

COFFREN HOUSE
10007 Croom Road
Croom
Prince Georges County
Maryland

HABS NO. MD-988

HABS
MD
17-CROOM
8-

PHOTOGRAPHS AND
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
Washington, D.C. 20013-7127

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

HABS
MD
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COFFREN HOUSE

HABS NO. MD-988

Location: 10007 Croom Road, Croom (Upper Marlboro vicinity), Prince Georges County, Maryland

Present Owner: G. Rogers and Ellen D. Naylor (also present occupant although the property is currently for sale)

Present Use: Private residence

Significance: The Coffren House, and adjacent Coffren Store, are significant as a surviving, rural general merchandise store and storekeepers dwelling complex. Once a familiar part of the rural landscape, the crossroads store complex is now rarely seen, with such architectural integrity. The house is a good example of a side-hall-and-double-parlor plan, a house type popular among the planter and merchant class in Prince Georges County during the early to mid 19th-century. Its interior architectural details are in the Greek Revival style. Having been constructed in 1861, it is a later example of both this house type and stylistic detailing.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Date of erection: 1861. This is the date of erection according to the county tax assessment records for 1861. The kitchen wing was added sometime between 1893 and 1900, to replace the separate kitchen building which once stood on the property.

2. Original and subsequent owners:

1853 Deed ON 1:452, 3 October 1853
Robert I. Young
To
John W. Coffren
All that land on which John W. Coffren now resides, being part of "Pages Rest" on the west side of the road leading from St. Thomas Church to Upper Marlboro, 1-1/2 acres.

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- 1856 Deed CSM 1:310, 30 July 1856
William H. Tuck and C.C. Magruder, trustees
To
John W. Coffren
18 acres including Coffren's store. Sold in
1851 to Robert I. Young, Young has sold the
same to Coffren, on which Coffren now lives.
- 1876 Equity #1115, 26 September 1876
J.P. Veazey, trustee- for the sale of the real
estate of John W. Coffren, deceased
James W. Curley
vs.
Susan H. Coffren
- 1880 Deed WAJ 1:509, 18 June 1880
J. Parker Veazey, trustee
To
Alice and Rosalie Coffren
58 acres in Croom including 18 acres sold by
Tuck and Magruder, trustees to John W. Coffren,
1856.
- 1889 Deed JWB 10:675, 14 March 1889
Josephine Owings, widow
To
Susanna Curtin
58 acres in Croom, conveyed by Thomas Owings,
trustee to Josephine Owings, same land conveyed
by Trustee, J. Parker Veazey to Alice and
Rosalie Coffren.
- 1889 Deed JWB 24:179, 20 March 1889
Albert and Susanna Curtin
To
William H. Gibbons
18 acres on road from Upper Marlboro to St.
Thomas Church (conveyed by Tuck and Magruder
to John W. Coffren, 1856).
- 1893 Deed JWB 24:384, 9 May 1893
William H. Gibbons and wife, Mary Gibbons
To
Jeremiah Ryon
3 acres on the road from Upper Marlboro to
Nottingham, with buildings.
- 1900 Deed JB 12:70, 30 June 1900
Jeremiah Ryon
To
Edith May Ryon

3 acres on Nottingham Road, with buildings

- 1904 Deed 16:389, 18 July 1904
Edith May Ryon
To
Arthur B. Duley and Margarett Duley
3 acres on the Road from Upper Marlboro to
Nottingham, together with buildings.
- 1952 Deed 1553:357, 20 October 1952
Margaret Duley, widow, et al
To
Allene Green
3 acres in Nottingham District
- 1984 Deed 5925:224, 2 July 1984
Allene Green
To
Debra Anne Naylor and Peter Richard Boundy, 1/2
interest; and G. Rogers Naylor and Ellen Duffy
Naylor
2.75 acres

3. Builder, contractor: The house was built for John Coffren. The actual contractors and/or suppliers are unknown.

4. Original plans and construction: The house was built as it is at present with a side hall and double parlors on the first floor. Originally the kitchen was in a separate building and there was no one-story ell.

5. Alterations and additions: Sometime between 1893 and 1900 the single-story kitchen wing was added to the house to replace the separate kitchen building which was moved to another site. This kitchen has recently been remodeled, but the wood-sided exterior wall of the main block is still visible in the current kitchen. This was the only major addition to the house. A bathroom was added (from part of the hallway) on the second floor ca. 1950.

B. Historical Context:

This complex of a general merchandise store with adjacent store-keepers dwelling was a common feature of the rural landscape of 19th- and early 20th-century Prince Georges County. They were constructed, generally at well traveled crossroads locations, to serve the needs of rural communities. Such a complex as Coffren's Store and

house often served as the nucleus of the rural community, with other commercial and residential structures developing around it as a result.

The house was built in a side-hall-and-double-parlor plan, a type which was commonly adopted by the wealthier planter and merchant class. It was built, in varying degrees of refinement, throughout the early to mid-19th century. This is a later example of the type, with Italianate brackets (and Greek Revival interior trim) It is somewhat simpler in its scale and detailing than other examples which include two story service wings, greater ornament, and masonry rather than wood-frame construction. (For more information on the significance of the rural store, etc. and information on its owners, see Coffren Store).

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: The Coffren House is a good, intact example of a popular Prince Georges County house type, the side-hall-and-double-parlor. This type appears throughout the county but in varying materials, scale and ornamentation. Many of the earlier examples are of brick, are larger in scale and with Adamesque detailing. This later example is somewhat smaller in scale and has only a single-story kitchen addition (many of the others have two-story, two-room deep kitchen/dining room wings). Thus, it is a somewhat simplified version of this popular style, a less affluent interpretation.

2. Condition of the fabric: The house appears to be in very good condition, having undergone much work by the current owners.

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Over-all dimensions: The main block is a two-and-one-half story, three-bay-by-one-bay, gable-roofed dwelling measuring approximately 28' x 32'. On the southeast side, towards the rear, is a single-story, two-bay-by-two-bay, gable-roofed kitchen wing. This wing measures approximately 16'-10" x 12'.

2. Foundations: The main block rests on a brick foundation. The kitchen wing originally sat on brick piers which have since been filled in with brick.

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3. Walls: The exterior walls of the main block are covered with weatherboard siding with corner boards. The walls of the kitchen wings are covered with german siding.

4. Structural system, framing: The house has a wood framing system (most likely balloon framing).

5. Porches, stoops: At the front entry there is a large stoop with a railing across the front and steps to either side. This stoop was added by the current owners in 1985. The pattern for the railing (a pattern of X's between plain balusters) was taken from the original porch to the rear. The rear porch runs the length of the main block. A raised seam metal-covered roof is supported by four chamfered posts. The balustrade is like that of the front stoop with a heavy molded handrail. There is an ornamental, 3/4 length cut-out wooden screen to the northwest side.

6. Chimneys: There are two chimneys on the main block, both interior end chimneys to either side of the roof ridge at the southeast gable end. They are brick chimneys, stuccoed over, with a corbelled lip. A similar chimney appears on the interior gable end of the kitchen wing.

7. Openings:

a. Doorways and doors: The main block has doorways, front and rear, directly opposite each other through the side hall. The front doorway is recessed with three-light sidelights flanking the doorway with a panel below. This pattern is mimicked in the paneled pilaster between the door and the sidelights. Above, there is a dentil molding and a full, four-light transom. Around the outer edge of the doorway is a plain, narrow beaded molding (like that found around the windows). There is a four-panel door with elongated octagonal panels. The rear doorway is much simpler, with only the plain, narrow outer molding and a four- (square) panel door. A trap door in the floor of the rear porch (to the side of the doorway) leads to a stair into the cellar. There is a doorway to the center rear of the kitchen wing. It is surrounded by a plain, narrow molding and has a door with four glass panes in the top and three horizontal panels in the bottom.

b. Windows: The typical window of the main block is a six-over-six-light sash, with the first-story windows being longer than those of the second-story. They have a plain, narrow surround with an inner bead, and narrow muntins and rails. In the gable ends, the windows are round-arched, six-over-six-light sash. At the southeast side the window in the gable end is the only window. There is a small, four-over-four-light sash window at the first-story of the northwest side (which lights a cupboard under the stair). At the rear, there is a window at mid-story, above the rear entry, which lights the landing of the stairway. The windows of the main block all have louvered shutters (including the round-arched windows but not the small bath window), with scrolled shutter dogs. The windows of the kitchen wing are also six-over-six-light sash, although much smaller in scale than the main block. Only the window on the rear has shutters.

8. Roof:

a. Shape, covering: Both the main block and the wing have low-pitched, side-gabled roofs. The main block is covered with corrugated metal in the front and metal pressed to look like shingles on the rear. The roof of the wing is covered with raised-seam metal.

b. Cornice, eaves: The main block has a large, boxed, returning cornice. It is supported by ornate drop pendant brackets, backed by a plain, wide frieze board, which lines the eaves all around. The wing has an unornamented, narrow boxed, returning cornice.

C. Description of Interior:

1. Floor plans:

a. First floor: A hall runs the length of the northwest side of the house, with doorways across from each other, front and rear. The stair runs along the northwest wall. There is a doorway into a cupboard underneath the stair. Along the southeast wall are doorways into the twin parlors. The northeast front parlor and the southwest rear parlor (used as a dining room) are adjoined by wide doorway. Each has a fireplace in the center of the southeast wall. At the north corner of the dining room is a doorway into the kitchen wing.

b. Second floor: The second floor follows the same pattern as the first with a sidehall and chambers over the twin parlors, also with fireplaces. There is a small, third room over the front of the entry hall. A bath has been added from part of the stairhall, along the north wall at the foot of the stairway to the third floor.

c. Third floor: There is a bathroom at the top of the stairway in the front of the house. Southeast of the hall is a doorway into one large room with sloping ceilings.

d. Cellar: There is a small cellar under the northwest side of the main block which is entered through a trap door in the floor of the rear porch.

2. Stairways: An elegantly curving stairway winds its way up from the first to the third floor. The stair begins mid-hall and runs along the northwest wall to a landing which is lit by a window (at a level between floors). At the landing, the stair turns 180 degrees and continues in its second run to the second floor. It rises to the third floor in a like manner with the exception that the two runs of the stairway to the third floor are of about equal length, while the first run of the two runs to the second floor is significantly longer than the second. The stair has a heavy, turned newel post with delicate turned balusters, two per step. The handrail elegantly curves around without the support of a newel post on the second floor. It is an open string stair with ornamental brackets.

3. Flooring: The flooring throughout the main block is the original, finished wide board flooring. The flooring in the remodeled kitchen is replacement oak, tongue-and-groove.

4. Wall and ceiling finish: There is picture molding in the first and second floors of the main block, and baseboard with a simple cyma reversa molding. There are plaster ceiling medallions in the first-floor hall and in the parlor and dining room. The hall medallion is in a pattern of concentric rings. The matching parlor and dining room medallions are in a circular acanthus leaf pattern with a fret band along the outer rim.

5. Openings:

a. Doorways and doors: The doorway surrounds are symmetrically molded with a cyma reversa section to

the middle, flanked by flute and band to either side, with a back band to the outer edge. There is a double-door doorway between the two parlors (the doors were removed and are currently being stored in store building on the property). The molding on the second floor follows the same pattern. The doors are four-panel doors.

b. Windows: The window surrounds have the same pattern as the doorways.

6. Decorative features and trim: There are four fireplaces, all with similar mantels. Those in the parlors on the first floor are identical. They consist of plain pilasters supporting a plain frieze board cut in a ogee pattern above the opening and supporting a mantel shelf with crown molding underneath it. The mantels in the bedrooms above on the second floor are the same but without the ogee arch.

7. Hardware: Most of the doors have ornate, old brass door plates and porcelain knobs. The front door has a brass knob cast in a floral pattern.

D. Site:

1. General Setting and orientation: The house faces northeast onto Croom Road. A driveway passes between the house and store (connecting with the horseshoe drive in front of the store), through an opening in a picket fence and into the rear yard. The store building is adjacent to the house, to the northwest. To the southwest rear of the house are a series of outbuildings. The property slopes off into a gully to the rear with the house and store sitting on the high point.

2. Historic landscape: The house (and store) is oriented towards Croom Road, located near a bend. This was a major north-south road for this rural area. Its location made it easily accessible for river freight from Nottingham, and later for the railroad at Croom or Linden Stations, for provisions for the store. The house and store complex once formed the nucleus for this small, rural community which also included a blacksmith and a wheelwrights shop (with other dwellings and St. Thomas Church down the road); with a school house and church meeting hall (now Moore's Store) added later.

3. Outbuildings: The Coffren house property includes a store building which predates the house (see HABS NO. MD-988-A), a barn/shed, corn crib, privy, meat house, hog

pen and chicken house. The barn is a small, two story, two-bay-by-two-bay building with vertical board siding and raised-seam metal roof, resting on brick and cement footings. The front has two entries, a sliding barn door and a vertical board door. Half the interior has stalls for livestock.

There is a connecting, one-story shed with two sliding barn doors. This long structure, reported to have been used as a mule barn, is also of vertical board siding with a raised-seam metal roof (HABS NO. MD-988-B).

The corn crib is a small, rectangular structure with slatted walls and a doorway at the gable end. It rests on hewn wooden sills and brick piers, and has a raised-seam metal roof (HABS NO. MD-988-C).

Behind the barn complex is a shed-roofed, vertical-board privy. The interior has three holes of varying sizes, and with beveled edges (HABS NO. MD-988-D).

There is also a two-by-one-bay hog pen with wide, horizontal siding resting on brick and cement piers, located south of the barn.

West of the barn complex is a meat house measuring 12'-15" x 12'-3". It is covered with wide, lapped siding with corner boards and has a raised-seam metal roof. There is an entry in the center of the front (northeast) facade with a vertical board door hung on iron strap hinges. It rests on hewn sills and a concrete foundation, having been moved here from another site (appears in photograph HABS NO. MD-988-B-1).

There is also a two-by-three-bay, shed-roofed chicken house built ca. 1920.

PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

A. Bibliography:

1. Primary and unpublished sources:

King, Marina. "Maryland Historical Trust, Historic Sites Inventory Form, John W. Coffren House and Store (Green House and Store)," prepared January 1986.

Prince Georges County Land Records, Deeds and Equity proceeding as cited in text.

Prince Georges County Register of Wills, Wills and
Administrations as cited in text.

2. Secondary and published sources:

Hopkins, G.M. Atlas of Prince Georges County,
Maryland, Washington: G.M. Hopkins, Publishers,
1878.

Stilgoe, John R. Common Landscapes of America, 1580
to 1845. New Haven & London: Yale University
Press, 1982.

Prepared By: Catherine C. Lavoie
Historian
February 1991

PART IV. PROJECT INFORMATION

The documentation of the Coffren House was undertaken as part of a cooperative project between the Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS), Robert J. Kapsch, chief, and the Maryland National Capital Park & Planning Commission on behalf of the Prince Georges County Historic Preservation Commission to document sites throughout the county. A one year project was begun in January of 1989, lasting approximately one year. Upon its completion, a phase II was begun, in March of 1990, also to span approximately one year's time. The site selection was made by Gail Rothrock, director, and Susan G. Pearl, research historian, for the HPC. They also provided access to their research and information on file with the HPC, as well as their extensive knowledge of county history. The large format photography was undertaken by HABS photographer Jack E. Boucher. The historical report was prepared by HABS historian Catherine C. Lavoie, who accompanied the photographer into the field for on-site inspection.