

H0-111  
Happy Retreat  
Woodbine  
Private

circa 1781

Happy Retreat faces south on the south side of Union Chapel Road, two miles west of its intersection with Route 97.

The house has been constructed in three sections. A four bay wide, one room deep, two story high, gabled roof (running north-south) stone house with 30 inch thick walls, east and west entrances and wide, central cooking fireplace on the north wall may well antedate the revolutionary war. Along the south wall of this building was constructed a three bay wide, two room deep, two story high, gabled roof (running east-west), brick (now covered with polyethelene and painted white) federal house facing south with wide brick chimneys inset into its east and west walls. The south elevation of the federal house features an open bible and cross paneled double entrance door, surmounted by a rectangular octagonally curvilinear, four light transom. Fenestration for both sections of the house is rectangular, double-hung, vertically aligned and proportionally scaled.

"Happy Retreat" is notable as the home of Colonel Richard Dorsey who served General Washington during the Revolutionary War and retired here to build this house adjoining his brother John Dorsey who built his house at Mt. Calvary Church, now known as New Years Gift.

INVENTORY FORM FOR STATE HISTORIC SITES SURVEY

**1 NAME**

HISTORIC "Happy Retreat"

Not for general  
publication

AND/OR COMMON

**2 LOCATION**

STREET & NUMBER  
McNeal Road

CITY, TOWN  
Woodbine

\_\_\_ VICINITY OF

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT  
6th

STATE  
Maryland

COUNTY  
Howard

**3 CLASSIFICATION**

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC ACQUISITION	<input type="checkbox"/> ACCESSIBLE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input type="checkbox"/> YES UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL
			<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
			<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
			<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
			<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
			<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER

**4 OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME Mrs. Augustus Riggs IV

Telephone #:

STREET & NUMBER  
"Happy Retreat"

CITY, TOWN  
Woodbine,

\_\_\_ VICINITY OF

STATE, zip code  
Maryland

**5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE,  
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Hall of Records

Tax Map 14,  
p.63

Liber #:161  
Folio #:359

STREET & NUMBER

Howard County Court House

CITY, TOWN

Ellicott City

STATE

Maryland

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE  
Howard County Historic Sites Inventory

DATE  
1977

\_\_\_ FEDERAL  STATE \_\_\_ COUNTY \_\_\_ LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORDS  
Maryland Historical Trust

CITY, TOWN

21 State Circle, Annapolis

STATE

Maryland

**7 DESCRIPTION**HO-111  
District 4

<b>CONDITION</b>		<b>CHECK ONE</b>	<b>CHECK ONE</b>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED      DATE _____
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

**DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE**

Happy Retreat faces south on the south side of Union Chapel Road, two miles west of its intersection with Route 97. The entrance road to the house proceeds south 4/10 of a mile. A turn east at this point of the entrance road leads you some 3/10 of a mile to the location of the house and its auxiliary buildings.

The house has been constructed in three sections. Initially a four bay wide, one room deep, two story high, gabled roof (running north-south) stone house with 30 inch thick walls stood here. The downstairs was divided but the upstairs was on large room, which was only entered by ascending a ladder, located just north of the east entrance which was placed in the first south bay of that elevation. This entrance has been widened and now holds a double, rectangular, two-two light entrance door. A wide stone and brick chimney is inset into its north wall which held only two four light attic casement windows. The large stone cooking fire place features a wide flat wooden lintel and 8½' by 3' stone hearth composed of a single huge stone slab.

Fenestration is proportionally scaled vertically aligned, rectangular, and double-hung; the first floor windows hold nine-over-six lights, while the second floor windows hold six-over-six.

A west rectangular entrance is located in the second north bay of that elevation. The first floor of this section of the house now holds an entrance vestibule at the east entrance (powder room lies beyond), from whose north wall one enters into the large and charming room of the original stone house. Where upstairs there was only one room with mantle piece on its north wall, featuring flat pilasters and rather simple unadorned architrave and mantle shelves, there now runs a north-south hallway along the east wall with rooms to the west.

Very early a federal brick wing was added along the south wall of the house. This is noteworthy for the south wall is only some 14 inches thick while the east, west and north walls measure some 30 inches thick. The federal section is a three bay wide, two room deep, two story high, gabled roof (running east-west) brick (now covered with polyethylene and painted white) structure with wide brick chimneys inset into its east and west walls. That on the west is totally centered, while that on the east is north of center.

The south elevation holds an open bible and cross paneled double-entrance door, surmounted by a rectangular, octagonally curvilinear, four light transom, located in the east bay of this wall. Two rectangular, double-hung first-floor windows are placed in the central and west bays of this wall with three proportionally scaled and vertically aligned second floor windows holding six-over-six lights placed above.

The south entrance leads into a hall which features a fine staircase with square, tapered spindles. The living room, located west of the hall features an unusually fine federal mantle piece in its north west corner, featuring an architrave decorated with central oval, flanked by two rising suns with ovals decorating the flat capitals of the pilasters flanking the mantle. Wide, random width pine floors are also evident in this section of the house, which dates from at least 1798. Two

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

Description  
Page 2 of 2

rooms with corner mantles occupy the northern half of this section of the house which was initially totally separated from the second floor of the stone house. The second floor plan is similar to the first floor with attic above.

Sometime in 1939 this property was acquired by the present owner, Mrs. Augustus Riggs IV. Photographs in her possession picture the house with very sparse growth and almost no landscaping, in a neglected state.

Through the years the house has been totally renovated and a service wing added on its north wall. A stone patio and green house have been placed along the west wall of the old stone house and lawns, shrubbery and boxwood lend charm and character to one of Howard County's most significant architectural and historical landmarks. Designed and executed by John Whitcomb, an architect and family member, the intersecting gable roof additions add, rather than detract from the integrity of the building and its site. The gable roof (running north-south) of the stone house has been extended one bay in brick and a two bay wide, two story high, intersecting gable roof (running east-west), (north-south) brick "L" added to this. This latter section serves as a service wing for the remainder of the house. A two car garage lies north, with tennis courts, log house and large frame barn resting on a stone foundation east of the house.

The one and a half story high, gabled roof (running north-south) log cabin features a wide central east entrance, two first floor, six-over-six light west windows, a wide stone exterior chimney on its north wall and interior staircase on its south wall. The floors of the loft and first floor are some 12 inches wide.

All the buildings and grounds of the house are in the most excellent condition and highest level of maintenance.

It is the wish of the owner that this information be used for state and county government record only and not for general publication. Only one negative each, of some five photographs, is on public record and are filed in Annapolic in the archives of the Maryland Historical Trust.

**8 SIGNIFICANCE**

<p>PERIOD</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 1900-</p>	<p>AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> ART</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> LAW</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> THEATER</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY) Local history</p>
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SPECIFIC DATES 1781

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Happy Retreat is historically and architecturally significant. Historically it is associated with Colonel Richard Dorsey who received a personal request from General Washington to organize a troop of horse, and joined Colonel Moses Rawlin's Regiment of Riflemen.

Architecturally it is an exceptionally well preserved and maintained eighteenth century stone and brick house, whose stone section may well antedate the revolution. In addition its two story high, three bay wide brick house is double pile in its organization, rather than one room deep as many Howard County homes later became, particularly those of the early to mid nineteenth century. This house, along with Cherry Grove, 1765 and the old Red House Tavern in Cooksville are representative of the early to mid seventeenth century architecture in Howard County. Historians believe the house to have been constructed after the Revolutionary War ended. This is true of the brick section. The stone section, however, probably was constructed prior to the revolution. By 1798 the entire house as we see it today, less the new twentieth century service wing, was constructed. Lieutenant Richard Dorsey became a colonel after the war and built "Happy Retreat" where he retired. An old paper noted in J.D. Warfield's Founders of Anne Arundel and Howard Counties, Maryland states:

State of Maryland to Richard Dorsey, Lieutenant in Colonel Moses Rawling's Regiment of Rifle men, 1774 January 24th, . . . . .	£ 57	10s	9d
Credit Amount paid at Phil. . . . .	10	2	6
To 7 years, 8 months interest	£ 47	8	3

Mr. J.D. Warfield then states that his silver spurs "are now held by his grand son, Richard Dorsey of "Rockland" and that "his sword was given to his son Caleb. Colonel Dorsey married Anne Wayman late in life. They had seven boys and five daughters.

Historically and architecturally significant to Howard County and the State of Maryland, it is presently owned by Mrs. Augustus Riggs IV who wished to lead a private life and have no publicity for the house. Photographs taken in 1972 are in the archives of the Maryland Historical Trust. No further photographs were taken at the date of this survey, at the request of the owner.

August, 1978. It is the wish of the owner that this survey be used for State and County use only and not for general publication. Since part of the land on which "Happy Retreat" stands was once considered for the expansion of Tridelphia Reservoir, it is important that the property be identified for

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

Significance page 2

planning purposes. In the future, should the owner desire placement of the property on the National Register of Historic Places, this outstanding building would surely qualify for such inclusion.

**9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES**

Interview with Mrs. Augustus Riggs, IV at "Happy Retreat", September 1, 1978.  
J. D. Warfield. Founders of Anne Arundel and Howard Counties, Maryland  
Baltimore, 1973, p.450

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

**10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA**

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 360 Acres

Please see Attachment 1, Tax Map 14

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Please see Howard County Record Liber 161, folio 359.

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE Maryland COUNTY Howard

STATE COUNTY

**11 FORM PREPARED BY**

NAME / TITLE

Cleora Barnes Thompson, Archivist

ORGANIZATION

Office of Planning & Zoning-Comprehensive Planning Section 465-5000 x257

DATE

STREET & NUMBER

3450 Court House Drive

TELEPHONE

CITY OR TOWN

Ellicott City

STATE

Maryland

The Maryland Historic Sites Inventory 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  
The Shaw House, 21 State Circle  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401  
(301) 267-1438

H0-111  
140117904

Happy Retreat  
Union ~~Street~~ Road, Woodbine  
Chapel

did not visit -  
located on map by  
Mr + Mrs. E.W. Gramkov  
7/21/70

Augustus Riggs IV

fox Map # 14

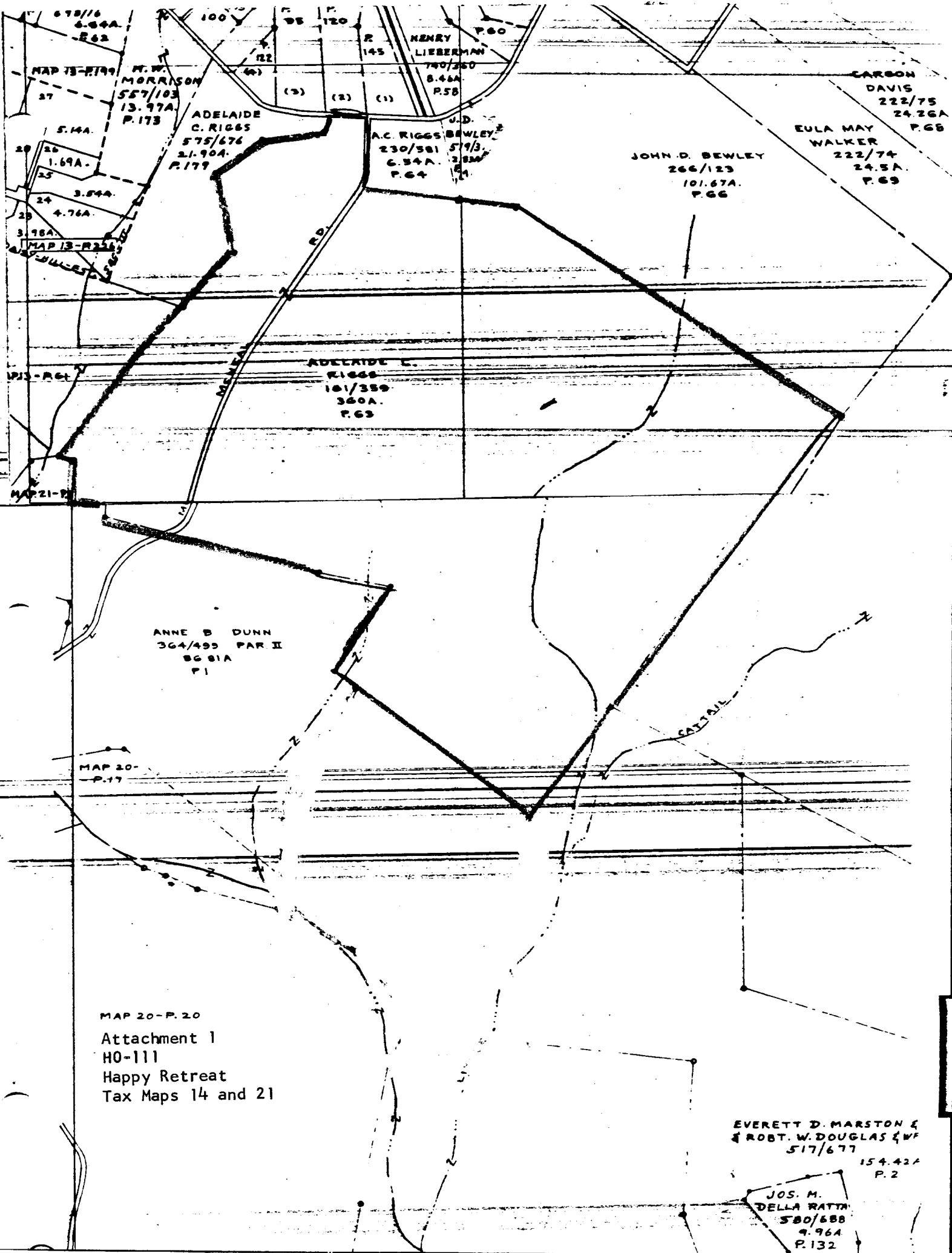
Adelaide C Riggs

161 / 359

360 A

p. 63





678/16  
6.44A  
P.62  
MAP 13-R-199  
37  
5.14A  
29  
1.69A  
25  
3.84A  
24  
4.76A  
23  
3.18A  
MAP 13-R-228  
MAP 21-P

W.W. MORRISON  
557/103  
13.97A  
P.173

ADELAIDE  
C. RIGGS  
575/676  
21.90A  
P.179

HENRY  
LIEBERMAN  
740/360  
8.44A  
P.58  
J.D.  
A.C. RIGGS BEWLEY  
230/581 519/3  
6.34A 2.82A  
P.64

JOHN D. BEWLEY  
266/123  
101.67A  
P.66

CARLON  
DAVIS  
222/75  
24.26A  
P.66  
EULA MAY  
WALKER  
222/74  
24.5A  
P.69

ADELAIDE L.  
RIGGS  
101/359  
360A  
P.63

ANNE B DUNN  
364/499 PAR II  
86.81A  
P.1

MAP 20-  
P.17

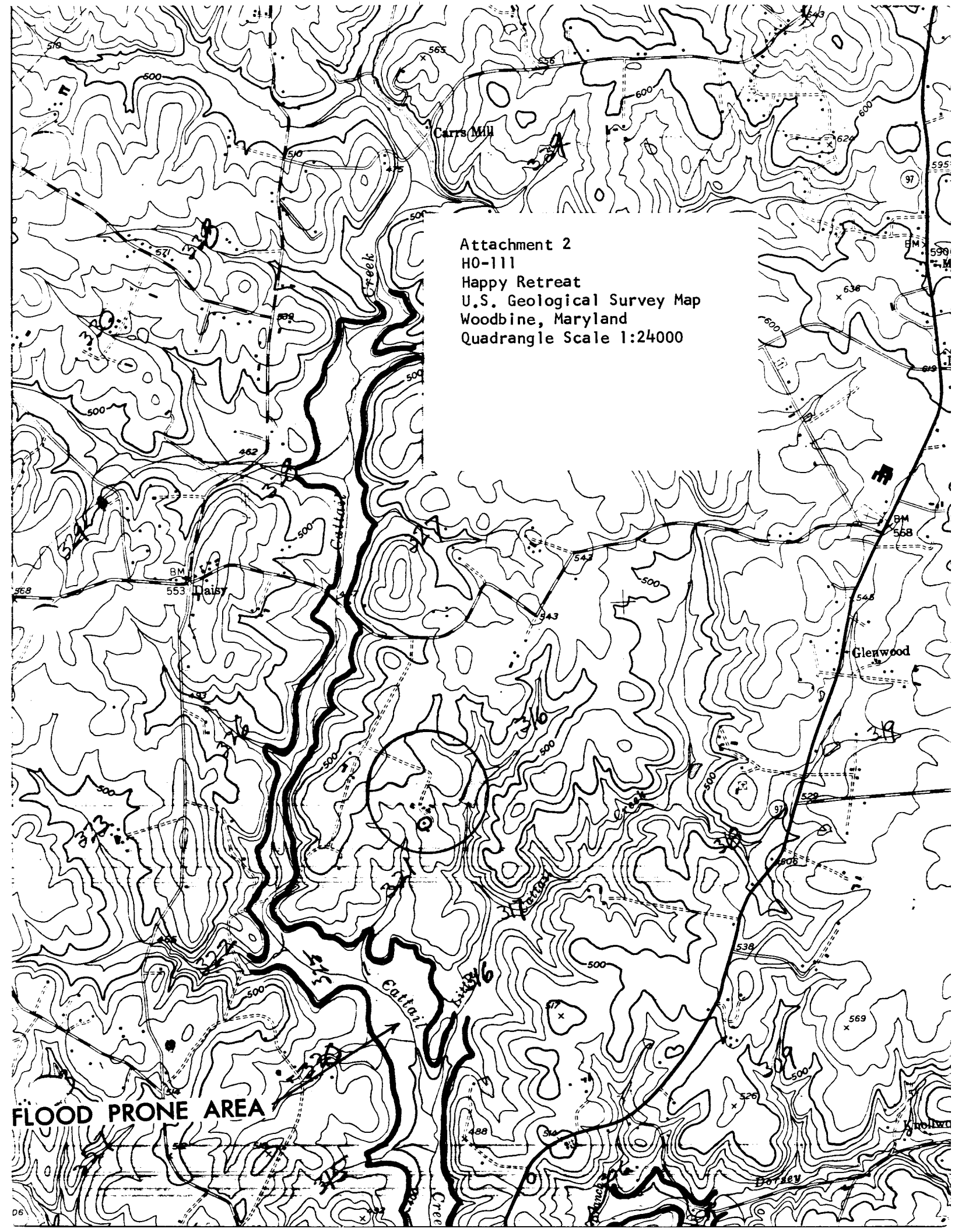
MAP 20-P.20  
Attachment 1  
HO-111  
Happy Retreat  
Tax Maps 14 and 21

EVERETT D. MARSTON &  
ROBT. W. DOUGLAS & WF  
517/677  
154.42A  
P.2

JOS. M.  
DELLA RATTI  
580/688  
9.96A  
P.132

Attachment 2  
H0-111  
Happy Retreat  
U.S. Geological Survey Map  
Woodbine, Maryland  
Quadrangle Scale 1:24000

**FLOOD PRONE AREA**





HO III

166A

from the north  
Hobby Retreat

SE 6/7



No. 111

166A

from the south

Hobby Retreat

pg 6/72



HO. III

166A

Hobby Retreat guest house

6/72  
888





HO-111

Happy Retreat

Jean Ewing

6/1972

166A



Ho. III

view to the west

166A

Happy Retreat

JSE 6/72