprawling 1000+ acre farm called "Summerseat" only 0.5 miles west of Ewings. Dr. Lewis Sutton graduated from the University of Maryland with a degree in medicine in 1858 and subsequently married Mary Rose Sasscer of Prince George County. Unfortunately, Mary died in December of 1864. Sutton then married Ms. Costigan on July 28, 1868. Soon after the marriage, Susan's parents appear to have handed over management responsibilities of a 200 acre farm called "Ewings" to the newlyweds. The Costigans, however, never deeded ownership to Dr. Sutton and his wife. A deed dated September 3, 1891 (Liber JFF 13, Folio 18) transferred ownership of the farm from Fanny McDonnell Costigan and Sallie Martin Costigan to Dicandia Costigan (all sisters of Susan Reeder Costigan) and noted that the property was "occupied by L. J. Sutton and his wife." While the Sutton's did not actually own the property, it did not stop the couple from erecting a modestly adorned two story frame dwelling with several outbuildings.

While living at Ewings, Dr. Sutton was a frequent contributor to the St. Mary's Beacon writing editorials from his house providing accounts of recent events that occurred in the Oakville vicinity. Sutton was also active in politics and at one time ran for Clerk of the Court. His wife was also active in local institutions such as the Colored school at St. Joseph's Church in Morganza. Interestingly, the Sutton family has preserved family letters that help to illuminate how relatives viewed Dr. Sutton, his wife, as well as St. Mary's County only a few years after the Civil

SM-574, Ewings
St. Mary's County
7.1 Description

corners with half-dovetail notches. The interstices between the logs is filled with a combination of bricks and mortar. Several randomly located notches in the logs suggest that they were reused from an earlier building. The entire building is covered with horizontal clapboard nailed to the logs with mature cut nails. The common rafter roof is covered with corrugated metal.

The east elevation is pierced by a single door shaded by a shed roof porch supported by a series of posts. The south elevation does not feature any openings although a pair of seams in the clapboard suggests that a door was later covered over. The west elevation features a single door as well as a later clapboard covered work room addition entered only from the exterior by a single door. All of the doors are constructed of two chamfered battens attached to a series of boards with machine cut nails. The north elevation features a small, randomly laid, stone chimney-back with a brick stack.

The interior is covered with vertical, circular sawn boards that are whitewashed. The overhead joists are exposed and whitewashed as well. A square hole in the floorboards and an excavated space below indicates the presence of a root cellar. The common rafter roof is constructed of thin, skinned logs that are butted or mitred at the peak.

The site also features an early-twentieth century stripping shed with an earthfast addition and three, early-twentieth century, axial plan tobacco barns, and two other outbuildings that have fallen-in.

SM-574, Ewings
St. Mary's County
8.1 Significance

War. In a letter from Richard E. Sutton to his wife Harriet Clothilda Green dated August 12, 1872, the brother of Dr. L. James Sutton wrote "Jimmy is quite steady and attentive to business, I can not say his wife is a woman after my own heart; but she certainly exerts a wonderful influence on him." Richard continued "I don't think anything could induce me to return here with a view of making a home. I have not visited much. I have only been three places. It is difficult to get from place to place and really I am so tired all the time that I hate to move...." Richard also observed how the county's economic landscape had changed since before the Civil War. He wrote "...there have been great changes all through the county since you were here, the men of property ten years ago are very poor now. And the poor of that period have not grown richer, but few men in the county are even comfortably well off. And how the Negroes keep from starving is beyond the comprehension of ordinary mortals..."

But while the landscape may not have been enticing or overwhelmingly prosperous to Richard, Dr. and Mrs. Sutton called Ewings their home. Only two years after Richard's letter the couple probably played host to the entire Costigan family as Summerseat's eighteenth century plantation dwelling tragically burned in March of 1874. While Summerseat was rebuilt, Susan's parents never truly recovered from this traumatic event for in 1875 Susan's father Sylvester died and was followed in 1878 by the death of her mother Susan at the Sutton residence.

James and Susan never raised any children together although James had a son from his previous marriage. In the 1870 census, James was listed as a physician and living with his wife in the Third District. In 1880, however, he is listed as a farmer. In September of 1887, however, the St. Mary's Beacon noted that Dr. Sutton resumed his profession. James lived until June 11, 1905 dying from injuries he had received after "he was run down and injured by a bicycle." His funeral was held at St. Jerome RCC in Hyattsville, Maryland. Susan lived until 1937 and was buried at "Summerseat" with her parents, sisters, and one brother. The property passed from the Costigan family's ownership in 1902 when it was sold by Dicandia Costigan to Vernon M. Dorsey. The Suttons remained in the house, probably until just after 1905 when Dr. Sutton died. On February 25, 1914, Dorsey transferred the property to Mary Alverta Russell as the deed notes that it was the property where "L. James Sutton and Susan Reeder Costigin formerly resided" (Liber EBA 12, Folio 276).

Today, Ewings is a vacant, deteriorating, and vandalized example of a post-Civil War farmstead that illustrates how St. Mary's County's domestic landscape drastically changed in the absence of slavery. This architectural evidence as well as significant archival documentation illuminates the character as well as economic and social status of the Sutton family. It also displays how inter-familial property arrangements often side-stepped questions of proper and legal ownership of a family farm. While the Sutton's did not have formal ownership of Ewings, the couple still built their dwelling there and remained intimately connected to the Costigan family. Curiously in the will of Susan Reeder Costigan (Susan Sutton's mother) Mrs. Sutton was not devised any property as Susan Costigan noted that her daughter had been adequately provided for already.

SM-574, Ewings
St. Mary's County
8.2 Significance

Chain-of-Title

(All deeds are located at the Land Records Office, St. Mary's County Courthouse, Leonardtown, Maryland unless otherwise noted.)

Reference: Liber MRB 12, Folio 291

Grantee: Arthur C. and Elizabeth Davidson and Emil W. Hynowitz

Grantor: Willie Faye Smith, Philip B. and Joyce E. Burch

Date: May 26, 1978

Notes: Here the property is listed as containing two parcels that total 127.8 acres. Parcel #1 is the tract that the house is situated on. The tract is known as "Wales" or "Ewings." Benjamin Smith died on February 19, 1973 and left Willie Faye Smith the estate.

Reference: Liber MRF 134

Grantee: Benjamin W. and Willie Faye Smith

Grantor: Francis E. and Mary Lenore Smith and Joseph Poe Russell (life tenant)

Date: June 27, 1967

Notes: Mary Alverta Russell willed the 117 acre tract to the Smiths.

Reference: Liber CBG 13, Folio 525

Grantee: Mary Alverta Russell

Grantor: Francis E. and Mary Lenore Smith

Date: December 17, 1935

Reference: Liber JMM 9, Folio 328

Grantee: Francis E. and Mary Lenore Smith

Grantor: Mary Alverta and J. Frank Russell

Date: November 4, 1935

Reference: Liber EBA 12, Folio 276

Grantee: Mary Alverta Russell

Grantor: Vernon M. Dorsey

Date: February 25, 1914

Notes: This deed notes that the Sutton's no longer live in the home.

Reference: Liber EBA 3, Folio 25

Grantee: Vernon M. Dorsey

Grantor: Dicandia Costigin (of Washington, D. C.)

Date: October 29, 1902

Notes: The deed notes that the tract consists of 150 acres and that Dr. L. James Sutton and Susan Reeder Sutton live on the parcel. (Susan Reeder Sutton is the sister of Dicandia Costigin)

SM-574, Ewings
St. Mary's County
8.3 Significance

Reference: Liber JFF 13, Folio 18

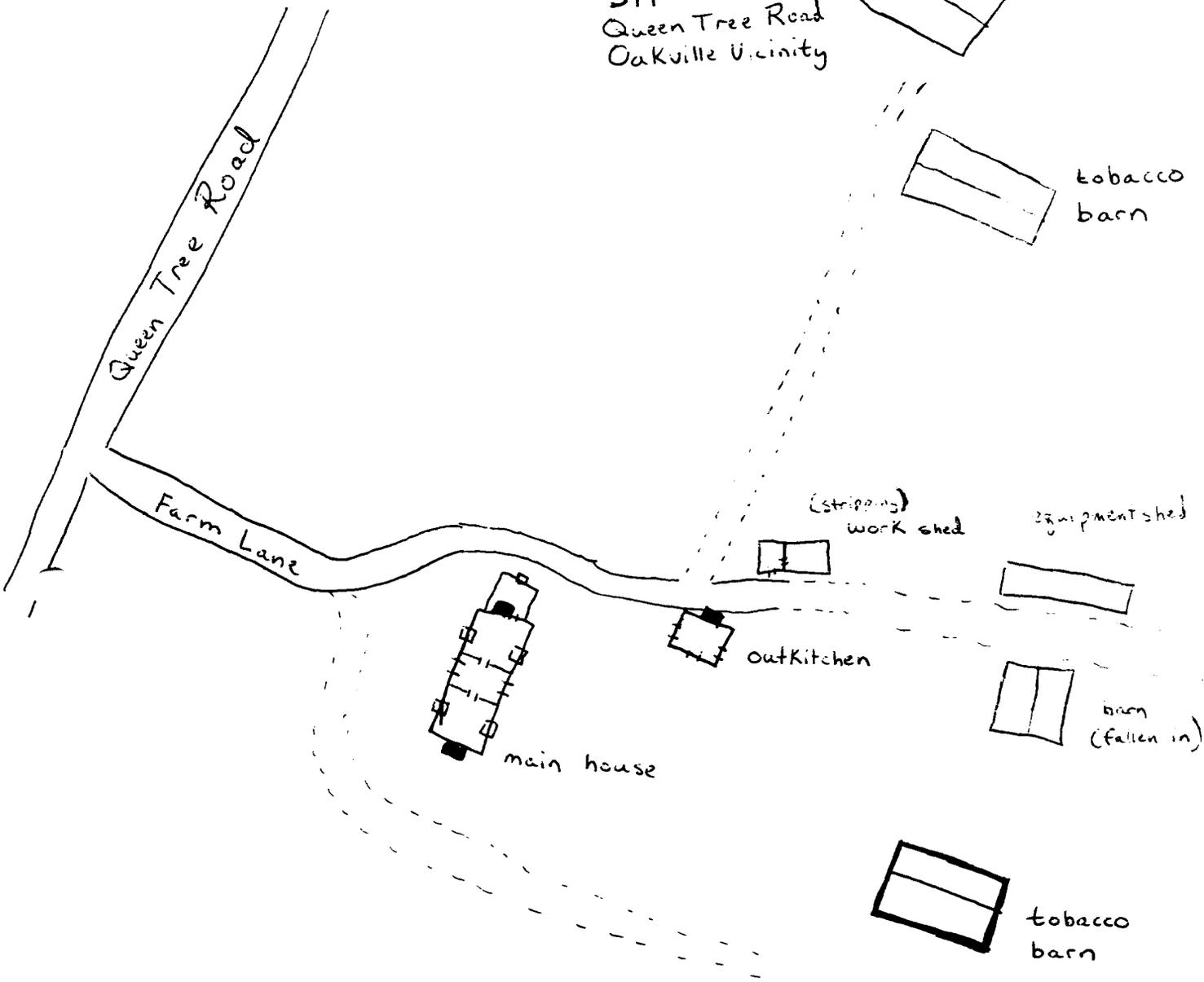
Grantee: Dicandia Costigin

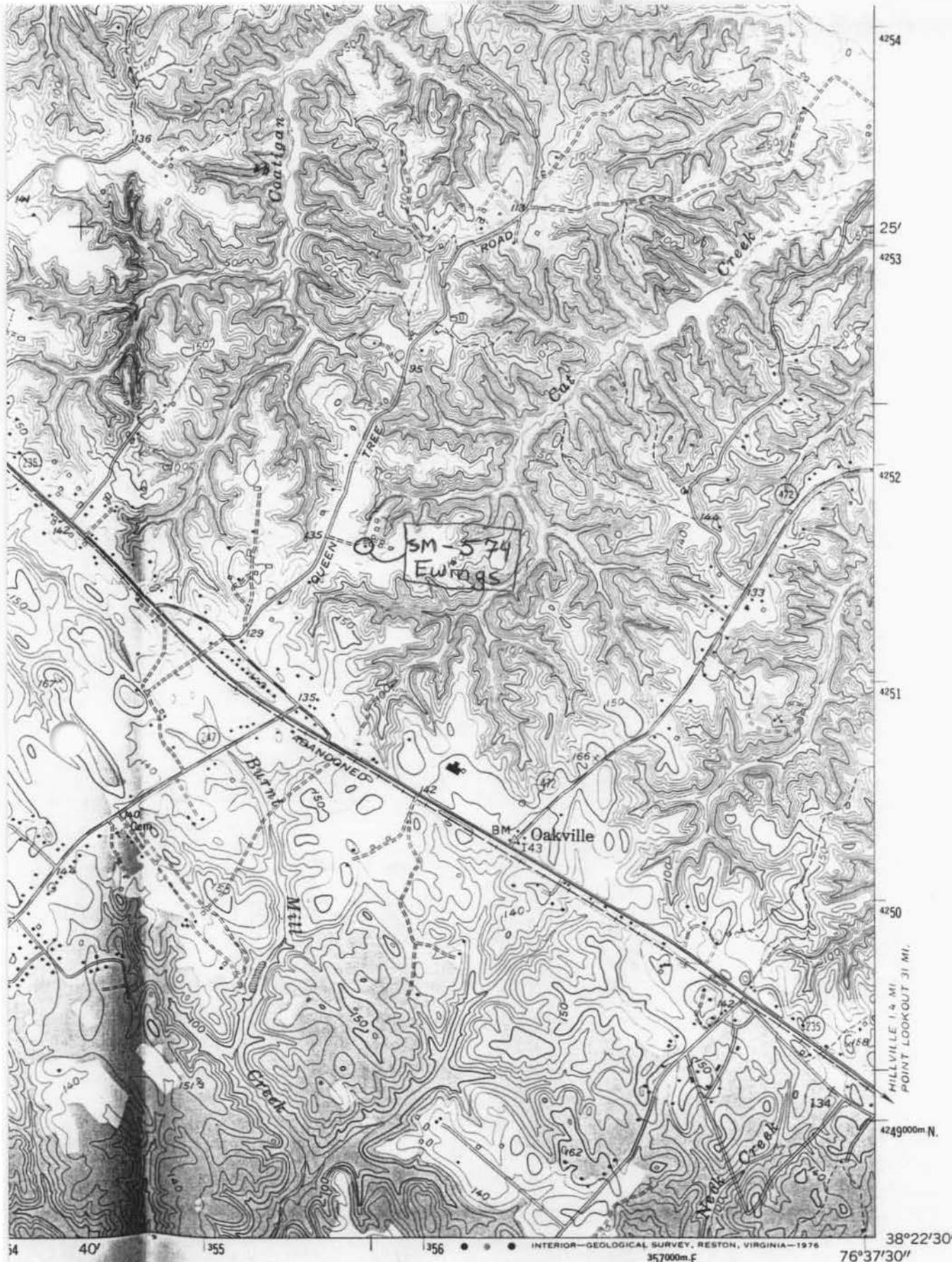
Grantor: Fanny McDonnell Costigin and Sallie Martin Costigin

Date: September 3, 1891

Notes: Dicandia purchases the tract from her two sisters for \$300. The deed also notes that Dicandia had also retrieved interests in the property from Sylvester J. Costigin and his wife as well as John H. Key trustee of the last will of Mary H. Costigin. This represents the last deed able to be traced for the property. A previous unrelated deed, however, (Liber JAC 2, Folio 460, dated June 20, 1866) for a neighboring property noted that the property transfer did not effect the rented lands and meadows of "Ewings" that is rented out to Abe Thomas "a free man of color."

Sutton Farm
SM-574
Queen Tree Road
Oakville Vicinity





4254
25'
4253
4252
4251
4250
4249000m N.
38°22'30"
76°37'30"

34 40' 355 356

INTERIOR—GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, RESTON, VIRGINIA—1976
357000m E.

ROAD CLASSIFICATION

- Heavy-duty Light-duty
- Medium-duty Unimproved dirt
- U. S. Route
- State Route

MECHANICVILLE, MI
NW/4 LEONARDTOWN 15' QUADRANGLE
N 3822.5—W 7637.5/7.5

1953
PHOTOREVISED 1974
AMS 5660 I NW—SERIES V833

MECHANICVILLE, MI





GM-574

Ewings

St. Mary's County, Md

Rick Rancetta

March, 1997

Md SHPO

w/ elevation

1 of 5



SM-574

Ewings

St Mary's County, Md

Kirk Ranzetta

March, 1997

Md SHPO

E + N elevations, Kitchen

2 of 5



SM-574

EwinsS

St. Mary's County, Md

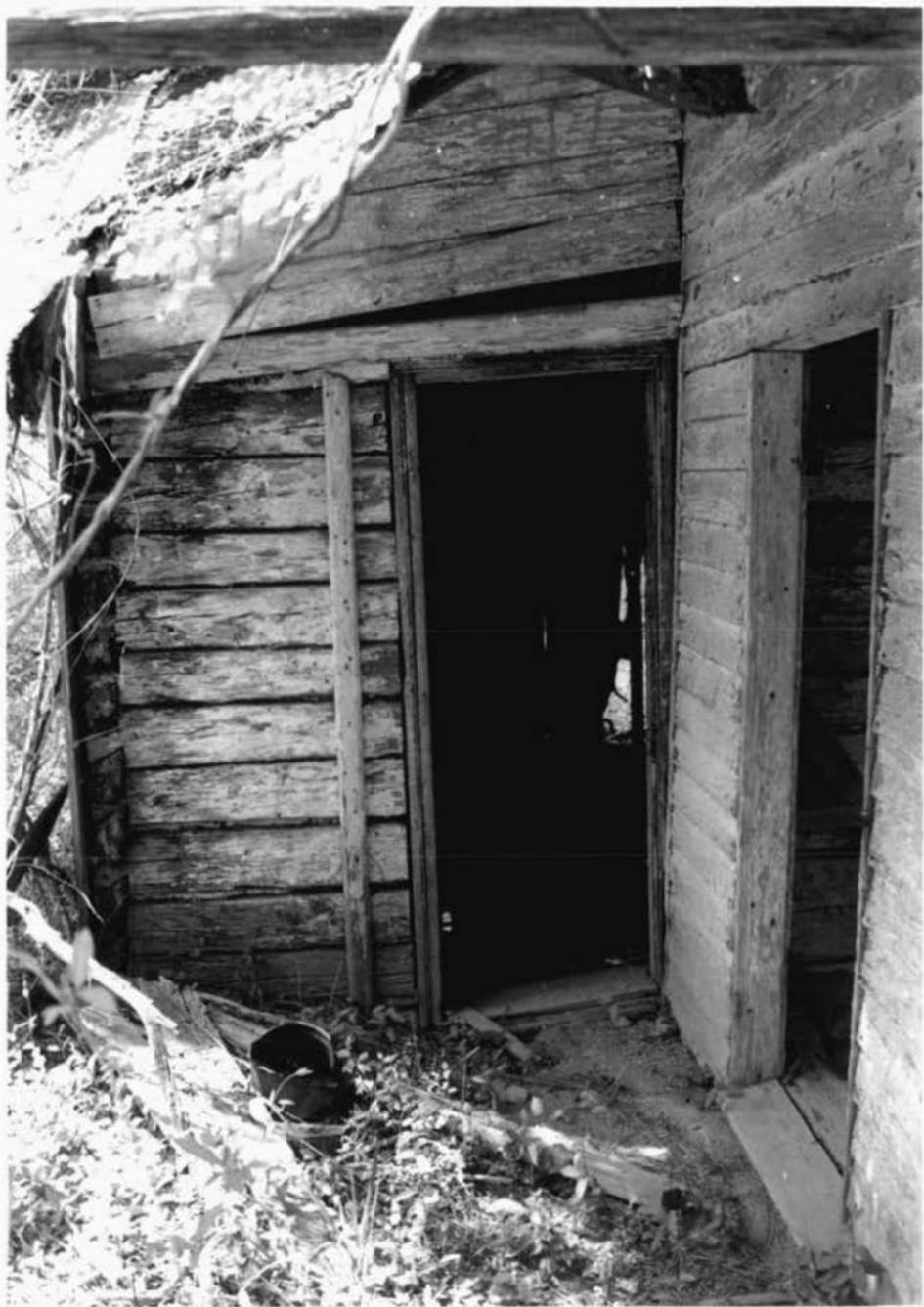
Kirk Ranzetta

March, 1997

Md SHPO

Elevation, Kitchen, detail of stack

3 of 5



SM-574

Ewings

St. Mary's County, Md

Kirk Ranzetta

March, 1999

Md CHPO

E elevation detail, Kitchen

4 of 5



SM-574

Ewings

St. Mary's County, Md

Kirk Ranetta

March, 1997

Md S&PO

Tobacco Barns - looking N

5 of 5