

ABSTRACT

Title of Document:

A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF CREMONA
FARM'S ANTEBELLUM TOBACCO
BARNs AND OUTBUILDINGS AS
RESOURCES IN REGIONAL CONTEXT

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Preservation, 2021

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A 2019 University of Maryland Historic Preservation Program study at Cremona in St. Mary's County, Maryland, uncovered the potential historical significance of an assemblage of antebellum domestic and agricultural outbuildings. Other well-preserved layers of architectural and landscape history exist at Cremona, creating an exemplary confluence of continuity and change.

After a detailed examination of Cremona's antebellum resources to establish the integrity of these structures, this paper details the results of two related yet distinct lines of inquiry to ascertain the historic significance of Cremona's outbuildings as contributing resources.

Detailed architectural investigations of three, dated barns at Cremona serve as a starting point for comparisons with other period (1797-1833) Southern Maryland barns. The paper particularly focuses on the functional details related to sheds, doors, and transverse intermediate sills.

Cremona's place in Southern Maryland's antebellum era outbuilding landscape is investigated. After establishing statistical outbuilding use via 1798 Federal Direct Tax records, this study identifies comparable, extant outbuilding assemblages in the region in order to determine the significance of Cremona's outbuildings.

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BARNs AND OUTBUILDINGS AS RESOURCES IN REGIONAL CONTEXT

By

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Final Project submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate School of the University of
Maryland, College Park, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Historic Preservation
2021

Advisory Committee:
Professor Dennis Pogue, Chair
Professor Donald Linebaugh

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Dedication

For my family. Many thanks for your patient support, which made this possible.

Acknowledgements

This paper would not have been possible without the support of a handful of individuals and organizations. Thanks to every property owner who granted access to their barns or outbuildings, including Historic St. Mary's City for the access granted to the Mackall Barn.

Special thanks to Eve Love of the St. Mary's County Historic Preservation Commission and Kathleen Seay of the Calvert County Planning and Zoning Department. Both were instrumental in tracking down information from property owners and facilitating some of the visits. Eve offered her time for the visits to the sites in St. Mary's County. Cathy Thompson of the Charles County Historic Preservation Commission, who liaised with property owners and graciously shared the manuscript for her forthcoming book, which was most helpful.

Thanks to both of my faculty advisors, Dr. Dennis Pogue and Dr. Donald Linebaugh, for their active support, beneficial advice and patience in answering my copious questions.

This project simply could not have happened without the incredibly unfettered access granted by Mrs. Nancy Dodge and the Cremona Foundation, and the eager, valuable support of Mr. Charles Fick during those visits. Thank you very much.

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Introduction: Cremona and Project Background

The 1,275-acre Cremona property is located along the west bank of the Patuxent River in St. Mary's County, Maryland (Figure 1). Featuring a side-gabled, symmetrical, brick, Federal-style, center passage Manor House, constructed circa 1819, the property also contains an array of domestic and agricultural outbuildings from the same period as the dwelling as well as from later periods, including a notable assemblage from the 1930s reflecting the Country House and Garden Movement.

An initial investigation of the property in 2019 by students and faculty from



Figure 1. 1930s Map with Directions to Cremona, Cremona Archives.

the University of Maryland discovered five outbuildings (a meat house, two tobacco barns, a dairy, and a livestock barn) that were previously unrecognized as antebellum-era structures. These outbuildings display traits pointing to construction between 1820 and 1840 and are thought to have been part

of a re-building program after Dr. William Thomas bought the property from John Ashcom in 1818.¹ A portion of the original evaluation team conducted architectural investigations and recorded four of these resources during Fall 2019 and Fall 2020 and established the structures' levels of integrity. Dendrochronological tests by Michael Worthington confirmed construction dates within the suspected ranges.²

This paper provides a detailed examination of Cremona's antebellum, Thomas-era outbuildings within the context of comparable Southern Maryland resources in order to ascertain the historic significance of Cremona's outbuilding assemblage as contributing resources.

Chapter 1 introduces Cremona's physiographic, ecological, and historic contexts. The chapter concludes with an introduction to the inception and use of outbuildings in the Chesapeake during the colonial and antebellum periods, focusing on the building types discovered at Cremona in 2019.

Chapter 2 offers detailed architectural descriptions of Tobacco Barns 1 and 2 at Cremona. The investigations of these barns raised questions about the traditional narrative regarding typical antebellum period barn construction. These questions are explored via comparative study with 10 other barns in Calvert and St. Mary's counties.

Chapter 3 explores the other antebellum outbuildings at Cremona, including the meat house, dairy, livestock barn, and Sam's Cabin, including an assessment of

¹ Deed, Maryland, January 24, 1818, Liber J.H., No 5, Folio 36.

² Michael J. Worthington and Jane I. Seiter, *The Tree-Ring Dating of Three Buildings at Cremona Farm, Mechanicsville, Maryland* (Oxford Tree-Ring Laboratory: 2019); Michael J. Worthington and Jane I. Seiter, *The Tree-Ring Dating of the Cremona Livestock Barn, Mechanicsville, Maryland* (Oxford Tree-Ring Laboratory: 2020).

their integrity. To ascertain the significance of Cremona's extant antebellum outbuilding assemblage, statistical outbuilding use data from the 1798 Federal Direct Tax records for Cremona's local area is evaluated to establish the scale of traditional use. Then, Cremona's resources are compared to other extant assemblages in Southern Maryland. Finally, the cultural landscape at Cremona is briefly explored as the resource that ties together the extant structures and contributes to the site's historic significance, which is ultimately detailed.

The results of both the comparative tobacco barn study and the outbuilding survey point to Cremona containing one of the most significant collections of existing antebellum outbuilding resources in Southern Maryland.

Chapter 1: Cremona in Physiographic, Ecological, and Historic Context and the Inception and Function of Antebellum Domestic and Agricultural Outbuildings

Cremona's Physiographic and Ecological Contexts:

Cremona is located in the Western Shore Uplands region of the Coastal Plain physiographic province. The region's topography varies between undulating and rolling hills with elevations between sea level and 250 ft. above sea level. The gentle changes in grade provide a great deal of topography suitable for agriculture, with the level grades bordering the Patuxent and Potomac rivers. The river enabled sail and then steam trade from the 17th century into the early 20th century, respectively.³

The local climate favors agriculture with a 185-day growing season from mid-April until mid-October. Long periods of excessive heat or cold are rare, with rainfall evenly distributed.⁴

Shortleaf and loblolly pine forests dominated the Western Shore Uplands region landscape during the 17th century, providing habitat for a variety of wildlife, ample material for construction and fencing, and an impediment to agriculture. Most southern Maryland soils are variations of loam alluvial soils. The northwest two-thirds of St. Mary's County contain concentrations of Sassafras series loam soils, which are well-drained and generally found on level to sloping and rolling to steep

³ Lori Thursby and Carrie Schomig, *National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Documentation Form: Tobacco Barns of Southern Maryland, Anne Arundel, Calvert, Charles, Prince George's, and St. Mary's Counties* (January 2010): E-3.

⁴ Ibid.

land. All of these conditions are favorable for agriculture and ideal for tobacco cultivation.⁵

The Cremona property closely reflects this description. The landscape of Ashcom's original property appears much as it would have during Thomas' ownership. The property consists of a peninsula, with an allée extending along the spine of the peninsula. The area on either side of the allée is cleared for agriculture nearly to the two creeks that, together with the Patuxent River, form the peninsula. Stands of forest remain at the base of the peninsula and in some of the riparian zones. Virtually all of the property is level and less than 20 ft. above sea level. Dominant soils on the Cremona property include Woodstown Sandy Loams, Sassafras Sandy Loams and Othello Silt Loams.⁶

Cremona's Historic Contexts:

A historic context is the intersection of time period, location, and historic theme. A historic resource's importance within a particular historic context indicates the resource's significance.⁷ The Cremona property has several periods of significance that reflect St. Mary's County's multiple historic contexts from pre-history through the depression-era. Since this paper focuses on five early 19th century outbuildings, only historic contexts of Cremona's early Thomas era, from 1800 to 1860, and just prior, will be discussed below.

⁵ United States Department of Agriculture, United States Forest Service. *Forests of Maryland* (Northern Research Station, Newtown Square, PA, 2015); Thursby and Schomig, *National Register Multiple Property Documentation Form: Tobacco Barns of Southern Maryland*, E-3.

⁶ USDA NRCS Web Soil Survey, <https://websoilsurvey.sc.egov.usda.gov/App/WebSoilSurvey.aspx>.

⁷ National Park Service. *National Register Bulletin: How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation*. (Washington, D.C., 1997): 7.

Throughout the 17th and much of the 18th century, farmers and planters in Southern Maryland relied almost solely on labor-intensive tobacco cultivation. Initially, the labor force consisted of white indentured servants, but by the last decades of the 17th century, enslaved Africans were imported in substantial numbers to take their place. The inherent risk in tobacco monoculture, combined with high wages for skilled workers, spurred landholders to utilize impermanent dwellings that became common to the Chesapeake region of Maryland and Virginia. These “Virginia Houses” could be quickly raised and were only expected to last a few decades, demonstrating the landowners’ priority for agricultural buildings, which were larger and typically more carefully constructed than the home.⁸

Between the late 1780s and 1820s, a confluence of circumstances caused social disruption in St. Mary’s County and widespread migration of its white population to Western Virginia and Kentucky. The tobacco monoculture rapidly depleted the soil. Since farmsteads averaged just 150 acres, they were too small to permit fallow periods to replenish soil nutrients. Tobacco’s profitability declined, and 18% of the county’s white population emigrated between 1790 and 1810. These were mostly tenant farmers and those who owned small tracts.⁹ In 1789, this land became available by lottery.¹⁰

Troubles with Great Britain further exacerbated the county’s economic hardships and gave added impetus to its residents’ westward migrations. After 1807,

⁸ Kirk E. Ranzetta, *I’m Goin’ Down County: An Architectural Journey Through St. Mary’s County* (Crownsville, MD: Maryland Historical Trust Press, 2010), 25-27; Dennis J. Pogue, *King’s Reach and 17th Century Plantation Life* (Annapolis, MD: Maryland Historical and Cultural Publications, 1990), 10.

⁹ Ranzetta, *I’m Goin’ Down County*, 43.

¹⁰ Regina Combs Hammett, *History of St. Mary’s County, Maryland* (St. Mary’s County Bicentennial Commission, 1977), 83.

the Embargo Act stifled trade, hobbling local farmers and planters. Between 1813 and 1814, the British effected a blockade on the Chesapeake and Delaware bays wherein British forces gradually moved into and patrolled interior waterways; confiscated crops and enslaved workers; and burned homes, barns and public buildings.¹¹

Disruptions in trade and destruction of property caused by the war exacerbated tobacco market uncertainties. During the last decade of the 18th century, Maryland and Virginia planters and farmers produced approximately 80% of the nation's exported tobacco. Over succeeding decades, overall production expanded in other regions, and Maryland's share of national tobacco production dropped sharply to 30% by 1830.¹² The national increase in supply caused prices to drop, further spurring migrations. The precipitous decline in the white tenant and landholding farm population, combined with decreasing profits for tobacco, lead local landholders to greater dependence on the labor of enslaved Africans.

Financial hardships grew during the years leading up to and after the transfer of the Cremona property in 1818. Extended droughts occurred in 1816 and 1819 that reduced the crop significantly.¹³ At the same time, European markets strengthened just as a financial crisis gripped the United States, triggered by a burst land speculation bubble. Credit seized throughout the country, requiring years to recover.¹⁴ The coupled difficulties of drought and lack of credit resulted in local farmers and planters being unable to manage their debt and some were forced to sell land.¹⁵

¹¹ Ibid., 83, 94.

¹² Ibid., 352-53.

¹³ Ranzetta *I'm Goin' Down County*, 44.

¹⁴ Daniel Walker Howe, *What Hath God Wrought: The Transformation of America, 1815-1848* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 142-43.

¹⁵ Ranzetta, *I'm Goin' Down County*, 44.

Following the Panic of 1819, local landowners slowly, and to varying degrees, took steps to protect themselves by diversifying production to include different staple grains. While diversification began in the late 18th century, it increased with greater urgency during this period. Some of these historic contexts are reflected in the built environment of this period.¹⁶

During the late 18th and early 19th centuries, most homes were modestly built by small landholders.¹⁷ However clear class distinctions were often reflected in dwellings wherein wealthy property owners demonstrated their wealth and taste in well-built properties that reflected current architectural tastes and in landscapes, well-ordered with domestic dependencies and agricultural outbuildings. With the diversification in agricultural output during the first half of the 19th century came new types of outbuildings dotting the landscapes of agricultural properties, especially larger holdings. Livestock raising and dairying also increased in importance. Granaries and smokehouses were the dominant outbuilding additions to the already-ubiquitous tobacco barns. This diversification of structures expanded into the middle decades of the century.¹⁸

Improved road transportation became available along the elevated spine of the peninsula forming St. Mary's County, but the Potomac and Patuxent rivers and their tributaries continued to be major arteries for trade and transport. By the 1820s, steamships augmented the sailing vessels, providing connections for the county with

¹⁶ Ibid., 45, 55.

¹⁷ Ibid., 50.

¹⁸ Ibid., 50, 52, 54-55, 75.

Baltimore, Maryland and Norfolk, Virginia. During the 1830s, public wharves and landings were established up and down the Patuxent River.¹⁹

Between 1830 and the outbreak of the Civil War, St. Mary's County was largely free of the tobacco market hardships of the earlier decades of the century. The efforts at diversification had helped stabilize tobacco and grain prices. Tobacco cultivation still required intensive labor, however, and as a result, county residents remained decidedly pro-slavery as the Civil War approached. Many moved to Virginia or joined the Confederate army when the state voted to remain in the Union, and the region maintained its Southern sympathies throughout the war.²⁰

Antebellum Domestic and Agricultural Outbuilding Inception and Function:

Along with the Manor House, the Cremona property contains 72 structures, including a significant collection from the early 19th century. Four structures, including a meat house, a livestock barn, and two tobacco barns, have construction dates ranging from 1826 to 1833 verified by dendrochronology testing conducted in 2019 and 2020. Added to these is a suspected dairy that contains strong physical evidence for construction during the same period. In addition to these five outbuildings, a possible slave quarter and two other extant dwellings are possible 19th-century constructions. A third tobacco barn, the De La Brooke Barn, was previously tested, revealing a 1797 construction date.²¹

¹⁹ Ibid, 61; Hammett, *History of St. Mary's County*, 352.

²⁰ Ranzetta, *I'm Goin' Down County*, 63-64.

²¹ Worthington and Seiter, *Three Buildings at Cremona Farm*; D.H. Miles, *The Tree-Ring Dating of the De La Brook Tobacco Barn, Horse Landing, St. Mary's County, Maryland* (Oxford Dendrochronological Laboratory, 2013).

Outbuildings were typical features on early Mid-Atlantic properties, necessitated by the Chesapeake climate and agricultural and domestic choices. Obvious uses for external structures included agricultural purposes such as storing grains, drying tobacco, and housing animals. Domestic functions also quickly migrated from the dwelling into nearby, functionally unique dependencies, including kitchens, dairies, and smokehouses (more commonly called meat houses in Maryland).²²

Several factors drove these functions from the house. As proprietors gained means, indentured and then enslaved laborers supplanted members of the family in accomplishing household duties. As a display of means and an attempt to secure privacy, property owners separated work functions from the living and entertaining space of the home. A further reason for moving kitchens outside was to eliminate the heat and smells associated with cooking from the house. This was more meaningful in the heat and humidity of the Chesapeake region than farther north, where retaining the hearth and avoiding an unnecessary walk outside would be beneficial in winter. The Chesapeake climate caused two additional reasons for moving food-related functions outside: vermin and putrefaction.²³

With the Chesapeake's warm climate, rodents and a variety of insects were pervasive and long-lived. Retaining foodstuffs in the home invited its invasion by pests. By creating specialized outbuildings, settlers, following the example of

²² Donald Linebaugh, "All the Annoyances and Inconveniences of the Country: Environmental Factors in the Development of Outbuildings in the Colonial Chesapeake," *Winterthur Portfolio* 29, no. 1 (Spring 1994): 2-3; Edward A. Chappell, "Housing Slavery," in *Chesapeake House*, eds. Cary Carson and Carl Lounsbury (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2013), 164-166.

²³ Linebaugh, "All the Annoyances and Inconveniences of the Country," 2, 6, 12.

American Indians, kept vermin from their homes and attempted to shut them out of the outbuildings.²⁴

This problem spurred development of uniquely configured meat houses to preserve and store meat. These functions followed a set annual cycle. Slaughtering typically occurred in December when the cool temperatures were not likely to corrupt the meat. The carcass would hang for one night before being packed with salt in a hollowed wooden tub for six weeks. After the meat lost its moisture to the salt, it hung for another week or two from the roof framing while smoke from a smoldering fire on the floor permeated the windowless building. The meat house then stored the cured meat for up to two years to age. Its design was typically between 8 and 14 ft.-square in plan, although sometimes slightly rectangular. Pyramidal roofs were typical on meat houses and on dairies.²⁵

Women often retained involvement in cheese and butter making functions. As such, dairies were regularly more highly finished than other outbuildings; it was more likely to be brick or frame construction rather than log.²⁶ Dairies were also the cleanest of the outbuildings in order to prevent bacterial growth. In pursuit of cleanliness, the interior walls were regularly whitewashed, and the floor was often covered in brick. Dairies were typically constructed with the floor 2-3' below grade, with insulation space between the plastered interior wall and the exterior sheathing, and with louvered or latticed

²⁴ Ibid, 7-9.

²⁵ Michael Olmert, *Kitchens, Smokehouses, and Privies: Outbuildings and the Architecture of Daily Life in the Eighteenth Century Mid-Atlantic* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2009), 74-76.

²⁶ Edward A. Chappell, "Housing Slavery," 164.

openings instead of windows.²⁷ These practices kept the small room between 40 and 50 degrees to preserve its contents. This was the point of the dairy, as the dwelling house could not be kept sufficiently cool during Chesapeake Bay summers.²⁸

Livestock barns did not come into anything like regular use until the 19th century. Before then, planters and farmers typically allowed cows and pigs to forage freely. Needs evolved over time. For example, to support depleted soils, cattle started to be collected near agricultural fields to provide a supply of dung. Housing eventually became one solution; though, cattle for slaughter required less care than milk cows and were less likely to receive shelter. Structures to house milk cows, permanently, and hogs, seasonally, became desirable where need existed. Stalls for milk cows typically measured from 3 to 3 ½' wide by 5 ½ to 8' deep. Hogs were often only gathered during the fall for fattening prior to slaughter and curing in December. As the countryside became more populated and the incentives to diversify increased, hogs, too, would often come under closer control year-round. When this happened, landowners constructed either sties or partially sheltered hog houses. The locus of collecting or sheltering both cows and pigs would have been placed near the dairy and meat house, respectively.²⁹

Of all outbuilding structures, planters placed a top priority on tobacco barns from the earliest settlement period given the economic importance of

²⁷ Olmert, *Kitchens, Smokehouses, and Privies*, 93.

²⁸ Linebaugh, "All the Annoyances and Inconveniences of the Country," 14.

²⁹ Orlando Ridout V, "Agricultural Buildings," in *Chesapeake House*, eds. Cary Carson and Carl Lounsbury (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2013), 201-2.

the tobacco crop; their construction facilitated fiscal security. As such, barn utilization iterated toward ensuring that a quality product went to market. This resulted in somewhat standardized construction patterns over time, and the cycle of tobacco cultivation kept to a regular calendar. Preparing and sowing seedbeds occurred in early spring. Watering and weeding went on until May, when seeds required transplanting into mounds of loose soil. Harvest occurred in late summer after months of weeding and de-worming. Leaves then air-dried and wilted on the ground or outdoor hanging racks. Riven sticks, loaded with tobacco stalks would hang amidst the specialized roof framing of the tobacco barn from late summer until late fall, when the leaves were stripped from their stalks and packed into hogsheads for shipment.³⁰

While tobacco barn function has remained the same, in broad terms, since the 18th century, changes to form and functional elements have occurred over time. Architectural historians have reduced the broad patterns of evolving tobacco barn design elements into temporal categories. These categories are typically understood to be the 17th through 18th century, 1800 to 1830, 1830 to 1900, and the 20th century. Since Cremona's barns fall within the first three periods, overviews of the traditionally understood characteristics of these periods are in order.

Early 18th-century tobacco barns were typically supported by post-in-ground foundations with a transition later in the century to braced framing tied

³⁰ Ridout, "Agricultural Buildings," 181-82; Lois Green Carr, Russell R. Menard, and Lorena S. Walsh, *Robert Cole's World: Agriculture & Society in Early Maryland* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1991), 58-65.

into a continuous sill. Hewn and pit-sawn timbers were connected with pegged mortise and tenon joints. Barn dimensions were close to square and smaller than in later periods. Principal and intermediate posts spaced at 5 or 10' intervals accommodated the length of the riven sticks used to hang the tobacco leaves. Studs between the posts created nailing surfaces for horizontal siding and provided additional structural support. The horizontal siding added to lateral stability as did braces connecting the sill to the corner posts. Square false plates, tilted at an angle, supported steeply pitched roof framing and allowed it to function independently of the lower barn framing. Common rafter pairs were spaced at 2 ½ ft. intervals. Every other rafter pair contained collars for hanging tobacco staves. Rails below the plates, also at five-foot intervals, served the same purpose. Barns raised during this period are thought to have typically stood without sheds originally.³¹

Barns constructed during the first quarter of the 19th century have a few important differences from those of the 18th century. By 1800, the five-foot tobacco stave had mostly transitioned to slightly more than four feet, which accompanied a shift in barn dimensions. The character of wall false plates shifted from square and tilted to rectangular and flat. To facilitate better ventilation, vertical siding fitted with hinged vents began supplanting horizontal siding during this period, supplementing the use of doors for airflow. As a result, studs, which had filled the spaces between posts, started

³¹ Kirk Ranzetta, "The Myth of Agricultural Complacency: Tobacco Barns of St. Mary's County, Maryland, 1790-1890," *Perspectives in Vernacular Architecture*. (Vol. 10, 2005): 86; Thursby and Schomig, *National Register Multiple Property Documentation Form: Tobacco Barns of Southern Maryland*, E45-E46, F2-F3; Ridout, "Agricultural Buildings," 184.

to go out of use. The studs were replaced by horizontal rails used as nailers for vertical siding. Shed use -- for equipment storage, animal shelter, additional tobacco hanging capacity, or tobacco stripping -- is thought to have come into common practice beginning roughly 1820. From the 1830s through the middle decades of the 19th century, newly constructed barns were longer than their predecessors, creating a more rectangular shape. Additional, transverse sills were sometimes used to tie together the long elevation sills, creating additional stability and an obstacle in walking along the length of the barn. Downbraces rose from these extra sills to posts on the long elevations providing further structural support. These intermediate sills are thought to have been used to cope with longer structures. Newly constructed barns also became taller with a shallower roof pitch over the course of the 19th century.³²

³² Ridout, "Agricultural Buildings," 184, 184-87; Ranzetta, "The Myth of Agricultural Complacency," 89.

Chapter 2: Cremona Tobacco Barns in Regional Context

Cremona's three early tobacco barns, including Cremona Tobacco Barn Number 1, Number 2, and the De La Brook Barn, represent a significant concentration of early barns. While the tobacco barns at Cremona reflect most of the standard practices identified in the traditional narrative of antebellum barn construction described in Chapter 1, some features of those barns, and of the previously documented De La Brook Barn, suggest the need for further study. This chapter will detail the results of the architectural investigations at Cremona's Barn 1 and Barn 2; turn to investigations of comparable barns constructed, mostly, during the same period; and provide results of this comparative study. Plan drawings for selected barns in this study are included. The conventions used are to convey the original barn configuration; as such, later additions are not depicted, and extant original materials are delineated. Section drawing were not completed, since the focus is on sill, shed, and door placement.

Cremona's Thomas-Era Tobacco Barns:

Cremona Tobacco Barn Number 1

Tobacco Barn Number 1 (Figures 2 and 3), dendrochronology dated to 1832, sits south of the Cremona's spine road and east of a spur road leading south, across Great Manor Creek, to the De La Brooke property. The structure has 24'-wide gabled ends on the east and west elevations. The north and south elevations of the original

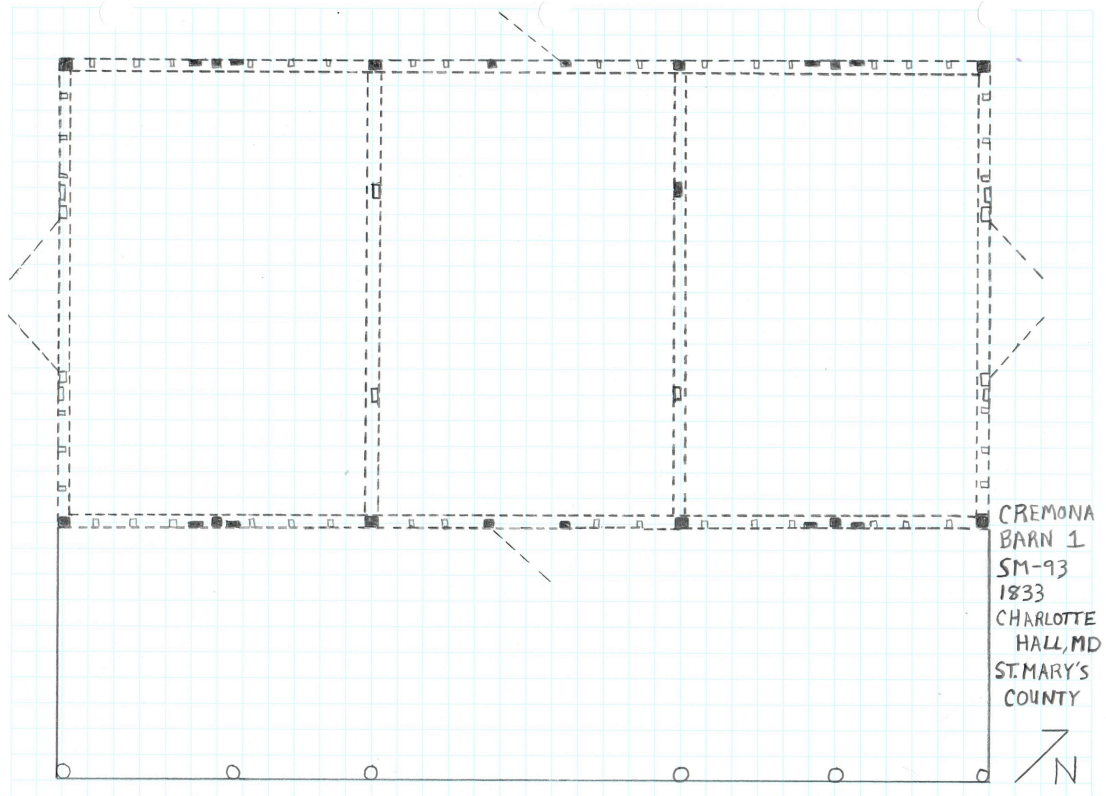


Figure 2. Cremona Barn 1, Southwest Elevation; the original portion of the barn is one-half of the gable-roofed section on the left.

barn measure 48'. Vertical board and batten siding clads the current exterior. A one-story shed extends along the south elevation.³³

The interior framing rests on circular sawn replacement sills and includes principal posts, spaced 16' on center from each corner post; between the corner post and principal post, an intermediate post is flanked by down braces descending from the corner post and principal post. The original studs that supported horizontal siding are missing. Long, unoccupied mortise holes in both pairs of principal posts once housed steeply pitched down braces that descended across the barn into transverse intermediate sills; only one down brace, on the northeast principal posts still exists, connecting to a partial-length, replacement intermediate sill. Centered between the two principal posts on each long elevation, door posts are framed, with holes for

³³ Worthington and Seiter, *Three Buildings at Cremona Farm*.



KEY FOR PLAN VIEWS	
FRAMING:	■ ORIGINAL; PRESENT
	□ ORIGINAL CONFIGURATION; NOT PRESENT
SHEDS & DOORS:	— ORIGINAL CONFIGURATION; PRESENT
	- - - ORIGINAL CONFIGURATION; NOT PRESENT
SILLS:	▭ ORIGINAL CONFIGURATION; PRESENT
	[- - -] ORIGINAL CONFIGURATION; NOT PRESENT

Figure 3. Cremona Barn 1, Plan View.

pintles in the south wall door frame that once secured a door. The north wall mirrors the south wall, but the northeast corner post and the principal post to the west of it are replacements. The possible door frame on the north wall is unverified, since it is covered with siding. The framing of the west gable wall, which has been altered, now supports a large, off-center door opening. The frame is of newer material, including the girt. The eastern girt remains; however, the barn was extended to a length of 96'

at some point, and the east wall framing under the girt was removed. Nevertheless, mortise holes remain in the original girt (Figure 4), betraying the original framing pattern on that wall, which included an eight-foot-wide double door. While not



Figure 4. Cremona Barn 1, Ghost Mortises for Studs and Door Posts on East Girt.

certain, the original west gable door likely matched the 8' centered east door.

Posts support plates, which support joists, girts, false plates, and common rafters. A joist spans the barn every four feet and sits below every other common rafter. The false plates resting on the joist ends have a rectangular profile and are parallel to the ground. Above the plate level, three collars span the barn and connect each side of every other common rafter pair, adding structure to the roof and creating platforms every four feet for hanging four-and-a-half-foot riven sticks laden with tobacco plants. A vertical tier pole connects each of the collars. The hanging capacity of the barn was substantial. Three tapering levels of tobacco were supported by the collars above the plate, with a total hanging area of 1,632 ft². The 17' below the plate, supported another four full levels of tobacco, adding another 4,608 ft².

The shed on the south elevation extends 14' beyond the barn. Its earthfast posts are not original, though the plate is from the original shed, containing empty mortises running along its length. Two pairs of mortises, spaced at four feet, contain peg holes, suggesting possible door locations. The shed on this barn may have been retrofitted onto the barn after the original construction.

The main structural members -- corner, principal, intermediate, and door posts, plates and the east girt -- are hewn. The joists are hewn and pit-sawn. Braces, collars, false plates and rafters are all pit-sawn. Shingle nailers are riven and pit-sawn. The original sill is missing. The diversity of treatments of the materials is a hallmark of construction in the Chesapeake during this period.

Mortise and tenon joints were used throughout. The tenons connecting posts to plates and braces to posts were pegged. The wooden pegs also secured joists to plates, over which they are lapped. Many of the braces were pegged. In some cases, empty peg holes remain, including in the erstwhile east wall girt for its door frame posts. Half-dovetail joints connect collars to rafters.

Tobacco Barn Number 1 retains a great deal of original fabric. In some spots where fabric is missing, vestiges of the original fabric remain. All of the corner posts, corner braces, principal posts and intermediate posts remain on the 48' south wall. The north wall is mostly intact as well, with only the northeast corner post and the northeast principal post having been replaced, although transverse braces from that wall remain.

Cremona Tobacco Barn Number Two

The Cremona Tobacco Barn Number Two (Figures 5 and 6), dendrochronology dated to 1826, resembles Barn Number 1 in many ways. The structure is oriented with its shorter gabled ends to the east and west. It contains a coaxial plan with openings on every elevation. This barn currently contains sheds on every elevation creating a gable over hipped roof. As originally configured, the barn



Figure 5. Cremona Barn 2, Northwest Elevation; the original gable-roofed section is now surrounded on all sides by later sheds.

featured a single shed on the south long elevation. The central section of the barn measures 48' x 24'.³⁴

Barn Number 2's post spacing on the long walls is less regular than Barn Number 1. The bay configurations of the long elevations are no longer extant, as the door frames has been removed, and the posts have been re-arranged. The original post positions are apparent based upon the sizes of the mortises and extant pegs that remain in their holes. Based upon the locations of ghost mortises, the original bay structure ran 12', 10', a 4' door, 10', and 12'. As in Barn 1, steeply pitched braces descend from the corner posts to the sills. Studs fill the intervals, resulting in members spaced at roughly two feet on center. Joists cross the plates every four feet. As a result, there are sometimes two joists between each post; whereas, Tobacco Barn 1 consistently has a single joist between posts, which are spaced every eight feet. The false plates and the rafter and collar plan and joinery are identical to Barn 1.

³⁴ Ibid.

Timber dimensions mirror Barn 1; sills, corner posts, girts, plates, and collars are hewn. Posts, studs, braces, and joists are hewn and pit-sawn, while rafters and false plates are pit-sawn. Shingle nailers are riven and pit-sawn. Mortise and tenon joinery is used; the joints are pegged on joints between posts and plates, between braces and posts, and between joists and plates.

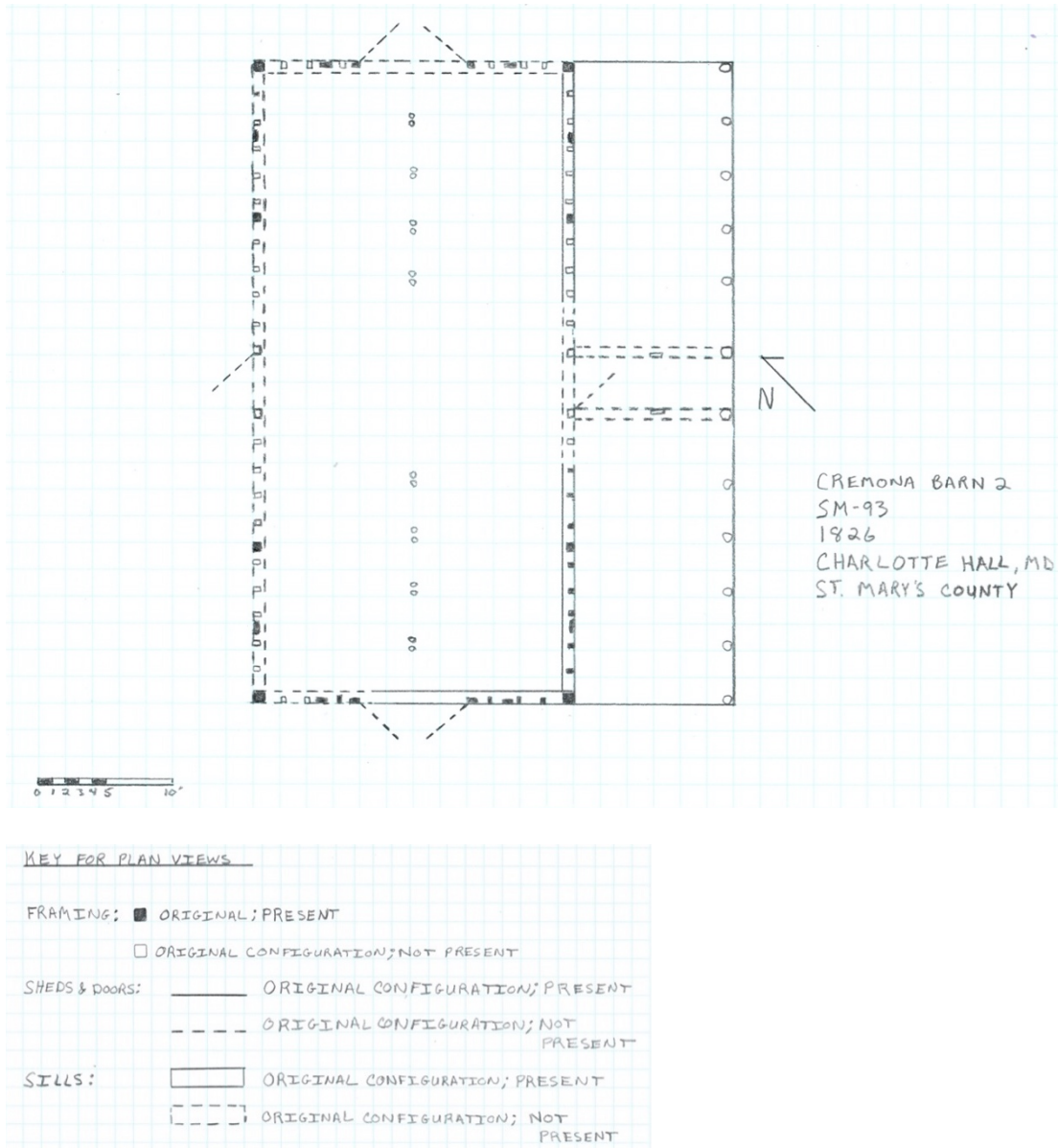


Figure 6. Cremona Barn 2, Plan View.



Figure 7. Cremona Barn 2, Ghost Mortise for Transverse Rail.

Barn Number 2 contains a few curiosities. The two erstwhile door posts on each of the barn's long elevations (north and south) once framed four-foot doors. This is evident from large, pegged ghost mortises in the bottom of the plates. These posts' interior faces contain empty mortises. On Barn 1, mortise holes on the posts' interior faces previously housed transverse down braces. The mortises in Barn 2 are

lower on the posts and are shorter (Figure 7). There is also no evidence of an original transverse sill across the barn despite the 48' length of this barn; however, some of the sills that might have revealed this have been replaced. These lower shallow mortises likely held horizontal rails for additional tobacco hanging capacity and provided added stability between the two long walls in lieu of an intermediate sill within the barn.

On these same posts, higher mortises (Figure 8) for downbraces are cut into the posts' exterior faces, although the ones to the north show no sign of use. It appears that the builder constructed a pair of transverse braces outside of the main barn and inside an original shed on the south long elevation. At the exterior of the

southwest corner post (the only one exposed), a pair of shallow, empty mortise joints are cut; these mortises would have housed rails for the shed framing.

Much of the original fabric remains. Missing elements include the north and south door framing, parts of the east and west door frames, small portions of the west and north sills, and some of the roof framing.



Figure 8. Cremona Barn 2, Tall Mortise for Steep Downbrace into South Shed.

Cremona Barn Summary

Cremona's Thomas-Era barns retain a majority of their character-defining features, including most of the original framing. Some of the features of these barns are to varying degrees at odds with the traditional assertions regarding barn typology from this period.

These features include door arrangements, the presence of original sheds, bracing use relative to horizontal siding, and the use of intermediate transverse sills.

Doorways on tobacco barns from this period are thought to have been typically placed on every wall, including those opening onto sheds, and were opened to facilitate airflow to dry the tobacco. They were usually four-foot wide on the gable ends and 8-12' wide on the long ends. Both barns at

Cremona are the reverse of this standard, with four-foot doors on the long ends and eight-foot doors on the gable ends.³⁵

Sheds are thought to have been virtually non-existent prior to 1820.³⁶ Moreover, Maryland Inventory of Historic Property (MIHP) reports typically reference siding on the core barn that faces a shed as evidence of the shed being an addition. The De La Brooke Barn, which is a pre-Thomas-Era structure on the Cremona property, is an exception to both of these rules and will be discussed further.

Horizontal siding, which was used exclusively prior to 1800 and phased out afterwards in favor of vertical siding, provided additional lateral stability by tying the posts and studs together. It is thought that this reduced the need for bracing. Both Cremona barns, from 1826 and 1832, contained horizontal siding, significant bracing, and suspected original sheds.

Transverse, intermediate sills are thought to have been an adaptation to lengthening barns in order to provide stability.³⁷ At Cremona, both barns are long for this period, at 48'. While one of the barns originally had two transverse sills, the other had none inside, with two suspected outside the barn within the south shed.

Tying all of these features together is the idea of access, airflow, and utility within the barns of this period. Kirk Ranzetta wrote about the Allstan Tobacco Barn in St. Mary's County, a structure that contained a continuous

³⁵ Ridout, "Agricultural Outbuildings," 186; Thursby and Schomig, *National Register Multiple Property Documentation Form: Tobacco Barns of Southern Maryland*, E-46.

³⁶ Ranzetta, "The Myth of Agricultural Complacency," 89.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 87.

sill on three sides of the barn and earthfast posts on the elevation that bordered the barn's shed. This innovation exemplified Ranzetta's statement that "the different types and arrangements of framing systems convey that farmers not only negotiated a wide range of mechanical, functional, and aesthetic options to satisfy individual needs but also responded to changing economies by modifying their buildings."³⁸ Orlando Ridout voiced similar sentiments, noting that "What is not fully evident to this point is the degree of variation [of the use of standard features] that occurred within this tradition."³⁹

Based on the findings of the barns at Cremona, comparative study of other antebellum barns in Southern Maryland is warranted to begin to test the degree of variation of functional barn elements related to access, including the evolution of barn features over time. An initial study was accomplished during Spring 2021.

Comparative Study of Antebellum Tobacco Barns Methods:

The first step of this comparative study was to establish a candidate population of barns. This involved reviewing over 3,500 Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties (MIHP) forms from Charles, Calvert, and St. Mary's counties in Maryland in order to identify tobacco barns that fit the timeframe of 1800 to 1850. This survey identified 114 candidate barns. Of 32 inquiries made, 18 barns were found to be destroyed, and three owners did not wish to

³⁸ Ibid., 83.

³⁹ Ridout, "Agricultural Buildings," 187.

grant access. Ten barns were visited and assessed along with the two Cremona barns. Two of the barns visited are not in the MIHP database.

Barn architectural investigations involved two components -- collecting data to aid in dating the barn and in addressing barn function. This two-pronged approach is meant to view functional differences in construction over time. These dating characteristics include: timber finish, false plate configuration, joinery techniques, original siding type, and plan size of the core barn. Two of the barns studied (along with the three Cremona barns) have been precisely dated using dendrochronology. Functional data include: door location and size, shed location on long or gable ends, and number of intermediate sills. Other data were collected, but these are central to the study to determine the relationship of doors, sheds, and accessibility.

Tobacco Barn Comparative Study Findings:

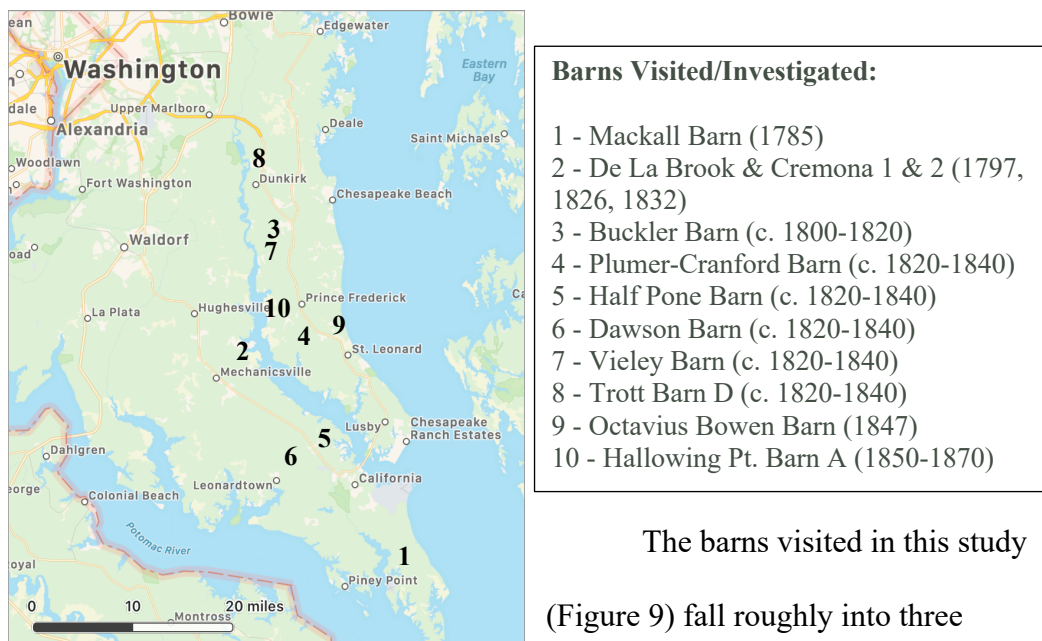


Figure 9. Locations of Barns Visited, Calvert and St. Mary's counties.

The barns visited in this study (Figure 9) fall roughly into three chronological clusters. Three barns were

constructed 1785 and 1820. Six barns, in addition to two of the Cremona barns, are

from approximately 1821 to 1850, with all but one suspected to be from before 1840. One barn is from after 1850. Descriptions of these barns are organized by these groupings. As a general comment, all original framing in every barn except for the last one is hewn and pit-sawn. As such, timber dimensioning will only be mentioned by exception or where it is notable, such as a sign of early material in a shed. This study focuses on the original configuration of these barns; additions are not discussed unless it was early or might have been original.

Early Period (1780-1820)

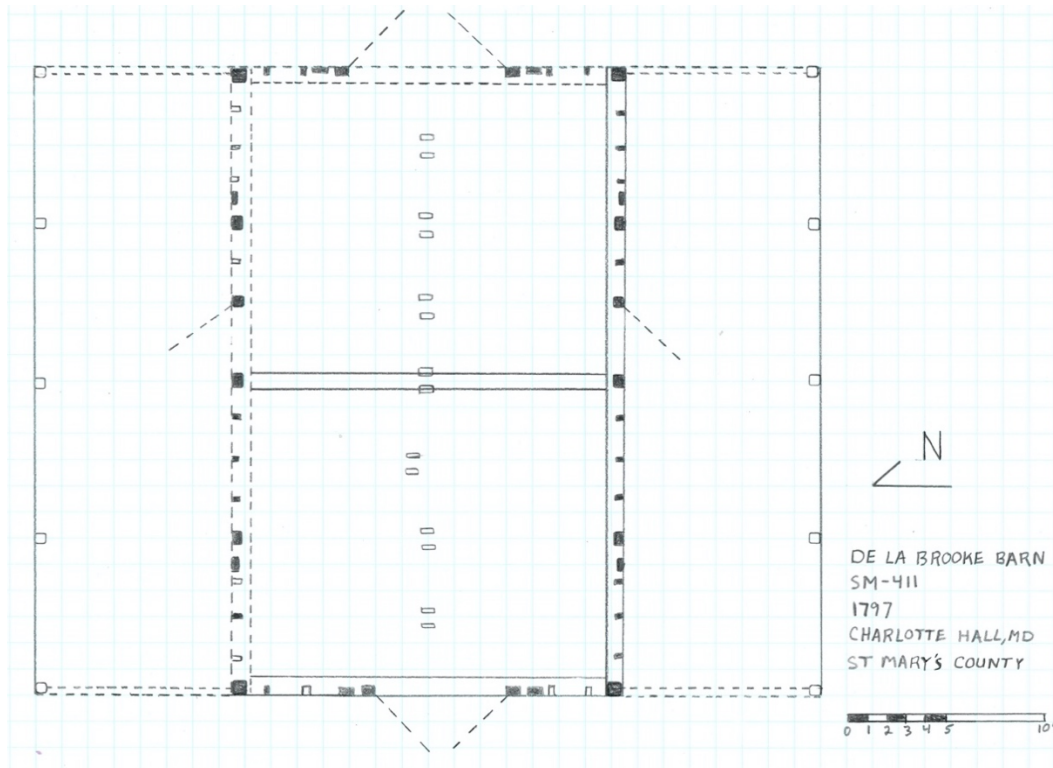
The De La Brooke Barn (SM-411) stands on what was once an adjacent property to Cremona and is now part of the Cremona property. The barn (Figures 10 and 11) is dendrochronology dated to 1797, with a footprint measuring 32' x 20' and a short span of 13'4" to the top of the plate. The barn is organized into four, eight-foot bays and four-foot rooms. Breaking with the traditional expectation, this barn contains double doors on the gable ends and contained single, off-center doors on the long elevations. These single doors were next to a single transverse intermediate sill



Figure 10. De La Brooke Barn, Southeast Elevation.

that evenly bisects the barn. They opened onto 10' wide sheds on each long wall. The dendrochronology testing demonstrated that both sheds were original. The early date of this barn's construction was well before 1820, which is the

traditionally understood point when new barns started to have original sheds. The barn originally contained horizontal siding on every elevation, including those with original sheds.⁴⁰



KEY FOR PLAN VIEWS	
FRAMING:	■ ORIGINAL; PRESENT
	□ ORIGINAL CONFIGURATION; NOT PRESENT
SHEDS & DOORS:	— ORIGINAL CONFIGURATION; PRESENT
	- - - ORIGINAL CONFIGURATION; NOT PRESENT
SILLS:	▭ ORIGINAL CONFIGURATION; PRESENT
	- - - ORIGINAL CONFIGURATION; NOT PRESENT

Figure 11. De La Brooke Barn, Plan View.

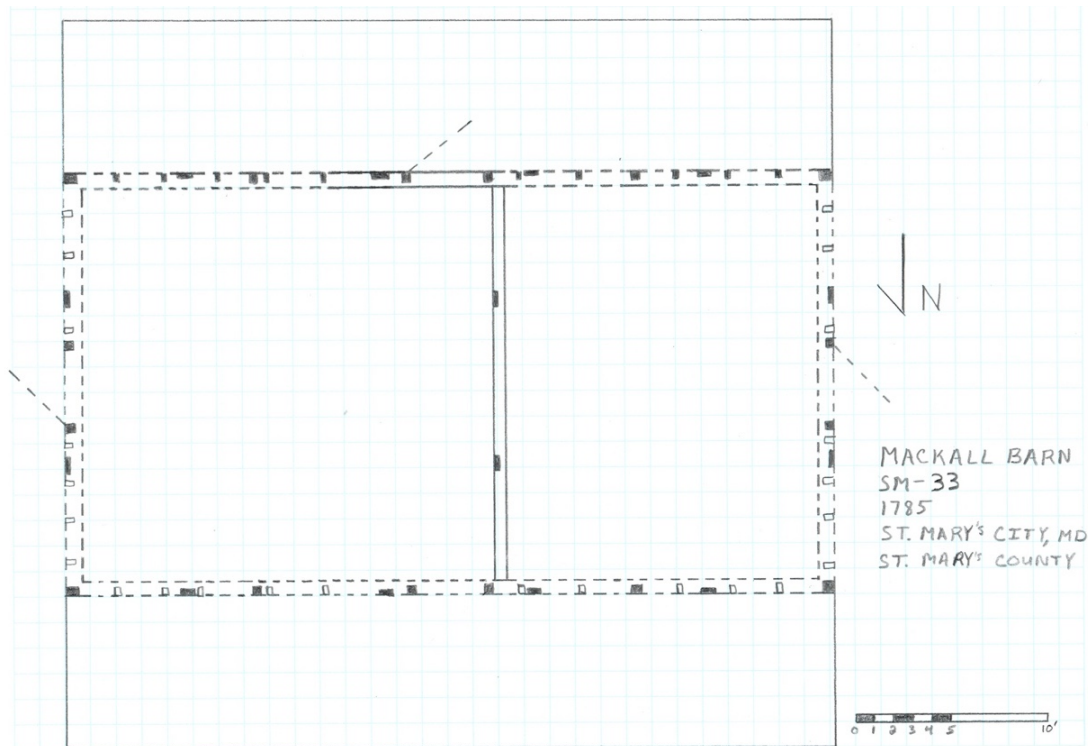
⁴⁰ Miles, *De La Brook Tobacco Barn*; Dennis Pogue, “De La Brooke Tobacco Barn, Addendum,” Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties Architectural Survey File, SM-411 (Crownsville, MD: Maryland Historic Trust, Last Updated: 2015).

It is likely that both sheds were originally post-in-ground, open air workspaces. At some point, siding was added to the sheds and removed from the inner walls facing the sheds. The double doors on the gable ends feature double pintles, a security feature that would prevent potential intruders from lifting the doors off their hinges. This feature is not present on the single doors where the sheds were sided at an early date. This timing is apparent because the brackets within the shed for hanging tobacco are of an early construction.⁴¹

The **Mackall Barn** (Figure 10), which was on the Brome-Howard Property (SM-33) in St. Mary's City, is the oldest barn reviewed, dendrochronology dated to 1785.⁴² The structure's use has fluctuated between tobacco barn and granary, and mortises for floor joists remain in the sills. The barn measures 40' x 22' and measures 16' from the floor to the plate. One intermediate sill crosses the barn just east of the doorway. It is misaligned with the posts between which it stretches. As a result, the single downbrace descending from north door's western post is crooked. This barn was covered with horizontal riven clapboard siding and single four-foot doors pierced the center of every elevation. Sheds existed on the north and south long elevations. The north shed, like the main barn was at one time used for grain storage. This is apparent from the empty lap joints in the sill for floor joists. The doorway between the barn and this northern shed contains a half lap for a rail rather than an actual door. The missing door is consistent with the shed having been sided to support grain

⁴¹ Pogue, "De La Brooke Tobacco Barn, Addendum."

⁴² Peter E. Kurtze and Gabrielle Lanier, "SM-33H, Brome Barn or Large Granary," Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties Architectural Survey File, CT-1090 (Crownsville, MD: Maryland Historic Trust, Last Updated: 2003).



KEY FOR PLAN VIEWS

FRAMING:	■	ORIGINAL; PRESENT
	□	ORIGINAL CONFIGURATION; NOT PRESENT
SHEDS & DOORS:	—	ORIGINAL CONFIGURATION; PRESENT
	- - -	ORIGINAL CONFIGURATION; NOT PRESENT
SILLS:	—	ORIGINAL CONFIGURATION; PRESENT
	- - -	ORIGINAL CONFIGURATION; NOT PRESENT

Figure 12. Mackall Barn, Plan View.

storage. The doorway into the south shed retains a pintle and a used pintle hole for a door, and it is possible that this shed was open. This barn's doors also break with tradition, using single doors on the long elevations rather than double doors. As in the De La Brooke Barn, the long elevation doors open into sheds.

The **Buckler Barn** (CT-1090) in Huntingtown (Figures 13 and 14) is small with an uncommon footprint at 18' x 28'. The barn is relatively short, as well, at only 15' 6" to the top of the plate; it is taller than De La Brooke, yet shorter than the 17'

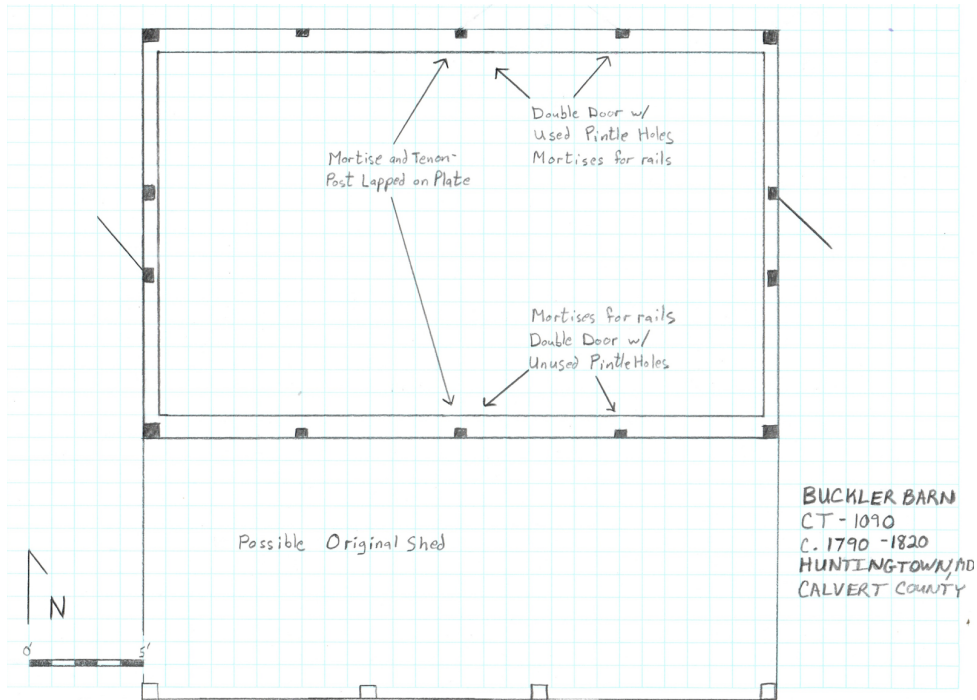


Figure 13. Buckler Barn, Southeast Elevation

walls actually connect with the principal posts, which rest on massive sills, measuring 12 ¼” wide. It contains no transverse intermediate sills. A shed remains on the southern long wall. Cut nails once attached vertical siding onto the wall facing the shed. While the evaluators did not find any nails suitable for narrowing the date range, the MIHP form for this barn referred to early machine cut nails. Shed posts and rafters are hewn and adzed and align with the posts on the core barn, suggesting the possibility of the shed being original.⁴³

height at Cremona.
The Buckler barn is
suspected to be the
earliest structure in
this study to have
been covered with
vertical siding
originally. Its down
braces on the long

⁴³ Tora Williamsen-Berry, “Buckler Tobacco Barn,” Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties Architectural Survey File, CT-1090 (Crownsville, MD: Maryland Historic Trust, Last Updated: 2003).



KEY FOR PLAN VIEWS	
FRAMING:	■ ORIGINAL; PRESENT
	□ ORIGINAL CONFIGURATION; NOT PRESENT
SHEDS & DOORS:	— ORIGINAL CONFIGURATION; PRESENT
	- - - ORIGINAL CONFIGURATION; NOT PRESENT
SILLS:	▭ ORIGINAL CONFIGURATION; PRESENT
	[- - -] ORIGINAL CONFIGURATION; NOT PRESENT

Figure 14. Buckler Barn, Plan View.

Centered single doors open on the gable ends, while off-center double doorframes open on the long walls. The double door frame on the north wall, away from the shed, contains used pintle holes, suggesting that a door once existed there. This doorframe also includes mortises for a rail to hang vertical siding. These mortises retain the tenon of a rail (Figure 15). Therefore, this wall was also sided at one time. The double door frame facing the south shed contains pintle holes that appear to have been unused. The apparently unused pintle holes, combined with the presence of siding on the wall facing the shed seem to quash the idea of this shed



Figure 15. Buckler Barn, Used Pintle on North Wall Door Post and Mortise for Siding with Remnant of Tenon.



Figure 16. Buckler Barn South Doorframe from Shed Showing Riven Siding and ghost mortises on Door Post for Nailers Across the Doorway.

being original. However, two possibilities exist for this shed. One is that the shed was original and was enclosed. It is traditionally thought that builders would not have sided both the barn and the shed, because of the adverse impact that doing so would have on airflow within the barn. Another possibility is based upon these door posts also having ghost mortises (Figure 16) that suggest the door frame was sided at some point. It may be that the shed was an original, open shed with no access to the barn, with the door being a later addition. It seems most likely that neither long wall contained a door originally, leaving this early barn with only the single doors on the gable ends. The long walls were both sided with an open, likely

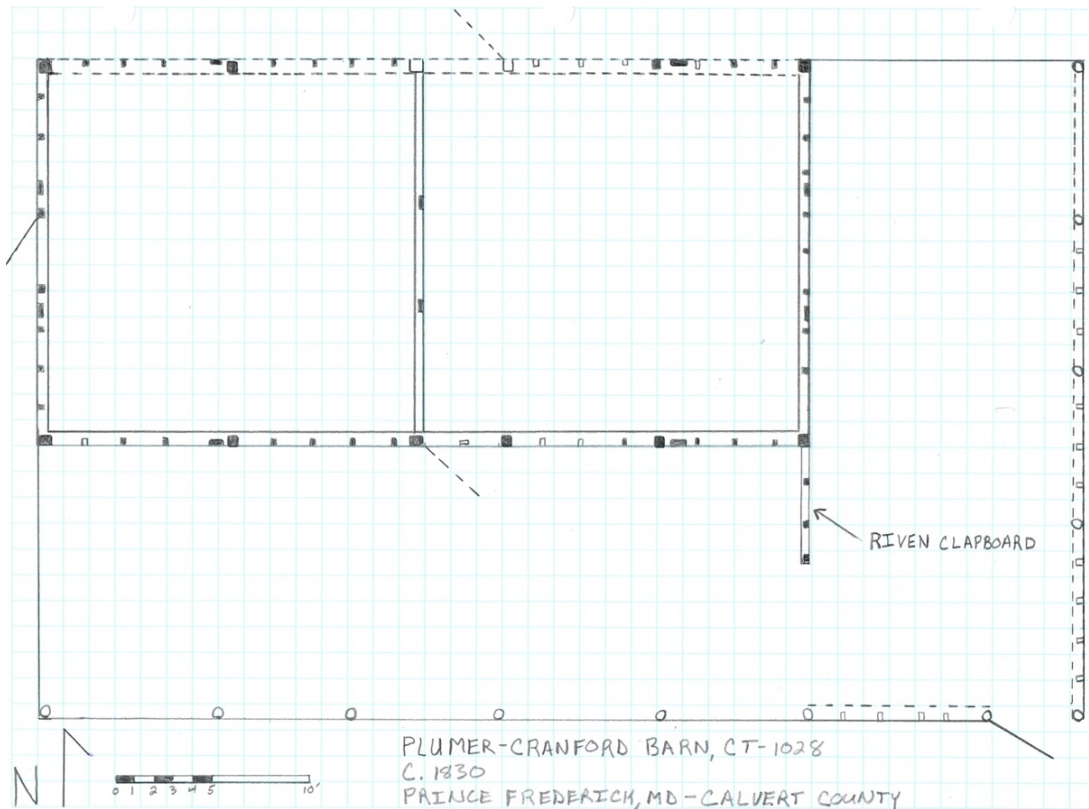
original, shed on the south wall. At some point siding was removed from the north door frame and a double door was added, but later removed with additions to the barn. The siding on the south door frame was also removed to create a doorway at a later date when the shed took on siding.

The small footprint and relatively low height below the eaves point to an early construction date, while the early cut nails and the vertical siding suggest a slightly later date. Its construction date is likely 1820 or very near to it.

Middle Period (1820-1850)

The first two barns of this period, the Plumer-Cranford (CT-1028) and Half Pone (SM-255) barns are likely the two earliest barns of this study's middle period, and most likely to have been built within a few years of the two later Cremona barns. They have both also been moved in recent years and the cardinal directions for each are based on their current orientation.

The **Plumer-Cranford Barn**, at the Biscoe Gray Heritage Farm near Port Republic (Figure 17), measures 40' x 20' in plan and 16' 3 ½" from the top of the plate to the ground. One transverse intermediate sill evenly bisects the barn. A pair of off-center single doorways pierced each long wall east of the intermediate sill leaving



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	- - -	ORIGINAL CONFIGURATION; NOT PRESENT
SILLS:	▭	ORIGINAL CONFIGURATION; PRESENT
	▭ - - - ▭	ORIGINAL CONFIGURATION; NOT PRESENT

Figure 17. Plumer-Cranford Barn, Plan View.

a 10', 10', 4', 8', 8', bay system laid out on a four-foot room plan. Most of the original pit-sawn studs, for hanging horizontal siding, remain. Original sheds stood off the south and east ends of the barn. Both sheds are post-in-ground constructions,

the original plate from the east shed is extant and contains ghost mortises that would have been used for horizontal siding.

Access between these sheds appears to have been limited. A riven clapboard sided partition (Figure 18) exists between these sheds, which is currently partial. No door framing exists, and it is presumed that this was once a complete wall. The eastern shed had no access to the core barn itself, which was sided on the adjacent wall. Prior investigators suspected this shed was used for stabling cattle or horses.⁴⁴



Figure 18. Plumer-Cranford Barn, View of Riven Clapboard Siding on Partition Between East and South Sheds.

clapboard walling was replaced with the present vertical siding nailed to horizontal rails.” At the time of the MIHP survey, the siding was vertical and no evidence of prior horizontal siding on that shed was mentioned, such as a plate with mortises that

According to the MIHP form, the south shed also had horizontal siding and no exterior door, so access to the south shed was only possible from inside the barn. However, the form explained, describing the exterior shed door that existed at the time of the survey, “framing evidence indicates that this door was cut in when the original stud and

⁴⁴ Tora Williamsen-Berry, “Plumer-Cranford Tobacco Barn A,” Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties Architectural Survey File, CT-1028 (Crownsville, MD: Maryland Historic Trust, Last Updated: 2012).

has since been discarded. It seems that horizontal siding might have been presumed because of the evidence on the other shed. Moreover, placing a shed on the gable end that is completely shut off from the barn and a sided shed on a long wall that has no exterior door would be detrimental to positive airflow within the barn. It is still possible that the south shed was enclosed with no exterior door. However, it is at least as likely that this shed contained no siding, which would explain the lack of shed door framing that the prior survey had noted and would facilitate better airflow within the barn.⁴⁵

The core barn contains three single doorways, one on each long wall, and one on the gable end opposite the stabling shed. This doorway configuration diverges from the traditional scheme with its narrow entryways on the long walls. The riven horizontal siding and mature machine cut nails suggest a construction date early in the period after 1820. The evidence of siding on both the core barn adjacent to the sheds and on the sheds themselves as well as the lack of doorways on the south shed exterior and between the barn and the east shed is all counter to the need to promote and control airflow through the barn, especially on a barn with only four-foot-wide single doorways on the north and west elevations.

The **Half Pone** barn (Figure 19) is in the vicinity of the community of Hollywood. This slightly squarer 40' x 30' barn is unique in the survey sample in several ways. Three transverse intermediate sills stretch across the barn at 12', 8', and 12' from east to west. The original post spacing from east to west was 12', 4', 4', 8', 4', 8'. Evidence of a pintle for a door exists on the center post. It appears that the

⁴⁵ Ibid.

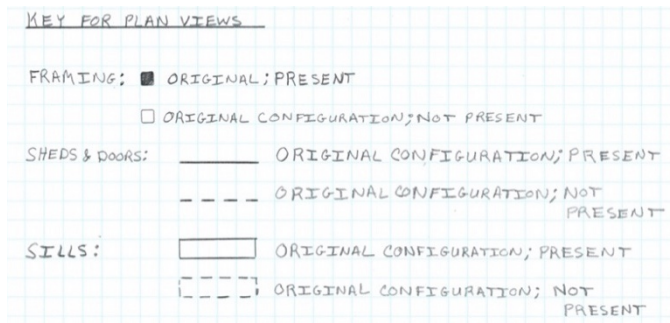
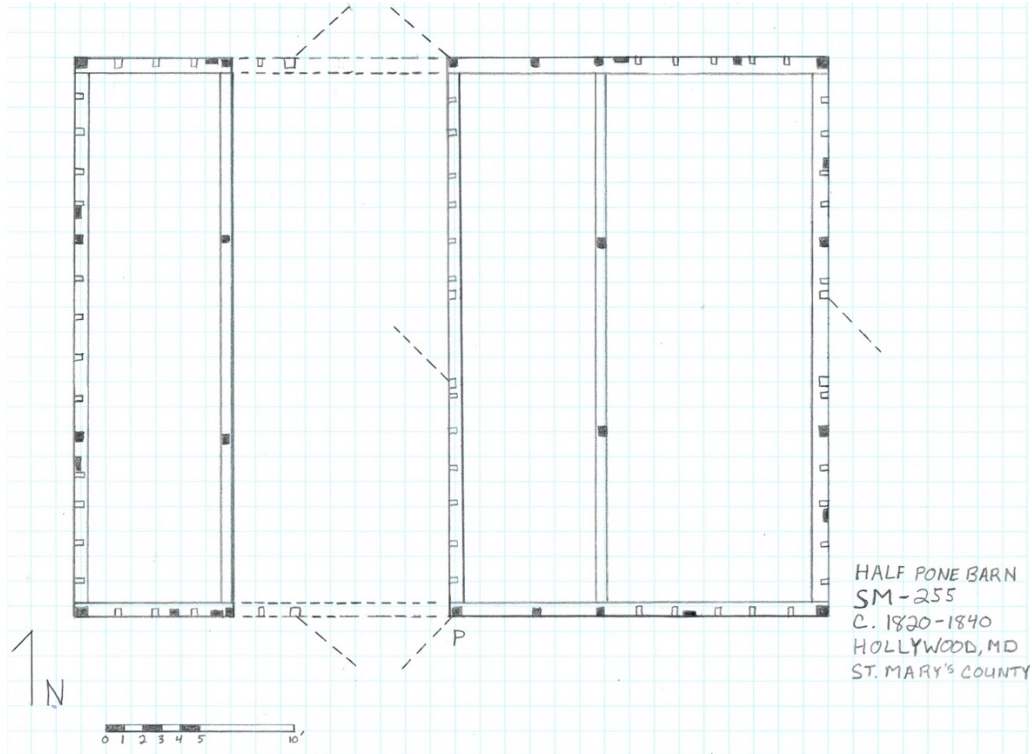


Figure 19. Half Pone Barn, Plan View.

original openings on the long elevations were off-center, 8' double doors to the west of the center post, in the space where a 12' double door now opens over an interrupted sill. It seems possible that, instead of the double doors originally, single doors opened to the east of the center post because of the curious four-foot post spacing. However, evidence from the original survey suggested that a wall rose from the center intermediate sill dividing grain storage within the eastern half of the barn from tobacco storage to the west. The double doors would have been within the

tobacco-storing western half, which would have facilitated controlling airflow to the tobacco. The prior survey also found single doorways on the east and west walls of the grain storage portion of the barn. The grain storage function may explain the curiously high number of intermediate sills as a support for flooring on the eastern half of the barn, although one of the sills is on the western half.⁴⁶

The bracing is irregular as well. The corner brace on the northeast corner, extending to the west, does not attach to the northeast corner post at all. It descends from the first post to the east of the corner post and appears to provide questionable structural support. It is typical for braces to descend from posts on the long elevations to the intermediate sills. That is not the case in this barn, which contains a pair of posts that ascend from each of the two outboard intermediate sills. The purpose for



Figure 20. Half Pone Barn, Double Joist Framing Over Eastern Intermediate Sill Posts.

these posts also appears to be novel. Each pair of posts supports a joist-like beam that spans the 30' width of the barn and connects to principal posts with pegged mortise and tenon joints below the plates. Across these joist-like beams lie two beams that run along the barn's longitudinal axis the 24' distance between the posts rising from the intermediate sills. The beams' two ends terminate over these posts. These beams support tier poles for hanging

⁴⁶ Elizabeth Hughes, "Tobacco Barn on Half Pone Farm," Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties Architectural Survey File, SM-255 (Crownsville, MD: Maryland Historic Trust, Last Updated: 2004).

tobacco. Another pair of transverse beams stretch across the barn just above and to the side of the joist-like beams (Figure 20). These beams, which are lapped under the plates, appear to be a later retrofit, although they are hewn. One possible explanation is that these latter posts were added when the horizontal siding was removed. It seems possible that the corner braces may have been added at the same time. One final curiosity is at the plate level. Neither joist nor false plate exist on this barn, which is quite irregular on a barn from this period.

The Half Pone barn is quite interesting and worth further study. The MIHP form lists this barn as c. 1850, but it seems likely that its construction date was earlier, given the horizontal siding. As its sheds do not appear to have been original, the earlier construction date and lack of original sheds would support the traditional narrative about original sheds occurring almost exclusively after 1820. This barn is currently presumed to have been constructed between 1820 and 1840.

The **Vieley Barn** (Figures 21 and 22) in Huntingtown appears to have no MIHP record. Presumably, it has not been investigated or recorded before. As such, this description includes a few additional details without being exhaustive. This barn measures 40' x 24' and is oriented on an east-west axis, and measures 15' 3" to the top of the plate. Originally, continuous sills rested on stone piers with posts forming five eight-foot bays. A single intermediate sill with braces connects the north and



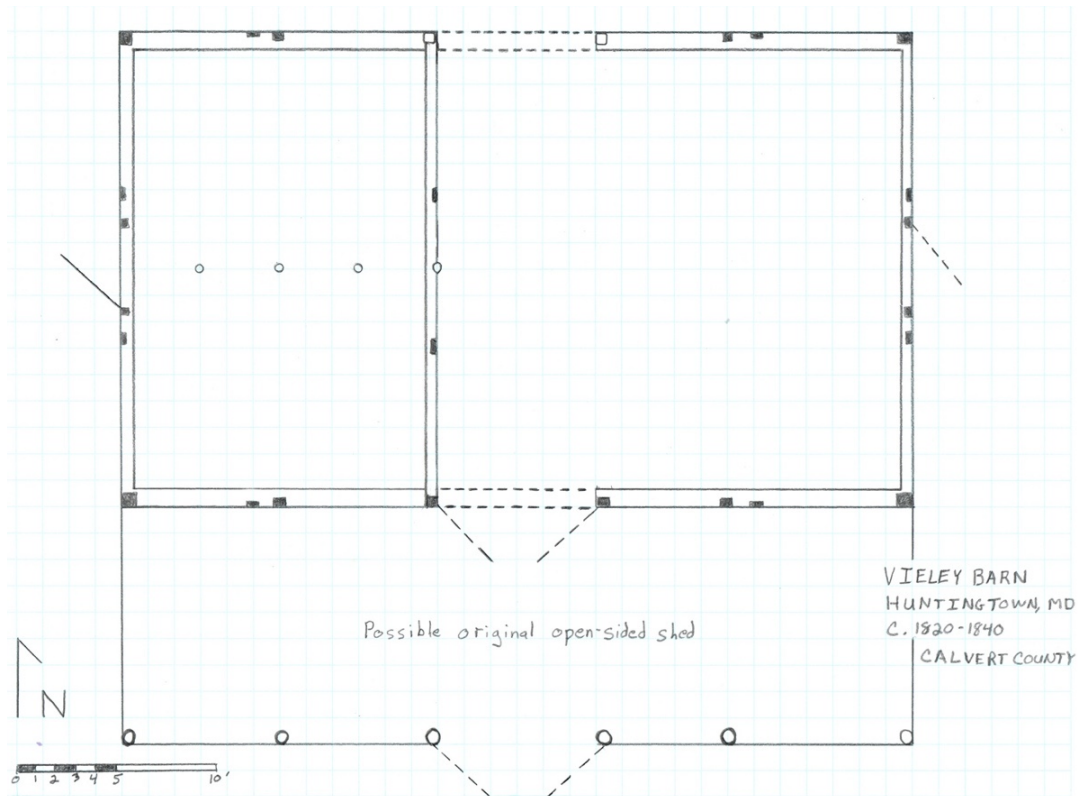
Figure 21. Vieley Barn, West Elevation.

south walls on the west side of the center bay. The sills on the north and south walls were cut under the centered eight-foot double doors. The opening on the north wall has been widened and a segment of the sill

was removed. Centered, four-foot single doors pierce the gable ends. The doorframe on the south wall retains pintles. Pit-sawn horizontal rails for hanging vertical siding is extant throughout. Vertical sash sawn siding, attached with face-pinched machine cut nails, partially covers the south wall.

A shed covers the southern elevation. The plate, rafters and joists in the shed are all hewn or pit-sawn. Post mortises in the plate are spaced at eight feet, matching the barn framing. If not original, the shed is very early and may have been open, without siding, given the siding on the barn and the evidence for doors on the south barn wall. The shed has vertical siding currently.

The barn contains four tiers below the plate and three above. Vertical, round tier poles spaced at four feet run below the peak of the roof, which consists of common rafters spaced at two feet, resting on a flat false plate. All of the framing is hewn and pit-sawn with pegged mortise and tenon joints.



KEY FOR PLAN VIEWS	
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	▭ ORIGINAL CONFIGURATION; NOT PRESENT

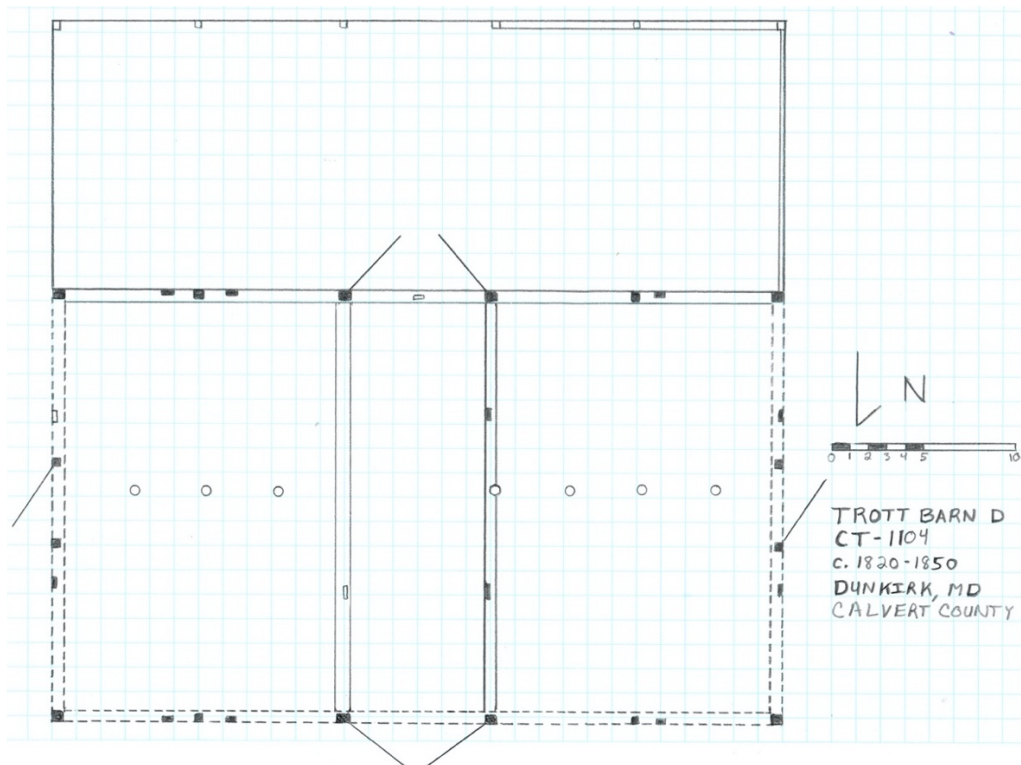
Figure 22. Vieley Barn, Plan View.

The evidence within the barn points to a construction date between 1820 and 1840. A late-19th- or 20th-century addition expanded the main barn to the east with a matching extension of the shed.



Figure 23. Trott Barn D, Southeast Elevation.

Trott Barn D (CT-1104) in Dunkirk (Figures 23 and 24) is almost a match of the Vieley Barn. The structure measures 40' x 24' and is oriented on an east-west axis. The bay, door, and shed configuration matches the Vieley Barn. There are



KEY FOR PLAN VIEWS

FRAMING:	■	ORIGINAL; PRESENT
	□	ORIGINAL CONFIGURATION; NOT PRESENT
SHEDS & DOORS:	—	ORIGINAL CONFIGURATION; PRESENT
	- - -	ORIGINAL CONFIGURATION; NOT PRESENT
SILLS:	▬	ORIGINAL CONFIGURATION; PRESENT
	- - -	ORIGINAL CONFIGURATION; NOT PRESENT

Figure 24. Trott Barn D, Plan View

three appreciable differences in the main barn. One difference is that Trott Barn D measures 16' 3 ½" to the top of the plate, one foot taller than Vieley. The Vieley Barn also has down braces attaching to the corner posts only, while down braces on Trott Barn D descend from both the corner posts and the principal posts. One brace in that pattern was never installed. The final difference is that the Vieley Barn contains one intermediate sill, while the Trott Barn D contains two intermediate sills that flank the center bay (Figure 25). The Trott Barn D intermediate sill to the west of the center bay stands on its side, 10 inches tall by 5 ½ inches wide. It attaches to two down braces.



Figure 25. Trott Barn D, Center Aisle facing South and Showing both Intermediate Sills and Double Doors to Shed.

The second intermediate sill, east of the center bay, appears hewn on one surface. The saw marks on the other surfaces are questionable but appear to be pit-sawn. Further, the single circular sawn down brace that attaches to it is toe-

nailed into the sill. If this sill, which attaches to the southern sill with a mortise and tenon joint and what appears to be a pair of small wooden pegs, is original, it had no original down brace. Finally, its orientation does not match the other sill; this sill is short and wide rather than tall and narrow. That detail will be discussed further later.

Inside the Trott Barn D shed, the similarities continue. While replacements exist, joists and rafters are hewn and pit-sawn. Posts align with the barn's framing,

suggesting that the shed may have been original. The shed plate that is west of the barn doors is hewn. The double doors between the shed and the south wall of the barn hang from wrought strap hinges attached with leather washers and what appear to be machine cut nails. Vertical siding on the wall between the barn and shed is attached with mature machine cut nails. A family member of the barn owner stated that a photo of the south elevation of the shed from the 1890s depicts an open shed used for sheltering sheep. This barn is suspected to have been constructed between 1820 and 1840.

The **Dawson Barn** in Hollywood (Figure 26) is also not listed in state records. This unusual barn measures 40' x 20' and 16' 2" to the top of the plate and is oriented northeast to southwest. It has four tiers below the plate and two above. This barn is a rare surviving example of post-in-ground construction rather than braced framing resting on continuous sills. The barn is arranged in five eight-foot bays, and the posts are cedar logs still in the round. Pit-sawn braces descend from corner posts and connect to the side of the first post. A single intermediate sill (Figure 27), which is now interrupted, crosses the barn on the northeast side of the center bay. Two down braces connect to this sill. Centered single doors pierce each gable end and a slightly off-center single doorway connects the southeast long elevation with a shed. Pintles remain on this doorway to the shed. The southeast wall contains sash sawn vertical siding attached with mature machine cut nails. Some of the shed joists are pit-sawn.

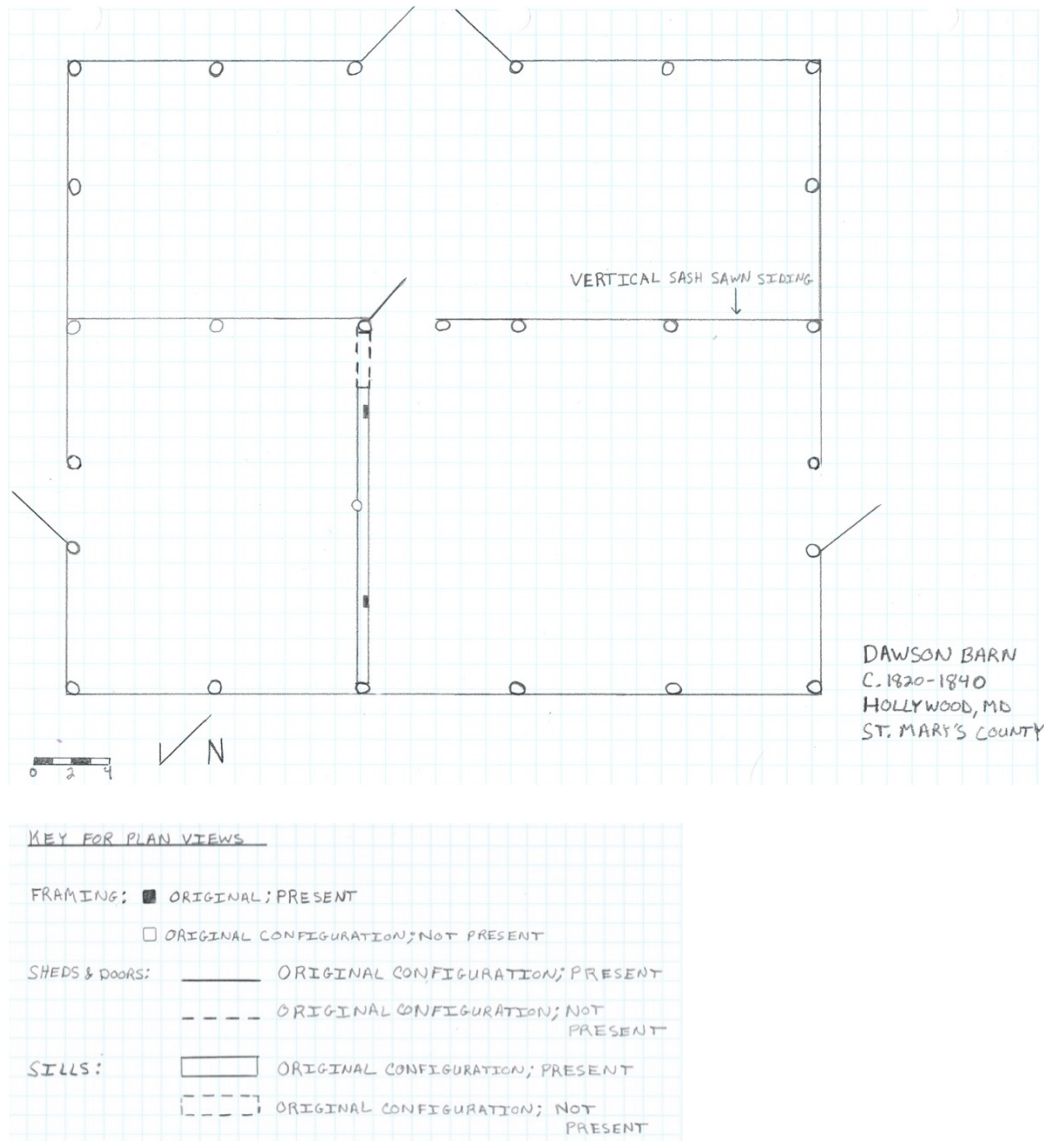


Figure 26. Dawson Barn, Plan View

Above the plate, the common rafters are spaced at two-foot intervals and rest on a flat false plate. A single row of round tier poles descends below the roof peak at four-foot intervals. This barn, also suspected to have been raised between 1820 and 1840, may be a good example of a builder trying to provide easier access to the barn by using post-in-ground rather than a continuous sill, reminiscent of the Allstan



Figure 27. Dawson Barn, Intermediate Sill with Earthfast Posts.

Barn's use of post-in ground on a single elevation. This post-in-ground construction is a notably rare feature in this barn.

The Octavius Bowen Tobacco Barn

(CT-1345) in Port Republic is believed to have been built in 1847. Measuring 32' x 24,' a 4 ½-foot center door on the long walls is flanked by 14' bays. Single doors are found on one gable end and the two long elevations.

Here again, single doors on the long walls

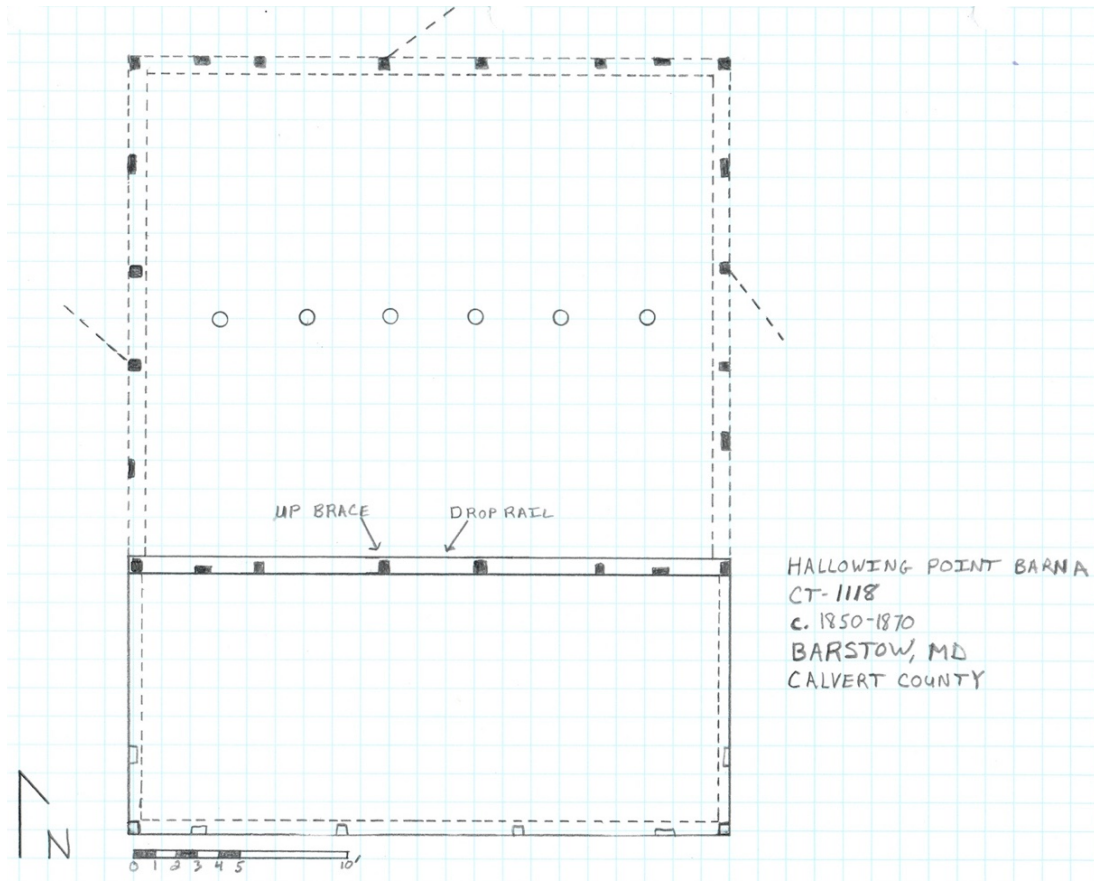
runs counter to the traditional narrative. The barn contains no intermediate sills.

Sheds border three sides of the barn. None are suspected to be original.⁴⁷

Late Period (1850-)

The **Hallowing Point Barn A** (CT-1118) in Barstow (Figure 28) is the only post-1850 barn visited in order to frame the study period. This small barn, suspected to have been raised between 1850 and 1870, is the closest to square of any of the

⁴⁷ Anna Blinn Cole, "Octavius Bowen Tobacco Barn," Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties Architectural Survey File, CT-1345 (Crownsville, MD: Maryland Historic Trust, Last Updated: 2011).



KEY FOR PLAN VIEWS	
FRAMING:	■ ORIGINAL; PRESENT
	□ ORIGINAL CONFIGURATION; NOT PRESENT
SHEDS & DOORS:	— ORIGINAL CONFIGURATION; PRESENT
	- - - ORIGINAL CONFIGURATION; NOT PRESENT
SILLS:	▭ ORIGINAL CONFIGURATION; PRESENT
	[- - -] ORIGINAL CONFIGURATION; NOT PRESENT

Figure 28. Hallowing Point Barn A, Plan View.

structures, measuring 28' x 24,' which would suggest an early construction date. Prior evaluators have suggested that the barn was constructed between 1830 and 1850 and that some of the machine cut nails found may have been early. The structure stands 15'2" to the top of the plate, and the bay system consists of four six-foot bays with a single four-foot, centered door frame. Most of the sills are replaced, but the sill on the

south wall is hewn. Braces lapped into this sill are nailed into place. Nailing rails for vertical siding is circular sawn, pointing to a post-1850 construction date.⁴⁸

The barn contains no intermediate sills, but it does contain a brace (Figure 29) that is half-dovetailed and nailed into the post on the western side of the southern wall's central bay and rises to the joist above. Single doors existed on each gable end and on the north long elevation. The doors on the gable ends are now missing and



Figure 29. Hallowing Pt. Barn A, Upbrace Connecting to Post.

covered with siding. The MIHP form recorded the presence of both doors, and the western door is visible in the file photo. On the south wall, a single open doorway leads into a 12' shed. The shed framing aligns with the barn posts and there is no evidence for a door. These points make it likely that a shed was original. There is no evidence of nails on the south barn wall, although not determinative either way. Much of the shed material is circular sawn. Given the

presence of other circular sawn members, this may be the original material or a replacement shed. The timber dimensioning and joinery of this barn suggests a construction date between 1850 and 1870, although it's dimensions would suggest a much earlier date, making it somewhat of an outlier.⁴⁹

⁴⁸ Tora Williamsen-Berry, "Hallowing Point Tobacco Barn A," Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties Architectural Survey File, CT-1118 (Crownsville, MD: Maryland Historic Trust, Last Updated: 2003).

⁴⁹ Ibid.

Barn Comparative Study Results:

While no definitive conclusions can be made regarding construction dates without dendrochronology, an attempt was made at approximate serialization. This is represented in the order that the barns are listed in the tables below. The first of which details barn dimensions, and a series of ratios. These include length over width, wherein the closer the number is to one, the nearer the barn is to square. Also listed are length over total quantity of transverse sills and the length over width ratio over the total number of transverse sills. Total number of transverse sills was used rather than simply the number of intermediate sills in order to avoid an infinite number in cases where zero transverse sills exist. The Dawson Barn is an outlier, since it has no sills on the outer walls.

Table 1. Intermediate Sills and Barn Dimensions.

Barns Visited	Mackall	De La Brooke	Buckler	Cremona 2	Plumer-Cranford	Half Pone	Cremona 1	Dawson	Vieley	Trott Barn D	Octavius Bowen	Hallowing Pt. Barn A	1820-1840 Averages
Date Constructed	1785	1797	C. 1800-1820	1826	C. 1820-1840	C. 1820-1840	1832	C. 1820-1840	C. 1820-1840	C. 1820-1840	1847	C. 1850-1870	
Core Barn Dimensions	40x22	32x20	28x18	48x24	40x20	40x30	48x24	40x20	40x24	40x24	32x24	28x24	
Int. Sills	1	1	0	2	1	3	2	N/A	1	2	0	0	1.6
Length/Width	1.82	1.6	1.56	2	2	1.5	2	2	1.67	1.67	1.33	1.17	1.8
Length/Total Transverse Sills	13.3	10.67	14	12	13.3	8	12	N/A	13.3	10	16	14	12.1
(Length/Width)/Total Transverse Sills	0.61	0.53	0.78	0.5	0.66	0.3	0.5	N/A	0.56	0.42	0.67	0.56	0.5

The trends in the data are mixed in their efficacy, and a greater sampling may provide a better picture. Yet, it is interesting to note the average values for the three ratios amongst only the barns dating from 1820 to 1850. The two Cremona barns are curiously close to the average. Intermediate sills appear to be the rule rather than the exception, and in the case of Half Pone, it is a heavily utilized feature. The three cases where it is not used are the three shortest barns in the study. Therefore, the traditional interpretation stands up here.

Table 2 denotes additional features examined in this study. Regarding doors, the traditional expectation of single doors on the gable ends is represented by the majority of cases, although three barns contain gable-end double doors. They are all on the Cremona property, making these barns exceptional. On the long elevations, the Cremona barns represent the majority of this sample, though they break from the traditional interpretation. Three-quarters of the barns have single rather than double doors, suggesting that the barns were less accessible than typically imagined and possibly that the need for double doors for ventilation is exaggerated.

Table 2. Barn Use Features.

Barns Visited	Mackall	De La Brooke	Buckler	Cremona 2	Plumer-Cranford	Half Pone	Cremona 1	Dawson	Vieley	Trott Barn D	Octavius Bowen	Hallowing Pt. Barn A
Date Constructed	1785	1797	C. 1800-1820	1826	C. 1820-1840	C. 1820-1840	1832	C. 1820-1840	C. 1820-1840	C. 1820-1840	1847	C. 1850-1870
Original Siding	Horizontal	Horizontal	Vertical	Horizontal	Horizontal	Horizontal	Horizontal	Vertical	Vertical	Vertical	Vertical	Vertical
Core Barn Dimensions	40x22	32x20	28x18	48x24	40x20	40x30	48x24	40x20	40x24	40x24	32x24	28x24
Door Type on Gable Ends	Single, centered	Double, Centered	Single, centered	Double, centered	Single, centered	Single, centered	Double, centered	Single, centered	Single, centered	Single, centered	Single, centered	Single, centered
Door Type on Longitudinal Elevations	Single, centered	Single, Off-center	N/A	Single, centered	Single, centered	Double, Off-center	Single, centered	Single, centered	Double, centered	Double, centered	Single, centered	Single, centered
Sheds on Gable or Long ends	Long	Long	Long	Long	Both	N/A	Long	Long	Long	Long	N/A	Long

Shed configurations provide a strong trend toward their use only on the longitudinal elevation. Three-quarters of the barns contained sheds thought to be original on the long elevation. One additional barn, or 8% of the sample, contained sheds on both elevations, and 16% contained no original sheds. It is no great discovery that 84% of the barns are thought to have had original sheds, since three-quarters of the barns in the study presumably were raised after 1820. However, 100% of those raised before that date are assessed to have had an original shed. Finally, and possibly of greater significance, two-thirds of the barns may have had open sheds. One of which, raised before 1800, is known to have had an original open shed along a covered barn wall. The traditional idea that siding on a barn wall suggests that there was no original shed should be reconsidered.

Unlooked for Findings:

Examples of highly unusual joinery were discovered in four Calvert county barns. These joints occurred where gable and long wall sills connect with corner posts, and sometimes where sills, intermediate sills, and posts connect. In some of the barns, a similar joint condition was found at the intersection of the plate/principal post or plate/corner post/girt. Typically, the connections in these locations are standard mortise and tenon or lapped joints, both of which would be pegged. In this case, the shorter sill -- either the gable or intermediate -- was laid on its side so that it is tall and narrow. The shorter sill joins the side wall sill, which is the same dimensions but oriented so that it is short and wide. The short sill is lapped over the long sill with a tenon cut



Figure 30. Buckler Barn, Southwest Corner Post, showing the mortise in the side wall sill, with a peg through the end sill, and the lapped corner post.



Figure 31. Trott Barn D, Southwest Door Post, showing intermediate sill lapped and tenoned into side wall sill.

below the lapped portion of the sill.

The tenon is inserted into a mortise in the long sill. The whole joint is pegged through the top of the lapped portion of the short sill. The post is lapped around the short sill and tenoned into the top of the long sill, which is pegged in place through the back of the joint. The Buckler,

Plumer-Cranford, and Trott Barn D barns (Figures 30-32) all contain this

clenched joint. The Vieley Barn has the same joint, but is not double

pegged, as it is missing the peg through the top of the sills. The

Vieley Barn also has a unique variation of this joint at the plate

level, where the tenon and the lapped portion of the post extend nearly a

foot beyond the top of the plate,

resembling rabbit ears (Figure 33).

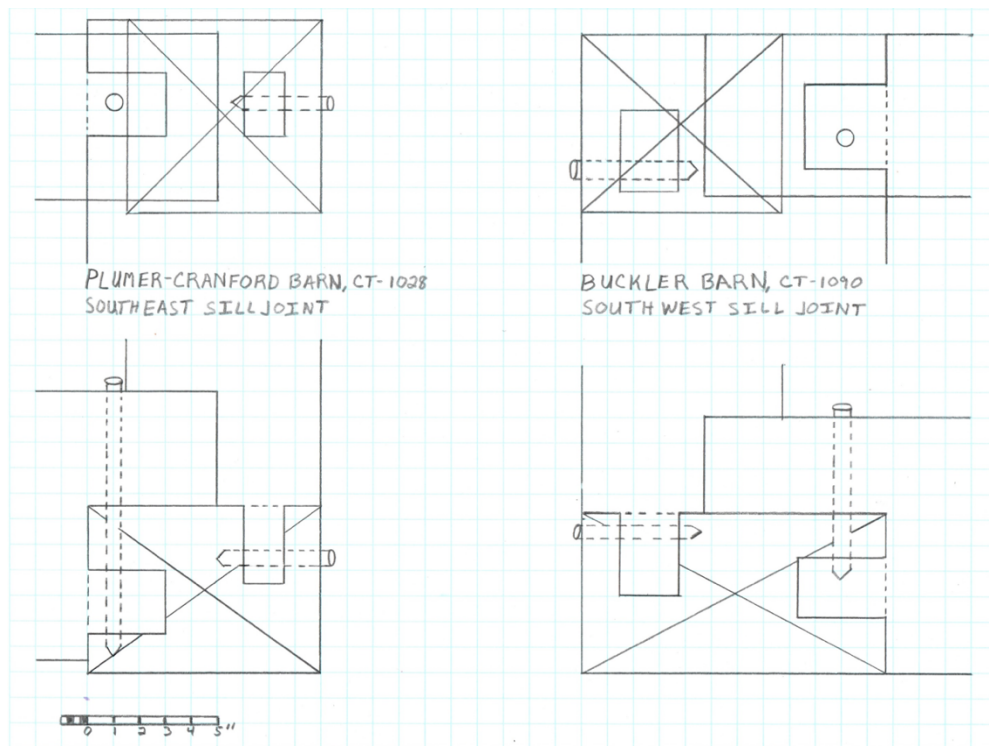


Figure 32. Plumer-Cranford and Buckler Barn Clenched Joints, in plan and section; edges of sills, posts, and pegs not visible to the eye rendered as dashed lines.

Barn Comparative Study Conclusions:



Figure 33. Vieley Barn Clenched Joint at Plate with "Rabbit Ears."

Further study to expand the data available would lead to a better understanding of trends regarding the design and use of these barns. More thorough documentation is in order for some of the barns, especially those never before measured or documented and even for many of those documented up to 40 years ago. The trends available to date appear to suggest that builders

configured barns in greater variation than previously assumed, and that some of the traditional beliefs involving antebellum barn configuration and use should be

reconsidered. Given the variation discovered in this study -- both within the study and relative to the traditional narrative -- there is much still to be learned about these barns. Further study of Southern Maryland barns from this period in the near-term is strongly recommended, especially given the high percentage of barn inquiries that returned news of demolished barns. These historically and culturally important buildings are under serious threat. Even with the small number of barns studied here, curious barn configurations were discovered.

At Cremona, the barns studied contain a mixture of well-preserved features typical of Southern Maryland tobacco barns and details such as the suspected exterior intermediate sills on Cremona Barn 2 that are valuable in their novel use of space. They are significant in and of themselves for these reasons. The concentration of three early tobacco barns at Cremona is atypical and significant. Within that concentration of barns can be found continuity in construction practice for that area of St. Mary's County. The joint evidence from northern Calvert County makes clear that sub-typologies of construction practice exist. Cremona's three barns also demonstrate the evolution of practice in that same area over a period of 36 years. However, these barns also contribute within a larger cultural landscape framework that demonstrates the continuity and change of a Southern Maryland plantation turned estate. This paper now turns to the other Thomas-era antebellum structures at Cremona.

Chapter 3: Cremona Outbuildings in Regional Context and Cremona's Historic Significance

Unlike Cremona's tobacco barns, the other antebellum outbuildings clearly demonstrate traditional practice. Yet, one can observe framing similarities between the barns and the outbuildings. The meat house shares the same high-pitched down braces as in the barns, and the frame for hanging meat is remarkably similar to the system used to dry tobacco. However, it is the quantity of well-preserved structures, including the tobacco barns, from the same period and the clear demonstration of traditional outbuilding layout on a well-preserved landscape that makes Cremona a rare antebellum outbuilding resource and historically significant. This chapter will explore each of Cremona's remaining antebellum outbuildings, address historic outbuilding use via the 1798 Federal Direct Tax records, examine comparable extant antebellum outbuilding assemblages in Southern Maryland, address Cremona's landscape as a resource in tying together the structures, and conclude with a statement of Cremona's significance based on this contextual evidence.

Cremona's Outbuildings:

Meat House

Cremona's meat house (Figure 34), dendrochronology dated to 1830, is a single-story, side-gabled frame building, resting on a brick foundation. Rectangular rather than square at 14' by 16', the building is large compared to the regional pattern for Chesapeake meat houses. The building is sheathed with wooden weatherboards. The north façade contains a centered single bay with what appears to be an original

door. A simple boxed cornice adorns the exterior roofline consisting of an unadorned soffit and fascia. Standard lapped wooden shingles cover the roof. Six-light windows (two wide by three tall) have been added to the building -- two on the south wall, three on the east. The door consists of four, hand-planed vertical boards, beaded on the interior. The vertical boards are connected on the interior by three chamfered horizontal battens. The top and bottom board each accept long strap hinges, fastened by oval-headed cut nails with leather washers. Clenched machine cut nails remain in the door as well.⁵⁰



Figure 34. Cremona Meat House, Northwest Elevation.

The hewn sills rest on a brick foundation. Mortise and tenon joints connect hewn corner posts and studs to the sills below and to the plates and girts above, all of which are hewn and pit-sawn. The studs are spaced at two-foot intervals. Two hewn braces descend from a wooden-pegged mortise and tenon joint at each corner post

⁵⁰ Worthington and Seiter, *Three Buildings at Cremona Farm*.



Figure 35. Cremona Meat House, Collars on Roof Framing for Hanging Meat.

and connect in the same fashion to the sills.

Wooden pegs are present on the corner post-plate joints as well. False plates rest across the ends of the girts and three hewn and

pit-sawn joists. The plates support five hewn and pit-sawn common rafter pairs that connect at the peak with a pegged bridle joint. Two horizontal collar beams stretch between each rafter pair, connecting to the rafters with half-dovetail joints. Small pit-sawn vertical ties descend from each top collar, beneath the roof peak, to the joists and are joined to the joist and each collar with mature square-headed and oblong-headed cut nails. The roof collars resemble the framing of Cremona's tobacco barns and serve a similar hanging function (Figure 35).

Much of the original fabric remains. All of the corner posts, studs, corner braces, girts, plates, joists, false plates, rafters, and collars are original. A few studs have been sistered. The north ends of the joists, false plate and rafter feet have deteriorated, especially the joists. New boards have been added to support the structure there. Sections of sill have been replaced on the north and east walls. Notably, the northeast corner of the building is now kicked out away from the foundation, throwing the building out of square. It is still square at the plate/girt level. Lower portions of the two northeast corner braces have been removed and replaced.

The door appears to be original. The brick foundation is recent as is the brick floor, which likely conceals a smoking pit, which further investigation may reveal.



Figure 36. Cremona Livestock Barn, Northeast Elevation; the siding was renewed in the 1930s, and a low shed was added running along the south wall.

Livestock Barn

A front-gabled livestock barn at Cremona (Figure 36), dendrochronology dated to 1831, demonstrates the same early 19th-century construction techniques, such as pegged mortise and tenon joints, as the tobacco barns and meat house. The lumber is hewn and more roughly dimensioned than the other structures, as is expected in such a structure. Posts for the stalls, which are hewn into a round dimension are joined into hewn joists overhead. The structure's foundation utilizes earthfast posts, which Orlando Ridout V suggested was generally the case for livestock barns, given the available evidence. While cows and pigs often roamed freely in the Chesapeake region, especially until the end of the 18th century, these structures were often used for fattening pigs before slaughter and for affording better conditions for milking cows. Given the low height of this structure, it is more likely that it housed these

shorter animals, rather than horses. Moreover, its proximity to the meat house and the dairy would be convenient to supply their functions. The structure appears to have good integrity and to be quite significant, given the rarity of surviving examples.⁵¹

Dairy

A presumed dairy (Figure 37) is located between the meat house and the kitchen wing of the manor house. This relative positioning was typical. Like the meat house, this smaller, square (10.3' x 10.3') structure is side-gabled, this time with an east façade. These dimensions fit neatly within the range of comparable structures in the 1798 Federal Direct Tax for St. Mary's County. External appearances suggest that this building's integrity is largely lost. Indeed, it appears to be a modern structure, as the interior walls are covered in brick and the ceiling is covered in concrete. Floorboards cover the ground, and it currently used for tool storage.



Figure 37. Suspected Dairy, Northeast Elevation.

A few details indicate that the building likely dates to the Thomas period, however. First, a narrow gap between the door and the edge of the interior brickwork reveals a hewn doorframe. This gap extends overhead,

⁵¹ Worthington and Seiter, *Cremona Livestock Barn*; Ridout, "Agricultural Buildings," 201-2.

revealing another hewn header board. The joint between the two is imperfectly seated, revealing a portion of a tenon. Another detail is the exterior cladding. It is in the style of a dairy with rather plainly louvered openings. The weatherboards are recent, but it is reasonable that they are a reproduction of what they replaced. This is confirmed by a 1937 photo of the manor that shows the dairy clad exactly as today.⁵² This detail, combined with other landscape features, is useful for interpretive purposes. Across the green from these Thomas-period structures, stand another line of structures, constructed during the 1930s on the footprint of predecessors. They were clearly meant to evoke the antebellum period. A reproduction dairy is among those buildings. Its features more strongly resemble a high style dairy, with a characteristic pyramidal roof and with more intricately louvered openings, than the presumed dairy nearer to the manor. However, the presumed dairy is exactly where it might be expected to have been constructed given cultural preferences of the early to mid-19th century, and its side-gabled style is consistent with the meat house and other early structures on site. Removal of weatherboards and floorboards may reveal more original framing and below grade, possibly brick, flooring. If present, these details would improve the integrity of a significant structure.

Sam's Cabin

Sam's Cabin (Figure 38), a framed structure, has long been suspected as a slave quarter. It, too, possesses the side-gabled style of the meat house and the dairy, but is much farther removed from the Manor House, which was common. Its two-bay east façade contains a small window and a door. An exterior brick chimney rises

⁵² Photo, *Cremona Manor House* (1937), St. Mary's County Historical Society.



Figure 38. Sam's Cabin, East façade.

along the south elevation. Its name comes from a former occupant, Sam Dotson, who lived in the structure after emancipation, but who also had been enslaved on the property. The structure, which is currently occupied, does not offer sufficient access to investigate further. However, an archaeological investigation of the surrounding yards conducted in 2015 recovered domestic refuse generally dating to the second half of the 19th and the early 20th centuries.⁵³

Comparative Outbuilding Assemblages:

Orlando Ridout V observed, “we must search for opportunities to create a multidimensional ‘biography of the land’ that places surviving buildings in a more accurate setting unedited by the passage of time.” Ridout’s intent was to overcome the fact that only a small percentage of structures of any type, and generally only those best preserved, remain at all. Ridout demonstrated that documentary evidence

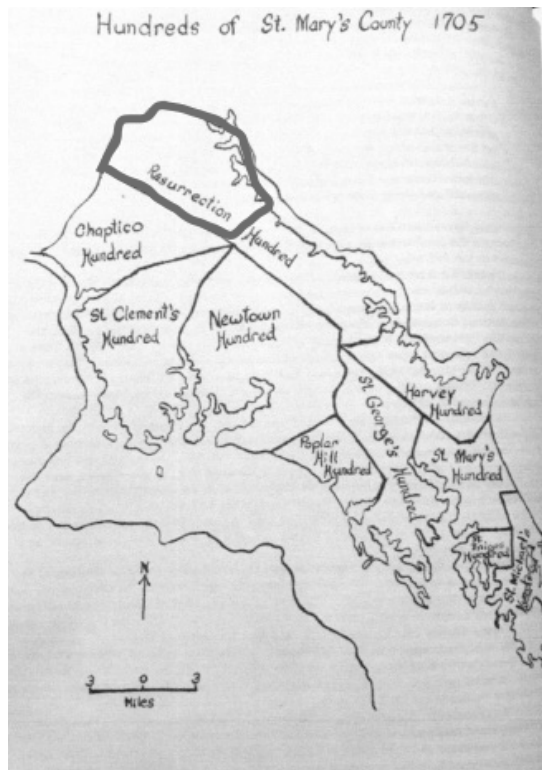
⁵³ *Cremona Estate: Investigation Sam’s Cabin* (St. Mary’s College of Maryland: 2015).

can help to fill in the gaps in the rest of the landscape. The reverse of this concept could be used to evaluate the significance of an individual site/assemblage such as Cremona.⁵⁴

This paper scratches the surface of that idea by identifying how widespread the use of outbuilding assemblages was near Cremona by using the 1798 Federal Direct Tax records and comparing that data to surviving antebellum outbuilding assemblages in southern Maryland today.

1798 Federal Direct Tax for the Upper Resurrection Hundred

The 1798 Federal Direct Tax provides an unparalleled accounting of property holdings at a moment in time. Fortunately, the records for this Federal tax are intact



for much of Maryland. Each Maryland county was organized into districts called Hundreds, which became the organizational structure when assessors recorded data for this tax. The property that became Cremona in the early 19th century was in the Upper Resurrection Hundred (Figure 39). Federal Direct Tax records, reconstituted for this Hundred (Table 3), demonstrate the ubiquitous nature of local outbuildings at the end of

Figure 39. St. Mary's County Hundreds Map, Upper Resurrection Outlined; Scanned from Hammett.

⁵⁴ Orlando Ridout, "Reediting the Architectural Past: A Comparison of Surviving Physical and Documentary Evidence on Maryland's Eastern Shore," *Buildings and Landscapes: A Journal of the Vernacular Architecture Forum* 21, No. 2 (Fall 2014): 88

the 18th century. Thirty of the 36 properties included a detached kitchen, two of which were brick. Twelve of the properties contained meat houses, 10 of which were square. The most common meat house dimension, for eight of the structures, was 12' x 12'; they ranged from 16' x 12' to 8' x 8'. The tax assessor discovered dairies on nine properties, one of which contained two dairies; all but one were square. These structures tended slightly smaller than the meat houses, with three at 8' x 8' and three at 10' x 10'; the largest was 14' x 14'. This dairy was on the same property, William Thomas's neighboring De La Brooke, which contained two dairies. Thomas also possessed a massive 38' x 30' brick dwelling, an equally impressive 28' x 18' kitchen, a meat house, corn crib, granary that included a stable, two barns, a lumber house, and 42 enslaved workers. The tax assessor deemed Thomas's property "in good repair." De La Brooke was among a few properties in the Upper Resurrection Hundred that distinctly stood out as the best accoutered.⁵⁵

⁵⁵ *Federal Direct Tax of 1798 – Maryland (St. Mary's County), [Upper Resurrection and Chaptico Hundreds]: Particular List of Dwelling Houses (M 3475-7) and Particular List of Slaves (M 3475-9)*, Maryland State Archives, Volume 729.
<http://aomol.msa.maryland.gov/000001/000729/html/index.html>

Table 3. 1798 Federal Direct Tax Records for Upper Resurrection Hundred, St. Mary's County, MD.

Property Owner	Dwelling Size	Enslaved	Kitchen	Meat House	Dairy	Com House	Granary	Barn	Other	Location/Condition
John Cartwright Ashcome	24' x 20'	6	12' x 12'					24' x 20'		On Navigation/In Bad Repair
William Baker	30' x 24' Brick		10' x 10'					32' x 20'		On Navigation/In Very Bad Repair
Elenor Burroughs	28' x 16'	7		16' x 12'		12' x 12'				In Forrest/In Bad Repair
John Hooper Broom	40' x 24'	15	16' x 12'	12' x 12'				32' x 24'		On Navigation/In Bad Repair
John Bruce	32' x 24' Brick		20' x 16'							In Forrest/In Indifferent Repair
John Lewis Cartwright	32' x 24' Brick		20' x 16'			16' x 12'				
Wm. Cartwright	38' x 30' Brick 2 Stories	14	24' x 20' Brick	12' x 10'	10' x 10'					Near Patuxent
John Chappleax	28' x 22'	4	16' x 12'						24' x 12' Stable	
Margaret DeButts	x 20' Brick and Wood, 2 Stories	20	16' x 16'	12' x 12'	16' x 12'	30' x 12'		60' x 20'	House 120' x 14' Cow	On Navigation/In Good Repair
George Davis	24' x 20'	11	20' x 16'							In Forrest/In Good Repair
Joshua Estep	24' x 20'	5	16' x 12'						24' x 12' Shop	In Forrest
Alsey Estep	24' x 18'	9	20' x 12'							In Forrest/In Good Repair
	30' x 22' 2 Stories									
John Forbes	24' x 12'									In Forrest
William Fowler	16' x 12'		18' x 14'							In Forrest/In Good Repair
Thomas Howell	24' x 16'	9	12' x 12'							In Forrest/Out of Repair
	40' x 20'	6						50' 16'		
John Howell	26' x 16'	23						24' x 24'		In Forrest/In Good Repair
William Kilgour	32' x 26' w/ Hip Roof	16	16' x 16'	12' x 12'			34' x 20'		16' x 24' Storehouse	On Navigation
John Keech	28' x 20'	15	16' x 16'			16' x 12'		24' x 20'		In Forrest/In Bad Repair
James Keech	28' x 16'	7	16' x 14'			16' x 12'				In Forrest/In Good Repair
Walter Lyon	24' x 16'	16	20' x 16'			12' x 12'				In Forrest
Lepe Locke	30' x 20'	26	20' x 16'	12' x 12'				32' x 24'		In Forrest
Samuel Morton	26' x 16'	10	16' x 16'			16' x 12'				In Forrest/In Good Repair
Mary Parsons	26' x 24' w/ Hip Roof					20' x 12'		36' x 20'		In Forrest
Joseph Parsons	40' x 16'		18' x 16'							In Forrest/Out of Repair
									16' x 12' Carriage House 32' x 16' Store House	
Thomas Ataway Reeder	42' x 26'	25	20' x 16'	12' x 12'	10' x 10'	32' x 28'				In Forrest
Thos. Reeder ten. Jos. Walker	30' x 28'		16' x 14'	10' x 10'	8' x 8'	26' x 26'				On Patuxent
Thos. Reeder ten. Geo. Reeder	30' x 24' Brick	25	16' x 16'		8' x 8'			Unk.		On Patuxent
Isaac Smoot	30' 24'	7	16' x 16'		8' x 8'			Unk.		On Patuxent
Richard Sothoron	28' x 24'	13	24' x 16'	8' x 8'			20' x 16'	24' x 16'		In Forrest/In Good Repair
Samuel Sothoron	24' x 22'									In Forrest/In Bad Repair
Mary Sothoron	40' x 32' Brick	23	32' x 16' Brick	12' x 12'	12' x 12'					On Patuxent/In Good Repair
John Johnson Sothoron	28' x 26'	14	12' x 12'		12' x 10'					In Forrest/In Good Repair
William Thomas	38' x 30' Brick	42	28' x 18'	12' x 12'	10' x 10'	14' x 14'	32' x 24'	32' x 24'	14' x 14' Lumberhouse	On Patuxent/In Good Repair
Henry Tubman	30' x 16'	28	20' x 16'	12' x 12'	14' x 14'		Includes	40' x 40'		In Forrest/In Good Repair
Elias Wheatley	20' x 20'	7	16' x 16'		12' x 12'	16' x 12'		32' x 24'		In Forrest/Out of Repair

The 1798 Direct Tax data also reveals important details about the property that became Cremona. Owned in 1798 by John Cartwright Ashcome, the property contained a single-story, wood-framed dwelling, measuring 24' x 20'. The property also contained a 12' x 12' detached kitchen, also of wood construction, and a barn measuring 24' x 20'. Somewhere on the property, six enslaved people lived, perhaps in a kitchen loft, in the barn, or on a quarter that the tax assessor ignored because of poor condition. One of the enslaved was less than 12 years old. The most telling evidence is that the tax assessor deemed Ashcome's property to be "in bad repair." This was not an isolated condition, as one-third of all dwelling sites in the Upper Resurrection Hundred were deemed to be in bad, very bad, indifferent or out of repair in 1798.⁵⁶

When Ashcom sold the property to William Thomas of neighboring De La Brooke in 1818, the region was in the midst of another difficult period. Trade fell off after the 1807 Embargo Act and ground to a halt with British military operations up the Patuxent River during the War of 1812. British forces razed many homes and agricultural buildings and confiscated crops and the enslaved.⁵⁷ Droughts in 1816 and 1819 hurt the tobacco crops.⁵⁸ Thomas bought the property in the midst of these troubles and built the current manor, which he named Cremona, near the site of Ashcom's dwelling sometime shortly thereafter. Although it is easy to jump to the conclusion that Ashcom's home was among those destroyed by the British, there is no evidence to suggest it. It is much more likely that the property was still in its unimproved condition of 1798, suffering from the troubles of the 19th century's opening two decades and ripe for sale and rebuilding.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ Hammett, *History of St. Mary's County*, 83, 94.

⁵⁸ Ranzetta, *I'm Goin' Down County*, 44.

A 1793 map of the property (Figure 40) and extant physical evidence suggest that Thomas bought the property and began a rebuilding program shortly thereafter, constructing more enduring structures on the footprint of the dilapidated structures that he found. The Cremona property is largely defined by a straight spine road that bisects the peninsula, set between two creeks, which is clearly indicated on the 1793 plat. Besides Ashcom's dwelling near the tip of the peninsula, depicted as a side-gabled structure with a chimney at each end, the 1793 map depicts several additional structures. Two of the structures, both on the south side of the road, are in the same location as the two tobacco barns studied during this project.⁵⁹

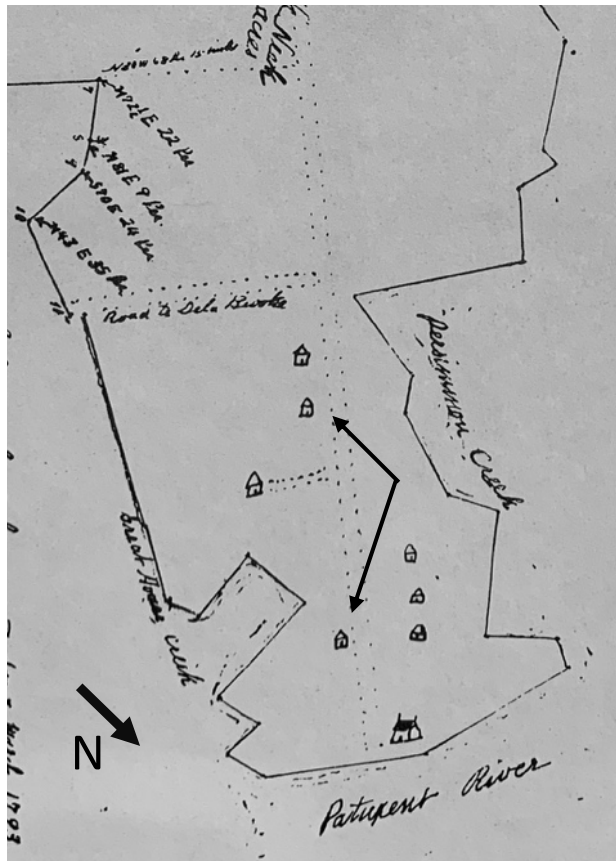


Figure 40. 1793 Survey of Cremona, Tobacco Barn Locations Marked, Cremona Archives; the main house is nearest the river shoreline

This rebuilding program may point to a possible solution for the curious external intermediate sills in Tobacco Barn 2. The recent dendrochronology sampling and analysis revealed that Barn 2, which contained the greatest irregularities, was constructed first during Thomas' rebuilding effort, with lumber felled in spring 1825 and winter 1825/26. Thomas constructed the meat house in the winter 1829/30, the Livestock Barn

⁵⁹ 1793 Survey Map, Cremona Archives.

in 1831, and Barn 1 during winter 1832/33. As the apparent first construction in his building effort, Barn 2, with transverse sills and braces uniquely on the exterior of the main barn, may have been designed to fulfill multiple uses as an exigent until Thomas could raise additional structures. During the months without curing tobacco, it may have held livestock, grains, hay or a carriage. The fact that Thomas constructed the meat house second, followed two years later by the livestock barn lends credence to the idea that Thomas may have housed livestock in the barn for a portion of the year. While livestock typically roamed freely, landowners often brought hogs into stalls for fattening a few months before slaughter, which occurred in December or shortly after. Tobacco stripping occurred in late fall, leaving two months between stripping and slaughter.⁶⁰

During the previously described review of 3,500 MIHP forms for properties in Charles, St. Mary's, and Calvert counties, data was collected on outbuilding assemblages to establish how many comparable properties are extant in Southern Maryland. Ignoring the quality of the antebellum era manor and its important 20th century resources, the Cremona property contains two antebellum outbuildings with domestic functions. These previously described dependencies are the meat house and dairy. The former retains good integrity, and the latter is suspected to do so under its modern coverings. Four antebellum era agricultural outbuildings remain as well. These are the livestock barn, tobacco barns 1 and 2 and the De La Brooke Barn. All are in good condition except for the De La Brooke Barn, although, it is in fairly good condition for an 18th-century structure. Ancillary outbuildings include Sam's Cabin

⁶⁰ Worthington and Seiter, *Three Buildings at Cremona Farm*; Worthington and Seiter, *Cremona Livestock Barn*.

and two additional dwellings that may have antebellum or at least 19th-century origins. All three might have begun as slave quarters, although at least two of them have been moved across the property. This study sought properties that contained three or more antebellum era outbuildings in good condition as a minimum basis for comparison with the Cremona assemblage. At least two of them should be domestic outbuildings.

Eighty-one properties were noted from the MIHP forms with at least one domestic outbuilding from the study period. Of these, 25 were listed as having either three or more outbuildings, either stated as antebellum or ambiguously listed as “early” or “19th century,” and not specifically noted as in poor condition. In many of these listings, no attempt was made by the form preparer to assess the dates of the outbuildings. The period of the house construction was assessed. This resulted in a potentially faulty presumption in this paper that the outbuildings listed for that house were of the same period. Inquiries were then made of preservation personnel from either the county governments or the county historic preservation commission about extant resources from this candidate pool. This method likely did not produce exhaustive results and was prone to inaccuracies because of both the shortcomings in the MIHP forms from the 1970s and 1980s and the varying willingness of property owners to answer county inquiries regarding their structures’ current condition. Nevertheless, the best examples of extant outbuilding resources in Southern Maryland, which was the goal of this inquiry, likely were identified, because those resources are best known to county officials. The best examples follow.

Built in the 1840s, **Rosemary Lawn**, in Welcome, Charles County, contains an extensive collection of dependencies and agricultural outbuildings that retain their original orientation on the landscape, offering an excellent demonstration of how property owners with means ordered their landscapes during this period. Outbuildings from the early 19th century include a dairy, ice house, and smokehouse. All are framed, pyramidal-roofed structures. Antebellum agricultural structures at Rosemary Lawn include a tobacco barn and two structures used for grain and corn storage. One of them served in a mixed-use capacity, sheltering livestock.⁶¹

McPherson's Purchase occupies a 120-acre complex of late antebellum through early 20th-century structures in Pomfret, Charles County. Its antebellum structures include 10 outbuildings dating from 1840 to 1860. These include a 1-story, 3-room, detached kitchen; a rare log meat house; and a duplex, center-chimneyed slave quarter; all are suspected to date from the early 19th century. A corncrib, granary, two tobacco barns, and two sheds are thought to be from 1840 to 1860. There is also a much-altered tobacco barn, significant for its 18th-century provenance. One of the barns is thought to be demolished. The kitchen, meat house and quarter are particularly important resources.⁶²

A few additional notable examples exist in Charles County. The Federal period dwelling at **Crain's Lot** in Newburg, contains a dairy and meat house built between 1820 and 1840. Both structures are arranged in line from the kitchen. **La Grange**, a Georgian manor in La Plata, retains a detached kitchen and meat house.

⁶¹ Cathy Thompson and Nicole A. Diehlmann, *In the Midst of These Plains: Charles County Buildings and Landscapes* (Crownsville, MD: Maryland Historical Trust Press, Forthcoming 2021), 150, 312-3

⁶² *Ibid.*, 145, 150, 347.

Ellerslie, in Port Tobacco, contains an important 18th-century granary; a meat house and dairy, both dating from the mid-19th century, are also on the property. However, these structures were not original to this site. **Longevity**, in Marshall Corner, contains a meat house, tobacco barn and a carriage house/stable, all dating to the late 18th or early 19th century. The carriage house/stable was significantly altered in the 20th century, and the dwelling associated with this site is destroyed. Not an assemblage, but the 18th-century **Friendship Livestock Houses**, Nanjemoy, are an important and rare comparable example for the Cremona livestock barn. The pair of narrow, 50'-long, timber framed sheds contain tilted false plates and pegged mortise and tenon joints. **Millbrook Farm** in Nanjemoy, contains a meat house, dairy and Charles County's last surviving grist mill, altered in the 20th century.⁶³

In Calvert County, the best example is **Morgan Hill Farm** in Lusby. Besides the 1725 hall and parlor plan manor house, which retains a great deal of original fabric, this property contains a two-pen log barn, corn crib, probable slave quarter, guest house, and two sheds. These are all contained on a landscape that retains excellent continuity with its history. According to the MIHP file, Mutual's **La Veille** contained a loom house, meat house, ice house, log quarter, and a c. 1830 tobacco barn. The continued existence of these structures is not yet verified.⁶⁴

In St. Mary's County, two properties are known to exist that fit the study's criteria. The best is **Sotterley** on the Patuxent River near Hollywood. This well-preserved site includes a meat house, brick stable, slave quarter, and a brick

⁶³ Ibid., 141, 145, 153-4, 287, 290, 305, 328-9.

⁶⁴ "Morgan Hill Farm, (Morgan's Fresh, Hill Farm)," Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties Architectural Survey File, CT-61 (Crownsville, MD: Maryland Historic Trust, Last Updated: 2003).

necessary. These structures and the manor all date to the 18th and early 19th centuries and sit within an extensive and well-preserved landscape. **Brome-Howard** in St. Mary's City, contains a meat house, dairy and slave quarter. Although the entire complex was moved to this site, all of the buildings retain their original orientation.⁶⁵

Of all of these properties, only Rosemary Lawn, Morgan Hill, McPherson's Purchase, and Sotterley are comparable to Cremona in the breadth and quality of outbuildings. As one of the few surviving examples of antebellum outbuilding assemblages, a once common feature on Southern Maryland plantations, Cremona's historic significance is high merely on that account.

Antebellum Thomas-Era Cremona Landscape:

Cremona's cultural landscape retains the character defining features that existed nearly 200 years ago. Its integrity is valuable as physical evidence of how landowners such as William Thomas shaped their environment and how other members of that community would have lived and worked on the landscape. Cultural landscape areas of inquiry such as hierarchy of spatial organization and multivocalities can be assessed at Cremona.

Hierarchy of Spatial Organization:

During the Antebellum period, landowners regularly arranged outbuildings hierarchically, typically based on functional needs. This is clearly demonstrated at Cremona, where the standard relationship exists between kitchen, dairy, and meat house, with the structures placed in that order extending away from the house. The

⁶⁵ "Sotterley," Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties Architectural Survey File, SM-7 (Crownsville, MD: Maryland Historic Trust, Last Updated: 2004).

kitchen was generally closest to the house, limiting the distance to carry prepared food. Cremona's kitchen was attached. Dairies retained a strong association with the lady of the house even after many domestic functions were removed from the home and transferred to enslaved laborers. As a result, dairy placement was typically close to the house. An equally strong factor was to keep the dairy inside of a boundary on the landscape between clean and dirty tasks (Figure 41). Inside this boundary, functions were more domestic in nature. Beyond the boundary, tasks involved less desirable activities. The Cremona meat house stands steps beyond the dairy; it is near enough to conveniently supply the kitchen, but beyond the sphere of the wholly domestic functions.⁶⁶

Farther afield (Figure 42) from the domestic core sits Cremona's livestock barn. Its activities began the transition to the agricultural, with applications relative to

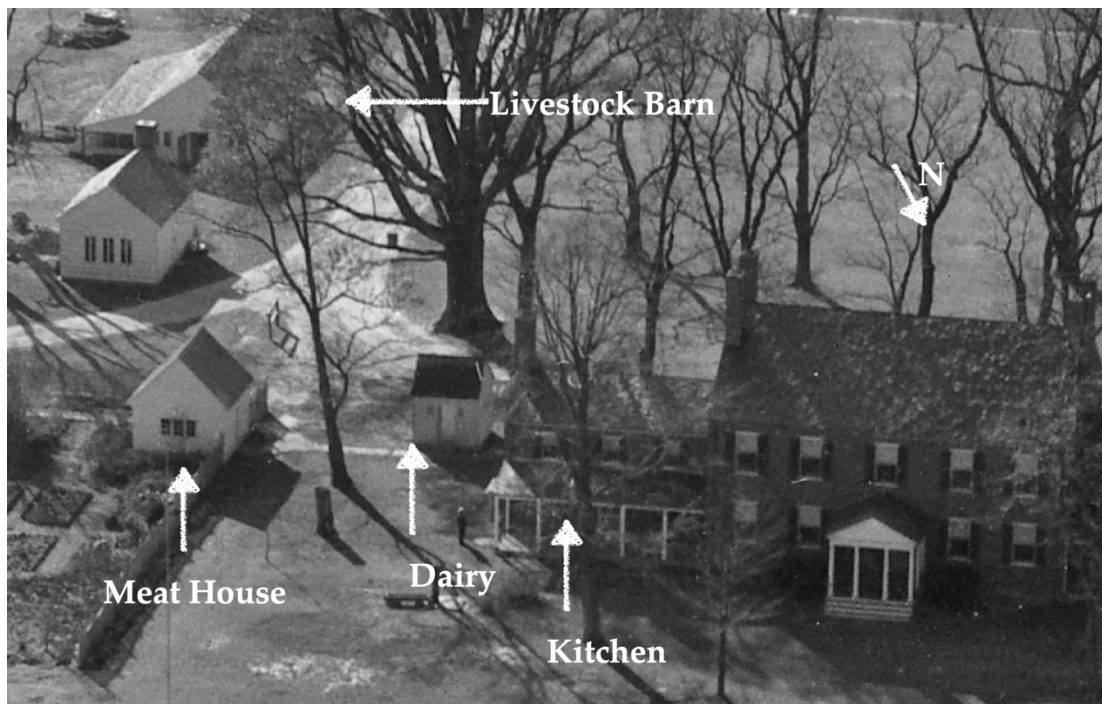


Figure 41. 1933 Aerial, Cremona Archives.

⁶⁶ Michael Olmert, *Kitchens, Smokehouses, and Privies*, 87-88, 93, 102-3.

the fields, yet it could supply the activities of the dairy and possibly the meat house. As such, this was a transitional structure, hierarchically. The same was true for the next structure, the cornhouse, which is demolished but clearly identified in photographs from the 1930s. It was nearest to the fields and more agricultural in nature. While its contents could still supply activities in the kitchen or possibly the livestock barn, it would have benefitted Thomas to shorten the transit distance from field to storage. Beyond the cornhouse, amidst the fields, Tobacco Barns 2 and 1 stand. Wholly agricultural, they are fully disconnected from the operation of the Manor. This functional hierarchy became a widespread, standard practice amongst the class of landowners in the Chesapeake Tidewater region who had sufficient means to push work tasks out of the home. At its heart this hierarchical relationship was driven by the nature of the tasks and is demonstrated clearly at Cremona.

Spatial hierarchy also existed between the Manor complex and the slave quarters, which appear to have existed on a peninsula approximately 700' from the Manor. This was sufficiently close for Thomas to keep an eye on his enslaved



Figure 42. 1933 Aerial, Cremona Archives; depicting Thomas era structures within the burgeoning Colonial Revival landscape created by the Davidsons.

population, sufficiently isolated to maintain control, and sufficiently far from the allée to keep the slave quarters out of approaching visitors' view.

Multivocalities:

Dell Upton noted that the plantation landscape was actually two landscapes. The white landscape was centered at the Manor; the enslaved landscape was centered at their dwellings and extended to their various places of labor.⁶⁷

Dr. Thomas' domestic outbuildings are an aspect of the arrangement of his plantation that demonstrates the multivocality of the landscape. Thomas' slaves certainly looked on the outbuildings as a place of hard work and of oppression. The planter typically saw the assemblage of outbuildings as a source of pride and accomplishment and a demonstration of wealth and power. The planter's ability to effect their construction, to fill the meat house, for instance, with the means of sustaining the entire plantation community was a sign of the resources that they commanded and of their control over those resources.⁶⁸

Thomas' view of the slaves' status is demonstrated by the location of their quarters. As mentioned before, they were placed on a peninsula that was out of the way and that limited mobility. Further, if we look down on the landscape, treating the previously described hierarchical zones as a series of concentric circles with the Manor at the center, the slave quarters would have been placed in the range of

⁶⁷ Dell Upton, "White and Black Landscape in Eighteenth-Century Virginia," in *Material Life in America 1600-1860*, ed. Robert Blair St. George (Boston, Northeastern University Press, 1988), 361.

⁶⁸ John Michael Vlach, *Back of the Big House: The Architecture of Plantation Slavery* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1993), 64.

agricultural structures, about the same distance from the Manor as the nearest tobacco barn.

At the same time, the slave quarters, the center of the enslaved workers' landscape, was their opportunity to make decisions and have some control, which they might have done by making improvements in the space between quarters or by altering the interior of their dwelling. They also used the common spaces to socialize and to gather for prayer and to sing. This reportedly occurred on the Manor lawn during a yellow fever outbreak in 1848.⁶⁹

Conclusions: Cremona's Integrity and Significance

Tobacco Barns 1 and 2 are excellent candidates on their own for National Register nominations for air-curing barns from the early 19th century. They are eligible under Criteria A and C based on the following details. They are in their original locations; these locations retain a sense of the rural, agricultural character of the area with virtually no degradation. They retain a majority of their character-defining features, including most of the original framing. The shed and metal roof alterations will not detract from their integrity. The doorway alterations and the extension to Barn 1, likely will not degrade a nomination either, since the alterations were effected because of changing agricultural needs. However, the missing transverse sills may degrade their viability. While not amongst the earliest surviving barns in Southern Maryland, these are quite early, which will be considered favorably

⁶⁹ Leonidas H. Berry, *I Wouldn't Take Nothin' For My Journey* (Johnson Publishing, 1981), 14.

when integrity is evaluated. As will the concentration of resources when considered collectively.⁷⁰

The meat house and livestock barn demonstrate good integrity, retaining a great deal of original fabric. The only alteration to the meat house has been replacement of a sill corner to retain its structural integrity. That is especially the case for the livestock barn, a rare structure in excellent condition considering the earthfast nature of its construction. The dairy is more difficult to gauge, since it is enclosed with modern materials. What can be seen of its framing appears in good shape. Further investigation would be more determinative, but the modern veneer over the interior has likely preserved the framing. Further investigation would also be in order for Sam's Cabin and the other two suspected 19th-century dwellings on the property. The meat house, dairy, and livestock barn retain their original location on the landscape.

Cremona's concentration of outbuildings is contextually connected by the well-preserved landscape that enables study of how the landscape and the structures were used and lived amongst. This assemblage clearly demonstrates the traditional cultural practices of 18th- and early 19th-century agriculture in the Chesapeake region. As such, the property qualifies for nomination under Criterion A.

As previously detailed, each of Cremona's well-preserved outbuildings exhibits the distinctive characteristics of outbuilding construction, placement, and use in the antebellum Chesapeake region. Each outbuilding specimen embodies its typology for the period of significance; moreover, the collection of barns contains

⁷⁰ Thursby and Schomig, *National Register Multiple Property Documentation Form: Tobacco Barns of Southern Maryland*, F-3-6.

possibly unique variations and demonstrate continuity and change in their methods of construction within a small geographical area. Cremona qualifies for nomination under Criterion C.

While Cremona's significance is clear, this study has demonstrated the benefit of further study of early tobacco barns and domestic outbuildings in the Chesapeake region. While some recent study has occurred devoted to outbuildings, the dearth of good comparable examples to Cremona suggests that this is a dwindling resource. The same is true of the barns. The fact that 54% of the inquiries about tobacco barns from this period returned news of the barns' demolition suggests that the timeframe in which to study these resources is short. Moreover, the results of this small data set suggest that there is much that is not yet fully understood in the traditional narrative of tobacco barn construction and use.

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