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MHT K-12

Form 10-300
(July 1969)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM**

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE: Maryland	
COUNTY: Kent	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER 71.3.24.0009	DATE 3/11/71

1. NAME

COMMON:
Denton House

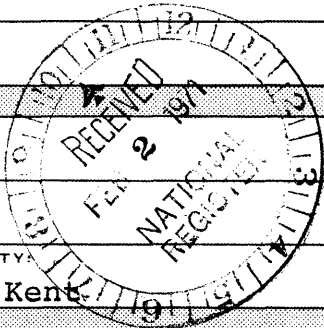
AND/OR HISTORIC:
Denton-Weeks House or River House

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER:
107 Water Street

CITY OR TOWN:
Chestertown

STATE: Maryland CODE: 24 COUNTY: Kent CODE: 031



3. CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input type="checkbox"/> District <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Object <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Structure <input type="checkbox"/> Object	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public <input type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both	Public Acquisition: <input type="checkbox"/> In Process <input type="checkbox"/> Being Considered	<input type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input checked="" 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) <u>tenanted</u>

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNER'S NAME:
State of Maryland, Maryland Historical Trust

STREET AND NUMBER:
Post Office Box 1704

CITY OR TOWN: Annapolis STATE: Maryland CODE: 24

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.:
Kent County Courthouse

STREET AND NUMBER:
Courthouse Square

CITY OR TOWN: Chestertown STATE: Maryland CODE: 24

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY:
National Historical Landmark

DATE OF SURVEY: 1970 Federal State County Local

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:
National Historic Landmarks Program

STREET AND NUMBER:
U. S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service

CITY OR TOWN: Washington STATE: D. C. CODE: 11

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

STATE: Maryland

COUNTY: Kent

FOR NPS USE ONLY

ENTRY NUMBER: 71.3.24.0009

DATE: 3/11/71

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 type="checkbox"/> Altered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unaltered	<input type="checkbox"/> Moved	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Original Site		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Located within the area designated as a National Historical Landmark in Chestertown, the Denton House is on the southeast side of Water Street between Maple Avenue and High Street.

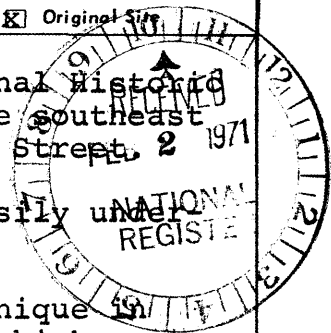
The house, under restoration, will be more easily understood as it will appear.

The existing five-bay long street facade is unique in Chestertown. It stands three full stories above a high basement, separated by a painted, molded stone water table. The Flemish bond brickwork has a very narrow, convex, white mortar joint. Each window of the basement, first floor, and second floor is accentuated by a rusticated, painted stone, flat-arch with keystone. On the first and second stories, the window lintel keystones are double, and the central window keystone of the second story is molded and carved. Between the first and second stories is a plain belt course of stone, painted white.

Wood steps will ascend one flight to the central entrance, similar to the stoop design of the James Brice House, Annapolis. Both the entrance door and reveals are paneled with molded raised panels and are flanked by plain Doric pilasters which will support a full pediment. The outline of the original pediment was revealed when the nineteenth-century porch was removed, thereby enabling an exact replica to be constructed.

Brick pilasters at the corners of the facade rise three full stories from the water table up to the cornice and are a feature of the facade. A less developed prototype is found at the headquarters building of the Kent County Historical Society on Church Alley, Chestertown. A rosette carved in a square panel is recessed in a stone block, between the capital of each pilaster and the main cornice. The cornice is a simplification of a Corinthian design with the modillions and plancers (the soffit of a cornice) carved above the capitals only; the carved plancers repeat the design of the rosettes below.

On the river facade, the basement is at ground level, creating a full story. The Flemish bond brickwork is similar to that used on the street (west) facade. A nineteenth-century photograph shows the design of a two-story porch which will be reconstructed. Brick piers will support the wood porch, supported by square columns from the first to the second floor and round columns from the second floor to the roof, a modified continuation of the main roof. A simple balustrade will extend between columns at both levels.



SEE INSTRUCTIONS

SIGNIFICANCE

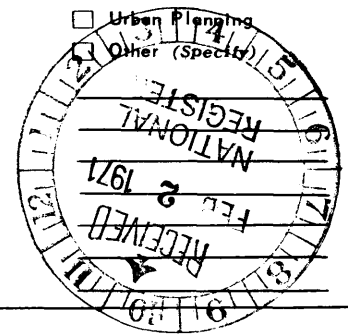
PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- | | | | |
|--|---------------------------------------|--|--|
| <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) **c. 1784-87**

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- | | | |
|--|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Education | <input type="checkbox"/> Political |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric | <input type="checkbox"/> Engineering | <input type="checkbox"/> Religion/Philosophy |
| <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 checked="" 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

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

The affluence and influence of the combination college town on a navigable river is exemplified by the architecture of the Denton House, a waterfront residential property.

The first professor of law (1791) at Washington College (founded 1752) was a former resident in the house and recently Miss Frances Denton, the former executive secretary to Colonel Edward House (1858-1938), advisor to President Woodrow Wilson.

The house is known in Chestertown for its local architectural excellence. A room from the house was recognized by Mr. Henry Francis DuPont as worthy of being moved to Winterthur.

The Denton House stands on parts of "water lots" number 12 and 13 of the original plat of Chestertown. John Tennant and Jude Clarkson were the first known grantees of the two lots. In 1736 and 1737, William Timbull, a Barbados merchant, purchased the two waterfront lots from Tennant and Clarkson. At the time of his death, William Timbull had built a house on the lots, as recorded in the legal transactions after his death in the Barbados in 1741. By petition to the General Assembly of Maryland, legal title was granted in 1784 to Eleazer McComb. Upon his legal acquisition of the property, he immediately sold it to Thomas Smyth.

Thomas Smyth (1729-1819) was one of the wealthiest merchants of Chestertown and Kent County prior to and just after the Revolution. He was Judge of the Court for Kent County (1757-1769), a member of the Maryland Conventions of 1774 through 1776, signer of the Association of Freemen in 1775, and member of the Council of Safety for the Eastern Shore in 1775-76. During the Revolution, he was actively involved in securing supplies for the continental army. Thomas Smyth owned the property for two and a half years and then sold it to his son, Richard Gresham Smyth, who held it for only nine months before he deeded it to Peregrine Letherbury.

SEE CONTINUATION SHEET

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Recorder: Michael Bourne, Field Surveyor, Maryland Historical Trust, Annapolis, Maryland, November 1970.

Hall of Records, Annapolis, Maryland: Deeds, Wills, Revolutionary Papers.

Kent County Courthouse, Chestertown, Maryland: Wills, Deeds.

SEE CONTINUATION SHEET

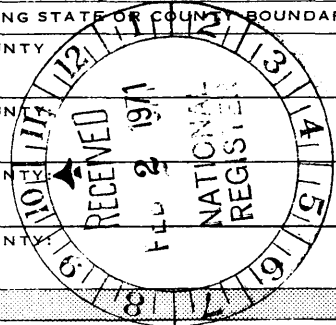
10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

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	° ' "	° ' "		39 ° 12 ' 29.0 "	76 ° 03 ' 46.5 "	
NE	° ' "	° ' "				
SE	° ' "	° ' "				
SW	° ' "	° ' "				

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: 1/4 acre

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

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE



SEE INSTRUCTIONS

11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE:
Mrs. Preston Parish, Keeper of the Maryland Register

ORGANIZATION: **Maryland Historical Trust** DATE: **Jan. 22, 1971**

STREET AND NUMBER:
Post Office Box 1704

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

12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION

NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

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 Liaison Officer
for Maryland

Date JAN 28 1971

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

Ernest A. Connally
Chief, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

MAR 11 1971

Date _____

ATTEST:
William J. ...
FEB 18 1971
Date _____

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Continuation Sheet)

STATE	
Maryland	
COUNTY	
Kent	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE
71.3.24.0009	3/11/71

(Number all entries)

Denton House

#6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS continued

Maryland Register of historic sites and landmarks

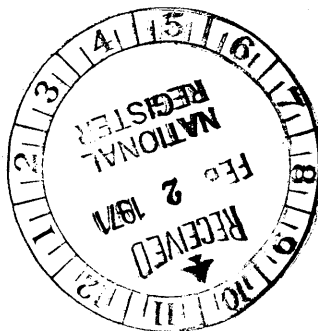
1970 - State

Maryland Historical Trust
Post Office Box 1704
Annapolis, Maryland 21404 code: 24

Historic American Building Survey

1969 - Federal

Library of Congress
Washington, D. C. code: 11



NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Continuation Sheet)

STATE	
Maryland	
COUNTY	
Kent	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE
71.3.24.0009	3/11/71

(Number all entries)

Denton House

#7. DESCRIPTION continued

Doors to the interior from each porch level will be located in the central bays. The ground level porch has a wide, diamond chevron, batten door with original long iron strap hinges.

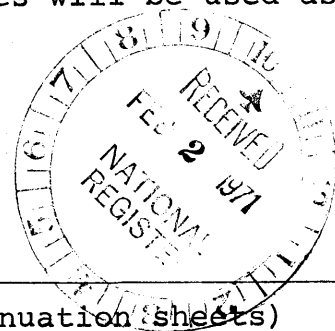
The gable-ends were originally without openings except for a door at the basement level on the southeast; and two casement windows flanking the chimney in each end of the attic.

Mt. Pleasant, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, has a first-floor plan with a central passage flanked by a single large room on the north and a smaller room and stairhall at the south ends. Each room is treated simply, having paneled, recessed interior shutters, a chair-rail, dentil cornice and plaster walls. One original mantel repeats the dentil mold of the cornice. An elliptical arch separates the stair from the passage of the first and of the second stories, although the staircase extends to the attic.

More elaborate rooms are located on the second story. Paneling from the "Chestertown Room" now installed in the Winterthur Museum, was originally in the northeast room. The precedent for its intricate design has been compared with designs in William Pain's The Practical Builder (1744) in a report "The Chestertown Room at Winterthur" by John Snyder, Jr., a Winterthur Fellow. The two remaining rooms retain paneled fireplace walls and dado, reflecting the transition between the earlier Georgian and the Federal designs.

One original raised-panel wall remains on the third story in the southwest room; and a mantel with Chinese fretwork remains in the northeast room. Three small rooms with beaded board partitions were originally located in the three bays of the northeast (entrance) facade.

The latter arrangement was also found off the kitchen in the basement. When restored, the basement will contain kitchen, dining and utility areas. The upper stories will be used as reception rooms and sleeping quarters.



NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Continuation Sheet)

STATE	
Maryland	
COUNTY	
Kent	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE
71.3.240009	8/14/77

(Number all entries)

Denton House

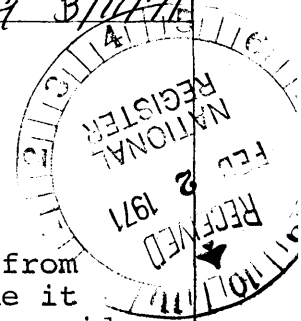
#8. SIGNIFICANCE continued

The purchase price for the property was unchanged from 1784, when Thomas Smyth bought the property, to the time it was sold to Richard Smyth. However, in 1787, Letherbury paid £ 1200 current money, an increase of £ 900 over the original cost of £ 300. Considering the value of the pound after the Revolution and the family relationship between Thomas and Richard Smyth, it is possible that the present structure was constructed during the Smyths' ownership. If not, it was constructed by Peregrine Letherbury, after his purchase on July 19, 1787.

Peregrine Letherbury practiced law in Chestertown, and was the first professor of law (1782-1801) at Washington College. He, as well as Thomas and Richard Smyth, contributed to the founding of Washington College in 1782. Letherbury served as Secretary, and later President, of the Board of Visitors and Governors of the College. In 1776, and again in 1779, he had been elected to the General Assembly of Maryland. After the Revolution he was actively involved in Masonry and in 1791 was elected Grand Master of the Maryland Masonry for one year.

After his death in 1801, the house was left to his daughter Mary, who later married Doctor George Washington Thomas, a physician in Chestertown. Mrs. Thomas had no children and upon her death in 1849 she devised the property to Peregrine Letherbury Wickes and provided for his education. After graduation from Princeton in 1856, he studied law with Severn Teakle Wallis, a very prominent barrister of Baltimore. He settled in Chestertown and later moved to York, Pennsylvania, his wife's home. He then sold the house to his brother, Ezekiel Chambers Wickes, also a lawyer.

In 1877, the house was purchased by Mary Elizabeth Willson Brown, granddaughter of Thomas Smyth. During her ownership, the building was used as a school for girls. From then until 1938, the property passed to various local families, until Miss Frances Denton, former private secretary to Colonel Edward House (1858-1938), advisor to President Woodrow Wilson, purchased the property. Upon her death in 1948, she bequeathed the property to her niece, Miss Marion Weeks. Prior to Miss Weeks' death in 1968, she deeded it to the Maryland Historical Trust to secure its future preservation. Upon the Completion of its restoration, it will be rented as a private home, to be opened to the public five times annually.



NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Continuation Sheet)

STATE	
Maryland	
COUNTY	
Kent	
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71.3.24.0009	3/11/71

(Number all entries)

Denton House

#9. REFERENCES continued

Schultz, Edward T., History of Freemasonry in Maryland, J. H. Medairy & Co., Baltimore, 1884, Vol. I, p. 396.

"History of Washington College," Vertical Files, Washington College Library, Chestertown, Maryland.

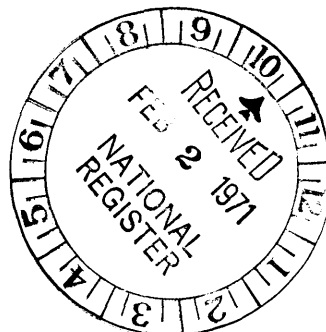
Biographical Cyclopedia of Representative Men of Maryland and the District of Columbia, National Biographical Publishing Company, Baltimore 1879, p. 424.

"The Smyth Family," Vertical Files, Enoch Pratt Library, Baltimore, Maryland.

Snyder, John, Jr., "The Chestertown Room, Winterthur," paper written May 1969, Winterthur Museum, Winterthur, Delaware.

Maynard P. White, 107 South Mill Street, Chestertown, Maryland; interviews.

Denton House is located in the First Congressional District of Maryland.



Form 10-301
(Dec. 1968)UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICENATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
PROPERTY MAP FORM*(Type all entries - attach to or enclose with map)*

STATE

Maryland

COUNTY

Kent

FOR NPS USE ONLY

ENTRY NUMBER

DATE

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

1. NAME

COMMON: Denton House

AND/OR HISTORIC: Denton-Weeks House or River House

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER:

107 Water Street

CITY OR TOWN:

Chestertown

STATE:

Maryland

CODE

24

COUNTY:

Kent

CODE

031

3. MAP REFERENCE

SOURCE:

U.S.G.S. 7.5 minute map; Chestertown Quadrangle (Maryland)

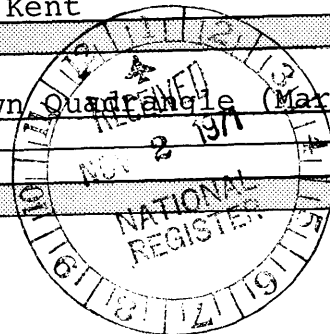
SCALE: 1: 24 000

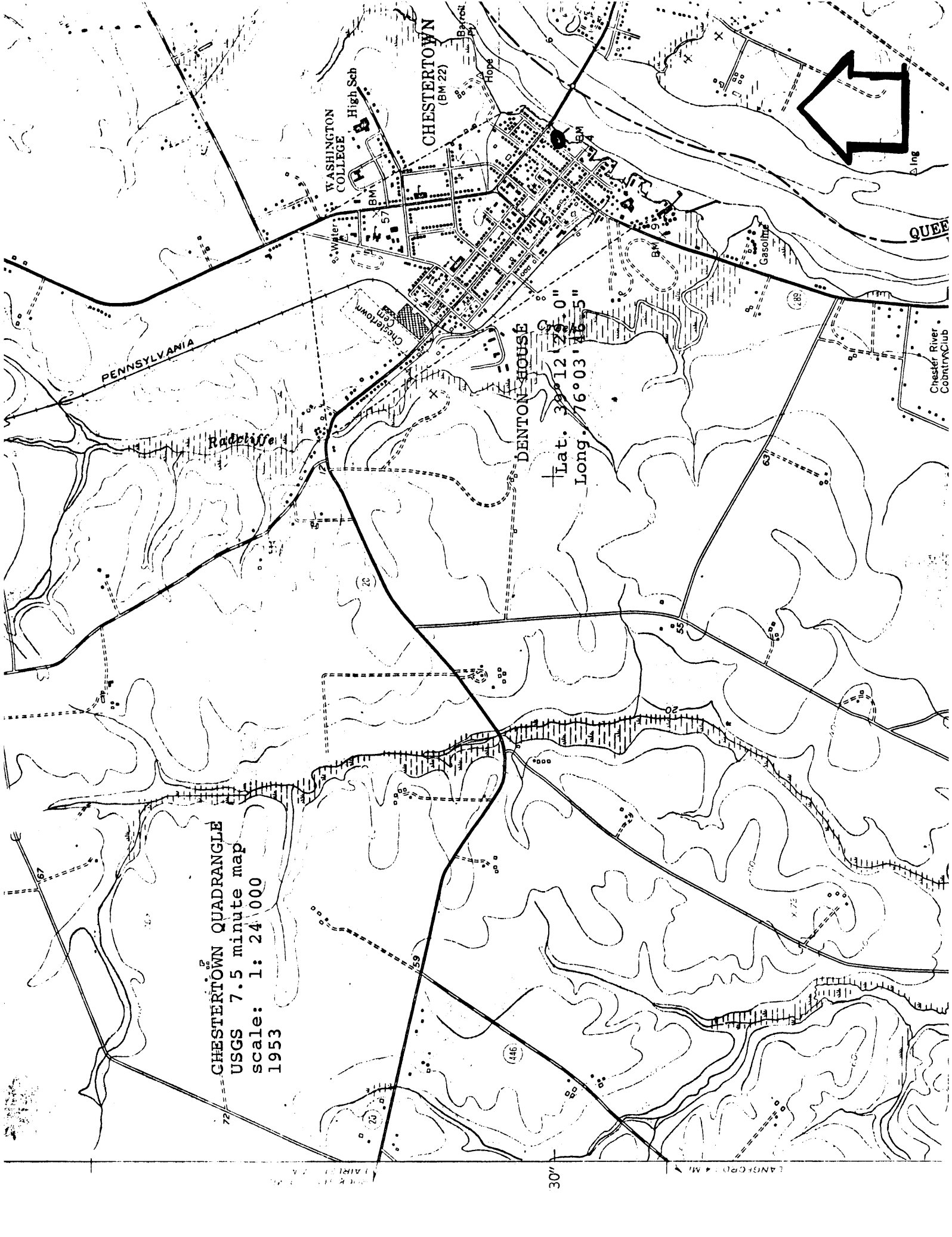
DATE: 1953

4. REQUIREMENTS

TO BE INCLUDED ON ALL MAPS

1. Property boundaries where required.
2. North arrow.
3. Latitude and longitude reference.





PENNSYLVANIA

CHESTERTOWN QUADRANGLE
USGS 7.5 minute map
scale: 1:24,000
1953

WASHINGTON COLLEGE High Sch

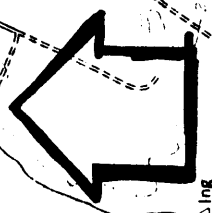
CHESTERTOWN (BM 22)

DENTON HOUSE

Lat. 39°12'29.0"
Long. 76°03'46.5"

QUEEN

Chester River Country Club



LANGRISH M. 30" 1:24,000

Form 10-301
(Dec. 1968)UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

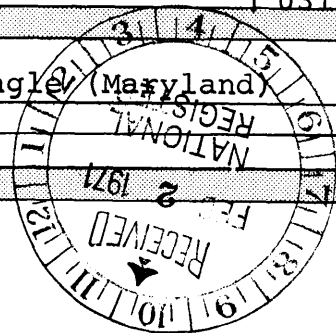
NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

PROPERTY MAP FORM

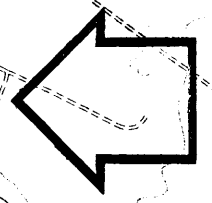
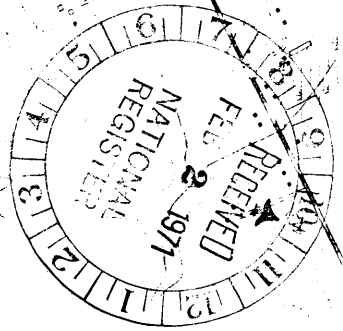
(Type all entries - attach to or enclose with map)

STATE Maryland	
COUNTY Kent	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER 71.3.24.0009	DATE 3/11/71

1. NAME			
COMMON:		Denton House	
AND/OR HISTORIC:		Denton-Weeks House or River House	
2. LOCATION			
STREET AND NUMBER:			
107 Water Street			
CITY OR TOWN:			
Chestertown			
STATE:		CODE	COUNTY:
Maryland		24	Kent
			CODE
			031
3. MAP REFERENCE			
SOURCE:			
U.S.G.S. 7.5 minute map; Chestertown Quadrangle (Maryland)			
SCALE: 1: 24 000			
DATE: 1953			
4. REQUIREMENTS			
TO BE INCLUDED ON ALL MAPS			
1. Property boundaries where required.			
2. North arrow.			
3. Latitude and longitude reference.			



SEE INSTRUCTIONS



PENNSYLVANIA

Radcliffe

WASHINGTON COLLEGE High Sch

CHESTERTOWN (BM 22)

DENTON HOUSE

Lat. 39° 12' 29.0"
Long. 76° 03' 16.5"

QUEEN

Chester River Country Club

CHESTERTOWN QUADRANGLE
USGS 7.5 minute map
scale: 1: 24 000
1953

Mill Pond

12'30"