

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY
RECEIVED MAR 20 1978
DATE ENTERED SEP 13 1978

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 ****
Content
AND/OR COMMON
Bowling House

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER
14518 Church Street
CITY, TOWN
Upper Marlboro
STATE
Maryland
VICINITY OF
Fourth
COUNTY
Prince George's
CODE
24
CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT
Fourth
CODE
033

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"/> MUSEUM |
| <input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE | <input type="checkbox"/> BOTH | <input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS | <input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL |
| <input type="checkbox"/> SITE | PUBLIC ACQUISITION | ACCESSIBLE | <input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL |
| <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"/> NO | <input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL |
| | | | <input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY |
| | | | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE |
| | | | <input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS |
| | | | <input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC |
| | | | <input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION |
| | | | <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER: |

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME
Mr. and Mrs. Jess Joseph Smith, Jr.
STREET & NUMBER
14618 Main Street (office)
CITY, TOWN
Upper Marlboro
STATE
Maryland
VICINITY OF
Maryland
29870

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
LIBER #: 4745
FOLIO #: 805
29870

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE
Historic American Buildings Survey
DATE
1936
DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS
Library of Congress
CITY, TOWN
Washington
STATE
D.C.
 FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

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

Content is located on the north side of Church Street at number 14518 in Upper Marlboro, Prince George's County, Maryland. Perpendicular to the street, the house faces east, overlooking its broad, terraced lawn, to the county courthouse.

Also known as the Bowling house, this is a two-storey, two-part, frame structure with gable roofs built in three stages. The first, built in 1787, consisted of the present main block (the south portion) excluding the stair hall and porch. The latter were added circa 1800. The north wing was added before 1844.

The main block has a two-storey porch, partially screened; across its east (entrance) facade. On the first and second floors of this elevation there are three windows and then a doorway in the northernmost bay. The west facade has identical fenestration on the first floor, but four windows on the second, and no porch. The first floor windows have nine-over-nine light sash, while those on the second floor have nine-over-six. The main entrance on the east has a door -- once six-paneled, now glass above two panels -- framed by plain pilasters and sidelights with a fanlight across them all. The original side and fan lights have all been replaced with single sheets of glass. The steps at this entrance are of modern brick, although the bottom tread is stone and appears to be old. The south gable end has two large, unmatched chimnies with a one-storey brick pent between. There is a four-over-four light window in the pent, and a six-over-six one in the south gable between the chimney stacks and a six-over six one on each floor to the east of the east chimney on this gable end. The foundation of this section is of stone, with small, six-paned windows on both the east and west.

The wing was built onto the north gable end of the main block, to the north of the stair hall. It is also two storeys tall, but slightly shorter than the main block, and only one room deep. It is three bays long, with a door in the southernmost bay of the first floor on the east and the northernmost bay on the west, and windows in all other openings. All windows in this section have six-over-six sash. On the west facade there is a small, six-pane window to the right and above the southernmost window. A one-storey, partially enclosed, screened porch covers the door and central window on the west facade first floor. Most of the windows on the entire house, except those covered by porches, have louvered shutters. On the north gable end of the wing there is a single chimney flanked by two small, six-over-six windows in the gable.

In the south section the floor plan consists of a stair hall on the north, a large room in the southeast corner and a slightly narrower room in the southwest corner. A small square room has been created in the northwest corner of the latter; this room was also divided originally (see floor plan).

In the hall the living room door appears to be the only old one remaining in place. It is six-paneled and has part of its old lock in place. Other similar doors have been stored in the cellar and upstairs. A transom with vertical louvers is over the doorway to the dining room. The hall has an ornate, plaster rosette on the ceiling; wide, curved cornice; a cross-arch with simple molded trim; and narrow chair rail with a carved low relief design. The latter does not match that elsewhere in the house. The stair is in the northwest corner of the hall. It has a plain walnut hand rail, square balusters and step-ends with a scroll design. Below the stair the wall is paneled and there is a door to the basement stairs.

SEE CONTINUATION SHEET 2.

8 SIGNIFICANCE

| PERIOD | AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW | | | |
|---|--|-------------------------|--|--|
| —PREHISTORIC | —ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC | —COMMUNITY PLANNING | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE | —RELIGION |
| —1400-1499 | —ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC | —CONSERVATION | —LAW | —SCIENCE |
| —1500-1599 | —AGRICULTURE | —ECONOMICS | —LITERATURE | —SCULPTURE |
| —1600-1699 | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE | —EDUCATION | —MILITARY | —SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799 | —ART | —ENGINEERING | —MUSIC | —THEATER |
| —1800-1899 | —COMMERCE | —EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT | —PHILOSOPHY | —TRANSPORTATION |
| —1900- | —COMMUNICATIONS | —INDUSTRY | —POLITICS/GOVERNMENT | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY) Local History |
| | | —INVENTION | | |

SPECIFIC DATES 1789 to about 1844

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Content is one of the oldest buildings remaining in Upper Marlboro. Construction on only two buildings in the town was begun earlier. Content and these other two are also the only three eighteenth century houses surviving in Upper Marlboro. The main block of Content is representative of the two-storey structures of this period, while Kingston and the Brick (or James Wardrop) house were both 1½ storeys when first constructed. Content is the most untouched of the three; Kingston was Victorianized and the Brick house made over into a two-storey dwelling.

Content was built in three stages. Part of the south section nearest Church Street was built first, in 1787. The stair hall and the two-storey front porch were added next, about 1800.

The several rows of terraces and falls on the east and north sides of the house are typical of the sort of landscaping done in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Although no plantings remain, it is unusual enough for the terraces themselves to have survived.

Content has always been owned by families who were prominent in the civic, economic and social affairs of Upper Marlboro, Prince George's County and the State of Maryland. The house is located on part of the tract "Meadow," which was patented in 1694 by Col. Ninian Beall and included in Marlborough when the town was laid out in 1706.¹ In 1729 some of this land passed from Col. Beall's descendants to David Craufurd, a wealthy merchant who lived at "Kingston."² It was his son, David, Jr., who conveyed part of lot #36 to his infant granddaughter, Sarah Contee, in April, 1787, ". . . on which a dwelling house is now erecting, or about to be erected . . ."³ Sarah evidently died early because in 1799 her father, Richard Alexander Contee, sold the place to his nephew, James Alexander Magruder who also had acquired the adjoining lot #48 from his father John Read Magruder who was Clerk of the County Court for many years.⁴ Almost immediately, James Alexander Magruder sold both lots with their improvements to his brother-in-law, William Bradley Beanes, half brother of Dr. William Beanes of the "Star Spangled Banner" storey.⁵ Beanes paid 300 pounds currency for the property and sold it two years later to Thomas Contee for 548 pounds currency. Either Beanes made a handsome profit in the sale or he had improved the property considerably. Contee had been a member of the first Senate of the State of Maryland.⁷ Dr. Benjamin Lee purchased the house from Contee's estate in 1821.⁸ According to tradition, it was he who had the north section of the house added. In 1844, Dr. Lee moved to his plantation near Largo and sold Content to Caleb Clarke Magruder.⁹ Mr. Magruder's name is conspicuous in the newspapers and Court Proceedings of the State and County during the 1850's and 1860's for his participation in civic and legal affairs.¹⁰ There is a story that he kept fighting cocks in the cellar. The property changed hands several times until 1921 when Mrs. Mildred W. N. Bowling

SEE CONTINUATION SHEET #3.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

SEE CONTINUATION SHEET #4.

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 1.1580 acres

UTM REFERENCES

A

| | |
|---|---|
| 1 | 8 |
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| 3 | 4 | 7 | 7 | 7 | 0 |
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| 4 | 2 | 9 | 7 | 4 | 9 | 0 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|

ZONE EASTING NORTHING

B

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ZONE EASTING NORTHING

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

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

| STATE | CODE | COUNTY | CODE |
|-------|------|--------|------|
| | | | |
| | | | |

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Mrs. Margaret W. Cook

ORGANIZATION

Prince George's County Committee of Maryland Historical Trust

DATE

August 1977

STREET & NUMBER

5621 Delaware Drive

TELEPHONE

301-839-3638

CITY OR TOWN

Oxon Hill

STATE

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 National Park Service.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

John N. Pearce 3/15/78

TITLE

State Historic Preservation Officer

DATE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

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

R. B. Rettig

DATE

9/13/78

~~DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHAEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION~~

~~KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER~~

ATTEST:

William Lebovich

DATE

Sept 12, 1978

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

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Content
Prince George's County

CONTINUATION SHEET Maryland ITEM NUMBER 7 PAGE 1

(DESCRIPTION CONTINUED)

The two rooms in the south section are connected by a doorway and each has a door into the hall. Both have fireplaces on the south wall. The mantel in the living (southeast) room is of black marble in an ornate design. To the west of it is the doorway into the pent closet. The floor of wide pine boards has been patched to cover the area where the original stairway was located. The chair rail is similar but not identical to that in the hall. The cornice is curved with a design of scrolls and flowers. This room measures about 24' x 16'.

The southwest room is about ten feet wide and at some time in the past was divided into two rooms. Nail holes in the floor show where the wall was located. A bathroom has been partitioned off the north end of this room. Marks on the wall indicate that there was a chair rail and that two different mantels have been on the fireplace. The floor near the fireplace has been patched. Lathe in the cellar ceiling shows there has been a fire here.

The dining room is on the north side of the hall and with the adjoining kitchen forms the north section of the house. At some earlier time, the dining room was divided in half (east-west). A corner cupboard of Victorian style conceals the utility pipes in the southwest corner of the room. A tiny window is high in the west wall inside of the cupboard. The casings on the doors and windows in this room do not match one another or those in other rooms of the house.

The kitchen has been changed by the addition of modern equipment, cabinets and new floor cover. The north wall has been covered over, concealing the fireplace.

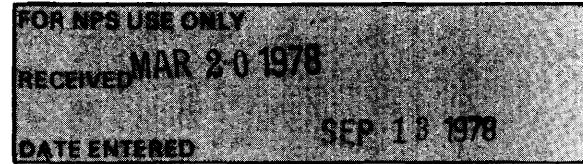
The second floor is similar in plan to the main floor. The hall has very wide molded chair rail. The door at the east end of the porch has been altered and resembles the main door on the floor beneath it. The fireplaces in the north and southwest bedrooms are covered. The mantel in the southeast room is plain wood with curved capitals atop plain pilasters.

The attic has one large room on either side of the stair hall. The wall and ceiling are plastered. The exterior wall of the north end of the hall is exposed. It clearly indicates the addition of the north section of the house. There is a door with a window on either side connecting the two sections of the house.

SEE CONTINUATION SHEET #2.

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INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**



Content
Prince George's County

CONTINUATION SHEET Maryland ITEM NUMBER 7 PAGE 2

(DESCRIPTION CONTINUED)

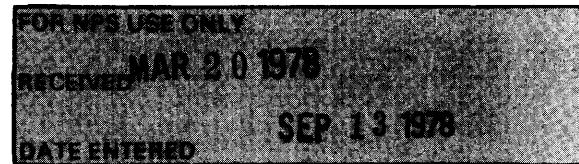
The cellar walls define the three stages in which the house was built. The south section has four stone (probably from Aquia) walls. Brick partitions have been added to make two small rooms on the west side. There is a large fireplace on the south wall. Next to the fireplace near the east wall is a wide, short door of vertical boards. The space where the stairway was formerly located can be seen where the ceiling has been altered. The floor is earthen. The hall and north rooms have concrete floors and brick walls. The west wall of the north room formerly had an exterior door near the hall wall.

The house is located in the southwest corner of the property, creating a large area of lawn to the north and east of the house. The highest point of the property is the northwest corner. Several curved, deep terraces which appear to be very old bring the land down to the level of the house. One terrace (north-south) breaks the expanse of the east yard. A border of trees of many varieties nearly surrounds the property. Evidence of brick paths has been found in the yard.

There are no outbuildings.

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Content

Prince George's County

CONTINUATION SHEET Maryland ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE 3

(SIGNIFICANCE CONTINUED)

purchased it. She and her descendants were in possession until the present owner purchased Content in 1977.

¹Patents, Liber B#23, folio 133, Hall of Records, Annapolis, Maryland.

²Deeds, Liber M, folio 503, Courthouse, Upper Marlboro, Maryland.

³Ibid, Liber HH, folio 480.

⁴Ibid, Liber JRM#4, folio 357; Liber JRM#7, folio 202.

Ibid, Liber JRM#7, folio 203.

⁶Ibid, Liber JRM#8, folio 376.

⁷R. Lee Van Horn, Out of the Past, Prince George's County Historic 1 Society, Riverdale, 1976, pp. 217-218.

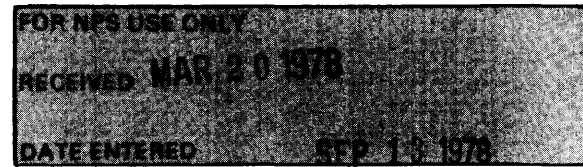
⁸Deed, Liber AB#2, folio 55, Courthouse, Upper Marlboro, Maryland.

⁹Ibid, Liber JB#3, folio 449.

¹⁰Effie Gwynn Bowie, Across the Years in Prince George's County, Garrett and Massie, Inc., Richmond, 1947, p. 545.

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Content

Prince George's County

CONTINUATION SHEET Maryland ITEM NUMBER 9 PAGE 4

PRIMARY SOURCES

Courthouse, Upper Marlboro, Maryland.

Deeds: M-503; HH-480; JRM#4-357; JRM#7-202, 203; JRM#8-376; AB#2-55; JB#3-499.

Hall of Records, Annapolis, Maryland.

Patents: B#23-133.

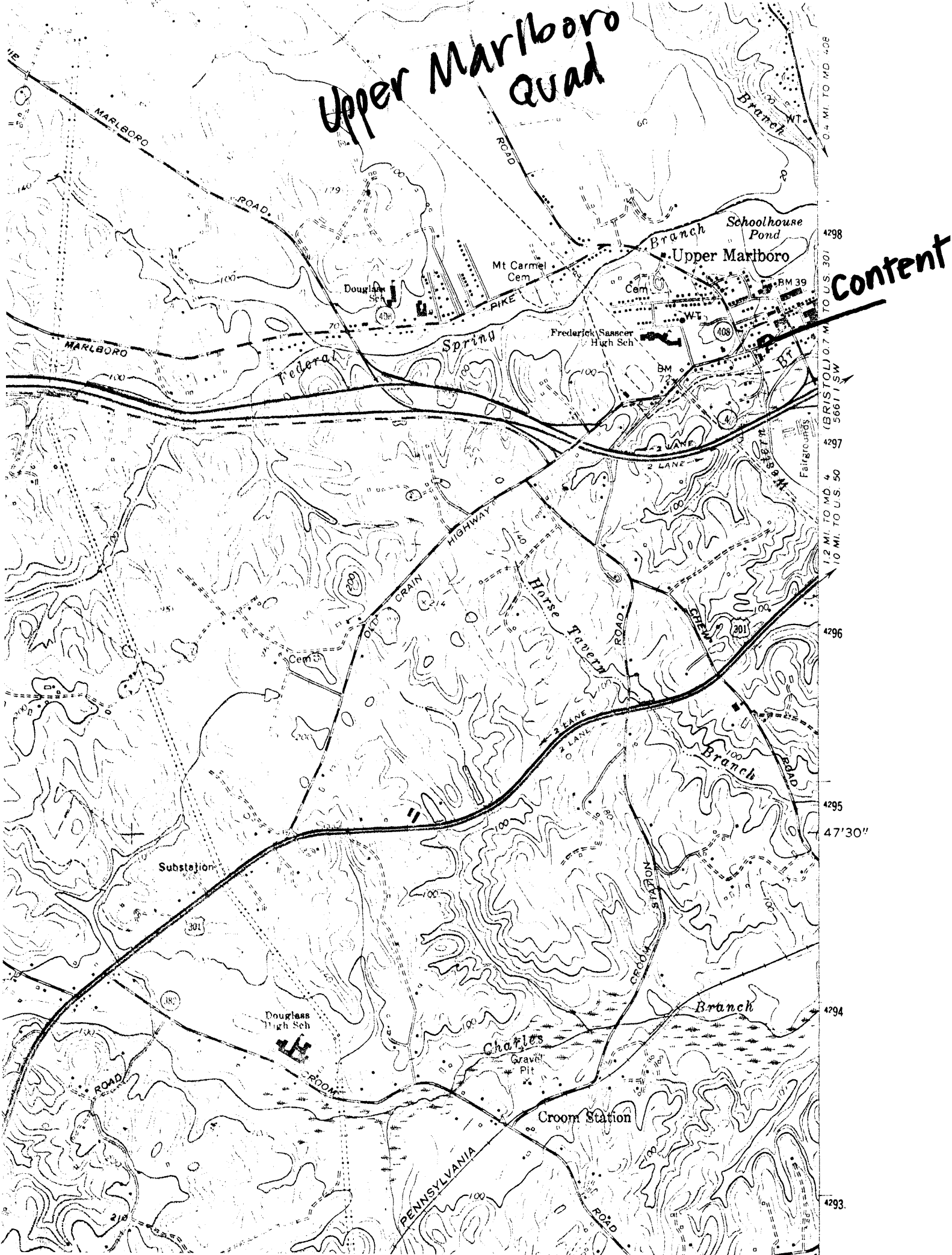
SECONDARY SOURCES

Bowie, Effie Gwynn. Across the Years in Prince George's County. Richmond, Virginia: Garrett and Massie, Inc., 1947.

Van Horn, R. Lee. Out of the Past. Riverdale, Maryland: The Prince George's County Historical Society, 1976.

Upper Marlboro Quad

Content



0.4 MI. TO MD 428
1.2 MI. TO MD 4
1.0 MI. TO U.S. 50
4298
4297
4296
4295
4294
4293

(BRISTOL) 0.7 M. TO U.S. 301
5661' 1 SW

47' 30"