

Ballast House
Blossom Point
Charles County
Maryland

HABS No. MD-318

HABS
MD,
9-BLOPT,
1-

PHOTOGRAPHS
HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service
Department of the Interior
Washington, D.C. 20243

BALLAST HOUSE

HABS
MD,
9-BLOPT
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Location: Blossom Point, Charles County, Maryland, 8 miles southeast of La Plata, Maryland, and approximately 50 miles south of Washington, D.C.

USGS Mathias Point, Maryland and Virginia Quadrangle, UTM Coordinates: 18:315245:4253145.

Present Owner: U.S. Department of the Army, Harry Diamond Laboratories.

Present Use: Vacant and condemned. The house is in imminent danger of collapsing into an eroding embankment on the Potomac River. The house is scheduled to be moved to a new site, and restored afterwards.

Significance: Although architecturally simple in design, the Ballast House contains exceptionally fine, attractive 18th century style interior woodwork in remarkably good condition. The original kitchen, once a separate structure, contains an original bake oven, which is one of the many varieties of bake oven designs recorded in the region. The house, known locally as the Brick House, is one of the very few pre-1840 buildings still standing in the county that have not suffered extensive physical alterations.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Date of erection: Circa 1800.
2. Architect: Not known.
3. Original and subsequent owners: Before its sale in February 1980 to the U.S. Army, the property on which the house stands has been owned by the Society of Jesus since 1649. Since 1942 the property has been leased by the U.S. Army, Harry Diamond Laboratories for use as a testing range of explosives. On February 28, 1980 the Army bought the property for \$2,784,316.90, acquiring a fee simple title. The sale totaled 1,599.60 acres.

The property was officially recorded in a deed, dated October 3, 1793, transferring title from the Reverend William James Walton to the Ministers of the Roman Catholic Church Religion. This deed can be seen in the deed book, Liber FG, Folio 70 at the County Commissioner's Land Office, Hall of Records in Annapolis, Maryland.

4. Builder, contractor, suppliers: The Jesuits were the probable builders of the house.

5. Original plan and construction:

According to local legend, the house is constructed of ship ballast originally brought to the colonies from England. However, it is now widely believed that it is constructed of locally made brick.

6. Alterations and additions:

The kitchen on the east side of the main house was once a separate structure. In the second half of 19th century the kitchen was attached to the main house by a "filler" addition with a single gabled dormer on either side of the roof. The original brick chimney on the east end of the kitchen, although its exterior appearance has been left intact, has been altered. The fireplace is now filled with concrete containing a small hole to hold a stove pipe. To the left of this fireplace is the original bake oven.

The attic in the main house was renovated 10 to 15 years ago, when the house was used as military laboratories and offices. Two original gable windows were enlarged and replaced with new sash. The attic was made an enclosed area by an addition of a wall. New sheathing and trim were placed over the walls and ceiling.

Other 20th century alterations in the house include new siding for the kitchen, enclosed frame additions on the front side, and a small screened frame porch and a concrete block toilet facility on the rear side. Interior additions include a lowered (suspended) ceiling and first and second floor bathrooms. A small cellar beneath the northeast parlor in the main house was sealed over. All four original fireplaces with attractive woodwork in the main house were filled with concrete, each having a small hole to hold a stove pipe.

B. Historical Events and Persons Connected with the Structure:

Before the sale of the property in February 1980 to the U.S. Department of the Army, Harry Diamond Laboratories, the property has been owned by the Society of Jesus since 1649. In 1642 a mission for the conversion of the Indians from the Port Tobacco region was founded here by Father Andrew White. The property has been closely associated with the St. Thomas Manor and the St. Ignatius Church. The St. Thomas Manor was the Jesuits' residence. St. Ignatius Church, located at Chapel Point on the opposite side of the Port Tobacco River, has been continuously active as a Catholic Parish and Church since 17th century, and is one of the most significant historic sites in the history of early Roman Catholicism in the United States.

The Ballast House was probably originally an overseer's house, and was a part of the Jesuits' working farm, for the purpose of supporting their church and parish.

Since 1942, the house has been used as military laboratories and offices, operated by the U.S. Department of the Army, Harry Diamond Laboratories. The grounds around the property were first used as a proving ground and firing range for mortar shells and rockets. Today the range is used mainly for testing the fuzes developed by the laboratory.

C. Sources of Information:

1. Bibliography:

a. Primary and unpublished sources:

Correspondence, J. Richard Rivoire's letter to Mr. Emerson G. Gray, Environmental Coordinator, Harry Diamond Laboratories, dated February 12, 1979. Subject: Ballast House for determination of eligibility for listing in the National Register of Historic Places, U.S. Department of the Interior.

Deed Records, County Commissioners Land Office, Hall of Records, Annapolis, Maryland.

Interviews:

Emerson G. Gray, Harry Diamond Laboratories Environmental Coordinator, DELHD-FA, 2800 Powder Mill Road, Adelphi, Maryland 20873, Telephone: (202) 394-1044.

Ms. Marcy Gray, Historical Archeologist, Interagency Archeological Services, Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service, 1895 Phoenix Boulevard, Atlanta, Georgia 30349, Telephone: (404) 996-2520, Ext: 346.

Mr. Douglas Murtland, Analyst, JRB Associates, Inc., 8400 West Park Drive, McLean, Virginia 22102, Telephone: (703) 821-4600.

Mr. J. Richard Rivoire, Restoration Consultant, P.O. Box 132, La Plata, Maryland 20632, Telephone: (301) 645-1144.

Surveys:

Army Material Command Biomedical Laboratory of the Blossom Point, Maryland. Survey of the property for inventory of natural, historical and archeological resources, April 23-24, 1973.

Mr. J. Richard Rivoire, Restoration Consultant. Survey of the Ballast House by request of Mr. Watson Perrygo, then president of the Historical Society of Charles County, Winter 1978.

Mr. J. Richard Rivoire, Restoration Consultant. Survey of the Ballast House by request of the Environmental Coordinator, Harry Diamond Laboratories, and the Interagency Archeological Services, Atlanta, Georgia, 1979.

b. Secondary and published sources:

Department of the Army, Construction Engineering Research Laboratory. Final Environmental Impact Statement: Formation of U.S. Army Electronics Research and Development Command. August 1976.

Prepared by: Susan McCown
Historian
Historic American Buildings
Survey
Spring 1980

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character:

The Ballast House, now known locally as the Brick House, is of simple Federal style with a corbeled eave cornice and two flush end chimneys as its only significant exterior elements. The interior contains attractive 18th century style woodwork, which is in remarkably good condition.

2. Condition of fabric: Poor.

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Over-all dimensions: The three-bay front main house and the kitchen on the east side measure 60'-4 $\frac{1}{4}$ " X 30'-2 $\frac{1}{2}$ ". The main house is two-and-a half stories high.

2. Foundations: Brick foundations. The rear screened porch rests on a concrete foundation.

3. Wall construction, finish and color:

The main house is constructed of brick, laid in common bond with headers every six courses. It has been painted white. The kitchen and all frame additions have German (novelty) siding painted white. The original kitchen siding consisted of lapped beaded boards, which were secured to the wall studs with wrought iron nails. A portion of this siding can be seen in the closet beneath the stair in the "filler" addition. The modern toilet facility on the rear of the main house is constructed of concrete block.

4. Structural system, framing: The house is supported by load bearing walls. The roof framing consists of wooden rafters.

5. Porches: An enclosed porch of frame construction is attached to the front facade of the original kitchen. An enclosed screened porch of frame construction is at the rear of the kitchen.

6. Chimneys: Two flush end brick chimneys project from the east gable end of the main house. A brick chimney with stepped shoulders is attached to east end of the original kitchen structure, and it contains a bake oven. All chimneys are original.

7. Openings:

a. Doorways and Doors:

The front (south) entrance door in the main house is a six-raised panel door. The wooden door on the front side of the original kitchen has four lights on top and three horizontal panels on bottom. The door on the west side of the frame addition across the front facade of the main house is similar to the latter door. A solid door leading to a space is on the east side of the "filler" addition. The rear screened porch has a screened door on the north side. The wooden door on the east side of the rear concrete block toilet facility has four glass lights on top and three panels on bottom.

b. Windows:

The wooden frame addition across the front facade of the main house is lighted by three six-over-six double hung sash windows coupled together. One window on the west side and two windows on the east side of this addition are similar. Three six-over-six double hung sash windows with brick lintels light the front second floor of the main house. The first floor window with a brick lintel on the west side of the main house is a nine-over-six double hung sash window. Both single second and attic floor windows on this side are six-over-six double hung sash windows. The rear side of the main house has a nine-over-six double hung sash window with a brick lintel on the first floor, and two six-over-six double hung sash windows on the second floor. The concrete block toilet facility, attached to the rear of the main house, is lighted by casement windows. On the southwesternmost side of the front kitchen addition are four six-over-six double hung sash windows. The front kitchen addition also has a two-over-two double hung sash window on the southeasternmost side. The east side of this addition is lighted by a six-over-six double hung sash window. There are no shutters.

8. Roof:

- a. Shape, covering: Gable roofs shelter the main house and the kitchen structure, and have tin roofing. All additions have shed roofs covered with asphalt shingles.

- b. Cornice, eaves: Corbeled eave brick cornices decorate the front and rear sides of the main house.
- c. Dormer: A gabled dormer is on either side of the roof of the "filler" addition.

C. Description of Interior:

1. Floor plans:

a. First floor:

The first floor plan of the main house is typically Federal, consisting of a side stairway at the northwest corner with two adjacent east parlor rooms, each with a fireplace on the east wall. A bathroom, a modern addition, occupies the northwest corner wall of the stairhall, behind the stairway. A frame addition, attached to the front facade of the main house, has an outside opening on the west side leading to a space. In this space an opening on the north wall leads to the original house. An outside opening on the east wall of the front kitchen addition leads to a space. An opening on the north wall of this space leads to a square room with a stairway, which in turn leads to two rooms in the rear. Another outside opening in the front side of the kitchen leads to a 15'-4" X 19' room. This room has openings that connect with the mentioned rooms in the kitchen structure.

b. Second floor: The second floor plan in the main house repeats the plan of the first floor. The second floor "filler" addition, attached to the original kitchen structure, has a small, 15'-9½" X 8'-5" space that is accessible through a stairway on the east wall.

- 2. Stairways: The 16-flight stairway occupying the northwest corner of the stairhall in the main house has a plain newell post, square balusters and scrolled brackets on the sides.
- 3. Flooring: The floor in the main house was originally wood.
- 4. Wall and ceiling finish: Most walls are plaster.

5. Openings:

- a. Doorways and doors: The six-raised panel doors with molded trim are original. The upper corners of doorway trim are morticed and tenoned in 18th-century fashion.
- b. Windows: The window frames have decorative molded trim in 18th-century style.

6. Decorative features and trim: The main house is decorated with fine 18th century style woodwork including chairrails, molded fireplace mantels and molded baseboards. All are original and are in remarkable good condition. There is an original narrow cupboard on the east wall of the first floor north parlor in the main house. The kitchen has simple one piece trim, which is now hidden by later additions.

7. Mechanical equipment:

- a. Heating: The parlor room fireplaces in the main house are "thimbled" for stove pipes.
- b. Lighting: The house was wired for electricity in the 20th century. Some ornate hanging fixtures, manufactured in the 1930s or 1940s, light the rooms.

D. Site:

1. General setting and orientation: The Ballast House is located on the extreme southwestern tip of Blossom Point, which is in an isolated area of Cedar Point Neck in Charles County, Maryland. Cedar Point Neck is bounded on the west by Nanjemoy Creek, on the south by the Potomac River, and on the east by Goose Creek and the Port Tobacco River. The house is surrounded by other buildings on the south and west sides of the grounds. Several marshes are found on the west side of the grounds. Gravel roads lead to the buildings, including the house, and unimproved roads lead to the field test grounds.

Prepared by: Susan McCown
Historian
Historic American
Buildings Survey
Spring 1980

PART III. PROJECT INFORMATION

Documentation of the Ballast House was prepared by the Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS) in cooperation with the U.S. Department of the Army, Harry Diamond Laboratories, in compliance with Executive Order 11593 and Public Law 93-291. The project was carried out under the direction of John C. Poppeliers, Chief of HABS, and Kenneth L. Anderson, Principal Architect. Recording took place during the summer of 1979 by the HABS Washington, D.C. office staff, Janet Hochuli (The Cooper Union), the project supervisor; and the student architects, William E. Graham (University of Maryland); David T. Marsh, Jr., (Howard University) and Linda Paquette (Auburn University). The drawings were completed in the Washington, D.C. office by Rudy Massengill, HABS staff architect; Janet Hochuli; Linda Paquette and David T. Marsh, Jr. The historical and descriptive data was written in Spring 1980 by Susan McCown, an architectural historian with the HABS in Washington, D.C. The documentary photographs were taken by Walter Smalling, Jr. in July 1979.

BLOSSOM POINT FARM
(Ballast House)
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ADDENDUM TO
BALLAST HOUSE
Blossom Point
Charles County
Maryland

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

REDUCED COPIES OF MEASURED DRAWINGS

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY
National Park Service
Northeast Region
Philadelphia Support Office
200 Chestnut Street
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19106

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

BLOSSOM POINT FARM (Ballast House)

This is an addendum to nine data pages previously transmitted to the Library of Congress in 1980.

Significance: The significance of Blossom Point Farm falls into three distinct areas. The following are brief summaries that highlight the important aspects of each area of significance.

Historical: The primary historical significance of Blossom Point Farm lies in its association with the Jesuit farm system, and in particular, with St. Thomas Manor. Since the seventeenth century, the Society of Jesus has been present in Maryland, the settlement at Chapel Point being the oldest continuous Jesuit residence in North America. Cedar Point Neck, leased as tenant farms since at least the fourth quarter of the seventeenth century, reflects the early establishment and continuity of the Jesuit farm system which was comprised of a plantation and supplemental tenant farms. Blossom Point Farm, one of several farms on Cedar Point Neck, carried on this agricultural and institutional tradition into the twentieth century. Built circa 1825-1840, the brick farmhouse at Blossom Point is the only survivor of this history on Cedar Point Neck. It not only reflects what was once an important way of life within the context of Jesuit and local Charles County history, but also, what was significant within the parameters of Cedar Point Neck itself. Of the farms that ranged in number from nine to twenty in the four centuries of tenant history, Blossom Point Farm has the added significance of having been the sub-agent's residence. It was the Blossom Point Farm tenants, beginning with Bennet Semmes in the 1780s and terminating with R. Arthur Greer in the 1930s, who held a managerial role, collecting rents and overseeing all the Cedar Point farms on behalf of the Superior at St. Thomas's. It should be noted that the new record name, Blossom Point Farm, is a reflection of the historic name of the property and its historic agricultural function.

Archaeological: The majority of the deposits found in the yard areas surrounding the Blossom Point farmhouse indicate a nineteenth-century occupation of the site. A small percentage of the deposits hint at a late-eighteenth-century occupation. These outside deposits, however, cannot be considered to be significant archaeological deposits due to the disturbance of the yard soils from construction and regrading activity that has occurred over the years. Investigations undertaken beneath the house revealed deposits dating from the mid-to late nineteenth century with a mix of twentieth-century artifacts

added later. Food remains revealed a diet that included the use of both wild game and domesticated animals. The excavations also collected interesting information on the lifeways of the nineteenth-century overseers who occupied the house. These interior deposits, however, cannot be considered significant due to the disturbance of the sub-floor areas by animal inhabitants and by recent repairs to the flooring.

Architectural: The Blossom Point farmhouse is a representative example of a vernacular Federal-period farmhouse in rural, southern Maryland. The interior of the main block retains a high level of integrity. It reflects the popularity of the three-bay, side-hall, double-pile plan in Tidewater Maryland, which is demonstrated by the large number of surviving examples listed on the Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties. The Blossom Point farmhouse is also representative of the evolutionary nature of stepped or "telescope" dwellings in Maryland. The three-part house involved three principal stages of major construction that yielded the essential shape of the farmhouse.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Dates of erection: Period I (rectangular frame of kitchen), circa 1790-1800; Period II (main house and kitchen chimney), circa 1825-1840; Period III (hyphen), circa 1852.
3. Original and subsequent owners: From 1649 until 1792, the Blossom Point farmhouse property was owned in trust for the Society of Jesus by a succession of laymen who were granted patents for the Jesuit landholdings. In 1792, the Maryland legislature chartered the Corporation of Roman Catholic Clergymen which was permitted to gain title to all lands (including Blossom Point Farm) which had previously been held in trust for the Society of Jesus. In 1980, the Blossom Point Farm property was sold to the U.S. Army.
4. Builder, contractor, suppliers: Archival research did not reveal the builder, contractor, or suppliers.
5. Original plan and construction: The oldest part of the house is the structural frame of the rectangular kitchen, dating to Period I, 1790-1800. Erected of oak and poplar, the braced-frame building was assembled with wrought iron nails and sheathed with wide pine beaded-edge shiplap siding, much of which survived on the gable ends. The whitewashed interior was common for utilitarian buildings as was the ladder-type stair previously located in the southwest corner. The heavily blackened surfaces in the loft indicate that former occupants used the space to smoke meat. It appears as if the kitchen was moved to its present site, based on its brick

foundation, which is contemporary with the main block and chimney, and the lack of late-eighteenth-century or early-nineteenth-century archaeological artifacts under its floorboards.

The second phase of construction, Period II (circa 1825-1840), included the erection of the two-story, side-hall, double-pile-plan main block and the exterior brick kitchen chimney. Many of the features of the house pointed to the second or third decades of the nineteenth century, including mature cut nails found throughout, the corbelled brick exterior cornices, the five-course common bond, and the Greek Revival curves of some of the interior moldings. The kitchen chimney, assembled in five-course common bond like the house, was the second chimney to serve this building. In building the extant chimney it was decided to include a bake oven, which necessitated cutting the gable end down brace of the kitchen frame.

The last major change to the house, Period III (c. 1852), was the addition of the story-and-a-half infill between the kitchen and the main house. The hyphen was constructed after 1840, and presumably around 1852, as the documentation indicates. The sawn lath and the mature cut nails were the principal dating evidence.

6. Alterations and additions: Mid- to late-nineteenth-century alterations to the main house included new cast iron rim locks with porcelain handles, along with new latches and escutcheons, and vertical tongue-and-groove board closets on the second floor (two in the northeast room, one in the southeast room). In the twentieth century vinyl-asbestos tile flooring was installed and gypsum drywall applied directly to the plaster ceilings. In the main hall, the rear door leading to the concrete masonry unit toilet room was infilled with fiberglass insulation and gypsum drywall sometime between 1979 and 1989. The door and transom are no longer extant. A first-floor toilet room was installed at some point in the original storage area beneath the main stair. The original finishes (plaster, tongue-and-groove boards heavily whitewashed) are still extant beneath the later gypsum drywall and studs. The fireplaces of the main house have been infilled with brick covered with a skim coat of plaster. Baseboards have been installed within the fireplace surrounds. As to the presence of a small cellar in the northeast parlor, physical investigation has supplied no evidence to support this contention. Neither does physical evidence exist to suggest that the gable windows in the attic of the main house were ever enlarged and/or replaced. In addition, the present configuration of the attic, with its low walls to the north and south, is the result of alterations made by the Harry Diamond Laboratories in the mid-twentieth century. Work undertaken at this time included the construction of two kneewalls on the north and south sides of the space, drywalling of the walls and ceiling, and the addition of interior thermal glazing in the windows.

At some point in the mid- to late nineteenth century, the kitchen was altered. The fireplace was infilled with brick and covered with vertical tongue-and-groove boards, and the bake oven was also infilled with brick and covered by later

clapboarding and drywall. Twentieth-century alterations to the kitchen have entailed the removal of the winder staircase in the southwest corner leading to the garret.

According to the historical record, in 1852, overseer Charles A. Pye proposed several alterations and improvements to the Blossom Point farmhouse, including the construction of the hyphen (or "filler") between the kitchen and the main house. Physical evidence supports an 1850s construction date for this addition. Alterations to the hyphen in the mid-twentieth century included the application of gypsum dry-wall to the walls and ceiling and the installation of vinyl-asbestos tile flooring. The doors, door surrounds, window surrounds, and baseboards in the hyphen are new.

B. Historical Events and Persons Connected With the Building:

In 1684 the Superior at St. Thomas Manor leased to Richard Boughton a plantation encompassing both Blossom Point and Nanjemoy Creek farms, comprised of 400 acres. The lease required him to pay a yearly rent of 1,000 lbs. of tobacco and to repair and maintain the said two tenements with their appurtenances and all new buildings to be built during the said term.

In 1712 Blossom Point Farm was leased to John Griffen for whom a survey map was drawn illustrating an extant building. This dwelling may have been the one formerly inhabited by Richard Boughton during his tenancy. John Griffen, who died in 1717, was succeeded at Blossom Point Farm by John Suttle, a native of St. Mary's County and a son-in-law of a Cedar Point leaseholder. Upon Suttle's death in 1743, Timothy McCan, a tailor, leased the farm until 1750, when he moved to Baltimore County and his interest in the farm reverted to the Jesuits.

The tenant history of Blossom Point Farm remains unclear from 1750 until about 1788 when Bennet Semmes appears on a map of Cedar Point, leasing 186 acres of Blossom Point Farm. Bennet Semmes was a relatively long-term tenant of Blossom Point Farm, remaining there until his death in 1832. During this time, he served as sub-agent (overseer) of the farms and tenements on Cedar Point Neck, collecting rents due to St. Thomas Manor and tending to management of the Cedar Point farms. This began a tradition of the overseers residing at Blossom Point Farm.

Semmes was succeeded briefly at Blossom Point by William Fiar, at which time the rent was raised to \$300. Fiar died on March 10, 1833, and as of July 10th of that year, James Neale was appointed sub-agent with a pension of \$50 and charged a rent of \$400. In 1839 Thomas Higdon assumed the role of agent (apparently a term sometimes interchangeable with sub-agent) of Cedar Point Neck Estates and tenant of Blossom Point Farm, paying rent of \$300. Higdon died in 1842, and according to Farm Rents, his wife, Eleanor, continued to rent the farm until 1849 when Joseph J. Wills rented the farm.

BLOSSOM POINT FARM

(Ballast House)

HABS No. MD-318

(Page 14)

This period between 1825 and 1840 is significant to the historical record of Blossom Point Farm in that it was during these years that the extant brick house was constructed. No conclusive archival documentation was available concerning the specific construction date of the house. A large majority of the archival documentation addresses Cedar Point Neck estate, as opposed to Blossom Point Farm. Therefore, speculation concerning the construction date of the house was derived from physical investigation of the building.

Another significant period in the history of Blossom Point Farm was ushered in during the 1850s when Charles A. Pye assumed the role of overseer of Cedar Point Neck and tenant of Blossom Point Farm. Pye was responsible for construction of the hyphen that connects the brick house and kitchen, as well as other alterations and improvements to the dwelling and outbuildings.

During Pye's tenancy, Blossom Point Farm was producing tobacco, Indian corn, oats, wheat, and Irish potatoes. Livestock, valued at \$600 in 1860, included 4 horses, 5 asses and mules, 7 milk cows, 6 working oxen, 15 other cattle, 20 sheep, and 20 swine. The farm also produced wool and butter for sale. Up until 1864, Pye operated Blossom Point Farm with the assistance of slaves who would have been owned by him personally. With the Civil War, the slaves as well as many tenants left Cedar Point Neck. Pye lost some of his slaves who went to join family in Washington, although he did convince others to remain to work for wages. Pye left Blossom Point Farm shortly after the Civil War, as Cedar Point Neck and much of southern Maryland entered a period of agricultural depression and out-migration.

The immediate succession of tenants after Pye remains unclear. From 1870 to 1872, E. N. Stonestreet is reported to have been running the Cedar Point Neck farms. However, he was not the tenant of Blossom Point Farm, having maintained a separate 450-acre farm on Cedar Point Neck since the years before the Civil War. The next confirmed tenant of Blossom Point Farm after Charles A. Pye was William C. Jamieson who resided there from at least 1886 until his death in 1903. During Jamieson's tenancy, Cedar Point Neck was divided into nine farms, Blossom Point Farm having the most acreage under cultivation: five fields of forty acres each. Jamieson grew tobacco, clover, corn, and wheat, and raised lambs.

On August 1, 1903, R. Arthur Greer, who assumed the role of sub-agent for Cedar Point Neck, entered into a lease with the Corporation of Roman Catholic Clergymen for Blossom Point Farm. During Greer's tenancy, which lasted at least until the Depression and presumably into the 1930s, Blossom Point Farm witnessed several improvements. These included a new ice house (1903), a window replacement (1906), a new porch (1908), repairs to the ice house (1909), a new carriage house (1909), a window frame (1910), another new porch (1911), a new stable (1913), porch repairs (1914), and sashes, windows, and flooring (1915). In 1916, blinds (venetian shutters) were painted, bricks cemented, and windows puttied. Lumber for a back porch was also noted in that year. Barns and stables were repaired in 1917, and in 1920,

carpenters were paid for their work on the barn gable, barn weatherboards, and shingles on the kitchen. And, in 1922, the chimney was repaired.

While Blossom Point Farm received many improvements in the early twentieth century to both the house and outbuildings, it ceased to be operated as a farm by 1942, when the property was leased to the U.S. Army as a testing facility. Since that time, all of the outbuildings have been demolished and only the house survives in its current deteriorated condition.

C. Sources of Information:

1. Bibliography:

a. Primary and unpublished sources:

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PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: The main house, dating from the late Federal period (c. 1825-1840), follows a side-hall, double-pile plan. The single-story frame kitchen was built around 1790 to 1800 and incorporated in the early-nineteenth-century building program to enlarge the farm dwelling. The kitchen chimney, laid in five-course common bond, was erected around the same time as the main block.
2. Condition of fabric: Fair, main house; severely deteriorated, kitchen and hyphen.

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Overall dimensions: The main house consists of a 28'x30', 2 1/2-story brick masonry bearing wall building. It has a 28'x9', one-story timber framed addition and porch on the southwest wall. A separate 28'x24', one-story timber framed kitchen was connected to the southeast wall of the main house in the nineteenth century. The kitchen has a 6'x15' shed addition on the northwest wall, a porch in the south corner and a 3'x12', 27' high brick chimney.
2. Foundations: The two porches on the south elevation rest on brick piers. The kitchen has a brick foundation.
3. Wall construction, finish and color: Physical investigation has revealed sections of the exterior siding of the circa 1852 hyphen and the mid-nineteenth-century kitchen surviving on the north and south walls of the hyphen and kitchen.
4. Structural system, framing: Load-bearing, brick masonry walls support the main house, while the hyphen is of frame construction and the kitchen has a diagonal cross brace frame construction. The roof framing of the main house is an A-frame, pegged ridge construction system. The hyphen has a gabled, wooden rafter roof frame construction. The kitchen originally had an A-frame roof construction system, nailed at the ridge. The cross braces were removed at an unknown date.
5. Porches: A partially enclosed frame porch is attached to the south facade of the main house.
7. Openings:
 - a. Doorways and doors: The "solid door leading to a space ... on the east side of the 'filler' addition" (see 1980 Ballast House report, HABS No. MD-318, page 6) is no longer extant. In addition, all exterior doors at the Blossom Point farmhouse are single-leaf doors.
 - b. Windows: The Blossom Point farmhouse contains several windows not mentioned in the earlier report. These include a two-over-two double hung sash window on the north side of the kitchen and two, six-over-six double hung sash windows on the east side of the main house (at the second floor and attic levels). (Note: Only the lower sash remains in place at the second floor window of the main house, east side.) The hyphen contains fragments of the original four-over-four double hung sash dormer windows on the north and south sides. There is also a four-over-four double hung sash window at the north side of the hyphen, first floor, looking into the frame porch addition on the north side of the farmhouse.

All of the original windows in the entire farmhouse have simple, unornamented wooden surrounds. On the first floor of the main house, all of the windows have splayed brick lintels; on the second floor, the windows have brick header rowlock lintels. The former presence of shutters is evidenced by the discovery of fragments of a Venetian/louvered shutter stored in the garret above the kitchen. The hinge placement of the shutter remains matched the hinge placement of the second floor, main house, and matched the hinge scars found on the second floor and attic levels of the main house. All evidence of hinge scars on the first floor of the main house has been boarded over.

8. Roof:

- b. Cornice, eaves: The gable ends of the main house exhibit simple, wooden bargeboards.

C. Description of Interior:

1. Floor plans:

- a. First floor: At some point in the twentieth century, a bathroom was installed on the first floor of the main house in the original storage area beneath the stair.
- c. Kitchen: An unfinished garret space lies above the kitchen, formerly accessible via a winder stair in the southwest corner of the kitchen. The winder stair was removed and the garret floor cut sealed over sometime in the twentieth century.

2. Stairways:

Correcting the earlier report (see 1980 Ballast House report, HABS No. MD-318, page 7), the main staircase in the northwest corner of the main house, connecting the first and second floors, has only one flight of stairs, not sixteen. It is a straight run with a three-step winder at the top.

On the second floor of the main house is a staircase leading to the attic. The staircase is partially enclosed with diagonal beaded boards. The bottom tread leads to a winder stair, then to two treads at the attic door. The six-panel, single-leaf door opens to reveal the remainder of the staircase, a straight run to the attic level above.

The hyphen contains a staircase leading from the first to the second floor, a straight run of stairs enclosed by vertical, random-width beaded boards and a single-leaf board-and-batten door. The original cap railing has been removed. A small pantry is located in the space beneath the staircase.

3. Flooring:

At some point in the twentieth century, vinyl-asbestos tile over plywood subflooring was installed throughout the farmhouse. Original, random-width pine floors are present in the main house, except for the northeast room of the first floor, which contains later, narrow-width hardwood flooring. No evidence exists for the survival of any original wood flooring in the hyphen or the kitchen.

4. Wall and ceiling finish:

In the main house, most of the walls are plaster, and the ceilings are gypsum dry-wall. The attic of the main house, the hyphen, and the kitchen have walls and ceilings of gypsum drywall. The garret above the kitchen is unfinished.

5. Openings:

- a. Doorways and doors: In the hyphen and the kitchen, all door openings are covered with plain, mid-twentieth-century trim. Within the hyphen, the staircase door is the original, single-leaf board-and-batten door with a simple wood surround. The pantry doorway (beneath the hyphen staircase) has a mid-twentieth-century surround. In the northeast corner of the kitchen, there is a late-nineteenth-century board-and-batten door (fronting the infilled bake oven).
- b. Windows: In the hyphen and the kitchen, all of the original frames have been removed, and the windows now have plain, mid-twentieth-century trim. Within the main house, the windows are more elaborate, having surrounds of two pieces (beaded board with applied molding), plain reveals, and one-piece, rounded-lip sills.

6. Decorative features and trim:

Correcting the earlier report (see 1980 Ballast House report, HABS No. MD-318, page 8), there are no chair rails in the main house. The baseboards are beaded, not molded, and there are coat rails in the main hall and in the southeast room of the second floor. Recent investigation also indicates that there is no surviving "simple one piece trim ... hidden by later additions" in the kitchen.

7. Mechanical equipment:

- a. Heating: The Blossom Point farmhouse was never fitted for central heat. In the mid nineteenth century, the house was heated throughout by stoves (the fireboxes were infilled and the flues were adapted to accommodate the stoves).

- b. Lighting: Updating the earlier report (see 1980 Ballast House report, HABS No. MD-318, page 8), the "ornate hanging fixtures, manufactured in the 1930s or 1940s" are no longer extant.

D. Site:

1. General setting and orientation: The general setting and orientation have not changed since 1980. However, the erosion of the bluff to the west of the farmhouse has advanced since that time. The northwest corner of the main house is approximately four feet from the edge of the bluff, while the northwest corner of the concrete masonry unit toilet room is less than one foot from the bluff's edge.

PART III. PROJECT INFORMATION

The purpose of this supplemental HABS documentation was to record significant interior and exterior features that were not previously measured and drawn, photographed, and noted in the written record of the resource. The work was undertaken as part of a comprehensive architectural, historical, and archaeological investigation intended to assist the Government with its preservation plans for the resource. Documentation of the Blossom Point farmhouse was prepared for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers by the Historic Preservation Group of Kise Franks & Straw: Carol A. Benenson, historian and field team; Mark A. Bower, field supervisor; M. Todd Cleveland, field team; and Alma Plummer, delineator. Robert Tucher provided the documentary photographs and Paul Baker Touart consulted on the construction history of the house. Recording and photography took place during October of 1989 and April of 1993. The Blossom Point farmhouse was demolished in April of 1993.