

**RACKLIFFE HOUSE**  
**at Manor Place Plantation**

**PRESERVATION PLAN**

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# RACKLIFFE HOUSE PRESERVATION PLAN

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

|   |   |
|---|---|
| I. INTRODUCTION                                     | 1   |
| II. HISTORICAL CONTEXT                              | 1-4   |
| III. ARCHITECTURAL CONTEXT                          | 5-6   |
| Research File                                       |   |
| -Chain-of-title from 1678/9 to 1996                 | 7-38  |
| Including Worcester County Orphan's Court Valuation | 17-19   |
| Last Will and Testament of John Rackliffe           | 20-21   |
| Inventory of John Rackliffe, 1790                   | 22-24   |
| Last Will and Testament of Charles Rackliffe        | 25-29   |
| Inventory of Captain Charles Rackliffe              | 30-34   |
| Illustrations-Plate 1                               | Rackliffe House, c. 1900, Collection of Ellen Whaley Patton, photograph c. 1900 J. W. Tucker  |
| Illustrations-Plate 2                               | John Churchman, Jr. " <i>The Peninsula Between The Delaware &amp; Chesapeake Bays</i> ," (1778?) Clearly shown is Sinepuxent Inlet, the break in the barrier island along the Worcester County coast that served the region from the 1690s until around 1830. Huntingfield Map Collection, Maryland State Archives MSA SC 1399-253) |
| Plate 3   | Palmer House, Williamsburg, Virginia, c. 1755   |
| Drawings-   | East Elevation, Paul Baker Touart, July 2007  |
|   | South Elevation, Paul Baker Touart, July 2007   |

# RACKLIFFE HOUSE PRESERVATION PLAN

Berlin vicinity, Worcester County, Maryland

## I. INTRODUCTION

The Rackliffe House, alternately known during the past two hundred years as the Dirickson farm, Sandy Point farm or Manor Place, is situated on an elevated ridge of land overlooking Sinepuxent Bay, Assateague Island, and the Atlantic Ocean. Owned by the State of Maryland and leased to the Rackliffe House Trust, the two-story, three-bay brick dwelling is the focus of an intensive restoration effort to return this important historic site to its original appearance, while at the same time sensitively adapting the site as a publicly accessible museum focused on interpreting over three hundred years of historical development in addition to its prehistoric past. In an effort to inform and guide the restoration of the house, the services of architectural historian Paul Baker Touart were retained for the research and production of a preservation plan. While this initial phase of work is primarily focused on detailing the architectural finishes of the exterior, it also contains a large amount of documentary research that is critical to the interpretation of the restoration. The information can also form the basis for additional historical research as time allows. Beginning in 2006-07, the restoration effort is planned over a three-year period.

## II. HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Captain Charles Rackliffe (d. 1752) is credited with the construction of this impressive brick dwelling on land that descended in his family since 1678/9. In his lifetime, Charles Rackliffe held title to 1700 acres in Worcester County, most of which was located on Sinepuxent Neck. The 1745 Worcester County debt books list tracts Genesar, Goshen, Pleasant, and Husband's Torrent under his ownership. Charles Rackliffe's inventory, probated on December 15, 1752,<sup>1</sup> reveals that he had developed a large working plantation, raising market supplies of tobacco, corn and wheat. At the same time he merchandised local timber products, such as shingles and cypress boards. He held sizable numbers of livestock and processed animal skins into marketable leather. (According to the inventory three of Rackliffe's cows were grazing on the barrier island.) Also included in the Rackliffe inventory were large varieties of fabric as well as five dozen brass buttons, which points to Captain Charles Rackliffe's position in the region as a merchant as well as a planter. Clearly he had on hand imported fabrics and other items that he offered to neighbors, often in exchange for tobacco, cypress shingles, or other crops and local manufactures. Represented also in his inventory is an assortment of walnut and maple furniture, most likely locally produced. Especially appropriate for this large house are over ten beds, the most expensive of which was a tall poster bed with

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<sup>1</sup> Worcester County Inventory, JW 8/204-208, 12.15.1752.

## RACKLIFFE HOUSE PRESERVATION PLAN (Continued)

mattress and hung with calico curtains valued at L6, making it the single most expensive furniture item in the house. Approximately half of Charles Rackliffe's moveable estate was invested in seventeen African-American slaves valued at L538.

The Rackliffe plantation remained in family hands through the balance of the eighteenth century and into the early nineteenth century. Captain Charles Rackliffe left a third of his estate to his wife Rachel during the rest of her life, and after her death her share was intended to pass to their children. To his eldest son, John, he left

*a part of all my land and Plantation whereon I now dwell lying and being in the County aforesaid on the Eastermost side of Sinepuxon neck according to the metes and bounds hereafter mentioned, Beginning at a Mulberry post artificially set upon the Bay side or Sound of Water and from thence North west into the Woods until it runs to ye Divisional line of marked trees or midell of the said Neck that divides between Maj[or] John Purnales Land and mine and from thence South West fifty fore degrees Westerly to the South side of a small Swamp called the school house swamp and from thence in the sd swamp Easterly & down the dreane of the sd swamp to the head of a small Creek that divides between myself and Joh (sic) Purnall then down the sd small Creek to the mouth thereof Easterly round the sd point Easterly to the Bay side and thence up the Bay Northerly to ye sd Mulberry post aforementioned...*<sup>2</sup>

John Rackliffe's inheritance included the main plantation dwelling, called Manor Place in later land records. This name was surely developed by the Rackliffes to distinguish their longtime ownership of the lands dating back to the original 1678/9 patent, and to distinguish their plantation from the other part of the Genesar tract that had passed to John Purnall through his marriage to Elizabeth Rackliffe. It is also clear from the entailments in Charles Rackliffe's will that he intended on establishing a landed estate in English fashion that was to pass down through family hands, thereby protecting the family's legacy on Sinepuxent Neck.

John Rackliffe owned this part of the family plantation during third quarter of the eighteenth century and throughout the Revolutionary War years. He is designated in the 1783 Federal tax assessment as the owner of more than 1,800 acres on Sinepuxent and Newport necks. The evaluation of his lands totaled a remarkable L3818.5.0. John Rackliffe participated in the Atlantic trade like his father; at his death he owned half interest in the hull of a vessel "on the stocks at John Fassitts" valued at L75. John Rackliffe succeeded in the agricultural and timber trade of the second half of the eighteenth century, and like his parents before him, owned a range of livestock and raised market supplies of tobacco, corn and wheat. Fifteen slaves worked Manor Place and the other tenant farms he held on Sinepuxent and Newport necks. The Manor Place

<sup>2</sup> Worcester County Will, JW 2/99-102, Written 13 July 1752, proved 31 August 1752.

## RACKLIFFE HOUSE PRESERVATION PLAN (Continued)

dwelling was furnished with a wider range of fine furniture and objects than owned by his parents, a general pattern of conspicuous consumption by the Chesapeake gentry that follows through the mid to late eighteenth century. His inventory included many fine mahogany dining and tea tables, a mahogany desk and tall case clock, and six "beds, bedsteads and furniture."<sup>3</sup>

John Rackliffe wrote a lengthy will in 1788, and at his death two years later the will was recorded in the Worcester County courthouse. The entailed lands he inherited from his father were passed in large part to his son, John, with lesser bequests to his daughters, Sally Fassitt, wife of Rouse Fassitt, and Catherine White, wife of William White and grandchildren, Thomas and Ziporha Fassitt and Sally White.<sup>4</sup> To his son John, he wrote in his will

*I give and bequeath unto my son John Rackliff to him his heirs and Assigns forever the following tracts or parcels of Land one tract of Land called Janezeer containing five hundred acres an other tract of Land called Goshen and Mayfield containing one hundred and seventy acres one other tract of Land called Pleasant containing one hundred and twenty Acres and a tract of Land called Rackliff's Good Luck beginning at the first bounder as the course directs to the side of a Creek called Point creek which lies between John Purnell and my self and binding on the Eastermost side of said Creek to the mouth thereof and then Rownd as the Bay directs to the first bounder another small tract lying on the Bayside at a point commonly known by the name Sandy Point...*

The third John Rackliffe's ownership of the family plantation was short-lived<sup>5</sup>; he predeceased his wife Sarah, who, after her death in November 1801, left four minor children—John, Rider, Kitturah, and Charlotte Rackliffe—heirs to a huge estate. Sarah Rackliffe left each child a lot in Square 165 of the new city of Washington, in addition to the family plantations on Sinepuxent and Newport necks. The latter were evaluated by the Orphans' Court of Worcester County.

The officials appointed by the court, Thomas N. Williams and William McGrigor, evaluated all the land holdings of the four orphans. Their detailed list of improvements, written in October 1808, included "One two story brick dwelling house, 36' x 30', One brick kitchen much out of repair, 30' x 20', two old frame kitchens very little value, One brick milk house in good repair," along with other log and frame farm buildings and tenant houses. At the time the main Manor Place dwelling was leased and occupied by a

<sup>3</sup> Worcester County Inventory, LH 2/122-123, 4 July 1790.

<sup>4</sup> Worcester County Will, JW 13/262, Written 15 October 1788, proved 9 January 1790.

<sup>5</sup> Rackliffe family research states that the third John Rackliffe, called Jack Rackliffe, probably died at the hands of his slaves who he evidently mistreated. He was buried under a former carriage house at Sandy Point farm. Family genealogical history provided by Thomas Patton.

## RACKLIFFE HOUSE PRESERVATION PLAN (Continued)

tenant, Kirk Gunby.<sup>6</sup> Due to the young age of the Rackliffe children, they did not occupy the Manor Place plantation while it was under tenancy.

John H. Rackliffe of Somerset County, the eldest of the four children, surfaces in August 1813 as the grantor of the Manor Place plantation. For the sum of \$14,500, he conveyed 729 acres of the Sinepuxent plantation to Thomas Fassitt, then a resident of Philadelphia.<sup>7</sup> Given the description of the improvements in 1808, the attached colonnade and kitchen were built during Thomas Fassitt's period of ownership. The mixture of reused eighteenth-century brick and early nineteenth century brick along with the V-shaped mortar joints supports this dating of the service wing. Attached kitchens by way of a colonnade also provided a means to separate the working and sleeping domain of the house slaves from the plantation family. Thomas Fassitt owned the Rackliffe plantation for six years, and conveyed 612 ½ acres of the land he purchased to John and Mary Hooper in August 1819.<sup>8</sup> The plantation was passed back and forth between the Hoopers and Fassitts until 1835 when the property, consisting of 1060 acres, was sold to John C. Dirickson for \$14,000.<sup>9</sup> During John C. Dirickson's period of ownership, which stretched between 1835 and 1862, the house and kitchen wing were stuccoed to imitate ashlar construction. The practice of stuccoing brick to appear like stone was very popular in and around Berlin. (See Burley Manor, 1835, and Caleb's Discovery, c. 1750 and c. 1820) Around 1850 John C. Dirickson gave over occupancy of the old Manor Place plantation house to his son James Brevard Dirickson, who is located at this site on the 1877 East Berlin district map in the Lake, Griffing, and Stevenson atlas. James Brevard Dirickson held title to this farm through the balance of the nineteenth century, and in 1902 the property passed to his stated heirs, Elizabeth Anne Dirickson Henry, Zadock P. Henry III, and Addie B. Henry.<sup>10</sup> The fire that destroyed the interior and resulted in a rebuilding of the roof occurred in 1928 when the Sinepuxent Corporation held a mortgage on the Henry land holdings, which at the time encompassed over 2000 acres. During the second half of the twentieth century the property was known as the Woodcock farm. In 1995 Thomas Ruark purchased the "residue of the Dirickson farm" from the estate of Elizabeth P. Woodcock.<sup>11</sup> A year later the State of Maryland acquired 114.8 acres and the old Rackliffe House.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Kirk Gunby also figures in a deed between himself and Charlotte Rackliffe and William Winder, guardian, Worcester County Land Record, X/532, 2 January 1806 for the acquisition of six slaves.

<sup>7</sup> Worcester County Land Record, AD 337-340, 6 August 1813.

<sup>8</sup> Worcester County Land Record, AK 27, 9 August 1819.

<sup>9</sup> Worcester County Land Record, JCH 2/213, 18 August 1835.

<sup>10</sup> Worcester County Will Book, TDP 12/198, proved 22 April 1902.

<sup>11</sup> Worcester County Land Record, RHO 2147/527, 24 March 1995.

<sup>12</sup> Worcester County Land Record, RHO 2258/381, 8 April 1996.

## RACKLIFFE HOUSE PRESERVATION PLAN (Continued)

### III. ARCHITECTURAL CONTEXT

The Rackliffe House at Manor Place is a large two-story, three-bay, double pile brick dwelling built during the second quarter of the eighteenth century by Captain Charles Rackliffe. Probably dating from the mid to late 1740s, the four-room plan brick structure was clearly standing by the time of Charles Rackliffe's death in 1752. (See Plate 1, Rackliffe House, c. 1900) Sited on an prominent ridge, the house Charles Rackliffe financed was clearly intended to make the most of this location by raising it on an elevated site with a man-made terrace surrounding it. The inclusion of large windows on the north, south and east walls provided expansive views up and down Sinepuxent bay and across to the Atlantic Ocean. Monitoring the shipping traffic in and out of Sinepuxent Inlet (See Plate 2, John Churchman, Jr., Map of the Peninsula Between the Delaware and Chesapeake Bays, 1778 ?) was of great interest given Charles Rackliffe's position as a planter and a merchant.

The two-story brick house was built in characteristic Flemish bond with random glazed headers featured throughout the four elevations. While the Flemish bond is not highlighted in characteristic fashion with a regular checkerboard pattern of glazed headers, there was an obvious effort to use the glazed headers for their decorative intent. The base of the structure is defined by a plain, single ledge watertable, and the east and west walls are pierced by rectangular vents that are similar to the foundation venting at St. Martin's Church (1756-63). Although the house was gutted by fire around 1928, the original form of the steeply pitched gable roof is evident in a turn of the twentieth century image of the property. The steeply pitched gable roof had kicked eaves, an architectural feature common to nearby Genesar (c. 1730-40), All Hallows Church (1748-56) and St. Martin's Church (1756-63). Nine-over-nine sash windows lighted the first floor, and nine-over-six illuminated the second floor rooms. Unusual to this house were large sized twelve-over-eight sash windows that pierced the gable ends to light the attic. On the east wall above the center entrance is a large nine-over-nine stairwell window. While seemingly intrusive in the east elevation with its large size in comparison to the window openings to each side, this type of stairwell window has regional precedents at Almodington in Somerset County and Tower Hill in Northampton County, Virginia.

Evident in the size and finish of the exterior, the Rackliffe House was one of the most impressive gentry dwellings in the region during the second quarter of the eighteenth century. Through the analysis of the exterior fabric and the information provided by the early twentieth century image, the exterior can be restored faithfully to its mid eighteenth appearance. The recent stripping of the 1830s stucco has revealed several things about the finish of the original house. Beltcourses between the first and



Plate 1, Rackliffe House, photograph c. 1900, Collection of  
Ellen Whaley Patton, J. W. Tucker, photographer





Plate 2, "Map of the Peninsula Between the Delaware and Chesapeake Bays," John Churchman, Jr. 1778?

Clearly shown is the Sinepuxent Inlet, the break in the barrier island along the Worcester County coast that served the region from the 1690s until around 1830.

Huntingfield Map Collection, Maryland State Archives, MSA SC 1399-253

second stories, a characteristic feature of Georgian style dwellings, were chopped off to provide a smooth surface. The ends of shutter pintels are imbedded in the brickwork to each side of the window openings, indicating the early presence of shutters on the house. Putlog holes in the four elevations of Flemish bond brickwork, used for anchoring supportive horizontal timber scaffolding during construction, were bricked in at a much later date due to the different mortar used to secure the header sized pieces. The mid eighteenth-century Palmer House in Williamsburg is one of the best examples of this construction feature in the Chesapeake region. (See Plate 3, Palmer House, Legacy of the Past, Colonial Williamsburg)

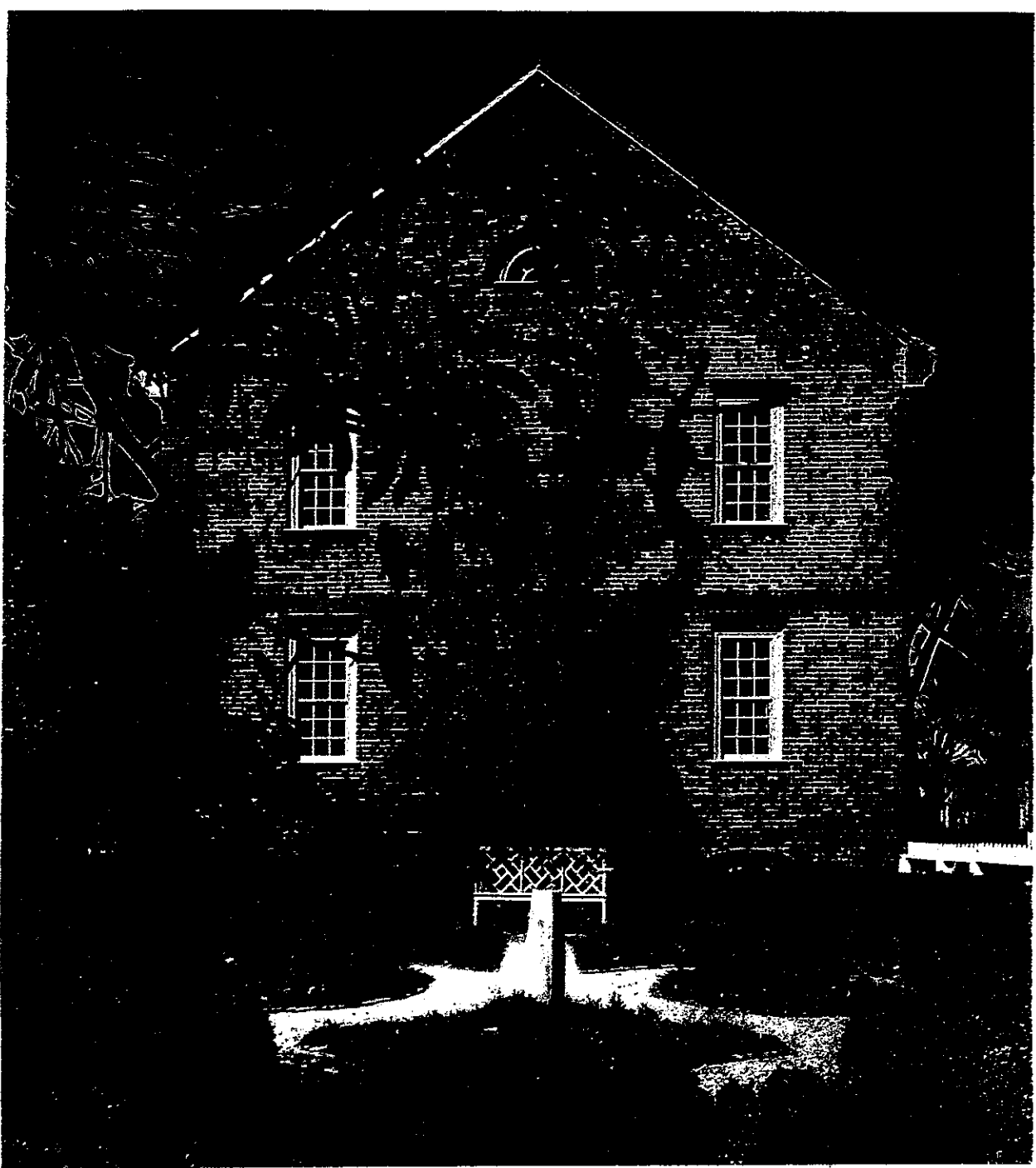
Although undocumented by historic images or descriptions, the interior spaces of this large scale house were surely finished with a high level of mid eighteenth-century woodwork. A second phase of documentary research and drawings is targeted at detailing the interior rooms. In keeping with general practices, the woodwork finishes were executed in a hierarchical order with the most elaborate moldings and raised-panel craftsmanship on the first floor and less elaborate moldings on the second floor. While important to the function of the house with its large scale twelve-over-eight sash gable end windows on the third floor, the attic would have been finished in a more rudimentary fashion with board partitions and plastered walls and ceilings.

In 1813, John H. Rackliffe sold Manor Place to Thomas Fassitt for \$14,500.<sup>13</sup> It was likely that after this transfer the attached service wing was built against the north gable end of the mid eighteenth century house. Designed in a familiar format for the time, the service wing included a single-story, one-room plan, gable roofed kitchen and adjacent colonnade. The two structures with differing rooflines were built together with a mixture of reused eighteenth and early nineteenth-century bricks. The mortar joints are struck in a V-shaped joint common to the early nineteenth century. Although the original roofs to the kitchen and hyphen have been replaced, the roof pitches are evident in the c. 1900 documentary image and architectural fabric. The original kitchen for the mid eighteenth-century house was located in a separate brick structure that is identified in the 1808 Orphan's Court description of the Rackliffe plantation. The 30' by 20' size of the kitchen, which was "much out of repair," in 1808 points to a much older dwelling sized structure that was probably converted into a kitchen after the two-story dwelling was built. The brick from the deteriorated "kitchen" was probably salvaged for the construction of the attached service wing. The size and finish of the exterior windows and door will be characteristic of the early nineteenth century.

The size and construction of the extant brick milk house suggests that it was built of reused materials during the period around 1800. The 1808 description calling it in "good repair" suggests that it was relatively new at the time. More attention to this building will be part of additional work in this first phase of the preservation plan.

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<sup>13</sup> Worcester County Land Record, AD 337-340, 6 August 1813.



Palmer House, built between 1756 and 1760. In later years it was put to various uses. *Right.* A view of the "putlog holes" of the Palmer House. (The holes left by scaffolding timbers were not filled with bricks when builders left the job and are now vacant.)



RACKLIFFE HOUSE  
Berlin vicinity, Worcester County, Maryland  
Chain-of-title Research File

Page 7

RHO 2258/381                      The Conservation Fund

to

4.8.1996                              State of Maryland

Parcel 1      114.8 acres

RHO 2252/352                      Ruark Family Limited Partnership

to

3.21.1996                              The Conservation Fund

Parcel 1 Plat 144/63 Subdivision of the Woodcock Farm

114.8 acres

RHO 2147/538                      Thomas Ruark

to

3.24.1995                              Ruark Family Limited Partnership

327.3 acres Residue of the Dirickson Farm

RHO 2147/527                      Estate of Elizabeth P. Woodcock

to

3.24.1995                              Thomas Ruark

RACKLIFFE HOUSE  
Berlin vicinity, Worcester County  
Chain-of-title Research (Continued)

Page 8

165/34                    Laura P. Elzey, Trustee under the Last Will and Testament  
                                  of Louise E. Parsons

to

1.15.1963                Carrie E. Parsons, Wicomico County

\$30,000 undivided 1/3 interest in the Derrickson or Dirickson  
Farm, 547 acres, being part of the land shown on a plat of  
land of John D. Henry, Zadock P. Henry, and Addie B. H.  
Carey, as purchased by the Sinepuxent Corporation, made in  
1939 by Wm D. Pitts, surveyor and recorded in plat book  
ODC 1/20

CWN 2/80                Lamar [Larmar] Corporation

to

3.13.1944                S. Franklin Woodcock, Elizabeth P. Woodcock, Louise E.  
                                  Parsons

"Derrickson Farm," 579 acres

JEB 20/185              Ralph W. Dulany and others

to

3.11.1944                Larmar Corporation, Inc.

JEB 20/183              The Sinepuxent Corporation

to

12.31.1943              Ralph O. Dulany, S. Franklyn Woodcock, Louise E. Parsons

"Derrickson Farm" 579 acres

RACKLIFFE HOUSE  
Berlin vicinity, Worcester County  
Chain-of- title Research (Continued)

Page 9

JEB 12/478      Ralph O. Dulany, Alice R. Dulany, S. Franklyn Woodcock, Elizabeth  
P. Woodcock, and John K. Gunby

to

5.6.1942                      The Sinepuxent Corporation  
  
2000 acres

JEB 10/171                      The Sinepuxent Corporation

to

10.14.1941                      Ralph O. Dulany, S. Franklyn Woodcock, John K. Gunby  
  
2000 acres

JEB 2/172                      John D. Henry, Minnie V. Henry, Zadock P. Henry III, Indianna  
Scott Henry, Addie B. Henry Carrie, and Ethan A. Carey

to

3.27.1939                      The Sinepuxent Corporation  
  
2195 acres "Robins Farm, Genezar Farm, Scarborough  
Farm, & James B. Derrickson Farm see Plat CDC 1/20

Will Book  
TDP 12/198

Last Will and Testament of James Brevard Dirickson

to

Proved  
4.22.1902

Elizabeth Anne Dirickson Henry (Mrs. Zadock P. Henry II)  
or John D. Henry, Zadock P Henry III, and Addie B. Henry

1877

Lake, Griffing, and Stevenson Atlas, East Berlin Election District  
James B. Dirickson, farmer, listed with 600 acres

Will Book  
TT 8/357

Last Will and Testament of John C. Dirickson

to

Written  
5.19.1862  
Proved  
7.1.1862

I give and bequeath to my son James B. Dirickson the Farm in Sinepuxent whereon he now resides containing six Hundred and twelve acres of Land; Also all the stock, farming utensils, household and kitchen furniture now on said Farm, I also give my son James on half of a tract of Wood Land purchased from Thomas L. Timmons whereon Levin Dirickson (negro) now resides; Also a tract of Cyprus Swamp land called ....., I also give to my son James one negro man named Caleb to him his heirs and assigns forever; I give and bequeath to my daughter Elizabeth Anne Henry (wife of Zadock Henry, Jr.) the Farm in Sinepuxent whereon Peter Scarborough now resides; also one half of a tract of Wood Land purchased from Thomas Timmons where on Levin Dirickson (negro) now resides; Also the farm whereon Robert Harrison now resides willed to my wife Catherine Dirickson by her brother James F. Brevard; but in case my wife Catherine fails to give my daughter Elizabeth A. Henry a Good and

Sufficient deed for said Farm; also I give to my daughter Elizabeth the house & lot in Berlin purchased of Hillary R. Pitts; Also twelve acres of Land lying to the south of and adjoining the Lot whereon Zadock Henry, Jr. now resides; I give and bequeath to my daughter Emma Catherine Purnell (wife of John R. Purnell) the house and lands

whereon I now reside said Lands containing about Sixty acres; I give to my daughter Emma all the lands purchased from Ebenezer Powell, ..... Ayres, Maria Spence, and Sarah Mitchell containing in the whole seven hundred acres; Also sixty six and a half acres of Wood Land purchased of Thomas L. Timmons lying north of Henry Quillen's lands in Upper Synapuxent Neck, also my interest in the Store House and lot in Berlin now occupied by Peter Frey (?) Also a part of Wood Land purchased from Edward Stevenson and adjoining the lands of William Nelson containing about thirty five acres to her my said daughter Emma her heirs and assigns forever. I give and bequeath to my wife Catherine Dirickson all her stock, farming utensils, Household and Kitchen furniture and Carriage and harness now on the farm where I reside to her heirs and assigns forever; I give and bequeath all the balance of my estate Real and Personal and mixed to my three children, James B. Dirickson, Elizabeth A. Henry, and Emma C. Purnell...

Inventory  
TPP 5/206

Inventory of James C. Dirickson

9.8.1863

Account appraised at J. B. Dirickson's

1700 bu Corn  
Corn crop growing on the land  
Wheat Crop  
Oat Crop



RACKLIFFE HOUSE  
Berlin vicinity, Worcester County  
Chain-of-title Research (Continued)

Page 12

JCH 2/213                      John Hooper and Mary his wife

to

8.18.1835                      John C. Derickson

\$14,000    1060 acres    Genezzar, Goshen, Sandy Point, Mayfields,  
Rackliffe's Good Luck

AU 556                              Thomas Fassitt

to

3.10.1829                      John Hooper of Worcester County

Same land purchased of John Rackliffe, deed bearing date  
8.6.1813, also a deed from Ryder Rackliffe, Kitturah Rackliffe, and  
James Murray and wife dated 11.22.1816

\$7,000            Manor Place of John Rackliffe....it being the farm  
whereon John Fassitt formerly lived...320 acres more  
or less

AP 498                              John Hooper and Mary his wife

to

2.21.1824                      Thomas Fassitt, City of Philadelphia

"Goshen and Mayfields" part of "Genezzar," part of  
"Rackliffe's Good Luck," and one entire tract called Sandy Point

\$15,000    "Manor Place"    612 ½ acres

AK 27

Thomas and Mary Fassitt

to

8.9.1819

John and Mary H. Hooper

\$15,000 "Manor Place" 612 ½ acres

Sandy Point, part of Goshen and Mayfields, Genezzar,  
and Rackliffes Good Luck

AD 337-340

John H. Rackliffe of Somerset County

to

8.6.1813

Thomas Fassitt of the City of Philadelphia

\$14,580.00 "Manor Place" situate in Synpuzent Neck

That whereas Edward Wale and Charles Rackliffe had by a patent under the Great Seal for granting Lands that the 10<sup>th</sup> day of January 1679 granted unto them a tract of Land called Genezzar lying at the South end of Synapuxon Neck in the County of Worcester in the State of Maryland on the seaboard side containing by estimation 2200 acres and whereas the said Edward and Charles did by their mutual deeds bearing date the 16<sup>th</sup> day of February 1681 make partition thereof whereby the N.E. side of the same Tract was allotted to the said Charles who being so seized thereof in fee simple deed on or about February 1695 leaving Charles his eldest son and heir at law to whom the premises descended who dying seized thereof the same descended and became the right and title of his only daughter and heir at law Elizabeth who afterwards intermarried with a certain John Purnell and the said John and Elizabeth by the deed duly executed bearing date the

25<sup>th</sup> of February AD 1621 (sic) [1721] conveyed all their estate of and in the premises to a certain Thomas Purnell in fee who reconveyed the same to the said John Purnell by means whereof the said John became vested in fee of and in all the north east moiety of said tract. Now this Indenture witnesseth that whereas Charles Rackliffe & John Purnell had by patent bearing the date the 9<sup>th</sup> day of July A. Domini 1724 granted unto them all that tract of Land called Pleasant lying on the westmost bay containing 650 acres more or less as by reference to the original Patent thereof will more fully and at large appear and the said John Purnell being so seized in fee simple of and in the said two parcels of land called Genezzar and Pleasant did by his deed duly executed and bearing the date the 1<sup>st</sup> day of June 1738 and on the 11<sup>th</sup> day of May A. Dom. 1725 convey as well that part of Genezzar lying on the northeast side of the said tract containing 500 acres as also that part of Pleasant commonly called the Cedars as by reference to the deeds for the same will at large appear to a certain Charles Rackliffe in in fee simple, And whereas a certain Francis Jenkins had by a patent dated the 12<sup>th</sup> of June A Domini 1678 granted unto hi tract of Land called Goshen and Mayfields lying contiguous to the head line of Genezzar, a part of which said tracts of Land containing by estimation One hundred and seventy acres by sundry descents devises and mutations of possession became the estate and title of the said Charles Rackliffe. And the said Charles being so seized of part of the said three tracts of Land by his will bearing date the 13<sup>th</sup> of July A Dom 1752 devised the same to wit Genezzaar to his son John in fee tail, Goshen or the northermost part of all his said lands to his son John in tail with a limitation over to his son John in fee and his part of Pleasant or the Cedars to his two sons John and James in tail as tenants in Common with ..... remainders over the said James dying without issue the estate tail to him became spent By means whereof the said John Rackliffe the elder became seized in fee tail of and in the tracts of Land called Genezzar and Pleasant and in fee simple of and in part of the tract called Goshen & Mayfields and whereas the said John had by patent dated the 29<sup>th</sup> of Sept. A. Domini 1763 granted unto him a tract of Land called Rackliffes Good Luck situate adjoining and on the east side of Genezzar and also one other tract called Sandy Point surveyed for him on the 9<sup>th</sup> of August 1785 and the said John Rackliffe the elder being so seized of the said several tracts and parcels of Land by his will dated the 15<sup>th</sup> of October A. Domini 1788 devised the same to his only son and in tail whereby the said John the younger became so seized in tail of and in part of Genezzar and part of Pleasant and in

fee simple of and in Sandy Point, part of Goshen and Mayfields and part of Rackliffes Good Luck who dying intestate the said entailed Lands descended to his son John the grantor and the fee simple Lands to his children as his heirs at Law. Now this Indenture further Witnesseth that the said John Rackliffe eldest son and heir in tail of John Rackliffe the younger for the purpose of docking all entails and Limitations entail of and in the premises and every part thereof in virtue of the Act of Assembly in November 1782 as also for and in consideration of the sum of fourteen thousand five hundred and eighty dollars current money of the United States to him the said John Rackliffe paid, the receipt whereof is hereby acknowledged and thereof and every the said John for himself and his heirs Executors and Administrators him the said Thomas Fassitt his heirs executors....

All those several tracts and parts of tracts of land lying in two distinct Parcels to wit; the one usually designated as the Manor place situate in Synapuzent neck on the easternmost Bay and bounded easterly thereby Southerly part by the same bay and Creek issuing there from and dividing the same Lands from the land late of John Purnell deceased up and with the same and the southwest fork of the Branch thereof to a white oak post standing at the head thereof thence with a line of marked trees binding on the said John Purnells lands to a road leading down Synapuxent neck being a division line between this parcel of land and the lands of Z. Purnell Esquire, thence up and with the same road and a line of marked trees dividing it from the said Z. Purnells Land in the direction of north forty three and one half degrees east to intersect the head line of the original tract called Genezzar as the same is established by Commissioners thence reversing the said line northwesterly to the county road and binding thereon with the lands of Mr. Wm Johnson northerly and easterly to the lines of Esther Purnells land usually called Hollands place thence with a line of marked trees dividing this from said Hollands place south forty eight degrees east to the said eastermost Bay at the mouth of a gut issuing therefrom which said parcel so described and bounded is ascertained to contain the full quantity of six hundred and twelve acres and one half and of parts of the tracts of land called Genezzar, Goshen and Mayfields, and Rackliffes Good Luck, and the tract of land called Sandy Point. The other parcel of land hereby conveyed commonly called The Cedars and bounded northerly and westerly by the waters of Holland Creek Newport Creek and southerly and easterly by the waters of a Creek and pond and an old neck fence between this land and the lands of Z.

RACKLIFFE HOUSE  
Berlin vicinity, Worcester County  
Chain-of-title Research (Continued)

Page 16

Purnell, Esquire as is ascertained to contain the full quantity of one hundred and sixteen acres and one half acres consisting of part of a tract of Land called Pleasant with a small part of Genezzar with all and singular the houses, orchards, fencing, improvements and appurtenances to the same two parcels of land.....

RACKLIFFE HOUSE  
Berlin vicinity, Worcester County, Maryland  
Research File (Continued)

Page 17

Worcester County  
Orphan's Court Proceedings, 1806-1809  
MH 7/410

10.26.1808 Estate of John Rackliffe; In the care of James Laird, View & Estimate

Worcester County.....The State of Maryland to Thomas N. Williams & William McGrigor Esquire, Greeting, The Orphans Court of Worcester County....have constituted and appointed you Commissioners to view and value the estate of John Rackliffe, minor, in the care of James Laird his Guardian and do hereby authorize and empower you after shall have taken the annexed oath to examine the real estate of the said John Rackliffe and to estimate the annual value thereof, including any slaves, working beasts, stock, and utensils thereon belonging the orphan... You are also to set down in writing what dwelling houses, out houses, orchards, gardens, meadows, and courses, and other improvements are on the land and the condition thereof and what proportion of the said land is in your estimation in woods...

And you are hereby required to make a fair and distinct action of your proceedings under this appointment under your hands and Seals to the said Court on or before the second Tuesday of October next annexed to this commission

Witness: Littleton Robins, Sr. Esquire, Chief Justice of the October Court 1808.

In Pursuance of the annexed Commission Issued out of the Orphans Court of Worcester County directed to us the Subscribers to view and estimate the annual value of the estate of John Rackliffe minor in the care of the Rev'd James Laird, his Guardian as will appear by the said Commission, we do hereby certify that after we had taken the oath required, we proceeded to view the lands and negroes belonging to said John Rackliffe minor. We do make the following report and valuation viz. that we do estimate the annual value of the land belonging to said John Rackliffe which is now leased to Kirk Gunby and entailed on said John Rackliffe and lying on the south west side of line drawn North West from a Mulberry post standing on the bay side eastward from the dwelling house where said Gunby lives in Synepuxon neck, at One Hundred and ninety Dollars and there in on the said land sixteen hundred and seventy panels of fence with eight and nine rails to a panel, and about one hundred and seventy old decaying apple trees, and in our estimation about one fourth of said lands in woods, and not well timbered and there is on said land the following buildings...

|  | length  | breadth |
|--|---------|---------|
| One two story brick dwelling house               | 36 feet | 33      |
| One brick kitchen much out of repair             | 30      | 20      |
| Two old frame kitchens of very little value each | 20      | 15      |
| One hewed log dwelling house of little value     | 20      | 15      |
| One sawed log smoke house                        | 15      | 12      |
| One old ditto of no value                        | 12 ½    | 12 ½    |

RACKLIFFE HOUSE  
 Berlin vicinity, Worcester County  
 Research File (Continued)

|   |      |      |
|---|------|------|
| One brick milk house in good repair                                   | 15   | 12 ½ |
| One old framed store house of little value                            | 12 ½ | 10   |
| One old framed barn in bad repair                                     | 30   | 20   |
| One old ditto Ditto of little value                                   | 40   | 20   |
| One old ditto ditto ditto with 10 feet shed on one side in bad repair | 25   | 20   |
| One old sawed log stable 10 feet shed on one end out of repair        | 24   | 29   |
| One old hen house of no value   | 15   | 25   |
| One old sawed loged corn crib o f little value                        | 20   | 8    |

And there is on the lands leased to said Gunby which are undivided and belonging to said John Rackliffe, Rider Rackliffe, Kitturah Rackliffe, and Charlotte Rackliffe lying on the north east side of the said post Fourteen hundred and sixty panels of fence, about seven rails to a panel and the following buildings, viz.

|  |    |    |
|--|----|----|
| One framed dwelling house in good repair | 20 | 15 |
| One old house of little value            | 10 | 10 |

And in our estimation about one sixth in woods. And there is on the lands called the Cedars which is leased to said Gunby, and belonging to John, Rider, Kitturah, and Charlotte and undivided as afsd. Two hundred and fifty panels of fence about six rails to a panel and very little wood land

|                                      |    |      |
|--------------------------------------|----|------|
| One Loged house of very little value | 15 | 12 ½ |
|--------------------------------------|----|------|

Which land lying North east of said line drawn from said post and the land called the Cedars, we do estimate at the annual value of One hundred and twenty dollars, the one fourth of which belongs to said John Rackliffe, and amounts to Thirty Dollars---

And there is on the lands leased to Nathaniel Brittingham in New port neck, which is an undivided right in the said John, Rider, Kitturah, and Charlotte Rackliffe, Two thousand one hundred and twenty panels of fence eight or nine rails to a panel, and about three hundred old decaying peach trees—and the following buildings viz.

|   |      |    |
|---|------|----|
| One framed grain house, loged, shed at one end in bad order | 20   | 20 |
| One new framed dwelling house shingled all over             | 28   | 18 |
| One framed dwelling house much out of repair                | 25   | 25 |
| One round log kitchen                                       | 15   | 15 |
| One old log smoke housel of little value                    | 12 ½ | 10 |
| One new ditto ditto in good repair                          | 12   | 12 |
| One old hen house of no value                               | 10   | 10 |
| Two sawed log corn cribs in bad repair each                 | 19 ½ | 7  |

A passage between said cribs with plank floor in bad order 19 ½ 15

And there is in our estimation about one fifth of said lands in woods which land we do estimate at the annual value of Three hundred and thirty dollars, one fourth belongs to said John Rackliffe, which is Eighty two dollars and fifty cents, and there is belonging to said John Rackliffe the following Negroes, value as follows:

|  |    | Profit | Expense |
|--|----|--------|---------|
| One Negro man named Draper aged 62 years |    | =      | =       |
| One ditto ditto Abraham                  | 24 | 40     |         |
| One ditto boy Levin                      | 14 | 24     |         |
| One ditto Ditto Milby                    | 11 | 9      |         |
| One ditto man Will                       | 22 | 40     |         |
| One ditto woman Esther                   | 57 | =      | 14      |
| One ditto ditto Nancy                    | 59 | =      | 16      |
| One ditto ditto Sarah                    | 19 | 12     | =       |
| One ditto girl Esther                    | 10 | =      | =       |

Which will make the whole annual value of said John Rackliffes Lands, slaves and stock the sum of Three hundred and ninety seven dollars and fifty cents current money...And we do allow one third of the land in Synepuxon to be planted in Indian corn, and one third sowed in small grain annually, and the one half of the lands in Newport to be planted in Indian corn, and one half sowed in small grain annually—Witness our hands and seals this 26<sup>th</sup> day of Oct. AD 1808

Thomas N. Williams  
 William McGrigor



Worcester County  
Will Record  
JW 13/262

Last Will and Testament of John Rackliffe

Written  
10.15.1788  
Proved  
1.9.1790

First, I give and bequeath unto my son John Rackliff to him and his heirs forever the following tracts or parcels of Land on tract of Land called Janezeer Containing five hundred acres an other tract of Land called Goshen and Mayfield containing one hundred and seventy acres one other tract of Land called Pleasant containing one hundred and twenty acres and a tract of Land called Rackliffes Good Luck beginning at the first boulder as the course direct to the side of a Creek called Point Creek which lies between John Purnell and my self and binding on the easternmost side of said Creek to the mouth thereof and then Rownd (sic) as the Bay directs to the first boulder another small tract lying on the Bayside at a point commonly known by the name of Sandy Point one other small parcel of Land purchased of Joseph Miller being in New Port Neck containing Eighty Acres also another small parcel of Land called Fancy where Peal Franklin now lives containing seventy acres and also all my right title and interest and claim in Lands in New Port purchased of the following persons viz. Robert Jenkins Henry, William Wolf (sic) Levin Riley and Stephen Riley another Parcel of Land being up in the swamp on the Easternmost side of Pocomoke river where John Schoolfield formerly lived the said Land joining John Marshalls Mill plantation also another small parcel of Land being in Sinepuxent Neck near the old widow Hills conveyed to me from the widow Hills sons Also a part of two tracts of Land being in the Forrest on the northwest side of the Pocomoke river containing Eight hundred and eighty nine acres I Give and Bequeath unto my daughter Sally Fassitt to her heirs and Assigns forever all my right Title and Interest in Lands lying in Queponco known by the name of Bowen Choice Deep Swamp part of winkefield purchased from Hammon Runnells Also I Give and Bequeath unto my daughter Sally Fassitt to her her increase and Assigns forever the following Negroes known by the names of Rhoda, old Cub, Pleasant and James also one round mahogany Table and also three Negroes known by the name of Jany, Hannah and Rachel, 2<sup>nd</sup> ly, I Give and bequeath to my Grand son Thomas Fassitt to his heirs and Assigns forever the following Negroes

Jacob and Sall. 3<sup>rd</sup> ly, I give and bequeath to my Grand Daughter Ziporha Fassitt the following Negroes Sarah and Tab. 4<sup>th</sup> ly, I give and bequeath to my daughter Sally Fassitt one Bed and Furniture and also a bed at Queponco. 5<sup>th</sup> ly, I give and bequeath to my Daughter Sally Fassitt three hundred and fifty acres part of a tract of Land being in the Forrest known by the name Discovery to be laid out as she and her brother can best agree. 6<sup>th</sup> ly, I give and bequeath to my daughter Sally Fassitt thirty five head of Cattle also thirty pounds of my out standing debts 7<sup>th</sup> ly, I Give and bequeath to my grand daughter Sally Whit ten head of Cattle and then head of Sheep at the age of sixteen or day of marriage to be paid by my executor. 8<sup>th</sup> ly, it is my will and desire that all my personal Estate which I give to my daughter Catharine White during her live time which William White has now in possession should be the property of my Grand daughter Sally White and also a large mahogany Table now in the possession of William White. 9<sup>th</sup> ly, I give and bequeath to my friend John Purnell son of Wm that part of Rackliff Good luck being on the southwest & westernmost side of a Creek called Point Creek until it comes to a division that Major Purnell made between his two sons Zadok and William provided the said John Purnell pays all the expenses that has occurred in securing the said Land also all the expenses that has since accrued on the said Land. 10<sup>th</sup> ly, I give and bequeath to my friend Zadok Purnell all that Land that is in Rackliffe Good Luck being on the south side of a division between him and his brother William made by Major Purnell his father during the said Zadoks natural life provided the said Zadok pays all the expenses for taking up and securing the Land. also all other expenses that has since accrued on the said Land and after the decease of my friend Zadok the remainder over my son John Rackliffe his heirs and Assigns forever. 11<sup>th</sup> ly, I Give and bequeath to my son John Rackliffe his heirs and Assigns forever six hundred and sixty eight pounds and six pence it being a claim against William Wats. 12<sup>th</sup> ly, I Give and bequeath to my son John Rackliffe and my son in Law Rous Fassitt my part of a Vessel which now lies on the stocks at John Fassitts to be equally divided between them. 13<sup>th</sup> ly, I give and bequeath to my son John Rackliffe all the residue of my personal Estate not heretofore given. I do constitute appoint and ordain my son John Rackliffe my sold and whole Executor of this my last Will and Testament revoking annulling and recalling another Will and Wills heretofore made...this fifteenth day of October in the year of our Lord one thousand seven hundred and eighty eight.