

PH0031372

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE: Maryland  
 COUNTY: Calvert  
 FOR NPS USE ONLY  
 ENTRY DATE: OCT 9 1974

1. NAME  
 COMMON: Preston-on-the-Patuxent  
 AND/OR HISTORIC:

2. LOCATION  
 STREET AND NUMBER: N of Johnstown off Terminus of Turner Road, 1/2 mile Southeast of Sollers Mill Rd.  
 CITY OR TOWN: Lusby Johnstown vicinity CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT: First  
 STATE: Maryland CODE: 24 COUNTY: Calvert CODE: 009

3. CLASSIFICATION

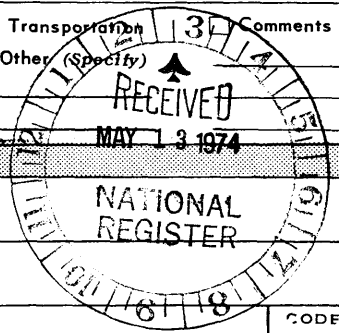
CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input type="checkbox"/> District <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Structure <input type="checkbox"/> Object	<input type="checkbox"/> Public <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both	Public Acquisition: <input type="checkbox"/> In Process <input type="checkbox"/> Being Considered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress
PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)			
<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial <input type="checkbox"/> Educational <input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> Government <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial <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 (Specify)

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY  
 OWNER'S NAME: Dr. John H. Cumberland  
 STREET AND NUMBER: 4200 Clagett Road  
 CITY OR TOWN: Hyattsville STATE: Maryland CODE: 24

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION  
 COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.: Calvert County Courthouse  
 STREET AND NUMBER:  
 CITY OR TOWN: Prince Frederick STATE: Maryland CODE: 24

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS  
 TITLE OF SURVEY: Maryland Historical Trust-St. Mary's City Commission Summer Survey of Tidewater Maryland Architecture  
 DATE OF SURVEY: 1973  Federal  State  County  Local  
 DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS: St. Mary's City Commission  
 STREET AND NUMBER:  
 CITY OR TOWN: St. Mary's City STATE: Maryland CODE: 24

SEE INSTRUCTIONS



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7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION	(Check One)					
	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> Ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> Unexposed
	(Check One)			(Check One)		
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Altered	<input type="checkbox"/> Unaltered	<input type="checkbox"/> Moved	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Original Site		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

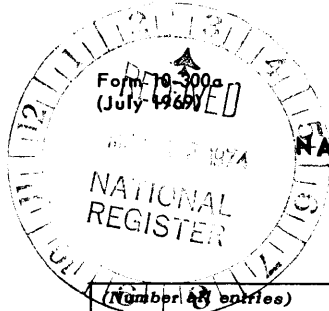
Preston-on-the-Patuxent is located at the terminus of Turner Road, one-half mile south of Appeal Sollers Road, Lusby, Calvert County. Attractively situated overlooking the Patuxent River, it is a modest one and one-half story brick house that has had several later additions made to it.

The main part of the house, the earliest section still standing, faces southwest. Its principal facade is five bays wide and there are three pedimented dormer windows on the front roof slope. The four windows of the first floor, all slightly altered from their original dimensions, have flat arches of stretcher brick, nine over six doublehung sash, and surrounds that stylistically date from about the mid-eighteenth century. The main entrance door occupies a central position on the facade and was originally sheltered by a brick, one-story, pedimented porch that is believed to have been removed around the middle of the nineteenth century; the broken brick on the facing of the wall is still discernable, as is the porch ceiling line. (This porch is similar to that which once existed at "Parrott's Cage," further up-river from Preston-on-the-Patuxent, and also in Calvert County). The doorway, with a molded surround identical to those of the windows, frames an eight panel double door. At the base of the house is an eleven course watertable with an upper course of quarter round brick. Below each of the two end windows is a small wood barred cellar window. Fronting the main entrance is a brick stoop of relatively recent construction. The three dormers appear to be later additions, possibly introduced as late as a 1903 "restoration" of the house by Hulbert Footner. This opinion is based primarily on the fact that the original roof framing did not allow a proper spacing of the rafters on which dormers could be positioned. There are no marks on the rafters excepting those contemporary to the existing windows and the half rafters that were inserted to provide for their support date from this same period. At each end of the roof ridge are single enclosed chimneys and the eaves cornice is boxed and has double ogee and beaded moldings.

Although the brick of the facade is laid in Flemish bond, the end and rear walls are of common bond. Each of the end walls are broken by two small closet windows at the first floor and two smaller windows within the attic gable. The rear wall originally had but one opening, a door located toward the southeast end of the wall, that was later changed to a window. The lack of any other pre-1903 openings on this wall strongly suggests that there may have been an extension to the house in this area, probably one of frame construction, which the existing 1917 additions replaced.

(See Continuation Sheet #1)

SEE INSTRUCTIONS



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
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(Continuation Sheet) #1

STATE Maryland	
COUNTY Calvert	
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ENTRY NUMBER	DATE
	OCT 9 1974

(Number of entries)

#7 Description (Continued)

The first floor plan initially consisted of a hall and parlor, divided by what is believed to have been a paneled partition wall. Both of the two rooms had paneled outside end walls with expansive fireplace openings, each chimney flanked by a small closet and an enclosed stair. The walls may have also been paneled or wainscoted, most probably the latter. When Preston-on-the-Patuxent was renovated by Footner the partition wall between the hall and parlor was removed, as was the paneling on the two fireplace walls. The woodwork was then reworked to provide for fully paneled side walls. Both of the chimneys were exposed and their coarse brickwork left untreated. The closets and shelves were removed, although evidence of both remain clearly identifiable. The two stairs were replaced by a single stair of the same basic design which is positioned in the northeast corner of the now single large room. In the attic are two rooms and a short hall. These attic rooms retain a mixture of early and mid-nineteenth century trim and hardware.

There is a full cellar beneath the house, revealing massive summers, tie beams, and joists beneath the first floor. A similar use of unusually large framing members is seen in the attic where six by six inch principal rafters separate the common rafters into sets of four.

The two-part rear wing of the house, giving it its present ell shaped plan, was built by Footner about 1917. Both their interior and exterior plans harmonize well with the basic plan of the earlier part of the structure. The wing contains a dining room, kitchen, bedrooms, and baths.

While Preston-on-the-Patuxent has a traditional construction date of circa 1651, there is no structural evidence to indicate a date earlier than about 1725. Judging from a comparison of its various construction features and detail with other similar houses in the region, a probable date of the second quarter of the eighteenth century appears more realistic.

There is a possibility that all or part of the brick shell may be earlier than the structural framing--as at Ocean Hall in St. Mary's County--but because the framing members so closely relate to the construction features of the brick walls it appears highly unlikely. Nevertheless, the plan of Preston-on-the-Patuxent is of interest, particularly in regard to the original front porch, and provides a useful example for the study of Tidewater Maryland vernacular architecture.

**SIGNIFICANCE**

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- |   |                                       |  |  |
|---|---------------------------------------|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pre-Columbian; | <input type="checkbox"/> 16th Century | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 18th Century | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 20th Century |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 15th Century   | <input type="checkbox"/> 17th Century | <input type="checkbox"/> 19th Century            |  |

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known)

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- |  |   |   |  |
|--|---|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal              | <input type="checkbox"/> Education              | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Political | <input type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric             | <input type="checkbox"/> Engineering            | <input type="checkbox"/> Religion/Philosophy  | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Historic                | <input type="checkbox"/> Industry               | <input type="checkbox"/> Science              | _____                                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture             | <input type="checkbox"/> Invention              | <input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture            | _____                                    |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Social/Humanitarian  | _____                                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Art                     | <input type="checkbox"/> Literature             | <input type="checkbox"/> Theater              | _____                                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Commerce                | <input type="checkbox"/> Military               | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation       | _____                                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communications          | <input type="checkbox"/> Music                  |   |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation            |   |   |  |

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Preston-on-the-Patuxent is popularly, if erroneously, known as the seat of the government of Maryland from 1654 to 1657 during the Puritan regime. The extant structure holds no architectural evidence to indicate that it dates to the mid-seventeenth century. However, documentation has been uncovered which places the structure in the second quarter of the eighteenth century making the building an important example of the type of dwelling erected by Maryland's affluent tobacco planters. Documentation of any thesis about the property is difficult owing to the absence of Calvert County records prior to the 1870's. Provincial records which were kept on the capital do provide some source material prior to 1776.

The belief that Preston-on-the-Patuxent was the "capitol" comes from evidence that the Council, the Assembly and the Provincial Court met "at Patuxent" in the 1650's. Richard Preston, a participant in each of the three bodies, most probably hosted their meetings in his dwelling located near the Patuxent River. Preston's prominence in the Puritan community propelled him to a position of leadership of the government. After the restoration of the Calverts (1657-1658) Preston continued his political career as a member of the assembly. He changed his religious beliefs becoming a Quaker. George Fox purportedly visited Preston "at Patuxent." Preston died in 1669 leaving his extensive landholdings to his grandson Samuel Preston, who abandoned his Maryland inheritance for Pennsylvania where he became a mayor of Philadelphia.

By the 1680's Preston, the four hundred<sup>acre</sup> tract containing Richard Preston's dwelling, belonged to Nathaniel Ashcomb who lived elsewhere. After Ashcomb died (1687) his daughter and son-in-law Alexander Parran became the owners. Parran's inventory of 1729 describes a house similar to the configuration of Preston-on-the-Patuxent. Two decades later Young Parran was the owner of the property; after his death in 1772 his son Richard Parran inherited Preston.

(See Continuation Sheet #2)

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

**9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES**

Albert, Major J. J. and Major J. Kearny. "Map of the Patuxent and St. Mary's Rivers, Maryland." Surveyed 1824. Issue 1837.

Assessments of 1783. Calvert County.

Calvert County Land Records.

Debt Books. Calvert County.

Probate Records (Wills, Inventories, Accounts, Testamentary Papers).

(See Continuation Sheet No. 3)

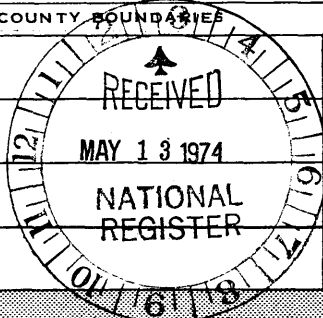
**10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA**

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY			O R	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES		
CORNER	LATITUDE	LONGITUDE		LATITUDE	LONGITUDE	
	Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds		Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds	
NW	38 ° 22 ' 25"	76 ° 29 ' 15"				
NE	38 ° 22 ' 28"	76 ° 28 ' 55"				
SE	38 ° 22 ' 17"	76 ° 28 ' 52"				
SW	38 ° 22 ' 13"	76 ° 29 ' 13"				

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: 52 acres

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

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE



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H/3 E 3702800

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**11. FORM PREPARED BY**

NAME AND TITLE: sh  
 Nancy Miller, Historian, and J. Richard Rivoire, Field Surveyor

ORGANIZATION: Maryland Historical Trust DATE: 1/74

STREET AND NUMBER: 2525 Riva Road

CITY OR TOWN: Annapolis STATE: Maryland 21401 CODE: 24

**12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION**

As the designated State Liaison 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. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

National  State  Local

Name Orlando Ridout IV  
 Orlando Ridout, IV

Title State Historic Preservation Officer

Date May 3, 1974

**NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION**

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

AR Wattersen  
 Director, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date 10/9/74

ATTEST:  
Charles A. [Signature]  
 Keeper of The National Register

Date 10.8.74

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
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(Continuation Sheet) # 2

STATE	Maryland	
COUNTY	Calvert	
FOR NPS USE ONLY		
ENTRY NUMBER		DATE
		OCT 9 1974

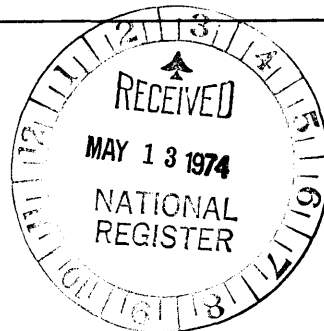
(Number all entries)

#8  
Significance (Continued)

The Parran family came to Calvert County at the beginning of the eighteenth century. Their prominence centers in local affairs. Young Parran was a county judge. Richard Parran served as a justice of the peace and a judge of the orphans' court; he participated in the administration of county affairs during the Revolution.

The history of Preston-on-the-Patuxent becomes more obscure in the nineteenth century. An 1827 map indicates that someone named Gant lived in the house. The transfer from the Parrans is usually explained locally through the marriage of Richard Parran's daughter to John Gant. The Gant family remained at the house for half a century.

For an equal period of time in the present century Hulbert Footner owned the house. An author, Footner wrote about his house and its environs in a book entitled Charles' Gift. Footner named the house Charles' Gift confusing the Patuxent River property with a tract of land Richard Preston owned on the Chesapeake Bay. Just as Footner altered the history of the house to suit his view of seventeenth century Maryland, so he altered the structure itself. He removed the partition in order to create the environment in which he believed Richard Preston hosted the Puritan government. Footner's approach to seventeenth century Maryland as evidenced in his book and his alterations to the structure illustrate the early twentieth century's view of our beginnings. His contemporary preservationists would have supported Footner's romantic description of the council meetings at Preston-on-the-Patuxent with both fireplaces blazing. Although such an approach to historic structures is laughable today, it represents the spirit in which the preservation movement began.



NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Continuation Sheet) #3

STATE Maryland	
COUNTY Calvert	
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ENTRY NUMBER	DATE
	OCT 9 1974

(Number all entries)

#9 Major Bibliographical References (Continued)

Provincial Court Deeds.  
Rent Rolls. Calvert County.

Secondary Sources:

Briscoe, Betty Worthington. Know Your County. 1954.  
Files of the Maryland Historical Trust, Annapolis, Maryland.  
Footner, Hulbert. Charles' Gift A Salute A Maryland House of  
1650. New York: Harper and Brothers, 1939.  
Stein, Charles Francis. History of Calvert County. n.p.: the  
Author and Calvert County Historical Society. 1960.

