

P40280313

DATA SHEET

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED SEP 12 1975

DATE ENTERED

NOV 12 1975

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

Rich Hill, Rich Hill Farm

AND/OR COMMON

Rich Hill, Rich Hill Farm

LOCATION

NE of Bel Alton

STREET & NUMBER

Bel Alton-Newtown Road

1 1/2 miles East of Rt. 301 on North side of/ —NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

Bel Alton *vic.*

— VICINITY OF

First

STATE

CODE

COUNTY

CODE

Maryland

24

Charles

017

CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE <input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL <input type="checkbox"/> PARK
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	PUBLIC ACQUISITION	ACCESSIBLE	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT <input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT <input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL <input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:

OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

Joseph F. Vallario, Jr. and Mary T. Vallario

STREET & NUMBER

7801 Woodyard Road

CITY, TOWN

STATE

Clinton

— VICINITY OF

Maryland

LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

STATE

La Plata

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED DATE _____
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Rich Hill Farm is located on the northwest side of the Bel Alton-Newtown Road, approximately one mile from the junction of that road with U.S. Route 301, at Bel Alton, Charles County.

The home known as Rich Hill is a two-story, gable-roofed frame building with a double chimney on one end and a one-story central chimneyed frame wing on the other. Rich Hill is a recognized local landmark because of its association with Col. Samuel Cox, one of several residents of the county who aided John Wilkes Booth in his escape to Virginia following the assassination of Abraham Lincoln. The main house, however, predates the period of its ownership by Cox and possesses many architectural features that are significant to the study and interpretation of the vernacular architecture of the Southern Maryland region.

The principal facade of Rich Hill faces southeast and is four bays wide at the first floor level. The entrance occupies the first bay in from the east corner. The three remaining first floor bays are occupied by windows, as are the five bays across the second floor level. On both floor levels the window and door surrounds are of a type popular in this region during the first several decades of the nineteenth century. The windows on both floor levels frame two-over-two Victorian sash. Fronting the southeast facade is a one-story, shed-roofed farm porch that was probably added to the house in the late nineteenth or early twentieth century.

At the southwest end of the main block is a large double chimney with a two-story, windowed pent. The chimney weatherings are stepped on three sides at the attic gable level and the two stacks are free standing.¹ Four windows were introduced on this elevation in about the third quarter of the nineteenth century, one on each side of the chimney at both floor levels.

¹The earliest dated example of this chimney type was the east chimney of Mt. Tirzah, a gambrel roofed house in Charles County dated 1774. The best surviving example is the double chimney with three-story pent at Chimney House, ca. 1779, Port Tobacco, Charles County.

It is believed, however, that this chimney is a replacement of an earlier one that probably resembled the massive tiered chimneys characteristic of the original house plan. In all other mid-eighteenth century houses of this type, there were two such chimneys, one at each end of the house. The replacement of the chimney is only suspected due to the lateness of its particular form as compared to the probable early date of the house, the nineteenth century appearance of the brickwork, and its poor, almost careless joining to the house. Removal of interior plaster and excavations at both ends of the house will reveal the necessary evidence.

(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 checked="" 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

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The historical significance of Rich Hill relates directly to its ownership by Col. Samuel Cox and the role Cox played in the flight of John Wilkes Booth through Charles County to Virginia following the assassination of Abraham Lincoln, April 14, 1865.

Samuel Cox, whose sympathy for the Southern cause was well known, hid Booth and his companion-in-crime, David Herold, on his Rich Hill farm after Booth and Herold were sent there upon being discovered in a nearby swamp by a neighbor's servant. Cox then proceeded to arrange for their safe (and secret) passage to Virginia. Booth and Herold remained hidden in a pine thicket at Rich Hill until April 21, when Thomas A. Jones, foster brother of Colonel Cox and a former Chief Signal Agent for the Confederacy, provided them with a small boat in which they crossed the Potomac River to Virginia. In the trials that followed Booth's eventual capture at Pope's Creek, Virginia, Cox and Jones were convicted of aiding Booth in his flight and sentenced to brief imprisonments -- Jones six weeks, and Cox seven.

Rich Hill is included in the "Booth Trail," defined by published tour guides and marked by state historical markers that locate all stops Booth made from his exit from Ford's Theatre to the barn and house of the Garrett farm in Virginia where he was shot and killed by Union soldiers.

Although the present exterior and first floor appearance of Rich Hill reflects the period of Cox's ownership, its original early or mid-eighteenth century skeleton and contemporary second floor treatment establish its architectural significance as well. The original floor plan was one characteristic of the Charles and St. Mary's County region throughout the eighteenth century. Marshall Hall, circa 1720; Greenwood, circa 1740; Sandgates, circa 1750-60; and, Maxwell Hall, circa 1760-70 are among the many documented eighteenth century Lower Southern Maryland houses having the same room configuration. However, Rich Hill and Marshall Hall are the only known and recorded houses with this plan that were initially built as two story dwellings. Important original elements that survive include the cut stone piers on which the house stands, the very handsome doors and hardware of the second floor, and the unique design of the second floor ceilings. Thus, although extensively altered in the early nineteenth century, Rich Hill provides much valuable information relative

(See Continuation Sheet #3)

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Pogue, Robert, F. T. Old Maryland Landmarks. Bushwood, Maryland: Private 1972. pp. 271, 273.

Klaphor, Margaret B. and Brown, Paul Dennis. History of Charles, County, Maryland. La Plata, Maryland: Charles County Tercentenary, Inc. 1958. pp. 122, 131.

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 15

UTM REFERENCES

329			329				
A	1,8	3,2,89,6,0	4,2,6,0,9,6,0	B	1,8	3,2,89,2,0	4,2,6,0,7,1,0
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C	1,8	3,2,87,1,0	4,2,6,0,7,4,0	D	1,8	3,2,87,4,0	4,2,6,0,9,9,0

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

329

329

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

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

J. Richard Rivoire, Architectural Historian sdh

ORGANIZATION

Maryland Historical Trust

DATE

May 1975

STREET & NUMBER

21 State Circle, The John Shaw House

TELEPHONE

(301) 267-1438

CITY OR TOWN

Annapolis

STATE

Maryland 21401

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

TITLE

State Historic Preservation Officer

DATE

August 26, 1975

FOR NPS USE ONLY

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

Acting

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

DATE

11/12/95

ATTEST:

DATE

NOV 11 1975

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
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Rich Hill
CONTINUATION SHEET Charles County ITEM NUMBER 7 PAGE 1

On the first floor level of the rear elevation the house is three bays wide with doors occupying the center bay and the first bay in from the north corner. The latter door occupies the area of a former window opening. Across the second floor level are three windows. With the exception of the first floor end door, the moldings framing these openings are stylistically of an earlier date than the other windows and doors and probably date from circa 1800.

The gable roof of Rich Hill is presently covered with corrugated tin. The roof framing, however, is an early nineteenth century replacement of the original. The original roof, also gabled but much more steeply pitched, was first covered with riven clapboards. This initial sheathing was followed by subsequent coverings of round and butt end shingles.

The exterior walls of the house are sheathed with beaded random width clapboards. The date of their application is probably contemporary with the circa 1825 renovation date of the house.

One of the more interesting structural features of Rich Hill is the manner in which the wall sills are seated on top of evenly spaced quarried stone blocks, a feature thought to be unique in Southern Maryland. The source of the stone is not known, although it probably was brought here from a Virginia quarry, as was the foundation stone of many houses in nearby Port Tobacco. In later years the area between the stone blocks was filled with coursed brick.

The present ground floor room arrangement of Rich Hill includes a through hall on the northeast end of the house (see plan). This hall is intersected by a simple, Federal-style, elliptically headed arch with paneled pilasters, positioned slightly less than halfway forward from the rear wall. On the southwest side of the hall are three rooms. The largest of these is located at the front between the hall and the southwest end of the building. Behind this are two rooms of equal size. The room between the northeast end hall and the southwest rear chamber houses the stair. Throughout this level the molding profiles are fairly consistent, regionally datable to within the first quarter of the nineteenth century. The mantels framing the two fireplaces are executed in a Federal-style manner. Both have reeded and ribboned pilasters and molded cornice shelves with reeded bedmoldings. The parlor mantel has carved sunbursts on the frieze. The staircase probably dates from the mid-nineteenth century and has a heavy, turned newell and turned balusters.

(See Continuation Sheet #2)

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Rich Hill
CONTINUATION SHEET Charles County ITEM NUMBER 7 PAGE 2

There is ample evidence to document the fact that the existing first floor room configuration is an alteration of an earlier arrangement. The original plan was one much more characteristic of eighteenth century Southern Maryland dwellings and consisted of four rooms and a centered rear stair hall.

At Rich Hill the entrance door was probably more centered on the front facade and opened directly into the larger of the two front rooms (west room). The arch in the existing end hall defines an earlier partition wall location dividing this area into two rooms. Centered in the rear was the stairhall, probably with a small winding stair. Flanking it, one to each side, were two similarly sized rooms. It is probable that the two rooms which preceded the present end hall had fireplaces on their outside end walls but that the chimney was removed when the house was remodeled. The door opening into the pent closet, as well as the rear outside door, are substantially older than the nineteenth century woodwork of this level, but might not be as old as the actual construction date of the house. Since they are not nearly as well designed or executed as the original doors found on the second floor it is possible that they were introduced during an earlier renovation of the house or were brought here from another location.

Until renovation work planned by the present owners of Rich Hill commences the precise location of door and window openings, partition walls and chimneys will probably remain undetermined.

The second floor of Rich Hill contains a profusion of original detail and amply illustrates the probable earliest appearance of the house. The rear stair opens into a "T" shaped hall off of which are four bedchambers, as well as a small closet at the front of the hall (see plan). All of the doors of this level have four, very pronounced, fielded panels, and are hung on decorative wrought hinges. Those jambs that are original do not bear applied moldings but do have chamfered edges; with the exception of the southeast chamber the wide plank flooring is original. The baseboards in the hall are the only ones thought to be original and have a beaded edge. Since the wall plates are at a level with the top of the windows additional room height was provided by raising the ceilings in a rather unique fashion. In the four bedchambers and hall closet the ceilings are canted on all four sides of the room, a feature which is entirely original and which has no relationship to the roof framing system itself (see cross section). Woodwork not original to this level includes all window surrounds and sash and the two west end mantels, all of which date from the early nineteenth century.

(See Continuation Sheet #3)

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Rich Hill
CONTINUATION SHEET Charles County ITEM NUMBER 7, 8 PAGE 3

#7

Although most of the framing of the wing appears to be eighteenth century its presence in this location did not occur before the circa 1825-35 renovation of the main block.

The framing system and interior fabric represent various stages of construction, modification and renovation and for this reason it is impossible to accurately determine its original appearance. It does seem obvious, however, that the wing was either moved here from another location on the property or else constructed using salvaged framing members.

There are no surviving landscape features of note, nor are there any farm dependencies earlier than a circa 1910 barn adjacent to the house yard.

#8

to the study and interpretation of the eighteenth century vernacular architecture of Lower Southern Maryland.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
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Rich Hill
Charles County,
Maryland

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 7

PAGE

DESCRIPTION (continued)

(This revised description is submitted to reflect recent renovations carried out at Rich Hill).

Although greatly altered when acquired by Cox in the early 19th century, Rich Hill possesses many unique architectural features that establish it as one of the most significant surviving examples of regional architecture.

Rich Hill was probably built within the second quarter of the 18th century. Like Marshall Hall (National Register, Charles County) it is a true 1½-story building, although from the exterior both appear to be full two-stories. Its existing gable roof replaced the original hip-on-gable roof. The five second level rooms still retain their original doors, hardware and surrounds, and have ceilings sloped on all four sides, the latter unique in Southern Maryland. The first floor plan consisted of four rooms and a short rear stair hall. In the early 19th century this plan was altered to an end hall plan with a large front room and two small rooms to the rear of that. Today only the stair hall and northwest room retain their original dimensions. No original woodwork remains on this level.

The window and door locations of the first floor front and rear elevations were altered in the early 19th century to accommodate changes made to the floor plan. The original entrance was centered on the south front and was flanked by four windows. The five windows of the second floor occupy original locations though all were subsequently enlarged. An original rear door was removed during recent renovations but the three windows across the second level of this elevation occupy original positions.

When the house was renovated in the early 19th century the exterior was sheathed with random width beaded boards, replacing an earlier riven board covering. At this same time the formerly exposed eaves, showing chamfered joist ends, were enclosed by a boxed cornice with molded decorations. When first built the house stood on cut stone piers, the open areas between these, however, were later filled with brick.

Single large exterior chimneys of a type seen at Maxwell Hall

See continuation sheet #

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Rich Hill
Charles County,
Maryland

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 7

PAGE

DESCRIPTION (continued)

(Charles County) and Loch Leven (Charles County) formerly stood at the ends of the house. These were subsequently removed, probably in the early 19th century. The double chimney with two-story pent presently standing at the west end of the house dates from this time.

A one-story frame addition on the east end, torn down during renovations in 1975-76, was built in the early 19th century using materials possibly salvaged from a former kitchen or other dependency. ✓

J. Richard Rivoire
Faulkner, Maryland
Summer 1976