

**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 Compton Bassett

and/or common Compton Bassett

2. Location

street & number 16508 Marlboro Pike N/A not for publication

city, town Upper Marlboro vicinity of congressional district Fourth

state Maryland code 24 county Prince George's code 033

3. 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"/> 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"/> entertainment
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> not applicable	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
			<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input type="checkbox"/> museum
			<input type="checkbox"/> park
			<input type="checkbox"/> religious
			<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
			<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name Robert B. Sasscer and Henry S. Sasscer

street & number 16508 Marlboro Pike

city, town Upper Marlboro vicinity of state Maryland 20870

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Prince George's County Courthouse

street & number Main Street

city, town Upper Marlboro state Maryland

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title See Continuation Sheet #1 has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date federal state county local

depository for survey records

city, town state

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input 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

Compton Bassett is a Georgian mansion built ca. 1783 near Upper Marlboro, in Prince George's County, Maryland. The building is constructed of brick covered with stucco, two stories high with a hipped roof. The fenestration of the five-bay southeast (front) facade is symmetrical, with a projecting central pavilion holding the entrance, and 9/9 windows defining the flanking bays. The six-paneled door is framed by reeded and fluted pilasters supporting a pediment, and is surmounted by a semicircular fanlight. Tall 4/6 sash windows flank the doorway, and a flat-roofed porch shelters the entrance. On the second story, a palladian composition of a fanlighted 6/9 window flanked by narrow 4/4 sash appears in the central pavilion, which is capped by a pediment containing a small lunette window. The building cornice is enriched with dentils. Two interior chimneys pierce the roof. The rear facade is also symmetrical. The interior is characterized by a center-hall plan, and retains a great deal of original Georgian-influenced ornament, including the stair, mantels, doors, door and window surrounds, interior shutters and paneling. The central hall is divided with a fanlighted cross-arch. A two-story, two-bay wing was added to the northeast side in 1928. Three brick dependencies, a chapel, meat house, and dairy remain on the property, contemporaneous with the house and symmetrically sited with respect to it. North of the house lies the family graveyard, and beyond the cemetery are four 20th century frame barns and a tenant house related to the property's continued agricultural use.

GENERAL DESCRIPTION

Compton Bassett is situated on a high, wooded hill overlooking the Patuxent River one quarter mile to the east. Maryland Route 4 is south of the house and Marlboro Pike is to the west. The property is approximately 1½ miles east of Upper Marlboro, Prince George's County, Maryland. The complex is situated in a setting of rolling fields and woods and much of the surrounding land is in cultivation.

This two-story brick Georgian mansion is covered with cream colored stucco, and has a high basement of grey stucco. The main block of the house measures fifty feet by forty feet with a two-story wing extending on the northeast side. The hipped roof is pierced by two interior chimneys aligned above the second and fourth bays.

The southeast (front) facade has a slightly projecting pavilion in the center flanked on either side by two windows on each floor. These windows have nine-over-nine light sash. On the first floor of the pavilion is the main entrance, a six-panel door with with handsome Georgian surround. On the interior this door is faced with twelve wide horizontal boards beaded at the lower edge; the door hardware appears to be original. The door surround has reeded and fluted pilasters that support a triangular pediment. Above the door is a simple but delicate five-pane fanlight. The whole first floor of the pavilion is framed with a simple, rectangular, flat-roofed porch. Within the posts of the porch, closely flanking the doorway, are two narrow 4/6 windows. On the

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		

Specific dates ca. 1783 **Builder/Architect** unknown

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

Applicable Criteria: B and C

SIGNIFICANCE SUMMARY

Compton Bassett derives significance from two major sources. First, for nearly two centuries, Compton Bassett has been continuously occupied by descendants of Clement Hill, Jr., (1670–1743) who acquired title to the property in 1699. Members of this prominent family have served Prince George's County and the State of Maryland in government and have operated an agricultural complex at Compton Bassett since 1700. Among the Hill's descendants with whom Compton Bassett is associated are Clement Hill IV, (1743–1807), who was appointed County Commissioner of Tax in 1792 and 1803; Dr. William Hill (1783–1823), a physician who was one of the organizers of the Planter's Bank in present-day Upper Marlboro, in 1817; and William Beanes Hill (1813–1890) who was a county judge for 25 years, elected a State Senator in 1877, and served as Secretary of State of Maryland in 1862. Second, Compton Bassett embodies the distinctive characteristics of the Georgian style in architecture. The symmetrical three-part east facade with central pavilion, the Palladian motifs on the east and west facades, the well-executed interior woodwork, and the symmetrical site plan of the house and dependencies are all characteristic of Georgian architecture in the second half of the 18th century. These features, as well as the property's agricultural setting, have remained largely intact. The property is one of Prince George's County's finest Georgian mansions, with many similarities in design, composition and detail to the National Historic Landmark, His Lordship's Kindness also in Prince George's County, which was built by Henry Darnall, a nephew of Ann Darnall Hill, the wife of Clement Hill, Jr. who first acquired the property at Compton Bassett.

HISTORY AND SUPPORT

Compton Bassett has been the seat of Clement Hill, Jr. and his descendants since 1700.¹ For 282 years, at least a part of the original patent has been in the occupancy of direct descendants of the patentee. The social status of Compton Bassett's early owners was reflected in their marriages with the most prominent Roman Catholic families in the Province. The many similarities in design between Compton Bassett and His Lordship's Kindness (National Register, Prince George's County) should not be considered coincidental when the close kinship of their early owners is taken into account. Primarily engaged in agriculture, each generation of the family has actively served its church, state and community.

Clement Hill, Jr., (1670–1743), who first acquired the property at Compton Bassett in 1699, had arrived in Maryland in 1693. He was the nephew of Clement Hill, Sr. (died 1708), of St. Mary's County, a prominent government official who had come to Maryland in 1662 with Lord Baltimore. In 1696, Clement

9. Major Bibliographical References

SEE CONTINUATION SHEETS #6 and #7.

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property approx. 80 acres

Quadrangle name Bristol, Maryland'

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

UMT References

A

1	8	3	5	1	3	4	0	4	2	9	17	4	0	10
Zone	Easting				Northing									

B

1	8	3	5	1	3	1	0	4	2	9	17	0	1	2	10
Zone	Easting				Northing										

C

1	8	3	5	0	4	8	0	4	2	9	17	5	4	10
Zone	Easting				Northing									

D

1	8	3	5	0	6	1	0	4	2	9	17	8	1	8	10
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 #3.

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

state	N/A	code	county	code
-------	-----	------	--------	------

state	code	county	code
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11. Form Prepared By

1. Peggy Bruns Weissman, Maryland Historical Trust
 name/title 2. Margaret W. Cook, Prince George's County Committee of the MHT

organization see above
 date 1. 1980
 2. 1976

street & number 1. 21 State Circle
 2. 5621 Delaware Drive
 telephone 301-269-2438
 839-3638

city or town 1. Annapolis
 2. Oxon Hill
 state Maryland 21401
 Maryland 20021

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 *J. M. Little* date 12-28-82

title STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER date

For HCRS use only	
I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register	
<i>James M. Dray</i>	date 3/8/83
Keeper of the National Register	
Attest:	date
Chief of Registration	

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Compton Bassett, Upper Marlboro vicinity

Continuation sheet Prince George's County, MD Item number 6 and 7

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REPRESENTED IN EXISTING SURVEYS

1. Historic American Buildings Survey
1936
Library of Congress
Washington, D. C.
2. Maryland Historical Trust Historic Sites Survey
1976 and 1980
Maryland Historical Trust, 21 State Circle
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

GENERAL DESCRIPTION (Continued)

second floor of the pavilion is a 6/6 window capped with a fanlight identical to that over the door and flanked with narrow 4/4 windows. This three-part configuration closely resembles a Palladian window. The pavilion is capped with a pediment containing a small lunette window, again identical to the fanlight over the entrance door.

The northwest facade is similar to the southeast with a few notable exceptions. The central portion is flush with the wall rather than projecting and there is no pediment breaking the roof line. The entrance is also a six-paneled door with identical fanlight but the door surround is much simpler: two pilasters topped with an architrave in semicircular form. There are louvered shutters on all the windows, including the narrow ones that flank the door and window above it.

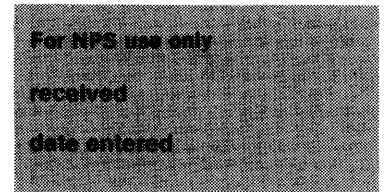
The southwest facade of the house has a nine-over-nine double hung sash window at each floor level. These are placed off-center, closer to the front of the building. A gable dormer with six-over-six sash window is centered on this slope of the hip roof. On the northeast facade a two-story stucco-covered brick kitchen wing in an L shape was added in 1928.

The floor plan of the main block consists of a center hall flanked by two rooms on each side. The open string stair, with delicately carved balusters, is at the northwest end of the hall. Each room has a fireplace centered on its interior wall. There is also a very large fireplace in the old kitchen in the cellar.

The delicately carved moldings grace the interior of the entire house, especially the cornice, door surrounds and mantels. Six-paneled doors are enclosed in finely carved moldings, the top frames fluted and reeded, and capped by a dentil cornice. This design is echoed in the fireplace mantels in the parlor and library, notable for a stylized triglyph and metope design. A simplified design is used on the other mantels in the house. There is a chair rail in the parlor, dining room and hall.

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GENERAL DESCRIPTION (Continued)

The stair hall is divided by a cross arch with fanlight supported by four reeded and fluted pilasters. The handrail of the stairway has two turned, square balusters per tread, and ends in a volute. There is a wooden hand rail on the wall side of the stairway.

The windows have interior, four-paneled shutters which fold into recesses in the sides of the window frames. The area beneath the windows is paneled.

The ceilings on both the main and second floors measure twelve feet in height. The floors are covered with original random width pine boards. The attic framing contains both sawn and hewn members. The cellar is of brick.

The Georgian symmetry of the mansion was carried over into the site plan. There are three dependencies and the site of a fourth, symmetrically placed at the four corners of the house, a dairy and the site of a store house, all approximately contemporary to the house.

The chapel, located approximately fifty feet from the south corner of the main block, is the largest of the three dependencies. The one-story building with cellar measures approximately 24 by 16 feet. It is constructed of brick with random glazed headers in all the walls, and has a steep gable roof. The main doorway, reached by five steps leading directly to the door, is near the west corner of the north facade. The four-panel door is framed by two plain pilasters with molded edges and a round-headed, five-light transom that repeats the pattern of the main entrance of the house. To the east of the doorway are two nine-over-nine light windows. The east end of the chapel is dominated by a large chimney flanked by nine-over-nine light windows on the first floor level and tiny windows high in the gable. The south facade has three evenly spaced windows matching those on the north. The west wall has one window high in the gable and a priest's door near the north corner. The six-panel door has no surround. A plain vertical board door, centered along the base of the north facade at ground level, leads to a cellar.

The brick meat house located to the west of the house has a steep gable roof similar to that used in the chapel and dairy. The building, built of brick with random glazed headers, measures 12 by 16 feet. A door is located on the east gable end wall.

The dairy is situated to the north of the house and is similar in appearance to the meat house, except for a centrally placed short, arched window in the south, west and north walls. The structure measures 14 by 16 feet, and is entered through a door on its east side. A frame addition has been built on the north side of the building.

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GENERAL DESCRIPTION (Continued)

A fourth dependency, thought to have been a store house, probably stood off the north corner of the house at one time. Bonded bricks have been found beneath the ground at the estimated location.

A family burial ground is located west of the mansion. Many burial stones date from the early 1800s, and it is thought there are other unmarked graves in the cemetery.

In addition, there are four 20th century outbuildings which document the more recent history of the property and its continued agricultural use in the 20th century. Located to the north of the cemetery is an early 20th century tobacco barn in good condition. North of the house is a group of three other farm buildings: a gambrel roofed two story stable, a frame one story cow shed, and another frame, one story stable. A small, mid-20th century house of no significance is located just north of this group of outbuildings.

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

Much of the 267 acres held by the present owners, consists of marshland and outlying fields and woods. Eighty acres are contained in this nomination, and include the main house, outbuildings, entrance driveway, cemetery, and surrounding land, which consists principally of cultivated fields and some woods. The amount of acreage included in the nomination was selected as the minimum necessary to preserve the property's historic setting of fields and woods; and to reflect its continued agricultural character. On the east, the Patuxent River, historically associated with the property, provides a natural boundary; on the south, the boundary follows the property line along Route 4 and Old Marlboro Pike; on the west, a hill west of the cemetery creates a physical and visual barrier; and on the north, a line of convenience was drawn between the western boundary and the river.

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

From the north side of the intersection of the Patuxent River and Maryland Route 4, the boundary follows the southern edge of the property line west past the driveway; then runs north over top of hill; then runs east to the Patuxent, then south to point of beginning. See USGS map and sketch map.

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HISTORY AND SUPPORT (Continued)

Hill, Jr., married Ann Darnall, and in 1699 he received his commission as Surveyor General of the Western Shore.² In the same year, Compton Bassett was surveyed for Hill, containing 748 acres.³ Within a year Hill had completed the construction of a home he named after a house he had known in his native England.⁴

Clement Hill, Jr.'s will gave his house and dwelling plantation to his wife during her lifetime and then to their son, Clement Hill, III (1707-1782), who had married Mary Digges.⁵ It was this Clement Hill who donated supplies to the support of the revolutionary army in 1788.⁶ According to family records, the original mansion burned in 1771; it was not rebuilt until after the Revolutionary War.

The responsibility for rebuilding the house fell to Clement Hill, IV (1743-1807), only son and heir of his father. This Clement Hill was appointed Commissioner of Tax in 1792 and again in 1803.⁷ The builder employed by Hill is not known. "A. L. Gosnell" was scratched into wet plaster over the dormer on the southeast facade, but his identity has not been established. The present house and dependencies are described in the Federal Direct Tax Assesment of 1798, with 1896 acres of adjoining land.⁸

Hill's 1807 will left the house to his wife, Eleanor Brent Hill, during her lifetime, and then to their son William Hill. Eleanor Brent Hill was a niece of Daniel Carroll, signer of the Federal Constitution, and of John Carroll, the first American Archbishop of the Roman Catholic Church.⁹

After her death, Dr. William Hill (1783-1823) inherited Compton Bassett by the terms of his father's will. Dr. Hill was involved in the 1814 incident at Fort McHenry which inspired Francis Scott Key to write the national anthem. Dr. Hill and a close friend, Dr. William Beanes of Upper Marlboro were captured by the British; Dr. Hill was released early, but Dr. Beanes was detained longer. It was while arranging for Dr. Beanes' release and witnessing the Battle of Baltimore that Key was inspired to compose the song. Dr. Hill was one of the organizers of the Planter's Bank in Marlborough.¹¹ By 1813, he had acquired additional land holdings and the property was resurveyed as "Woodland", with a total of 2,182 acres.¹² In March 1822, James Hoban, the architect of the White House visited Dr. Hill at Compton Bassett for consultation regarding improvements to the house, including the use of pebbledash on the exterior.¹³ The pebbledash may have been applied to cover smoke-stained bricks, probably from the 1700 house, which were re-used in the present building.

When Dr. William Hill died in 1823, the property was left to his wife, Anne Smith Hill and after her death to his son, William Beanes Hill. William Beanes Hill (1813-1890) was Judge of the Orphan's Court for 25 years, State

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HISTORY AND SUPPORT (Continued)

Senator in 1877, and Secretary of the State of Maryland in 1862. He was also one of the leading planters in Maryland, and was one of the original stockholders in the Maryland Agricultural College (now the University of Maryland) in 1856.¹⁴ In 1884, Judge Hill founded the Woodland Bridge Company, Inc., to operate a toll bridge across the Patuxent River near Compton Bassett. This was once located near "Hill's Landing", just south of the present Maryland Route 4 bridge and no longer is in existence.¹⁵

Judge Hill, who married Catherine Beall Smith, willed his house to his eldest daughter, Esther G. Hill. Esther G. Hill died in 1900, leaving the house to her niece, Mary Dixon Beall, who had married Dr. Reverdy Sasscer. Two of their sons, Henry S. and Dr. Robert B. Sasscer, are the current owners of the property, which is still a working farm.

Footnotes

- ¹ Bowie, Effie Gwynn, Across the Years in Prince George's County. (Richmond: Garrett and Massie, 1947) p. 427.
- ² Ibid., p. 426. Ann Darnall was the daughter of Colonel Henry Darnall of the Woodyard, whose grandson Henry Darnall built His Lordship's Kindness, a National Historic Landmark in Prince George's County.
- ³ Rent Rolls #4:324, Hall of Records, Annapolis, Maryland.
- ⁴ Bowie, op. cit., p. 426. No description of the 1700 house is known to exist. The 1743 inventory of Clement Hill, Jr's estate was made room by room and lists "Chamber over the Great Roome..., Chamber over the Little Roome..., Chamber over the Hall..., Dining Roome..., Hall..., Hall Closett..., Great Roome..., Little Roome..., Store..., Kitchen..., and Passage...,"
- ⁵ Ibid., p. 249. Mary Digges was a daughter of Charles of Warburton Manor.
- ⁶ Red Books, Part 2, items 1604-1605, Hall of Records, Annapolis.
- ⁷ Van Horn, R. Lee, Out of the Past. (Riverdale: Prince George's County Historical Society, 1976) pp. 217 and 242.
- ⁸ Federal Direct Tax, 1798, Patuxent Hundred, Prince George's County, Maryland. Particular lists of dwellings and of land.
- ⁹ Bowie, op. cit., p. 112.
- ¹⁰ Van Horn, op. cit., pp 262-263; News and Notes of the Prince George's Historical Society, Riverdale, Maryland, p. 29.

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HISTORY AND SUPPORT Footnotes (Continued)

- ¹¹Van Dorn, op. cit., p. 269.
- ¹²Patented certificate #2392 for Prince George's County, Hall of Records, Annapolis.
- ¹³Hill Family Papers, unpublished. 14 March 1822 letter from Dr. Hill to Hoban. Receipts for Hoban's services and for building materials appear in Dr. William Hill's accounts. Under date of 20 March 1822, Hill paid \$20.00 to Hoban and \$6.00 to William Pallaway for "gig and horse" to transport Hoban for two days.
- ¹⁴News and Notes, op. cit., p. 59
- ¹⁵Hill Family Papers, unpublished. An undated drawing, entitled "Hill's Landing", shows the late bridge, a stern-wheeler steamer, and a brick kiln at the water's edge.
- ¹⁶Bowie, op. cit., p. 427. Esther G. Hill gave the religious articles in the family chapel to St. Mary's Roman Catholic Church, Upper Marlboro, in 1895. No record has been found to show deconsecration of the chapel, and it may still be a Roman Catholic Church.

MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES PRIMARY SOURCES

Courthouse, Upper Marlboro, Maryland. Administration #12747; Land Records AB-11:17, 3446:687, 3603:114, 3803:510

Hall of Records, Annapolis, Maryland

Federal Direct Tax, 1798. Patuxent Hundred, Prince George's County.

Particular Lists of Dwellings and Land.

Inventories, DD#1, RNR#1:315-317

Patented Certificate, Prince George's County, #2392

Patent, CC#4:161, WD:261

Red Books, Part 2, Items #1604-1605

Rent Rolls 4:324, 327, 332

Wills, 23:215, T#1:634, TT#1:340, WAJ, Jr., #1:660, JBP#1:668

Hill Family Papers, unpublished, in possession of the family

SECONDARY SOURCES:

Bowie, Effie Gwynn. Across the Years in Prince George's County. Richmond: Garrett and Massie, 1947. pp. 427-448.

Forman, Henry Chandlee. Early Manor and Plantation Houses in Maryland. Easton, Maryland: the author, 1934. p. 83

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MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES (Continued)

Forman, Henry Chandlee. Old Buildings Gardens and Furniture in Maryland.
Cambridge, Maryland: Tidewater Publishers, 1967.

Hinton, Louise Joyner. Prince George's Heritage. Baltimore: Maryland
Historical Society, 1972. p. 110.

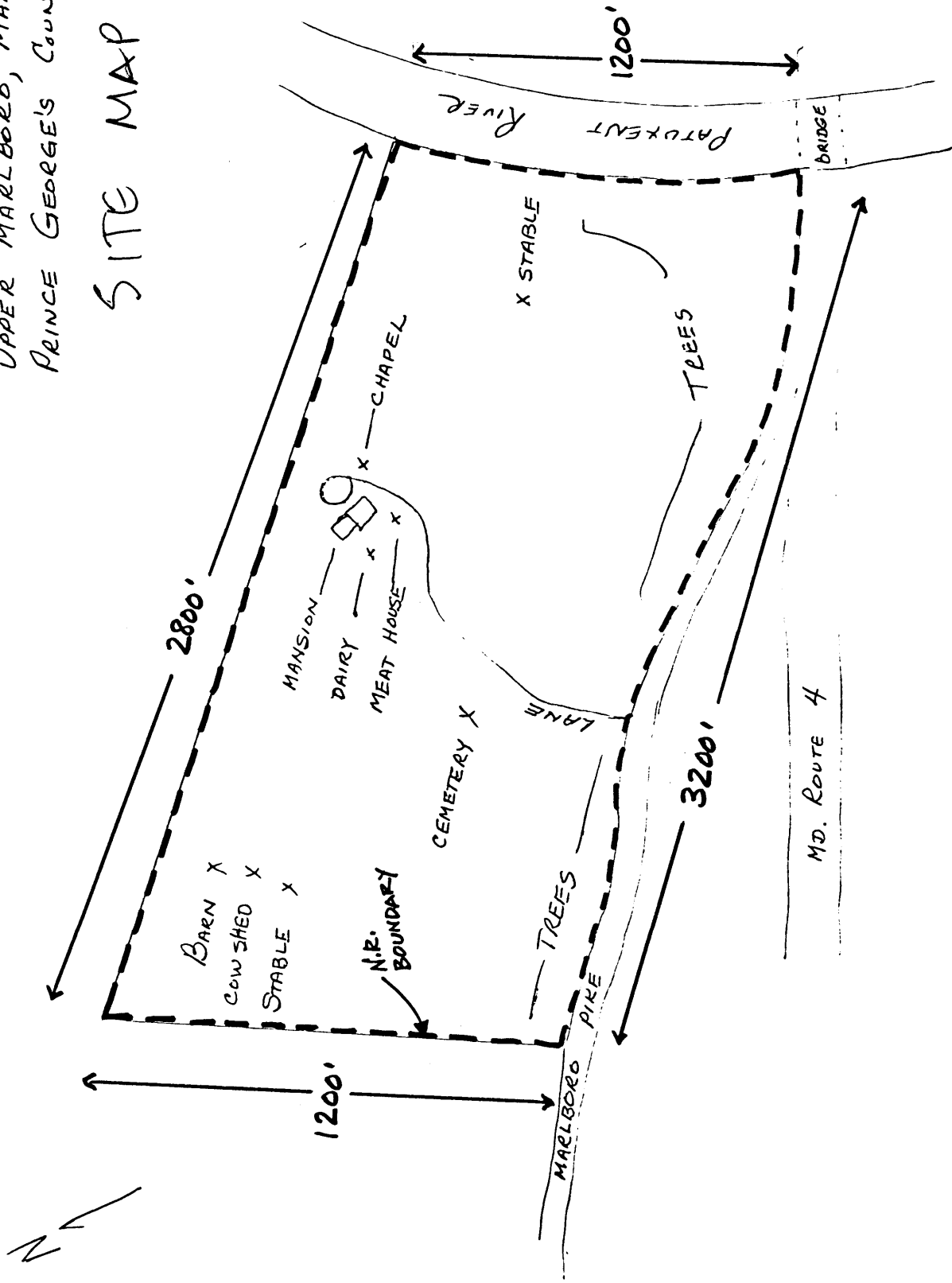
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Maryland: Prince George's County Historical Society, October 1973 and June 1975.

Scarborough, Katherine. Homes of the Cavaliers. New York: Macmillan Company
1930. p. 99.

Wilstach, Paul. Tidewater Maryland. Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill Company,
1931. p. 298.

COMPTON BASSETT
 16508 MARLBORO PIKE
 UPPER MARLBORO, MARYLAND
 PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY

SITE MAP



DIMENSIONS APPROXIMATE
 NOT DRAWN TO SCALE
 MW Cook 9/78