

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National 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). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Thornton

other names K-195

2. Location

street & number 10618 Perkins Hill Road

☐ not for publication

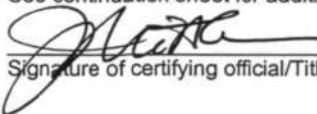
city or town Chestertown

☒ vicinity

state Maryland code MD county Kent code 024 zip code 21620

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

11-8-05
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

Thornton (K-195)

Name of Property

Kent County, MD

County and State

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	
5	3	buildings
2		sites
	3	structures
		objects
7	6	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
AGRICULTURE/SUBSISTENCE: storage
AGRICULTURE/SUBSISTENCE: animal facility
AGRICULTURE/SUBSISTENCE:
agricultural outbuilding
AGRICULTURE/SUBSISTENCE: agricultural field

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC: single dwelling
AGRICULTURE/SUBSISTENCE: storage
AGRICULTURE/SUBSISTENCE: animal facility
AGRICULTURE/SUBSISTENCE:
agricultural outbuilding
AGRICULTURE/SUBSISTENCE: agricultural field

7. Description**Architectural Classification**

(Enter categories from instructions)

COLONIAL: Georgian

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Brick
walls Brick
roof Wood shingles
other

Narrative Description

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

Thornton (K-165)

Name of Property

Kent County, MD

County and State

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)

AGRICULTURE

ARCHITECTURE

ARCHEOLOGY: HISTORIC—NON-ABORIGINAL

Period of Significance

ca. 1788-1930

Significant Dates

ca. 1788

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Unknown

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:

Historical Society of Kent County, Maryland

Thornton (K-195)

Name of Property

Kent County, MD

County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 352 acres

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

1	Zone	Easting	Northing
2			

[illegible]☒ 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 By

name/title Jane B. Sprinkle & John H. Sprinkle, Jr.

Organization

date 2001; revised 11/2005

street & number 10618 Perkins Hill Road

telephone 410-778-5416

city or town Chestertown

state MD

zip code 21620

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

street & number

telephone

city or town

state

zip code

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 Reduction Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

K-195
Thornton

Name of Property

Kent County, MD

County and State

Section 7 Page 1

Description Summary:

Thornton comprises a 352-acre family farm that is seated along Morgan's Creek, a tributary of the Chester River, in Kent County, Maryland. The roughly triangular property is bounded on the west by Morgan's Creek, on the east by Perkins Hill Road, and on the south by an unnamed creek. The farm contains about 200 acres of tillable land, 80 acres of woodland bordering Morgan's Creek, and 65 acres of pasture, which include 3 artificial (and non contributing) ponds, the most recent of which was installed during the 1960s. Although agricultural practices have changed over the years at the farm, a variety of hedgerows and fence lines cut across the fields and pastures. The tillable and pasture land is divided into 15 plots, which vary in size from about 50 acres to less than 5 acres. These divisions are remnants of 20th century agricultural practices when the farm was a small dairy operation.

The domestic and agricultural complex contains roughly 7 acres and is positioned in the southern portion of the farm, seated at the highest elevation on the property (above 60'). The focus of the complex is a late 18th century, 5 bay, 2 and 1/2 story brick structure, that includes a 1 and 1/2 story brick kitchen wing addition. The contributing elements of the agricultural complex include an animal barn, a granary, a dairy barn, and a smoke house. The non contributing elements includes a garage, a garden/potting shed and a chicken house.

The archaeological record of the property comprises two recorded archaeological sites. One, 18KE308, is associated with the extant domestic structure. 18KE309 is the site of a tenant farmer occupation and dates to the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The tenant site is located in a field approximately 500 feet south and east of the principal farmstead.

Thornton was patented in 1664 as a 1,000 acre grant from Philip Calvert, Lord Baltimore to Francis Jackson. In 1712, the land passed from Philip Hopkins to his cousins, Phillip and John Brooks, then living in Derby, England. The original 1,000 acre patent was divided in 1853 into two roughly equal parcels. By the mid-1930s, the farm had achieved its current extent of about 350 acres. The Brooks family resided on and farmed Thornton as a family operation until the early twentieth century, when the family removed to Chestertown. After that time, tenant farmers lived on the farm and tilled the land, until 1980 when the house was again occupied by the land owners.

General Description:

The house, constructed ca. 1788, is principally Georgian in style. The brick work is Flemish bond on the facade and common bond on the rear face. The windows on the lower story are 12 over 12 while the second story windows are 12 over 8 panes. It appears that the original raised panel shutters and hardware survive on the first floor. The common rafter roof comprises rafter pairs joined with mortise and tenon joints; each pair is

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

K-195
Thornton

Name of Property

Kent County, MD

County and State

Section 7 Page 2

individually numbered using Roman numerals. Three dormers are present on the facade and two on the rear. Architectural evidence suggests that these dormers were added to the structure soon after its initial construction.

The house has the typical Georgian floor plan, comprising a central stair hall with rooms on either side. The house appears to retain all of its original interior wood work and plaster. For example, the fireplace mantel in the principal room has a classically oriented pedimented form with a crossetted corner overmantel and a scrolled mantel shelf support. Interior doors have 6 raised panels with apparently intact hinges. The 2 and 1/2 story stair hall retains much of its original decorative graining and the tread brackets have a delicately executed floral motif. The architectural detail of the second floor is less extensive. The house contains seven fireplaces.

Rehabilitation: In the 1980s the house was rehabilitated for modern use. All of the fireplace flues were rebuilt, one chimney stack was shortened to its original height. The interior wood work on the second floor bedrooms was re-installed to full-depth closet space. A false wall was installed in the stair hall to hide utility service to the second floor, which included installation of a full bathroom in the hallway. Nineteenth century elements, including Victorian second story shutters and hardware, and remnants of a Victorian porch on the facade were removed. Although a reproduction porch entablature was added that followed the ghost of the original pediment, the surviving pilasters were retained. Modern utilities were installed and a new wood shingle roof was laid. A porch was added to the kitchen wing.

The following architectural description was taken from the Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties form for Thornton:

Thornton is a brick house and wing built in the late 18th century. It is located on Perkins Hill Road near Urieville and faces north across open fields. The main house is five bays wide and two and one-half stories high standing on a tall basement which is marked with a molded water table. The gable roof of the main house has two gable dormers in each roof slope. The chimneys are enclosed in gable walls and have corbelled and banded brick caps.

The wing is one and one-half stories high, one room deep and four bays long. It has a catslide gable roof extending above a shallow front veranda which is as long as the wing. The veranda roof rests upon four brick columns with bases marked by a course of molded bricks identical to those which make up the water table of the main house. The long slope of the roof is toward the rear of the building. Both slopes have gable dormers. A chimney is enclosed in the west gable wall. Another protrudes from the center of the wing. Both have corbelled caps; the central chimney is extremely tall and slender.

The brick of the main house is laid in Flemish bond on the north (approach) facade, Liverpool bond on gables and rear, and English bond below the water table (which is found on the front, rear facades and on the east gable.) Flemish bond mortar joints are grapevined. A belt course on the front facade has been chiseled away.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

K-195
Thornton

Name of Property

Kent County, MD

County and State

Section 7 Page 3

Window openings on both front and rear have splayed flat arches; those in the attic have rowlock arches. The wing has Liverpool bond on all facades.

The main house is evenly fenestrated with 3/8 sash windows on the second floor, 12/8 sash windows on the first and three-pane windows used for cellar windows. There are central entrances, a 8/8 window at the stair landing, rear, and a tall window, now closed with louvered blinds above the main entrance. [This door opening was restored as a window during the 1980s rehabilitation] Second floor and basement windows have beaded frames with quarterround backband moldings; first floor frames on the south facade have quarterround moldings but are not beaded. On the north first floor and on the south entrance, frames have two planes instead of being flat, are beaded and have the usual quarterround backband. Sills on the second floor are flush with the walls, but those on the first are rounded and have a cove bed. (This detail is also seen at Knocks Folly, K-114) Louvered shutters are seen on second floor windows; on the first are three raised and beveled panel blinds which may be original.

Front and rear entrance doors have six raised and beveled panels on the outside; inside they have unusual horizontal battens which are beaded and grained and closed with late 19th century hardware. The north front entrance has a five pane transom light. It has architrave trim with triglyph corner blocks and paneled pilasters. There are full length louvered shutters. The jambs have flush beaded panels. The front entrance porch [removed during the 1980s rehabilitation] appears to be somewhat later than the house; its flat hipped roof is supported by double round columns. The balustrade has plain rectangular balusters and a molded handrail. The cornice has delicate, shaped modillion blocks. There are two benches. and rear porch are missing.

Six sash windows are used on the wing which is also evenly fenestrated. Entrance doors are located in the east bay on front and rear and in the third bay from the east on the rear. Like the windows, frames have backband moldings made up of delicate composite curves. An additional entrance has been added to the gable. [This doorway was removed and patched during the 1980s rehabilitation.] A portion of original cornice, made up of cyma recta and quarter-round, remains on the-rear.

The main house has a central hall and two rooms per floor. There are rooms on each floor of the wing and an enclosed stair. Most of the original woodwork remains in the house with the exception of the kitchen. Floors of medium to wide yellow pine also remain; most have not been painted, varnished or stained. Plaster, most in good condition and some fragments of wall paper, have also survived.

The stair is of the three run type and is open to the attic. The newel is very simple and turned as are intermediates. The newel cap is continuous with an oval, molded handrail. Balusters are rectangular, two per step. Step brackets have a scroll design up to the second floor and a curved slot above that. The spandrel is a simple rectangular panel with painted maple burl graining.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

K-195
Thornton

Name of Property

Kent County, MD

County and State

Section 7 Page 4

In the main, East parlor, the fireplace has a tabernacle overmantel. The fireplace opening is rectangular with quarterround crossette surround. The straight mantel shelf has a curved bracket support. The room has crossette trim on the four windows and the door.

The mantel has mahogany graining with black picking-out on ogee edge of panels. Panel fields are oak burl. Six-panel doors have oak graining with burl panels.

The west first floor room has identical chairrail and baseboard, and trim except without crossettes. The paneled fireplace wall has recessed panels with ogee edges. There is a closet beside the fireplace.

The parlor chamber has a mantel with shelf supported by brackets and two flanking closets with six-panel doors. Paneling on this wall is recessed; the same chairrail as above is used but the window trim is a single quarterround. The west room on the second floor has a very similar paneled fireplace wall but the mantel shelf is supported by consoles.

The first floor wing room has a more delicate trim made up of composite moldings and a mantel with broken shelf and three reeded frieze blocks; there is a closet with vertical boards on the closet.

The main house appears to have been the first part constructed with wing added soon after.¹

A recently published architectural history of Kent County, Maryland describes the property as follows:

During the restoration project of the 1980s, many components of the kitchen wing showed signs of having been reused from an earlier structure. There were footings for a previous fireplace nearly centered in the wing and overhead joists were beaded, whitewashed and extended through the wall and over the built-in porch. However, since the existing walls are bonded into the main house, it is believed that the kitchen structure was rebuilt at the same time the main house was constructed.

When built, the house was five bays long and two stories tall with the central entry having a pedimented architrave supported on recessed panel pilasters with triglyphs, a unique treatment in Ken, but bearing some similarities to Rose Hill. The majority of the brick work on the north facade was laid in Flemish bond. However, beneath the quarter-round water table the bond is English and the basement windows had four-pane sash behind iron bars. Flanking the entrance there were two 12/12 sash windows with paneled shutters. On the second floor there were five 12/8 sash windows which lacked shutters. Each floor had jack arches one brick in height. The south facade was very similar, except that the center door and window were located so as to best

¹ Fritz, Marsha, "Thornton (K-195)", 1977, Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties, on file at Maryland Historical Trust (MD SHPO), Crownsville, MD 21032

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

K-195
Thornton

Name of Property

Kent County, MD

County and State

Section 7 Page 5

serve the position of the stair. In each gable there were two small, four pane casements flanking the chimney. Originally there were no dormers.

Set back about six feet from the north wall in order to create enough space for a basement bulkhead in the west gable, the service wing is very similar to that at Springfield Farm. It has an asymmetrical A roof with the longer side extending over the six foot porch. The five brick posts which support the roof have the same molded watertable as the main block. There were originally four openings on the north facade, two doors and two windows with 9/6 sash and shutters. Above, there were two dormers east of the central chimney and one west of it. The same fenestration occurred on the south side. In the west gable flanking the chimney there were two full-size windows with 6/6 sash, just as all the other windows in the second story of the kitchen wing.

The interior of Thornton had the most popular plan for Kent County farm houses, a central stair passage with room on each side. The kitchen wing had two rooms with the outer room having the cooking fireplace.

In the east parlor, the most formal room of the house, there is a tabernacle overmantel with crosssetted central panel. Crosssettes are also used around the fireplace opening, windows, and door. The mantel shelf is supported on the undercut ogee consoles. There are recessed panel jambs in all the windows, molded baseboard, chair rail and cornice, creating a well finished room of the period. The west room has a less formal arrangement, a paneled chimney breast with cabinet adjoining. There are crossettes over the plain overmantel only at the top and nowhere else in the room. The paneled wall is the only one to possess a cornice.

The front and back doors in the entry are flush with the interior wall, with paneled jambs which correspond to the door panels outside. Wide horizontal boards cover the inside of the doors

The open string stair rises in three flights to the second story. Its newel and intermediate posts are turned in the form of a doric column and its hand rail rises up and over each intermediate post. There are well-designed, scrolled step ends, a paneled spandrel, and half hand rail and half posts in the walls which provide a fine degree of finish.

Both second floor chambers are finished with paneled closet walls flanking a plaster chimney wall with mantel around the off-center fireplaces. There is no cornice in either room and the window trim consists only of hackband and board joints.

There is some speculation about the original appearance of the rooms in the service wing. The original arrangement may have had a stair in each of the rooms which ascended to two private chambers. Around 1820 however, the east room was finished with a reeded plinth mantel and adjoining board wall pantry closet. At

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

K-195
Thornton

Name of Property

Kent County, MD

County and State

Section 7 Page 6

that time a stair was installed between the two rooms for access to the two bedrooms for access to the two bedrooms above.²

Outbuildings: Three barns (contributing) are presently located on the property: a "dairy barn," an "animal barn," and a "granary." Constructed in the early twentieth century, the dairy barn (36 x 46') was used as part of the farm's dairy operation until the early 1980s. It has a cinder block foundation and a concrete first floor with milking stalls. The balloon framed building has a metal seamed roof and an attached shed (13 x 15'), silo (12' diameter) and milk house (12 x 19'). The building has not been used as a dairying operation since the early 1980s. A recently constructed (non contributing) pole barn (40 x 60') is located north of the dairy barn and is used for general equipment storage.

Approximately 28 feet south of the dairy is the location of a barn which burned due to a hay fire in the mid-1980s. This building was similar in construction to the animal barn and was referred to as the "hay barn."

The animal barn (33 x 30') is located 50 feet south of the former hay barn. The surviving structure appears to be of late nineteenth century construction that has received wood siding and a metal roof in the early twentieth century. Half of the ground floor of this barn was converted to a farm shop in the early 1980s. The rest of the building is used as general storage.

Located 50 feet south of the animal barn, the granary (28 x 36') dates to the second half of the nineteenth century. It retains portions of its original features to store a variety of grains, including cob corn bays on either side of the central carriage way. The building has a field stone foundation and a metal roof. Its general layout is similar to the Cochran Grange granary from Delaware, with a through passage on the lower level flanked by corn cob storage, a corner winder stairway, and an upper floor dedicated to small grain storage.³ The rear or western facade of the former hay barn, animal barn, and granary are aligned.

A "smoke house" (contributing) is located immediately south (about 34') and to the rear of the main dwelling's kitchen wing. This approximately 14 x 15' almost square wood frame building has board and batten siding and rests on a brick foundation. It has a metal roof.

Two (non contributing) wood framed sheds are present in the farm yard behind the main dwelling and the smoke house. They serve as a planting shed for the garden, and as general storage.

² Bourne, Michael. Historic Houses of Kent County: An Architectural History, 1642-1860. Chestertown, MD: Historical Society of Kent County, 1998, pp. 335-337.

³ Herman, Bernard, Architecture and Rural Life in Central Delaware, 1700-1900. University of Tennessee Press, 1987, pg. 203.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

K-195
Thornton

Name of Property

Kent County, MD

County and State

Section 7 Page 7

Archaeological Properties: The property contains two recorded archaeological sites. 18KE308 is associated with the principal domestic complex dating from the 18th century and 18KE309 is associated with a late nineteenth and early twenty century tenant complex.

Limited excavations have occurred at 18KE308 in association with rehabilitation activities. For example, testing was done at the rear porch to search for foundation remains. This testing not only revealed the presence of post holes and molds associated with the porch, but also a buried A horizon, or top soil, in the area adjacent to the house--probably the result of excavating the house's full basement. Excavations of builder's trench sections--most with mixed physical integrity--have revealed creamware ceramics and a late 18th century coin issued in New Jersey, suggesting a late 18th century date of construction. A large kitchen and flower garden has been the subject of unsystematic surface collection through the years. Test excavations have identified at least one lined privy near the house, that was backfilled in the early, probably when the interior plumbing was installed.

Site 18KE309 comprises a ca. 2 acre scattering of domestic debris associated with a tenant occupation. Dating of this site is based on documentary evidence and artifacts recovered through unsystematic surface collection. Oral tradition suggests that the site includes a well that has since been filled in by farm operators during the course of the twentieth century.

Prehistoric artifacts have been found through casual surface collection within the farm, however, to date, no concentrations have been identified that would seem to suggest extensive prehistoric occupations on the property.

Contributing Resources

Sites (2)

House
Smoke House
Dairy Barn
Animal Barn
Granary

Non Contributing Resources

Pole Barn
Garden/potting shed
Storage Shed
Agricultural ponds (3)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

K-195
Thornton

Name of Property

Kent County, MD
County and State

Section 8 Page 1

Statement of Significance:

Thornton is eligible for the National Register under Criterion C for the architectural significance of the principal dwelling, a late Georgian style farm house built during the late 18th century, which retains a high degree of integrity. The design, form, materials and workmanship are characteristic of a type of prosperous farmer's dwelling of the period in the region. The house's interior finishes are finely executed and exceptionally well preserved. According to the state inventory form,

Thornton retains an unusual amount of original trim and detailing on the exterior, but the interior is a treasure of early woodwork and decoration. Virtually all major features remain in place and most are decorated with painted graining. This decoration is extremely valuable and rare; having passed from favor in the 20th century, much of it was painted over and damaged. It has survived at Thornton, however, and in almost-perfect condition.

The property derives additional significance under Criterion A for its association with the agricultural development of Maryland's upper Eastern Shore region. The farm is particularly noteworthy in that it has been owned and operated by the same family for nearly three hundred years. The farm has been under cultivation by Thomas and John Brooks and their descendants since 1712.⁴ During the 18th and 19th centuries the farm was cultivated by successive generations of the Brooks family.⁵ Agricultural census records show that the farm exhibited typical characteristics for a medium to large sized operation during the 19th century. For much of the 20th century the farm was occupied by tenants, yet management decisions remained with the family.⁶ In the post-World War II period, the farm was a diversified small dairy operation run by tenants. Dairying had ceased

⁴ Although briefly outlined in *Historic Houses of Kent County* (pgs. 335-338), much of the eighteenth and nineteenth century history of the Brooks family lies hidden within Kent County's court and land records. After inheriting the property in 1712, Philip died intestate in the early 1760s, leaving a sizeable estate. By 1783, the "upper part" of Thornton was in the "occupation of William Kinggold," who appears to have been renting the farm and its old brick house in the Kent County assessment.

⁵ After a early nineteenth century inheritance swap, Philip Brooks lived at Thornton until he died intestate in 1837. After Philip's brother Thomas died in the late 1850s, the original patent was divided into three parcels, now known as Thornton (upper Thornton), the Wilmer Farm (lower Thornton), and the Hildebrand Farm, located across Perkins Hill Road. George Courtland Medford Brooks, who received Thornton in the land division, died in 1863 leaving the property to Philip Angier Medford Brooks, who attended Episcopal High School in Alexandria, Virginia. P.A.M. Brooks lived with his wife, Susan Emily Massey, in Chestertown until the 1880s when they returned to the farm until the early twentieth century. *Historic Homes of Kent County*, pgs. 335-338.

⁶ On August 29, 1904, "intending to discontinue farming and having rented the homeplace to Mr. Samuel Nickerson," P.A.M. Brooks advertised the sale of his farming equipment and livestock. Among the items sold were: 15 mules, horses, and colts; 16 cattle (2 cows, 3 hieifers and a 12 year old steer); 3 Oliver plows; 2 twin harrows; a sulkey; 3 one-horse cultivators; a Hallock weeder; an Evans corn planter; and a 11 hoe Bickford and Hoffman drill. After 1904, the Brooks family resided in Chestertown. The advertisement for the 1904 sale is in the possession of the family.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

K-195
Thornton

Name of Property

Kent County, MD

County and State

Section 8 Page 2

by 1980, when the family returned to living on the property and overseeing day-to-day management of its operations.⁷ This record of continuous occupation is highly unusual in the present day, and justifies the inclusion of the entire 352-acre parcel within the boundaries of the nominated property.

Although there is little agreement on what constitutes a family farm, there is widespread agreement that the family farm is an important part of American culture and historical agrarian mythology.⁸ Ever since Thomas Jefferson's unrealized view of a democratic American future based on the foundation of a hard-working class of educated yeoman farmers, the ideal of the family farm was a powerful force in American society. As the American frontier closed at the end of the 19th century and Americans confronted an urban and industrial (and now technological) future, concern for the plight of the family farmer has grown. This debate over the future of American agriculture has intensified in the post World War II period as prime farmland throughout the country, especially in areas adjoining eastern cities, has fallen victim to suburban sprawl. Generally debates over the family farm center on its economic preservation, not on its value as an American symbol. The number of farms within Maryland declines each year—despite the state's continuing investment in one of the country's most aggressive agricultural land preservation programs. Current statistics show that in 1969 there were 17,000 farm operations in Maryland—by 1997 the number had fallen to 12,000 operations, with a comparable loss of agricultural land use. In 1997, Thornton was one of only 2000 farms across the state with between 200 to 500 acres. In 1988 Thornton was designated one of approximately 30 bicentennial family farms in Maryland by the United States Department of Agriculture, recognizing its status as a family agricultural operation for over 200 years. This honor was granted after a review of available historical and agricultural information regarding the history of the farm by USDA and state officials.

The Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties form observes:

Thornton represents a fine country house of the end of the 18th century. Records in the Kent County Courthouse have a transaction of March 17, 1809 transferring the property (900 acres) from Mary Brooks to Phillip Brooks. A note gives the property its present name and stated that it previously belonged to another Phillip Brooks "late of Kent County." (B.C. 5/432) Whether the first Phillip was the builder of the house is unknown; the house has remained in the family until the present.

The property is also eligible under Criterion D because it contains at least two archaeological sites that have the potential to contribute to our understanding of the region's history. Limited excavations in association with the principal structure have documented the physical integrity of deposits at this site. The existence of discrete

⁷ The Brooks family retains several family related documents and portraits, including a memoir from Susan Emily Massey dating from the late nineteenth century.

⁸ For the varied definitions of a family farm and how this discussion has current political and economic implications see: "What is a Family Farm?" *Progressive Farmer*, December 2001.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

K-195
Thornton

Name of Property

Kent County, MD

County and State

Section 8 Page 3

archaeological sites associated with the owners and tenant farmers suggests that the property has the potential to yield information regarding the relationship between tenants and land owners in the latter half of the nineteenth century. Comparison of assemblages from each site would illustrate the differences and similarities in the material culture between these two economic conditions. Further excavations at the tenant farmer site would also yield information on the nature of this reported dwelling, on which there is little written evidence.

In addition to the rehabilitation work of the 1980s, the current owners have undertaken extensive efforts to maintain the historic and agricultural character of the property. The farm participates in a variety of conservation programs sponsored by the federal and state government to improve agricultural practices while protecting the Chesapeake Bay environment. In addition, the State of Maryland recently purchased the development rights for this property, thus ensuring the preservation of its agricultural setting.

The period of significance is defined by the approximate date of construction of the main dwelling (ca. 1788) and concludes in 1930 when the farm achieved its current size.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

K-195
Thornton

Name of Property

Kent County, MD

County and State

Section 9 Page 1

Major Bibliographical References:

Bourne, Michael Owen, *Historic Houses of Kent County: An Architectural History: 1642-1860*.
The Historical Society of Kent County, Chestertown, Maryland, 1998.

Fritz, Marsha L., *Thornton*, Maryland Historical Trust Inventory Form for State Historic Sites Survey, 1977.

Herman, Bernard L., *Architecture and Rural Life in Central Delaware, 1700-1900*. The University of
Tennessee Press, Knoxville, 1987.

Odle, Jack (with Jim Phillips), "What is a Family Farm?" *Progressive Farmer*, Volume 116 (December 2001),
pgs. 20-22.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

K-195
Thornton

Name of Property

Kent County, MD

County and State

Section 10 Page 1

UTM References

Betterton, MD quad

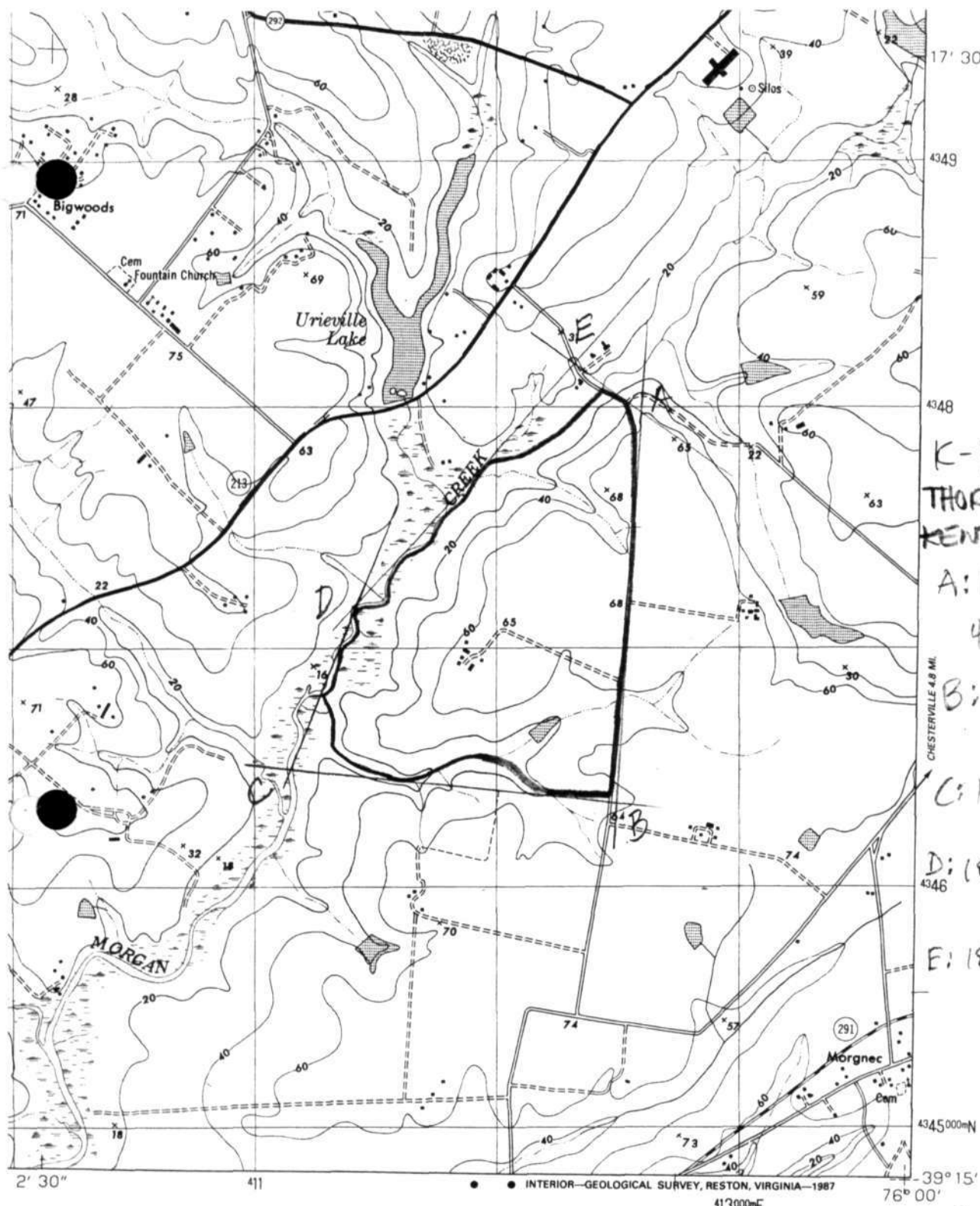
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- B: 18-412524-4346550
- C: 18-411183-4346684
- D: 18-411439-4347389
- E: 18-412463-4348272

Verbal Boundary Description:

The nominated property is described among the Land Records of Kent County, Maryland as Map 29, Grid 2C, Parcel 5. The eastern and northern boundary of the property is Perkins Hill Road, the western border is Morgan Creek. Thornton is separated from another farm to the south by an unnamed tributary of Morgan Creek.

Boundary Justification:

The nominated property, 352 acres, represents the remnant of the property historically associated with the resource which has remained in agricultural use under the ownership of the same family since the early 18th century.



K-195
 THORNTON
 KENT COUNTY, MD
 A: 18-412631-
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 B: 18-412524-
 4346550
 C: 18-411183-
 4346684
 D: 18-411439-
 4347389
 E: 18-412463-
 4348272

MILE



QUADRANGLE LOCATION

Revisions shown in purple and woodland compiled by the Geological Survey from aerial photographs taken 1981 and other sources
 This information not field checked. Map edited 1986

ROAD CLASSIFICATION
 Primary highway, hard surface ——— Light-duty road, hard or improved surface ———
 Secondary highway, hard surface ——— Unimproved road - - - - -
 Interstate Route U. S. Route State Route

BETTERTON, MD.
 39076-C1-TF-024

1948
 PHOTOREVISED 1986
 DMA 5762 I SE-SERIES V833

MD TF
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BETTERTON
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