

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a).

1. Name of Property

historic name Plumb Groveother names Nesbitt-Warner Farmhouse; MIHP #WA-V-015

2. Location

street & number 12654 Broadfording Road☐ not for publicationcity or town Clear Spring☒ vicinitystate Marylandcode MDcounty Washingtoncode 43zip code 21722

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this ☒ nomination ☐ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property ☒ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant ☐ nationally ☐ statewide ☒ locally. (☐ See continuation sheet for additional comments).

Signature of certifying official/Title

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property ☐ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria. (☐ See continuation sheet for additional comments).

Signature of certifying official/Title

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby, certify that this property is:

☐ entered in the National Register.☐ See continuation sheet.☐ determined eligible for the National Register.☐ See continuation sheet.☐ Determined not eligible for the National Register.☐ removed from the National Register.☐ other (explain): _____

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

Plumb Grove (WA-V-015)

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5. Classification**Ownership of Property**

(Check as many boxes as apply)

- ☒ private
☐ public-local
☐ public-State
☐ public-Federal

Category of Property

(Check only one box)

- ☒ building(s)
☐ district
☐ site
☐ structure
☐ object

Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	3	buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
1	3	Total

Name of related multiple property listing

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

N/A

number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

6. Function or Use**Historic Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC/single dwelling

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

RECREATION AND CULTURE/museum

7. Description**Architectural Classification**

(Enter categories from instructions)

MID 19TH CENTURY/Greek Revival**Materials**

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Stone

walls Brick

roof Wood/shingle

other Wood

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets)

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8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing)

- ☐ A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad pattern of our history.
- ☐ B Property associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- ☒ C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- ☐ D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply)

Property is:

- ☐ A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- ☐ B removed from its original location.
- ☐ C a birthplace or grave.
- ☐ D a cemetery.
- ☐ E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- ☐ F a commemorative property.
- ☐ G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets)

Area of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

Architecture

Period of Significance

Ca. 1831

Significant Dates

Ca. 1831

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

N/A

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets)

Previous documentation on files (NPS):

- ☐ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- ☐ previously listed in the National Register
- ☐ previously determined eligible by the National Register
- ☐ designated a National Historic Landmark
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey
- # _____
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record
- # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- ☒ State Historic Preservation Office
- ☐ Other State agency
- ☐ Federal agency
- ☐ Local government
- ☐ University
- ☐ Other

Name of repository:

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10. Geographical DataAcreage of Property Less than one acre**UTM References**

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

1	1	8	2	4	8	0	4	0	4	3	9	4	0	6	0
	Zone		Easting			Northing									
2															

3															
	Zone		Easting			Northing									
4															

☐ See continuation sheet**Verbal Boundary Description**

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet)

11. Form Prepared Byname/title Paula S. Reed, Ph.D., Architectural Historian; Edie Wallace, M.A., HistorianOrganization Paula S. Reed & Associates, Inc.date June 2011street & number 1 W. Franklin St., Suite 300telephone 301-739-2070city or town Hagerstownstate Marylandzip code 21740**Additional Documentation**

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets**Maps**A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.**Photographs**Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.**Additional Items**

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO)

name Clear Spring District Historical Associationstreet & number P. O. Box 211

telephone _____

city or town Clear Springstate Marylandzip code 21722

Paperwork Reduction Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et. seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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Description Summary:

Plumb Grove, a ca. 1831 Greek Revival style farmhouse of brick construction, occupies an approximately 1-acre tract within what was once a large farm belonging to Jonathan Nesbitt. The surrounding lands belong to the Washington County Board of Education, but aside from a school complex to the south of the house, the land is still farmed and the setting retains its agricultural character. In addition to the house and its fenced lot, the nominated property contains three support buildings constructed recently. The L-shaped house has five bays with a central entrance sheltered with a temple form porch. The interior plan consists of a central stair and entrance hall, with two rooms on each side, and a kitchen in the rear wing. Exuberant Greek Revival style woodwork characterizes the interior.

General Description:

Plumb Grove, a ca. 1831 Greek Revival style brick farmhouse sits on a .95-acre plot of land subdivided from a parcel belonging to the Washington County Board of Education. The farmland now contains the Clear Spring School Complex, athletic fields, barns and agricultural land. The Plumb Grove house property is enclosed on three sides with a white picket fence and on the fourth side by a post and rail fence. The entire property, including the school's land, was once part of the Plumb Grove (Nesbitt) farm. Aside from the school buildings and playing fields, the landscape retains its agricultural character.

Plumb Grove faces southeast toward Broadfording Road. (For the purposes of this nomination, the front elevation will be referred to as "east".) A gravel lane leads approximately 1/4 mile from Broadfording Road to the Plumb Grove house. The lane parallels Draper Road, just to its northwest. The house stands on a fairly level plot of land with Fairview Mountain behind to the west and the rolling floor of the Cumberland/Hagerstown Valley extending to the east. The Town of Clear Spring is approximately 1/2 mile to the southeast. Plumb Grove is one of three Nesbitt Farms that stand in close proximity to each other. The Otho Nesbitt Farm (WA-V-013) is about 1/4 mile to the east, and the Nesbitt Farm (WA-V-012) is about 1/4 mile to the northeast.

Plumb Grove is a two story L-shaped brick dwelling resting on limestone foundations. The front elevation is formal with five bays and a central entrance. Bricks are arranged in Flemish bond at the front elevation, with splayed brick jack arches over the openings. Sawtooth brickwork and corbelling finish the cornice at the front elevation. Side and rear walls are laid in common bond with five stretcher courses to each row of headers. Double inside end chimneys joined with a parapet complete the masonry work. The rear L-extension continues seamlessly from the south

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end wall of the front section. On the north side a recessed double porch spans the length of the L. The porch side of the L has two bays, a door and a window at the first story, and an upper level with three bays, two windows and a central door. Doors also open onto the lower and upper porches from the front section of the house. All of these doors have six panels. The absence of a window at the west end of the L's north elevation is the result of an interior boxed stair in that corner. The porch has square posts and is enclosed with a balustrade.

A Greek Revival style entrance porch dominates the front elevation. It has a low hipped roof with a plain entablature below and four large Doric columns, two pair, one pair each placed on either side of the three steps leading to the porch deck. A balustrade links each pair of columns. Plumb Grove has a trabeated entrance with a broad transom and sidelights. These surround an eight-panel door with a vertical molding suggesting that the door is bi-fold, but no evidence is present to suggest that the door was ever hinged in the middle. Attached columns flank the door.

Windows have six over six light sash within narrow rounded frames with mitered corners. At the front elevation replacement paneled shutters have been added to the windows. Windows in the rear extension are smaller than those in the front section, but all have six-pane sash. The wide south gable end of the main section of the house has three windows at each level, one at the forward side of the chimneys and two to the west of the chimneys. This arrangement allowed two windows in the southwest rooms of the front section of the house. The north gable end is arranged more symmetrically with one window on each side of the chimneys at each level. The west elevation of the front section, within the angle created by the extension has one window at each level. Thus the northwest and southwest rooms each have two windows and the northeast and southeast rooms each have three.

The roofing material is wood shingles, a relatively recent replacement covering.

Interior:

The front entrance opens into a formal stair and entrance hall with two rooms on either side. The floor plan layout has large rooms diagonally opposed in the northeast, a parlor, and in the southwest, the dining room. The northwest and southeast rooms are significantly smaller. The same is true of the second floor. At the first floor, wide doorways separate the front and rear rooms.

The staircase rises against the north wall of the entrance hall and appears strangely out of character with the other woodwork in the house. While the mantelpieces, door and window trim are very bulky and heavily molded, the staircase has a graceful, delicate round railing that

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sweeps in a single curving form from the top to the base of the steps where it bends in a scroll to alight on top of a narrow turned newel. Balusters, two per step, are turned and tapered. Scroll carvings decorate the spandrel along the edge of the stairs.

Contrasting with the staircase is the robust and massive door and window trim and mantels. Architraves have large symmetrical moldings and decorated corner blocks. Each mantelpiece is different, but the two most prominent are very elaborate. The northeast parlor mantel has Doric colonnettes, a frieze with central projecting tablet, protruding semi-elliptical bolection moldings and a three part projecting mantel shelf. The dining room mantel has fluted Doric colonnettes, and a frieze with large Greek Key molding running its length. The mantels in the smaller rooms are much simpler, with architraves around the fireboxes and narrow shelves.

The building also includes a cellar with a cooking fireplace.

The wing to the rear (backbuilding) contains the kitchen with a large service fireplace in the west end wall and an enclosed winder stair adjacent to the fireplace in the northwest corner. The upper story room reportedly housed the Nesbitt slaves/servants.

Additional buildings:

In addition to the house there are three service buildings in the rear yard, all of fairly recent construction. A brick summer kitchen/wash house was added to the landscape just behind the house and in the traditional work yard. A frame, board and batten covered restroom and storage building with an attached shed stands immediately behind the house's kitchen wing. Behind that is a small frame shed, also covered with board and batten. All of these accessory buildings have been constructed since the 1980s.

Resource Count:

1 contributing building
3 non-contributing buildings

Evaluation of Integrity:

Plumb Grove is an excellent example of a Greek Revival style farmhouse from west central Maryland. It remains highly intact with key components – design, layout and woodwork – all present. Although the setting has been altered by the addition of non-historic support buildings, these newer constructions are compatible in materials, scale and design to the 1830s period of the house. The .95-acre plot of land is part of the original Nesbitt land, and aside from the school

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development to the south of Plumb Grove, the surrounding land remains in agricultural use, preserving the setting. Therefore, Plumb Grove retains a high level of integrity of location, setting, materials, design, workmanship, feeling and association. The Maryland Historical Trust holds a preservation easement on the property.

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Summary Statement of Significance:

Plumb Grove (Nesbitt-Warner Farmhouse, MIHP #WA-V-015) is locally significant under National Register Criterion C as a particularly fine example of a vernacular adaptation of the Greek Revival architectural style, significant for its degree of stylistic elaboration not commonly found in rural examples. Built ca. 1831 at the marriage of Jonathan and Ann (Meixsell) Nesbitt, the large five-bay house with its elegant Greek temple-form porch and soaring paired chimneys gracefully represented the status of the successful Nesbitt family in its rural setting. Though Plumb Grove was located on the edge of the western Maryland mountains, the nearby town of Clear Spring was a booming National Pike town active with artisans and regular deliveries of merchandise from the port at Baltimore. The Nesbitts had ready access to the state-of-the-art Greek Revival moldings and mantelpieces found throughout the interior of Plumb Grove. The period of significance is ca. 1831 representing the date of construction of Plumb Grove.

Resource History and Historic Context:

Historic Context

Plumb Grove represents an important slice of regional history rooted in the rich soil cultivated and developed into prosperous farms by German husbandmen. A few pioneering farmers and fur traders initially settled the area in the 1730s and 1740s. At that time Lord Baltimore had just opened Maryland's frontier or "back country" for settlement, and Germans were migrating through the area to create settlements in Virginia. Seeking to develop the back portions of Maryland, Lord Baltimore began to encourage settlement on his colony's frontier. Speculators from eastern Maryland responded by acquiring large tracts for subdivision and resale to German farmers. As settlement progressed, political divisions of the frontier occurred. Until 1748, the land was part of Prince George's County. Afterward it was Frederick County until 1776 when Washington County was formed.

Settlement was sparse until the close of the French and Indian War in 1763 and the end of Pontiac's rebellion the following year. Thereafter, settlement progressed rapidly as transportation routes improved and word of the rich farmland in the Cumberland and Shenandoah valleys spread. The land was made fertile by numerous limestone outcrops, which give special visual character to the landscape as well as providing material for buildings and fences. The English speculators who had acquired large grants of land as investments began to subdivide and sell into smaller lots of 100-300 acres which were ideal for a profitable family farm. These farms were divided into fields of 20-40 acres and planted with small grains and corn

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or clover. Other lands were left in pasture and woodlots, as the process of clearing the land was slow. Woodlot and pasture functions were often combined in areas where rock outcrops made cultivation difficult. Allowing cattle and hogs to forage through woodlands helped to keep them open and clear.

While the valley lands of Washington County were easily converted to the general/grain farming traditions carried on by German and Pennsylvania-German immigrants, the mountains bordering the valleys on the east and west provided different opportunities for development. Covered with old growth trees and laden with iron ore, the mountains were soon home to several iron furnace operations. The Green Spring Furnace, nestled within the North Mountain ranges to the west, was established in 1765 by Lancelot Jacques and Thomas Johnson.¹ The insatiable need for wood to provide charcoal for the furnaces ensured that previously forested mountain land was eventually cleared.

Through the first half of the 19th century, the west-central region of Maryland became known for grain production. Grain was sold in bulk, or processed into flour and meal, or distilled into whiskey. These commodities were shipped to markets in Baltimore or Philadelphia. Shipping from western Maryland was a problem, and hindered the growth and prosperity associated with grain production. There was no reliable inland water route to the farming areas, although navigation of the Potomac River was seasonally available from the 1790s through 1828. Road transportation served as the primary artery for the freight hauling needs of the region. Maryland, therefore promoted turnpike development, although most of these toll routes were privately funded. The output and growth in population in the western areas of Maryland encouraged construction and improvement of roads.

In 1806 the Federal government began the construction of a highway that would lead to the newly acquired Louisiana Purchase lands comprising much of the central portion of the United States. The "National Road" began in Cumberland, Maryland partly following the old Braddock Road, a rough wagon track established by explorers and traders, and led to Wheeling in Virginia (West Virginia) and later on to Terre Haute, Indiana. The main wagon road from Baltimore to Cumberland, a collection of privately owned and operated turnpike segments that ran through the heart of Washington County was eventually upgraded and consolidated to become part of the National Road system. The National Pike, as it became known, was one of the most heavily traveled east-west routes in America with traffic passing all hours of the day and night.

Construction of the Chesapeake & Ohio Canal along the Potomac River as an alternative transportation system began in 1828 and reached the western districts of Washington County by

¹ Scharf, p. 1295.

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1839. Not only did the canal open a new avenue of transportation for agricultural products but it also became a source of employment for many who lived nearby. The "canal towns" of Washington County, as well as throughout the adjoining rural areas, were full of men whose occupation was listed on the census as "boating on the canal" or "boatman." Other common occupations in rural Washington County included farmer, farm laborer, and – in areas around the several active iron works – miner, collier, and "works at furnace."

The Clear Spring Districts in Washington County benefited from both the National Pike and the C&O Canal in close proximity. Although highway transportation waned as the canal and railroad peaked through the second half of the 19th century, the district ranked among the higher rural district populations in 1880.² Still, the west-central Maryland "bread basket" saw a slow decline in the dominance of grain production and milling, largely due to the advances in steam powered mills and the railroad. As mid-western farms began to concentrate on wheat, the farms of Washington County developed a more diversified product list, eventually shifting to dairy products, fruit, and vegetable production. By 1900, the "General Farm" designation was commonly found on the census in Washington County.

The advent of the automobile in the first decades of the 20th century briefly revived the aging National Turnpike. However, the urbanization and industrialization process of the late 19th century gradually transformed the economy of Maryland. While agricultural pursuits continued in the rural parts of the state, their relative importance as the driving force of the economy declined.³ In 1920, Maryland had become 60% urban with slightly over half the state's population in Baltimore.⁴ Meanwhile suburban residential districts and recreational areas spread outward from Washington D.C. and Baltimore into Montgomery and Baltimore Counties, a trend that has continued to the present. The conversion of farmland use to dairy and orchards led to the decrease of traditional agricultural industries particularly milling and attendant businesses and industries.

After World War II with the advent of the post war booming manufacturing economy and the emerging Cold War, population began to shift once again. This time with the encouragement of the government's new interstate highway system, the defense highways developed in the Eisenhower administration, upwardly mobile and automobile owning city dwellers left the urban environments of Washington DC and Baltimore to create suburban neighborhoods on the edges of the cities. Since the late 1940s, suburban development has sprawled outward into and

² Scharf, p. 974.

³ Bruchey in Walsh and Fox, p. 483, 484.

⁴ Crooks in Walsh and Fox, p. 590.

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throughout mid-Maryland substantially reducing agriculture and profoundly altering the rural scene.

Architectural Context

Farmhouses from the 18th century through the mid-20th century exhibit great variety in mid-Maryland, yet all are readily identifiable to the region. Little housing remains from the settlement period. Dwellings that do survive represent the more durable buildings and not the general population of houses. Log was the preferred building material, although probably a disproportionate number of early period survivors are of stone construction. These very early stone houses use the type of stone found in the nearby landscape, often limestone in the Cumberland Valley section of Washington County.

Later farmhouse builders introduced brick and light weight framing systems with various milled sidings or shingles. Brick houses were much less common on mid-Maryland's farms in the 18th century than they were in urbanized areas. When 18th century brick farmhouses do occur they are distinguished by the presence of water tables, Flemish bond facades and common bond secondary walls with three or four courses of stretcher rows to each header row. Much more common among mid-Maryland brick farmhouses are those from the 1820-1900 period. Those constructed before approximately 1850 display Flemish bond facades and thereafter, common bond or all-stretcher facades.

Farmhouse form followed several traditional paths. Among the earliest buildings were Germanic central chimney dwellings with one or two stories and three or four rooms clustered around a massive group of fireplaces. British settlers more frequently constructed one or one and a half story buildings with a hall and parlor plan, one room deep with inside or exterior end fireplaces. Generally farmhouses spanned three to five bays, sat on cellars and had side gables.

By the second quarter of the 19th century typical floor plans consisted of center passages with one or two rooms on either side, or a two or four room plan where the main entrance opened directly into a room. A common arrangement attributed to Germanic traditions exhibits two central front doors, side by side, which open directly into two front rooms. Porches began to appear with frequency, either across the entire front or recessed in an inset containing two or three bays along the front elevation at the kitchen wall. Another variation is an L-extension to the rear of the main part of the house, almost always with a recessed double porch along one side. This L configuration accommodates a kitchen wing, and these rear wings were consistently referenced in 18th and 19th century records as "back buildings," even though they were attached to the main part of the dwelling.

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Houses were almost universally roofed with wooden shingles, often long and double-lapped, top to bottom and side to side. This shingle type seems to be associated with German traditions. Otherwise, top-lapped thin wooden shingles prevailed with staggered joints and there is evidence that thatch was used, along with "cabbin" or clapboard roofs. In the late 19th and early 20th centuries roofs of slate or standing seam metal appear.⁵

Within Washington County, Plumb Grove stands out as an exceptionally elaborate vernacular adaptation of the Greek Revival architectural style. Area farmhouses built through the mid-19th century commonly adapted Greek Revival features to familiar house plans, but unlike Plumb Grove, only selected style elements were applied. The Lehman's Mill House (MIHP #WA-I-211), built in 1837, is a good example of a more common Greek Revival-influenced farmhouse in the county. Although symmetry in the style was an important feature, the Lehman's Mill House was constructed with four bays, leaving the main entrance in an asymmetrical location. The main entrance consists of an unadorned door with transom. Laid out in a German three-room plan, the stairs are boxed (enclosed) and only one mantelpiece, located in the large parlor, exhibits the typical Greek-styled molding. Few houses in the county are comparable to Plumb Grove in the level of stylistic detail applied. The Sherrick House (MIHP #WA-II-334), built in 1834 near Sharpsburg, like Plumb Grove, is a more formal farmhouse, with five bays providing a symmetrical central entrance and center stair hall. Prominent Greek Revival features include the tripartite door with a Greek-styled portico, highly stylized interior mantels, moldings, and stairway.

Resource History

Nathaniel Nesbitt was among the earliest settlers in the west-central mountain and valley region of Washington County, then still part of Frederick County, when he acquired several land patents in the 1750s. By 1776, when Washington County was formed, Nesbitt owned over 1,400 acres on the eastern edge of Fairview Mountain. His land was located in an area known for its iron ore deposits and plentiful supply of wood for charcoal production. His valley land was underlain with limestone bedrock, the soil known for its fertility and well-suited to grain production. By the late 18th century, wheat production on Washington County farms, then part of the "bread basket" of the young United States, placed some area farmers among the wealthiest property-owners.

⁵ Paula S. Reed & Assoc., "Mid-Maryland: An Agricultural History and Historic Context," draft, Frederick, MD: Catoclin Center for Regional Studies, 2006, Chapter 5.

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By 1790, Nathaniel Nesbitt had nine children, including five sons. His eldest son John was already living in his own household in 1790. Perhaps in preparation for his sons' inheritance, in 1791 Nesbitt had his land resurveyed as *Nesbitt's Inheritance*, by then down to 708 acres.⁶ By 1800, two sons, John and Jacob, had separate households while Nesbitt and his remaining three sons worked the land along with three slaves.

Up to the turn of the 19th century, the Nesbitt plantation was served by several early transportation routes that proved seasonally unreliable. The Potomac River, just to the south of the Nesbitt land, was used to move farm produce from as early as the middle of the 18th century. In the 1790s, George Washington's Potomac Navigation Company opened channels through the rapids along much of the upper Potomac and began skirting canals around the Great Falls and Little Falls above the port at Georgetown. The river was unreliable however, as winter ice, spring floods, and summer droughts all negatively affected boating. The east-west road, today's Broadfording Road, which ran between Elizabethtown (Hagerstown) and Jacques's Green Spring Furnace where it joined the road to Hancock and beyond (today's Rt. 56), remained a crude and rutted wagon road impassible in bad weather. But with the construction of the National Road, beginning at Cumberland in 1806, sections of road leading from the port at Baltimore to Cumberland were improved as turnpike roads, including a section west from Hagerstown, becoming part of the National Turnpike system, better known as the National Pike. The National Pike was an invaluable improvement in transportation through western Maryland and brought dramatic changes to the rural landscape.

Nathaniel Nesbitt died in 1807 knowing that his lands would soon be more valuable by their proximity to the National Pike. According to his will, the land was divided among his five sons – Peter, Jonathan, Nathaniel, John, and Jacob.⁷ Peter Nesbitt died in 1809 and by 1820 all the remaining brothers except Jonathan had removed to Ohio, Indiana, or western Pennsylvania.⁸ Jonathan Nesbitt, who inherited Lot 2 of *Nesbitt's Inheritance* including the homeplace, was the only Nesbitt listed in the 1820 census. His household included four sons, one daughter, three slaves, and three free blacks.

The National Pike section west from Hagerstown was completed in 1823, passing through the recently platted town of Clear Spring (platted in 1821, recorded in 1825).⁹ Located 11 miles west of Hagerstown, Clear Spring was a natural stopping place for travelers on the Pike to rest

⁶ Washington Co. Patented Certificate #647, MSA S1208-697, Maryland State Archives. The tract was surveyed in May 1791. Neighbors Samuel and Harry Prather contested the survey in September but then withdrew their caveat in October 1791 and the patent was issued in 1794.

⁷ Washington Co. (WC) Will Book B, page 142.

⁸ "Dennis Family Genealogy Pages," Nesbitt/Witmer Group, <http://pjdennis.com/familygroup>.

⁹ WC DB HH, p. 741.

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themselves and their horses, buy provisions, or repair wagons. The small town of 74 lots stood on part of Nathaniel Nesbitt's *Resurvey on Locust Thicket*, just a short distance southwest of the Nesbitt homeplace by then occupied by Jonathan Nesbitt [I] (Otho Nesbitt House, WA-V-013). By 1825, Clear Spring included five tavern-keepers, four stores, fifteen carpenters, shoemakers, tailors, wagonmakers and other craftsmen, and a school:

The number of tradesmen related to building crafts indicates the demand for such skills in the growing town. In addition, the number of tradesmen related to the business of travel (wheelwrights, wagonmakers, tavern keepers, etc.) provides some indication of the economic importance of the National Pike to the town. The road continued in this important role, as seen by the steady increase in the number of establishments serving travelers – by 1836, Clear Spring had seven hotels.¹⁰

The building boom was not limited to just the town as nearby farmers embarked on their own improvements.

In 1826, the young widow of Jacob Meixsell of Frederick, Mrs. Frances Meixsell, moved her family to the new town of Clear Spring – the occasion noted by Jacob Engelbrecht in his Frederick diary.¹¹ By 1831, Mrs. Meixsell's daughter Ann was preparing to marry into the Nesbitt family, among the most prominent families in the area. The marriage of Jonathan Nesbitt, Jr. to Ann R. Meixsell took place on March 23, 1831.¹² The newlyweds moved into a new brick farmhouse on a 157-acre section of the Nesbitt plantation, built using distinctive features from the lately popular Greek Revival style. By 1840, the household included three young children and two free-black laborers. The Nesbitt's named their farm "Plumb Grove," as noted in the Clear Spring Academy ledger of the 1840s where the Nesbitt children attended school.¹³

Several of the farms located on the Lots that made up the former *Nesbitt's Inheritance* had undergone similar transformations. The log Nesbitt homeplace, located on Lot 2 and still occupied by Jonathan Nesbitt Sr., appears to have been significantly enlarged, first with a stone addition and later, probably after about 1825, with a brick addition. One of the additions is said to have included a ballroom.¹⁴ The neighboring house located on *Nesbitt's Inheritance* Lot 3, was probably built by Daniel Gehr ca. 1830. Gehr purchased the tract from Nathaniel Nesbitt (Jr.) in 1813 for \$5,000, indicating there was likely an earlier house on the property. Gehr's new

¹⁰ "Town of Clear Spring," WA-V-414, MIHP documentation, 1992.

¹¹ "The Diary of Jacob Engelbrecht," CD-ROM, Historical Society of Frederick County, 2001, p. 232
WC Marriage Records 1799-1860, p. 148.

¹³ David Wiles, President Clear Spring District Historical Association, personal communication, March 2011.

¹⁴ David Wiles, President Clear Spring District Historical Association, personal communication, March 2011. See also "Otho Nesbitt House," WA-V-013, DOE and MIHP documentation.

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house combined elements of the outgoing popular Federal style with Greek Revival features strikingly similar to those found at Nesbitt's Plumb Grove. In 1837 Gehr sold his house and land to Tobias Johnson.¹⁵ (see 1859 Taggart map)

The elegant Greek Revival styling of Jonathan Nesbitt Jr.'s Plumb Grove reflected the social standing of Nesbitt who, in addition to his successful farm operation, represented Washington County in the Maryland House of Delegates in 1842. This house too appears to have replaced an earlier dwelling. Located on Lot 4 of *Nesbitt's Inheritance* devised to John Nesbitt in 1807, Jonathan Nesbitt Sr. purchased the 137-acre tract from his brother John in 1816 for \$6,000.¹⁶

In May 1855, one year before his death, Jonathan Nesbitt Sr. conveyed the Lot 4 farm to Jonathan Nesbitt Jr., in exchange for "the support, maintenance and comfort, of the said Jonathan Nesbitt Sr. for and during the term of his natural life."¹⁷ The tract included 20 additional acres, for a total of 157 acres. Jonathan Nesbitt Jr.'s Plumb Grove farm was valued at \$10,000 on the 1860 census, while the Nesbitt homplace, occupied by his brother Otho Nesbitt, was valued at \$12,650. (see 1859 Taggart Map).

Jonathan Nesbitt Jr. died in 1877, followed by his wife Ann in 1885. Of their five children, three had moved to Missouri. Allen Nesbitt bought out his siblings' interest in the farm and remained until 1893 when he sold it to Rosa Warner.¹⁸ Rosa Warner was the wife of Clear Spring hotel owner Fred Warner, who used the farm to produce food for his hotel while the house was tenanted. The Warner family retained Plumb Grove until it was sold in 1967 to the Washington County Board of Education.¹⁹

The Plumb Grove house remained vacant from 1967 through 1981 when it was sold, along with just under one acre of land, to the Clear Spring District Historical Association.²⁰ The house was in deteriorated condition and the Association embarked on a restoration of the building using Maryland Historical Trust Capital Grant funds.

¹⁵ WC DB Y, p. 830 (1813, Nesbitt to Gehr) and DB SS, p. 675 (1837, Gehr to Johnson). This house, known locally as "Poplar Hall," was recorded as the "Nesbitt Farm," WA-V-012, MIHP documentation, 1978. Local lore states that the house was built by John Nesbitt, brother of Jonathan Nesbitt, Jr., and sold to Tobias Johnson. No deeds from Nesbitt to Johnson were found to confirm this.

¹⁶ WC DB BB, p. 487.

¹⁷ WC DB 10, p. 455.

¹⁸ WC DB 87, p. 425 (1885, Nesbitts to Allen Nesbitt) and DB 99, p. 517 (1893, Nesbitt to Warner).

¹⁹ WC DB 456, p. 785.

²⁰ WC DB 712, p. 583.

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Major Bibliographical References:

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- "Nesbitt-Warner Farmhouse." WA-V-015, MIHP documentation, 1978, www.mht.maryland.gov.
- "Otho Nesbitt House." WA-V-013, DOE, 2003, and MIHP documentation, 1978, www.mht.maryland.gov.
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- "The Diary of Jacob Engelbrecht." CD-ROM, Historical Society of Frederick County, Frederick, MD, 2001.
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- Washington County Estate and Marriage Records, Washington County Courthouse, Hagerstown, MD.
- Washington County Land Records, <http://mdlandrec.net>.

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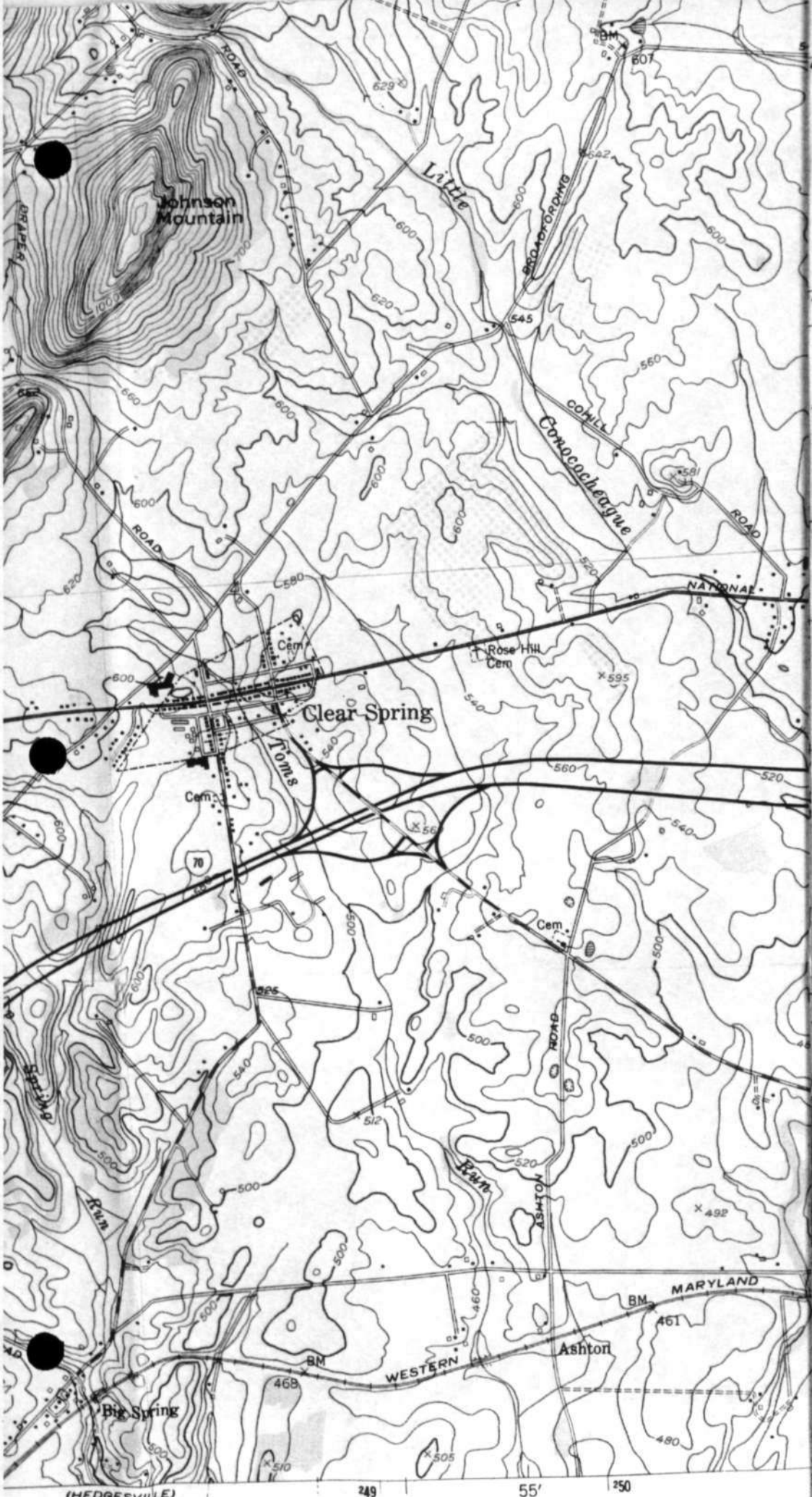
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Verbal Boundary Description:

The boundaries of the nominated property are recorded among the Land Records of Washington County, Maryland in Liber 712, folio 583, and further shown as Parcel 242 on Washington County Tax Map 34.

Boundary Justification:

The nominated property, .95 acres, encompasses the remnant of the acreage historically associated with the resource, including the historic house and domestic yard.



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Plumb Grove
Washington
County, MD

18 248040
4394060

4396
4395
40'
4394
SPICKLER 0.2 MI.
HAGERSTOWN (COURTHOUSE) 8.5 MI
4392
110 000 FEET
(PA.)
PINESBURG 1 MI.
WILLIAMSPORT 4 MI.
4390000m N.
39°37'30"
52'30"

(HEDGESVILLE)

249

55'

250



Boundary Map

Washington County Tax Map 34, Parcel 242

Plumb Grove, WA-V-015

12654 Broadfording Road

Washington Co., MD

June 2011

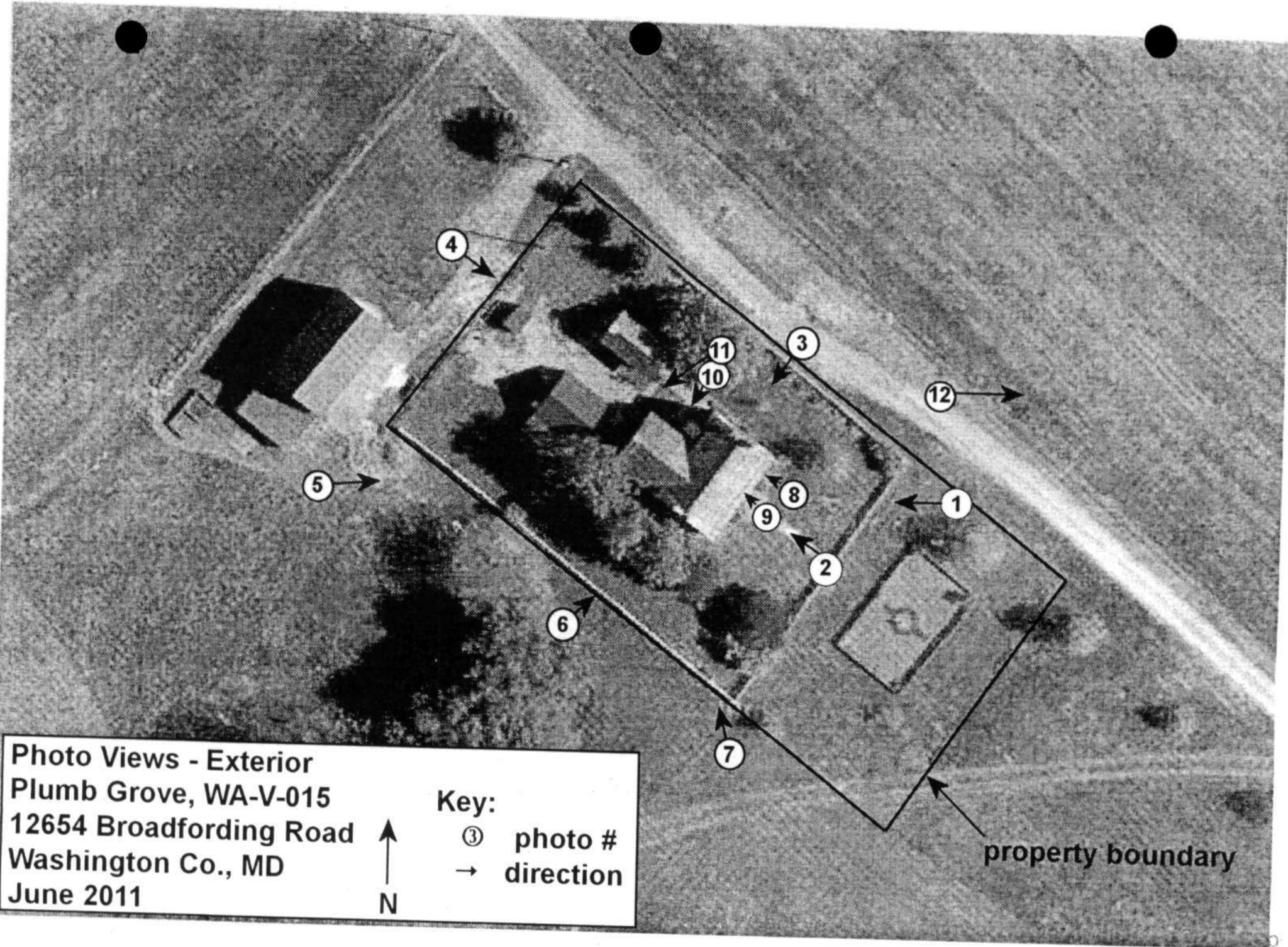


Photo Views - Exterior
Plumb Grove, WA-V-015
12654 Broadfording Road
Washington Co., MD
June 2011



Key:

③ photo #
→ direction





Site Map
Plumb Grove, WA-V-015
12654 Broadfording Road
Washington Co., MD
June 2011



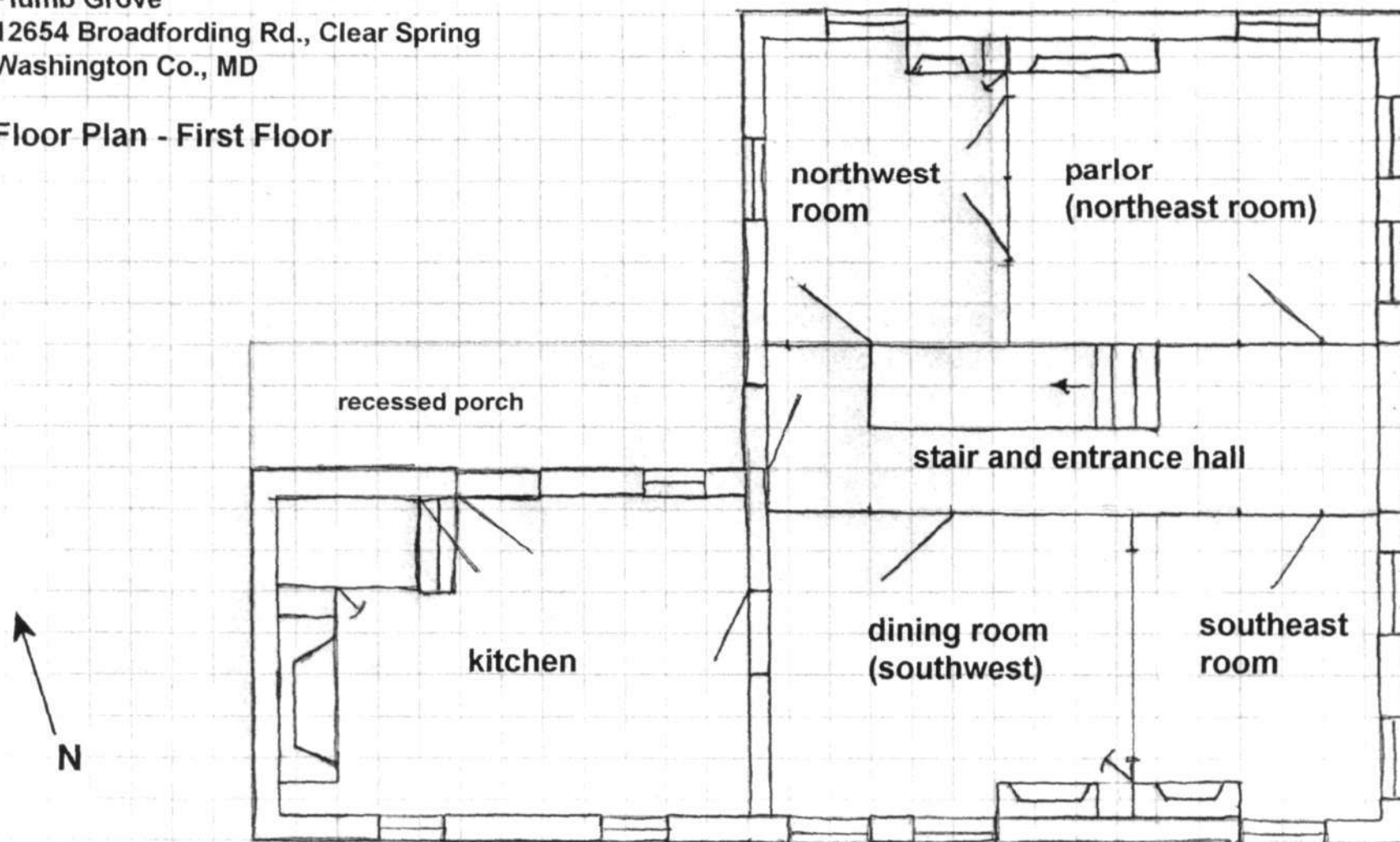
WA-V-015

Plumb Grove

12654 Broadfording Rd., Clear Spring

Washington Co., MD

Floor Plan - First Floor

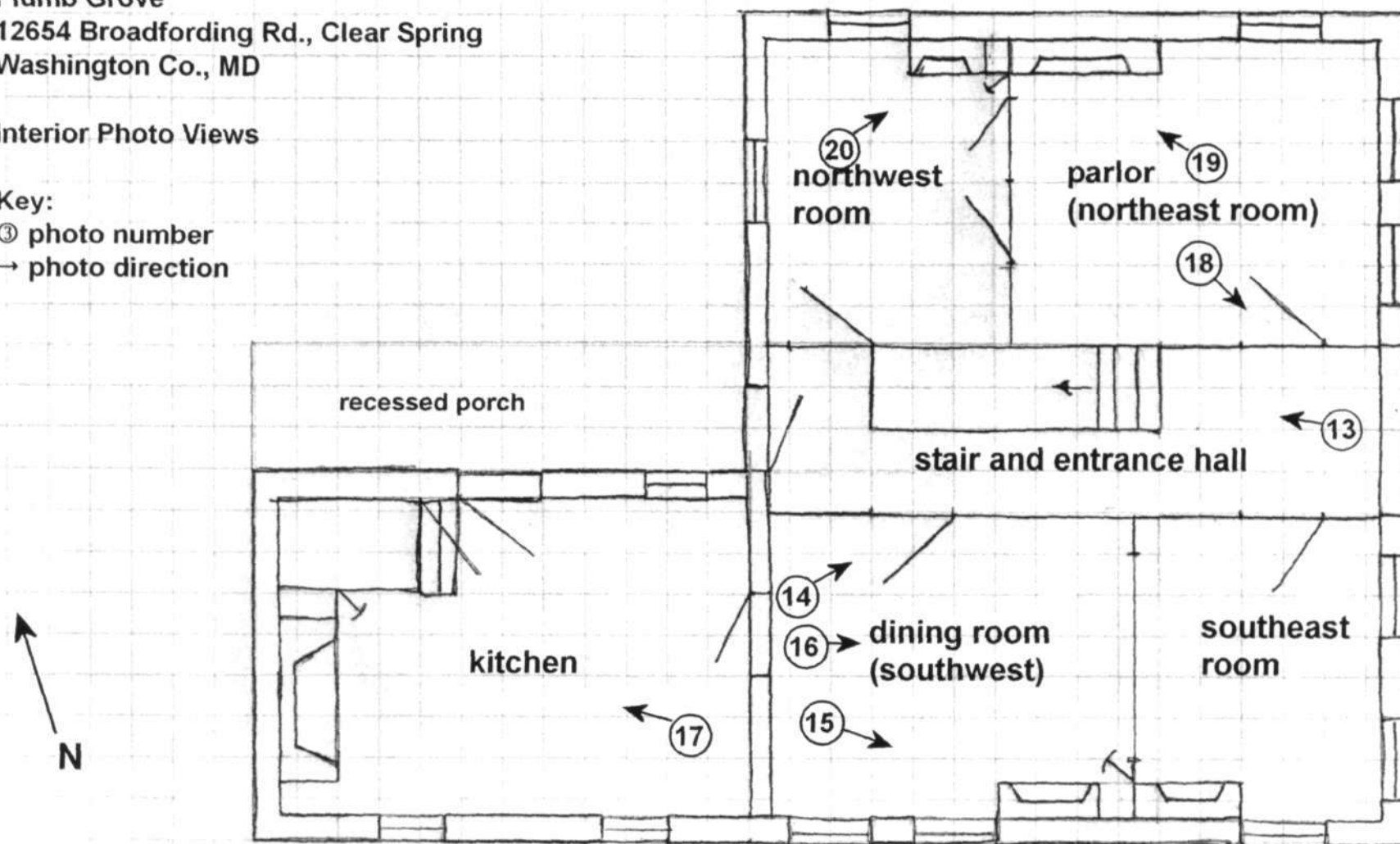


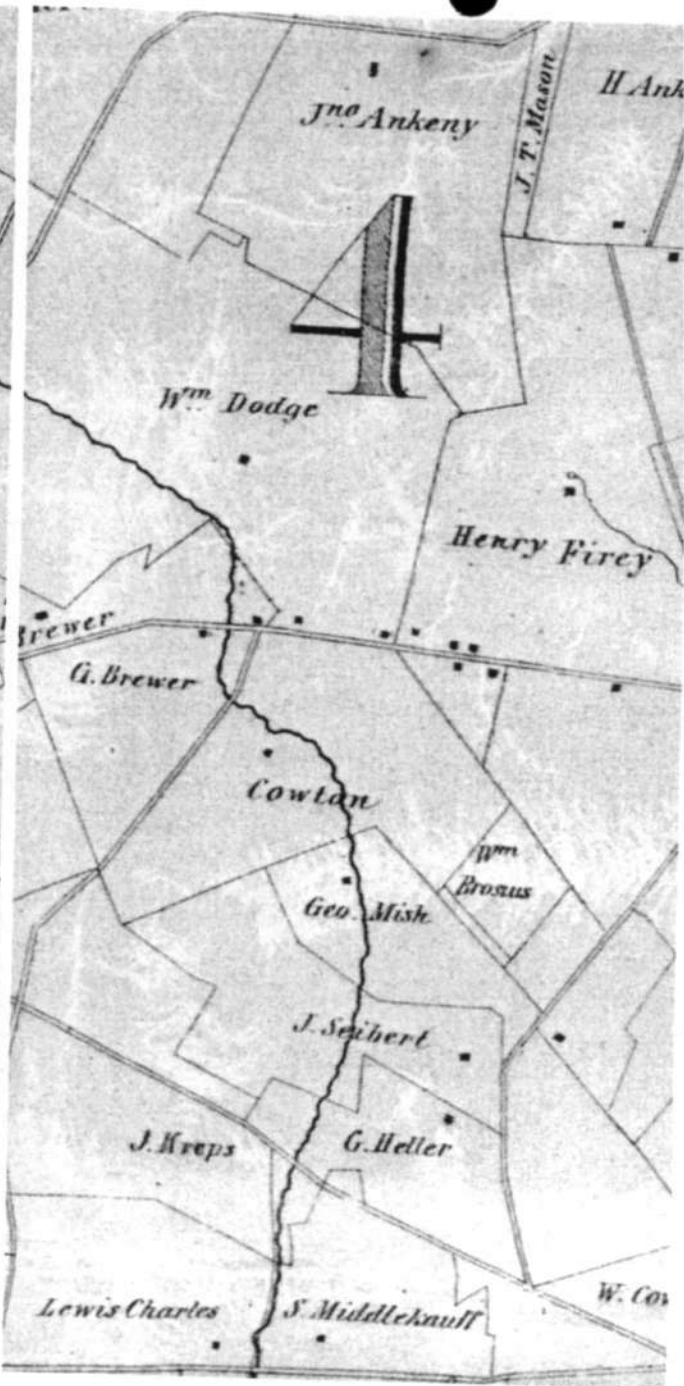
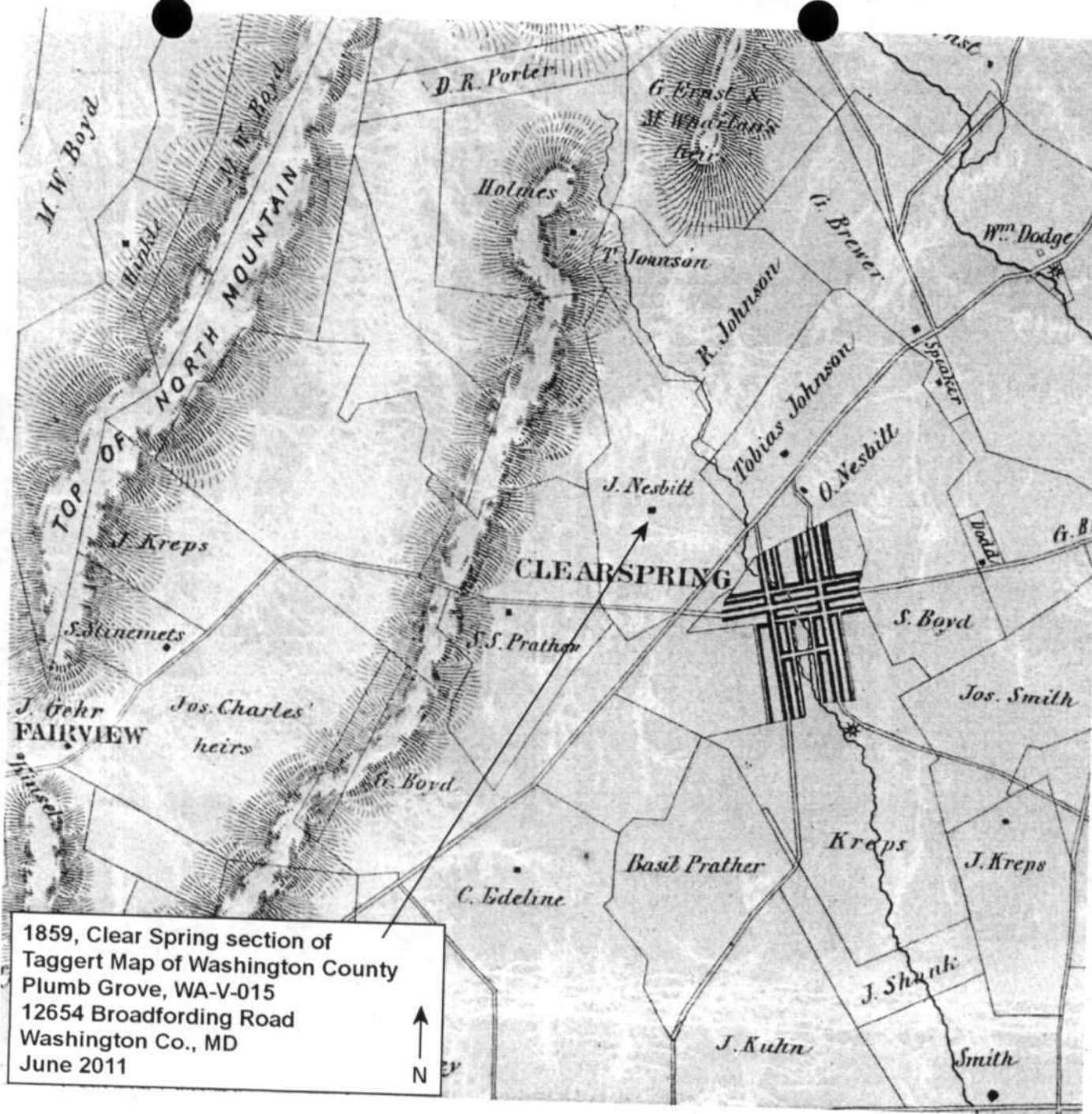
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Interior Photo Views

Key:

③ photo number
→ photo direction





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Index to Photographs

The following information applies to all photographs which accompany this documentation:

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Plumb Grove
Washington Co., MD
Photo by Paula S. Reed & Associates, March 22, 2011
Digital files located at MD SHPO

HP 100 Gray Photo Cartridge
HP Premium Plus Photo Paper

MD_WASHINGTONCOUNTY_PLUMBGRove_0001.tif: West view, east and north elevations
MD_WASHINGTONCOUNTY_PLUMBGRove_0002.tif: NW view, east (front) elevation
MD_WASHINGTONCOUNTY_PLUMBGRove_0003.tif: SW view, north (side) elevation
MD_WASHINGTONCOUNTY_PLUMBGRove_0004.tif: SE view, west (rear) elevation
MD_WASHINGTONCOUNTY_PLUMBGRove_0005.tif: E view, west and south elevations
MD_WASHINGTONCOUNTY_PLUMBGRove_0006.tif: NE view, south (side) elevation
MD_WASHINGTONCOUNTY_PLUMBGRove_0007.tif: N view, south and east elevations
MD_WASHINGTONCOUNTY_PLUMBGRove_0008.tif: Window detail, east elevation
MD_WASHINGTONCOUNTY_PLUMBGRove_0009.tif: Front door detail, east elevation
MD_WASHINGTONCOUNTY_PLUMBGRove_0010.tif: Backbuilding, SW view, north elevation
MD_WASHINGTONCOUNTY_PLUMBGRove_0011.tif: Kitchen/wash house (foreground) and
restroom/storage building, SW view
MD_WASHINGTONCOUNTY_PLUMBGRove_0012.tif: Setting, view E toward Otho Nesbitt House
(WA-V-013)
MD_WASHINGTONCOUNTY_PLUMBGRove_0013.tif: First floor, stair and entrance hall, view NW
MD_WASHINGTONCOUNTY_PLUMBGRove_0014.tif: First floor, dining (southwest) room, view E
toward stair and entrance hall
MD_WASHINGTONCOUNTY_PLUMBGRove_0015.tif: First floor, dining (southwest) room, south
wall, mantel
MD_WASHINGTONCOUNTY_PLUMBGRove_0016.tif: First floor, view SE from dining (southwest)
room into southeast room
MD_WASHINGTONCOUNTY_PLUMBGRove_0017.tif: First floor, kitchen, view N showing service
fireplace in north end wall

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MD_WASHINGTONCOUNTY_PLUMBGROVE_0018.tif: First floor, parlor (northeast room), view S toward entrance hall

MD_WASHINGTONCOUNTY_PLUMBGROVE_0019.tif: First floor, parlor (northeast room), view N showing north wall mantel and west wall doors

MD_WASHINGTONCOUNTY_PLUMBGROVE_0020.tif: First floor, northwest room, view E showing north wall mantel and recessed cupboard

MD_WASHINGTONCOUNTY_PLUMBGROVE_0021.tif: Second floor, northeast chamber, view N showing north wall mantel

MD_WASHINGTONCOUNTY_PLUMBGROVE_0022.tif: Second floor, northwest chamber, view E showing north wall mantel

MD_WASHINGTONCOUNTY_PLUMBGROVE_0023.tif: Second floor, southwest chamber, view SW showing south wall mantel

MD_WASHINGTONCOUNTY_PLUMBGROVE_0024.tif: Second floor, southeast chamber, view SW showing south wall mantel