

PH 365564

DATA SHEET

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY  
RECEIVED JUN 22 1976  
DATE ENTERED OCT 8 1976

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

AND/OR COMMON

HOLLY HALL

LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

259 South Bridge Street

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Elkton

VICINITY OF

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

First

STATE

Maryland

CODE

24

COUNTY

Cecil

CODE

015

CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY

- DISTRICT
- BUILDING(S)
- STRUCTURE
- SITE
- OBJECT

OWNERSHIP

- PUBLIC
- PRIVATE
- BOTH
- PUBLIC ACQUISITION**
- IN PROCESS
- BEING CONSIDERED

STATUS

- OCCUPIED
- UNOCCUPIED
- WORK IN PROGRESS
- ACCESSIBLE**
- YES: RESTRICTED
- YES: UNRESTRICTED
- NO

PRESENT USE

- AGRICULTURE
- COMMERCIAL
- EDUCATIONAL
- ENTERTAINMENT
- GOVERNMENT
- INDUSTRIAL
- MILITARY
- MUSEUM
- PARK
- PRIVATE RESIDENCE
- RELIGIOUS
- SCIENTIFIC
- TRANSPORTATION
- OTHER:

OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

Associated Cecil Endeavors, Inc.

STREET & NUMBER

259 South Bridge Street

CITY, TOWN

Elkton

VICINITY OF

STATE

Maryland 21921

LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,  
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Cecil County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

Elkton

STATE

Maryland

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

DATE

FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE

# 7 DESCRIPTION

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

Holly Hall is a Federal-style mansion built about 1810 on the east side of the main road leading south from Elkton, about one-fourth of a mile from town. A few holly trees remain of the many which gave this house its name and many large English boxwoods remain from early formal plantings west of the house.

Holly Hall is a brick mansion two and one-half storeys in height above a high basement, five bays in length, with a hipped roof supporting a small flat deck; the brick walls extend above the rafter plate as a parapet, and early photographs show a railing surrounding the deck. The south and north front walls (the former being the principal facade) are laid in Flemish bond with closers at the corners; the east and west sides are laid in common bond, every sixth course being headers. A small wood moulding caps the parapet walls. Two chimneys rise flush with the exterior walls at the east end and originally two similar chimneys existed at the west end, later removed; the southwest chimney was false.

Identical entrances are in the center bay of both the south and north fronts, consisting of a wide door, sidelights with muntins describing ovals and small diamonds, and a semi-elliptical transom with muntins describing a shield centered between radiating muntins parallel to the sides of the shield; engaged columns of the Tuscan order flank the door. Muntins of the south entrance sidelights have been removed but their traces remain. Much original glass with scratched inscriptions remains in the northerly entrance. The south entrance is sheltered by a small portico of modern construction. The existing brick foundation appears in early photographs beneath a wooden portico which consisted of four columns supporting an entablature with a paneled frieze. The north entrance is enclosed within a small north wing, further described below.

Windows of the first and second storeys are, typically, six-over-six with narrow frames, marble sills and brick jack arches. Windows of the basement storey are three-over-three. Centered in the second storey of both the south and north fronts is a Palladian window, its masonry opening unadorned. In the parapet area a horizontal, rectangular, recessed panel of stucco is above each window except the Palladians. Louvred blinds originally flanked each window, as shown in the early photographs, but only the iron hinge pintels remain, their butts rebated in and screwed to inner faces of the jambs. In all storeys of the south front the windows of the westerly bay are false; wooden frames surround recessed panels of stucco, now painted black with white painted muntins; in the early photographs blinds are shown closed over these false windows which, today, show no evidence of hardware.

The west end elevation is expressed as three bays with windows in each storey and stucco panels in the parapet matching those elements of the south and north fronts. The east end elevation is covered by the east wing, further described below.

(see continuation sheet #1)

# 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES *c. 1810*

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Holly Hall is a mansion designed after published designs of such early architects as Asher Benjamin and Robert Morris. Its design is simple but sophisticated and restrained, in the manner of the early 19th century. While its basic form, hipped roof and recessed stucco panels are noteworthy, its parapets are unique in Maryland. They relate it to many contemporary published designs, commonplace in England but rare in America.

The family history of James Sewell, builder of Holly Hall, dates back to about the middle of the 17th century. Henry Sewell, born in England, came to St. Mary's County, Maryland, in 1660 with his wife, Jane Lowell Sewell, and children. He was Secretary of the Province and Counselor and recipient of numerous patents of land made to him by Cecilius Calvert, the second Lord Baltimore. In 1665, a year after Sewell's death, his widow married Governor Charles Calvert who later became the third Lord Baltimore, Henry and Jane Sewell's only son, Nicholas, had two sons, Charles and Clement. The latter was born in Cecil County and died in 1740. His only son, Henry, also born in Cecil County but later moving to Talbot, had a son, Basil. Basil Sewell was the father of James Sewell, builder of Holly Hall.

Holly Hall is built on land originally belonging to Robert Alexander, a Tory sympathizer during the American Revolution. About two-thirds of his lands were confiscated when he left with the British fleet and were sold at public auction. Tobias Rudolph bought lots in Elkton and some farm land in the area. In his will (1787), he left land to his daughter, Anne Marie Rudolph, who married James Sewell in 1809, seven years after he had moved to Cecil County. The Sewells built Holly Hall circa 1810 on the farm land left to Mrs. Sewell by her father.

On January 20, 1808, the Maryland Legislature authorized a lottery for the purpose of finishing Elkton Academy and paving the streets of Elkton for which James Sewell was named a Commissioner. On December 24, 1808, in an Act for Improvement of Elkton in Cecil County, Sewell was one of those named to mete and bound the town and make a plat of same. On April 12, 1811, he was elected President of the first Elkton bank. In 1813 he commanded the 2nd Battalion at Fort Defiance, which defended Elkton from Admiral Cockburn. The garrison repulsed the British advances and prevented them from reaching Elkton. Sewell was Clerk of the Circuit Court in Elkton from 1816 to 1840 and was one of the founders of Trinity Episcopal Church in 1832.

(see continuation sheet #4)

# 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Earle, Swepson. The Chesapeake Bay Country.  
 Johnson, George. History of Cecil County.  
 Jones, Hon. William J. Elkton in the 1830's.  
 Works Progress Administration Writers' Program. Maryland, A Guide to the Old Line State.  
 Sewell File. Cecil County Historical Society.  
 No author. History of Cecil County. Land & Probate Records of Cecil County.

# 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 6.2 acres

UTM REFERENCES

A	<u>18</u>	<u>428900</u>	<u>4383720</u>	B			
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C				D			

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

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

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

# 11 FORM PREPARED BY

njm

NAME / TITLE

Mrs. Lester H. Wagaman, Architect/James Thomas Wollon, Jr. ATA

ORGANIZATION

DATE

Associated Cecil Endeavors, Inc.

January 1976

STREET & NUMBER

TELEPHONE

Route 5, Box 101/Craigs Corner Road

CITY OR TOWN

STATE

Elkton, /Havre de Grace,

Maryland 21921/21078

# 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 National Park Service.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

*John M. Pearce*  
SHPO

6/21/76

TITLE

DATE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

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

*John M. Pearce*  
*W. Stewart*

DATE

10/8/86

ATTEST:

DATE

10/7/76

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
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CONTINUATION SHEET      ITEM NUMBER 7      PAGE 1

DESCRIPTION (continued)

Two dormers are in the south and north slopes of the roof, each with top sashes elliptically arched, the muntins describing three Gothic lancets; below the arched segment of the top sash the muntins describe a conventional six-over-six arrangement. Dormer roofs are gable, the small rake cornices terminating on small eave returns. A double dormer on the easterly roof slope is a later addition.

The east wing, probably added forty to fifty years after the house was built, is of brick laid in common bond, two storeys high above a high basement, two bays in length. Its shed-roof of shallow pitch is concealed behind parapets above the south and north walls. Windows are similar to those of the main house, and in the easterly bay of the south front's first storey was, originally, a door with transom, sheltered by a portico, its roof concealed behind a simple classical entablature supported by square columns suggesting the Tuscan order. A window now occupies this bay, the door and portico eliminated. In the east side of the east wing, a door, sheltered by a modern porch, is in the middle of three bays and windows are in flanking bays.

A three-bay, one-storey brick wing extends north, centered on the main house, added as a chapel in the 20th century.

The floor plan of the main house is a variation of the typical center-hall plan and all original partitions are brick to the third floor.

A center hall extends through the house with (originally) a pair of parlors to the east (the front or southerly one being slightly larger) and one large room and the staircase to the west. The staircase, occupying the southwesterly corner of the house, is screened from the center hall of each principal storey with a broad elliptical arch supported by engaged, semi-elliptical fluted Tuscan columns in the first storey, fluted Tuscan pilasters in the second. The stair rises, with intermediate landings, clear to the third floor. Its round rail of black walnut terminates in a spiral in the first storey and it extends continuously to the third, turning at each landing or floor in a semi-circular radius. The first two treads from each level, in each direction, have their inner ends following the same curving profile, making the ends of the treads and the edges of the landings and floors of equal length, masking the effect of flat landings and floor levels.

(see continuation sheet #2)

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CONTINUATION SHEET      ITEM NUMBER 7      PAGE 2

DESCRIPTION (continued)

There are no newels and the rail is supported by plain rectangular balusters. Step ends and the fascia of the third floor are ornamented with applied carved scrolls.

The easterly parlors were, originally, connected by a wide arched opening, now filled. The northeasterly parlor is now subdivided into a narrow passage to the east wing and two small rooms. The large west room is now subdivided into two rooms of equal size and the westerly chimney has been removed in its entirety from the basement clear through the house. All changes appear to date from the mid-20th century.

The second floor plan is similar to the first and all three rooms have been subdivided into two, with closets. The third storey, finished with lathe and plaster originally, had a similar original floor plan but the easterly portion has been modified slightly.

The basement storey has a similar floor plan and laterations have been minimal. The southeasterly space is subdivided into three spaces by brick walls of undetermined age. Ceilings in the basement are or were plastered on hand-split lathe fastened to joists with early cut nails. Where the finish is missing, boards are visible spanning between joists and supported by ledgers nailed to the joists probably supporting a layer of mortar or plaster for insulation. A small chamber beneath the south porch may have served as a root cellar. Exterior entrances were through the east and west facades near the north corners, but both have been closed, the former by the east wing. The original kitchen was probably in the basement, but the existing closed fireplaces seem too small for cooking purposes and possibly the kitchen was the large northeasterly room where the chimney is removed.

Interior elements of woodwork are, or were, identical throughout both principal storeys. Doors are of six panels in the conventional arrangement with loose ogee-with-astrial mouldings and shallow raises. The bold architraves of interior doors and windows have plain blocks at top corners. Architraves of windows extend to the floor. The splayed window jambs have a single tall, flat panel above the sill and one in the soffit; a large panel with a shallow raise fills the space below the window. Door jambs and soffits are, likewise, paneled, the panels having shallow raises. All panel mouldings match those of the doors. Door hardware is generally modern. The third storey trim is simpler and door architraves are of two planes with applied backbands. Dormer ceilings are arched, following their top sashes.

(See continuation sheet #3)

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CONTINUATION SHEET      ITEM NUMBER 7      PAGE 3

DESCRIPTION (continued)

All rooms in the two principal storeys had chair railing but it survives only in the southeast room of the first storey. A modern chair rail has been installed in the center halls.

The only surviving mantel is in the southeasterly room of the first storey. Of gray King-of-Prussia marble, its Ionic columns support boldly-projecting paneled blocks in the fluted frieze and it has a broad shelf. A small cupboard is built into the south side of the chimney breast and former windows flanking the chimney breast are now filled with modern bookshelves.

Shallow original closets flank the chimney breast of the northeasterly room of the second storey.

All floors in the two principal storeys are covered with modern narrow oak flooring.

The interior of the west wing was simple and utilitarian from the beginning and it has been superficially modified through the years. Elements of interior embellishment were inspired by their counterparts in the main house including the paneled window recesses and the six-paneled doors, the latter having wide, loose ogee mouldings with tallish top panels. The wide, beaded architraves have an applied echinus backband.

The interior of the chapel or north wing is finished with simple stock window trim and chair rail with acoustical board walls and ceilings.

A simple, late 19th century, two-storey tenant house of wood stands north of the main house, and two concrete block buildings, each one storey in height, stand to the east.

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**CONTINUATION SHEET** ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE 4

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

General Sewell dispensed a generous hospitality in Elkton, inviting every visitor of prominence or distinction to Holly Hall. A gentleman of urbanity and polished manners, he was active in the Whig political party. He was identified with the old Bank of Maryland, the failure of which precipitated a riot in Monument Square in Baltimore.

A brick burial vault was built into the side of the slope to the west of Holly Hall. A stone on the iron door bore an inscription reading: James A. Sewell's Family Vault - 1838. General Sewell died in 1842, leaving four children, James, Martha, Glenn, and Mary. In a deed dated October 8, 1858, a Circuit Court order listing James M. Sewell and others, parcels totaling 225 acres were sold to Edwin Wilmer for the sum of \$23,750. However, that part described as the Garden, containing the burial vault, was held in trust as a cemetery for the descendants of General James Sewell.

In 1860 the house and some land were sold to James E. Barroll for \$18,000. During the War between the States, the coach and pair from the Holly Hall stables were sent by James Barroll to convey the Reverend W. H. B. Mitchell, Rector of Trinity Church, when he was arrested for treason in the Chancel with his robe on. The Union forces were taking him in a road wagon, but as they passed the entrance to Holly Hall, Mrs. Barroll came out and made such an earnest plea for more comfortable transportation for her Rector, insisting on the use of her own coach, her request was granted.

After Mr. Barroll died the house was evidently rented out as a number of Elkton residents report relatives who have lived there. A number of weddings have taken place on the stairs. In 1889 all the real estate was sold to Mr. William Singerly for \$7,000. He never occupied the house, but built a pumping station and laid a water line to his pulp mill west of Holly Hall on Elk River. In 1895 he sold a five-acre strip of land for a right-of-way for the Elkton-Middletown Railroad Company. This was a project begun to connect Elkton and Middletown by means of an electric railroad. A single line was laid as far as the Canal, but the Company disbanded in 1912.

(see continuation sheet #5)



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CONTINUATION SHEET      ITEM NUMBER 8      PAGE 5

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

In the first quarter of the 20th century the property was owned by Mr. and Mrs. George R. Ash, who operated a dairy farm. In 1923 it was sold to the Order of the Society of the Divine Savior. The Catholic order acquired the estate as a means of supporting the Foreign Missions which it had in China. During the various administrations a dairy farm was developed with a herd of registered Guernsey and Holstein cattle.

After the Mission Fathers vacated the property, the owner's representatives in Washington were contacted by some members of the Women's Club of Elkton. This original group enlisted the aid and interest of other citizens and a non-profit corporation was formed, called Associated Cecil Endeavors, Inc. ACE signed an agreement to lease Holly Hall with a three-year option to purchase. The group is the managing corporation dedicated to the restoration, redecoration, and refurnishing of Cecil Center-Holly Hall as a civic, cultural, and social center. ACE is also responsible for the three other buildings on the property. All rentals, fees, and other profits from any of their projects are to be applied to the cost of acquiring and properly maintaining Holly Hall.

Holly Hall was indeed patterned after published architectural designs of the early 19th century. What makes it especially interesting is the manner in which this was done, the finished result being a not-quite-successful, but nonetheless impressive, version of the English high style of the time.