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7. Description

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The original five bay section of this house constitutes an excellent example of the small 18th century beaded clapboard house in Mercer County. We quickly notice the original sash-nine over six on the first floor, six over six on the second, the masonry fireplace back on the outside end wall and the beaded barge boards on the gable ends. Original shutters and doors survive at the first floor openings.

The interior arrangement is an abbreviated center hall plan, because of the overall small size of the house. The narrow steep staircase that divides at the top occupies the whole hall area, so that the real back door lets out of the original kitchen to the right. Upstairs the center hall essentially contains two cherry railed balconies, each of which leads to a side bedroom, now separated at the front facade by a bathroom. The door and window frames and the arch leading up the stairway are strips of sharp finned Greek Revival molding.

The most important aspect of this house is the fact that some of the decurative features correspond to the Lawrenceville area, and more specifically, to the John Mhite Homestead on Colu Soil Road in that town. The . living room to the left displays an imposing Federal fireplace with bowed mantle and reeded pilasters, capitals and center panel, carefully notched in Adamesque swag patterns and two ovular fans. A slightly smaller version stands in the "borning room" in the Welling house next door. One is almost forced to conclude that the same imaginative craftsman was employed in all three houses. These fireplaces, along with the simplified versions in one bedroom in each of the newer houses, are virtually identical. No doubt others by this un-named man will be recognized.

Light, small panelled cherry doors throughout this house forge another link with Lawrenceville.

The old kitchen (now a dining room) on the right side shows a huge fireplace opening for cooking. An iron band supports the broad brick segmental arch. The brick baking oven, now hinted at by the blocked up opening, is gone. The 19th century addition is of little architectural consequence, although the new kitchen completed a decade or so ago utilizes old timbering in an ingenious manner.

In conclusion, this house is not only a fine example of the small clapboard house in this area, but also an interesting addition to our knowledge of the decorative style of a specific personality. This man must have worked at other places. The connection with Lawrenceville destroys the insularity of rennington at this time.



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PERIOD (Check One or More as	Appropriate)		
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John D. Hart, who built this house **around** 1800, must have been some relation to the signer John Hart from Hopewell, perhaps a nephew. He has been noted only for his activities as a merchant, succeeding John Carpenter who kept a store in the building opposite the Presbyterian Church in 1800, and later taking in Henry Baker as a partner. Also, he married Elizabeth Velling, who owned the Dutch Colonial cottage next to this property. It was perhaps at this time that Hart deemed it more fitting for him and his new wife to move into a more modern, more elegant house. The two properties were in his estate, and were conveyed by his executors to Charles Velling by deed April 3, 1839.

Congressional Representation

Clifford P. Case - U.S. Senator Harrison A. Williams - U.S. Senator Frank Thompson, Jr. - Congressman (4th District)



SEE INSTRUCTIONS

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