

HA-790

Lafayette Hotel (Abraham Jarrett Thomas House)

Architectural Survey File

This is the architectural survey file for this MIHP record. The survey file is organized reverse-chronological (that is, with the latest material on top). It contains all MIHP inventory forms, National Register nomination forms, determinations of eligibility (DOE) forms, and accompanying documentation such as photographs and maps.

Users should be aware that additional undigitized material about this property may be found in on-site architectural reports, copies of HABS/HAER or other documentation, drawings, and the “vertical files” at the MHT Library in Crownsville. The vertical files may include newspaper clippings, field notes, draft versions of forms and architectural reports, photographs, maps, and drawings. Researchers who need a thorough understanding of this property should plan to visit the MHT Library as part of their research project; look at the MHT web site (mht.maryland.gov) for details about how to make an appointment.

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Last Updated: 02-18-2004

HA-790

c. 1835

ABRAHAM JARRETT THOMAS HOUSE
Havre de Grace, Md.

Along with the Susquehanna and Tidewater Canal Lockhouse and the Concord Point Lighthouse, the Abraham Jarrett Thomas House, known as the Lafayette Hotel is the town's most prominent landmark. It is a large two and a half story five bay brick building built on a Georgian plan which has been covered with stucco. Situated on the west bank of the Susquehanna River, the building is on the site and perhaps the foundations of the old Ferry House, an inn run in conjunction with the old hand operated ferry boats.

INVENTORY FORM FOR STATE HISTORIC SITES SURVEY

1 NAME

HISTORIC Abraham Jarrett Thomas House

(Lafayette Hotel)
AND/OR COMMON**2 LOCATION**

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN 501 St. John Street

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

STATE Havre de Grace

VICINITY OF

6

COUNTY

Maryland

Harford

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY

☐ DISTRICT
☒ BUILDING(S)
☐ STRUCTURE
☐ SITE
☐ OBJECT

OWNERSHIP

☐ PUBLIC
☒ PRIVATE
☐ BOTH
PUBLIC ACQUISITION
☐ IN PROCESS
☐ BEING CONSIDERED

STATUS

☒ OCCUPIED
☐ UNOCCUPIED
☐ WORK IN PROGRESS
ACCESSIBLE
☒ YES: RESTRICTED
☐ YES: UNRESTRICTED
☐ NO

PRESENT USE

☐ AGRICULTURE ☐ MUSEUM
☐ COMMERCIAL ☐ PARK
☐ EDUCATIONAL ☐ PRIVATE RESIDENCE
☒ ENTERTAINMENT ☐ RELIGIOUS
☐ GOVERNMENT ☐ SCIENTIFIC
☐ INDUSTRIAL ☐ TRANSPORTATION
☒ MILITARY ☐ OTHER

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

Joseph L. Davis, Post 49 The American Legion, Inc. Telephone #: 939-0234

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN 501 St. John Street

STATE, zip code

Havre de Grace

VICINITY OF

Maryland 21078

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTIONCOURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

STREET & NUMBER Harford County

CITY, TOWN Main Street

STATE

Bel Air

Maryland

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

DATE

☐ FEDERAL ☐ STATE ☐ COUNTY ☐ LOCALDEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE

7 DESCRIPTION

3A-790

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
☐ EXCELLENT	☐ DETERIORATED	☒ UNALTERED	☒ ORIGINAL SITE
☒ GOOD	☐ RUINS	☐ ALTERED	☐ MOVED DATE _____
☐ FAIR	☐ UNEXPOSED		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Built in a Hangover Georgian style, 501 St. John Street is a large rectangular, detached two and a half story, five bay by one bay brick dwelling with a gable roof, possibly dating from the early 19th century. The building, now the Joseph L. Davis Post of the American Legion, is covered with textured stucco and has a one story cinder block addition on the rear. Located between the Susquehanna River and St. John Street, the building faces west toward Legion Square where there is a statue of Lafayette, commissioned for the town's Bicentennial celebration. Old photographs c. 1920 and 1930 show that the facade is Flemish bond while the flanks and rear are common bond. The foundations are random rubble covered with stucco.

A one story, three bay porch with pillars resting on a cement floor extends across the entire facade supporting a hipped roof.

Windows are arranged uniformly on the facade; on all elevations they have 9/1 light, double hung sash within recessed jambs. A c. 1930 photograph shows that the windows on the facade and south elevation have flat arches above them and stone sills and lintels. While there are three windows on the first floor, south elevation today, the 1930 photograph shows only one window slightly off center with the window sash within a deeply recessed opening. Third floor gable end windows contain 6/1 light sash as do the three front and two rear dormers.

The main entrance is in the center bay of the facade; it is framed by pilasters supporting an entablature with a plain frieze. The door contains fifteen raised panels. Other entrances are in the cinder block addition.

The building has a gable flank roof, covered with asphalt shingles, a narrow box cornice and a wide molded fascia board on the facade and rear. All of the dormers have recessed triangular pediments. Pairs of connected end chimneys rise from the north and south walls; like the rest of the building, they are covered with stucco.

Interior: The first floor has one room on either side of a center hall. The stairs rising to the third floor are on the south wall of the hall. The windows framed by architrave molding are deeply recessed with wide inner sills. The band of molding under the window sills a rectangular panel is in the center. Six panel doors are found through out the house. The American Legion has a Ratnskeller in the basement, a large cooking fireplace with an arched opening is on the north wall of the rear room. There was another large fireplace in the adjoining room but it has been bricked up.

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

8 SIGNIFICANCE

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

SPECIFIC DATES

c. 1834

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Abraham Jarrett Thomas House is a two and a half story, five bay brick dwelling with a Flemish bond facade-now covered with stucco. The building and the river front lot on which it is located figure prominently in the Town's history. The early growth of the settlement known as Harmerstown, Stocketts town, Susquehanna Lower Ferry and finally Havre de Grace was determined by its location on the Susquehanna River and the upper Chesapeake Bay. Here, travelers following the Old Post Road-the major Colonial route between the south and Philadelphia crossed the Susquehanna River by ferry. Among the early ferry operators was John Rodgers, who secured a license in 1776 to operate an "ordinary" at Havre de Grace. Rodgers who bought a lot on S. Washington Street (HA-798) in 1788 on which a dwelling-beleived to have been built before 1800 stands today, is better known as the (c.1780) ^{PROPRIETOR} of Rodger's Tavern across the river where George Washington was a frequent vistore and as the father of Commodore John Rodgers, the founder of the American Navy. Although the exact location of the tavern run by John Rodgers in Havre de Grace is not known, it is logical to assume that it may have stood on this site, particularly since we know from the land records that this land was deeded to the Havre de Grace Ferry Co. in 1818 by William B. Stokes. In 1834 the land, comprising 11 lots, was sold to Abraham Jarrett Thomas, for whom the present structure was probably erected, although the basement may be earlier. A.J. Thomas was a banker and an early member of St. John's Church (HA-544). Stevenson Archer Williams in his "Recollections of Boyhood At Medical Hall etc.." mentions that the Lafayette Hotel was the Abraham Jarrett Thomas house when he was a boy. The Philadelphia, Wilmington and Baltimore Railway later known as the Baltimore and Washington Railway purchased the property in 1856 and the building was run as the Lafayette Hotel until shortly before it became the Post 49, American Legion headquarters in 1947.

Those who pass through Havre de Grace on the train often remark on the sight of the old building with the large chimneys on the river front. The mass of the building is similar to the Wollon Doublehouse (HA-835) a smaller dwelling built in an Overhang Georgian style with large double interior end chimneys. Only four buildings in Havre de Grace have Flemish bond brickwork, The A.J. Thomas House being one of them although covered with stucco. The size of the house (aprox. 40' x 30') makes it unusual as does the presence of a large cooking fireplace in thebasement. The building deserves further structural investigation.

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

1798 Tax Assesment-Harford County
1814 Tax Assesment-Harford County

Williams, Stevenson Archer "Re-
collections of Boyhood at Medical
Hall etc,..." 1923 copy at Susquehanna
Museum, Havre de Grace.

Kidwiler, Elias W. History of Havre de Grace "The Town We Live In"

Shriver, J. Alexis, Talk Given At the Unveiling of the Historical Marker at Rodgers
Tavern, Perryville, Oct. 15, 1932

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY _____

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

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

STATE	COUNTY
STATE	COUNTY

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

ORGANIZATION	Marion Morton-Historic Sites Surveyor	DATE	April 18, 1977
STREET & NUMBER	Maryland Historical Trust	TELEPHONE	
CITY OR TOWN	21 State Circle	STATE	
	Annapolis, Maryland		

The Maryland Historic Sites Inventory was officially created by an Act of the Maryland Legislature, to be found in the Annotated Code of Maryland, Article 41, Section 181 KA, 1974 Supplement.

The Survey and Inventory are being prepared for information and record purposes only and do not constitute any infringement of individual property rights.

RETURN TO: Maryland Historical Trust
The Shaw House, 21 State Circle
Annapolis, Maryland 21401
(301) 267-1438

311 58

December 1, 1947

Grantor: Havre de Grace Print and Publishing Co., Inc.
Grantee: Joseph L. Davis Post #49, The American Legion, Inc.

GCB300 149

September 20, 1946

Grantors: Michael Fahey and Margaret, his wife
Grantee: Susquehanna Trading Co.

DWG 178 59

April 12, 1922

Grantor: Baltimore and Washington Railroad
Grantee: James Robinson
\$6,000.00

ALG 8 214

October 7, 1856

Grantor: Joseph Coudon, executor for Abraham Jarrett Thomas
Grantee: Philadelphia, Wilmington and Baltimore Railroad
Being designated on the old plat of said town as square no. 245
and comprising lots 4, 8, 13, 18, 23 and 28.
\$6,200.00

HD 18 10

December 5, 1834

Grantor: Albert Constable, trustee
Grantee: Abraham Jarrett Thomas
Equity Case: Dec. 1833 William Williams-complainant; Havre de Grace
Ferry Co., defendant
\$2,700.00 Lots-4, 8, 13, 18, 23, 28, 33, 38, 44, 50, 56

With all and singular the Buildings, improvements, advantages, priviledges,
rights, ways, waters, and appurtenances.

HD 1 478

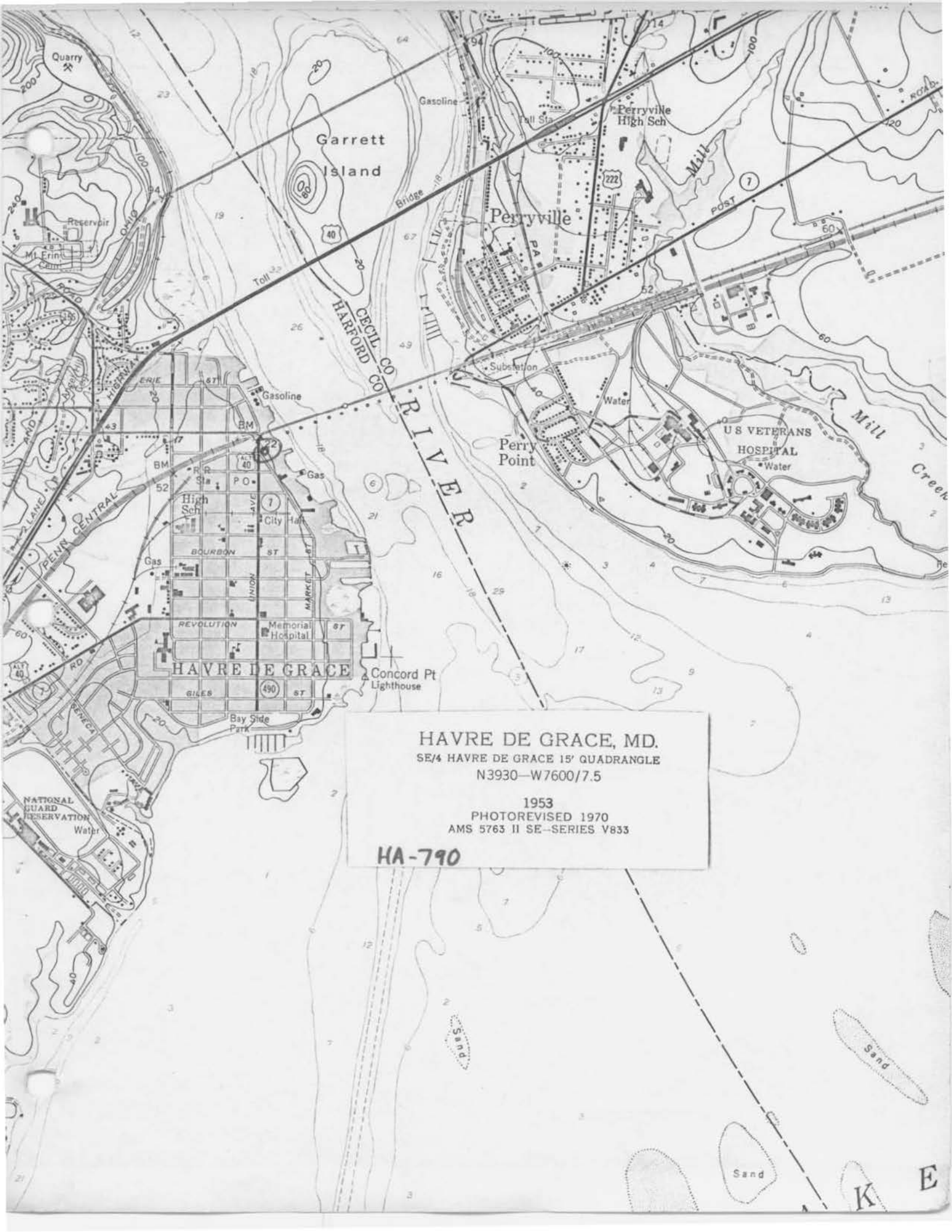
September 25, 1818

Grantor: William B. Stokes
Grantee: Havre de Grace Ferry Co.
\$10,000 lots 4, 8, 13, 18, 23, 28, 33, 38, 44, 50, 56

Havre de Grace Miscellaneous 1793-1855

Pringle, Sappington , R.Y. Stokes, et al- purchased from William B. Stokes Esq. ten water lots on which stood the brick tavern laterly burnt down with the stables now remain- thereon and the walls and materials together with the wharf and all the said William B. Stokes right of ferriage across the river Susquehanna. March 17, 1817

This entry is copied from papers belonging to the Harford County Historical Society filed under H de G miscellaneous.



HAVRE DE GRACE, MD.

SE/4 HAVRE DE GRACE 15' QUADRANGLE
N3930—W7600/7.5

1953

PHOTOREVISED 1970
AMS 5763 II SE—SERIES V833

HA-790

K E



HA 790
Abraham Jarrett Thomas House
(Chafayette Hotel)
501 St. John St.
Haore de Grace, Md.
Southwest Elevation

April 12, 1977

Marion Morton



Abraham Jarrett Thomas House HA-790
(Lafayette Hotel)
501 St. John St.
Havre de Grace, Md.
Southeast Elevation

April 18, 1977

Marion Morton



Abraham Jarrett Thomas House HA-790
(Lafayette Hotel)
501 St. John St.
H. de G. Maryland
Southwest Eleoation
Old photo. in collection of Susquehanna
Museum, Hare de Grace, Md.

April 18, 1977

Marion Morton



AI - HA-790

HA-790 Abraham Jarrett Thomas House
501 St. John Street
Havre de Grace, MD

picture taken from a post
card

Gift from: Mrs. Elise B. Deller
1708 Chatham Road
Camp Hill, PA 17011

October 27, 1984

Sister Sara



A5 - HA790

HA-790 Abraham Jarrett Thomas House
501 St. John Street
Havre de Grace, MD

view of back of house taken in
1922.

Gift from: Mrs. Elise B. Deller
1708 Chatham Road
Camp Hill, PA 17011

October 27, 1984

11th Ave



Laburnum Hotel

A4-HA790

HA-790 Abraham Jarrett Thomas House
501 St. John Street
Havre de Grace, MD

view of front of house taken
in 1922.

Gift from: Mrs. Elise B. Deller
1708 Chatham Road
Camp Hill, PA 17011

October 27, 1984



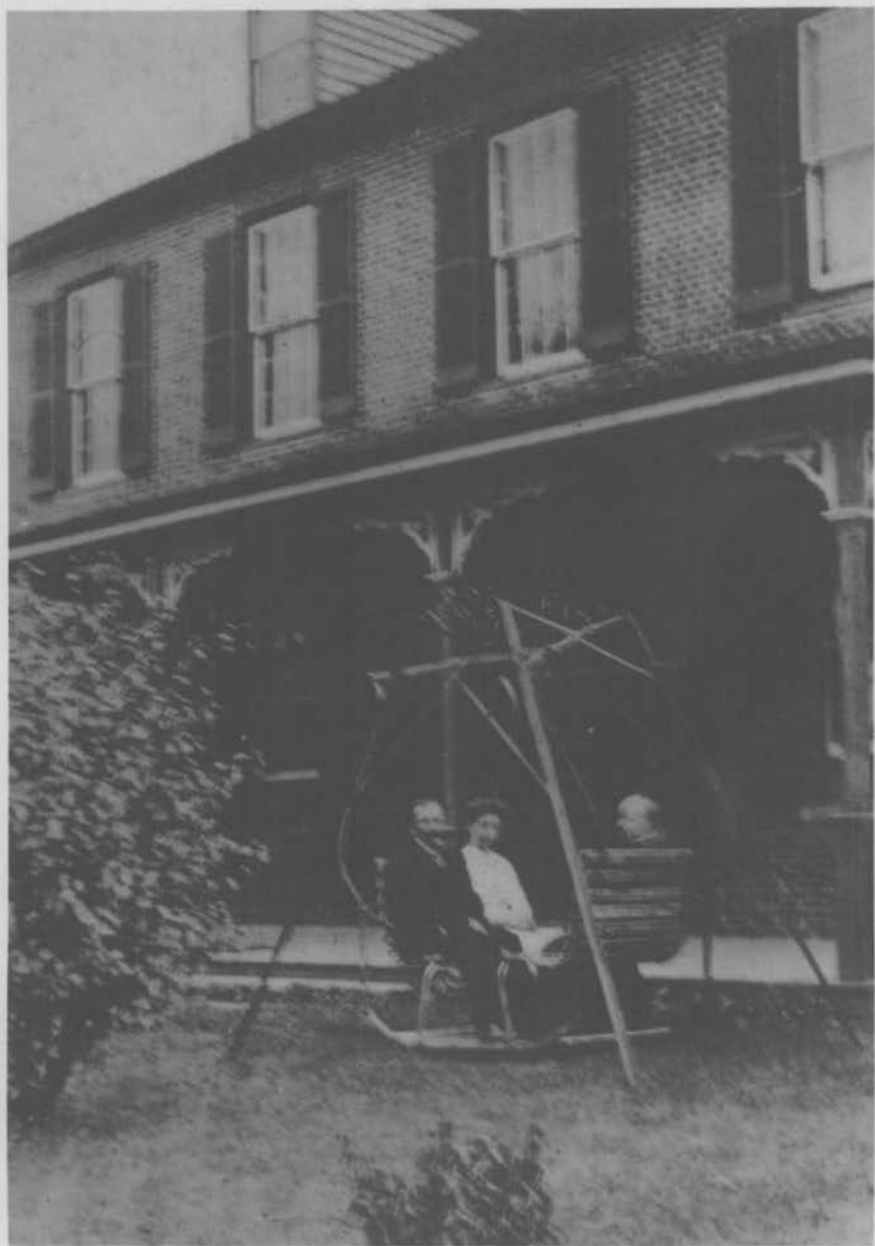
HA-790 Abraham Jarrett Thomas House
501 St. John Street
Havre de Grace, MD

1984
790

picture taken by Mrs. Elise
B. Deller, June 23, 1984

Gift from: Mrs. Elise B. Deller
1708 Chatham Road
Camp Hill, PA 17011

October 27, 1984



A2-HA790

HA-790 Abraham Jarrett Thomas House
501 St. John Street
Havre de Grace, MD

probable dates, 1894-95
or early 1900

Gift from: Mrs. Elise B. Deller
1708 Chatham Road
Camp Hill, PA 17011

October 27, 1984