

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**DATA SHEET**

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED APR 26 1977

DATE ENTERED MAR 29 1978

**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 ~~XX~~  
YARMOUTH

AND/OR COMMON  
White House Farm

**LOCATION**

STREET & NUMBER  
Bestpitch Ferry Road, 2.2 miles south

of Bucktown  
NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN  
Cambridge

XX VICINITY OF

First

STATE  
Maryland

CODE  
24

COUNTY  
Dorchester

CODE  
019

*Do not PUBLISH (see note)*

**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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	<b>PUBLIC ACQUISITION</b>	<b>ACCESSIBLE</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL
			<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY
			<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:

**OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME  
Mr. Jeffrey Phillips Williamson

STREET & NUMBER  
P.O. Box 428

CITY, TOWN  
Cambridge

X VICINITY OF

STATE  
Maryland 21613

**LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.  
Dorchester County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER  
High Street

CITY, TOWN  
Cambridge

STATE  
Maryland 21613

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE

DATE

FEDERAL  STATE  COUNTY  LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE

# 7 DESCRIPTION

## CONDITION

EXCELLENT                       DETERIORATED  
 GOOD                                 RUINS  
 FAIR                                  UNEXPOSED

## CHECK ONE

UNALTERED  
 ALTERED

## CHECK ONE

ORIGINAL SITE  
 MOVED      DATE \_\_\_\_\_

### DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Yarmouth is situated in fields on the east side of Bestpitch Ferry Road, 2.2 miles southeast of Buchtown in Dorchester County, Maryland. It is a five-bay long and two-bay deep, two-story brick structure built above a high basement. All walls are laid in Flemish bond above the chamfered water table with English bond below. There are segmental arches above the basement windows while the arches of the principal facades are segmental on the underside and flat on the top, similar to Brice House, Annapolis. There is a two brick deep string course at second floor level. The windows are replacements and have 6/9 sash on the first story and 6/6 on the second. The large wood cove cornice appears original and is comparable to the cornice on Pemberton Hall, Wicomico County, and on the Ringgold and Customs Houses in Chestertown, all of which were built in the 1740's.

A portico in front of the central entrance dates from the restoration, as does the eight-panel door and frame which had to be replaced after a fire which damaged the door and part of the interior hall. On the east gable is a cellar bulkhead. Facing the Transquaking River, the north side has only one bay west of the center door with two on the east side. The first story window was originally wider and probably was fitted with 12/8 sash. It now has the same size window as the others. A door on the west gable of the house formerly led to the kitchen which is no longer standing. Two large chimneys rise from within the gables in the usual fashion.

Yarmouth's floor plan has no parallel in Dorchester with the possible exception of LaGrange in Cambridge which has been drastically altered over its lifetime. It is not dissimilar to Beckford, Somerset County, but considerably smaller in scale, and Radcliffe Manor, Talbot County.

The southern half of the house consists of a stair hall in the center with a room on the east (now kitchen) and a smaller room on the west which is accessible only from the dining room. On the north side of the building is the living room, the larger of the two, and the dining room which is accessible from beneath the stair. Each of the four rooms has diagonal fireplaces, the two north rooms also have raised panel chimney breasts. The living room chimney breast has two large horizontal panels flanked by pilasters and double crossette trim around the three-centered arched fireplace. Three windows in this room have paneled window jambs. The dining room has paneling and trim like the living room, lacking the pilasters, and the kitchen has paneling with bolection molding around the fireplace.

The stair ascends 270 degrees to the second story. It has an open string balustrade with turned newels and balusters and paneled soffits.

See continuation sheet #1

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The second story has three bedrooms and bath with a corridor down the center of the house. Two of the rooms have small fireplaces and most have a very wide beaded board chairrail. Two flights continue to the attic which is divided into two finished rooms and bath.

A common system of rafters was used for the construction of the roof.

The cellar is divided into two parts by the brick wall which extends to the second floor. The arch supports for the corner fireplaces are clearly visible. Because of structural failure in the east gable, the entire wall had to be dismantled and reconstructed, including the chimneys. Walls were underpinned and the floor lowered to make more head room for the air conditioning system.

Also on the property is a very good 18th century granary with catslide roof. It stands several feet above the ground on brick piers.

# 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input 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

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Known also as White House Farm, Brick House Farm and Eccleston's Hill, Yarmouth is the single most important dwelling existing in Dorchester County from the second quarter of the 18th century. It is noted for the extent of its intact original detail, specifically the interior woodwork. Paneled chimney breasts and mantels remain on the first floor and mantels and chairrail on the second. The original stair is extant, and on the exterior the original cove cornice. In addition Yarmouth has a floor plan not found elsewhere in the county, with one possible, but greatly altered, exception. (See description).

In 1683 the Maryland legislature directed the founding of a number of new towns on convenient sites throughout the province, to increase the number of official ports of entry for goods arriving in Maryland. Two of these were to be located in Dorchester County, one near present-day Madison and the other "On Travers's Land, on the West Side of the North-West Branch of Transquaquin River." By 1706 this latter town had come to be known as Little Yarmouth, but it appears to have been a town in name only; when the new towns legislation was repealed in 1715, Little Yarmouth was hardly more than a river landing with a small store.

During the years 1700 to 1705, much of the land surrounding the site of Little Yarmouth was purchased by a relative newcomer to Dorchester County. Hugh Eccleston, it is believed, hailed from Buckinghamshire in England; he arrived in Maryland about 1650, and by 1692 had become Clerk of Dorchester County, a post which he held for eighteen years. Eccleston attained considerable wealth and social prominence in the county, taking part in many land transactions. In 1695 he patented "Eccleston's Hill," the 200-acre tract that was to become the core of his large plantation on the Transquaquin River. To this he added by patent, "Retaliacion," 940 acres, in 1700, and "Merchants Goodwill," 96 acres, in 1706. In addition he made several purchases of existing tracts: "Richardsons Purchase," 470 acres, and "Mullikins Green," 200 acres, in 1700, and 50 acres, part of "Andersons Neck," in 1705. At the time of his death, Eccleston also owned a 400-acre tract called "Utopea," although there is no record of how he obtained it.

Hugh Eccleston retired from his position as County Clerk in 1709, and surprised his friends and colleagues by leaving Cambridge, where he had recently built a house, in order to live full-time on his plantation.

See continuation sheet #2

# 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Forman H. Chandlee. Early Manor and Plantation Houses of Maryland.  
 Easton, Maryland: by the Author, 1934.  
 Interview with Mr. Jeffrey P. Williamson, owner.  
 Jones, Elias. New Revised History of Dorchester County, Maryland.  
 Cambridge, Md.: Tidewater Publishers, 1966.  
 Laskowski Papers, 1955.

(See continuation sheet#4)

# 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 30 acres

UTM REFERENCES

A	1, 8	412-680	4254	412-580	4254-260
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING	ZONE	NORTHING
C	1, 8	425467	041271010	425467	041271010
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING	ZONE	NORTHING
D	1, 8	425423	041271610	425423	041271610
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING	ZONE	NORTHING

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION  
412-230 4254-440 412-420 4254

Beginning at a point on the south shore of the Transquaking River 600 feet N.W. of Yarmouth, then following the river bank east 1,000 feet, then moving 1,400 feet S.S.W to a point, then N.W. 1,300 feet (crossing the driveway) to a point, then N.E. 1,200 feet to the point of the beginning.

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

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

# 11 FORM PREPARED BY

njm

NAME / TITLE Michael Bourne, Architectural Consultant/  
 Randolph M. Cornell, Summer Research Historian

ORGANIZATION Maryland Historical Trust DATE August 1976

STREET & NUMBER 21 State Circle TELEPHONE 267-1438

CITY OR TOWN Annapolis STATE Maryland 21401

# 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

*John W. Pearce* 4/21/77  
 SHPO DATE

TITLE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHAEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION	KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER
ATTEST: <i>Walter C. Cole</i>	DATE <u>3 29 78</u>
KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER	DATE <u>3 26 78</u>

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He died two years later. His will, executed November 25, 1710, and probated the following April, recorded several bequests to his large family. Sons Hugh, Jr., John and Thomas, the latter still a minor, were designated Eccleston's executors. Hugh received the "Dwelling plantation" -- presumably "Ecclestons Hill" and "Richardsons Purchase" -- and two houses and lots in Cambridge. John was given "Millintons" or "Mullikins Green" and Eccleston's part of "Andersons Neck," with the provision that Thomas be deeded half of the property upon attaining his majority. The remainder of his holdings Eccleston divided among his five daughters. No provision was made in the will for the disposal of Eccleston's personal estate which was valued after his death at £ 488.15.06 Sterling. Consisting primarily of livestock and crops, slaves, farm implements and household furnishings, these articles were presumably included in the bequests to Hugh Eccleston, Jr.

As the eldest son, Hugh Eccleston, Jr., who was Town Clerk of Cambridge, assumed the administration of his father's estate. He appears to have done his job poorly, however, for his brothers alleged that he squandered their patrimony and refused to settle their father's just debts. After Hugh's death in 1718, John and Thomas filed suit to recover their property and to prevent his widow from continuing to enjoy their rightful assets. Mary Skinner Eccleston remarried soon after his husband's death; in 1722 she and her second husband, Francis Allen, resigned to John Eccleston all right of "Dower, Title, Interest, Claim and Demand" in lands owned by Hugh Eccleston, Jr., in return for the sum of 3500 pounds of tobacco. Thomas Eccleston appears to have died in 1722, since he was no longer mentioned after the suit was filed.

In this way John Eccleston came into possession of practically all of his father's holdings on the Transquakin River. He seems to have pursued agriculture as his sole occupation, and he attained the rank of colonel in the local militia. To his patrimony, Eccleston added several land acquisitions of his own. He purchased "Andersons Place," 353 acres, and patented in 1734 "Ecclestons Prevention," 50 acres, and "Slipe," 60 acres. In 1744 these tracts, together with "Ecclestons Hill" and "Richardsons Purchase," were resurveyed and patented by Eccleston as a tract of 995 acres called "Ecclestons Regulation." The property remained in the Eccleston family until 1829 when John Donovan, trustee for the estate of Dr. John Eccleston, sold "Ecclestons Regulation" to Caleb Ross. Ross again resurveyed the tract and changed its name to "Yarmouth." The house and land changed hands more than ten times between 1829 and 1969 when Yarmouth was pur-

See continuation sheet #3

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chased by Mr. Jeffrey P. Williamson, the present owner. Mr. Williamson has done considerable research into the history of Yarmouth and of the Eccleston family, and has carried out a thorough restoration.

The actual builder of this handsome brick mansion, however, remains a mystery. There is no known written record that would shed light on the building or early history of Yarmouth; we are forced, therefore, to rely on architectural evidence and historical reasoning. Certain of the details -- in particular, the wooden cove cornice -- seems to place Yarmouth in the second quarter of the eighteenth century. Its erection is generally ascribed to John Eccleston, and dated in the late 1720's or 30's, the time when Eccleston was taking personal charge of his late father's plantation and increasing his own holdings. The above mentioned cornice is very similar to three 1740's period houses on the shore (see description). From this and other architectural evidence, it seems likely that Yarmouth was constructed in the second quarter of the 18th century, possibly the 1740's.

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Works Progress Administration Writers Program. Maryland: A Guide to the Old Line State. New York: Oxford University Press, 1941.

Maryland Hall of Records. Land and Probate Records of Dorchester County.

Reps, John. Tidewater Towns. Williamsburg, Va.: Historic Williamsburg, Inc. 1966.