

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY  
RECEIVED SEP 20 1978  
DATE ENTERED

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 Thomas Richards house  
AND/OR COMMON Richardsmere

LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER 3 miles west of Rising Sun on <sup>U.S. 1</sup> ~~south side of~~  
~~U. S. Route 1.~~ NOT FOR PUBLICATION  
CITY, TOWN Rising Sun VICINITY OF First CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT  
STATE Maryland CODE 24 COUNTY Cecil CODE 015

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 type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input 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	<b>PUBLIC ACQUISITION</b>	<b>ACCESSIBLE</b>	<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 Mr. and Mrs. Ronald W. Edwards ✓  
STREET & NUMBER R. D. #2, Richardsmere Farm  
CITY, TOWN Rising Sun VICINITY OF Maryland STATE 21911

LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. Cecil County Courthouse  
STREET & NUMBER Main Street  
CITY, TOWN Elkton STATE Maryland

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE  
DATE  
DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS  
CITY, TOWN STATE  
FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

# 7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input checked="" 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 type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

## DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Thomas Richards house is located on the south side of U. S. Route 1, three miles west of Rising Sun, Maryland. It is a stone and brick farmhouse nestled in a picturesque valley opposite the historic Richards' Oak Tree.

The house faces north and is set into a hillside, making it slightly taller on the south elevation. It consists of two sections, the kitchen of fieldstone construction, dating from the late 18th century, and the main block of brick construction, dating from the early 19th century.

The stone section is 1½ stories with dormers only on the south side. On the north facade it has a 44" wide, six-panel door with five-light transom in the east bay and a window with nine-over-six sash in the west bay. The shingle roof overhangs this facade several feet, sheltering the entrance. A brick interior chimney rises from the west end of this section. On the south facade there are a door and window directly opposite those on the north. Two gable-roofed dormers with six-over-six sash are situated above the openings on this side. A porch extends across this facade, just below the sills of the dormer windows.

On the inside, this section is one room deep and measures 18 feet wide by 20 feet long. There is a large, cooking fireplace in the west end of the room, with eight-foot mantelshelf and oven. The west end of the room has beaded paneling, as does the enclosed winding stair leading to the second story and the brick section. The bedroom in this section has a small fireplace with a painted blue scroll design on the plaster to simulate a mantel. This room has a beaded, pine paneled ceiling, and the east wall is paneled, with four steps leading to the landing of the stairs.

The brick section is three bays wide, two stories tall and one room deep, with garret and basement. This section is a half-story above the stone section due to the slope of the hill. The north facade has a six-panel door with four-light transom in the west bay and nine-over-six sash windows in all other openings. The windows on the north facade of both sections and the first story, south window of the kitchen have paneled shutters. There is a pent roof across the north facade of the main block between the first and second stories. On the south there are nine-over-six sash windows in all openings on both floors. The stone foundation is partially exposed on this facade. There is a small, four-pane window in the north side of the chimney stacks in both gables of this section. The brick is laid in common bond. (The fireplace on the east end looks as though it may have been added later; the firebox and flue extend out from the wall to the second floor level where the flue goes inside the wall.)

The first floor plan of this section consists of a large room at the east end of the house, and an entrance hall and smaller room in the west. The stair is located in the center. (See floor plan.) The main entrance opens into the hall, which is 13½ feet long and 4½ feet wide. The south wall has beaded and tapered paneling with two steps of the enclosed stair exposed with newel and baluster.

The small room south of the entrance hall is the library. It has a large mantel of simple molding and simple, beaded chair rail. There are two closets beneath the stairs on the east side of the room. There is a small closet in the exposed (south) side of the chimney.

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 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY) Local history
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Thomas Richards house is important for the basically unaltered condition in which it has survived, serving as an excellent example of the architecture of the turn of the 19th century in Cecil County. Thomas Richards, builder of the house, was a prosperous farmer and active member of West Nottingham Friends Meeting. He was also involved in politics, serving as a commissioner of the tax. In his will of 1837 it is stated that he owned shares in the Susquehanna River Bridge. Richards was a successful member of the community and his house is reflective of the solidity of his position.

The restoration was carried out with the advice of Edward Plumstead of Rising Sun, Maryland, and Robert Rally, architect and restoration consultant of Newark, Delaware.

Richards' grandson, Joseph Thomas Richards, was born in 1845 and became an engineer in Philadelphia. It was he who compiled the original genealogy, map and Friends Meeting record that has preserved the family history. Dr. G. Hampton Richards, another descendant, served the community of Port Deposit for many years in medical practice and the hospital.

The Richards genealogy in America <sup>begins</sup> with Joseph Richards, M.D., Philadelphia, baptised 1620, died 1710. His descendants spread into Chester County, Pennsylvania, and fifth generation Thomas Richards (1755-1837) migrated from Toughkenamon, Pennsylvania to Nottingham, Cecil County, Maryland in December, 1795, at the age of forty.

He settled on an original Nottingham Lot (#2) laid out by William Penn's survey of Nottingham in 1702 and held by two Philadelphia landholders, John Guest and Edward Benson. This tract of land south of the Octoraro had been sold to William Edminston in 1740 and was known as "Edminston Heights." This plantation of 373 acres, together with all houses, buildings and improvements, was purchased by Evan W. Thomas of Harford County in 1796. Thomas made an agreement with Thomas Richards to use and farm the land, and on April 24, 1799, 200 acres of Edminston Heights was conveyed to Thomas Richards by deed of indenture. The purchase price was for 1,555 pounds current money of the State of Maryland.

The property remained in the Richards family for over 130 years, from 1796 to 1927, when the farm was sold.

In 1928 US Route #1 was re-routed, severing the northern boundary. This is the tract of land where the famed Richards' Oak now stands. This huge tree, at first called the Lafayette Oak (following the General's visit), is a historic landmark owned for more than a century by the Richards family.

SEE CONTINUATION SHEET #2.

# 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

SEE CONTINUATION SHEET #3.

## 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 4.19 acres

UTM REFERENCES

A 

18	4047110	4394030
ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING

B 

ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING

C 

ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING

D 

ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

BEGINNING at a point beside U.S. Route 1, just east of Richard's Oak, and at the intersection of lands owned by Ms. Evelyn Todd Fox and Ronald Edwards, thence, south along said property line for 365'; thence, due east across lands owned by said Edwards for 525' to a point on the edge of said property; thence, north for 375' running along the property line of Edwards and Edwin Hoster to a point beside said U.S. Route 1; thence, west along Route 1 for 462' to the place of beginning, containing 4.19 acres, more or less. (Also see enclosed plat map.)

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

Ronald W. and Audrey S. Edwards (owners)

1 km

ORGANIZATION

Cecil County Committee, Maryland Historical Trust

DATE

July 1977

STREET & NUMBER

R. D. #2

TELEPHONE

CITY OR TOWN

Rising Sun

STATE

Maryland 21911

## 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

*Vanny Smith*

9/14/78

TITLE

ACTING STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER

DATE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

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

*Carol D. Skelton*

DATE

12-19-79

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHAEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

ATTEST:

*Kristin O'Connell*

DATE

12/18/79

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

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Thomas Richards house  
Cecil County

CONTINUATION SHEET Maryland

ITEM NUMBER

7

PAGE 1

(DESCRIPTION CONTINUED)

The large room at the east end is the living room. The fireplace in the east end has a mantel with a band of reeding below the shelf and reeded pilasters flanking the opening. The chair rail is molded with beaded band; the same molding is repeated in the window flames. There are two doors in the west end of the room, one at either end; the north one leads to the hall and the south one to a closet.

The central staircase in the brick section leads to an upstairs hall running north to south with a window at each end. The width of the hall is five feet. The hallways (both up and down) have ample mushroom pegs for hanging clothes. A large bedroom is to the east of the hall and two small bedrooms to the west. The smallest bedroom is presently a bath; the old partition was moved to enlarge the other bedroom and make the bath. There are no fireplaces on the second floor of the brick section.

Floors throughout the house are original, random width oak downstairs and poplar upstairs (painted). Interior molding, woodwork and hardware is mostly original. When necessary to replace them during restoration, nails, wood and hardware were purchased from other old buildings rather than using new or reproductions. Original paint colors have been matched. Electricity, plumbing and other modern conveniences have been tucked into obscure places with meticulous care. The once dirt-floored cellar and root-cellar under the brick section is the present modern kitchen, T.V. room and utility room. Stone foundation walls continue to be exposed. This area is approachable from the old kitchen by three stone steps and can be completely closed-off from the authentic part of the house.

The house is furnished with antiques collected with care specifically for it. The Thomas Richards house is typical of an affluent farm of the period. It was built with solid construction, good taste, and with a modest pride. This atmosphere continues today.

The only original outbuilding is the large stone and wood bank (three levels) barn. It was built and enlarged during the early 19th century and remains in excellent condition, continuing to be functional.

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Thomas Richards house  
Cecil County

CONTINUATION SHEET Maryland

ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE 2

(SIGNIFICANCE CONTINUED)

A land deed as late as 1878 still refers to the area as Edmunston Heights; however, with the influence of the expanding Richards family the area was becoming known as Richardsmere. The same area is now locally called Spready Oak.

The Thomas Richards house is not dated, but it is signed by Thomas Richards on the plaster inside the cooking fireplace. The "rds" was quite smoked over as was any other writing or date below his name. The Richards did not alter the house during 130 years of dwelling. From 1927 until 1942 ownership changed four times and electricity and plumbing were added. One family owned the farm from 1942 until 1962 when the present owners purchased the property and began an accurate restoration.

SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANCE

The two-part Thomas Richards house is a basically unaltered example of two house types found throughout northeastern Maryland and southeastern Pennsylvania in the late 18th and early 19th centuries. The first section, a 1½-story stone structure dating from the end of the 18th century, is very simple with cooking fireplace and a finished room in the attic. The Germanic influence typical of this large area is most easily seen in the overhanging roof with fine cornice. Other good regional architectural traits include: vertical beaded paneling, Germanic wrought iron hardware on the main door, and the heavy quality of the woodwork (front door, shutters, bolection surround of cooking fireplace, etc.)

The early 19th century brick addition exhibits a combination of Federal and Germanic influences, also typical of this Maryland/Pennsylvania region. The reeded mantel in the living room is distinctly Federal, while the other mantels in this section are simpler versions of the Federal style common to Maryland's Eastern Shore. (Also probably done in the 19th century, in great contrast to the Federal motifs of the fireplace decorations in the main house, is the folk or "naive" effort to decorate the small fireplace in the bedroom of the earlier structure with a painted on plaster surround.) The pent roof across the north facade of the main block is also a Germanic feature common to this area. The front facade is the four-bay one of the Germans, rather than the more common five-bay tidewater front, although the floor plan is not typical of either tradition.

The early 19th century bank barn on the property is also a type typically found in German-influenced areas.

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Thomas Richards house  
Cecil County  
Maryland

CONTINUATION SHEET      ITEM NUMBER 9      PAGE 3

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MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Primary sources:

Cecil County Land and Probate Records, Courthouse, Elkton, Maryland  
Wills B#9/19; D#11/439  
Deeds JB#3/474; JB#20/176; JS#32/32  
Inventories, 1808-1820

West Nottingham Friends Meeting House plans

Map of Old Nottingham Lots, 1901

Secondary sources:

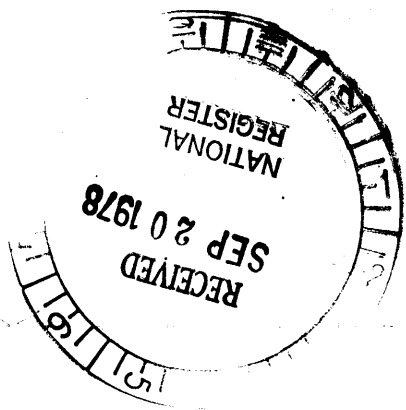
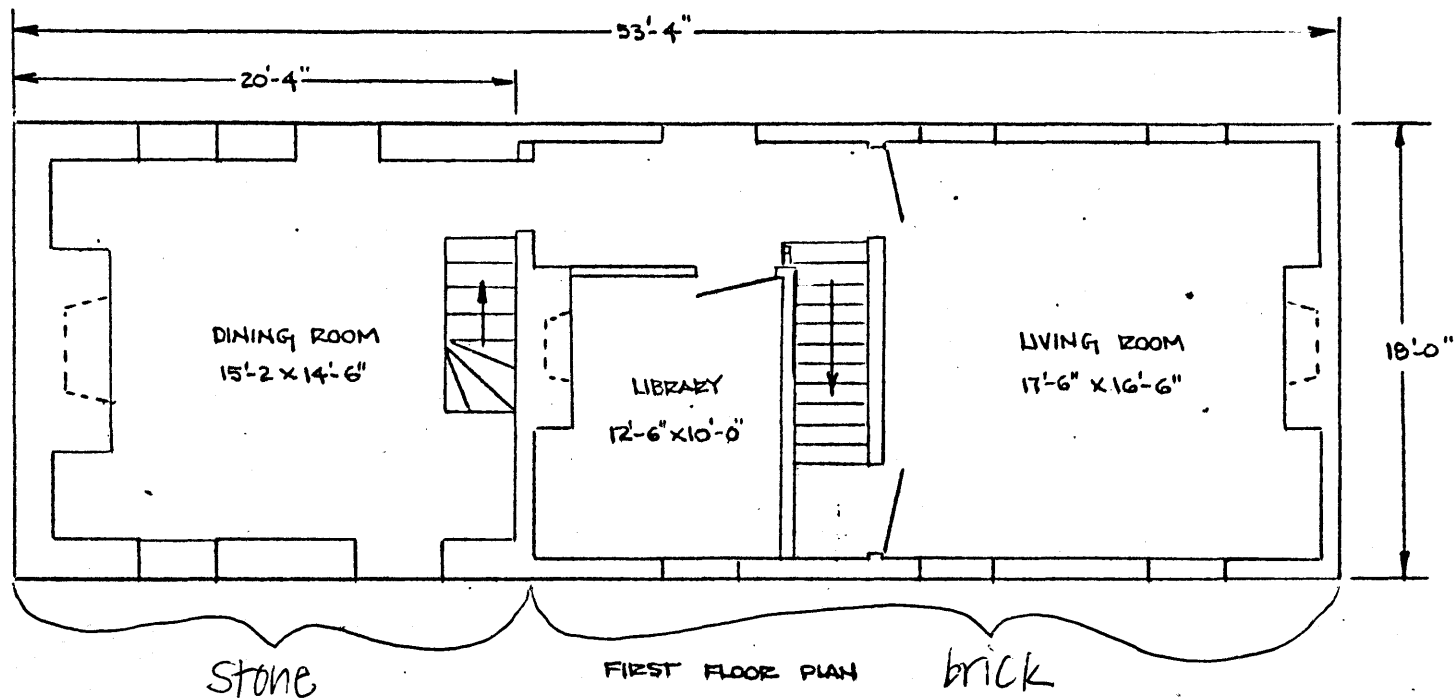
Gifford, G.E., Jr. Cecil County, Maryland, 1608-1850, As Seen By Some Visitors.  
Rising Sun, Maryland, 1974. p. 225.

Johnson, George. History of Cecil County, Maryland. Elkton, 1881. pp. 351,  
397, 402.

Miller, Alice. Cecil County, A Study in Local History. Port Deposit, 1949.  
pp. 122, 140.

Richards, Joseph Thomas. Richards Genealogy, ms.

North

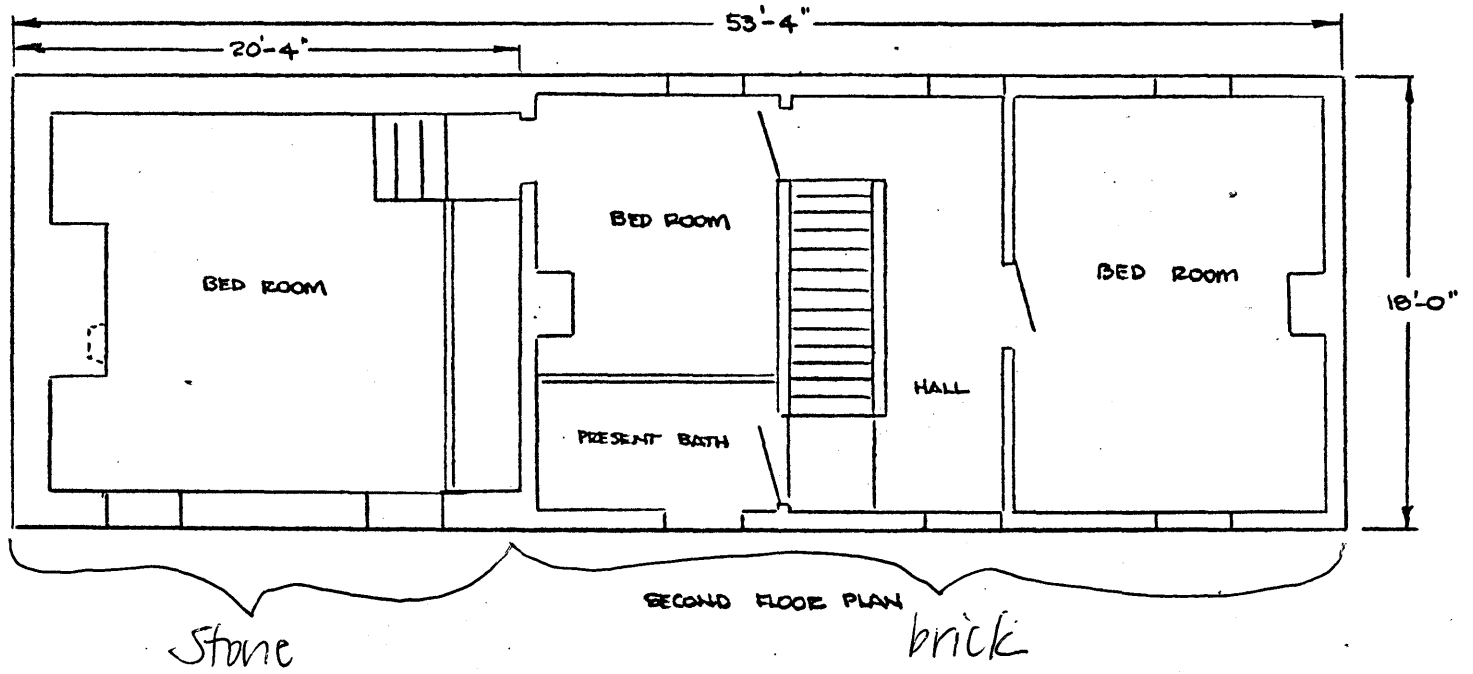


THOMAS RICHARDS HOUSE  
OWNER - MR & MRS RONALD W. EDWARDS

South



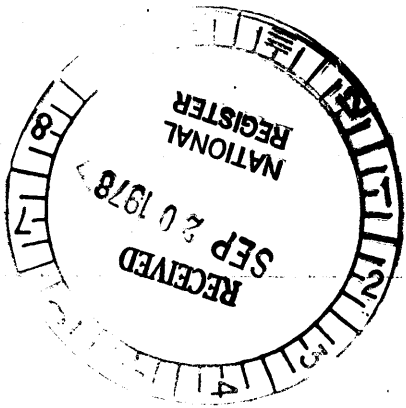
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SECOND FLOOR PLAN

Stone

brick



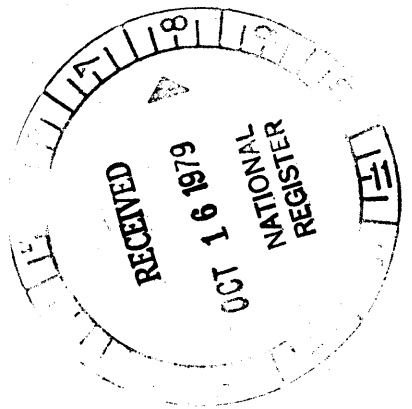
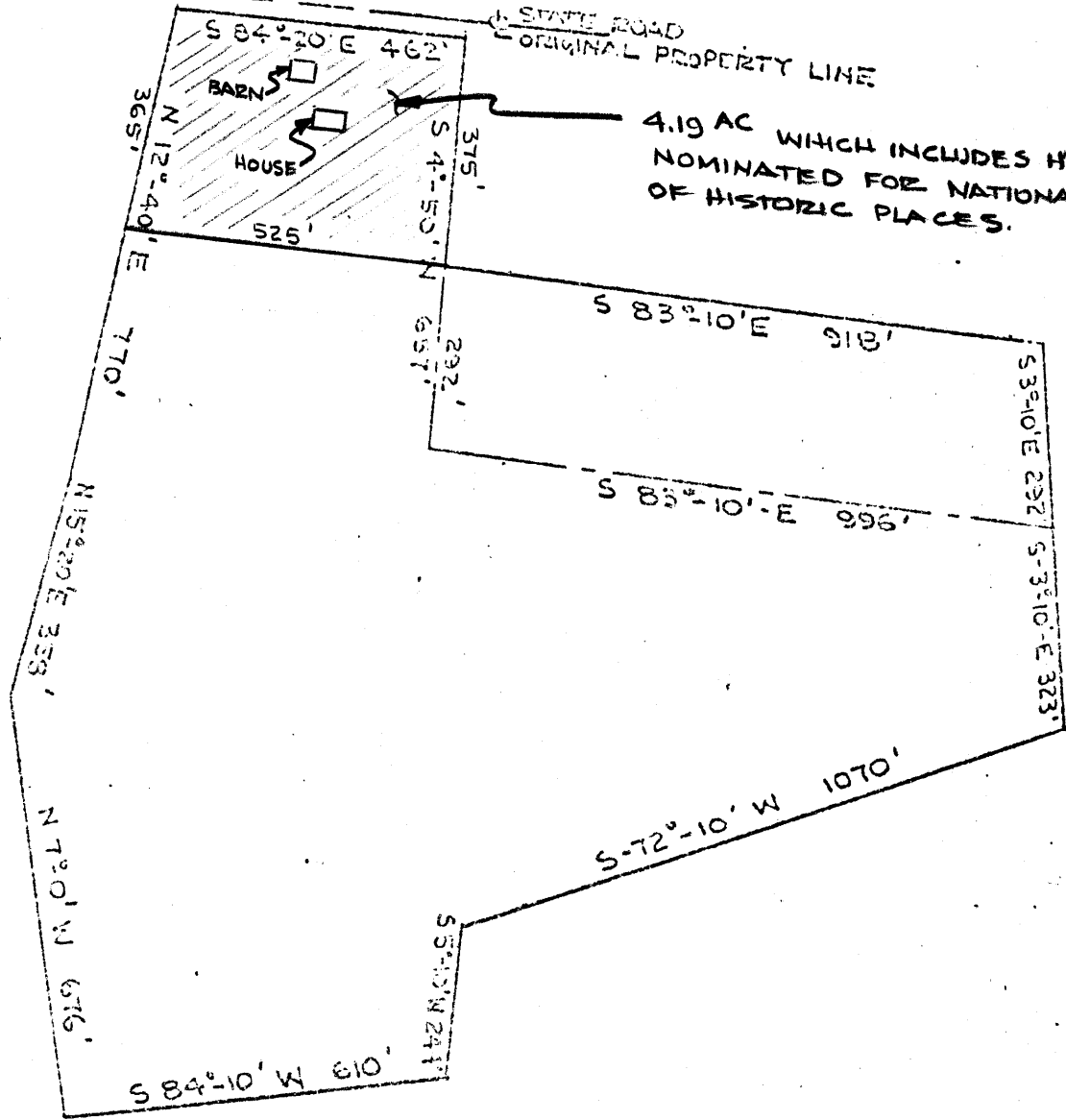
South

THOMAS RICHARDS HOUSE

US ROUTE No 1

STATE ROAD  
ORIGINAL PROPERTY LINE

4.19 AC WHICH INCLUDES HOUSE & BARN  
NOMINATED FOR NATIONAL REGISTER  
OF HISTORIC PLACES.



PROPERTY OF  
 RONALD W. & ANDREY S. EDWARDS  
 5TH DISTRICT CECIL CO. MARYLAND  
 SCALE 1" = 300'      JUNE 1981