

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 Webster's Forest

and/or common Webster's Forest

2. Location

street & number 500 Asbury Road, n/a not for publication

city, town Churchville vic. X vicinity of congressional district

state Maryland code 24 county Harford code 025

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> religious
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> not applicable	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name Mr. and Mrs. William Cass

street & number 500 Asbury Road

city, town Churchville n/a vicinity of state Maryland 21028

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Harford County Courthouse

street & number

city, town Bel Air state Maryland 21014

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Maryland Historical Trust

Historic Sites Inventory has this property been determined eligible? ___ yes no

date 1976 ___ federal state ___ county ___ local

depository for survey records Maryland Historical Trust, 21 State Circle

city, town Annapolis state Maryland 21401

7. Description

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

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

DESCRIPTION SUMMARY:

Facing south on the south side of Asbury Road near Churchville in Harford County, Maryland, Webster's Forest is a stone house constructed in two sections. The eastern section is the older, dating prior to 1800. It stands three bays wide, one and a half stories tall above a high basement, with a gambrel roof. Its interior exhibits a side-hall plan, two rooms deep, with a corner fireplace in each room. Despite severe damage by fire in 1966, exterior walls, chimney, floor structures, most of the flooring, and portions of the north cornice of this section remain original. An exterior basement entrance retains its original oak strap hinges. Original interior detailing includes exposed second floor joists with ovolo-planed edges, and second-story floorboards beaded on their undersides. An early 19th century fireplace surround survives in one of the second-floor rooms. The two-bay, gable-roofed west addition appears to date from the second quarter of the 19th century; due to falling grade, its ground story is at the same level as the basement of the east section, and its two upper stories coincide with the two floors of the older part. The ground story retains a wide cooking fireplace which features an iron crane and "beehive" oven. Above the kitchen, the dining room on the first floor retains virtually all its original details, including paneled doors flanking the chimney, opening into a china closet and former dumbwaiter. Original architrave trim and fireplace surround also survive. On the second floor, two original doors remain.

GENERAL DESCRIPTION

Located on the southwest side of Asbury Road 1,800 feet north of its intersection with Maryland Route 136 is Webster's Forest, a stone house of two principal sections. The principal facade faces southeast, hereinafter, for simplicity in description, called south. The older section is the easterly and it is stuccoed, one and one-half stories in height above a high basement, with a steep gambrel roof and a narrow porch across its south front. The addition to the west is three stories in height with a gable roof; due to falling grade, its first story is at the same elevation as the basement of the older section and the upper two stories are at approximately the same elevations as the two floors of the older section.

The oldest section of Webster's Forest traditionally dates from the late 17th century; remaining visible original elements indicate construction prior to 1800.

The older section is expressed as three bays in length on its south facade, two on its north, the westerly bay of each facade contains an entrance and the westerly bay is, itself, an early addition (in two different stages, as described below) and only its south wall is of stone, the other two walls being of frame construction. The easterly bays contain two rooms with corner fireplaces and the westerly bay is a side hall containing an open staircase, together creating a typical side-hall plan two rooms in depth. The original stone walls surround

8. Significance

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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/
<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 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; ca. 1835 **Builder/Architect** unknown

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

SIGNIFICANCE SUMMARY

Webster's Forest is significant for its architecture, which reflects the combined influence of disparate vernacular traditions. The gambrel-roofed form of the older section is generally associated with the 18th century architecture of the Tidewater region in Maryland, and is highly unusual in Piedmont Harford County. The house incorporates elements of the architectural tradition of nearby southeastern Pennsylvania in its corner fireplace, beehive oven, fine stonework, and siting against a partially-excavated earthen bank. Documentary and architectural evidence tends to confirm local tradition that the gambrel-roofed section of Webster's Forest is the earliest building extant in Harford County. The beehive oven in the ca. 1835-1850 section is unique in the county. Despite extensive damage by fire in 1966, the house retains considerable integrity, exhibiting numerous significant architectural features including its original form, exterior walls, fireplaces and oven, floor framing, much of its flooring, and trim - particularly in the dining room on the second floor of the gable-roofed section. Replacement work which followed the fire, while not a precise restoration, remains compatible with the period and style of the building..

HISTORY AND SUPPORT

The tract, Webster's Forest, was patented in 1704 by John Webster (1667-1753). (DD5/213, 214; PL2/11). The first of Harford County's Webster family to settle here, he first patented a tract in the area in 1696. He belonged to Bush River Friends Meeting, and was appointed a delegate to the Nottingham Monthly Meeting in 1730. Webster testified in 1740 when the commissioners appointed to resolve the boundary dispute between Pennsylvania and Maryland met in nearby Joppa. It was probably this John Webster who built the gambrel-roofed section of Webster's Forest.

In his will, Webster left to his son, Samuel, "all that parcel called Webster's Forest and the tracts called Websters Enlargement and Howards Forest." (29-374).

Samuel Webster (1710-1786) was the tobacco inspector at Joppa, an important and well-paid office. In the 1783 Tax Assessment for Harford County, Harford Upper Hundred, he is listed as the owner of 50 acres of Webster's Forest. The soil quality was poor, and he owned no slaves, In his will 130 acres of Webster's Forest were bequeathed to his son, Richard (AJ/197).

9. Major Bibliographical Reference

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SEE CONTINUATION SHEET #5

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property approximately 2.3 acres

Quadrangle name Bel Air, Maryland

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

UMT References

A	<u>1</u> <u>8</u>	<u>3</u> <u>9</u> <u>1</u> <u>3</u> <u>7</u> <u>0</u>	<u>4</u> <u>3</u> <u>7</u> <u>7</u> <u>5</u> <u>0</u> <u>0</u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing

B			
	Zone	Easting	Northing

C			
	Zone	Easting	Northing

D			
	Zone	Easting	Northing

E			
	Zone	Easting	Northing

F			
	Zone	Easting	Northing

G			
	Zone	Easting	Northing

H			
	Zone	Easting	Northing

Verbal boundary description and justification

SEE CONTINUATION SHEET #5

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

state	n/a	code	county	code
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state	code	county	code
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11. Form Prepared By

name/title James T. Wollon, Architect

organization ARCHITECT date December 1976; revised March 1983

street & number 600 Craig's Corner Road telephone 301-269-2438

city or town Havre de Grace state Maryland 21078

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 [Signature] 6- (7/27/83) date

title STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER date

For HCRS use only	
I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register	
<u>[Signature]</u> Keeper of the National Register	Entered in the National Register date <u>9/1/83</u>
Attest:	date
Chief of Registration	

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GENERAL DESCRIPTION (Continued)

the two rooms to the second floor level; the east gable is of stone but wood partitions separate the second floor rooms from the hall. Wood partitions separate the two rooms in all stories including the basement. A brick chimney rises above the peak of, and flush with, the east gable.

Together the two rooms measure, externally, approximately 20 by 32 feet; the hall bay is approximately 11 feet wide, making the total external dimensions of the older section approximately 31 by 32 feet. However, the hall bay appears to have been built in at least two stages, the southerly 22½ feet being one section, the northerly 9½ feet being the other. Sequence and significance of these two stages is undetermined. The location of a staircase, before the addition of the hall, is not indicated.

The older section was severely damaged by fire in 1966. All windows are modern as is the staircase, most interior finishes and the roof. The exterior walls, portions of the north cornice, the chimney, the floor structures and most of the flooring are original as are the basic forms (but not the details) of the replaced materials. Two shed-roofed dormers are on each side of the house; they and the windows in the stone walls throughout contain new 6/6 sash. Two small basement windows beneath the south porch were not destroyed by the fire; each window is unequally offset toward the east from the windows above; the easterly window contains a six-light sash, the westerly window a four-light sash of 8 X 10 inch panes, set in a wide plain frame.

The basement story contains a wide fireplace in the northeast corner of its south room. Exterior access is through a door in the east wall immediately south of the fireplace. A doorway opens through the stone wall into the basement beneath the hall. The partition between the south and north rooms is of pit-sawn unplanned vertical boards, attached with hand-made wrought nails. The original door has been replaced but the original oak strap hinges are preserved; the wooden pintels remain in place, chamfered and tapered for nailed attachment to the partition. First floor framing is exposed, the joists of hewn material; diagonal framing associated with the triangular chimney appears original and unchanged.

The east ends of the hewn first floor joists beneath the southerly 22½ feet of the hall are supported by a hewn girder against the stone wall which separates the rooms from the hall, indicative of this bay's being an addition; the west ends of the joists extend into the stone west foundation wall. Approximately 9½ feet south of the exterior face of the north wall is a joint in the stone west foundation wall, immediately north of which is a hewn girder, its west end supported on the foundation wall, its east end on a small stone pier against the original stone wall separating the hall from the rooms. Log joists spanning north-south extend from this girder to the north foundation wall of the hall.

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GENERAL DESCRIPTION (Continued)

An enclosed winding stairway rises from the basement to the first floor in the southwest corner of the hall. An open stairway, with an intermediate landing, all dating from ca. 1966, of stock materials, rises at the north end of the southerly section of the hall, the location of the stair which was destroyed in the 1966 fire. A hewn oak post is against the east wall of the hall, above the small stone pier in the basement as described earlier; an unused mortise remains in its west face, as though from a girt, now removed.

Modern flooring covers the original in the first story hall but the original floors remain in the two rooms. The former corner fireplace of the south room has been closed but its hearth remains. The corner fireplace in the north room is open, its stonework exposed to the ceiling. Immediately below the joists in the diagonal face of the chimney is a long shallow niche of unknown original function, approximately 48 inches long, 6 inches high and 4 inches deep. Original second floor joists are exposed in the ceilings of the two rooms, planed smooth, with an ovolo profile planed into each bottom corner. Second story floorboards are beaded on their undersides. Finishes and trim date from after the 1966 fire, all using stock elements of that period.

The second floor plan resembles the first, but as described earlier, no stone wall exists between the hall and the rooms. Like the first story, original flooring remains in the two second story rooms and modern flooring is in the hall. The northerly room has a corner fireplace, its mantel consisting of an architrave surround, plain frieze, bedmoulding and moulded shelf, appearing to date from the early 19th century. The south room has no fireplace, that original condition indicated by the unbroken floorboards and joists below.

No early framing remains in the attic.

The west addition appears to date from ca. 1835-1850. Of carefully laid stone with large roughly worked quoins and lintels, it is two bays in length, measuring approximately 21 feet square. Entrances are through the west end near the southwest corner and through the east bay of the south front. All windows are 6/6 except those of the basement story; now the south window is a 1/1 but it was originally 6/6 also and basement windows of the north side, due to rising grade are 3/3. Window and door frames are wide, with applied backbands. A shed-roofed porch extends across the basement story of the west end, sheltering the entrance and the massive brick "beehive" oven which protrudes from this wall near the northwest corner.

Internally, this wing consists of a single room in the ground and first floors, with two smaller rooms in the second. The ground floor room is a kitchen and it retains its wide fireplace, fitted with a crane for cooking; the "beehive" oven is intact north of the centered fireplace, complete with a wrought iron door. A dumb-waiter formerly rose to the first floor dining room in the recess north of the chimney. Straight-sawn ceiling joists are exposed.

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GENERAL DESCRIPTION (Continued)

The dining room in the first floor retains virtually all of its original details. Double doors open into a wide china closet south of the chimney and a single door opens to the former dumbwaiter in the northwest corner. A stepped plain separates the four flat panels from the stiles and rails of these doors, which are hung on cast-iron Baldwin Patent hinges. Architraves throughout consist of triple plains flanking the deepest one, all separated by shallow steps; plain corner blocks are at the top corners. Similarly planed pilasters support a beaded frieze in the mantel and the wide plain shelf is supported by a quarter-round bed and two scrolled brackets. The firebox is arched.

Many second floor details have been replaced but a few similar original ones remain including two doors, one with a Carpenter-type lock. All roof framing is modern.

The house is located within a landscaped and planted yard, and approached from Asbury Road by a drive lined with mature hardwoods. The landscaping provides a strong visual contrast with the open pastureland which surrounds the nominated parcel. There are no significant outbuildings on the property.

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HISTORY AND SUPPORT (Continued)

Richard Webster (1741-1824) was one of the first Methodist preachers born and trained in the United States. In 1768 he studied under Robert Strawbridge and by 1770 his home was a preaching center. Several years later Francis Asbury, well-known Methodist leader, appointed Richard Webster and another man as traveling preachers for Kent and Cecil Counties. Webster held this position until 1774 when he received his first conference appointment in Baltimore. He was later a preacher on the Chester (County, Pennsylvania) Circuit, and in 1787 he filled in for Asbury in much of his work when the latter became ill.

In Harford County, Richard Webster gave a piece of Webster's Forest at Calvary for a Methodist chapel, and also helped to pay for the construction of the church. His son later built a schoolhouse near this chapel, and Webster's or Calvary Mill was situated under the hill below the building.

In the 1798 Federal Direct Tax Assessment, Harford Upper Hundred, Richard Webster is listed as the owner of 360 acres, worth approximately \$1,200 (p. 88). On this land was one dwelling house and four outbuildings valued at \$250 (p. 32). The description was as follows (p. 10):

One dwelling house 30 by 20 feet stone,
kitchen 20 by 18 feet stone, old milk
house 12 feet square log, spring house
12 by 12 feet, corn crib 16 by 10 feet
wood.

At Richard's death, the Webster's Forest property passed to his son, Henry, termed "the lands and mansion house where I now live." (SR1).

Henry Webster (1793-1872) was the man who built the school at Calvary, by the chapel his father had begun. A farmer, he added the three-story stone section to Webster's Forest in about 1850. Henry apparently farmed well and made the land his family had owned for generations prosper. When he died in 1872, the property went to his son, William. (BHH8/306).

William Webster (1831-1914) made his living from the Harford Mutual Fire Insurance Company. His son, younger John, farmed the land well, he willed the property to the wife of his older son, Richard Henry, believing that proper. Several years after Henry's death, the farm and house were sold to John F. Joesting. The present owners are relatives of the late Mr. Joesting.

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MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

(Author unknown). Pioneers of Methodism, "Fruits of Robert Strawbridge."
(Date and publisher unknown).

Forman, Henry Chandlee, Early Manor and Plantation Houses of Maryland, 1934.

Wright, C. Milton, Our Harford Heritage, 1967.

Minutes of the Nottingham Monthly Meeting, Cecil County, Maryland, kept in
Friend's Archives at Swarthmore College Library, Swarthmore, Pennsylvania.

Records of S. George's Spesutia Church, Harford County, Maryland.

The Pennsylvania Archives

Harford County Land and Probate Records.

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The boundaries of the nominated property are shown on the attached sketch
map.

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

The boundaries of Webster's Forest are defined by Asbury Road on the north-
east; by a row of mature trees lining the driveway on the northwest; by a
decline in grade on the southwest; and by a fence line and plantings on the
southeast. These boundaries encompass the house within its historic landscaped
setting, and preserve its historic relationship to Asbury Road.

WEBSTER'S FOREST, HARFORD COUNTY, MARYLAND

(42-8)

SCALE: 1" = 200'

