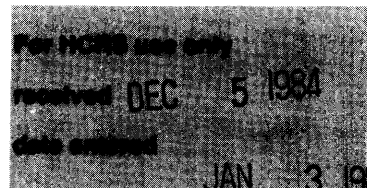


**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**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 McPherson's Purchase

and/or common McPherson's Purchase

2. Location

street & number Maryland Route 227 MD227 n/a not for publication

city, town Pomfret X vicinity of congressional district First

state Maryland code 24 county Charles code 017

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input checked="" 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"/> not applicable	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name Hillen J. Morgan Jr. and Eileen G. Doherty

street & number Post Office Box 1012 A

city, town La Plata n/a vicinity of state Maryland 20646

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Charles County Courthouse

street & number East Charles Street

city, town La Plata state Maryland 20646

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

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

date 1984 federal state county local

depository for survey records Maryland Historical Trust, 21 State Circle

city, town Annapolis state Maryland 21401

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved date <u>n/a</u>
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

Number of Resources		Number of previously listed
Contributing	Noncontributing	National Register properties
<u>19</u>	<u>0</u> buildings	included in this nomination: <u>0</u>
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u> sites	Original and historic functions
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u> structures	and uses: agriculture, residential
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u> objects	
<u>19</u>	<u>0</u> Total	

DESCRIPTION SUMMARY:

McPherson's Purchase is a working farm encompassing 120 acres, 75 percent of which is cleared and under cultivation. Centrally located on the farm is a complex of eighteen domestic and agricultural support structures, eleven of which date prior to circa 1870. Seven of these were built and continue to function solely for agricultural purposes and include two tobacco barns, two wagon or equipment sheds, a corncrib and a granary, all dating from about 1840-1860, and a former tobacco house built in the late-eighteenth century which was extensively enlarged in the nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries and converted to a hay and livestock barn. Included also are several early domestic dependencies, including a kitchen-service structure, a small garden or storage shed, and a plank constructed meathouse, the last with dovetailed corners and overhanging roof. Another early-nineteenth century building of interest is a duplex slave quarter with a central chimney. With the exception of the meathouse these buildings are of morticed and tenoned post and beam construction, many with hewn sills supported by ground-set wood piers; several of the sheds, however, were constructed around ground-set cedar posts morticed and tenoned into the wall plates. There are seven early-twentieth century buildings, consisting of two small service sheds, a three-bay wood or wagon shed, a workshop and a garage, a small, ell-shaped wagon shed attached to the end of the hay barn and a circa 1910 double-pile frame house of simple architectural styling. All are believed to have been built between about 1890 and circa 1920. Much of the land that makes up McPherson's Purchase is low and relatively flat, and its proximity to Mattawoman Creek and Old Woman's Run made it necessary for early owners of the property to construct a series of drainage ditches throughout the farm. Most of these ditches were apparently dug in the mid-nineteenth century as there is a distinct physical relationship between the placement of the older buildings and the arrangement of fields, drainage ditches and streams. All of the cultivated fields lie contiguous to one another, affording wide vistas across the farm north, east and south of the house and farm complex. The major portion of the wooded land lies north and east of the entrance drive and is mostly wetlands bordering Mattawoman Creek not suitable for cultivation.

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 checked="" 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/
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates late 18th-c.1920 **Builder/Architect** unknown

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

Applicable Criteria: A, C
 Applicable Exceptions: none
 Significance evaluated: local

SIGNIFICANCE SUMMARY:

Encompassing the largest historically and physically cohesive collection of early domestic and agricultural support structures in Charles County, McPherson's Purchase is significant as a uniquely instructive representative of a regionally typical nineteenth century farmstead. Despite the fact that this region has traditionally had an agrarian economy based largely on the production of tobacco and corn, very few farms of similar historical value retaining more than a few ancillary support structures survive. This is the direct result of a steady decline in farming activity in this area over the past several decades and the dissolution of an ever increasing number of farms for residential and commercial development. Of the eighteen buildings standing on the property, all of which were constructed during the ownership of the property by a single family, eleven date between circa 1830 and circa 1870, a period of significant development in the recorded history of the farm. All eleven buildings are important examples of regional architecture, but several are among the last surviving examples of their architecture and function in this

area. Of particular value to the study of the socioeconomic history and architectural traditions of this region is the three room kitchen-service building, a locally unique example in both plan and interior detail of this once essential domestic dependency, and the meathouse, one of the last surviving buildings of plank construction in Charles County. Of similar significance is the slave quarter, once represented in various forms on a great number of farms throughout lower Southern Maryland but now rarely seen. While tobacco curing barns have always been an integral part of the Southern Maryland landscape, fewer than half of those now standing date earlier than the latter half of the nineteenth century. Although typical of early-nineteenth century tobacco barns, the excellent structural condition, unusual construction features and historically appropriate context of the two barns at McPherson's Purchase give them a special degree of interest and value. Despite alterations the original structure around which the existing hay barn evolved is also significant as one of only two or three "tobacco houses" in Charles County datable to the eighteenth century. Although now quite different in appearance and function, the framing of the original structure nevertheless remains basically intact and its early form and physical features easily documentable. Also of significance is the corncrib and the granary, both of which are unusually well preserved examples of their type. In addition, the surrounding fields retain clear evidence of ditch lines and field divisions which were established in the mid-nineteenth century.

For History and Supporting Documentation, see continuation Sheet No. 7

9. Major Bibliographical References

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See Footnotes under Section 8, (Continuation Sheet No. 8)

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property 120⁺ acres
Quadrangle name Port Tobacco, Maryland

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UMT References

A	1 8	3 2 2 2 3 10	4 12 7 14 4 12 10
	Zone	Easting	Northing
C	1 8	3 2 0 9 6 0	4 2 7 3 7 5 0
E			
G			

B	1 8	3 2 2 2 1 10	4 12 7 13 6 16 10
	Zone	Easting	Northing
D	1 8	3 2 1 3 1 0	4 2 7 4 4 1 0
F			
H			

Verbal boundary description and justification

See Continuation Sheet No. 6

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 J. Richard Rivoire

organization Preservation Consultant date April 1984

street & number Post Office Box 132 telephone (301) 932-1000

city or town LaPlata state Maryland 20646

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 Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature *J. Rivoire* 11-20-84

title STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER date

For HCRS use only	
I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register	entered in the
<i>Joe Melores Byers</i>	National Register
Keeper of the National Register	date <u>1-3-85</u>
Attest:	date
Chief of Registration	

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McPherson's Purchase

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GENERAL DESCRIPTION:

The property is located on the east side of Maryland Route 227 at Mattawoman Creek, approximately 1.8 miles from the junction of Route 227 and Marshall's Corner Road, vicinity of Pomfret.

Entered from a private drive one-half mile in length, McPherson's Purchase is a working farm encompassing 150 acres, 75 percent of which is cleared and under cultivation. Centrally located on the farm is a complex of eighteen domestic and agricultural support structures, eleven of which date prior to circa 1870. Seven of these were built and continue to function solely for agricultural purposes and include two tobacco barns, two wagon or equipment sheds, a corncrib and a granary, all dating from about 1840-1860, and a former tobacco house built in the late-eighteenth century, extensively enlarged in the nineteenth century, and again in the early-twentieth century and converted to a hay and livestock barn.

A dwelling house known to have stood here as early as 1840 was replaced circa 1910 by the existing two-story, double-pile frame house of simple architectural styling. Arranged in a line directly behind the house, however, are several early domestic dependencies, including a kitchen-service structure, a small garden or storage shed, and a plank constructed meathouse, the last with dovetailed corners and overhanging roof. Another adjacent early-nineteenth century building of interest is a duplex slave quarter with a central chimney. With the exception of the meathouse these buildings are of morticed and tenoned post and beam construction, many with hewn sills supported by ground-set wood piers; several of the sheds, however, were constructed around ground-set cedar posts morticed and tenoned into the wall plates.

In addition to the house there are six early-twentieth century buildings, consisting of two small service sheds, a three-bay wood or wagon shed, a workshop and a garage located near the house, and a small, ell-shaped wagon shed attached to the end of the hay barn. All are believed to have been built between about 1890 and circa 1920. While of more recent vintage and of simple, utilitarian architecture and less complex construction than other buildings on the farm, they nevertheless contribute to the overall physical continuity and historical integrity of the site.

Much of the land that makes up McPherson's Purchase is low and relatively flat, and its proximity to Mattawoman Creek and Old Woman's Run made it necessary for early owners of the property to construct a series of drainage ditches throughout the farm. Most of these ditches were apparently dug in the mid-nineteenth century as there is a distinct physical relationship between the placement of the older buildings and the arrangement of fields, drainage ditches and streams.

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Continuation sheet McPherson's Purchase Charles County, Maryland Item number 7 Page 2

GENERAL DESCRIPTION (continued)

All of the cultivated fields lie contiguous to one another, affording wide vistas across the farm north, east and south of the house and farm complex. The major portion of the wooded land lies north and east of the entrance drive and is mostly wetlands bordering Mattawoman Creek not suitable for cultivation.

McPherson's Purchase is a working farm on which hay and tobacco are the two principal crops raised. Although several of the outer fields have not been utilized in recent years, the extent of previous and current cultivation has remained basically unchanged for almost two hundred years.

As it was historically, the nucleus of the farm today is centrally located on the property, the complex of agricultural and domestic support structures roughly outlining a small square from which radiate irregularly shaped outer fields separated by drainage ditches and tree lines.

A listing and brief description of the domestic and agricultural buildings standing on the property is given below. The listing encompasses all of the structures standing on the property today. Although it is probable that other ancillary buildings associated with the domestic and agricultural development of the property once existed, no evidence remains. Man-made features of the property, in addition to the house and related farm buildings, include the previously discussed drainage ditches and the entrance drive. This road continues beyond the farm complex to connect the original McPherson's Purchase tract with other McPherson lands to the east acquired in the nineteenth century, terminating at Pomfret, a small community that once provided various necessary support services to the farms in this area. See sketch maps for location of buildings and drainage ditches.

1. HOUSE: Believed to have been built by Benjamin W. B. McPherson shortly before his death in 1912, the house is a two-story, five-bay frame structure containing four rooms and a center stair hall on both principal floor levels and has a two-story kitchen wing at the rear. The simple, traditional exterior of the house features a centered cross gable framing a three-part arched window and a one story porch with round tapered posts and balustrade on the south front, one two-story projecting bay window and another one story bay window at the east end, and a two-story galleried porch at the rear. The exterior walls are sheathed with novelty siding and the roof with pressed tin. All of the windows of the main block of the house frame sash of one-over-one panes, while the sash of the rear wing is of two-over-two panes. All of the windows were fitted with exterior wood blinds, recently removed for repair and repainting.

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GENERAL DESCRIPTION (continued)

2. KITCHEN-SERVICE BUILDING: Detached from the main house and dating from about the second quarter of the nineteenth century, this was originally a one story building containing three ground floor rooms. It was raised to its present two-story height in the late-nineteenth century. The largest of the three rooms originally functioned as a kitchen for the earlier dwelling house and has an interior chimney and large fireplace equipped with cranes and trammels. Both this room and the adjacent north room have exposed ceiling joists and retain their original wall sheathing of horizontal, rough sawn, lapped boards. When the building was raised to two stories a stair was built in the southwest first floor room and the walls of this room sheathed with narrow tongue and groove boards. The room arrangement of the second floor repeats that of the first. All of the existing exterior openings frame later sash and doors, although two original first floor interior batten doors remain. According to a previous owner of the property this building was used for feeding and housing farm laborers in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries.

3. SHED: A one story frame structure with a single south end door, this small building was constructed to house a generator that provided electricity to the house prior to the introduction of electrical service to this area in the late-1920s. Probably constructed in the late 19th century.

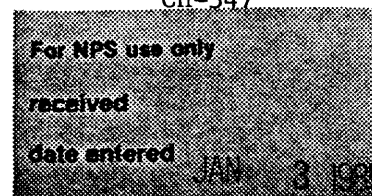
4. SHED: Of the same age and design as the adjacent building, this small gable roofed frame structure is built over a well and once contained a hand pump, supplying water to both the house and kitchen. The pump has been removed and the building is now used for storage. Probably constructed in the late 19th century.

5. MEATHOUSE: Measuring twelve by twelve feet and of plank (log) construction, the meathouse displays several interesting features, including dovetailed corner joints and exterior wall sheathing of vertical boards that on the rear elevation are chamfered at the top edge where they meet an angled horizontal board used to seal the area between the projecting joist ends. There is a single door centered in the south side wall and the south slope of the gable roof overhangs this elevation by two feet. Constructed circa 1840.

6. SHED: The original function of this low frame building is unknown, possibly it served as a garden shed or as a storage facility for the kitchen. The exterior sheathing is of board and batten and the interior has exposed white-washed framing. Dating from about 1850, it has an exterior door in each end wall, but only the south door, which retains its original strap hinges, is original.

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GENERAL DESCRIPTION (continued)

7. WAGON-WOOD SHED: Although of early-twentieth century date this three-bay structure is of interest for its ground-set post construction, several of which were reused from earlier buildings. Two of the posts are in two parts, the in-ground portion morticed at the top just above grade to receive the squared off base of the above-ground section. Whether this is an original feature or a later repair is unknown.
8. WORKSHOP: A narrow, one story frame structure, the workshop dates from the early-twentieth century and was evidently used for harness equipment repair as well as storage.
9. GARAGE: Also dating from the early-twentieth century, the garage is a rectangular frame structure and has exposed wall framing on the interior, a wood floor, and double doors at the west end fronted by a wooden ramp.
10. STRIPPING SHED: Recently renovated for use as a tobacco stripping shed, this was once a wagon shed of ground-set post construction that was enlarged by extending the south slope of the gable roof and enclosing this formerly open side of the shed, creating what was probably used as a small tobacco curing barn. Probably constructed in the late 19th century with 20th century alterations.
11. HAY BARN: Dating from the late-eighteenth century and thus the oldest building standing on the property, the hay barn was initially a four-bay tobacco house that was extended at the north end and sheds added to both sides in the mid-nineteenth century. Early in this century the original roofs of the barn and sheds were removed, a higher A-frame roof constructed over the entire structure, and the building converted to house livestock and store hay. With the exception of the roof the framing of the original tobacco house, as well as its later extensions, survive.
12. WAGON-EQUIPMENT SHEDS: These two small sheds, one built against the south end of the hay barn and the other added at a right angle to it, date from the early-twentieth century.
13. CORNCRIB: Constructed in a manner typical of corncribs in this area dating from the late-eighteenth century through to the mid-nineteenth century, this building has exposed morticed and tenoned framing with four major wall posts in each wall and overhanging gables at each end. The walls are sheathed with narrow, vertical wood strips spaced 2-inches apart secured to the outside face of the walls rather than the interior as is more commonly seen in early cribs. Unlike all other buildings on the farm the crib stands on brick piers, but they probably replaced earlier wood piers. The west end door was initially shorter and located in the upper half of the opening. The corncrib was built in the mid-nineteenth century.

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GENERAL DESCRIPTION (continued)

14. GRANARY: Of morticed and tenoned post and beam construction supported on wood piers, the granary has a small, sashless window in each side wall, one of which retains its original batten shutter with wood latch, and a single door in its west end. The interior walls are sheathed with wide, shiplapped, horizontal boards between evenly spaced major wall posts. The exterior walls are sheathed with rough sawn lapped boards and the existing seamed metal roof, like that of the other pre-1870 structures, replaces a former sheathing of wood shingles.

15. TOBACCO BARN: Believed to be the older of the two tobacco barns still in use, this building is of interest for the fact that the south shed, while appearing to be an addition, is in fact part of the original structure and is framed with ground-set cedar posts. The three-sectioned main portion of the barn has morticed and tenoned framing built on ground-laid sills. Unusually long angle braces at the corners are secured to the posts by wood pinned mortice and tenons but fastened to the sills with a half-dovetail half-lap joint reinforced by iron spikes. Supporting the interior tie beams and tier supports are eight evenly spaced ground-set posts, an unusual feature for a barn of this type and date. Dating from the second quarter of the nineteenth century, the barn was enlarged by a shed roofed addition at the east end that has ground-set posts morticed and pinned to the wall plate and dates from about 1900.

Contained within the south shed of the barn is a screw prize, a large, hand operated mechanical apparatus used to press leaf tobacco into hogsheads (casks), a once widely used method of preparing tobacco for shipment, market and storage. Dating from the late-nineteenth century, the prize has a ratchet mechanism used to drive the screw that is embossed with the name of the manufacturer: "JA. BATES/BALTO./MD."

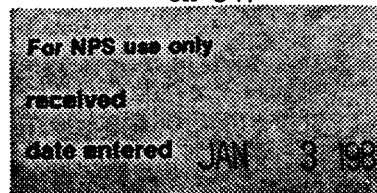
16. WAGON-EQUIPMENT SHED: Believed to date from the second half of the nineteenth century, this long narrow structure was built in two parts, the larger east end section having been erected first. Both parts of the building were formerly open on the south side, but two-thirds of the west end portion were later covered with vertical planks. Both parts of the building were constructed using ground-set posts morticed, tenoned and pegged to the wall plates and end wall ties. Several of the posts appear to have been salvaged from earlier buildings.

17. TOBACCO BARN: Although of morticed and tenoned post and beam construction, the overall style, framing materials and other details indicate that this large and well built barn was constructed in the second half of the nineteenth century, probably during the third quarter. Although larger than the other tobacco barn it too has a three-part main block with a south shed, but in this instance the roof is centered over the entire structure rather than being elongated on the side covering the shed.

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GENERAL DESCRIPTION (continued)

18. QUARTER: Among the most interesting structures on the farm, the quarter is a rectangular building containing two living units, each of one room with an unfinished sleeping loft above. Separating the two first floor rooms is a center chimney containing two back-to-back fireplaces. Of extremely simple, utilitarian architecture, the quarter has two doors on the south side and two narrow windows on the north. A first floor door in the west end and a first floor window in the east end are later additions, but the two gable windows are original. The two first floor rooms, mirror images in plan, have exposed ceiling joists and walls sheathed with rough sawn, horizontal, lapped boards. Narrow stair ladders, later enclosed, are located in a corner of each room and give access to the attic sleeping area, the two unheated chambers partitioned by a wall of wide vertical planks. Of morticed and tenoned post and beam construction supported by wood piers, the quarter is believed to date from the second quarter of the nineteenth century. Given its marked similarity to the kitchen-service building (#2) it appears probable that the two buildings were erected at the same time.

GEOGRAPHICAL DATA:

Boundary Description

The area of nominated property is bounded on the west side by the east branch of Mattawoman Creek and on the south side by Old Woman's Run. On the north side the property is bounded by a straight line drawn due west from the northeast corner of the original tract until it intersects Mattawoman Creek, and on the east side by a straight line drawn due south from the same northeast corner of the original tract until it intersects Old Woman's Run. All of these boundaries are as recorded in the original patent description of 1798 (Patents: IC#M, folio 447) at the Hall of Records, Annapolis, and in the most recent transfers of the property, specifically Liber 895, folio 15, at the Charles County Courthouse in La Plata, Maryland.

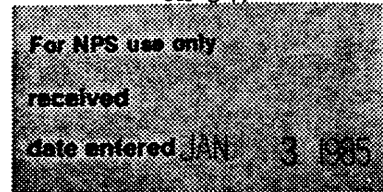
Boundary Justification

The boundaries as shown on the plot plan incorporate the original 116 acre McPherson's Purchase tract and with the exception of a narrow, largely wooded strip of land to the southeast, define the extent of the property now held by the present owners. Justification for the boundaries is based on the fact that they encompass the entire farm complex described in the nomination as well as all of that property associated with its original development. The acreage included is both a historically and visually integral part of the farmstead as it has existed since the original patent of 1798. This acreage contributes to the significance of the resource because, in addition to providing the setting for the complex of agricultural structures, it retains evidence of cultural modification of the landscape for agricultural use: ditch lines and field divisions established in the mid-nineteenth century remain clearly evident.

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McPherson's Purchase

Continuation sheet Charles County, Maryland Item number 8 Page 7

HISTORY AND SUPPORT:

McPherson's Purchase as it exists today incorporates the original McPherson's Purchase tract of 116 acres as well as small portions of additional contiguous lands acquired by members of the McPherson family in the nineteenth century.

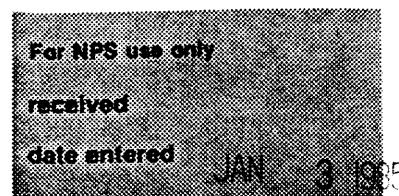
The McPherson family, prominent participants in Charles County's social, political and agricultural life during the late-eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, first arrived in this area in the mid-eighteenth century, acquiring lands in this locality as early as 1749. William McPherson, progenitor of the branch of the McPherson family that owned and occupied McPherson's Purchase, died in 1752. From his will it is apparent that he settled on a tract immediately south and adjacent to McPherson's Purchase, referring in his will to the 168 acres he owned as "the land on which I now dwell." This property, made up of two tracts called "Part of Brierwood" and "Dalreadie" he bequeathed to his wife Barbara for the duration of her single life and on her death or remarriage to his son, William.¹ An inventory made of William Sr.'s estate records a relatively modest amount of personality, including six slaves and one servant.² He did, however, own as much as 455 acres of land in this immediate area and several additional large tracts located in other parts of the county.

On the death of his mother Barbara, William McPherson, Jr. assumed ownership of his father's home plantation, adding and selling various contiguous lands before taking a patent on the 116 acres of McPherson's Purchase in 1798.³ In the 1790 census records of Charles County William McPherson is recorded as the owner of 22 slaves.⁴ By the time of his death in 1809 he owned 18 slaves and left a personal estate valued at \$4,676.68.⁵ In his will William left the McPherson's Purchase tract of 116 acres, together with a smaller adjacent and unnamed piece of land on the east side of Old Woman's Run, to his son Thomas. To his son William, a minor, he left "all (the) remaining part of my dwelling plantation, reserving a place in my present Mansion House for my daughters Harriet McPherson and Mary McPherson and my sister Catherine McPherson for (their) single lives."⁶ It is evident from this that William McPherson Jr. resided on the estate left to him by his father in 1752 and that the McPherson's Purchase tract, though part of his plantation, was a separate parcel.

It was Thomas McPherson who was undoubtedly responsible for the development of McPherson's Purchase as a working farmstead, and it appears likely that he was the first of his family to actually occupy the property. By the time of his death in 1849, Thomas McPherson owned 26 slaves and a large amount of livestock which together with his household furnishings and farm equipment was valued at \$8,721.73.⁷ Thomas McPherson left as heirs one son, Benjamin William Benson McPherson, and four daughters. To his son he left "the dwelling plantation whereon I now live called McPherson's Purchase containing 116 acres.... and all other lands I possess, reserving a home in my present dwelling house for my four daughters." He further stipulated that his daughters were to have

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HISTORY AND SUPPORT (continued)

full use of the dwelling house during their single lives and that they were to be furnished with firewood and a one acre garden plot. In addition to all of his father's real estate Benjamin was left one "negro (and) her increase, one bed and furniture, my two guns and no more." To his daughters Thomas left a number of slaves and the "rest and residue of my property not disposed of."⁸

Benjamin W. B. McPherson continued farming the property, expanding it to the east to include a 170 acre tract acquired in 1869 and an additional 69 acres he bought in 1870.⁹ It was probably during Benjamin's tenure of ownership that many of the later buildings, including the existing house, were constructed. The inventory of his personal estate, dated August 3, 1912, records assets valued at \$32,707.20, excluding the 355 acre farm. Included in the listing of farm equipment is "1 Screw Prize" that was appraised at \$35.00.

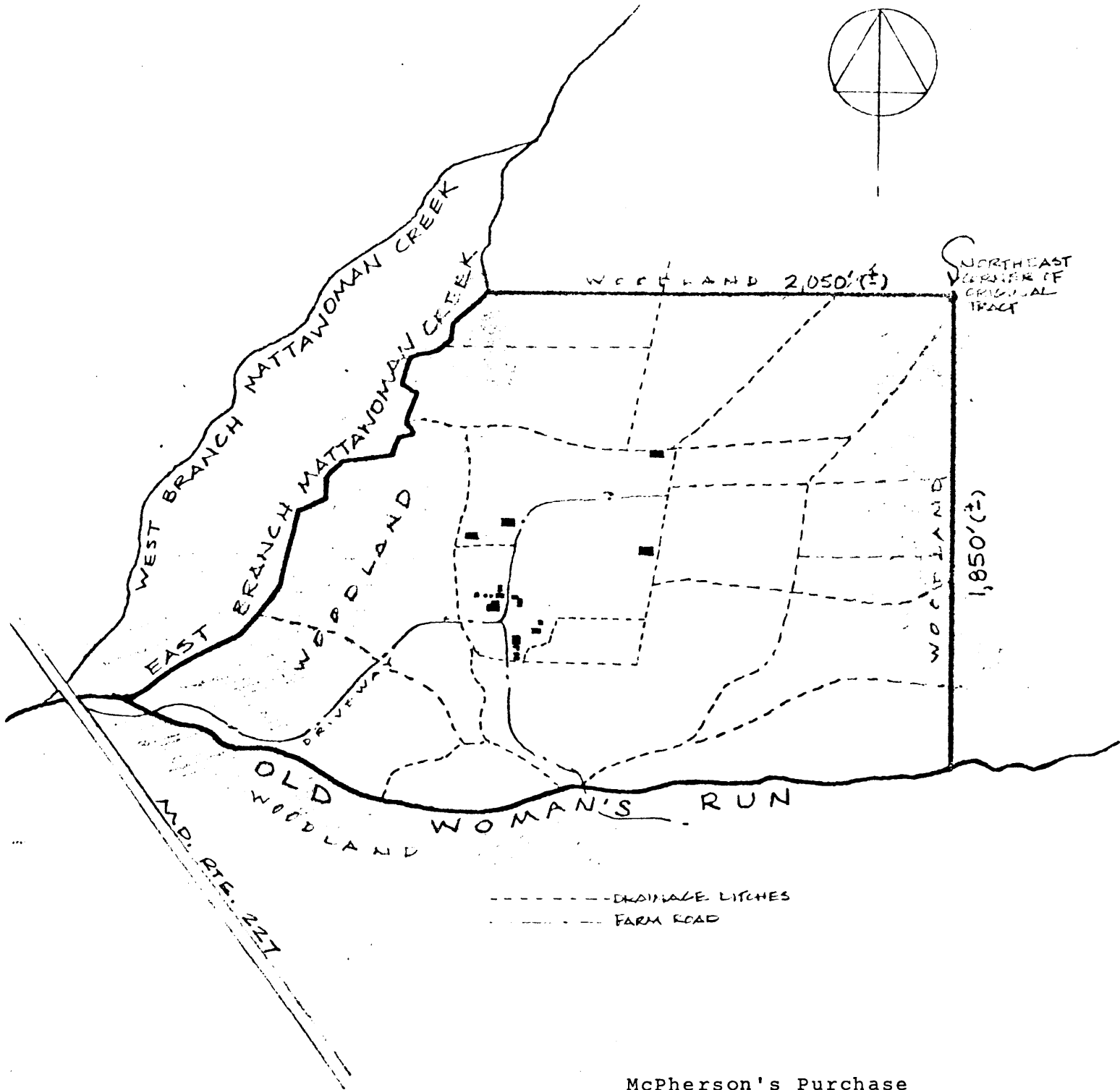
Benjamin McPherson died intestate, leaving as heirs two sons and one daughter. In late 1912 ownership of McPherson's Purchase was transferred to Edwin A. T. McPherson, one of Benjamin's sons, by the other two heirs, but the property subsequently reverted back to William and Jane McPherson at Edwin's death.¹¹ In 1949 the farm, then reduced to 291 acres, was sold out of the McPherson family.

From 1951 to 1983 the farm was owned by James Holman. Holman made few improvements to the property and by the time of his death it had fallen into general disrepair. Currently, however, significant efforts are underway by the present owners to completely renovate the farm, including extensive rehabilitation of the house and farm buildings and the clearing of overgrown fields, ditches and tree lines.

Notes

1. Wills: Liber AC#4, folio 355.*
2. Inventories and Accounts, 1735-1752, folio 533.
3. Patents: Liber IC#M, folio 447. Hall of Records, Annapolis, MD.
4. Brown, Margaret Klaphor, History of Charles County, Maryland.
La Plata, Maryland. 1958. Pp. 188, 189.
5. Inventories and Accounts, 1808-1812, folios 83, 517.
6. Wills: Liber HB#13, folio 15.
7. Inventories. 1849-1852, folios 68, 263.
8. Wills: Liber DJ#16, folio 484.
9. Deeds: Liber GAH#2, folios 401, 446.*
10. Inventories: Liber CHP, folio 583.
11. Deeds: Liber HCC#25, folio 616.

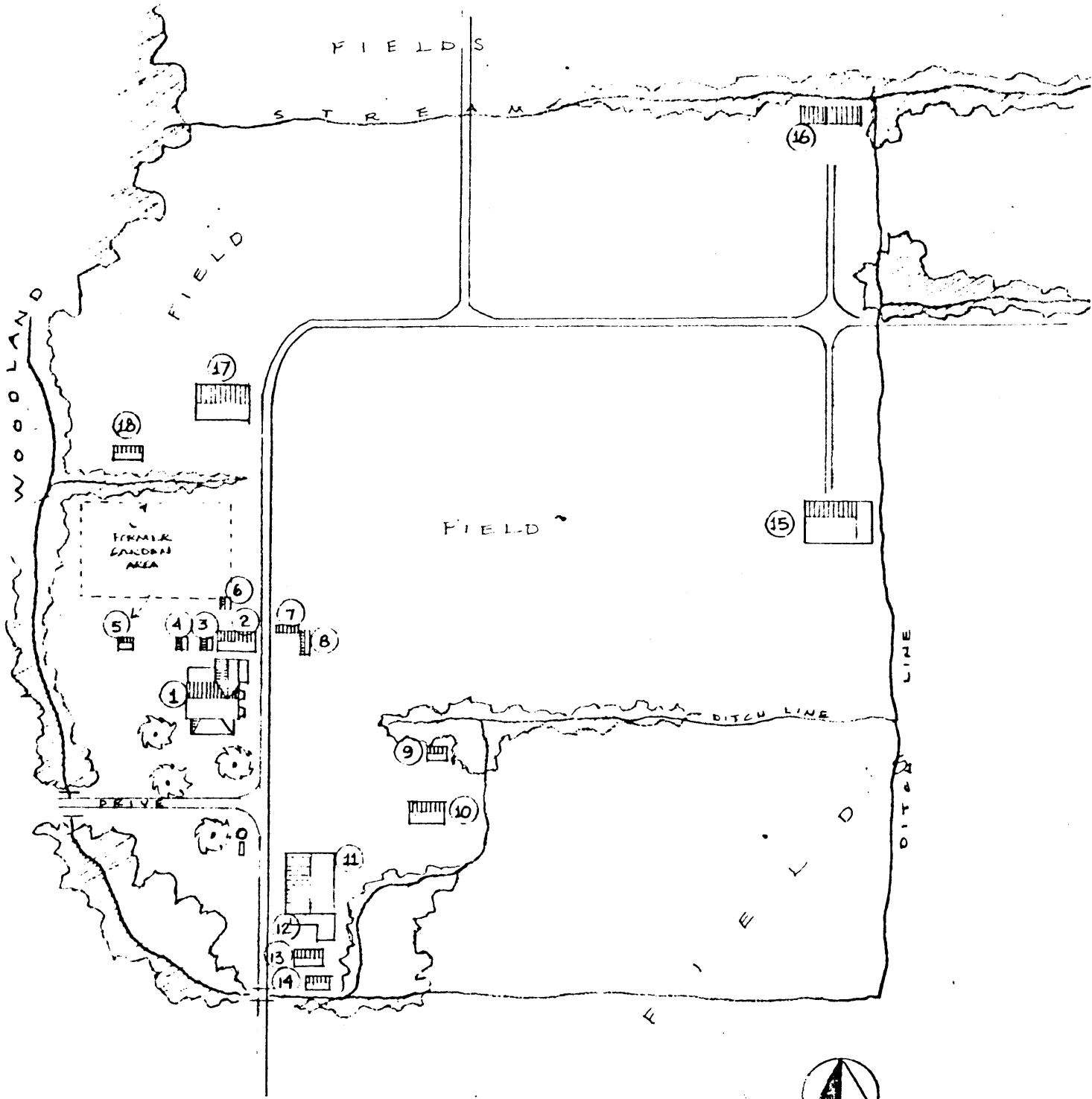
* All probate records and deeds referenced above located at the Register of Wills and County Clerk's offices, Charles County, Maryland.



McPherson's Purchase

Charles County, Maryland

sketch map No. 1



McPherson's Purchase
 Charles County, Maryland
 sketch map No. 2