

HO-381

## Elk Ridge Assembly Rooms

### **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](http://mht.maryland.gov)) for details about how to make an appointment.

All material is property of the Maryland Historical Trust.

***Last Updated: 05-03-2004***

Ho-381  
The Elk Ridge Assembly Rooms  
Elkridge  
Private

1871

The Elk Ridge Assembly Rooms building stands on the north side of Lawyer's Hill Road just west of the intersection of Old Lawyer's Hill Road. It is composed of two sections built into a slope of land falling northward so that its five bay wide, two bay deep tent roofed shingled north wing is two stories high while its three bay wide, four bay deep intersecting gable roof (running north south) south wing is only one story high.

A gabled roof, shingled, one story high portico supported by shingled columns covers the central double paneled entrance door which is flanked by 16-16 light jib windows whose bottom wooden panels can be opened to form french doors. Four similar windows are located on its east and west walls.

Built on land donated by Judge George Washington Dobbin whose proposal to create a "neighborhood parlor" led to the construction of these Assembly Rooms, it was meant to serve specifically as a vehicle for healing any separations within the neighborhood which had been incurred by the Civil War.

INVENTORY FORM FOR STATE HISTORIC SITES SURVEY

**1 NAME**

HISTORIC

The Elk Ridge Assembly Rooms

AND/OR COMMON

**2 LOCATION**

STREET & NUMBER

6090 Lawyer's Hill Road

CITY, TOWN

Elkridge

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

Sixth District

STATE

Maryland

VICINITY OF

Howard County

**3 CLASSIFICATION**

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE <input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input 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 type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	<b>PUBLIC ACQUISITION</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT <input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input type="checkbox"/> YES UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT <input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL <input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OTHER Community Hall

**4 OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME

The Elkridge Assembly

Telephone #:

STREET & NUMBER

Lawyer's Hill Road

Tax Map 32 p. 38

CITY, TOWN

Elkridge

VICINITY OF

Maryland

STATE, zip code

**5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE,  
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC

Hall of Records

Liber #: 270 103

Folio #: 485 155

STREET & NUMBER

Howard County Court House

CITY, TOWN

Ellicott City

STATE

Maryland

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE

Howard County Historic Sites Inventory

DATE

1977

FEDERAL  STATE  COUNTY  LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORDS

Maryland Historical Trust

CITY, TOWN

21 State Circle, Annapolis

STATE

Maryland

**7 DESCRIPTION**Ho-381  
Dist 1

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input 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 Elk Ridge Assembly Rooms' building is a three bay wide, four bay deep, gabled roof, shingled frame, one story high structure whose gabled roof (running north-south) springs outward on either side to create a chinese roof effect and intersects with a five bay wide, two bay deep, tent roofed (running east-west) two story high, stage wing which holds a rectangular stage door approached by five open wooden stairs on the east side of its south wall and a similar door on the west side.

The central, rectangular double entrance door with proportionally scaled panels is covered by a one story high, gabled roof portico supported by square shingled columns on cement bases.

The entrance is flanked by 16-16 light jib windows, whose bottom panels can be opened to create french doors, and is surmounted by an oval paned window with key stone.

The three bay wide, four bay deep auditorium has a central and side aisles and hold four east and west windows similar to those on the front facade. In the summer it is particularly pleasing, opening up the windows on each side to the pleasant evenings.

The original building was designed by Robert Stead, a Washington architect and summer resident of the hill. It burned and was replaced.

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

**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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input 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 checked="" 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 type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)	
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION			

SPECIFIC DATES      1871      BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Assembly Room is significant historically and architecturally.

Historically it was built to provide the Lawyer's Hill area with a room for dances, , plays, tableaux, readings, etcetera. Formerly, all the neighbors had gathered in the home of Judge Dobbin, "The Lawn" and at Rockburn. Plays and musicals were held at these private homes followed by refreshments and/or dinner.

"The early days of the sixties were shadowed by the war", wrote Rebecca Pue Penniman, daughter of Judge Dobbin. She recalled the day when the family sat on the porch of the Lawn listening to the guns of the first battle of Manasses. She relates that Lawyer's Hill was almost equally divided in sentiment, and feeling ran very high. It was thus determined by all never to let the question of the North and South be discussed which left the residents at the end of the war as good friends as ever.

In 1869 the construction of The Assembly Room was proposed by Judge Dobbin as a kind of neighborhood parlor and the land given by him in the summer of 1870. The Assembly Room was opened with the production of "The Rivals" by the residents. Later its productions became so popular that tickets were sold in Baltimore on which the train schedule from Baltimore to Elkridge were printed.

Architecturally it is representative of the shingle style in architecture. Simple in design to serve the purpose of neighborhood gatherings and theatricals, its intersecting roof lines add interest as well as its jib windows and gabled roof entrance portico.

Built for a unique purpose, that of assembling a divided neighborhood after a terrible war and uniting them through their artistic endeavors with the theatre and the arts, The Assembly Room is of national significance. Serving a humanitarian purpose, it resulted in not only healing the wounds of its participants but furnishing fine entertainment for its visitors.

The Assembly Room is one of Howard County's finest landmarks and should be included along with the entire Lawyer's Hill area in an Historic District for both the National Register and for Howard County, should its residents so desire.

**9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES**

rown, George Dobbin. "The Robert D. Browns." Elkridge, 1976. (Mimeographed)  
 Dr. Brown's Books 60 to Peabody Library. Baltimore Sun, Fall 1951  
 "Thomas Viaduct Celebrates 134th Birthday." The Times - Ellicott City, Md.  
 Thursday, July 24, 1969. Interview with Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Cobb, present  
 owners of "The Lawn". Elkridge, July 28, 1976.

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

**10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA**

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY \_\_\_\_\_

Please see attachment 1, Tax Map 32, p. 38

**VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION**

Please see Howard County Land Records Liber 103 and Folio 155

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

STATE	Maryland	COUNTY	Howard
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STATE	COUNTY
-------	--------

**11 FORM PREPARED BY**

NAME / TITLE

Cleora Barnes Thompson, Archivist

ORGANIZATION

Office of Planning & Zoning-Comprehensive Planning Section

DATE

STREET & NUMBER

3450 Court House Drive

TELEPHONE

465-5000 x 257

CITY OR TOWN

Ellicott City

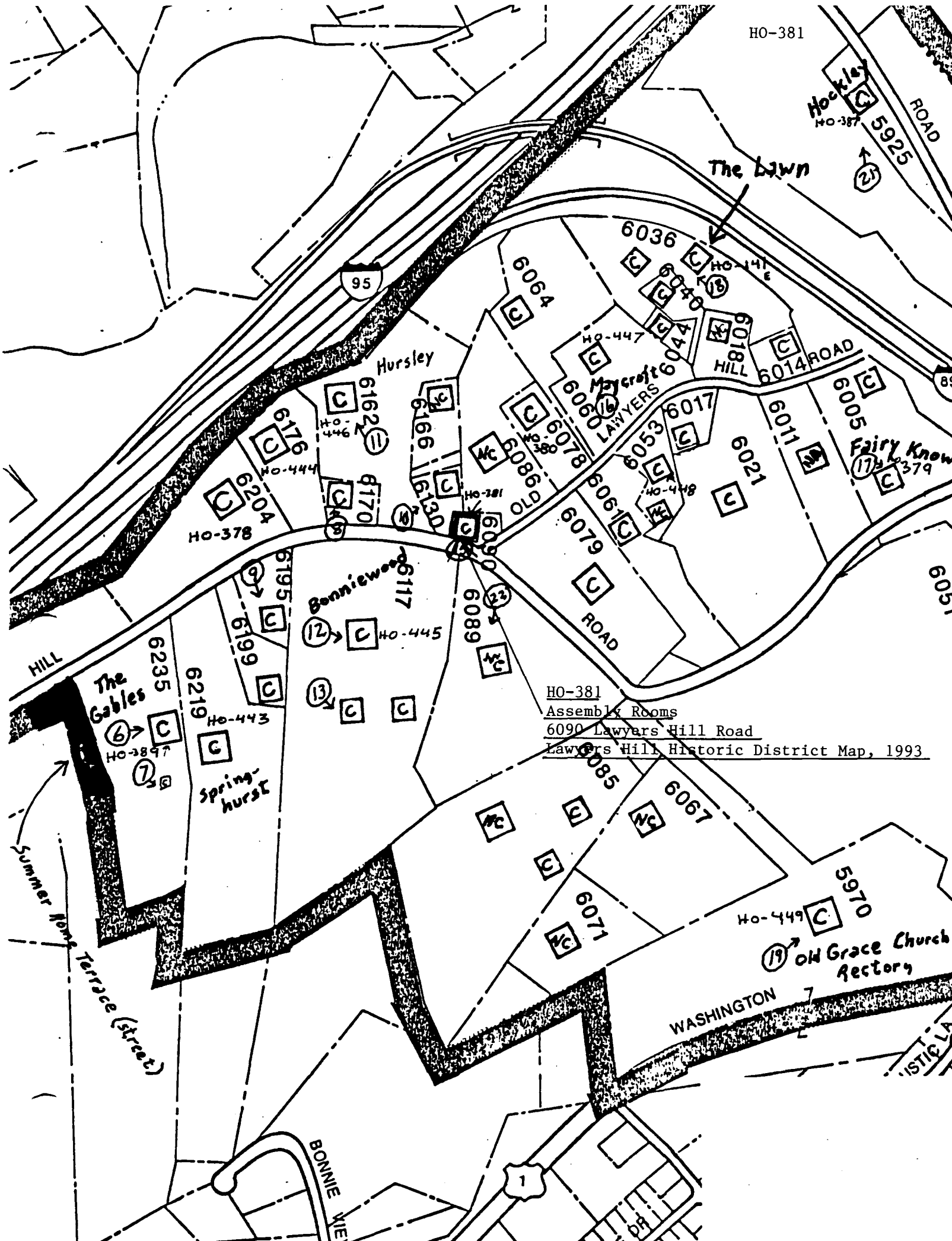
STATE

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





HO-381  
 Assembly Rooms  
 6090 Lawyers Hill Road  
 Lawyers Hill Historic District Map, 1993

HOCKLEY ROAD  
 HO-387  
 5925  
 (25)

The Lawn

Hursley

HILL

The Gables

Springhurst

Bonnie Wood

WASHINGTON

Old Grace Church Rectory

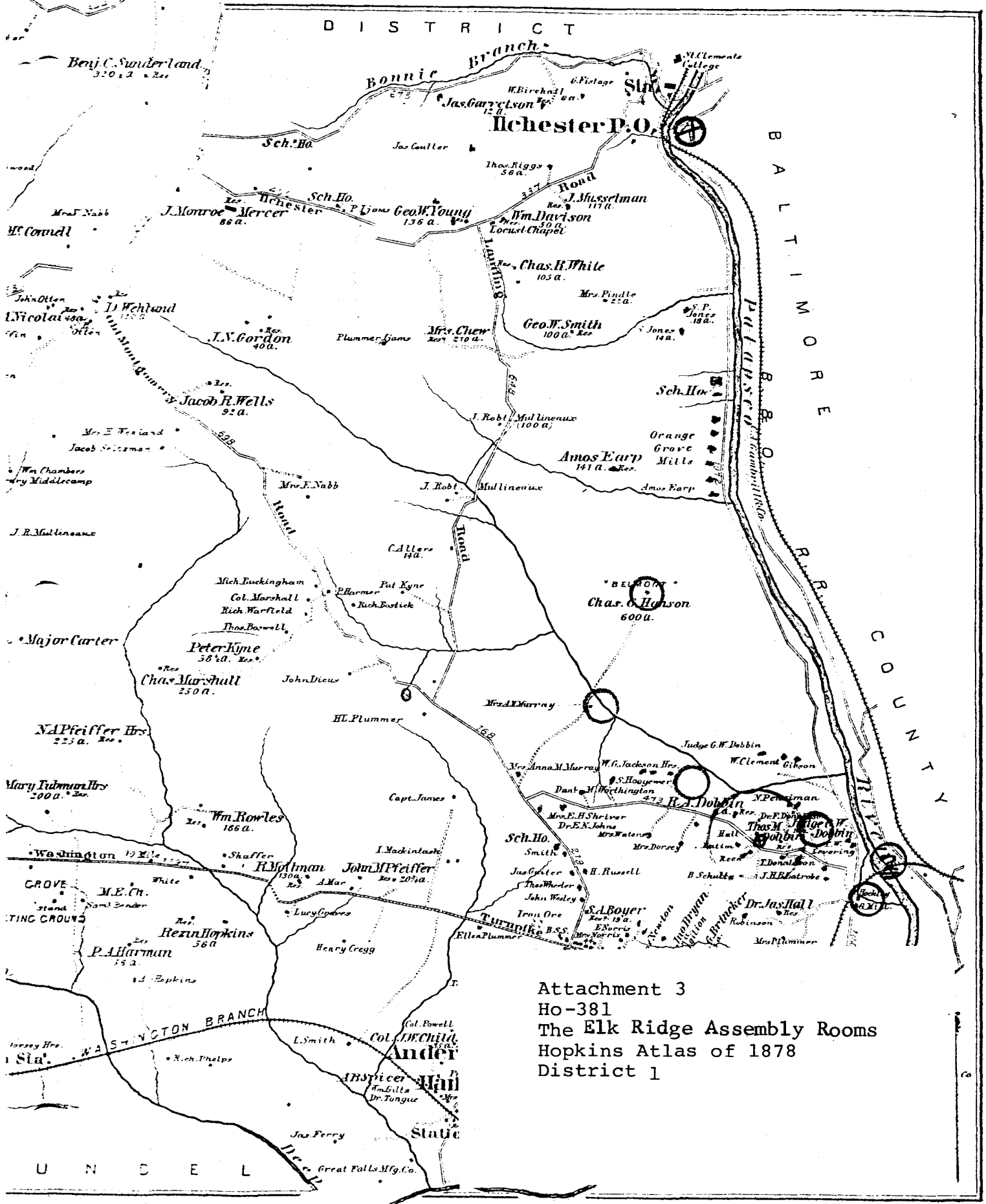
Summer Home Terrace (Street)

BONNIE WOOD

HISTORIC LA

S E C T I O N D

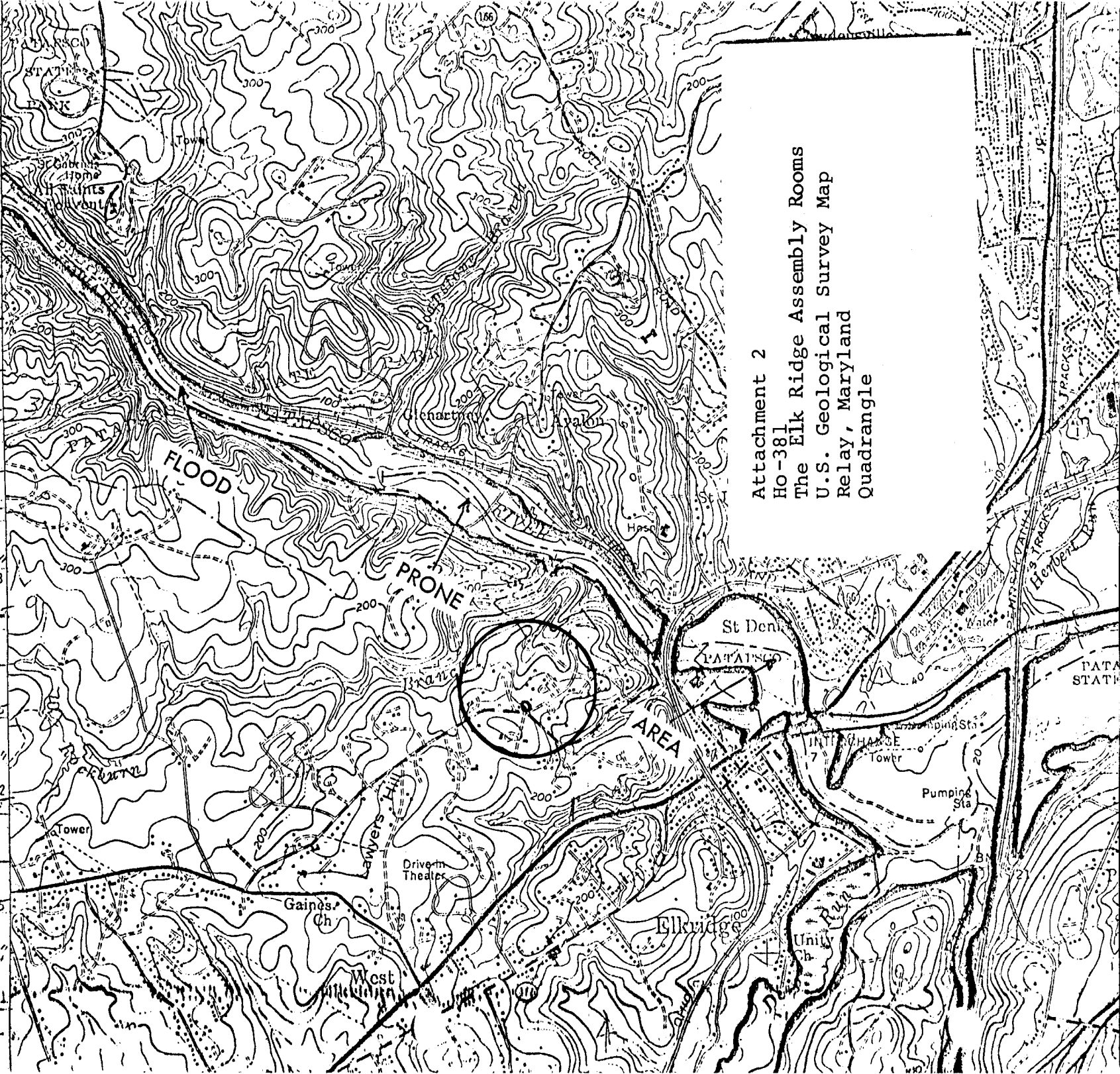
D I S T R I C T



Attachment 3  
 Ho-381  
 The Elk Ridge Assembly Rooms  
 Hopkins Atlas of 1878  
 District 1

37° 14' 30" N  
79° 13' 30" W

52.5  
42.5  
37.5  
34.5000m N.  
37° 14' 30"  
22.5  
15  
7.5  
4344  
39° 14' 00"  
52.5  
42.5  
37.5  
39° 13' 30"  
4343  
22.5  
15  
7.5  
39° 13' 00"  
4342  
52.5  
42.5  
37.5  
39° 12' 30"  
37° 12' 30"  
22.5  
15



Attachment 2  
HO-381  
The Elk Ridge Assembly Rooms  
U.S. Geological Survey Map  
Relay, Maryland  
Quadrangle



MO-081 DIST  
THE ASSEMBLY  
1977  
C.B. THOMPSON AHP