

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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RECEIVED

MAY 9 1977

DATE ENTERED

JAN 18 1980

**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**

*Chester Hall*

HISTORIC

Rye Hall

AND/OR COMMON

Chester Hall (Preferred)

**2 LOCATION**

STREET & NUMBER

Route 213, 1 mile S.E. of Chestertown

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Chestertown

VICINITY OF

First

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

STATE

Maryland

CODE

024

COUNTY

Queen Anne's

CODE

035

**3 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
- COMMERICAL
- EDUCATIONAL
- ENTERTAINMENT
- GOVERNMENT
- INDUSTRIAL
- MILITARY
- MUSEUM
- PARK
- PRIVATE RESIDENCE
- RELIGIOUS
- SCIENTIFIC
- TRANSPORTATION
- OTHER:

**4 OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME

Dr. Neil W. Brayton

STREET & NUMBER

357 High Street

CITY, TOWN

Chestertown,

VICINITY OF

STATE

Maryland 21620

**5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE,  
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Queen Anne's County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER

Commerce Street

CITY, TOWN

Centreville

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

Chester Hall is a large brick federal style dwelling which was constructed in the 1790's by either Joseph Forman, Thomas Whittington or Samuel Wallis. It measures approximately forty-eight feet by thirty-six feet and is two stories tall above a high basement. Its walls are laid in Flemish bond both below and above the molded water table. The water table is very bold, being composed of two courses of brick, the upper course being a cove and the lower an ovolo.

A generous brick stair ascends to the bel-etage from a raised terrace. The principal entrance has a handsome pedimented architrave of recent date. The five-bay long south facade, in which the entrance is centered, is divided into three principal areas by pilasters. A wide pediment with lunette window crowns the three center bays. Between the pilasters, at the level of the second floor, is a recessed belt course. All windows have rusticated stone lintels with keystones, those of the first story being deeper than those above. Buttress-like pilasters rise at each corner of the rectangular building, similar to the Piper House and River House, both in Chestertown, across the River.

With the exception of the pilasters, water table, and rusticated stone lintels, the other three sides are very plain. The east side is two bays long, with an entrance to the basement at ground level, and the west side is three bays long with a door on the principal floor at the north side. One dormer is located on each of the three sides of the low pitch deck-on-hip roof, and a chimney rises on each side of the upper slope of the roof.

The north facade of the structure has a central entrance with double doors; to the east thereof is an entrance with original paneled reveal and door, and a window. The door is probably in such good condition as a result of being protected by the "covered way" which led between the former two-story kitchen and the house, described in the 1798 Federal Direct Tax Assessment. In more recent years, the door also led into a small frame lean-to kitchen which has been replaced by a porch. On the west side some brickwork on the first story has been altered and relaid to accommodate a triple window, probably replacing two single windows. This alteration occurred during the early twentieth century. On the second story are three windows, the center one being at the level of the stair landing.

Behind the house is a small brick meat house, probably the one mentioned in the 1798 Tax Assessment.

In many ways, the house resembles Bloomingdale (1792-National Register) in the southern part of Queen Anne's County. It is approximately the same size and the entrances are in the same locations. The low pitch hip roof and location of dormers and chimneys is very similar. Bloomingdale, however, lacks the pilasters and pediments which made Chester Hall a unique example of federal architecture on the Eastern Shore of Maryland.

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 type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES c. 1790 (before 1798) BUILDER/ARCHITECT

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Chester Hall's area of significance lies chiefly in its unique architectural quality. At the end of the eighteenth century and beginning of the nineteenth century, great federal buildings being erected along the East Coast were characterized by pilasters, wide pediments with lunette windows and a lightness in composition which was the result of the influence of the brothers Adam in England. Chester Hall is a unique example of that period and style of the Eastern Shore.

In the 1798 Federal Direct Tax Assessment, it was valued at \$2,000 and was the single most valuable dwelling in Town Hundred in Queen Anne's County, and only a few buildings in the county were valued in excess thereof. Today it remains one of the great period houses of the county and it appears to have been overlooked by historians of the early twentieth century because of its remote location from the county seat.

The land on which Chester Hall stands was originally patented as Rye Hall in 1722 to James Wyatt of Kent County. Wyatt sold the property to George Ayres in 1728, whose heirs sold it to Joseph Forman in 1790. The sale price between 1790 and 1797 increased considerably, which may indicate that the house was constructed during that period. Thomas Whittington purchased it in 1797 and apparently had difficulty procuring the title until 1802 when he transferred it to Samuel Wallis, who was mentioned as the owner in the 1798 Federal Direct Tax.

Violet Primrose, whose family had owned the property adjoining Rye Hall to the south, lived there from 1843 until her death in 1856. A part of a crate with her name printed thereon was found in the attic when the house was restored. Rev. and Mrs. William Urie owned Rye Hall between 1865 and 1882. It passed through several hands until it was purchased by the present owner, Dr. Neil W. Brayton, in 1976. In the transactions of the twentieth century, the original name had been lost and thus the previous owners, the Honorable and Mrs. Stephen R. Collins, coined the name "Chester Hall."

## 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Emory, Frederick Queen Anne's County, Maryland, Maryland Historical Society, Baltimore, 1950.  
 Queen Anne's County Records (Wills, Deeds, patents, etc.) Queen Anne's County Courthouse, Centreville, Md., Hall of Records, Annapolis, Md.  
 Federal Direct Tax Assessment. 1798. Queen Anne's County. Particular List-Dwellings. Hall of Records, Annapolis, Maryland.

## 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 64.35  
 UTM REFERENCES

A	1,8	4,10,17,0	4,34,00,10	B	1,8	40,97,6,0	4,33,93,8,0
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C	1,8	4,99,3,5,0	4,33,96,4,0	D	1,8	40,97,2,0	4,34,02,3,0
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING

### VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Beginning at a point on the north side of Maryland Route 213 2,400 feet south of the Chester River, then moving northeast 2,300 feet to a small stream, then southeast 1,500 feet to a dirt road, then following the road southwest 2,400 feet to its intersection with Maryland Route 213, then following 213 northwest to the point of beginning.

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

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

## 11 FORM PREPARED BY

njm

NAME / TITLE

Mr. Michael O. Bourne, Restoration Consultant

ORGANIZATION

DATE

November 1974

STREET & NUMBER

TELEPHONE

P.O. Box 716

778-0069

CITY OR TOWN

STATE

Chestertown

Maryland 21620

## 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 N Pearce* 5/2/77  
 SHPO

TITLE

DATE

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

*W. Ray Luce*  
 DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION  
 ATTEST *Anna Jane Sars*  
 KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER  
 Regional Coordinator

DATE

1-18-80

DATE

1/17/80

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Chester Hall  
Queen Anne's County  
Maryland

CONTINUATION SHEET ITEM NUMBER 7 PAGE 1

DESCRIPTION (continued)

The interior floorplan is very similar to Poplar Hill Mansion, (National Register) Wicomico County. Its central hall contains the stair and flanking it are two rooms of unequal size on each side. On the west side is a very large drawing room with small den beyond; the latter is also accessible from beneath the stair landing. The drawing room mantel was taken from the house of the overseer of the basket factory which formerly stood at Scotch Point in Chestertown and possesses reeded plinth blocks supporting the shelf. On the east side of the hall are two rooms closer in size than the others, the south room being the dining room and north being the kitchen.

The majority of the woodwork, including the stair, was removed in the early twentieth century, although some trim and doors are original, as well as most of the floors. The present woodwork is in the style of the late eighteenth century and is appropriate to the house. It was installed in the mid-1940's by the previous owners, the Honorable and Mrs. Stephen R. Collins.

The basement is reached by a stair beneath the main stair. It is divided into areas like the first story, two rooms in which fireplaces (now bricked up) originally existed. In the corner of the room beneath the drawing room is a small room in which there was formerly a root cellar, down about three steps from the floor, a rare example in the Maryland tidewater area.

On the second floor, the small room in the northwest corner of the house is accessible from the stair landing. The large room above the parlor has been made into two bedrooms, one with a fireplace, and both having baths. Above the dining room, the master bedroom fireplace has another mantel taken from the basket factory overseer's house. This mantel is more refined than the one in the drawing room, having coxsetted trim with fluted plinth blocks supporting the shelf. A large dressing room-bath opens from the master bedroom and hall. There is a Franklin stove on a hearth of square paving blocks which are original to the house.

The shallow third floor is divided into a bedroom and bath, storage room and hall. From the shape of the deck-on-hip roof, it appears that there may have been a deck on the roof which was accessible from the present skylight.

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Chester Hall  
Queen Anne County

CONTINUATION SHEET Maryland ITEM NUMBER 7 PAGE 2

(DESCRIPTION, CONTINUED)

Smokehouse:

A small brick smokehouse is located directly behind the southeast corner of the house. Laid in seven-to-nine course American bond, the building is 10 feet wide by 10 feet 3 inches long. The gable roof structure is oriented on an east-west axis, with the door in the center of the east gable. The present door is a 20th century replacement.

The roof is framed of machine sawn common rafters mitred and nailed at the ridge. The rafters are set on a flat false plate, which is supported by large hewn joists, which in turn rest on a plate laid on the masonry walls. Although the rafters show considerable blackening, it is not clear whether they are original. Sawn and mitred rafters and the use of widely spaced American bond suggest a mid-19th century date or later, but the roof might easily be a replacement, and 7 course bond is not unheard of in the late 18th and early 19th century.

Barn:

A large frame barn stands across the driveway and to the southeast of the house. Constructed of a combination of reused hewn timber and later circular sawn material, this building is 69 feet 8 inches long by 26 feet 5 inches wide. Covered with vertical board and batten siding painted a dark green, the high gable roof and overall form of the barn are the main exterior clues to its age.

The building is divided into several separate work areas, with a series of large sliding doors and smaller "dutch" doors providing access to the various sections inside. One door is hung on large wrought iron strap hinges; all other hardware readily visible is 20th century. A steep stair near the east end of the building rises to a large and spacious loft interrupted by heavy hewn tie beams.

Although the barn in its present form probably dates to the mid-19th century or later, it retains much of the character and overall appearance of an earlier barn. In addition, much of the material is clearly reused and probably dates to the 18th or early 19th century. Of particular interest are a series of curious pegs remaining in many of the reused timbers. These are generally about one inch in diameter, and are closely spaced, three to five inches apart, along one surface of the timbers. They are generally almost flush with the surface, though it is unclear whether they were driven in this far, or originally protruded some distance and have since been cut back flush.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
HERITAGE CONSERVATION AND RECREATION SERVICE

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CHESTER HALL  
QUEEN ANNE'S COUNTY

CONTINUATION SHEET Maryland ITEM NUMBER 7 PAGE 3

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(DESCRIPTION, CONTINUED)

The purpose of these pegs is unknown, but if they did originally protrude farther, they might have been used to hang produce or some type of equipment harnesses, or tools.

ACREAGE JUSTIFICATION

The 64.35 acres included in this nomination are all that is owned by the present owners. The acreage is defined visually by a large hedge which follows the boundaries of the property. It includes the house and outbuildings. The swimming pool on the property is not an intrusion.