CAPSULE SUMMARY Hettie Parker and Gertrude Downey House MIHP#: F-6-102-2 810 West Main Street Emmitsburg, Maryland Date: c.1870s Access: Private

Representing a repurposed one-room schoolhouse, 810 W. Main Street is a front-gabled frame building with a small, shed-roof addition appended to its southeast corner. Together with its addition, it encloses approximately 770 square feet. Unlike other buildings on the street, it is set back from the curb and surrounded by a lawn. The property includes a modern block garage, which is not subject to the survey. Built in around 1880, as a school, the residence is associated with African American women Hettie Parker and Gertrude Downey. The property stayed in African American ownership until 1964.

Likely erected in the 1870s, as Emmitsburg School No. 3, the frame, front-gabled one-room schoolhouse served only for a short period for instruction. In 1904, Hettie Parker, an African American woman, acquired the property, forming part of a small Black cluster community along West Main Street. Isaac and Gertrude Downey, an older Black couple, gained the property in the late 1920s. They lived in residence through the 1940s and were likely responsible for making the addition and other small alterations.

The African American cluster on West Main Street disappeared, with only the Downeys staying beyond 1920. Unlike Emmitsburg's Lincoln Avenue, African American neighborhood, West Main Street could not sustain itself. Still, the Black-associated homes on the street are important for reflecting African American settlement in northern Frederick County. For this reason, 810 West Main Street is recommended as a Contributing resource to the Emmitsburg Historic District, eligible for Criterion A, Ethnic, Black History, at the local level of significance.

historic	Hettie Parker and Gertrude Downey House						
other	Emmitsburg School No. 3; Isaac and Gertrude Downey House						
2. Location							
street and number	810 West Main Str	reet				not for	publication
city, town	Emmitsburg					vicinity	
county	Frederick						
3. Owner of	Property (John J. and Marga	(give names and mailing ac aretta K. Working	ldresses o	of all owners)		
street and number	PO Box 453				telephone		
city, town	Emmitsburg	S	tate M	D	zip code	21727	
	of Legal Des	cription					
Location		rick County Circuit Court, L	and Reco	rd liber	06196 folio	00256	
	i of deeds, etc. Fredei						

5. Primary Location of Additional Data

 x
 Contributing Resource in National Register District

 Contributing Resource in Local Historic District

 Determined Eligible for the National Register/Maryland Register

 Determined Ineligible for the National Register/Maryland Register

 Recorded by HABS/HAER

 Historic Structure Report or Research Report at MHT

 Other:

6. Classification

Category	Ownership	Current Function		Resource Co	ount	
district	public	agriculture	landscape	Contributing	Noncon	tributing
<u>x</u> building(s)	<u>x</u> private	commerce/trade	recreation/culture	1	1	buildings
structure	both	defense	religion	0	0	sites
site		domestic	social	0	0	structures
object		education	transportation	0	0	objects
		funerary	work in progress	1	1	Total
		government	unknown			_
		health care industry	<u>x</u> vacant/not in use other:	Number of Co previously list	•	

*Located within boundary of Emmitsburg Historic District (NRHP 92000076)

7. Description

Condition

excellent	<u>deteriorated</u>
good	ruins
<u>x</u> fair	altered

Prepare both a one paragraph summary and a comprehensive description of the resource and its various elements as it exists today.

Summary

Representing a repurposed one-room schoolhouse, 810 W. Main Street is a front-gabled frame building with a small, shed-roof addition appended to its southeast corner. Together with its addition, it encloses approximately 770 square feet. Unlike other buildings on the street, it is set back from the curb and surrounded by a lawn. The property includes a modern block garage, which is not subject to the survey. Built in the 1870s as a white school, the residence was later associated with African American women Hettie Parker and Gertrude Downey. The property stayed in African American ownership until 1964.

Setting

The house sits in the middle of its lot, near the west end of West Main Street, Emmitsburg, Frederick County, in the Emmitsburg Historic District (Photo 1). This area was the stopping point of Emmitsburg's historic settlement. Adjacent houses are free-standing and have more room than similar buildings in the downtown core. These residences, however, are still set close to the street, reflecting a historic pattern. A narrow alley runs behind the house, and beyond is a shallow tributary of Flat Run. The alley is populated with a few historic outbuildings, including wood-frame stables. Past the willow-lined stream are former farm fields, recently converted into a residential tract.

Building

The original portion of the house, formerly a one-room school erected in c.1870s¹, has a strong front-gabled plan of a rectangular box covered with a medium pitch roof (Photo 2). The original school portion rests on a raised red-brick foundation. The bricks sit on a base of Catoctin Greenstone. It is clad with weathered, unpainted German siding and hemmed with 3¼" corner boards. These elements are fastened to the interior by 2½"-long machine-cut nails with tapering shanks and flat, rectangular heads. Its gables are ornamented with delicate cornice returns. A standing seam roof, painted silver, covers the building. Older half-round galvanized gutters trace its long elevations.

Its front street façade has a four-sided "bay" window. Of recent construction, the window is made of single-light crank casements set in a structure of painted plywood. A relative of former owner Mary Alice Krom recalled that Mary installed the window to display pottery that she sold from the house.²

Its south elevation holds its current entry. The elevation is fenestrated with tall, 6/6, wood sash windows. The wood frame windows hold 10"x18" lights. They are bracketed by wood shutters painted green (Photo 2). The mortise-and-tenon assembled shutters are historic and found on a few older homes near the town square on Main Street. Rickety wood steps lead to a small landing giving entry to the building. The entrance is fitted with

¹ This date represents references to the school in Frederick County School Commissioners' minutes. The building is likely older, but no information was found establishing a date of construction.

² "Notes from June 27, 2022 interview with Paul Joseph Krom." Krom is the son of Mary Alice Krom, the second to last owner of the property.

Name: Hettie Parker and Gertrude Downey House Continuation Sheet

Number 7 Page 1

what appears to be an older ½-light-and-wood panel door (Photo 2). A change in the siding at this location, and a consideration fenestration of the north elevation, suggests the door replaced a window.

At the southeast corner is a shed-roof frame addition of approximately 182 square feet (Photos 2 & 3). The simple structure ties into the original building with beams resting on a ledger tacked onto its siding. It is made of heavy horizontal boards nailed into a framework of studs. Gray, textured asphalt shingles cover the addition. The face of the original building, including a wood panel door, remains intact behind it. A six-panel wood door gives entry from its west façade. The south elevation has four openings holding barn sash in various levels of deterioration. A decayed wood plank enters the addition from the east side. Its floor has collapsed.

The east elevation of the original building rises approximately 3.5' above grade and has two openings (Photo 3. At ground level is a 6/6 wood sash with a pie window box affixed to it. This feature was used by the last African American owner, Gertrude Downey, who made pies and other baked goods as part of her income.³ This feature, and the chimney above, suggest a kitchen historically sat along the east side of the house. Below is a coal chute leading to the basement, which housed a furnace. The presence of the basement suggests the school is original to the location.

Facing onto a neighboring property, the north elevation shows its original composition (Photo 4). Its wall has symmetrical window openings, holding the same tall, 6/6 sash found on the south façade. The pattern and placement of the windows indicate it was originally a schoolhouse. Windows of this size and design were used prominently along side elevations to bring in light and provide ventilation. In this way, the building reflects a standard design historically found in other one-room schoolhouses in the county.⁴

Integrity

One-room frame schoolhouses were particularly susceptible to being moved. They were often sold to a private owner and turned into houses after public use. As a private home, they rarely maintained their original form, often receiving multiple additions and changes of fenestration. The one-room school, maintaining its overall original form, is in itself rare. School records indicate this building was threatened with a similar fate but remained on the site, mostly unchanged. In this way, the former school, and home to Hettie Parker AND Gertrude Downey, retains sufficient historic integrity to communicate its original use and the early alterations made by African American owners.

³ Ibid.

⁴ A 1935 inventory of Frederick County schools recorded many gable-front, wood-frame buildings of relatively the same design. Most of them were identified as "Colored." These were located in Buckeystown, Pleasant View, Ebenezer, Comstock, and other communities with a concentrated Black population. Helfenstein & Urner, Agents, "Inspection and Survey Report of Public Schools, Frederick County, Maryland," (Unpublished report, May 1935).

8. Signific	ance			Inventory No. F-6-102-2
Period	Areas of Significance	Check and	justify below	
1600-1699 1700-1799 <u>x</u> 1800-1899 <u>x</u> 1900-1999 2000-	agriculture archeology architecture art commerce communications community planning conservation	 economics education engineering entertainment/ recreation ethnic heritage exploration/ settlement 	health/medicine industry invention landscape archit law literature maritime history military	philosophy politics/government ecture religion science social history
Specific dates	1880; 1896; 1904;	1964	Architect/Builder	Unknown
Construction da	ates c.1870s			
Evaluation for:				
<u> </u>	National Register		Maryland Register	not evaluated

Prepare a one-paragraph summary statement of significance addressing applicable criteria, followed by a narrative discussion of the history of the resource and its context. (For compliance projects, complete evaluation on a DOE Form – see manual.)

Summary

Erected likely in the 1870s, as Emmitsburg School No. 3, the frame, front-gabled one-room schoolhouse served only for a short period for instruction. In 1904, Hettie Parker, an African American woman, acquired the property, forming part of a small Black cluster community along West Main Street. Isaac and Gertrude Downey, an older Black couple, gained the property in the late 1920s. They lived in residence through the 1940s and were likely responsible for making the addition and other small alterations.

The African American cluster on West Main Street disappeared, with only the Downeys staying beyond 1920. Unlike Emmitsburg's Lincoln Avenue, African American neighborhood, West Main Street could not sustain itself. Still, the Black-associated homes on the street are important for reflecting African American settlement in northern Frederick County. For this reason, 810 West Main Street is recommended as a Contributing resource to the Emmitsburg Historic District, eligible for Criterion A, Ethnic, Black History, at the local level of significance.

Historical Overview

Historically located at the far west extent of Emmitsburg, the area along the Waynesboro Road saw little development beyond the National Hotel, an informal demarcation of the west end of town. The name of the alley behind the house, Tannery Drive, reflects its early use. Opened in the late 18th century, the tanyard continued to operate until its third owner, Jacob Motter, shut it down in 1880. The tannery and its beam house are depicted on the 1873 atlas map for Frederick County as a large L-shaped building (Figure 2). Tanneries were typically located on the outskirts of town, on less valuable land. The treating of hides, and the odor they created, relegated them to less populated areas.

With the closure of the tannery and selling of lots from Jacob Motter's property, residential development in Emmitsburg began to shift west.⁵ This development coincided with the Shield's Addition, a large area making up Emmitsburg's "west end." In 1787, William Shield purchased 106 acres from William Emmit, who had platted the town only two years earlier. Emmit created a grid of town lots, divided into quadrants by a principal

⁵ James A. Helman, *History of Emmitsburg, Maryland* (Frederick, Md.: Citizens Press, 1906), 50.

Name: Hettie Parker and Gertrude Downey House Continuation Sheet

Number <u>8</u> Page 1

intersection. The plan resulted in a linear community, with Main Street experiencing the main growth. North and south of this principal artery were smaller alleys, which initially saw little development.

The subject area was platted in 1877 by John S. Shields, and sold to Isaac S. Annan, a prominent Emmitsburg merchant and banker, and his brother. It is unclear when the school was constructed, but by 1879, it appeared already abandoned. Father White of Emmitsburg offered the Frederick County School Commissioners \$500 to acquire the building for its wood. The sale was never completed.⁶ The 1890 Sanborn Fire Insurance map, the first to cover West Main Street beyond the hotel, shows the present structure in a lot designated as a lumberyard. The building itself is identified as a vacant school (Figure 3).

The West Main Black Community

In 1904, Hettie Parker, an African American woman, acquired the property holding the former school from Isaac Annan. Annan, who would die four years later of a heart attack, sold Parker the lot with its 60' of frontage and several buildings.⁷ Parker, who was recorded in the 1900 census living on West Main as a renter, may have already occupied the property.⁸

Born in Pennsylvania in around 1855, Hettie (sometimes Hetty or Hattie) was married to Samuel A. Parker, a Black barber and a native of Delaware. The 1880 federal census documented the couple residing in Emmitsburg with their two children, Jeremiah and Georgeanna.⁹ Jeremiah, 2, was indicated to have been born in Pennsylvania, while Georgeanna, 1, had been born in Maryland, suggesting the family had recently moved to Emmitsburg. It is unspecified where they lived, but they were close to Black neighbors Peter Brown and John Cousins and their families.

While the husband disappeared from future Emmitsburg censuses, Hettie was recorded to be living in the former schoolhouse through 1910. That year's enumeration found her living alone, owning the property and working as a laundress. Laundering for private homes was a typical job for African American women. The work could be arduous, involving picking up and delivering laundry, working in hot and dangerous conditions, and long hours of ironing and folding. Yet, the job of a laundress or washerwoman allowed women to establish their own businesses and become independent.¹⁰

⁶ Minutes, School Commissioners of Frederick County (August 20, 1878 to July 7, 1879), 139.

⁷ Land Records of Frederick County, 267/152, Isaac Annan to Hetty Parker, 1904.

⁸ U.S. Census Bureau, 1900, Census Place: Emmitsburg, Frederick, Maryland; Roll: 622; Page: 19; Enumeration District: 0012; FHL microfilm: 1240622.

⁹ Ibid., 1880, Census Place: Emmitsburg, Frederick, Maryland; Roll: 510; Page: 205C; Enumeration District: 075. ¹⁰ See C. G. Woodson, "The Negro Washerwoman, A Vanishing Figure," *The Journal of Negro History* (Vol. XV, No. 3, July 1930), 269 and Elizabeth Clark-Lewis, *Living In, Living Out: African American Domestics and the Great Migration* (New York: Kodansha USA Inc., 1996).

Name: Hettie Parker and Gertrude Downey House Continuation Sheet

Number <u>8</u> Page 2

Hettie left Emmitsburg in the 1910s, relocating to Ashbury Park, New Jersey, to be with her daughter, Georgia, who lived in a rented house with lodgers in a historically Black neighborhood. During World War I, New Jersey and its host of war-related industries attracted Blacks from throughout the South, who moved to the state for better-paying jobs. By 1930, the state's African American population had nearly tripled since before the war.¹¹

Based on the 1924 Sanborn map, Parker likely added a frame porch to the façade, which was removed by the next owners (Figure 5). Parker sold her Emmitsburg property three years later to Isaac and Gertrude Downey, an older African American couple.¹²

Born in Mechanicsburg, Pennsylvania, in 1868, Isaac worked on farms as a young man. He came to the area in the 1890s, initially employed as an orchardist for John Hollinger in Freedom Township. Later he worked on the Frailey farm as a stableman. The 1900 census listed him as a servant at the home of Harry G. Beam, a farmer, in Emmitsburg.¹³ Five years his junior, Gertrude Brown Downey grew up on Lincoln Avenue, a more developed Emmitsburg African American neighborhood. Before marriage, she had worked as a housemaid. The couple appears to have had no children.

The couple was living in their West Main Street home when recorded by the 1940 census.¹⁴ They were the last African Americans left on the street. Isaac, 76, continued to work as a stableman, putting in 52 weeks in 1939 for an annual salary of \$200.¹⁵ They owned their home valued at \$300, considerably less than neighboring properties. Based on a Sanborn map, they presumably built the addition before 1945 (Figure 6). Isaac Downey died three years later, at age 74.¹⁶

Gertrude "Toodie" Downey continued to reside in the house, turning it into her place of business. In the front room, she established a laundry where she washed and ironed clothes for her primarily white clients.¹⁷ She turned part of the room into a small bakery. Here she baked goods, chiefly pies, sold to Emmitsburg residents. The operation included several wooden pie safes and an ice freezer in the basement. Gertrude lived in the smaller room at the back. Heat came from a massive brick fireplace in the front room; water from a cistern and well on the south side of the home.

¹¹ Giles R. Wright, *Afro Americans in New Jersey: A Short History* (Trenton: N.J.: New Jersey Historical Commission, 1980), 54.

¹² Land Records of Frederick County, 364/272, Hetty Parker to Isaac and Gertrude Downey, 1927.

¹³ U.S. Census Bureau, 1900, Census Place: Emmitsburg, Frederick, Maryland; Roll: 622; Page: 13; Enumeration District: 0012; FHL microfilm: 1240622.

¹⁴ Ibid., 1940, Census Place: Emmitsburg, Frederick, Maryland; Roll: m-t0627-01548; Page: 8A; Enumeration District: 11-25.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ "Isaac Downey," *Frederick Post*, February 6, 1943, 5.

¹⁷ "Notes from June 27, 2022 interview with Paul Joseph Krom."

Name: Hettie Parker and Gertrude Downey House Continuation Sheet

Number <u>8</u> Page 3

In 1964, the property was sold at auction from the estate of Gertrude Downey. Mary Alice Krom, an Emmitsburg resident, acquired it for \$25,000.¹⁸ Krom, an artist and potter, converted the former school into a studio. Alice gave lessons in the front room to Emmitsburg children and sold her own pottery, marked "MK," from the house. To increase visibility, she installed the bay window across the front façade. Mary Alice Krom died in 2006, with the property acquired the same year by its current owner. The building is currently unused.

Conclusion

The building, mostly in its original configuration, is significant in itself as a well-preserved example of a oneroom, frame schoolhouse. Adding to this significance is its association with Hettie Parker and Gertrude Downey, members of a fledgling African American community. Both women, who lived alone, turned the former school into their place of business, with Downey, perhaps the most enterprising, using it as a combined laundry and bakery. For these reasons, 810 West Main Street is recommended as a contributing resource to the Emmitsburg Historic District nomination.

¹⁸ Land Records of Frederick County, 712/690, Estate of Gertrude Brown Downey to Mary Alice Krom, 1964; "Land Sales Total \$90,000," *The News*, November 10, 1964, 4.

9. Major Bibliographical References

See Continuation Page.

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of surveyed property	0.172	_	
Acreage of historical setting	0.172		
Quadrangle name	Emmistburg, MD	Quadrangle scale:	1:24000

Verbal boundary description and justification

The selected survey boundary is depicted in Figure 1. It encompasses the house its immediate setting, located within the current tax parcel. The boundary includes all the property historically associated with the building.

11. Form Prepared by

name/title	John W. Murphey, Architectural History Services, for:			
organization	Catoctin Furnace Historical Society, Inc.	date	July 31, 2022	
street & number	12610 Catoctin Furnace Road	telephone	240-288-7396	
city or town	Thurmont	state	MD	

The Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties was officially created by an Act of the Maryland Legislature to be found in the Annotated Code of Maryland, Article 41, Section 181 KA, 1974 supplement.

The survey and inventory are being prepared for information and record purposes only and do not constitute any infringement of individual property rights.

return to:

Maryland Historical Trust Maryland Department of Planning 100 Community Place Crownsville, MD 21032-2023 410-697-9591

Name: Hettie Parker and Gertrude Downey House Continuation Sheet

Number <u>9</u> Page 1

Bond, Isaac. "Map of Frederick County, Maryland." Baltimore: E. Sachse and Company, 1858.

Frederick County, Maryland. Land Records: various entries, 1877-1964.

Frederick County Public Schools Meeting Minutes: various entries, 1877-1897.

Helfenstein & Urner, Agents, Inspection and Survey Report of Public Schools, Frederick County, Maryland." Unpublished report, May 1935..

Helman, James A. History of Emmitsburg, Maryland. Frederick, Md.: Citizens Press, 1906.

Krom, Paul Joseph. "Notes from June 27, 2022 interview with Paul Joseph Krom." Notes on file with the Catoctin Furnace Historical Society.

Lake, D. J. Atlas of Frederick County Maryland. Philadelphia: C. O. Titus & Company, 1873.

Scharf, J. Thomas. *History of Western Maryland*. Vol. I-II. Philadelphia: L.H. Everts, 1882.

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_____. 1900, Census Place: Emmitsburg, Frederick, Maryland; Roll: 622; Page: 19; Enumeration District: 0012; FHL microfilm: 1240622.

_____. 1940, Census Place: Emmitsburg, Frederick, Maryland; Roll: m-t0627-01548; Page: 8A; Enumeration District: 11-25.

- Wallace, Edith B. "African American History of the Monocacy-Catoctin Region, Northern Frederick County, Maryland. Historic context prepared for the Catoctin Furnace Historical Society et al, March 8, 2022, Draft. Context on file with the Catoctin Furnace Historical Society.
- Wright, Giles R. *Afro Americans in New Jersey: A Short History.* Trenton: N.J.: New Jersey Historical Commission, 1980.

Name: Hettie Parker and Gertrude Downey House Continuation Sheet

Number <u>Photos</u> Page 1

PHOTO LOG

Name of Photographer: John W. Murphey Date of Photograph: February 26 and March 2, 2022, as indicated Location of Original Digital File: Maryland SHPO

Photo 1 of 4: West (front) elevation, camera facing northeast. February 26, 2022. F-6-102-2_2022-02-26_01.tif

Photo 2 of 4: South elevation, camera facing northwest. February 26, 2022. F-6-102-2_2022-02-26_02.tif

Photo 3 of 4: East elevation, camera facing northwest. February 26, 2022. F-6-102-2_2022-02-26_03.tif

Photo 4 of 4: East elevation, camera facing southeast. March 2, 2022. F-6-102-2_2022-03-02_04.tif Inventory No. F-6-102-2

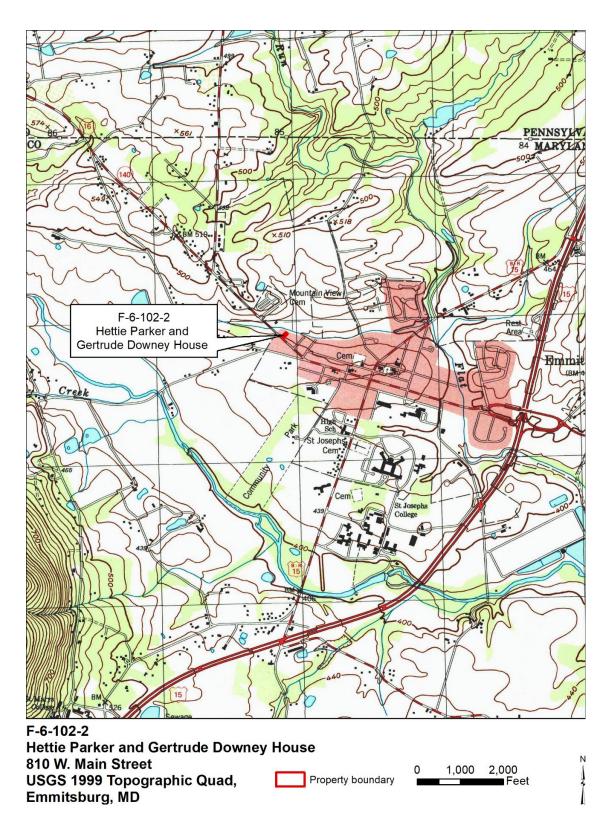


Figure 1: Survey Boundary Map.



Figure 1A: Plan of property.

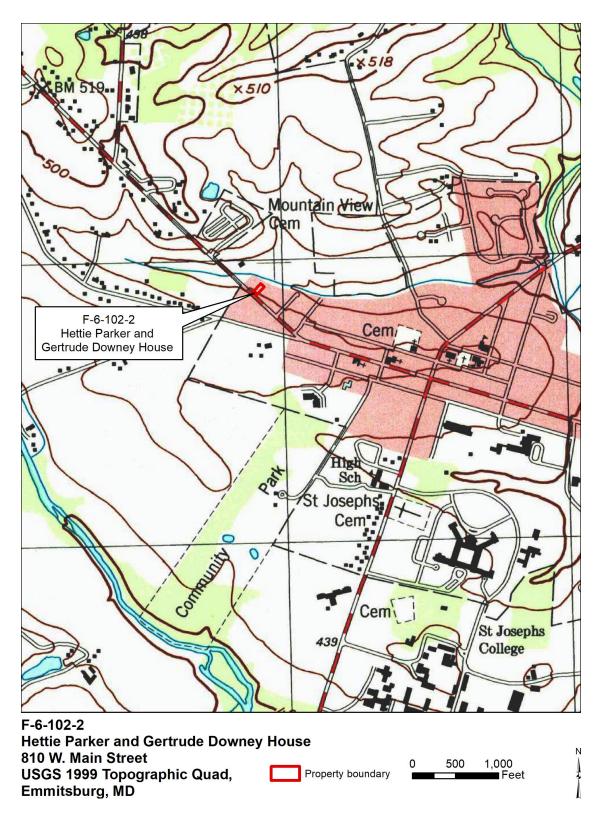


Figure 1B: Survey Boundary Map (1:12,000).

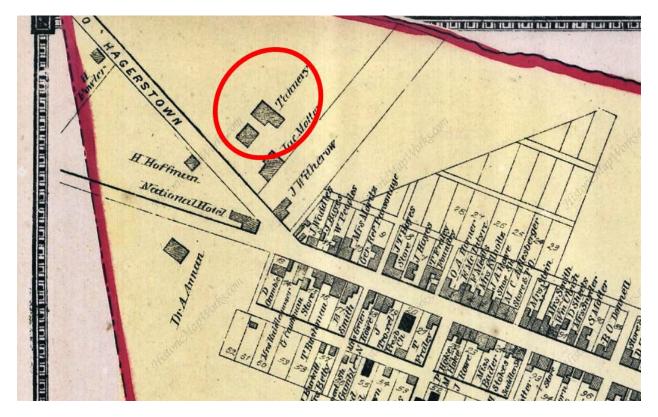


Figure 2: Emmitsburg, 1873 *Atlas of Frederick County Maryland*. Tannery circled.

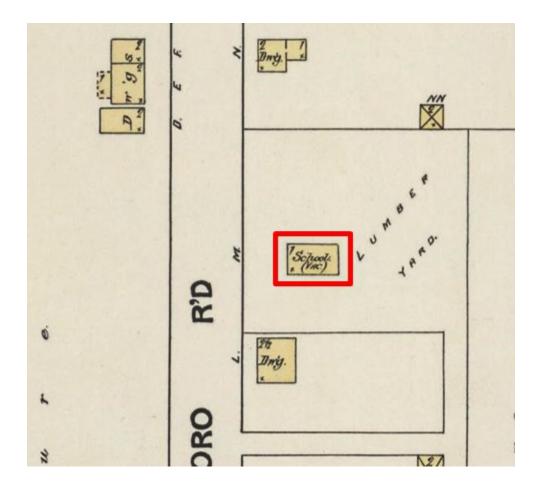


Figure 3: 1890 Emmitsburg Sanborn Fire Insurance Map.

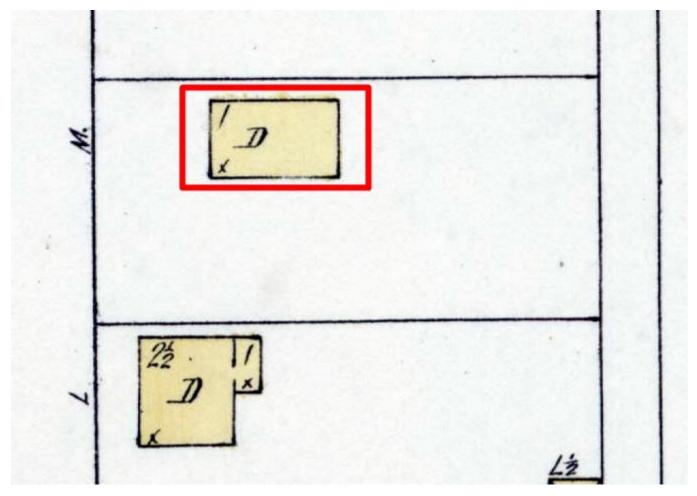


Figure 4: 1910 Emmitsburg Sanborn Fire Insurance Map.

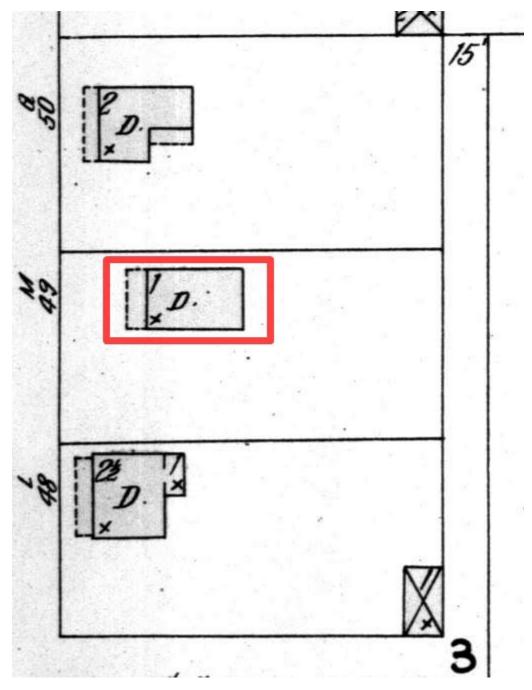


Figure 5: 1924 Emmitsburg Sanborn Fire Insurance Map.

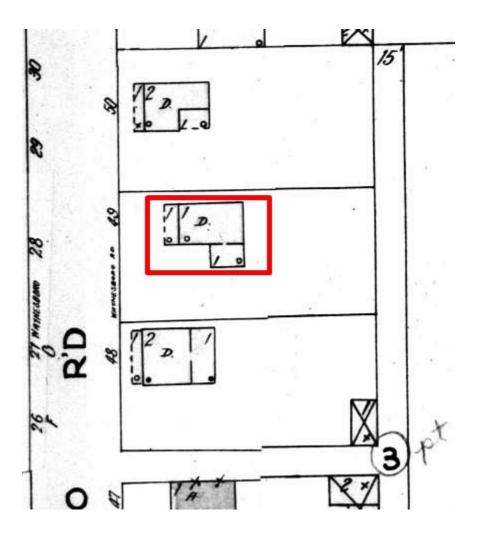


Figure 6: 1945 Emmitsburg Sanborn Fire Insurance Map.

Chain of Title

Book 712/Page 690, Estate of Gertrude Brown Downey to Mary Alice Krom, 1964.

Book 364/Page 272, Hetty Parker to Isaac and Gertrude Downey, 1927.

Book 267/Page 152, Isaac Annan to Hetty Parker (lot with buildings, 60 ft frontage), 1904

Hettie Parker and Gertrude Downey House Photo Log

MIHP No.: F-6-102-2

MIHP Name: Hettie Parker and Gertrude Downey House

County: Frederick

Photographers: John W. Murphey

Dates: February 26 and March 2, 2022, as indicated

Ink and Paper Combination: Epson UltraChrome pigmented ink on Epson Premium Semimatte Photo Paper

Image File Name	Image Description
F-6-102-2_2022-02-26_01.tif	West (front) elevation, camera facing northeast. February 26,
	2022.
F-6-102-2_2022-02-26_02.tif	South elevation, camera facing northwest. February 26, 2022.
F-6-102-2_2022-02-26_03.tif	East elevation, camera facing northwest. February 26, 2022.
F-6-102-2_2022-03-02_04.tif	East elevation, camera facing southeast. March 2, 2022.



F-6-102-2_2022-02-26_01.tif West (front) elevation, camera facing northeast. February 26, 2022.



F-6-102-2_2022-02-26_02.tif South elevation, camera facing northwest. February 26, 2022.



F-6-102-2_2022-02-26_03.tif East elevation, camera facing northwest. February 26, 2022.



F-6-102-2_2022-03-02_04.tif East elevation, camera facing southeast. March 2, 2022.