

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

For NPS use only

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

received MAY 29 1987

date entered JUN 25 1987

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic Brookefield of the Berrys (preferred)

and/or common Brookefield at Molly Berry

2. Location

street & number 12510 Molly Berry Road N/A not for publication

city, town Croom X vicinity of Fourth Congressional District

state Maryland code 24 county Prince George's code 033

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> not applicable	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input type="checkbox"/> museum
			<input type="checkbox"/> park
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private residence
			<input type="checkbox"/> religious
			<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
			<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name Mr. and Mrs. Francis O'Brien (Linda)

street & number 12510 Molly Berry Road

city, town Upper Marlboro N/A vicinity of state Maryland 20772

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Prince George's County Courthouse

street & number Main Street

city, town Upper Marlboro state Maryland 20772

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

Maryland Historical Trust
title Historic Sites Inventory has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date 1974 federal state county local

depository for survey records Maryland Historical Trust

city, town Annapolis state Maryland 21401

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one
<input checked="" 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> moved
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		date meat house moved early 1987

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

Number of Resources:

Contributing	Noncontributing
<u>4</u>	<u>2</u> buildings
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u> sites
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u> structures
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u> objects
<u>4</u>	<u>2</u> Total

Number of previously listed National Register properties included in this nomination: 0

Original and historic functions and uses: agriculture, residential

DESCRIPTION SUMMARY:

Brookefield of the Berrys is an early nineteenth century frame gable-roof plantation house which stands in a complex of contemporary and later outbuildings south of Croom. The house, begun circa 1810 and completed in 1840, consists of a two-and-one-half story main block, with two exterior brick chimneys at each gable end; extending from one gable end and enclosing one chimney is a one-and-one-half-story kitchen wing with a single exterior brick chimney. The building, constructed in two stages, exhibits fine Federal and Greek Revival style decorative detail. In addition to the dwelling, five outbuildings stand on the nominated ten-acre property: a nineteenth century granary, a nineteenth century smokehouse and a similar balancing nineteenth century dependency, a twentieth century corn crib, and a 1986 garage/-outbuilding.

For General Description, see Continuation Sheet No. 1.

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 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 c. 1810, 1840 **Builder/Architect** unknown

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph) Applicable Criteria: C
Applicable Exceptions: none
Significance Evaluated: local

SIGNIFICANCE

Brookefield of the Berrys is an excellent example of an early nineteenth century plantation house of a successful and prosperous planter in Southern Prince George's County. The house is particularly significant because it was built in two stages. Construction was begun circa 1810 structural details in parts of the building e.g., the framing of the attic and the use of wrought nails indicate construction in this period, and the principal entrances and trim in some parlors are Federal in style. The house was finished in 1840 by John Thomas Berry. This second building phase is reflected in the Greek Revival style moldings and mantels in the formal living spaces. Brookefield exhibits several rare or unique architectural details, e.g., the rare surviving roof form with its ridgeboard and multiple purlins, the unique local example of clapboard interior wall sheathing, and the rare survival of centering in the chimney support. Berry and his descendants lived at Brookefield from 1840 until 1976; three generations of the family have farmed the land continuously, and their farmstead has been one of the most prosperous in the area. This nineteenth century farmstead is well represented by the complex of outbuildings surrounding the house. Brookefield exemplifies an outstanding plantation house and farm of an important Prince George's County family, from the ante-bellum period to the middle of the twentieth century.

9. Major Bibliographical References

See Footnotes on Continuation Sheet No. 11.

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property 10 acres

Quadrangle name Brandywine, MD

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UTM References

A	<u>18</u>	<u>347330</u>	<u>4286760</u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing

B	<u>18</u>	<u>347660</u>	<u>4286790</u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing

C	<u>18</u>	<u>347640</u>	<u>4286600</u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing

D	<u>18</u>	<u>347320</u>	<u>4286760</u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing

E	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing

F	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing

G	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing

H	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing

Verbal boundary description and justification

See Continuation Sheet No. 12.

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	N/A	code	county	code

state	code	county	code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Susan Pearl, Principal Investigator, Historic Survey Project

Prince George's County

organization Historic Preservation Commission date September 1986

c/o County Planning Div., Room 4010

street & number 14741 Gov. Oden Bowie Drive telephone (301) 952-3521

city or town Upper Marlboro state Maryland 20772

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national state local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature [Signature] 5-23-87

title STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER date

For NPS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

[Signature] 6/25/87
 Keeper of the National Register

Attest: _____ date

Chief of Registration

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 1 Brookefield of the Berrys
Prince George's County, Maryland

GENERAL DESCRIPTION:

Brookefield of the Berrys is an early nineteenth century frame gable-roof dwelling which stands in a complex of contemporary and later outbuildings. The house consists of a two-and-one-half-story main block, with two exterior brick chimneys at each gable end; extending from one gable end and enclosing one chimney is a one-and-one-half story kitchen wing with a single exterior brick chimney. The building was begun circa 1810 and completed in 1840.

The main block is approximately 44 by 30 feet, five irregular bays by three bays. Entrance is in the central, but slightly off center bay of the principal west facade, through a door with sidelights and elliptical Federal style fanlight. There is an identical door in the east facade. Siding is plain horizontal board painted white. Windows are 6/6 double hung sash. The board surrounds of the windows have inner bead, flat outer band and plain corner blocks, and are painted brown. All trim and corner boards are also painted brown. The louvered shutters have been removed from most windows. The windows of the west facade are not symmetrically spaced. The windows in the first two bays are slightly narrower and more closely spaced than those in the other bays. The east facade is also irregular, with only one wider bay south of the entrance. The fourth or northmost bay is filled with a projecting bathroom addition on both stories.

The central entrances on the east and west facades have six-panel doors. The molded casing of each door has bulls eye corner blocks and frames the sidelights and elliptical fanlight. The three-pane sidelights are filled with patterned stained glass (recent replacements by the present owners) over molded wainscot panels. The fourteen sections of the elliptical fanlight are filled with patterned stained glass in shades of red, yellow and lavender.

Across the five-bay west facade is a one-story hip-roof porch, probably added in the late nineteenth century, supported by turned posts with jig-sawn brackets, and with a new plain balustered railing. The central access is framed by plain railing with molded spherical caps.

Across the east facade is a two-story shed-roof veranda supported by turned posts with jig-sawn brackets like those of the west porch. Central access to the entrance is similar to that of the west facade but by means of a flight of three brick steps. There is a side entrance to the veranda from the south. The northmost part of the veranda is enclosed on both first and second stories to form bathrooms.

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Brookefield of the Berrys
Prince George's County, Maryland
GENERAL DESCRIPTION (continued)

At each of the north and south gable ends of the main block are two tall corbelled brick chimneys laid in 5:1 common bond. At the south gable end, the two chimney are asymmetrically located in relation to the ridge. The chimneys are of unequal size. The chimneys have weatherings at second story level and are freestanding above the weatherings. There are two similar chimneys at the north gable end, also asymmetrically located. The easterly chimney is partially enclosed by the kitchen wing.

The gable roof is covered with wood shingles and has two rectangular hatches on the west plane near the ridge. The narrow boxed cornice is painted brown. The main block rests on a brick foundation which encloses a full cellar. One of the shallow cellar windows on the west foundation wall is barred by tapered wooden pegs which appear to be original.

Extending north from the north gable end of the main block, flush with the east facade, is a one-and-one-half story kitchen wing, 22 by 16 feet, three bays by two. Its gable roof has a steeper pitch than that of the main block. Entry into this kitchen wing is in the first bay of the west facade through a plain door with plain board surround. This door is sheltered by a small entry porch with a gable-roof canopy supported by turned bracketed posts. The porch floor is of brick. The only other opening in the west facade of the wing is a narrow 1/1 window in the third bay, close to the northwesterly chimney of the main block. Another entrance in the central bay of the three-bay east facade is through a plain door with plain board surround. Another door in the first bay was recently removed and replaced by a window. Windows in the east facade are 4/4 double hung sash. Across the east facade is a one-story shed-roof facade-wide porch supported by plain posts and resting on brick piers.

At the north gable end of the wing is an exterior corbelled brick chimney at the ridge. This chimney, like those of the main block, is laid in common bond. The kitchen chimney, however, has a narrow wedge course incorporated into the bonding. It is freestanding above the weatherings and flanked by two tiny square wood frame double hung sash windows of two-over-two lights both at the first story and loft levels. The cornice of the wing is plain with a plain rake board which is painted brown. The kitchen wing rests on a brick foundation which encloses a very shallow crawl space that is no longer accessible.

The trim in the interior spaces varies, some in the Federal style, some Greek Revival. Trim in the wide central passage is Greek Revival in style with sharply profiled grooves and bulls-eye corner blocks with recessed centers. There is a pedestal chair-rail with sharp profile and a high molded baseboard. An elliptical arch divides the central passage. It has the same sharply profiled molding as the door surrounds. The capitals of the pilasters are distinguished by overlapping horizontal moldings. Floorboards probably original are wide and laid in tongue-in groove joints.

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Brookefield of the Berrys
Prince George's County, Maryland
GENERAL DESCRIPTION (continued)

The open-string two-flight staircase is inset in the widened east end of the central passage. It rises toward the east along the south wall of the passage, turns 90 degrees at a small landing, and continues to the second floor. It has a slim turned newel and plain square balusters. A smooth rounded walnut handrail is mitered to the plain round newel cap which is pegged to the newel post. Stair-ends are bracketed, and the spandrel is paneled. The staircase probably dates from the first, circa 1810 period of construction of the house.

All rooms have wooden mantels Greek Revival in style but no two are identical. The other trim in the two northerly parlors and the southeast parlor is Federal in style, while that in the southwest parlor is, like the central passage, Greek Revival in style. The small southeast room has a two-step molding around the door and windows, with an astragal bead bonding and separating the broken field. There is pedestal chair-rail and high molded baseboard. The mantel has a plain frieze with plain pilasters and scallop molding around the firebox and on the shelf. A twentieth century narrow-board floor has been laid over the older wide tongue-in-groove boards.

The small northeast room has surrounds, chair-rail and baseboard similar to those in the small southeast room. The mantel in this room has a plain frieze flanked by paneled pilasters.

The larger northwest room is more formal than the two easterly rooms. Surrounds, chair-rail and baseboards are similar to those in the two smaller rooms but the mantel is more ornate. At the center and ends of its frieze are projecting rectangular panels. There is a band of lozenge molding directly under the shelf. The flanking pilasters have two bands of vertical astragal molding.

The southwest room is the largest and most formal, and, like the central passage, is completely finished in the Greek Revival style. The door and window surrounds have sharply profiled grooves, and bulls-eye corner blocks with recessed centers. The pedestal chair-rail has a sharper profile than that of the other three parlors, and it has a similar high molded baseboard. Windows have paneled jambs and soffits with wainscot panels beneath. The cornice, ceiling medallion and cupboard have been recently installed carefully matching the existing molding where possible. The mantel in this southwest parlor is similar to, but more ornate than, that in the dining room. It has deeply molded pilasters and projecting rectangular panels at the center and ends of the frieze. Above the frieze is a band of double-lozenge molding, and the edge of the shelf is embellished with a bead-and-reel molding. The wood appears to be grained.

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Continuation SheetSection number 7 Page 4Brookefield of the Berrys
Prince George's County, Maryland
GENERAL DESCRIPTION (continued)

The stair rises to a wide central passage on the second story. Above the first-story elliptical arch is a simpler two-step molding which forms a corresponding division of the second-story passage. Above each of the first-story parlors is a second-story bedroom. The wood trim of these second story rooms is slightly plainer than that in the first-story rooms: two-step moldings surrounding the doors, and one-step moldings surrounding the windows. The baseboards are possibly later additions.

The bedroom is to the southwest and has a mantel with a plain frieze and a course of lozenges below the shelf. The mantel in the northwest room has a projecting rectangular panel centered in the frieze. The firebox is flanked by paneled pilasters. There is a plainer mantel in the small southeast bedroom; it has a plain frieze and molded pilasters. The northeast bedroom has the smallest mantel. It has a plain frieze and plain pilasters but boldly profiled molding under the shelf. As indicated above, all mantels are Greek Revival in style.

Beneath the second run of the staircase, a flight of steps descends into the cellar space. The west wall of this cellar staircase is covered with wide hand-riven clapboards joined with a mixture of rosehead and machine-made nails. In the cellar, the brick foundation walls are visible. In the northeast corner, however, the foundation is of stone. Arched brick bases support the chimneys. In the northwest arch, the centering is still in place, a rare survival.

The attic of the main block is lighted by a wood frame double hung sash window of six-over-six lights in each gable end. There is a ridge board, a rare feature before the twentieth century, joined to the rafters by pegs struck alternately from right and left. The collar beams are also pegged to the rafters. There are purlins in the east plane of the roof, but not in the west plane, suggesting the break in construction phases. The wide floor boards are joined with rosehead nails, indicating finishing during the first phase of construction.

The north wing consists of a kitchen in the northerly space and a pantry joining it to the main block. During recent restoration work, a series of old brick footings was revealed beneath the kitchen floor, possibly representing an earlier structure. Centered in the north wall is a large brick fireplace with hand-hewn wooden lintel. The fireplace had been closed but was recently reopened. A steep enclosed stairway rises in the southwest corner of the kitchen (eastward, along the south wall) to the loft space above kitchen and pantry. Rafters in the loft are of hewn timbers, mortised and pegged. Floor level of the kitchen wing is lower than that of the main block, a three step rise from the kitchen/pantry into the northeast parlor.

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Continuation SheetSection number 7 Page 5Brookefield of the Berrys
Prince George's County, Maryland
GENERAL DESCRIPTION (continued)

Brookefield has a complex of outbuildings, five within the nominated 10 acres, and four outside its boundaries. Directly south of the house, about 35 feet to the south, is a small pyramidal-roof smoke house, 10-1/2 feet square. This nineteenth century building is sided with plain horizontal board and has boxed cornice. It rests on a brick foundation and has a wood shingle roof. Entrance is through a batten door in the north facade.

About 30 feet northeast of the house is another pyramidal-roof outbuilding, meat house, of the same size. This building stood just outside (north) of the ten acres owned by the present residents, but was moved early in 1987 onto the nominated property. This outbuilding is sided with wide, hand-riven horizontal boards and has a boxed cornice. Its hand-hewn sill rests on brick piers. At the peak of its roof (covered with asphalt shingle) are the remnants of a wooden finial. Entrance is through a batten door in its south facade. The roof structures includes large hewn horizontal beams joined in radiating spoke configuration.

Approximately 300 feet to the southeast is an early nineteenth century gable-roof barn or granary measuring 24 by 16 feet. It is sided with wide hand-riven horizontal board. Its hewn sillbeams rest on a deteriorating brick foundation. Entrance is through a batten door centered in the south gable end. Above the door, a large open window lights the loft level. The interior of this building is finished with horizontal board paneling, laid with tongue-in-groove joints. The gable roof is covered with a new corrugated metal roof.

North of the granary, across the east yard from the house and still within the nominated 10 acres, is a small twentieth-century corn crib constructed of vertical slats with wood shingles covering the gable roof.

A new outbuilding/garage is presently under construction in the east yard, near the access lane and west of the granary. It is one-and-one-half stories in height, is clad with horizontal board and has a gable roof covered with wood shingles. There are four gable dormers on each of the east and west planes of the roof. There are three opening bays in the west of this building. The building rests on a concrete foundation faced with brick. This building will be a non-contributing element in the nominated property, but it has been constructed to be compatible with the contributing buildings.

The entire complex of buildings is located on level farmland between Croom and North keys. The complex of buildings is set back approximately 1,200 feet east of Molly Berry Road, with a cornfield separating them from that road. Access is by a long unpaved lane which runs east along the southern boundary of the present ten-acre parcel from Molly Berry Road. Remnants of an old gate are visible in the underbrush at the edge of the road, on a direct line with the front (west) door of the house. The ten-acre parcel is

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Brookefield of the Berrys
Prince George's County, Maryland
GENERAL DESCRIPTION (continued)

separated by a split rail fence from an adjoining farm on the south, and it is bounded by woods on the east. Young deciduous trees and old cedars are planted on the immediate grounds of the Brookefield house and farm buildings.

Four more outbuildings belong historically to the complete complex but are located outside the ten acres owned by the current residents. Approximately 100 feet northwest of the house is a nineteenth-century saltbox-roof stable. This is a gable-roof structure which has been expanded by a shed addition to the rear (north), giving it a saltbox profile. The hewn sill of the original section rests on a brick foundation, while the rear extension rests on brick piers. Siding of the entire building is of wide horizontal boards, some of which are circular sawn. The roof is covered with wood shingles in serious disrepair. Entrance is through a batten door roughly centered in the south facade. There are two more openings, into the east and west facades of the extension. Two small square four-pane single sash windows light the ground level in each gable end; above them in the east gable end is a large window opening.

West of the stable, and set back slightly to the north is a long shed, with vertical siding (mostly circular sawn). Standing seam tin covers its shed roof.

East of these buildings, just north of the nominated 10 acres is another early twentieth century corn crib; it is constructed of vertical slats, and green asphalt shingle covers its gable-roof.

Northeast of the stable and shed, also outside the ten-acre parcel, is a gable-roof slave quarter. This small (20 by 16 feet) two-room one-and-one-half-story structure is sided with wide hand-split horizontal boards, unpainted and joined by square cut machine-made nails; it has a boxed cornice, and a wood shingle roof. Its deteriorated hand-hewn sill rests directly on the ground. The building has no chimney, but there is evidence of the original chimney in a rebuilt portion of the east gable end. Entrance is through a batten door centered in the three-bay south facade; it is flanked by 4/4 double hung sash windows, partly missing; a ground-level window and a loft-level window light the west gable end. The interior walls are lined with narrow vertical circular sawn boards, and there is a tiny boxed two-run staircase in the northwest corner.

¹Two windows in this room had legends scratched into the panes; the panes have been removed and preserved. In one of the southerly windows is incised "MJB." MJB was possibly a member of the Berry family. MSB Chew was certainly Margaret Sprigg Bowie Chew (a first cousin of Robert W. Bowie, Brookefield's owner in 1837), and in 1843 married William H. Tuck, the attorney who handled the sale of the Brookefield property.

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Continuation SheetSection number 8 Page 7Brookefield of the Berrys
Prince George's County, MarylandHISTORY AND SUPPORT

Brookefield of the Berrys is an excellent example of an early nineteenth century plantation house of southern Prince George's County. It stands on part of the large (2,530 acre) tract called Brookefield which was patented in 1664 by Thomas and Baker Brooke.¹ Parts of this large tract were passed down through generations of the Brooke family, and in the late eighteenth century, a portion of Brookefield between Nottingham and Croom, was the home plantation of Dr. Richard Brooke, great-grandson of the patentee, Thomas Brooke. At his death in 1783, Dr. Brooke devised this "part of Brookefield I now live on" to his son, Thomas Frederick Brooke, who continued to live at his father's plantation.² In 1806 Thomas F. Brooke sold his 354-1/2 acre plantation, plus a 62-1/4-acre adjoining parcel of land, to John Duvall, a merchant from nearby Nottingham.³ It was Duvall who began construction of the present house at Brookefield.

The house shows evidence of construction begun but not completed in the first quarter of the nineteenth century, e.g., the pegged ridge board and early wrought nails in the attic, as well as the Federal style fanlights over the principal entrances and Federal style trim in three of the parlors. Duvall never finished the house. In 1824 a judgment for \$8,000 was brought against him and in 1928 a writ of **fieri facias** was issued against him. Sheriff Edward W. Belt was ordered to seize and sell Duvall's Brookefield plantation. This the sheriff did and the land was purchased as an investment by Robert W. Bowie of Mattaponi.⁴ Bowie was the son of Governor (1803-1806, 1811-1812) Robert Bowie and owned considerable land in the Nottingham District. It is uncertain whether he intended to finish the large and potentially elegant house which Duvall had started. Bowie himself lived at Mattaponi, a substantial Federal style brick mansion two miles to the northeast. Members of Bowie's family certainly spent some time at Brookefield, as evidenced by the incised initials of his cousin on a pane of glass in the southwest parlor.⁵

Bowie never completed the house but in December 1839 advertised the plantation for sale. The **Marlboro Gazette** carried the advertisement and it was repeated in the **National Intelligencer**, printed in Washington, 12 December 1839: "A fine estate in Prince George's County...I will sell, at private sale, my Brookefield farm, formerly owned by John Duvall, Esq., containing upwards of 600 acres...unquestionably one of the best of its size in the County...it lies about three miles from the Patuxent River at Nottingham, is in an excellent state of cultivation, and capable of producing from 80 to 100 hogsheads of tobacco annually...[also corn, white wheat, rye and other small grain]...[it is] under good enclosures, is well watered, has an abundance of timber... There is a large and handsome dwelling house on the estate which has never been quite finished, and other buildings necessary for the use of

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Prince George's County, Maryland
HISTORY AND SUPPORT (continued)

the farm...[I] will also offer...8 or 10 likely young Negroes and the stock and farming utensils on the place... Apply to me at my residence, Robert W. Bowie, Mattaponi, Prince George's County."⁶ An offer was made immediately by John Thomas Berry and Bowie agreed to sell.⁷

John Thomas Berry was one of nine children of William Berry of Greenland south of Upper Marlboro. The younger Berry grew up on the Greenland plantation, which passed in 1839 to his older brother, Alfred M. Berry.⁸ It was in this same year that John T. Berry contracted to purchase Brookefield. John T. Berry became a highly successful planter. Throughout his ownership of Brookefield, the plantation was valued at a very high rate (\$40,000) in comparison with similar plantation/farms of southeastern Prince George's County. Into the twentieth century, his family was known for its wealth and prominence. Tax assessments, as well as census real estate values, indicate that Brookefield of the Berrys was one of the most prosperous in the area.⁹ The road which gives access to the farm bears their name to this day.

John T. Berry moved into the house on the first of January, 1840, and began the work of finishing it. He soon brought with him his three children by his deceased first wife and his brand new bride, Louisa Talburtt, by whom he would have four more children.¹⁰ Berry completed the construction and embellishment of the house. The central passage and the southwest parlor (largest) were finished with particularly fine Greek Revival style moldings. Wooden mantels were installed in all of the rooms. The slave quarter, which still stands northeast of the house, and the granary to the southeast, were probably also constructed at this time

Robert W. Bowie died in 1848, before John T. Berry had completed his payments for the Brookefield plantation and before a legal deed for the property had been executed. Berry, therefore, applied to William H. Tuck, executor of Robert W. Bowie's estate, to execute such a deed. Tuck did so in 1856, indicating that Berry had completed the agreed payments, and legally conveying to him the 691-2/3-acre Brookefield property.¹¹

Since 1840, descendants of John Thomas Berry have lived at Brookefield for nearly 140 years. After Berry's death in 1884, the plantation was divided between his sons. William Pinkney Berry remained in his father's house and operated the 302-acre farm on the east side of the road from Croom to North Keys, while his brother, Roger Bernard Berry, farmed the 258-acre portion of the property on the west side of the same road. At the end of the nineteenth century, William Pinkney Berry's farm included the house and immediate outbuildings (smoke house and meat house) a tenant house, two barns, a corn crib, the granary (which was also used as a carriage house), and four houses for servants (including the slave quarter which still stands). The assessed

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Prince George's County, Maryland
HISTORY AND SUPPORT (continued)

value of the 302-acre farm, including livestock and household furniture, indicates that Brookefield was one of the most prosperous farms in the entire southeast section of the county.¹²

William Pinkney Berry's first wife, Caroline Plater, had died in 1884 at the time of the birth of their only child, William P. Berry, Jr. Within a few years, Berry married his deceased wife's sister, Mary Plater. A daughter, Caroline Plater Berry, was born to them in 1895. When the elder Berry died in 1904, his estate was divided between his widow, Mary, and his son, William, Jr. The Equity Court, late in 1905, ordered the disposition of the property, and Brookefield was described as a "highly improved farm containing 302-1/4 acres improved by a fine dwelling with modern conveniences and outbuildings, [and] two large tobacco barns, located on the public road 1/2 mile from North Keys and convenient to Railway Station and Steamboat landing."¹³ Mary Berry, known locally as Molly Berry, continued to live in the family house with her young daughter, Caroline. The road from North Keys to Croom, which gave access to the Berry farmhouse, came to be known locally as Molly Berry Road and was subsequently so designated by the county. Molly Berry Road is one of the proposed "Scenic Roads" in Prince George's County. Molly Berry died in 1940. Her daughter resided in the Brookefield house until her death in November 1976. In 1980, a long, narrow 10-acre strip of Brookefield, which contained the house, the smoke house, the granary, and one of the corn cribs, was sold by the Berry family heirs to the present owners.¹⁴

Brookefield of the Berrys is a unique surviving example in Prince George's County of this type of plantation house: i.e., an early nineteenth century gable-roof frame dwelling with central hall and flanking double parlor plan with an attached kitchen wing. The closest parallel in the county is Spring Hill (PG:87B-1), built ca. 1820. It has central passage and flanking parlors, but unlike Brookefield, has no kitchen wing. Spring Hill has two exterior chimneys with a two-story pent at one gable end. It is plainer than Brookefield in stylistic detail.

Another early nineteenth century example of this type, Bloomfield (PG:66-5), was moved and significantly altered in the 1920s. Two other early nineteenth century plantation houses, Rosemount (PG:86B-2) and the Gardiner House (PG:87A-14), are somewhat similar to Brookefield. They are, however, only one room deep, having a central passage with one parlor on each side; both Rosemount and the Gardiner House have a lower kitchen wing.

Chelsea (PG:73-18) is somewhat similar to Brookefield in plan: a central passage flanked by parlors with staircase set off from the passage to the side. Similar to Brookefield, Chelsea's best parlor has bold Greek Revival style moldings with cornerblocks while the other parlors have two-step

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Federal style trim. Unlike Brookefield, however, Chelsea has a hip roof with balustrading at the peak and interior chimneys. Its exterior has been substantially altered.

More gable-roof frame plantation houses survive from a slightly later period, 1830s to 1850s, and are typified by side-stairhall-and double-parlor plan, with attached lower kitchen wing. Woodstock (PG:82A-13) and Bellevue (PG:84-20) are the best examples of this style with exterior chimneys, while the Coffren House (PG:86A-10) and Buena Vista (PG:70-17) are the best examples of this type with interior chimneys. Of the earlier five-bay central-hall-and-double-parlor type, Brookefield is a unique surviving example, with only Spring Hill surviving as a close parallel.

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Footnotes

- ¹Patents, Liber 6, folio 343.
- ²Prince George's County Will T #1:168.
- ³Prince George's County Deed JRM #12:69.
- ⁴Prince George's County Deeds AB #7:401, 404; JBB #3:262; cf. also Prince George's County Court records, April term, 1824.
- ⁵cf. Note #1, Item #7.
- ⁶**National Intelligencer**, 12 December 1839.
- ⁷Prince George's County Deed CSM #1:229; cf. also Estate file #83.
- ⁸Prince George's County Deed AB #12:358.
- ⁹Prince George's County Tax Assessments 1840-1900; Census for Prince George's County, 1850-1880.
- ¹⁰Prince George's County Deed HB #14:23; Prince George's County Marriage Licenses; Griffith, George R., **The Berrys of Maryland**, 1976.
- ¹¹Prince George's County Deed CSM #1:229; cf. also Estate file #83.
- ¹²Prince George's County Tax Assessments 1840-1900; Census for Prince George's County, 1850-1880.
- ¹³Prince George's County Equity #3175; Deeds #30:424; #430:20.
- ¹⁴Prince George's County Deed #5308:325.

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MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL DATA

Verbal boundary description and justification

The nominated property consists of a long narrow ten-acre parcel of land, all of the land described in Prince George's County Deed #5308:325. Its westerly boundary is the edge of a cornfield ca. 1200 feet east of Molly Berry Road: it is noted on the south by an unpaved entrance lane from Molly Berry Road, and on the north by an arbitrary line drawn roughly parallel with, and roughly 200 feet north of, the entrance lane; the property extends ca. 1600 feet east into a wooded area watered by a southerly branch of Mattaponi Creek. The nominated property includes the dwelling house and four outbuildings: a smoke house, a granary, one corncrib and a modern garage/outbuilding. Although historically the house is the cluster of a large farm, the owners of the surrounding acreage are not interested in their property being included in the nomination.

Verbal Boundary Description:

Source: Prince George's County Land Records, Deed Book 5308, p. 325

Being part of the land of Edward Plater Berry, Elizabeth Berry Jones, Carolyn Berry Eaton and William Edward Berry, recorded in Liber 4995 at Folio 834 among the Land Records of Prince George's County, Maryland (4th Election District), and being more particularly described as follows:

Beginning at a 30" sycamore tree being a common corner between the land hereinafter described and the land of William L. Bondurant, Jr. (Liber 4379, Folio 617), said beginning point being at the end of the eighteenth deed line (North 02 deg. West, 4 11/25 perches) of Liber 4379, Folio 617; running thence with the division lines between the land of Berry and the land of Bondurant, Jr., the following four (4) courses:

1. N 55 deg.45 min. 00 sec. W, 198.00 feet to an iron pipe; thence
2. N 73 deg. 00 min. 00 sec. W, 495.00 feet to an iron pipe; thence
3. N 62 deg. 00 min. 00 sec. W, 225.72 feet to an iron pipe; thence following generally with the south side of a private road and a fence line,
4. N 82 deg. 03 min. 30 sec. W, 658.72 feet to an iron pipe; running thence through the land of Berry with new lines of division now being established, the following three courses:
 5. N 22 deg. 50 min. 00 sec. E, 243.49 feet to an iron pipe; thence
 6. S 76 deg. 21 min. 30 sec. E, 1978.31 feet to an iron pipe; thence
 7. S 61 deg. 55 min. 00 sec. W, 603.51 feet to a stone on the southeast bank of a small branch, marking the aforesaid division line of the land of Berry and the land of Bondurant, Jr.; running thence with the same,
 8. N 03 deg. 18 min. 00 sec. E, 73.26 feet to the point of beginning.

Containing 435,600 square feet or 10.0000 acres of land.

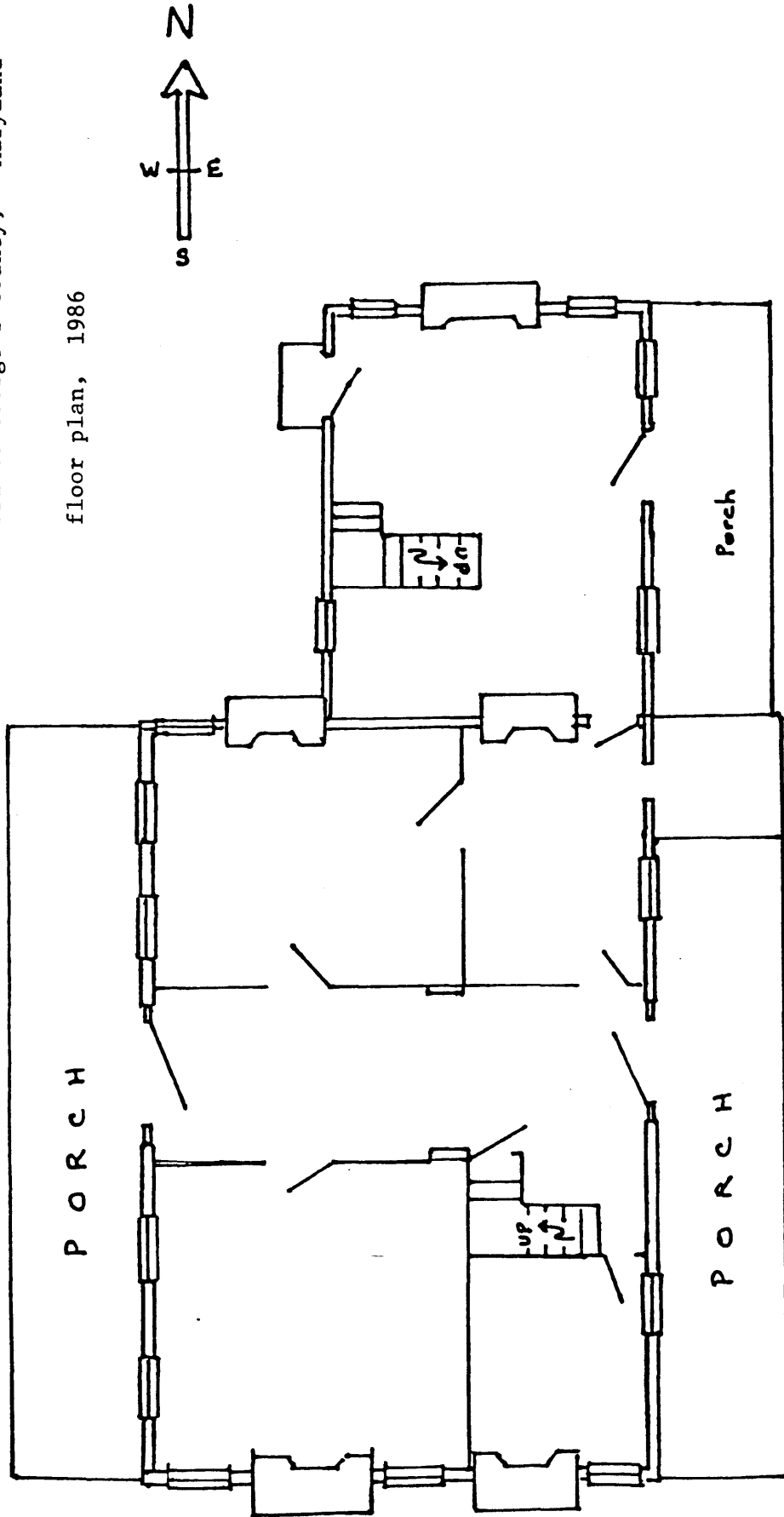
Together with a 22 foot right of way for ingress and egress running from the westerly division line of the above described land out to the county road know as "Molly Berry Road"; being north of and adjacent to the division line between the land of Berry and Bondurant, Jr.

Subject to encumbrances, if any, of record.

BROOKFIELD OF THE BERRYS PG:86A-20

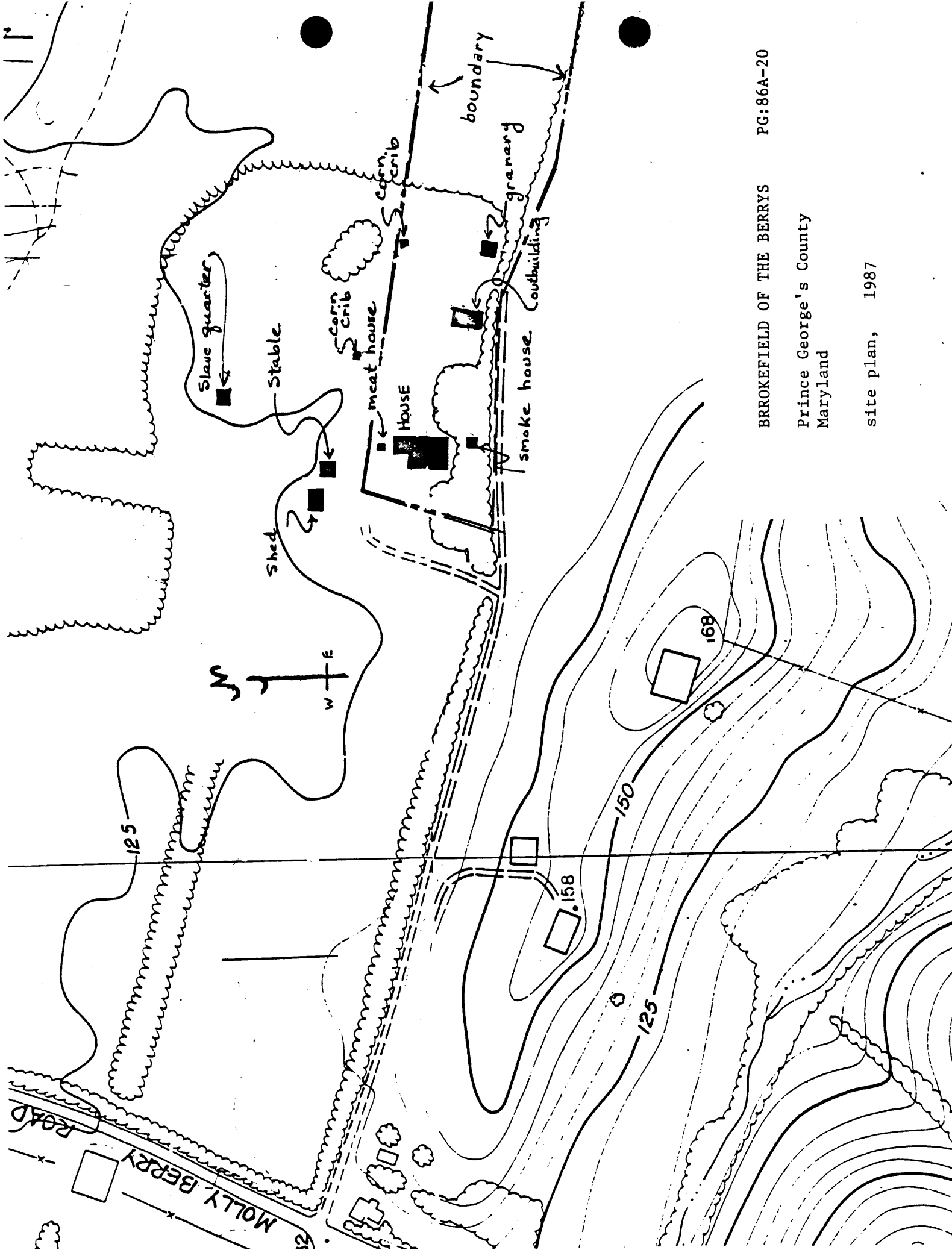
Prince George's County, Maryland

floor plan, 1986



1" = 10'

sg pearl
9/86



BROKEFIELD OF THE BERRYS PG:86A-20

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Maryland

site plan, 1987