

Capsule Summary
SM-600
Thomas Log House
Chaptico Vicinity
Private

mid to late-nineteenth century

The Thomas Log House, constructed in the mid to late-nineteenth century, represents the only documented example of a two room log house remaining in St. Mary's County. The dwelling also maintains an important association with a local African American family. The one story, single pile Thomas Log house is constructed of horizontal logs joined at the corners with half-dovetail notches. The interstices between the logs are filled with a combination of brick, mud, and riven strips of wood. The interior of the house is significantly divided into two distinct spaces. Each of these spaces feature exposed floor joists and are entirely whitewashed. This interior arrangement is profoundly different from other log dwellings documented in St. Mary's County. Most log slave dwellings in St. Mary's County, such as the Sotterley Slave Quarter (SM-7A), consisted of only one room while others featured two, non-communicating but equally sized rooms such as the Brome-Howard Slave Quarter (SM-33A). In stark juxtaposition to these buildings, the Thomas Log House was less architecturally regimented as it had a more traditional arrangement of connected and differentiated spaces. This floor plan suggests that the house was built by either freed slaves just prior to the Civil War or ex-slaves after the abolition of slavery although the grandmother of Louis X. Thomas (the current owner) vividly remembers living in the house and believes it was built by slaves in the 1850s or 1860s.

Overall, the Thomas Log house represents one of the most significant African American dwellings yet documented in St. Mary's County. While buildings such as the Sotterley Slave Quarter (SM-7A) and the Blair's Purchase Slave Quarter (SM-125A) portray the rigid regimen imposed by slave life, the Thomas house moves toward more normalized domestic organization. This poses critical questions about how freedmen and ex-slaves may have differentiated themselves from their slave neighbors and/or forefathers through architectural expression.

SM-600, Thomas Log House
St. Mary's County
Maryland Comprehensive State Historic Preservation Data

Historic Context

Geographic Organization:	Western Shore
Chronological/Developmental Period:	Agricultural-Industrial Transition, 1815-1870 Industrial Urban Dominance, 1870-1930
Historic Period Theme:	Architecture Cultural Agriculture
<u>Resource Type</u>	
Category:	Building
Historic Environment:	Rural
Historic Function and Use:	Residence
Known Design Source:	None

**Maryland Historical Trust
State Historic Sites Inventory Form**

MARYLAND INVENTORY OF
HISTORIC PROPERTIES

Survey No. SM-600

Magi No.

DOE yes no

1. Name (indicate preferred name)

historic

and/or common Thomas Log House

2. Location

E side of Yowaiski Mill Rd, 1 mile N of the intersection of Yowaiski Mill Rd. & Chaptico-Mechanicsville Rd.
street & number not for publication

city, town Chaptico vicinity of congressional district 4

state Maryland county St. Mary's TM-17, B-3, P-17

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 Louis X. Thomas, Jr.

street & number PO Box 04 telephone no.: 301-884-4477

city, town Chaptico state and zip code Md 20621

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. St. Mary's County Courthouse liber MRB 383

street & number folio 337

city, town Leonardtown state Md

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 type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site	
<input type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved	date of move _____
<input checked="" 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 Resources: 1

The Thomas Log House is located on Yowaiski Mill Road approximately 0.6 miles north of the intersection of Yowaiski Mill Road and Chaptico-Mechanicsville Road. Oriented on an east-west axis, the house is situated on relatively flat parcel just north of the Gardiner-Yowaiski Mill (SM-420). While the house's west side currently faces the road, the east side was the original primary elevation as the original farm lane ran to the east of the house. The dwelling is currently vacant and surrounded by young trees and undergrowth. A modern house is located just to the south and a new dwelling is scheduled to be built just to the north.

The Thomas Log house is a one-and-a-half story, three bay, two room dwelling with a gable roof. Constructed c. 1860-1870, the house was constructed on a fieldstone and brick foundation. The exterior walls were originally covered with vertical board-and-batten siding that consisted of circular sawn boards and battens attached to the logs with fully-formed cut nails. The logs themselves were joined at the corners with half-dovetail notches and secured with large bolts. The interstices between the logs were filled with a combination of brick, mud, and riven strips of wood. Horizontal boards were then nailed over the cracks to protect the chinking. At the juncture of the roof and exterior walls is an open cornice where the individual rafter feet are visible. The rafters are birdsmouthed over the top log. A corrugated metal roof, pierced by a single interior brick chimney flue, covers the entire building.

The east or primary elevation is pierced by three bays--a centrally located door flanked on either side by a window. The door, itself, consists of a series of beaded boards that are secured on the inside of the door by horizontal battens. The windows exhibit ghosts that suggest the presence of sash. The south elevation is pierced on the first floor by a single door. The attic story is pierced by a window that does not currently exhibit a sash. The west elevation features a centrally located flanked on either side by windows. These bays roughly correspond to the openings on the east elevation. While the door has been replaced, the window on the north end of the elevation contains the outlines of a sash that originally contained six panes. It does not appear to have been moveable. The north elevation features a single window opening on the attic story.

The interior of the dwelling has changed little since it was initially constructed. The house features two rooms. The larger room measures approximately 12 feet by 16 feet and could be entered from the east or west sides via opposing entries. This room, as well as the other, was entirely whitewashed and the hewn joists left exposed. Like on the exterior, horizontal boards were placed over the spaces between the logs to hold the chinking. This room was heated by a brick chimney flue that formed part of a partition wall that separated the house's two first floor spaces. The partition wall itself consists of vertically placed, circular sawn planks. These planks are fastened to the floor as well as to an overhead floor joist. A wide, intermediate, beaded chair rail further strengthens the partition. A single door connects the two first floor rooms together. The second room, which measures approximately 16 feet by 8 feet features two opposing windows, a door to the exterior, as well as a winder stair. The door to the exterior allows this space to function independently from the main room. The attic story was not decorated at all as the common rafter roof was left exposed. The circular sawn rafters were joined at the peak with butt joints.

8. Significance

Survey No. SM-600

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 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> state <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> local	

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

The Thomas Log House, constructed in the mid to late-nineteenth century, represents the only documented example of a two room log house remaining in St. Mary's County. The dwelling also maintains an important association with a local African American family.

The one story, single pile Thomas Log house is constructed of horizontal logs joined at the corners with half-dovetail notches. The interstices between the logs are filled with a combination of brick, mud, and riven strips of wood. The interior of the house is significantly divided into two distinct spaces. Each of these spaces feature exposed floor joists and are entirely whitewashed. This interior arrangement is profoundly different from other log dwellings documented in St. Mary's County. Most log slave dwellings in St. Mary's County consisted of only one room. Examples include the Sotterley Slave Quarter (SM-7A), Riverview Log House (SM-120A) and Laurel Grove Slave Quarter (SM-563). Some quarters consisted of two, often non-communicating, but equally sized rooms. Examples of "double-quarters" include the Brome-Howard Slave Quarter (SM-33A), Blair's Purchase Slave Quarter (SM-125A) and the Bushwood Slave House (SM-110A). In stark juxtaposition to these buildings, the Thomas Log House was much less architecturally regimented as it featured a more traditional arrangement of connected and differentiated spaces. This conventional floor plan suggests that the house was possibly built by either freed slaves just prior to the Civil War or ex-slaves after the abolition of slavery.

Land records, as well as oral history, reveal that the house and much of the surrounding property has been owned or tenanted by members of the Thomas family since at least 1910. The grandmother of Louis X. Thomas (the current owner) vividly remembers living in the house and believes it was built by slaves in the 1850s or 1860s. The architectural evidence suggests a mid to late-nineteenth century construction date. The widespread use of cut nails, the presence of circular sawn boards for the floor and partition wall, the low pitched roof, and the shared, centrally located, brick chimney flue are all consistent with the time period.

The first mention of the Thomas family in the land records appears in 1910 when James H. and Sarah Thomas purchased a 10 acre property called "Tennison's Lot" for \$50. Marriage and census records reveal that on December 30, 1895 James H. Thomas married Sarah Queen in Leonardtown at the courthouse. By 1910 James, who worked at a lumber mill, and Sarah had four children Mary Alice, James Wilson, John Harrison, and Rachel Lola. Further research, either through documents or oral history, is warranted in order to illuminate the Thomas lineage as well as how the Thomas' used and functioned the house and property over time.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Survey No. SM-600

McDaniel, George. Of Hearth and Home: Preserving a People's Culture. Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press, 1982

10. Geographical Data

Acree of nominated property 2 acres around house

Quadrangle name Charlotte Hall, Md

Quadrangle scale 1:24 000

UTM References do NOT complete 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

C	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
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D	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
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E	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
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F	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
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G	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
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H	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
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Verbal boundary description and justification

Same as per deed 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 Kirk E. Ranzetta, Historic Sites Surveyor

organization St. Mary's County Dept. of Planning & Zoning

date February, 1998

street & number 22740 Washington Street

telephone 301-475-4662

city or town Leonardtown

state Maryland

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
Shaw House
21 State Circle
Annapolis, Maryland 21401
(301) 269-2438

MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST
DHCP/DHCD
100 COMMUNITY PLACE
CROWNSVILLE, MD 21032-2023
514-7600

SM-600, Thomas Log House
St. Mary's County
Significance 8.1

Overall, the Thomas Log house represents one of the most significant African American dwellings yet documented in St. Mary's County. While buildings such as the Sotterley Slave Quarter (SM-7A) and the Blair's Purchase Slave Quarter (SM-125A) portray the rigid regimen imposed by slave life, the Thomas house moves toward more normalized domestic organization. This poses critical questions about how freedmen and ex-slaves differentiated themselves from their slave neighbors and/or forefathers through architectural expression.

SM-600, Thomas Log House
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 383, Folio 337
Grantee: Louis X. and Jane C. Thomas
Grantor: George and Agnes Thomas
Date: November 4, 1987

Notes: The deed notes that two parcels are transferred. Parcel #1 contains 70 acres and is called Harrow Hills and was originally owned by Mary Ellen Gardiner. Parcel #2 contains 10 acres and is called "Tennison's Lot."

Reference: Liber CBG 24, Folio 157
Grantee: George and Agnes Thomas
Grantor: Louise F. Long, et al
Date: July 17, 1952

Reference: Liber CBG 24, Folio 206
Grantee: Mary R. Fowler and Louise F. Long
Grantor: John F. Briscoe
Date: January 23, 1950

Reference: Liber JMM 10, Folio 521
Grantee: John F. Briscoe, Sr.
Grantor: A.K. Love and Paul J. Bailey
Date: November 10, 1937

Notes: As stipulated by the St. Mary's County Circuit Court of Equity in case No. 1744 NE (Decree Record Liber JMM 6, Folio 496) John F. Briscoe v. Carrie Woodland, the property is sold for \$1000 to John F. Briscoe. It is also here that the property is combined. During testimony elicited during the proceedings, a witness describes the tracts as containing "a corn house, stable, dwelling, barn, and other outbuildings."

Parcel #1

Reference: Liber EBA 13, Folio 167
Grantee: William Briscoe
Grantor: William H. Gardiner, Maud S. Gardiner, Anna Gardiner, Gwynette B. Gardiner
Date: November 21, 1914

Notes: The heirs of Mary Ellen Gardiner sell the 75 acre property, called "Part of Harrow Hills," to William Briscoe who is listed as already living on the tract.

Reference: Liber JAC 3, Folio 43
Grantee: M. E. Gardiner
Grantor: F.A. Harding and Ann M. Harding
Date: January 1, 1868

Notes: Here Mary Ellen Gardiner receives a considerable amount of property that includes the 248 acre tract called Part of Harrow Hills.

SM-600, Thomas Log House
St. Mary's County
8.3 Significance

Parcel #2

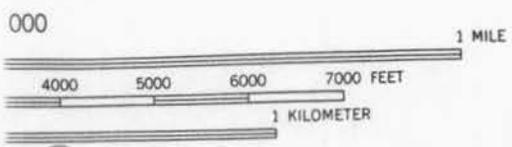
Reference: Liber JMM 2, Folio 147
Grantee: William Briscoe
Grantor: Eugene Trice and Annie C. Trice
Date: January 10, 1924
Notes: This deed describes the property "Tennison's Lot" as containing 10 acres.

Reference: Liber JMM, Folio 36
Grantee: Eugene Trice
Grantor: W. Ernest Clarke, Sheriff
Date: October 11, 1923
Notes: The property is sold at auction as a result of a Circuit Court case involving the Eastern Shore Trust Company (assignee of James W. McPherson) vs. James H. and Sarah Thomas.

Reference: Liber EBA 9, Folio 417
Grantee: James H. and Sarah Thomas
Grantor: J. Franklin Adams
Date: July 12, 1910
Notes: The property called Tennison's Lot is purchased for \$50. It notes that the property is located 300 yards north of Gardiner's Mill and the boundaries form a rectangle.



CHAPTICO 1.9 MI.
ONARDTOWN 13 MI.



AL 20 FEET
EA LEVEL



ROAD CLASSIFICATION

Heavy-duty 4 LANE 6 LANE Light-duty
Medium-duty 4 LANE 6 LANE Unimproved dirt

SM-600
Thomas Log House
Chaptico Vic.
St. Mary's County
Charlotte Hall Quad

MAP ACCURACY STANDARDS
IRVEY, WASHINGTON 25, D. C.
D SYMBOLS IS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST

INTERIOR-GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, WASHINGTON, D. C.-1965
346000m E



SM-600

Thomas Log House

St. Mary's County

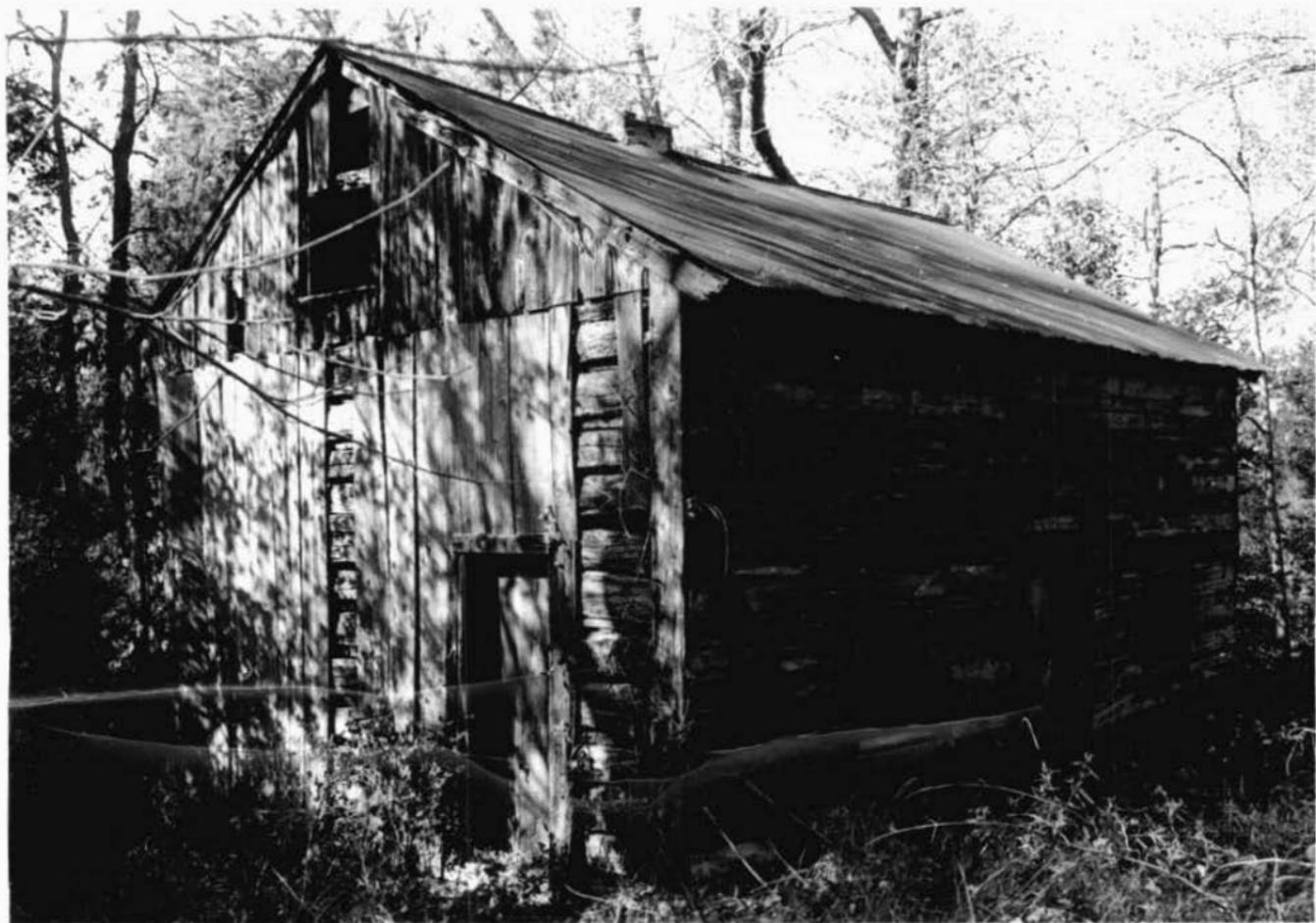
Kirk Ranetta

Nov., 1997

MD SHPO

E elevation

1 of 3



SM-600

Thomas Log House

St. Mary's County

Kirk Ranzetta

Nov., 1997

and SHPO

E + S elevations

2 of 3



SM-600

Thomas Log House

St. Mary's County

Rick Rancetta

Nov., 1997

MD CHPO

Detail of corner notching, NE corner

3 of 3