

HO-43
BELMONT
ELKRIDGE
PUBLIC

CIRCA 1738

BELMONT IS ONE OF HOWARD COUNTY'S EARLIEST STRUCTURES, BEGUN IN 1738 IN ELKRIDGE ON A TRACT PATENTED IN 1695 AS "MOORE'S MORNING CHOICE." BUILT BY CALEB DORSEY, JR., THE "IRON MASTER" AND HIS WIFE, PRISCILLA HILL, BELMONT HAS BEEN OWNED BY SIX GENERATIONS OF DORSEYS. GIVEN TO THE SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION IN 1964, IT PRESENTLY PROVIDES A CONFERENCE CENTER FOR THE PURSUIT AND SHARING OF KNOWLEDGE.

THE LAND SURROUNDING BELMONT IS AS SIGNIFICANT AS THE HOUSE ITSELF; THE SLOPING WOODLAND REMAINING MUCH AS IT WAS IN THE DAYS OF CALEB DORSEY. ARCHITECTURALLY, IT IS BUILT ON THE FIVE PART PLAN WITH ORIGINAL CENTRAL BRICK STRUCTURE CONNECTED TO EARLY EAST AND WEST WINGS BY HYPHENS. THE CENTRAL STRUCTURE IS COVERED WITH PLASTER, FIVE BAYS WIDE AND ORIGINALLY TWO BAYS DEEP AND ONE AND A HALF STORIES HIGH, WITH PITCHED GABLE ROOF AND GABLED DORMERS. WIDE CHIMNEYS ARE INSET INTO ITS EAST AND WEST WALLS AND A GABLED PORTICO COVERS THE SOUTH ENTRANCE.

RESTORATION AND ENLARGEMENT OF THE HOUSE CREATED A NORTH EXTENSION TO THIS CENTRAL BUILDING BLOCK, PROVIDING FOR A FIVE BAY WIDE, ONE BAY DEEP, CONFERENCE ROOM AND OFFICE. EAST AND WEST CHIMNEYS FOR THIS ADDITION MATCH THE ORIGINAL EAST AND WEST CHIMNEYS. THE GABLED ROOF NOW BECOMES A MANSARD ROOF. DORMERS INSET INTO THE NORTH GABLE MATCH THOSE ON THE SOUTH. AN EAST WING FOR USE AS A SERVICE AREA WAS ALSO ADDED. ALL RESTORATION AND ADDITIONS HAVE BEEN UNUSUALLY WELL INTEGRATED AND SENSITIVELY EXECUTED TO MAINTAIN THE ORIGINAL INTEGRITY OF THE STRUCTURE. A PAIR OF SIGNATURE PLAQUES, EACH BEARING THE INSCRIPTION "CPD 1738", ARE MOUNTED ON EITHER SIDE OF THE ENTRANCE DOOR, BENEATH THE PORTICO.

MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST WORKSHEET

NOMINATION FORM
for the
NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES, NATIONAL PARKS SERVICE

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

1. NAME

COMMON:
Belmont

AND/OR HISTORIC:
"Moore's Morning Choice"

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER:
Belmont Conference Center, 6555 Belmont Woods Road

CITY OR TOWN:
Elkridge

STATE: Maryland 21227 COUNTY: Howard

3. CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> District <input type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Structure <input type="checkbox"/> Object	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public <input type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both	Public Acquisition: <input type="checkbox"/> In Process <input type="checkbox"/> Being Considered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress
PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)			
<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Educational <input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Government <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial <input type="checkbox"/> Military <input type="checkbox"/> Museum	<input type="checkbox"/> Park <input type="checkbox"/> Private Residence <input type="checkbox"/> Religious <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Scientific	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Comments _____ _____ _____

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNER'S NAME:
The Smithsonian Institute

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN: Washington, D.C. STATE:

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.:
Hall of Records

STREET AND NUMBER:
Howard County Courthouse

CITY OR TOWN: Ellicott City STATE: Maryland 21043

Title Reference of Current Deed (Book & Pg. #): Tax Map 32

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY:
Howard County Historic Sites Inventory

DATE OF SURVEY: 1976 Federal State County Local

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:
Maryland Historical Trust

STREET AND NUMBER:
21 State Circle

CITY OR TOWN: Annapolis STATE: Maryland 21401

7. DESCRIPTION	
CONDITION	<div style="text-align: right; font-size: small;">(Check One)</div> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Excellent <input type="checkbox"/> Good <input type="checkbox"/> Fair <input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated <input type="checkbox"/> Ruins <input type="checkbox"/> Unexposed
	<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> <div style="width: 45%;"> <div style="text-align: center; font-size: small;">(Check One)</div> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Altered* <input type="checkbox"/> Uncolored </div> <div style="width: 45%;"> <div style="text-align: center; font-size: small;">(Check One)</div> <input type="checkbox"/> Moved <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Original Site </div> </div>
DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (If known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE	
<p>The entrance to Belmont is located on Elibank Road about 1/8 mile from the intersection of Montgomery Road. A country road winds through meadow and pasture land to the old home, reputed to be the first home erected at Elkridge Landing.</p> <p>An examination of the stone foundation reveals a tunnel which passed under the east hyphen from the central foyer to the dining room for the use of servants. The walls of the tunnel are laid in English bond. The stone foundation under the dining area matches very well with the stone foundation of the central portion of the building. This along with old ceiling beams found in the east wing of the building give an early date to the east and west wings of the building which are purported to have been completed by 1800. An unusual Roman arch is situated on the east bay of the north wall foundation. Double wooden paneled doors are decorated with six lites fitting into the upper half of the full arched door panel. A diagonally paneled wrought iron grill on the exterior is bolted on the interior. A circular drain is located on the north side or exterior of the door. This door at one time leading to the gardens, now leads into the basement of the first floor conference room. Old log beams are located under the central portion of the house, with brick work used to square up door and cellar window openings.</p> <p>An interesting vault is located on the west basement wall of the conference room with a Mosler Safe Company door, manufactured in Hamilton, Ohio where wine and valuables were kept by the Honorable David K.E. Bruce, statesman and diplomat, who sold Belmont to the Smithsonian Institute to insure its future. An old wooden refrigerator with interior compartments is located in a room east of the vault. Pigs and chickens were slaughtered on the property and stored here to provide food for the household.</p> <p>The original structure of brick covered with plaster, constructed in 1737, was a five bay wide, two bay deep, one and a half story house with pitched gable roof and gabled dormers. Chimneys are inset into the west and east walls.</p> <p>A gabled portico supported by four columns surmounted by a full pediment leads to the central rectangular door flanked by half columns and surmounted by a four lite transom. A pair of signature plaques each bearing the inscription "CPD 1738" are mounted on either side of the entrance door.</p> <p>Three high pitched gable dormers with rectangular casement windows with four lites on each side and shingles on the east and west sides of the dormers are set into the south elevation of the roof at regular intervals.</p> <p>A five part plan now exists and through examination of the foundation was completed at an early date. The plan consists of the original structure at the center, and an east and west wing connected by hyphens.</p> <p>The east and west wings are of identical construction as are the two hyphens which connect the central structure to its east and west wings. The east and west wings are two stories high and 2 bays deep with proportional and symmetrical fenestration. The first floor windows are double-hung and contain nine-over-nine lites with wooden sills and green paneled wooden shutters. The two second story windows are similar and proportional, having six-over-six lites.</p>	

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

(continued)

SIGNIFICANCE			
PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)			
<input type="checkbox"/> Pre-Columbian	<input type="checkbox"/> 16th Century	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 18th Century	<input type="checkbox"/> 20th Century
<input type="checkbox"/> 15th Century	<input type="checkbox"/> 17th Century	<input type="checkbox"/> 19th Century	
SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known) 1737			
AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)			
<input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal	<input type="checkbox"/> Education	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Political	<input type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning
<input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> Engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> Religion/Philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify)
<input type="checkbox"/> Historic	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Industry		_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> Invention	<input type="checkbox"/> Science	_____
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Architecture	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Landscape Architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Art	<input type="checkbox"/> Literature	<input type="checkbox"/> Social/Humanitarian	_____
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> Military	<input type="checkbox"/> Theater	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Communications	<input type="checkbox"/> Music	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Conservation			_____
STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE			
<p>The significance of Belmont lies in several areas, architecture, 18th 19th and 20th century history, landscape architecture, and the political scene.</p> <p>Architecturally Belmont is representative of the federal period which has its roots in the English Renaissance. The east and west wings, though only two stories high are reminiscent of the additions given to Hampton Court in England with hyphens connecting the central structure to its wings. Despite alterations and additions to the original structure, the integrity of Belmont's original plan has been maintained. Built by Caleb Dorsey, "of Belmont" with English brick brought over in his own vessels. This has been covered with plaster. Walls of the hall and the drawing room are panelled in oak. Much of the interior has been rearranged to accommodate its present use as the Smithsonian Institution's Conference Center at Elkridge. The drawing room, however, remains much the same. A stair case in the hall has been rearranged and original bannisters used elsewhere. Again, this rearrangement of the interior has been so carefully and tastefully done that none of the original charm and character of the house is lacking.</p> <p>Built on the five part plan, an east wing has been added for use as a service wing. This in no way disturbs the composition of the house which due to the topography of the site slopes west to east. The service area creates an anchor and due to the landscaping blends nicely into the plan of the original house. Historically, the property is significant as it is located on one of the first Howard County, then Ann Arundel County land grants. Mordecai Moore directed survey parties and one autumn encamped on the "ridge of elks" on the heights above the Patapsco River. He arose early before anyone else and what he saw is best described in the following quote:</p> <p>"The mists were rising from the river, and the land sloped away from his feet to a generous horizon on three sides while behind was a little hill which would protect one from the northwest winds. It was an ideal site for a home, and Mordecai Moore was not slow to realize this fact. "Here will I build me a house" he said to his soul and after he had awakened his companions and the sun had climbed up into the sky he set himself to survey a tract of land which included more than ten thousand acres centering at the point whereon he had his camp. This tract he named in his patent papers, approved, in due course by the proprietary "Moore's morning choice." Here, not many years later, Belmont was erected on the site of Moore's morning camp." (5 May 1689 Dr. Moore laid out Belmont)</p>			

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Newman, Harry Wright. Ann Arundel Gentry. Annapolis, 1933.
 Stein, Charles F., Jr. Origin and History of Howard County, Maryland. Baltimore, 1972.
 Warfield, J. P. The Founders of A A and Howard, Counties, Maryland. Baltimore 1967.
 Hammond, John Martin. Colonial Mansions of Maryland and Delaware. Port Washington, NY.
 Hall of Records, Ann Arundel County-1972, Annapolis, Maryland
 Hall of Records, Howard County, Maryland
 "Belmont". Howard County Historic Society, Inc. Vol. I, No.2 (March, 1959)

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY				O R	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES				
CORNER	LATITUDE				LONGITUDE				
	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds
NW	°	'	"	°	'	"	°	'	"
NE	°	'	"	°	'	"	°	'	"
SE	°	'	"	°	'	"	°	'	"
SW	°	'	"	°	'	"	°	'	"

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY:

Acreage Justification:
 339.22 Acres Tax Map #32
 Please see 419/339 P. 83

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE:
 Cleora Barnes Thompson, Archivist

ORGANIZATION: DATE:
 Howard County/ Comprehensive Planning

STREET AND NUMBER:
 3450 Court House Drive

CITY OR TOWN: STATE:
 Ellicott City, Maryland 21043

12. State Liaison Officer Review: (Office Use Only)

Significance of this property is:
 National State Local

Signature _____

Belmont Discription - continued:

A wooden cornice with dentils decorates the hipped roof line. A chimney is inset into the east wall of the west wing and the west wall of the east wing.

The one and a half story, gabled roofed hyphens which connect the east and west wings to the central structure are identical. Furthermore, they have identical north and south elevations which contain rectangular central doors surmounted by four lite transoms and flanked by double-hung windows on each side with four-over-four lites. A shutter is placed on the east side of the east windows and on the west sides of the west windows. A full arched dormer is inset into the gabled roof above the central door, enclosing a full arched fan lite. There is a wooden cornice with dentils decorating the roof line identical to that of the east and west wings.

Additions have been made to this original five part plan of Belmont creating a north extension of the original central portion of the house, five bays wide and one deep for conference room and office and an east wing for use as a service area. Both these additions have been unusually integrated and sensitively added to the original structure. The addition to the north wall is formed by extending the east and west walls to create almost the same dimensions as the original structure. An east and west chimney matches the originals which are inset into the east and west walls. The original gabled roof now becomes a mansard roof. Dormers inset into the north gable match those on the south.

Twelve brick steps covered with flagstone lead up to a grass path which leads to the central doorway and its semicircular stairway entrance. Its rectangular paneled door with projecting flat copper lanterns and two double-hung windows at each side which contain nine-over-nine lites and shutters. Seven steps on the west and seven on the east with a wrought iron railing and newel post lead to the landing which has a wrought iron railing decorated with eleven ovals.

The porch is supported by east and west walls and an elliptical arch on the north wall with keystone.

A water table runs around the extension. Set into the base of this water table are segmental arched cellar windows located under each window. Each contains three vertical lites with wooden sills and iron grates. North of the house are ten steps leading to boxwoods and swimming pool located northwest of the house.

A three bay wide one and a half story east wing addition extends north four bays deep. It has a mansard roof with two dormers on the north elevation, two on the west elevation, all of which have rectangular double-hung windows with six-over-six lites. On the north wall of this addition is centered a casement window with six lites on each side and flanked by a rectangular double-hung window with six-over-six lites and green vented wooden shutters. Cellar windows with elliptical arches are located under each window.

The south elevation of this addition contains a dormer window which nestles into the east wall of the east wing. It is covered with shingles, has a flat roof and rectangular double-hung window with six-over-six lites.

Belmont Description - continued:

A dormer window east of this is centered above the two first story windows which are double-hung, rectangular with six-over-six lites and green shutters.

On the west wall of the addition a chimney is inset into the wall between two gabled dormer windows which match those located in the central part of the building.

An entrance door on the south bay has a seven lite transom and french doors with nine lites in the upper half of each door. Five brick steps covered with flagstone are flanked by a wrought iron railing. There is a rectangular double-hung window with six-over-six lites and green shutters north of the entrance door.

South of the entrance door is a recessed bay containing two rectangular double-hung windows with six-over-six lites and green shutters.

An old log house with gabled roof stands east of the west wing between which are two additional buildings, one a conical roofed stone building with south entrance. The other a hipped roof, wooden frame building with central chimney.

The door opening of the stone building contains brickwork which squares off the stone work and is similar to work found in the foundation of the central portion of the house. This building may well date circa 1737.

A four paneled rectangular entrance door is centered on the west wall with a small four lite window with wooden sill on the north wall. of the
wooden
building

A road runs north-south, east of this smaller building. East of this road and south of this building is located the old log house.

Two horse barns are located at some distance east of this log house, one of which is 9 bays long, gabled roofed with dormer windows. Northeast of the barns is located a three bay wide, two bay deep, gambrel roofed residence.

Interior of Belmont:

The staircase located on the east wall of the dining room, located in the east wing is an original to the house but has been relocated due to interior rearrangement of the house. This general rearrangement of interior space has been necessary due to its present use as a conference center for the Smithsonian Institute.

In 1695* Mordecai Moore obtained a 1360 acre tract of land. Sometime later Caleb Dorsey acquired this land and in 1732 passed it to his son Caleb Dorsey, Jr. CIHT 1 #1/382) Hall of Records, Annapolis. This deed of March 25, 1732 reads:

Caleb Dorsey to:

Caleb Dorsey, Jr., his son

" All those two tracts of land, one called Moore Morning Choyce containing 1368 acres more or less according to the meets and bounds in the original grant of the said tract, and the other tract called Dorsey's Chance containing 200 acres more or less according to the meets and bounds in the original grant of the said tract, which said two tracts adjoin each other and lie in a place called Elk Ridge now in Anne Arundel Co., but formerly in Baltimore Co."

Fox hunting led Caleb Dorsey, Jr. to meet a young lady. He took to hunting in her area on a regular basis. He was purported as not hunting foxes there but "dear". This resulted in his marriage to Priscilla, his securing "Moore's Morning Choice" from his father and building the present Belmont.

The significance of this structure lies in its influence on commerce and industry. In its building certain resources were required and Caleb met the challenge by greatly increasing the large fortune he inherited from his father through his development of the iron ore resources in the area. He and his brother, Edward built a foundry at Avalon on the Patapsco and further south a larger foundry called Hockley in honor of his boyhood home and a third nearer Belmont. Industry and commerce helped to build Belmont and certainly its building was an incentive to industry. Caleb's own ships brought over bricks from England to build Belmont. These were filled with tobacco and later wheat and returned to England. Warehouses at Elkridge landing were a bee hive of activity and the iron furnaces one of the first industries allowed by Great Britain to the colonists. Many of the cannon used by American troops against the British were cast at Caleb Dorsey's iron-works.

The will of Caleb to Edward Dorsey of July 9, 1772 taken from the Hall of Records, Annapolis reads:

WILLS
38/819

July 9, 1772

Caleb Dorsey to:

Edward Dorsey, his son

" I give and bequeath unto my son Edward Dorsey all my land called Moores Morning Choice Enlarged as also my land called Calebs Pasture, the Valley of Owings, Littleworth, Caleb and Edwards Friendship, Calebs Vineyard.....etc. "

Edward Dorsey was popularly known as "Iron-head Ned." A big-hearted, strong-fisted man, he and his brother Samuel ran his father's mills. His daughter, Priscilla Dorsey inherited Belmont and married Alexander Contee Hanson, whose decendants held the old homestead until 1964. Priscilla's marriage was a romantic one as it was an elopement. The girls guardians in Baltimore would not give their consent to the match. Nevertheless she went to Annapolis with the man she loved and married him there. She was to be the next mistress of Belmont.

The will of 1799 from the Hall of Records, Annapolis reads:

* Patents No. C #3 Land Office, Annapolis

HO-43

Wills
JG 2/73

April 6, 1799

Will of Edward Dorsey of Caleb

I will and direct that all my property not hereafter designated shall go as the Law of the State of Maryland directs.

I do hereby appoint and direct that my real, miscell (?) and personal property shall be divided immediately after my eldest son comes of age.

And I do by this my last will and testament make, ordain, and appoint my beloved wife Elizabeth as Executrise along with Mr. Robert Dorsey my Executor.

Be it known that I Elizabeth Dorsey of Anne Arundel County, widow of Edward Dorsey of Caleb late of said county deceased, do hereby quit claim to the several bequests and devises in the will of my said husband deceased, and do elect in lieu thereof my lower and third part of his estate, both real and personal.

The papers concerning the estate of Belmont to the heirs of Elizabeth Dorsey in 1807 read thus:

heirs of Elizabeth Dorsey:

Caroline Dorsey
Mary Dorsey
Hammond Dorsey
Mrs. Priscilla Hanson
Hill Dorsey

(Box 83, folder 70)
Hall of Records, Annapolis

In 1815 the following division of property was noted at the Hall of Records, Annapolis;

Hall of Records, Annapolis

Division of Property (probate records)

Box 123, folder 3

July 21, 1810

Edward Dorsey of Caleb:

John J. Donaldson and wife Caroline
Daniel Murray and wife Mary
Hammond Dorsey-by William A. Dorsey, his guardian
Alexander Hanson and wife Priscilla
Hill Dorsey

In 1815-16 Priscilla Hanson acquired Belmont. (WSG 5/85 (A.A. Co) and HBN 103/347 (Howard County). Alexander Contee Hanson the first Hanson to live at Belmont was firm in his convictions and fluent in speech. He served Maryland many years in the United States Senate.

Henry Clay, a good friend, was often a guest at Belmont, and has his favorite place before the fire. His chair is still kept there and the large dining room table where they dined is still in use.

Many parties were given by Priscilla for her husband and his friend from Congress. The Belmont Papers contain a letter written from Alexander to his wife Priscilla, asking her to have six pairs of slippers for himself and guests who would be arriving from Washington, among them was Henry Clay.

On December 18, 1849 Priscilla Hanson bequeathed Belmont to Charles G. Hanson, her son in the following Will:

Wills

WG 1/214

May 26, 1849 (probated Dec. 18, 1849)

Priscilla Hanson to:
Charles G. Hanson, her son

"I give, devise, and bequeath to Thomas Donaldson and George W. Dobbin, and the survivor of them, all my estate and property, real, personal, and mixed; In trust to permit and suffer my son, Charles G. Hanson to take and receive the rents issues and profits thereof, for and during the term of his natural life.

And, after the death of said Charles G. Hanson, in trust to permit and suffer Anna Maria Hanson, wife of said Charles G. Hanson, to take and receive the rents, issues, and profits thereof during her natural life.

And after the death of said of said Charles G. Hanson, in trust to permit and suffer my son, Charles G. Hanson to take and receive the rents, issues and profits thereof during her natural life.

And after the death of said Charles G. Hanson and Anna Maria Hanson, I give, devise, and bequeath the said property to the child or children of said Charles G. Hanson and Anna, and the descendants of such."

In 1917 Mary Graham Bruce acquired Belmont Deed HBN 103/347

Deed

HBN 103/347

April 21, 1917

Reuben D. Rogers, Trustee to:
Mary Graham Bruce

Whereas, by a degree of the Circuit Court for Howard County, in Equity, March 21, 1917, passed in a cause wherein Murray Hanson et al were plaintiffs, and Charles Edward Hanson and Priscilla Hanson were defendants (Equity Docket #4, folio 93), a contract for the sale of the property hereinafter described to Mary Graham Bruce, December 15, 1916, was ratified and confirmed, and Reuben D. Rogers was duly appointed trustee to convey said property to said Mary Graham Bruce.

Now therefore, this deed witnesseth, that said Reuben D. Rogers, Trustee, does grant and convey unto the said Mary Graham Bruce, all the right and title of all the parties to the aforesaid cause, in and to all that parcel of ground situated in the First Election District of said Howard County, constituting the Farm known as "Belmont" on which Annie M. Hanson, Florence C. Hanson, and Murray Hanson until recently resided, and consisting of all that tract of land, which in a cause in the High Court of Chancery of Maryland."

Ownership of Belmont was transferred from the last direct heir to a cousin and her husband, Mr. and Mrs. Howard Bruce.

On October 3, 1947, Mary Graham Bruce and husband Howard deeded 6.56 acres more or less to Julia Morris Bruce Dobbin in the following deed:

Deed

MWB 200/507

October 3, 1947

Mary Graham Bruce and husband Howard to:

Julia Morris Bruce Dobbin

All that parcel of land situate in the First Election District of Howard County, bounded and described in accordance with the survey of S.J. Martenet & Co. as follows:

Beginning for the same at a concrete monument marked "1915" ..etc... containing 6.46 acres more or less.

Being part of the land conveyed to Mary Graham Bruce by two deeds: 1) from Reuben D. Rogers, Trustee, April 21, 1917, HBN 103/347, and 2) from Julia M. Bowdin and husband, November 13, 1918, HBN 106/307.

Together with the buildings and improvements thereon.

Together with a right of way 40 ft. wide...etc...

This was to allow their daughter to build a house on the property adjacent to them. In 1949 this property was returned in the following transaction:

Deed

MWB 214/510

December 14, 1949

"Julia Morris Bruce Dobbin and husband Titlton H. Dobbin to:

Howard Bruce and Mary Graham Bruce

Witnesseth that Julia Morris Bruce Dobbin and husband Tilton H. do hereby grant and convey unto Howard Bruce 2/5 undivided interest in and to the lands hereinafter described and hereby conveyed, and unto Mary Graham Bruce the remaining 3/5 undivided interest in and to said lands, which said lands constitute all those two parcels of land situate in the first Election District of Howard Co. and which are described as follows:

First Parcel: Beginning at a concrete monument at the end of the 14th or So. 37^o East 150 ft. line..etc... containing 4.652 acres more or less, being the same land conveyed by Julia Morris Bruce Dobbin, July 2, 1949, MWB 211/398.

Second Parcel: Beginning at a concrete monument marked "1915"...etc... containing 6.46 acres more or less, being all and the same land which by deed, October 3, 1947, MWB 200/507 was conveyed by Mary Graham Bruce and her husband Howard Bruce."

David Bruce inherited Belmont from his cousin Howard Bruce and in 1964 the Smithsonian Institution acquired the estate situated on 340 acres of fields and woodlands. The following announcement was circulated on March 10, 1967 to heads of bureaus, offices and divisions.

SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION

A N N O U N C E M E N T

March 10, 1967

The Belmont Estate, given to the Smithsonian Institution in 1964, is situated on 340 acres of fields and woodlands near Elkridge, Maryland. It is bordered by the Patapsco River and park, approximately 12 miles from Baltimore, 35 miles from Washington, and eight miles from the Friendship International Airport. The driving time from Washington is about 45 minutes.

Belmont provides a conference center in an historic location with pleasant surroundings for the pursuit and sharing of knowledge in the Institution's varied fields of interest. The estate will provide comfortable residential quarters for as many as 30 guests while 50 persons may be accommodated for lectures and discussions.

Smithsonian units are encouraged to make their needs for the Conference Center known to its Director.

For your guidance in planning use of the center, the following physical arrangements will be made available.

Conference and Meeting Rooms

- A conference room seating 32 persons at tables plus space for a dozen observers. Projection and recording equipment will be provided.
- A reading room which can be used as a lecture hall seating 50 persons.
- A library and a living room for informal discussions.
- Special rooms in the main building and elsewhere on the property for smaller meetings and working sessions.

Living Accommodations

- A dining room seating up to 50 persons.
- A coffee lounge and an adjoining garden terrace for guests before and after work sessions and meals.
- Sleeping accommodations for up to 22 guests with a planned increase to provide quarters for an additional eight persons.

Requests for information on Belmont's facilities and charges and inquiries regarding reservations should be address to:

Mr. Hugh Latham, Director
Belmont Conference Center
Room 318, Smithsonian Building, extension 5866

or

Belmont, Elkridge, Maryland, area code 301, 796-4300

Arrangements for overnight conferences including payment of Smithsonian participants expenses (conference fees, subsistence, and accommodations) will be by contract arrangement between the Smithsonian activity sponsoring or participating in the conference and the Belmont Center. Smithsonian participants will be on travel orders but may claim only transportation expenses. Advice on preparing contracts may be obtained from the Chief, Supply Division.

S. Dillon Ripley
Secretary

DISTRIBUTION: Heads of bureaus, offices, and divisions

Significance

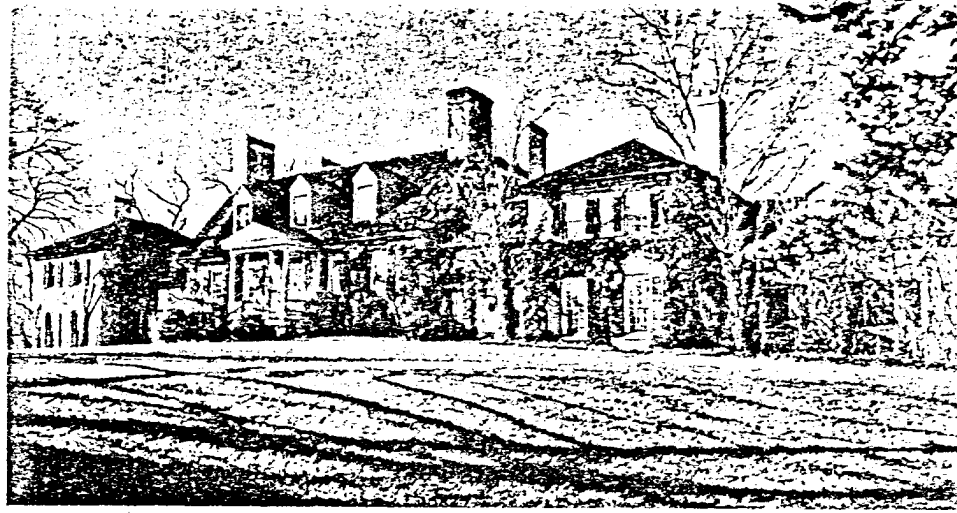
North of the house are terraced gardens and high boxwoods. On a distant hill north of the house is a family burial ground where generations of Dorseys and Hansons lie buried.

Six generations of Dorseys have owned this land.

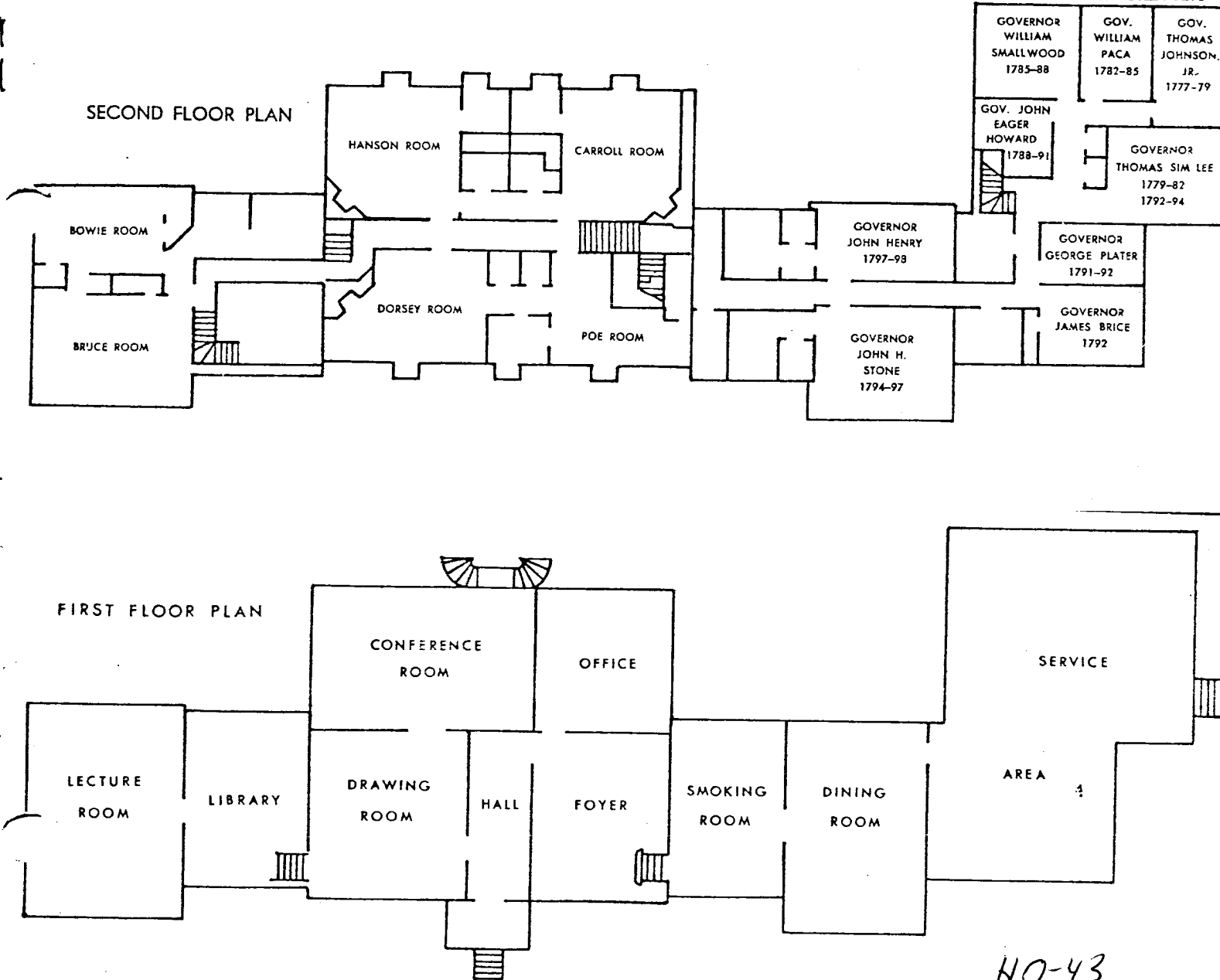
The land surrounding Belmont is as significant as the house itself. The sloping woodland remaining much as it was in the day of Caleb Dorsey and Avalon Iron Works.

In conclusion we see that Belmont had much to do with the political life of its day and has been the home of two senators from Maryland, Howard Bruce and Alexander Contee Hanson. It now serves the nation as a place of retreat for special conference groups, maintaining its original role as a house open to the visitor.

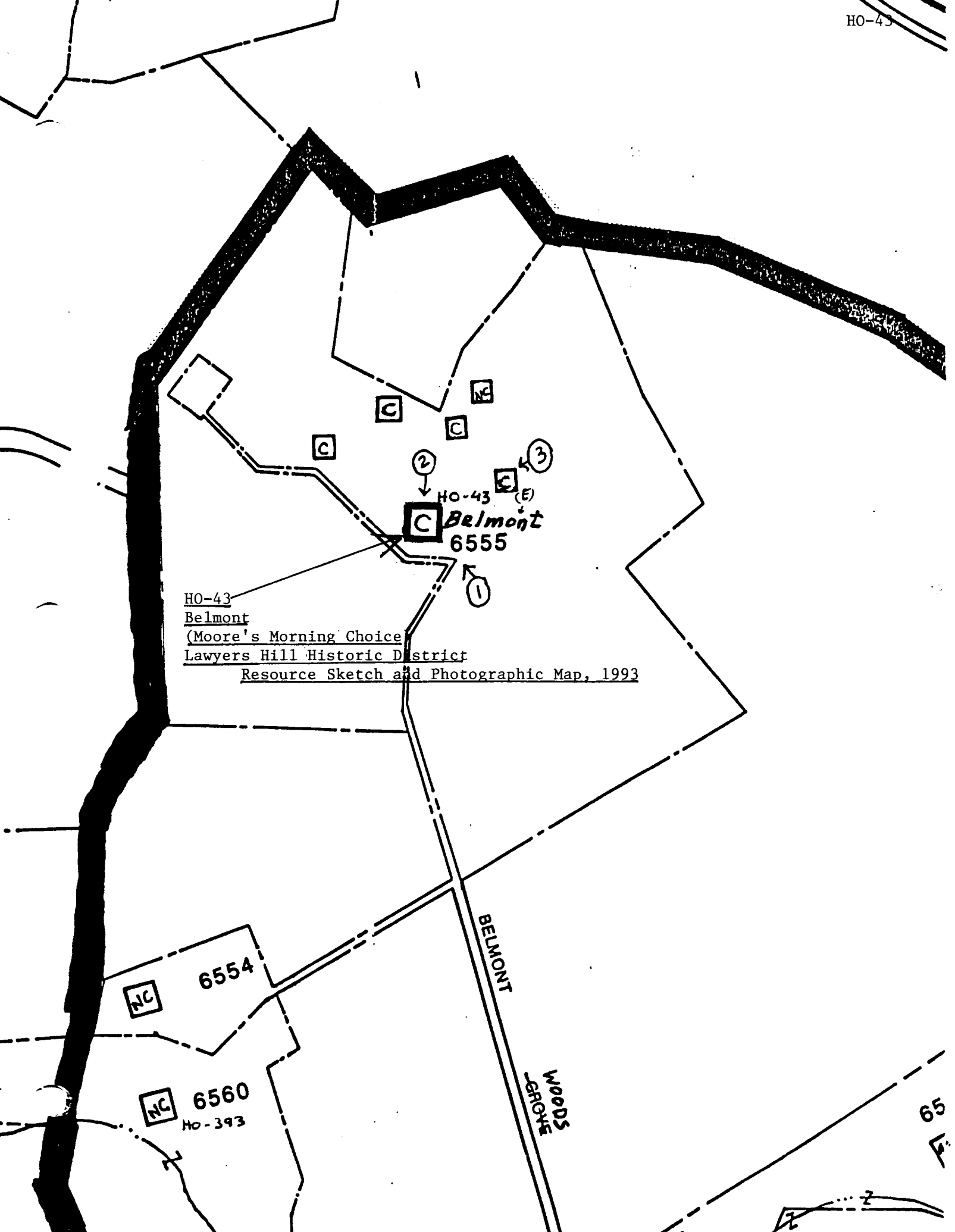
BELMONT



The Smithsonian Institution's Conference Center at Elkridge, Maryland



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 Belmont
 (Moore's Morning Choice
 Lawyers Hill Historic District
 Resource Sketch and Photographic Map, 1993

NC 6554

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ROCKBURN

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SEE



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BELMONT
MHT