

UNITED STATES  
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE  
WASHINGTON, D.C.

The National Survey of Historic Sites and Buildings

Chestertown Historic District, Chestertown, Maryland

Chestertown's beginning dates from 1698 when the court house for Kent County was erected on the bank of the Chester River at the future site of the town. In 1706 streets were laid out for a town and in 1708 the small settlement, then known as New Town, was made a Port of Entry for Cecil, Kent, and Queen Anne counties of Maryland. New Town, however, failed to grow and the leading tobacco port on the Eastern Shore during the first half of the 18th century was Oxford, located in Talbot County on the Tred Avon River. Founded in 1683, Oxford was for some time a close rival of Annapolis as the busiest port in the province.

Chestertown's growth as a major port began in 1730, when its owner, Simon Wilmer, resurveyed his land and laid out the existing gridiron plan of streets and house lots. From about 1750-1790 the town flourished as the chief tobacco and wheat shipping port of Maryland's Eastern Shore. During this period merchants and planters constructed fine Georgian brick town houses in the town. Some 50 of these structures still stand.

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NSHSB: 12/22/69  
C W S

## Other Sites Considered

### Chestertown Historic District, Maryland

Location: Kent County, Chestertown.

Ownership: Various, private and public. Mr. Maynard P. White, Chairman, Historic District Commission, 107 South Mill Street, Chestertown, Maryland 21620.

Boundaries of Historic District (See attached map): The area is roughly bounded by the Chester River on the southeast, by Cannon Street on the southwest, by Cross Street on the northwest, and by Maple Avenue on the northeast.

### History and Condition

From about 1750 to 1790 Chestertown flourished as the chief tobacco and wheat shipping port of Maryland's Eastern Shore. During this period merchants and planters constructed fine Georgian brick town houses in the town. With the exception of Annapolis, Chestertown has more extant pre-Revolutionary buildings than any other Maryland community. Most of Chestertown's some 50 historic houses, however, have undergone considerable alteration.

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Chestertown's growth as a major port began in 1730, when its owner, Simon Wilmer, resurveyed his land and laid out the existing gridiron plan of streets and house lots. As the heavy water-borne trade with Philadelphia grew, wealthy merchants and planters began building town houses in New Town. By 1775 the town had emerged as the chief tobacco and wheat shipping port of the Eastern Shore. In 1780, when the town charter was revised, the name of New Town was changed to Chestertown. In 1782 Washington College, the first institution of higher education in Maryland, was founded at Chestertown by the Reverend William Smith. The first college

structure, a large three-story brick structure modeled after Princeton's Nassau Hall, was completed in 1784.<sup>1</sup> The town's first newspaper began publication in 1793. By 1800, however, Chestertown was in decline as a port and was rapidly losing its trade to Baltimore.

On September 23, 1910, a serious fire swept the business district of Chestertown and destroyed 20 stores and six houses. The 18th century residential area, lying between the business section and the Chester River, however, escaped without damage. The town still has approximately 50 houses that were erected in the period 1730-1800, but most underwent considerable modification in the 19th century. The finest of these Georgian and Federal Period houses are concentrated along Water Street, near the Chester River. There are few intrusions on this street, but the problem becomes more serious as one proceeds Northwest from the river to the business district. Among the structures of architectural interest are the following buildings:

1. Ringgold-Pearce House (also known as the Abbey), 100 South Water Street. In 1767 the merchant Thomas Ringgold bought two houses that had been built by Nathaniel Palmer and Nathaniel Hynson, Jr. around 1735 and united these dwellings with a new section into a Georgian three-part composition two-and-one-half story brick house. The elaborate interiors of the house were decorated by William Buckland, noted architect of Annapolis, in 1767-1771. The original Chippendale-Georgian paneling of the drawing room was purchased and removed from the house by the Baltimore Museum of Art in the 1920s. The house was restored in the 1930s and now serves as the residence of the president of Washington College.

2. "Custom House," 101 South Water Street. A long three-story brick building with a dormered and gabled roof, obviously erected in two stages, this building is said to have been built by the Ringolds in 1694. The first floor, which contained three large storage rooms, served as a warehouse, and the upper floors were utilized as the living quarters. Maryland colonial port authorities rented a room in this house for use as Chestertown's custom house.

3. Widehall, 101 North Water Street, at High Street. Erected by Thomas Smythe, merchant, about 1770, this is a large two-and-one-half story brick Georgian house with a hipped and dormered roof and elaborate interiors. The exterior, however, has been altered: a mansard roof was added in the 19th century and the existing hip roof is a reconstruction; the present large two-story porch with tall Ionic columns was added across the rear (river) elevation in 1910.

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<sup>1</sup>Washington College's original building was destroyed by fire in 1827.

4. River House, 107 North Water Street. Built in 1737-43 by William Timbrill, a Barbados merchant, with elaborate interiors dating from around 1762, this is a large three-story brick Queen Anne style house. The exterior, however, has been altered by the addition (c.1825) of a Greek Revival porch on the street elevation and the construction of a new wing, which also involved the demolition of the original galleried porch, on the rear (river) elevation in 1912. The fine Chippendale-Georgian paneling of the third floor master bedroom was purchased and removed from the house by the Henry Francis Dupont Winterthur Museum in 1926.
5. Meteer House, 110 North Water Street. A brick dwelling built in 1780.
6. Perkins House, 115 North Water Street. A brick house dating from around 1726.
7. Bacchus House, 201 North Water Street. A brick house erected around 1780.
8. Nicholson-Daringer House, North Queen Street. A fine brick Federal Period town house built in 1788 by Captain John Nicholson of the U.S. Navy.
9. Emmanuel Protestant Episcopal Church, High and Cross Streets. A brick church, greatly altered, built in 1768. The structure is treated individually and in detail elsewhere in this report.
10. Palmer House, 532 West High Street. A one-and-a-half story stone house.
11. White Swan Tavern, 231-235 East High Street. A two-and-one-half story brick building erected around 1750 and once used as a tavern.
12. William Barroll House, 108-110 East High Street. A three-story brick house said to have been erected around 1735 by William Barroll V.
13. Wiches House, 100 East High Street. A three-story brick tavern built by Samuel Beck prior to 1775.

CHESTERTOWN HISTORIC DISTRICT, MARYLAND

Boundaries of the Historic District:

The historic district is bounded on the southeast by the Chester River, on the southwest by Cannon Street, on the northwest by Spring Street, and on the northeast by Maple Avenue. Precise boundaries are recorded in ink on copies of the following two maps: U. S. Geological Survey Map: Chestertown Quadrangle, Maryland, 7.5 Minute Series (Topographic), 1953, and a more detailed Street Map entitled "Boundaries of Chestertown Historic District, Maryland." Copies of both maps are on file with the Branch of Historical Surveys, Division of History, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation, National Park Service.

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MORNING RD

HOLY AVE

WINDY MOUNTAIN

ELLEN ST  
WALTER ST  
MORNING RD

WINDY MOUNTAIN

WINDY MOUNTAIN

WINDY MOUNTAIN

WINDY MOUNTAIN

WINDY MOUNTAIN

COLLEGE AVE

WASHINGTON AVE

BROWN ST

WINDY MOUNTAIN

WASHINGTON AVE

CAMP ST

WINDY MOUNTAIN

HIGH ST

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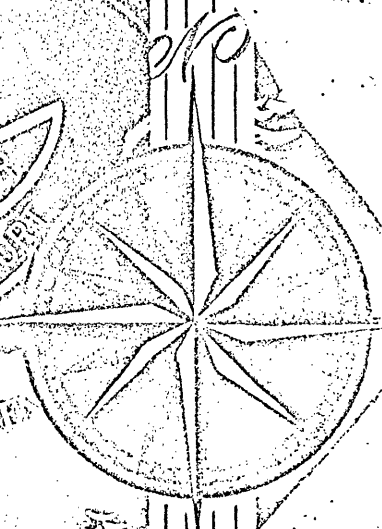
WINDY MOUNTAIN

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CHESTERTOWN



Boundaries of Chestertown Historic District,  
Maryland



# United States Department of the Interior

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20240

IN REPLY REFER TO:

A1619-DOS

APR 13 1970

Memorandum

To: Secretary of the Interior  
Through: Assistant Secretary for Fish and Wildlife, Parks, and Marine Resources *LP 4/14*

From: <sup>Acting</sup> Director, National Park Service

Subject: National Historic Landmark recommendations, 61st meeting of the Advisory Board on National Parks, Historic Sites, Buildings and Monuments

Enclosed herewith is the memorandum of the Advisory Board on National Parks, Historic Sites, Buildings and Monuments summarizing its findings and recommendations on the National Survey of Historic Sites and Buildings partial theme study of "Colonial Architecture." This memorandum makes two principal recommendations: (1) That 77 sites encompassed by this study be declared eligible for National Historic Landmark status. These are listed under Sections A, B, C, and D of the memorandum; (2) That 41 of these sites be given further consideration in long range plans for addition to the National Park System.

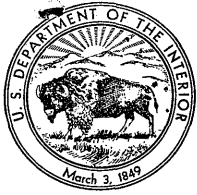
We recommend that you approve the Advisory Board's memorandum, and that it be returned to this office to become a part of the permanent record of actions recommended by the Board and approved by you.

*Harthon L. Price*

Enclosure

Approved: APR 15 1970

*Walter Hickel*  
Secretary of the Interior



# United States Department of the Interior

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20240

IN REPLY REFER TO:

October 8, 1969

## Memorandum

To: Secretary of the Interior

From: Chairman, Advisory Board on National Parks, Historic Sites, Buildings, and Monuments

Subject: National Survey of Historic Sites and Buildings: Partial study of "Colonial Architecture" comprising sites in eighteen States and the District of Columbia

The Advisory Board on National Parks, Historic Sites, Buildings, and Monuments, at its 61st meeting in Washington, D. C., October 6-9, 1969, having carefully evaluated the partial study of "Colonial Architecture," submits the following statements with recommendations:

A. Of the sites included in the study, the following are recognized as nationally significant in illustrating or commemorating the history of the United States, and it is recommended that they be declared eligible for designation as Registered National Historic Landmarks with boundaries, as appropriate, described in attachments:

### Alaska

1. Church of the Holy Ascension, Unalaska
2. Church of the Assumption of the Virgin Mary, Kenai

### California

3. Anza House
4. Jose Castro House
5. Estudillo House
6. Fort Ross Commander's House
7. Fort Ross Russian Orthodox Church
8. Guajome Ranchhouse
9. Los Alamos Ranchhouse
10. Los Cerritos Ranchhouse
11. Monterey Old Town Historic District
12. Petaluma Adobe
13. San Diego Mission Church
14. San Juan Bautista Plaza Historic District
15. San Luis Rey Mission Church
16. Vhay House



Delaware

17. Aspendale

Florida

18. Llambias House
19. Oldest House
20. St. Augustine Town Plan Historic District

Illinois

21. Church of the Holy Family
22. Pierre Menard House

Louisiana

23. Keller (Homeplace) Plantation House
24. Lafitte's Blacksmith Shop
25. Mayor Girod House
26. Madame John's Legacy
27. Parlange Plantation House
28. Presbytere

Maryland

29. Brice House
30. Chase-Lloyd House
31. Chestertown Historic District
32. His Lordship's Kindness
33. London Town Publik House
34. Montpelier
35. Mount Clare
36. Resurrection Manor
37. Tulip Hill
38. West St. Mary's Manor
39. Wye House

Missouri

40. Louis Bolduc House

New Mexico

41. San Estevan del Rey Mission Church
42. San Francisco de Assissi Mission Church
43. San Jose de Gracia Church

North Carolina

44. Chowan County Courthouse
45. Cupola House
46. Palmer-Marsh House
47. Single Brothers' House

South Carolina

48. Brick House Ruin
49. William Gibbes House
50. Hampton Plantation
51. Heyward-Washington House
52. Middleburg Plantation
53. Pompion Hill Chapel
54. St. James' Episcopal Church, Goose Creek
55. St. James' Episcopal Church, Santee
56. St. Stephen's Episcopal Church

Texas

57. Mission Concepcion
58. Spanish Governor's Palace

Virginia

59. Brandon
60. Bruton Parish Church
61. Carter's Grove
62. Christ Church, Alexandria
63. Kenmore
64. Sabine Hall
65. James Semple House
66. Shirley
67. Waterford Historic District
68. Wythe House
69. Yeocomico Church

Washington

70. Fort Nisqually Granary

B. Three sites included in the portion of Colonial Architecture that considered the Middle Colonies are recognized as nationally significant and it is recommended that they be declared eligible for designation as Registered National Historic Landmarks:

1. William Trent House, New Jersey
2. Christ Church, Pennsylvania
3. Carpenters' Hall, Pennsylvania

C. Two sites included in this study are recognized as nationally significant in Theme IV, "Spanish Exploration and Settlement." It is recommended that they be declared eligible for recognition as Registered National Historic Landmarks:

1. La Purisima Mission, California
2. Cathedral of St. Augustine, Florida

D. Two sites not originally included within this study are recommended for designation as National Historic Landmarks within Theme XX, Subtheme, "Architecture."

1. El Santuario de Chimayo, New Mexico
2. Peyton Randolph House, Virginia

E. Other Recommendations:

1. That the following sites be placed in the category of "Other Sites Considered:"

California

- (1) Avila House
- (2) La Casa de Cota de la Cuesta
- (3) La Casa de Eduardo de la Cuesta
- (4) Covarrubias Adobe
- (5) De La Guerra Adobe
- (6) El Cuartel
- (7) Guadalupe (Olivera) Ranch House No. 1
- (8) Hill-Carrillo Adobe
- (9) Ortega House

- (10) Plaza Church
- (11) Rocha House
- (12) San Diego Old Town Historic District
- (13) San Juan Capistrano Mission Church

District of Columbia

- (14) Alva Belmont House

Illinois

- (15) Cahokia Courthouse
- (16) Cahokia Historic District

Louisiana

- (17) Darby Plantation House
- (18) Ormond Plantation

Maryland

- (19) Emmanuel Protestant Episcopal Church
- (20) Genesar
- (21) Hammond Manor House
- (22) Kilmarock (Burleane Hall)
- (23) Ogle Hall
- (24) Otterbein Church
- (25) Patuxent Manor House
- (26) St. John's Episcopal Church, Broad Creek
- (27) St. Paul's Episcopal Church, Kent County
- (28) Talbot County Court House
- (29) Third Haven Meeting House
- (30) Trinity Episcopal Church, Dorchester County

Missouri

- (31) Jean Baptiste Valle House

New Mexico

- (32) San Geronimo de Taos Mission Church

North Carolina

- (33) Bath Historic District
- (34) St. Paul's Episcopal Church, Edenton
- (35) St. Thomas Episcopal Church, Bath
- (36) Tryon Palace, Original (West) Wing

South Carolina

- (37) Branford-Horry House
- (38) Fenwick Hall
- (39) Medway Plantation
- (40) Thomas Rose House
- (41) Col. John Stuart House
- (42) Sword Gate House

Virginia

- (43) Berkeley Plantation
- (44) Brafferton Hall, College of William and Mary
- (45) The Glebe House
- (46) Noland's Ferry House
- (47) Pohick Church
- (48) President's House, College of William and Mary
- (49) Smithfield Plantation
- (50) Tazewell House

West Virginia

- (51) Crane (Lord Fairfax) House
- (52) Mordington (Happy Retreat)
- (53) Governor Tiffin House

2. That the following sites be given further study under this theme:

California

- (1) Olivas Adobe
- (2) San Gabriel Mission Church

Colorado

- (3) Baca House

Connecticut

- (4) Hatheway House

Delaware

- (5) Christ Church, Laurel
- (6) Prince George's Chapel

Florida

- (7) Spanish Treasurer's House

Louisiana

- (8) African House, Melrose Plantation
- (9) Creole Cottage
- (10) Louis Arceneaux House
- (11) E. D. White Memorial Cottage
- (12) Voisin Plantation House
- (13) Spanish Custom House
- (14) Erariste Blanc House
- (15) Montegut House
- (16) Bank of the United States
- (17) Absinthe House
- (18) Cathedral of St. Louis

Maryland

- (19) Carroll Mansion
- (20) Providence Plantation
- (21) Queen Anne's County Courthouse
- (22) Horatio Sharp (Rideout) House
- (23) Scott House
- (24) St. John's Episcopal Church, Hillsboro
- (25) St. Luke's Episcopal Church, Church Hill
- (26) St. Luke's Episcopal Church or Tuckahoe Chapel, Queenstown
- (27) Old Wye Church
- (28) Doughoregan Manor

New Mexico - Florida

- (29) Pascual Martinez Ranch House
- (30) Santa Fe and Albuquerque and Pensacola town plans

North Carolina

- (31) Breezeway type of Colonial House
- (32) Edenton Historic District
- (33) Hayes Plantation House
- (34) Sycamore Plantation

South Carolina

- (35) Edward's House
- (36) Edisto Hall

Virginia

- (37) Battersea
- (38) Blandfield
- (39) Carlyle House
- (40) Dulaney House
- (41) Elmwood
- (42) Hanover Tavern
- (43) Hanover Courthouse
- (44) King William Courthouse
- (45) Long Bridge Ordinary
- (46) Marmion
- (47) Powhatan Courthouse
- (48) Powhatan Tavern
- (49) Three-story wooden row houses, south side of 200 block of Prince Street in Alexandria
- (50) Smithfield Courthouse
- (51) Washington Historic District
- (52) Wetherburn's Tavern
- (53) Fincastle Historic District

West Virginia

- (54) Harewood
- (55) Sweet Springs

F. The National Park System includes the following structures that are Importantly Related to this study:

1. Tumacacori National Monument, Arizona
2. Castillo de San Marcos National Monument, Florida
3. Fort Matanzas National Monument, Florida

4. Hampton National Historic Site, Maryland
5. Nelson House, Colonial National Historical Park, Virginia
6. San Jose Mission Church, Texas

G. Forty-eight sites related to this theme have been classified as possessing national significance in other theme studies. These are:

Importantly Related to Colonial Architecture

1. Russian Mission Orphanage, Alaska
2. San Xavier del Bac Mission Church, Arizona
3. Carmel Mission Church, California
4. Larkin House, California
5. Old Custom House, California
6. Royal Presidio Chapel, California
7. Santa Barbara Mission Church, California
8. Sonoma Pueblo Historic District, California (with boundaries enlarged and defined in the attachments)
9. Savannah Historic District, Georgia
10. The Cabildo, Louisiana
11. Ursuline Convent, Louisiana
12. Vieux Carre Historic District, Louisiana
13. Jackson Square, Louisiana
14. Colonial Annapolis Historic District, Maryland
15. Hammond-Harwood House, Maryland
16. Maryland State House, Maryland
17. Whitehall, Maryland
18. Ste. Genevieve Historic District, Missouri
19. Palace of the Governors, New Mexico
20. Old Salem Historic District, North Carolina
21. Miles Brewton House, South Carolina
22. Robert Brewton House, South Carolina
23. Charleston Historic District, South Carolina (with boundaries enlarged and defined in the attachments)
24. Drayton Hall, South Carolina
25. Mulberry Plantation, South Carolina
26. St. Michael's Episcopal Church, South Carolina
27. Presidio de La Bahia, Texas
28. Alexandria Historic District, Virginia
29. Bacon's Castle, Virginia
30. Christ Church, Lancaster County, Virginia



31. Colonial Williamsburg Historic District, Virginia
32. Gadsby's Tavern, Virginia
33. Gunston Hall, Virginia
34. Mount Airy, Virginia
35. Mount Vernon, Virginia
36. St. Luke's Church, Virginia
37. Stratford Hall, Virginia
38. Adam Thoroughgood House, Virginia
39. Tuckahoe Plantation, Virginia
40. Westover, Virginia
41. Wren Building, College of William and Mary, Virginia

Also Related to Colonial Architecture

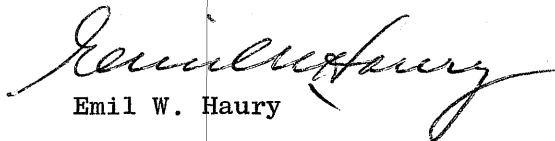
42. Erskine House, Alaska
43. St. Michael's Cathedral, Alaska
44. Commandant's House, Presidio of San Francisco, California
45. Las Trampas Plaza Historic District, New Mexico
46. Salem Tavern, Old Salem, North Carolina
47. The Alamo, Texas
48. Rising Sun Tavern, Virginia

H. The Board recommends that the Old State (Colony) House in Newport, Rhode Island, a Landmark previously placed in the category of Also Related to Colonial Architecture, be noted as being Importantly Related to Colonial Architecture.

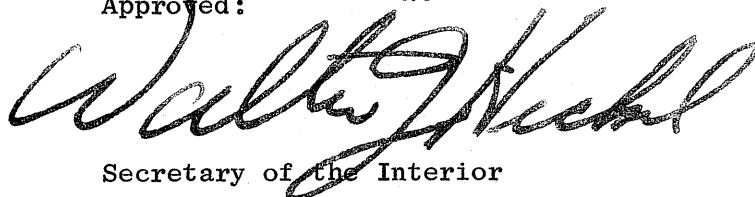
I. The following sites are judged of such prime significance as to merit further study for possible addition to the National Park System. It is recognized that many, such as Colonial Williamsburg, are being adequately preserved at present and are not available. Because unforeseen contingencies may change present circumstances, such sites should nevertheless be identified as potential units of the system and noted for long-range consideration in the evolution of the National Park System Plan.

1. Russian Mission Orphanage, Alaska
2. San Xavier del Bac Mission Church, Arizona
3. Fort Ross, California
4. Guajome Ranchhouse, California
5. Los Alamos Ranchhouse, California
6. Monterey Old Town Historic District, California

7. Petaluma Adobe, California
8. Royal Presidio Chapel, California
9. Santa Barbara Mission Church, California
10. Church of the Holy Family, Illinois
11. Parlange Plantation House, Louisiana
12. Vieux Carre Historic District, Louisiana
13. Colonial Annapolis Historic District, Maryland
14. Resurrection Manor, Maryland
15. Tulip Hill, Maryland
16. Whitehall, Maryland
17. Wye House, Maryland
18. Ste. Genevieve Historic District, Missouri
19. San Estevan del Rey Mission Church (Acoma), New Mexico
20. San Jose de Gracia Church (Las Trampas), New Mexico
21. Old Salem Historic District, North Carolina
22. Charleston Historic District, South Carolina
23. Drayton Hall, South Carolina
24. Mulberry Plantation, South Carolina
25. St. James Episcopal Church, Goose Creek, South Carolina
26. St. James Episcopal Church, Santee, South Carolina
27. Mission Concepcion (San Antonio Missions Park Proposal), Texas
28. Presidio de la Bahia (Goliad Complex), Texas
29. Alexandria Historic District, Virginia
30. Brandon, Virginia
31. Bacon's Castle, Virginia
32. Christ Church, Lancaster County, Virginia
33. Colonial Williamsburg Historic District, Virginia
34. Gunston Hall, Virginia
35. Mount Airy, Virginia
36. Mount Vernon, Virginia
37. St. Luke's Church, Virginia
38. Shirley, Virginia
39. Stratford Hall, Virginia
40. Adam Thoroughgood House, Virginia
41. Westover, Virginia

  
Emil W. Haury

Approved: **APR 15 1970**

  
Secretary of the Interior