

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

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

1 NAME

HISTORIC Rock Cliff
AND/OR COMMON High Banks

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER About one mile south of Maryland Route 328, on the west side of a dirt road that is on the south side of Route 328 just east of Matthews.

CITY, TOWN Matthews VICINITY OF First
STATE Maryland COUNTY Talbot CODE 041

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	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC ACQUISITION	<input type="checkbox"/> ACCESSIBLE	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT <input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input 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"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME J. Court Stevenson
STREET & NUMBER Box 586, Route 3
CITY, TOWN Easton

N: 222-2764
B: 222-2200

VICINITY OF Matthews STATE Maryland 21601

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. Talbot County Courthouse
STREET & NUMBER Washington Street
CITY, TOWN Easton

STATE Maryland 21601

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

DATE

FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE

DESCRIPTION

T-329

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input 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 _____
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Prior to the establishment of the High Banks subdivision, Rock Cliff or High Banks house was situated in the middle of vast acres of farmland. Even now, the house is separated from the development by a strip of field so that it retains some of its environment.

Rock Cliff is a two-story, three-bay brick house with dormers and has a one-story four-bay frame addition that was built in two sections. (For ease in description, these will be called the hyphen and the kitchen.) The brick house, judging from its mantel and trim, appears to date from about the 1780s. The original wing appears to be later, as many of its details are seamed with cut nails. The wing as it stands now reflects the probable early 19th century form of the additions, rather than the late 19th century form in existence until 1977 (see below).

new front porch

The brick house is laid in Flemish bond with a three-brick belt course on the southwest facade and common bond elsewhere. The southwest facade has an off-center entrance flanked by two windows with 6/6 sash. Three 6/6 windows light the second story and two pedimented dormers containing 6/6 sash light the attic. On the southeast gable is a protruding fireplace at the first story; the chimney flue above this also protrudes until the top of the second story when it steps back several bricks and continues to rise, projecting only slightly, above the roof where it ends with several rows of corbeling. (There is no fireplace on the second floor at this end.) Two small windows flank the chimney in the attic. Part of the northeast facade has been rebuilt; this facade has fenestration similar to that on the southwest, without the dormers. The northwest end has an interior end chimney wider than that at the other end as it accomodates two flues. Two small windows flank the chimney at the attic level. Part of this end is covered by the wing.

Attached to the northwest end of the house are the two sections of the frame wing, built at different times. There was a kitchen on the property by 1804; the present building does not appear to date from that early period in its present form. The hyphen was built between 1804 and 1817 and retains a good amount of original detail.

The wing has been renovated since 1977, when the Stevensons bought the house. At that time it was a two-story structure, with the second story overhanging the first on the northeast side of the hyphen. As the second story was a later addition and in poor repair, it was removed and the earlier first stories of the kitchen and hyphen were renovated. The hyphen is not quite as deep as the kitchen, although this difference in depth, which originally showed on the northeast facade, has been covered by a wall constructed in the 1977 renovation.

As the wing stood from the late 19th century until two years ago, both the kitchen and the hyphen had a window and a door on the southwest facade first story. This facade now has an off-center entrance flanked by two windows. The northeast facade also had a window and door in each section. Because of the new wall (mentioned above) it has the same fenestration as the other facade. The original doorway and window in the hyphen survive, however, behind the new wall. There are two windows in the end wall of the kitchen.

SEE CONTINUATION SHEET #1.

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(DESCRIPTION, continued)

Copies of the 12-inch beaded clapboards that survived on the northeast wall of the hyphen were milled and used to cover the entire wing. A circa 1900 stove chimney in the northwest end of the kitchen was removed with the second floor, and an entirely new roof of hand-hewn cedar shakes installed. Two dormers were built into the front slope of the roof and one in the rear. Very little was done to the brick house during this renovation, except for the removal of a circa 1945 farm porch.

The brick house has a hall and parlor floor plan, while the wing has a single room in the kitchen and a large room and bath space in the hyphen. The rooms in the main house are well finished, with a fine mantel in the living room with crosssetted trim and a shelf with dentil molding supported by two scrolled, undercut consoles, similar to the principal mantel at Willow Grove, Caroline County, Maryland. There is a bold chairrail in the living room and a wall of raised paneling across the fireplace wall and recessed panel wainscot on the other walls in the dining room. (It is possible that the paneling in the dining room was added in the early 19th century.) Two original doors with diagonal boards survive in the brickhouse. Neither room presently has a stair, although the framing for a stair has been found in the ceiling in the east corner of the dining room. (It is not certain whether this stair location is original, but it appears that a stair was removed when the paneling mentioned above was installed. There is a small but elegant mantel in the chamber above the dining room.

The interior of the hyphen is sheathed with horizontal beaded boards and has one batten door with an old wooden hinge and an old iron strap hinge with penny end. Another exterior wall has been added on the northeast making that elevation of the hyphen flush with the kitchen; the space between the old and new walls is planned to contain a bathroom. (A cellar entrance was blocked up when this change was made.) A stair to the second floor of the brick section is located in the hyphen, an unorthodox location for the only stair to the second floor of the main house. In the kitchen there is an enclosed stair to the second story of the wing. During the renovation, wide pine boards (up to 22 inches wide) were used for flooring in the wing.

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(DESCRIPTION, continued)

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

The five acres of land being nominated represent both (1) the present size of the tract as it was platted some years ago, when the larger tract was divided, in order to provide a setting for the house while maintaining the integrity of the site yet distinctly separating the site from the proposed surrounding housing development of which parts are currently in process and (2) the most clearly defined visual and physical boundaries as much of the present bordering land is tilled and will in the near future be landscaped differently as part of the previously referenced development.

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PAGE

(DESCRIPTION, continued)

Re: Section 7, Page 1, Paragraph 3, Sentence 7

About the 1960s, a section of the northeast or river-side elevation of the brick section was rebuilt to repair a structure failure. This work covered an area approximately twenty feet long and several feet high (the exact size of the area is not known by the applicant) but apparently not higher than the top of the first floor windows (at the highest point) and involved reusing existing brick and filling in with used brick where necessary while maintaining the original lines and features of the building and brick ~~boundary~~

bonding.

B 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 checked="" 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input checked="" 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY) Local History
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES _____ BUILDER/ARCHITECT _____

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

SIGNIFICANCE

Rock Cliff is an important vernacular structure in the architectural history of Maryland's Eastern Shore. It retains much original and early fabric that is specifically dated through documents. The Federal Direct Tax of 1798 for Talbot County lists Rock Cliff as unfinished. Also assessed were a shop, kitchen and smokehouse. The 1804 tax list mentions a new house with separate kitchens while the 1817 list mentions an adjoining kitchen, indicating construction of the hyphen by that date.

The house is also interesting as the building form chosen by a man of strong Quaker faith. The austerity and simplicity of the house and its woodwork are reflective of the philosophy of Edward Needles and his sons. The paneling in the dining room, the fabric of the hyphen, and the removal of the stair from the main block to the hyphen are also datable to the ownership of a Quaker, one Robert Kemp.

The history of the families who have owned Rock Cliff is in itself a picture of life on the Eastern Shore from the 17th century until the present. Information abounds about these people, who became prominent in politics, Friends Meeting, cabinetmaking, and other areas. The Needles, builders of the house, were an unusual family. They converted to Quakerism and freed their slaves at a time when many Eastern Shore Quakers were turning away from the faith and acquiring slaves for the first time. Edward Needles and his sons, Tristram, were cabinetmakers as well as planters. John Needles, Edward's other son, went on to become a well-known cabinetmaker in Baltimore.

HISTORY

The history of Rock Cliff (also spelled Roeclift) begins in 1663 with certificate of survey and subsequent patent of 320 acres 80 miles up the Choptank River just south of Turkey Creek in Talbot County. Its name alludes to the thirty-five foot high cliffs contained within its mile of shoreline, which make it the highest portion along the entire Choptank River. A year later Skinner sold Rock Cliff to Francis Riggs of Calvert, who had been his partner in a number of transactions involving patenting and speculative buying of tracts. It is probable that these early owners of Rock Cliff never attempted to establish a plantation themselves or even to lease this land. It is certain that Francis Riggs did little to improve the tract as he died soon after buying it.

In 1667 Charles Calvert granted Riggs' estate to his cousin, Joseph Riggs, since no nearer kin claimed it. Joseph Riggs had been an indentured servant to Captain John Witty of Virginia. He quickly took advantage of his windfall and sold Rock Cliff to Thomas Lacey, a Calvert County planter, along with another Choptank River tract.

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PAGE 2

(SIGNIFICANCE, continued)

Apparently Lacey like many other western shore planters, was eager to try his luck at tobacco culture in the newly developing areas on the Eastern Shore, since he is described as a Talbot County Planter in 1675, when he acknowledged a deed of sale for Rock Cliff to John Clemons.⁵

After 1670 John Clemons invested heavily in Talbot land, buying six other tracts.⁶ However, he died in 1676 soon after buying Rock Cliff and directed his executors to split his estate among his under-aged children.⁷ For the next 23 years the Clemons family had title to Rock Cliff, and we have the first record that it was leased to a tenant, Robert Grundy, who probably was the first to cultivate the land.⁸ It is quite certain that no clearing occurred before the Clemons' ownership because another tract, "Kellum at Kilton" was laid out in 1674 by William Hemsley, deputy surveyor, for T. Phillips; this included about one-half of Rock Cliff⁹(see figure 1). Hemsley's survey error resulted in extensive litigation for the Clemons family and Edward Mann, who had bought Killam from Phillips in 1675.¹⁰

The Rock Cliff/Kellum boundary dispute lasted until 1699, when John Clemons, Jr sold Rock Cliff by splitting it into three parts. The largest parcel (200 acres nearest Turkey Creek) was sold to John Needles, who had been leasing it as part of Killam from his father-in-law, Edward Mann.¹¹ The smallest parcel was sold to Vincent Hemsley, who was the high sheriff of Talbot County.¹² (Hemsley immediately sold his 108 acres of Rock Cliff to Jonathan Ayrey.¹³) Thomas Bennett bought the third 170-acre parcel from John Clements, but died soon after and willed it to his young sons, Thomas and John.¹⁴ Their portion was conveyed shortly thereafter to Walter Trotter, who eventually sold it to William Harrison in 1715.¹⁵ This 170-acre tract remained in the Harrison family until 1765, when Edward Needles (II) bought it from John Harrison and his wife.¹⁶ Thereafter the Needles family had the bulk of Rock Cliff for over a hundred years and made it their dwelling plantation along with a part of Kellum.

Although John Needles had come to Maryland between 1675 and 1680 as an indentured servant of Thomas Tench of Anne Arundel County,¹⁷ he quickly rose to prominence, as evidenced by his appointment as Towne Commissioner of Oxford responsible for re-surveying it in 1694.¹⁸ In 1696 he was listed as a vestryman and an officer in the Talbot County militia, where he reached the rank of captain.¹⁹ Later he served as a court commissioner and justice of the peace at York in 1697, 1698, and 1701 and was partially responsible for the establishment of the Courthouse at Pitts Bridge (Easton) in 1710.²⁰ This quick rise in affluence may be due to his marriage to Elizabeth Mann in 1782.²¹ Her father, Edward Mann, was a merchant of considerable wealth.²²

SEE CONTINUATION SHEET #3.

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(SIGNIFICANCE, continued)

John Needles willed the bulk of Rock Clift and Kellum to his oldest surviving son, Edward, and his youngest brother, William. His 1723 will indicates that he had diversified the tobacco plantation by planting an apple orchard, which was part of the 100 acres he bequeathed to his son William, with the provision that he provide Edward (I) with casks of cider every year.²³ Shortly thereafter William died intestate, and William Dobson and James Wilson, Jr. gave the first description of Rock Clift when they evaluated it for the Orphans Court in 1729:

"...there is on the plantation one small orchard and one old dwelling house and one old forty feet tobacco house which we value at three hundred pounds of Tobacco per annum, likewise one old corn house and hen house of no value. We further certify that the guardian [of William's orphan, Samuel Dudley] may clear two acres of ground per annum and no more and what timber he may want for the plantation use. . .²⁴

After William's death, Edward Needles ended up with the above land as well as many other tracts.²⁵ In 1723 he married Elizabeth Thomas, who was from an influential family. His affluence as a member of the landed gentry is also reflected in his election as a burgess to the lower house at Annapolis. He served there from 1732 to 1737 along with other notables from Talbot.²⁶ Since tobacco prices were very low during this period, he helped to enact a bill encouraging the cultivation of flax and hemp in Maryland to reduce the ill effects of the boom-bust single cash crop economy.²⁷ It is not known whether he tried planting these crops at Rock Clift. After his term in the assembly, Edward served as one of the Talbot Commissioners and justice of the peace from 1739 until 1749.²⁸ In addition to his public offices, he was a vestryman of St. Peter's Parish and a pewholder in the White Marsh Church, where Rev. Maynadier delivered his reputedly boring sermons.¹⁹ In his will, probated in 1752, Edward left most of Rock Clift to his oldest son, John Needles III, but when John drowned that same year in the Sassafras River, the property passed to Edward (II), the next eldest son.³⁰

Edward (II) had been a sailor in his youth and with his inheritance settled down and married Elizabeth Stevens.³¹ Again it appears that the Needles consolidated much of their wealth through marriage. Elizabeth's father, Walter Stevens, had a large estate at his death, part of which went to the Needles grandchildren.³² These children of Edward II and Elizabeth Needles were especially interesting. After their father's death in 1765, all but one became Quakers and Freed their slaves.³³

SEE CONTINUATION SHEET #4.

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(SIGNIFICANCE, continued)

The oldest daughter, Nancy, was the mother of Samual Hambleton, a hero in the battle of Lake Erie during the War of 1812.³⁴ The oldest son of Edward (II), John Needles (IV) reputedly has "a very cultivated mind with an excellent knowledge of astronomy and higher mathematics."³⁵ He signed up with Col. Richardson's brigade in the Revolutionary War and may have served with the "Flying Camp."³⁶ During the last part of the Revolution he became high sheriff of Talbot County and made the public announcement of the "Proclamation of the cessation of hostilities" in 1783 on the courthouse steps.³⁷ Later he was appointed county surveyor in charge of laying out Easton and St. Michaels.³⁸ In addition, he and his twin brother Edward (III) worked along with their younger brothers, Tristram and William (III) to help secure the freedom of slaves in conjunction with the Third Haven Meeting of Friends.

In 1784 Edward Needles III was one of the committee of the Third Haven Monthly Meeting of Friends to receive and provide for ten Negro slaves formerly belong to William Bowers.³⁹ Since this was against the law, John Needles IV was appointed to petition the General Assembly of Maryland for legislative action. However, the petition was declined since it was deemed unconstitutional.⁴⁰ Later, in 1790, Tristram and Edward Needles III were two members of a committee appointed by the Third Haven Monthly Meeting of Friends to inquire into the condition of and to advise and encourage the freed slaves of Talbot Quakers.⁴¹

In 1783 John and Edward Needles had adjoining parcels of Rock Clift (see figure 2). In the tax assessment of that year one old dwelling house and joiners shop were listed on Edward's 220 acres, while no improvements were listed on John's 150 acres.⁴² Sometime after this date Edward began building the existing 19' by 30' brick dwelling house which was listed as unfinished in the 1798 Federal Direct Tax assessment (along with a shop, kitchen, and smokehouse).⁴³

The Needles family records and an autobiography left by Edward Needles' son, John (V), who was born at Rock Clift, give some clues concerning the personality of his father and thus the brick structure described briefly in the Federal Direct Tax of 1798. The building reflects the taste of an austere religious man who went on several religious visits to Quaker meetings as far as North Carolina.⁴⁵ Since the Friends had no paid ministry, they depended on the diligence of these traveling Quakers for leadership and inspiration.⁴⁶ Edward's religious sacrifices are even more remarkable in view of the fact that he was a widower with six children.⁴⁷ His austerity is underscored by his son John's comment: "he expressed a concern for plainness by mentioning in his letter that when he bid me farewell [in the summer of 1798] he observed that my cravat was tied in bow knot."⁴⁸ It is no wonder that his house reflects simple clean, almost Shaker-like lines and good design, without the excessive architectural ornamentation of other, more ostentatious Talbot houses of the period.

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(SIGNIFICANCE, continued)

Another interesting point is that John Needles describes his father as a "cabinet/maker . . . [who] had a work shop on his farm, had apprentices to help him in the shop and . . . carried the farm also. He made wheat fans and boats they called battoes for fishing."⁴⁹ Edward's (III) younger brother, Tristram, was also a cabinetmaker and had a joiners shop on his adjoining farm at Kellum.⁵⁰ It is probable that the Federal woodwork at Rock Clift comes from one or both of their shops. Thus it seems that John Needles' (V) cabinetmaking skills were rooted on these two plantations even before he was apprenticed to James Neal of Easton.⁵¹ Eventually he moved to Baltimore and is now widely recognized as one of the more skilled craftsmen involved in cabinetmaking in Baltimore during the nineteenth century.⁵²

Unfortunately Edward Needles never lived to see the completion of his house. He died in December of 1798 and directed that it be sold by his executor, Tristram Needles.⁵³ Tristram did not sell it until 1804.⁵⁴ Since no ads have been found advertising it in the Easton newspapers in the intervening period, the reason for the six-year time lag is probably that the details were being finished. In the 1804 tax assessment, a new house is listed at Rock Clift with a separate kitchen belonging to Robert Kemp, the new owner.⁵⁵ Robert Kemp was another prominent Quaker, and it was he who had the kitchen connected to the brick house with a hyphen. This early hyphen is still evident on the brickwork of the northwest wall of the brick house. Also, the staircase was moved into the hyphen, and the dining room repaneled. Apparently these alterations were made before 1817, when the tax assessment mentions an adjoining kitchen on the house.⁵⁶ In 1825 Robert Kemp died and bequeathed most of Rock Clift to his young son, William T. Kemp, and Kellum to his daughters.⁵⁷

W. T. Kemp lived until 1873, and his estate was remarkable considering the generally hard times on the Eastern Shore during his lifetime. The personal inventory of his property runs to seven pages and is worth almost five thousand dollars. Apparently he and his children remained religious Quakers despite the decline of the Talbot Friends in the 19th century.⁵⁸ One of his sisters, Sarah, was listed as an elder in the Third Haven Meeting minutes when she died in 1881.⁵⁹ His wife lived to be 90 years old and the family remained at Rock Clift until 1933.⁶⁰ During this time Rock Clift was generally called "Highbanks". They incorporated the earlier kitchen and hyphen into a rather awkwardly styled wing and built a two-story porch on the brick house.

In 1933 the property was bought by James and Adelaide Keester (see figure 3), who leased it out to tenant farmers during the Depression. After World War II they replaced the two-story porch with a plain farm porch and added plumbing. In 1960 the Keesters sold the property and a series of subsequent owners bulldozed the outbuilding (including a large sheep barn). Recently it has been consolidated with parts of Kellum and Middle Spring into a large tract which is being farmed, with its magnificent river frontage being developed as a subdivision called "Highbanks".

SEE CONTINUATION SHEET #6.

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(SIGNIFICANCE, continued)

- ¹Patents, Liber 6, ff. 251-253.
- ²Ibid., f. 250.
- ³Archives of Maryland, XLIX, pp. 205, 253.
- ⁴Ibid., p. 264.
- ⁵Talbot County Land Records, Liber 1, ff. 320.
- ⁶Ibid., Liber 1, ff. 125, 129, 138, 198, 203, 303.
- ⁷Maryland Wills, Liber 5, f. 63.
- ⁸Provincial Court Judgments, Liber T.L. No. 1, f. 799.
- ⁹Patents, Liber 18, ff. 268-269.
- ¹⁰Talbot County Land Records, Liber 1, f. 344.
- ¹¹Talbot County Land Records, Liber A. B. no. 8, f. 8.
- ¹²Ibid., f. 12.
- ¹³Ibid., f. 21
- ¹⁴Ibid., f. 10; J. Baldwin, Maryland Calendar of Wills, III, p. 64.
- ¹⁵Rent Rolls: Talbot County, 1650-1790, Liber II, f. 22.
- ¹⁶Ibid.
- ¹⁷Patents, Liber W. C. no. 2, ff. 380-381.

SEE CONTINUATION SHEET#7.

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¹⁸Oswald Tilghman, History of Talbot County (Baltimore, 1915), Vol. II, pp. 344-345.

¹⁹Archives of Maryland XX, 522; Baldwin, op. Cit., p. 64.

²⁰Tilghman, Vol. I, pp. 157-162, Vol. II, p. 223.

²¹Samuel Hambleton Needles, Record of Mann, Needles and Hambleton Families (Philadelphia, 1876), p. 78.

²²Talbot County Land Records Liber 1, f. 344.

²³Maryland Wills, (Talbot), Liber 18, f. 198.

²⁴Talbot County Land Records, Liber P. F. No. 13, f.

²⁵Rent Rolls Index, Maryland Hall of Records.

²⁶Tilghman, Vol. II, p. 18.

²⁷Archives of Maryland, XXXVII.

²⁸Samuel Hambleton Needles, p. 32.

²⁹Ibid., p. 32

³⁰Maryland Wills (Talbot), Liber 28, f. 351.

³¹S. H. Needles, op. cit. p. 76.

³²Magruder's Maryland Colonial Abstracts, Vol. 3. pp. 101-102.

³³Samuel Hambleton Needles, p. 84.

³⁴Ibid., p. 83.

³⁵Ibid., p. 83.

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³⁶Archives of Maryland, XVIII, 68-69.

³⁷Tilghman, Vol. II, p. 132.

³⁸Samuel Hambleton Needles, p. 33.

³⁹Ibid., p. 33

⁴⁰Ibid., p. 33

⁴¹Ibid., p. 34

⁴²Federal Direct Tax of 1798, 18th District Tuckahoe, Kings Creek no. 80.

⁴³Ibid.

⁴⁴Ibid.

⁴⁵Kenneth Carroll, Quakerism on the Eastern Shore (Baltimore: Maryland Historical Society, 1970), p. 156.

⁴⁶Ibid., p. 157.

⁴⁷Edward Needles Wright, "John Needles (1786-1878); An Autobiography", Bulletin of Friends Historical Association, Vol. 58 (no. 1), pp. 3-4.

⁴⁸Ibid., p. 10.

⁴⁹Ibid., p. 6.

⁵⁰William Voss Elder, III, Chippendale Furniture of the 18th Century, Baltimore Museum of Art (1968); Federal Tax Assessment of 1783, Talbot County, 18th District., p. 19.

⁵¹Edward Needles Wright, p. 11.

SEE CONTINUATION SHEET #9.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

T-329

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DATE ENTERED

Rock Clift
Talbot County
CONTINUATION SHEET Maryland . ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE 9

(SIGNIFICANCE, continued)

⁵²C. F. Montgomery, "John Needles - Baltimore Cabinet Maker," Antiques V.
65, pp. 292-295.

⁵³Talbot Wills, Liber J. P. no. 5, f. 302.

⁵⁴Talbot County Land Records, Liber J. L. No. 30, f. 514.

⁵⁵1804 Tax Assessment, Dist. 2, p. 24-25, (Hall of Records Assession no. 12771).

⁵⁶1817 Talbot Tax Assessment, Dist. 4, p. 15, (Hall of Records Assession no. 12778)

⁵⁷Talbot Wills, Liber J. P. no. 8, ff. 302-303.

⁵⁸Carroll, pp. 155-188.

⁵⁹Ibid., p. 240.

⁶⁰Henry, Hairston, and Price, Highbanks and Cains Resurvey Chain of Title, Easton.

FHR-8-300A
(11/78)

7-329

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
HERITAGE CONSERVATION AND RECREATION SERVICE

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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

Rock Clift
Talbot County
Maryland

RLA 25 July 1980

CONTINUATION SHEET	ITEM NUMBER	PAGE
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The northeast elevation which is referenced in Section 7 and the continuation sheet dated 24 June 1980 as the "river side" elevation should be referenced as the "river view" elevation as it is the only elevation from which the river is visible because of the terrain.

The brick repair work on the southwest elevation visible in the photographs submitted with the application was made for the present owner. About 1900 this second story window opening was enlarged for a doorway and returned to a window post World War II. The present owner removed the circa 1950 brick work, which did not match the original brick in size or bonding, to have the area reconstructed in original brick size and bonding.

The nominated property is indicated as parcel number 51 on the enclosed copy of a section of Maryland Department of Assessments and Taxation Map No. 27 drawn to a scale of 1"=600'.

INVENTORY FORM FOR STATE HISTORIC SITES SURVEY

1 NAME

HISTORIC

Rock CLIFT

AND/OR COMMON

High Banks

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

Discovery Drive, south of Matthews

CITY, TOWN

Easton

— VICINITY OF

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

First

STATE

Maryland

COUNTY

Talbot

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE <input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL <input type="checkbox"/> PARK
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	PUBLIC ACQUISITION	ACCESSIBLE	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT <input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input 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"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

John C. Stevenson

Telephone #:

STREET & NUMBER

504 42nd Avenue

CITY, TOWN

Hyattsville

— VICINITY OF

STATE, zip code

Maryland 20871

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Talbot County Courthouse

Liber #: 503

Folio #: 607

STREET & NUMBER

Washington Street

CITY, TOWN

Easton

STATE

Maryland 21601

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING 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 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 _____
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Prior to the establishment of the High Banks subdivision, High Banks house was situated in the middle of vast acres of farmland. Even now, the house is separated from the development by a strip of field so that it retains some of its environment. The house is composed of two parts, a two and one-half story brick part, three bays long and a low two story frame part, four bays long.

The brick section laid in Flemish bond on the facade and common elsewhere, has a one story shed roof porch on the southwest facade, partly covering the three brick belt course, with an off-center entrance and two windows with 6/6 sash beneath the roof. Three windows light the second story and two dormers light the attic. On its southeast gable is a protruding fireplace/ chimney which services only a first story fireplace. Two small windows flank the chimney in the attic. Part of the northeast facade has been rebuilt.

On its northwest side is the frame wing which has a door and window to each of the two rooms within. The northwest room is deeper than the middle which is noticeable on the northeast side of the house where there is a cellar entrance and an overhanging second story.

Inside the house has a two room plan in each section. Those in the brick section are well finished, with a fine mantel in the living room having crossetted trim and a shelf with dentil molding supported by two scrolled undercut consoles, similar to the principal mantel at Willow Grove, Caroline County. There is a bold chair rail, and an original door with diagonal pattern. In the dining room is a wall of raised paneling across the fireplace wall and recessed panel wainscot. Neither of the rooms have a stair, which is unique in this type building. The stair is located in the next middle room, the wing in an equally unorthodox location. The middle room is sheathed with horizontal beaded boards. There is one batten door with an old wood hinge, and an old iron strap hinge with penny end. In the kitchen is an enclosed stair to its second story room.

The brick section of the house, judging from its mantel and trim appears to date from around the 1780's. The wings, however, appear to be later as many of its details are seamed with cut nails. There is a possibility that the dining room paneling was added in the early 19th century for several reasons. (1) A stair is normally in this type house. (2) In the cellar entrance is the remains of a brick fireplace. (3) The wing is later than the brick section.

8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input checked="" 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 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
----------------	-------------------

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

High Banks is an important vernacular dwelling because it retains much original and early fabric. Its plan is unusual for the period, which may be the result of subsequent, but early, additions. Its appearance is similar to the millers house at Wye Mills, but is a little later.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY _____

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

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

STATE COUNTY

STATE COUNTY

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Michael Bourne, Architectural Consultant

ORGANIZATION

Maryland Historical Trust

DATE

Jan., 1977

STREET & NUMBER

Shaw House, 21 State Circle

TELEPHONE

CITY OR TOWN

Annapolis

STATE

Maryland 21401

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



T-329

TUCKAHOE

Matthews

Rocky

Fowling
Creek
Quad

TALBOT COUNTY

Wings
Landing

CH

Berry

N

378

BM 53

BM 42

X 55

X 67

X 51

X 37

36



14 x 1.65

50% 329

(High Banks)
Rock Clift

T-329



S.W. facade; S.E. gable

M. Bourne

2/76



Rock Clift T-329
Talbot County, Maryland
J. Court Stevenson, 1977
Neg. at MHT
Front Facade, S. W. Elevation



Rock Clift

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Talbot County, Maryland

J. Court Stevenson, 1977

Neg. at MHT

Hyphen and kitchen facade, N.W.elevation



Rock Clift

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Talbot County, Maryland

J. Court Stevenson, 1977

Neg. at MHT

Parlor Mantel



Rock Clift T-329

Talbot County, Maryland

J. Court Stevenson, 1977

Neg. at MHT

East wall of dining room showing stair
framing in the ceiling.



Rock Clift

T-329

Talbot County, Maryland

J. Court Stevenson, 1977

Neg. at MHT

Northeast wall and hyphen with original
batten door and horizontal sheathing



Rock Clift

T-329

Talbot County, Maryland

J. Court Stevenson, 1977

Neg. at MHT

East end paneling of dining room with
wainscot.



Rock Clift T-329
Talbot County, Maryland
J. Court Stevenson, 1977
Neg. at MHT
Batten door in hall, southwest wall