

S-54

Waters' River (Robertson Farm)

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.

All material is property of the Maryland Historical Trust.

Last Updated: 10-02-2003

1987

S-54
Waters River
Manokin vicinity
private

c.1813

"Waters River" is significant as an exceptionally well preserved and proportioned Federal period plantation house which faces the Big Annemessex River. Several distinctive features including tall, narrow chimneys, recessed panels on the front and rear facades, and intricately carved woodwork tie "Waters River" to a prominent collection of its contemporaries. Inside, the dwelling is divided by a four-room plan with the stair rising in the southeast room. Decorative scrollwork embellishes the stringer, and diamond cross-sectioned balusters support a ramped handrail. A half-rail mirrors the main railing on the adjacent wall surface. The balance of the first and second floor rooms are finished with well executed woodwork.

This Flemish bond brick house was erected by a fourth generation descendant of the original owner, Major William Waters, who patented the 1280-acre tract on September 5, 1663. Although Major Waters maintained his residence in Northampton County, Virginia, his Annemessex River property was divided along with the rest of his Virginia land holdings, and "Waters River" remained in family hands for the next five generations. Historically, members of the Waters family were prominent Quaker planters, and Quaker meetings were held on the lands of Richard Waters during the early eighteenth century.

John, William, and Richard Waters inherited parts of their father's estate, and John Waters purchased from his brother, William, a 700-acre tract, part of which passed to John Waters' son, William, after John's death in 1708. William Waters' wife, Rose Harmanson, was assessed for 352½ acres of "Waters River" in 1783 since William had died two years before. Included on the premises was a brick dwelling house with three rooms below-unfinished, kitchens, barns, and

all in bad repair." Fifteen years later the house was further described as the property of William Hayward Waters;

"1 Dwelling house built of brick 52 feet by 20 feet one story high 7 windows 5 feet long by 2 feet 8 inches, 3 windows 4 feet by 2 feet, 1 kitchen 20 feet by 16 feet 1 smoke house 12 feet square, 1 milk house 12 feet by 10 feet 1 carriage house 12 feet by 8 feet the above houses very old and out of repair."

From this description it is clear the 1783 and 1798 descriptions refer to an earlier brick house that was replaced around 1813 with the extant structure. This construction date is supported architecturally by the Federal period woodwork in addition to the double-struck nails found in the attic framing. William H. Waters' will was proved in 1834 and bequeathed to his son, Thomas Littleton Waters, "my manor or plantation whereon I now live." (JP 5/31)

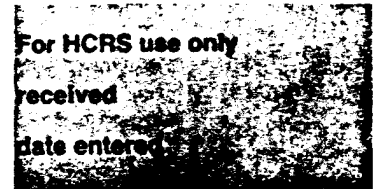
The next notable family to own "Waters River" was the Robertson family, who acquired the property in 1888 from Francis S. Lockerman (HFL 6/92). Various Robertsons, including Dr. Samuel H. Robertson, a local general practitioner, owned the farm from 1888 until 1943 (BLB 126/458). The current owners bought the 312-acre farm in 1950 (GJB 186/444).

**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*

Type all entries—complete applicable sections



1. Name

historic "Waters' River" - Robertson Farm

and/or common Waters' River (preferred)

2. Location

street & number Hood Road n/a not for publication

city, town Manokin ☒ vicinity of congressional district First

state Maryland code 24 county Somerset code 039

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
☐ district	☐ public	☒ occupied	☐ agriculture	☐ museum
☒ building(s)	☒ private	☐ unoccupied	☐ commercial	☐ park
☐ structure	☐ both	☐ work in progress	☐ educational	☒ private residence
☐ site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	☐ entertainment	☐ religious
☐ object	☐ in process	☒ yes: restricted	☐ government	☐ scientific
	☐ being considered	☐ yes: unrestricted	☐ industrial	☐ transportation
	☒ not applicable	☐ no	☐ military	☐ other:

4. Owner of Property

name James and Ellen Britton

street & number P. O. Box 143

city, town Princess Anne n/a vicinity of state Maryland 21853

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Somerset County Register of Deeds

street & number Somerset Courthouse

city, town Princess Anne state Maryland 21853

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Maryland Historical Trust
Historic Sites Inventory

has this property been determined eligible? ☐ yes ☒ no

date 1976 ☐ federal ☒ state ☐ county ☐ local

depository for survey records Maryland Historical Trust, 21 State Circle

city, town Annapolis state Maryland 21401

7. Description

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Condition

☒ excellent
☐ good
☐ fair

☐ deteriorated
☐ ruins
☐ unexposed

Check one

☐ unaltered
☒ altered

Check one

☒ original site
☐ moved date n/a

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

Number of Resources

Contributing

1
0
0
0
1

Noncontributing

3 buildings
0 sites
1 structures
0 objects
4 Total

Number of previously listed
National Register properties
included in this nomination: 0

Original and historic functions
and uses: residential

DESCRIPTION SUMMARY:

Waters' River is a large plantation house constructed c. 1800-1820 on the Big Annemessex River near Manokin in Somerset County, Maryland. The house is built of brick laid in Flemish bond, and stands two stories high above a raised basement. The steeply pitched gable roof is clad in wood shingles. The principal (south) facade is oriented to the river, and is three bays wide: 9/9 sash flank the central entrance on the first story, with 6/6 sash above. A two-story frame kitchen wing (a 1944 remodeling of a pre-1910 structure) extends from the east gable end. A small, one-story, 20th century porch is attached to the west gable. Significant original exterior features include splayed wooden lintels simulating jack arches over all window openings, recessed plaster panels below the second-story windows, a boxed cornice with dentilled bed molding, and corbeled interior chimneys which rise from each end. The interior is organized in a four room plan: A flush, six-panel door opens into a rectangular stair hall; a library and parlor lie to the left, and the dining room is directly behind the hall. A great deal of Federal period detail remains intact, including the stair and balustrade; mantels; paneled doors and reveals; and baseboard, chair rail, and architrave moldings. Also located on the property are three small outbuildings and a frame water tower, all of which are more recent than the main house and do not contribute to its significance. In addition, the property includes the site of an earlier Waters dwelling and the remains of a corduroy (log) road leading to the site of an oyster house at the river edge; the significance of these elements is uncertain.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

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For NPS use only

received

date entered

Continuation sheet Waters' River
Somerset County, Maryland Item number 7 Page 1

GENERAL DESCRIPTION:

The tract of land and house known as "Waters' River" is located on the Big Annemessex River and south of Maryland 361. The house stands at the south end of Hood Road which intersects Maryland 361 between Manokin and Upper Fairmount. Sudler's Creek, also known as Holland Creek, borders the property on the east.

The circa 1800-1820 two-story three bay four-room plan house rests on a raised cellar and is covered by a steeply pitched wood shingle roof. Four Flemish bond walls rise above a stepped water table and are pierced by 9/9 sash on the first floor and 6/6 sash on the second floor. Four over two window sash pierce the gable end walls to light the attic. Each window is distinguished by a flared wooden jack arch. However, the cellar window openings are spanned by brick jack arches. Between the first and second floor windows on front and back are decorative recessed plaster panels. At the base of the roof, a wooden boxed cornice with dentiled bed molding stretches across the front as well as the rear facades. Corbelled chimneys rise on each gable end. Attached to the east gable end is a two-story frame kitchen wing, which is a 1944 remodeling of an earlier frame addition. Extending from the west side is a 20th century single story porch. Aside from these major features, the south or water facade has a single bay gabled porch which covers the center entrance. A flush six-panel door opens into a rectangular stair hall. The quarter-turn stair rises in the northeast corner and is embellished with a circular tapered newel post and square balusters set on a diagonal to resemble a diamond shape. The stringer is decorated with scrollwork. Rising in steep upward sweeps before each landing post, the circular handrail is repeated on the adjacent wall surface with a half-rail. Door and window surrounds follow an early 19th-century profile of an ogee and astragal molded backband throughout the house. Likewise, the chair rail and baseboard follow the same profile in each room. Flat six-panel doors are accented by a small cavetto molding around each panel. The reveals of each doorway are paneled.

The southwest room or study contains a corner fireplace with a Federal period mantel. An ogee molded surround frames the hearth and supports fluted end blocks and a plain frieze. The shelf is stepped and detailed with various moldings.

Directly behind the study is the parlor which contains the most elaborate mantel as well as paneled wainscoting and cornice moldings. The chimney breast is highlighted by a richly detailed Federal period mantel. Semicircular reeded pilasters flank the hearth and are capped by a frieze molding enriched with an applied saw-tooth type molding. The frieze is also distinguished by paneled blocks and capped by a stepped and richly molded shelf. At the top, a reeded herringbone band stretches across to complete the design.

See Continuation Sheet No. 2

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National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
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Continuation sheet Waters' River
Somerset County, Maryland Item number 7 Page 2

GENERAL DESCRIPTION (continued)

The fourth room or dining room is finished in much the same way with cornice molding, chair rail and baseboard. The mantel design is less complex than in the parlor. It follows the same format but is not embellished with as much detail. Under the cove cornice a beaded astragal molding highlights the otherwise standard design. To the right of the chimney breast is a built-in dining room closet with a replaced glazed door.

The second floor is divided in the same manner as the first floor with the addition of a small room behind the enclosed attic stair. This room is now used as a bathroom. Across the upstairs hall is the room above the study which contains a corner fireplace. The mantel design consists of a crossetted fireplace surround which oddly juts out at the level of the rail and juts back in before the header molding. The stepped shelf is molded and broken at each end. The rear two rooms contain fireplaces as well, but these are only distinguished by molded surrounds. In the northeast room, a mid 19th-century three-panel door opens into the adjacent addition.

The attic is unfinished with an exposed sawn common rafter roof system with half-dovetailed lapped collar beams. The collars are fastened with double-struck cut nails. The east end chimney pile has been fully stuccoed, but the west end still has its exposed supportive arch in addition to its original wooden centering.

The basement is divided into four rooms - each separated by a brick partition. Exposed and whitewashed floor joists have a combination of hewn or pit-sawn sides and hewn bottoms. Supportive brick arches are found under the chimney piles.

Around the house are three early 20th-century farm buildings as well as a frame water tower. Among these, apparently the oldest is a small frame smoke house with circular sawn studs and later six pane windows. It was moved around 1945 from behind the house to the adjacent barnyard. These outbuildings do not contribute to the significance of the resource.

Other aspects of this property include the site of an earlier Waters house closer to the shore line, along with the remnants of a corduroy (log) road that led to an oyster house at the water's edge. The significance of these elements is uncertain.

8. Significance

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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/
☐ 1700-1799	☐ art	☐ engineering	☐ music	☐ humanitarian
☒ 1800-1899	☐ commerce	☐ exploration/settlement	☐ philosophy	☐ theater
☐ 1900-	☐ communications	☐ industry	☐ politics/government	☐ transportation
		☐ invention		☐ other (specify)

Specific dates c. 1800-1820 Builder/Architect unknown

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

Applicable Criterion: C

Criteria Exceptions: none

Level of Significance for Evaluation: local

SIGNIFICANCE SUMMARY:

Waters' River is significant for its architecture, as an exceptionally well preserved example of a Federal period plantation house on Maryland's lower Eastern Shore. Several of its distinctive features, including tall proportions, recessed plaster panels on the front and rear facades, and intricately carved interior woodwork, are shared by other Somerset County houses of the period; Waters' River is distinguished among these by its integrity, retaining over 90% of its original interior and exterior fabric intact. The property's integrity is further enhanced by the retention of its rural, water-oriented setting.

For History and Supporting Documentation, see Continuation Sheet No. 3

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Continuation sheet Waters' River
Somerset County, Maryland Item number 8 Page 3

HISTORY AND SUPPORT:

This structure was built by the fourth generation descendent of the original owner, William Waters, from Northampton County, Virginia. Historically, members of the Waters family were prominent Quaker planters in Somerset County. Major William Waters, originally of Northampton County, Virginia, was granted 1280 acres on September 5, 1663, and "Waters' River" remained in family hands for the next five generations.

On September 5, 1663, Major William Waters received a 1280 acre patent for "Waters; River" on the north bank of the "Annamessex River" (sic). John, William and Richard Waters inherited parts of their father's estate. John Waters received a 700 acre tract which passed to his son, William Waters, after John's death in 1708. William Waters' wife, Rose Harmanson, was assessed for 352½ acres of "Waters' River" in 1783 since William had died two years before. Included on the property was a "brick wall dwelling house with three rooms below - unfinished, kitchens, barns and all in bad repair orchards indifferent other improvements midling."¹ Fifteen years later the house was further described as the property of William H. Waters:

"1 dwelling house built of brick 52 feet by 20 feet
one storey high 7 windows 5 feet long by 2 feet 8 inches
3 windows 4 feet by 2 feet 1 kitchen 20 feet by 16 feet
1 smoake house 12 feet square 1 milk house 12 feet by 10
feet 1 carriage house 12 feet by 12 feet by 8 feet the
above houses are very old and out of repair."²

From this description it is evident that the 1783 and 1798 descriptions refer to an earlier brick house that was replaced in the first or second decade of the 19th century. This construction date is supported architecturally by the Federal period woodwork in addition to the double-struck cut nails found in the attic framing. William H. Waters' will was proved in 1834 and left to his son Thomas Littleton Waters, "my manor or plantation whereon I now live. . ."³

Waters' River remained in the family until a few years before the Civil War when the then 300 acres were sold at auction to John Curtis.⁴

The next notable family to own "Waters' River" was the Robertson family, who acquired the property in 1888 from Francis S. Lockerman.⁵ Various Robertsons, including Dr. Samuel H. Robertson, a local general practitioner, owned the farm from 1888 until 1943.⁶ The current owners bought the 312 acre farm in 1950.⁷

See Continuation Sheet No. 4 for Footnotes

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Continuation sheet

Waters' River

Somerset County, Maryland

Item number 8, 9, and 10

Page 4

Footnotes

- ¹ 1783 Tax Assessment - Rose Waters - Microfilm in Wicomico County Library.
- ² 1798 Federal Tax Assessment, William Waters, Annemessex Hundred.
- ³ Somerset County Will Book, J.P. 5/31 10/4/1834.
- ⁴ Somerset County Deed Book, L.W. 5/742-743.
- ⁵ Somerset County Deed Book, H.F.L. 6/92, 6/20/1888.
- ⁶ Somerset County Deed Book, B.L.B. 126/458, 12/13/1943.
- ⁷ Somerset County Deed Book, G.J.B. 186/444.

MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

1783 Somerset County Tax Assessment, Rose Waters, Annemessex Hundred.

1798 Somerset County Federal Direct Tax, William Waters, Annemessex Hundred.

Somerset County Land Records, Various Volumes, Somerset County Courthouse.

Somerset County Rent Rolls, 1663 through 1723 - compiled by Ruth T. Dryden.

Somerset County Will Book, Various Volumes, Somerset County Courthouse.

Torrence, Clayton, Old Somerset on the Eastern Shore.

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Boundaries are depicted on the attached map, and generally follow existing property lines except on the north, where a line was projected to exclude a large tract of agricultural land not related to the significance of the resource.

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

The nominated property, 142 acres, was selected to encompass the house within its rural setting and to maintain its historic orientation to the Big Annemessex River and to Holland Creek.

9. Major Bibliographical References

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See Continuation Sheet No. 4

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property approx. 142 acresQuadrangle name Marion, MarylandQuadrangle scale 1:24,000

UMT References

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

B	1 8	4 3 3 1 5 0	4 2 1 6 2 7 0
	Zone	Easting	Northing

C	1 8	4 3 2 5 4 0	4 2 1 6 5 4 0
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D	1 8	4 3 2 7 3 0	4 2 1 7 3 6 0
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E			
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F			
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G			
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H			
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Verbal boundary description and justification

See Continuation Sheet No. 4

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	code	county	code
n/a			

state	code	county	code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Paul B. Touart, Architectural Historianorganization Somerset Historical Trust date 20 October 1983street & number 424 North Somerset Avenue telephone (Home) 651-1094city or town Princess Anne state Maryland 21853

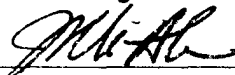
12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

☐ national ☐ state ☒ local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature



7-5-84

title STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER

date

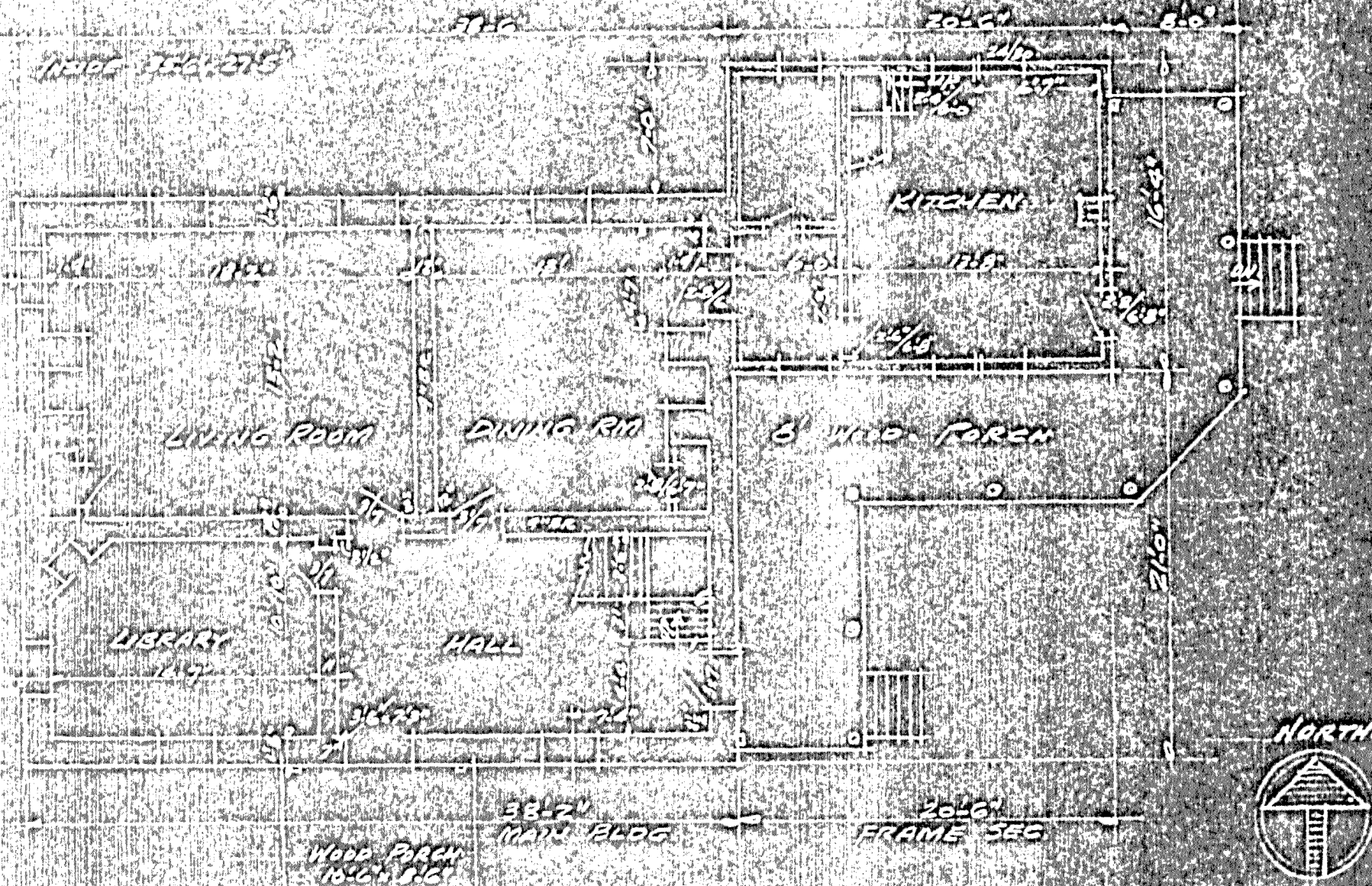
2000545204

Form 10-445
(5/62)

1. STATE COUNTY Somerset TOWN Manokin VICINITY STREET NO. ORIGINAL OWNER Richard Waters ORIGINAL USE Dwelling PRESENT OWNER Mr. James Britton PRESENT USE Dwelling WALL CONSTRUCTION Flemish Bond Brick NO. OF STORIES 2½		HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY INVENTORY 2. NAME Water's River S-54 DATE OR PERIOD c. 1780 STYLE Georgian ARCHITECT BUILDER 3. FOR LIBRARY OF CONGRESS USE	
4. NOTABLE FEATURES, HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE AND DESCRIPTION OPEN TO PUBLIC No Quaker meetings were held on this property in 1687 and the Waters family, a Quaker one, owned this land for many years. The present house on the site was built for Richard Waters in about 1780. He was the son of old Dr. Waters who lived nearby in Tudor Hall. The house of brick, 2½ stories high, is almost square. It is 3 bays wide and 3 bays deep, with an A-roof. There are flat white brick arches over the windows. Between the second and first stories, instead of a belt course there are inset panels filled with plaster. There is a chimney enclosed in each end wall of the house. The house sits on a high basement with a simple water table.			
5. PHYSICAL CONDITION OF STRUCTURE Endangered Interior Exterior			
6. LOCATION MAP (Plan Optional) 		7. PHOTOGRAPH	
8. PUBLISHED SOURCES (Author, Title, Pages) INTERVIEWS, RECORDS, PHOTOS, ETC.		9. NAME, ADDRESS AND TITLE OF RECORDER Paul A. Brinkman DATE OF RECORD 5/8/67	

SUPPLEMENTAL INFORMATION AND PHOTO (PHS MAY BE ADDED ON SHEET OF SAME SIZE)

S-54



EXISTING FIRST FLOOR 1/8"=1'-0"

1944 DRAWING FOR
RESTORATION



3-6-4
2-15-4

B

NO 440

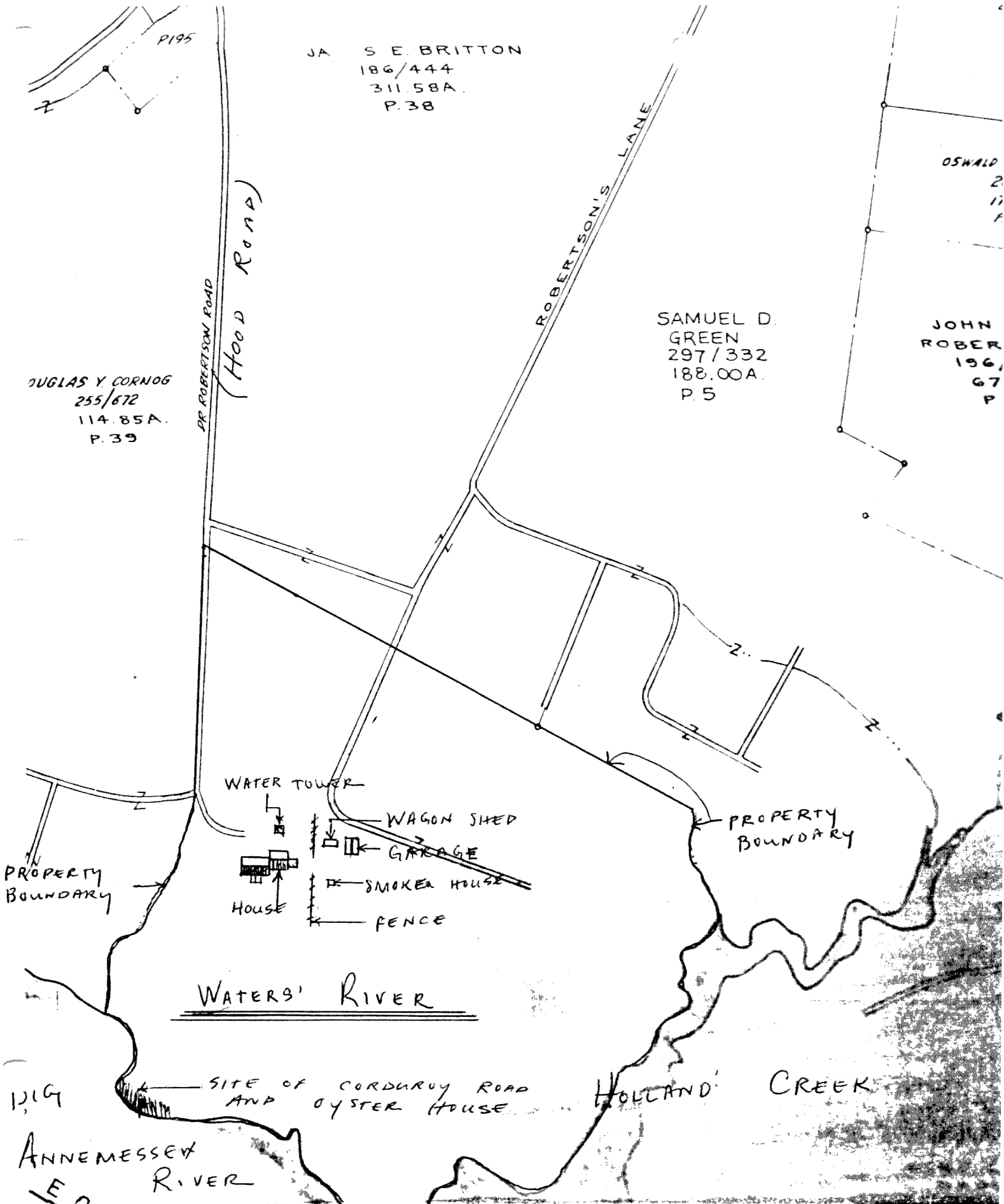
JA S E BRITTON
186/444
311.58A.
P.38

DUGLAS Y CORNOG
255/672
114.85A.
P.39

SAMUEL D.
GREEN
297/332
188.00A.
P.5

JOHN
ROBER
196,
67
P

OSWALD
2
11
P





4219
2.3 MI. TO MD. 413
4218
100 000
FEET
4217
4216
5'
4215
4214
(KINGSTON)
5860 11 SW

S-54
WATERS' RIVER
SOMERSET COUNTY,
MARYLAND
A: 18-433610-
4216860
B: 18-433150-
4216270
C: 18-432540-
4216540
D: 18-432730-
4217360



"Waters' River"

S-54

near Manokin

south wall

Photographer-Paul Touart

September 1983



"Waters' River" S-54
near Manokin
2nd floor bedroom mantel
Photographer-Paul Touart
September 1983



"Waters' River S-54
near Manokin
hall
Photographer-Paul Touart
September 1983



"Waters' River S-54
near Manokin
hall - STAIRCASE
Photographer-Paul Touart
September 1983



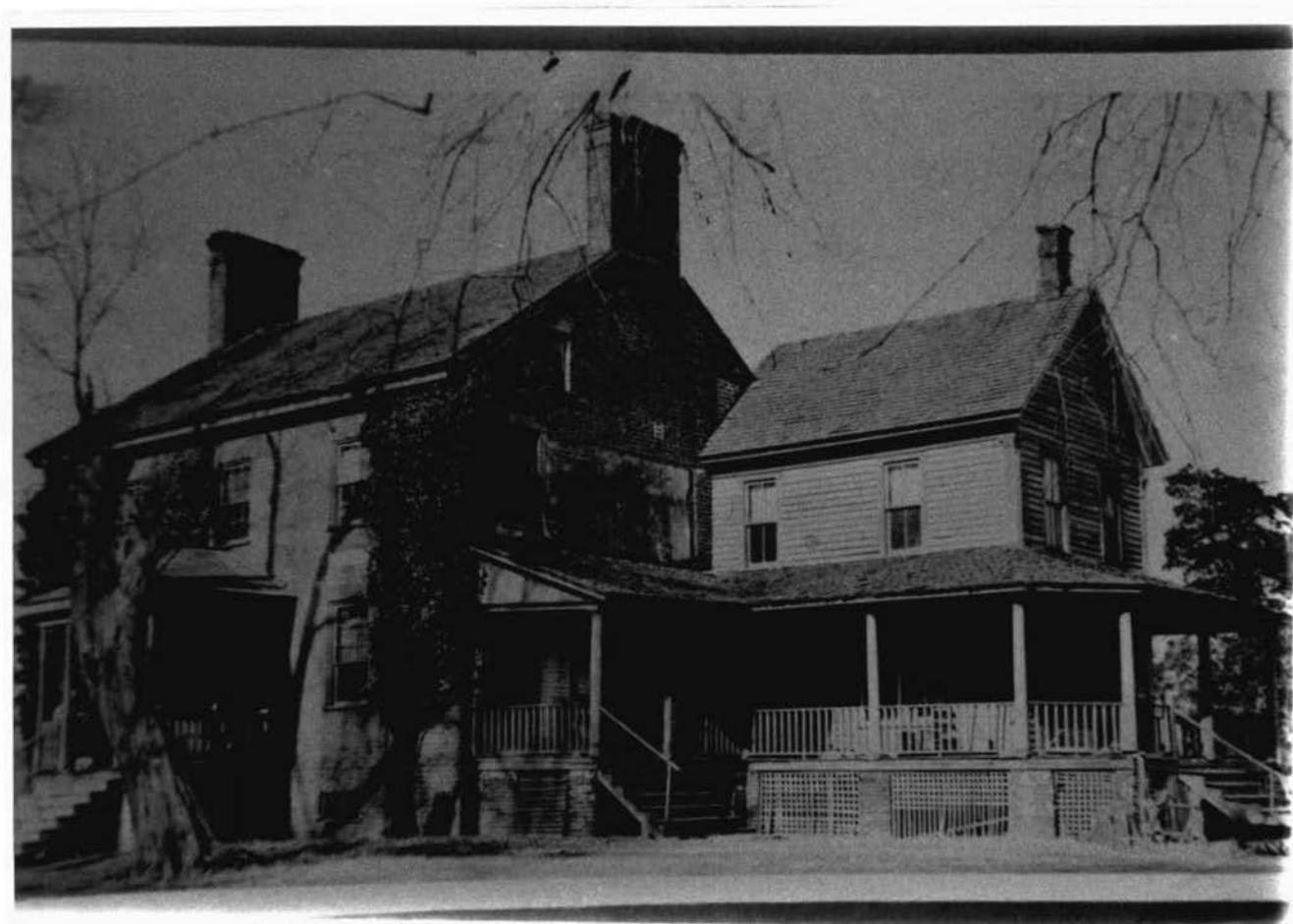
"Water's River" S-54
near Manokin
stair detail
Photographer-Paul Touart
September 1983



"Waters' River"^u S-54
near Manokin
attic-wooden arch centering
Photographer-Paul Touart
September 1983



Waters River S-54
Near Upper Fairmount, Somerset County
North Elevation
10/83 Paul Touart
Neg./MD Historical Trust



Waters' River

S-54

Manokin vicinity, Somerset Co., Md.

Documentary Photograph, c. 1900

Collection of Brittan Family

Copied October 1984, Paul Touart



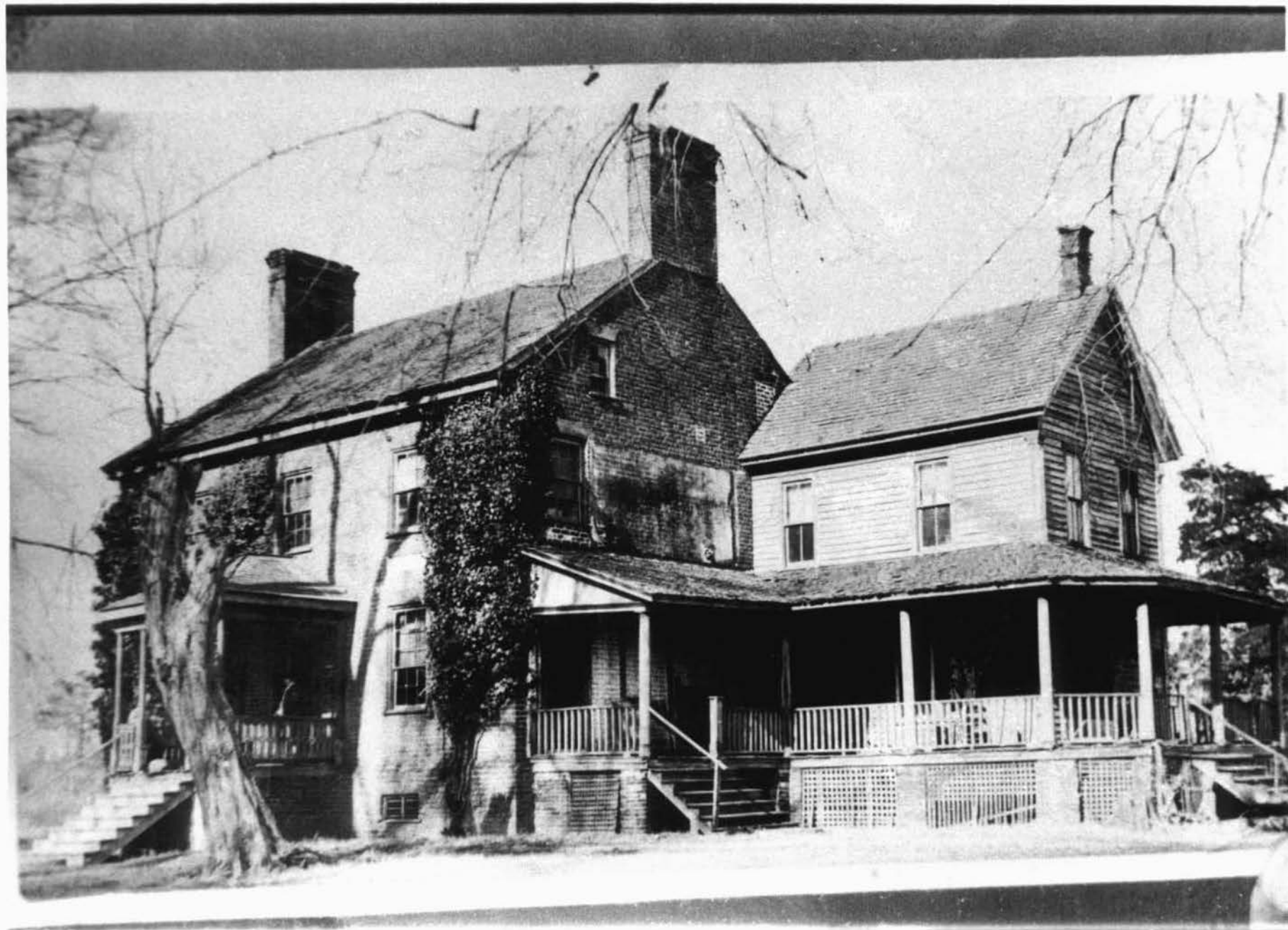
"Waters' River S-54
near Manokin
northwest elevation
Photographer-Paul Touart
September 1983



S-54
Waters River

~~S-54
Waters River
Somerset~~

Photographed by
DANIEL C. CHURCH



Waters River

S-54

Near Upper Fairmount, Somerset County

Documentary Photograph taken

c. 1900-1930

Copied 10/83 Paul Touart

Neg/Md. Historical Trust



Waters River S-54
Near Upper Fairmount, Somerset County
North Elevation
10/83 Paul Touart
Neg./MD Historical Trust



Waters River S-54
Near Upper Fairmount, Somerset County
Water Tower - East Elevation
10/83 Paul Touart
Neg./MD Historical Trust



Waters River S-54
Near Upper Fairmount, Somerset County
East Elevation
10/83 Paul Touart
Neg./MD Historical Trust