

# Maryland Historical Trust Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties Form

Survey No. M:36/8

## 1. Name of Property (Indicate preferred name)

historic Riggs-Thompson House

and/or common Academy of Holy Names

## 2. Location

street & number 711 Pershing Drive \_\_\_ not for publication

city, town Silver Spring \_\_\_ vicinity of

state Maryland county Montgomery

## 3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Present Use	
<input type="checkbox"/> district)	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> educational	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site		<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object		<input type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
		<input type="checkbox"/> industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other:

## 4. Owner of Property (give names and mailing addresses of all owners)

name Sisters of Holy Names of Jesus & Mary of N.Y. Province, Inc.

street & number 711 Pershing Drive telephone no:

city, town Silver Spring state and zip code Maryland 20815

## 5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Montgomery County Courthouse Tax Map and Parcel JN33: Parcels P73 and N18

city, town Rockville state Maryland Liber and Folio 00560/0445

## 6. Primary Location of Additional Data

Individually Listed in the National Register  
 Contributing Resource in National Register District  
 Contributing Resource in Local Historic District  
 Determined Eligible for the National Register  
 Recorded by HABS/HAER  
 HSR or Research report at MHT  
 other:

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## Description

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Survey No. M:36/8

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Condition

- |  |                                       |
|--|---------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> excellent       | <input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good | <input type="checkbox"/> ruins        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> fair            | <input type="checkbox"/> altered      |
- 

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

Resource Count:

See attached.

CONTINUATION SHEET  
36/8 Riggs-Thompson House  
711 Pershing Drive

Section 7:2

The Riggs-Thompson House is located on a 4.8 acre property in a residential subdivision immediately outside the Central Business District of Silver Spring. The parcel is bounded by Pershing Drive and Ellsworth Drive on the south and north, and Springvale Road on the east. Lining the western boundary are houses and lots facing Cedar Street. The Riggs-Thompson House, facing west with its south side along Pershing Drive, was built to face Georgia Avenue now two blocks away.<sup>1</sup>

In front of the main (south) facade lie vestiges of a garden which probably dates from the 1930s, after the property was acquired by the current owners. At the heart of the garden are two tall cedar trees surrounded by dogwoods and underlaid by perennials. A central planting area features a large religious statue, dogwoods and beds of iris, roses and other perennials. On the west side of the house a broad lawn is dotted with 3 immense tulip poplar trees as well as numerous oaks and a few very tall black walnuts. A brick garage on this side of the house is accessed by a steep drive, with land dropping steeply down to Ellsworth Drive which followed Sligo Creek Branch, a stream bed now located underground.

The house, composed of Second Empire and Italianate style sections and later additions, was originally built c1858 by George Washington Riggs, and expanded by William Thompson after the Civil War. The structure was adapted in the 20th century for use as a private school and convent. The original section is a central brick mansard-roofed house. An Italianate front was added to the west (front) elevation with a small south side wing. The entire building is covered in aluminum siding.<sup>2</sup>

The original central block, constructed of brick, has a T-shaped plan consisting of a front rectangular block facing west and a rear ell. This block is sheltered by an asphalt shingled mansard roof, with straight silhouette, punctuated by arched dormer windows on front and rear elevations. External chimneys are located on both south and north sides. According to historic Sanborn maps, this central block is constructed of brick; however, like the remainder of the historic house, it is now covered with aluminum siding.

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<sup>1</sup>Compass coordinates have been modified for ease of description. Streets actually run from southwest to northeast, and northwest to southeast. The Sligo Creek branch, site of today's Ellsworth Drive, may be seen on the 1917 USGS map.

<sup>2</sup>Covered with aluminum siding, the brick construction is not evident today. It is shown on the 1933 Sanborn Insurance Map.

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A one-story north wing projecting from the main (brick) block appears to be an original chapel built by the Riggs family. The cornice on east and west elevations is punctuated by shallow pediments.

West of the main block is a five bay by two bay Italianate style section with flat roof. This section was probably built by the Thompson family. A historic photograph reveals that this section had a cornice with modillions similar to those formerly found on the chapel wing. Windows are two over two double-hung sash, with louvered shutters. An exterior chimney is located between the fourth and fifth bays. A double door entrance with transom is located in the central bay. A full width veranda has a double depth in the central three bays, with chamfered posts and railing. The porch entrance with stairs and railing are on the south side. One story wings with triple hung sash are located on the north and south sides.

Between 1941 and 1963 a two-story frame block was added to the rear of the original brick section. In 1950, a two-story brick building was constructed facing Springvale Road, northeast of the historic house, connected to the rear frame section with a one-story brick enclosed walkway. By 1975, the house was encased in aluminum siding and cornice brackets were removed. Sometime after 1975, the original slate fishscale shingle roof on the historic house was replaced with asphalt shingle.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup>1941 Klingé Real Estate Atlas. 1933 Sanborn Insurance Atlas, corrected to 1963. Photograph of 6-2-1975 by Michael Dwyer, M-NCPPC, MHT inventory form. Cornice brackets are seen in an early 20th century view of the house's west (front) facade (private collection, M-NCPPC files).

# 8. Significance

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Period	Areas of Significance	Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/humanitarian	
	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> theater	
	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation	
	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)	
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention			

Specific dates	c1858; c1866	Builder/Architect	
check: Applicable Criteria:	<input type="checkbox"/> A	<input type="checkbox"/> B	<input type="checkbox"/> C <input type="checkbox"/> D
and/or Applicable Exceptions:	<input type="checkbox"/> A	<input type="checkbox"/> B	<input type="checkbox"/> C <input type="checkbox"/> D <input type="checkbox"/> E <input type="checkbox"/> F
Level of Significance:	<input type="checkbox"/> national	<input type="checkbox"/> state	<input type="checkbox"/> local

HISTORICAL CONTEXT:

MARYLAND COMPREHENSIVE PRESERVATION PLAN DATA

Geographic Organization: Piedmont

Chronological/Developmental Period(s): Industrial/Urban Dominance A.D. 1870-1930

Prehistoric/Historic Period Theme(s): Architecture and Community Planning

Resource Type: Individual

Category: Residential

Historic Environment: Suburban

Historic Function(s) and Use(s): Residential

Known Design Source:

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36/8 Riggs-Thompson House  
711 Pershing Drive

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The Riggs-Thompson House is historically significant as the residence of George Washington Riggs (1813-1881), a founder of what became Riggs National Bank and one of Washington's wealthiest and most influential citizens. It is additionally significant for its association with subsequent owner William H. Thompson, a locally prominent businessman and social leader. Though the integrity of its setting and building material has been compromised, the resource is architecturally significant as a rare example of a Silver Spring country estate built before the early 20<sup>th</sup> century suburbanization of this area. The residence, built c1858 on a 140-acre estate, represents a period of prosperity when upper class Washington residents established country seats in lower Montgomery County.

In January 1857, George W. Riggs purchased 140 acres of land along Westminster Road (Georgia Avenue), and a smaller adjacent four-acre parcel on Colesville Road. The following year he acquired another three-acre parcel on Colesville Road. All three parcels were part of a tract known as *Girl's Portion*. It appears likely that the original section of the house was the central brick portion. Though encased in later additions, this residence includes the earliest example of the Second Empire style in Montgomery County.<sup>4</sup>

George W. Riggs (1813-1881) was a founder of Riggs National Bank. He was born in Georgetown and attended Yale University from 1829-1831. His father, Elisha Riggs, was of a well-known Montgomery County family who became an influential New York City broker. George W. Riggs formed a Washington brokerage and banking firm in 1840 with William W. Corcoran, known as Corcoran and Riggs. That same year, Riggs married Janet Madeline Cecelia Shedden (1815-1871). In 1844, under the Tyler administration, the firm became an official depository of the U.S. Treasury.<sup>5</sup>

Besides being known as a wealthy and successful banker, George W. Riggs was a prominent Washington citizen. He was one of the governors of the Metropolitan Club in 1865,

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<sup>4</sup>Deeds JGH 5:566 (1857) and JGH 7:199 (1858). The construction date estimation is based on study of tax records (Catherine Crawford, MHT Inventory Form, 1983) and date of purchase. The Sycamores, Manchester Mill Road, was built c1867; Marywood, in Brookeville, dates from c 1868; and the Wilbur House, Silver Spring, was built in c1887.

<sup>5</sup>"Riggs Bank" in Proctor, *Washington Past and Present*, p298. Partners in Progress: Riggs National Bank in Kathryn Schneider Smith (ed) *Washington at Home*, p309. *The Riggs Family of Maryland*, pp328-331. Obituary, *Washington Star*, August 1881. The 1850 census lists the Riggs family residing in Washington. Source: Robinson & Associates, Anderson Cottage Historic Structure Report, 1985.

CONTINUATION SHEET  
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an organizer of the Washington and Georgetown Railroad Company, a member of the Board of Aldermen of the District of Columbia (1873) and a trustee of the Corcoran Gallery of Art. He temporarily retired from the firm in 1848, allowing his younger brother Elisha Jr to represent the family's interests in the firm. George W. Riggs moved to New York by 1853 where he was occupied in the settlement of his father's estate. When William Corcoran retired in 1854, he returned to head the newly renamed Riggs & Company.<sup>6</sup>

About 1858, George W. Riggs built the house on Georgia Avenue (now accessed from Pershing Drive) as a country estate. The property was assessed with \$800 worth of improvements in 1858. The Montgomery County estate was a lively place when the Riggs family was in residence. George and Janet Riggs had between seven and nine children born between 1841 and 1858, with a total of six who lived to adulthood. The estate included a working farm recognized for its fine-blooded cattle.<sup>7</sup>

The Riggs family may have been responsible for constructing the north chapel wing, located directly off of the central mansard-roofed block. Janet was an ardent Catholic; George converted to the faith after his marriage. The Riggs' are known to have built a chapel at their Green Hill estate in Prince George's County.<sup>8</sup>

Before moving to Montgomery County, George and Janet Riggs had resided at Corn Rigs, a 256-acre Washington, D.C. estate with a brick Gothic Revival house they built in 1842. This structure, later known as the Anderson Cottage and used as a summer White House, is still extant, now part of the U.S. Soldier's and Airmen's Home. In 1856, shortly before purchasing the Sligo property, Riggs had built a house on I Street, in Washington, D.C. Baltimore architect

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<sup>6</sup>The Riggs Family of Washington, p331-332.

<sup>7</sup>Montgomery County Tax Assessments, Volume 1858-1863. Howard Berger, "Maryland Historical Trust Historic Sites Inventory Form: Green Hill." M-NCPPC, 1990. 8-11-1864 letter of Elizabeth Lee in V. J. Laas (Ed.), *Wartime Washington: Civil War Letters of Elizabeth Blair Lee*. Reference has been made to a ball attended by Abraham Lincoln which though unsubstantiated is certainly possible given George Riggs' prominence. *Montgomery Journal*, 2-12-1988.

<sup>8</sup>Berger, Green Hill Inventory Form, 1990. During the period in which the Riggs family lived at the Sligo house, neighbor Elizabeth Blair Lee, described an April 1862 meeting with 20-year-old Kate Riggs who informed her of the death of a mutual friend from typhoid. Elizabeth wrote of her plans to attend "the funeral at the Cottage Chapel". Kate, or Catherine Shedden Riggs, was the oldest daughter of the Riggs family. *Letters of Elizabeth Blair Lee*, 4-29-1862 (p136).

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R. Snowden Andrews designed the elegant three-story brick house in the Italian Renaissance style. The I Street house was demolished in 1935.<sup>9</sup>

The Sligo area became known for its summer vacation houses, built for wealthy Washingtonians eager to escape the crowded and unhealthy urban condition. By 1854, just a few years before the Riggs family established their estate, Francis Preston Blair, influential editor of *The Globe* newspaper who was retiring from the publishing business, had settled at his country estate known as Silver Spring. This became the namesake for the community that later developed in the area.<sup>10</sup>

Descriptions of George Riggs' property are found in the Civil War correspondence of Elizabeth Blair Lee, daughter of Francis Preston Blair. From her letters one learns that Riggs had moved from his Sligo estate by November 1863. The following July, Silver Spring area skirmishes between Confederate and Union soldiers resulted in 300 dead. Private homes were torched and plundered. Elizabeth wrote that the Riggs were among the lucky few who "have had only their hay forage eaten & the eatables grown by the families" adding that Riggs also lost a valuable ox.<sup>11</sup>

One week after this misfortune, the family sold their Silver Spring farm. The property was nonetheless considered desirable, selling for the respectable sum of \$22,000 for 147 acres to Joseph and Octavia Bryan, on July 21, 1864. The Bryans sold the land within a week to William Thompson for \$23,000.<sup>12</sup>

Upon his death in 1881 an obituary read: "Mr. Riggs was remarkable for strength of mind and for his power to grasp and fathom any subject presented to him. Mild and retiring in disposition, yet his hand was ever open to the calls of worthy necessity, and in all his transactions his judgement was prompt, and his conclusions just."<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>9</sup>*The Riggs Family of Washington*, p330. Robinson & Associates, "Historic Structures Report: Anderson Cottage," 1985. Illustration of I Street House from files of M-NCPPC, Prince George's County.

<sup>10</sup>Roger Brooke Farquhar. Joyce Nalewajk, *History of Woodside*, pp 41-42.

<sup>11</sup>Map of Defenses of Washington, Atlas to Accompany Official Records of Union and Confederate Armies, 1861-1865. B. F. Cooling, *Jubal Early's Raid on Washington: 1864*, 150-153. V. J. Laas (Ed.), *Wartime Washington: Civil War Letters of Elizabeth Blair Lee*, p421.

<sup>12</sup>Deeds EBP 1:281(7-21-1864); EBP 1:284 (7-27-1864); EBP 10:121 (8-30-1872). Howard Berger, "Maryland Historical Trust Historic Sites Inventory Form: Green Hill." M-NCPPC, 1990.

<sup>13</sup>"Death of George W. Riggs," *Washington Star*, August 1881.

CONTINUATION SHEET  
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William Thompson, a prominent Washington businessman who was retiring from a successful plumbing and gas-fitting business, moved to the house after the Civil War. He was vice-president of the Metropolitan National Bank and had additional financial interests in steamboats and real estate. Thompson was "a man of progressive disposition, great energy and upright character." At the onset of the Civil War, he had married Helen L. Nourse, who was described as "a lady of charming manners and genial disposition [who] received splendid educational advantages in Washington." In 1872, Thompson acquired an additional 3 3/4 acre tract on Colesville Road, thus enlarging the farm to 160 acres.<sup>14</sup>

Soon after purchasing the property, the Thompsons enlarged the house, adding an Italianate style front to the south/southwest side. The addition was probably built by 1866, when the assessed value of improvements was \$1,500, nearly double the previous assessment.<sup>15</sup>

After the Metropolitan Branch of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad opened in 1873, suburban development grew in the Sligo area. The train stop was given the name Silver Spring Station, in honor of Blair estate. The community at the Colesville Road-Georgia Avenue intersection, however, continued to be known as Sligo into the early 20th century.<sup>16</sup>

The Riggs-Thompson estate became a social center for other Washingtonians who settled or summered in the area. The Thompsons, who were childless, entertained frequently, hosting gatherings sponsored by the Home Interest Club and other organizations founded by new suburbanites. A contemporary account described the Thompson property as being "of choice land...embellished by an elegant residence attractively located in the center of the place, and containing fine forests, beautiful drives and lawns." The Thompsons continued to maintain a house in Washington, living at 1219 I Street NW.<sup>17</sup> In 1889, the *Evening Star* reported that the "beautiful rolling country of the Silver Spring area" was characterized by "attractive residences of people who have established charming country homes with spacious surroundings of lawn, park, forest, and farm." The Riggs-Thompson estate is representative of Sligo area country estates that set the standard for residential living from the mid 19th to the early 20th century.

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<sup>14</sup>*Portrait and Biographical Record*, 1898, p768-9. List of Patrons, in *Hopkins Atlas*, 1879.

<sup>15</sup>Montgomery County tax assessment records.

<sup>16</sup>1917 USGS map includes communities of Sligo, at Colesville Road, and Silver Spring, at train station, Sligo Avenue.

<sup>17</sup>*Portrait and Biographical Record*, p768. Joyce Nalewajk, *Woodside: The Early Years*, citing obituary in *Montgomery Press*, July 31, 1896 (p41) and 1889 *Evening Star* article (p42). Washington address included in Thompson's will dated February 2, 1885.

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36/8 Riggs-Thompson House  
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William Thompson died in 1896. A notice in the *Sentinel* observed that Thompson passed away while "at his farm in Silver Springs (sic)". Helen Thompson continued to maintain the estate into the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. In addition to furniture and furnishings, the house was outfitted with "books, pictures, paintings, [and] ornaments". Helen owned several automobiles, driven by chauffeur David Hawkins, and to manage the estate she employed a farm overseer, John W. Shaw. Helen died May 13, 1923, leaving her possessions to her sister, Sarah Lord Pratt, and sister in law Julia Moore Nourse.<sup>18</sup>

In 1924, the property, reduced to 94.73 acres, was sold to real estate broker Eldridge E. Jordan and his wife Constance. This sale marked the decline of the estate, located in a rapidly developing residential area just outside the burgeoning Silver Spring business district. Some years earlier, the 110-acre William Thayer estate, located immediately south of Riggs-Thompson, was subdivided and named Silver Spring Park (between Sligo Avenue and Bonifant Street). In 1925, the eastern portion of the Riggs-Thompson estate was subdivided when Eldridge Jordan joined developers Eugene A. Smith and Thomas E. Shaw to create Jordan & Smith's Addition to Silver Spring Park, located between Bonifant Street and Pershing Drive (then Baltimore Road) and extending from Georgia Avenue to Cedar Street.<sup>19</sup>

This subdivision left the Riggs-Thompson House on a ten-acre parcel. In 1926, the Jordans and Eugene Smith took a \$35,000 mortgage on this property. By 1931, they defaulted on this loan and the property was offered at public sale. The house was described as a frame dwelling with 15 or more rooms, four baths, and "all the modern improvements" including electricity. Other buildings on the ten-acre parcel were a small, single story dwelling, a garage, and various other outbuildings. Ruth Money bought the property for \$30,000 and immediately conveyed it to Evan Reid Corporation.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>18</sup>William died July 23, 1896. *Sentinel* obituary July 31, 1896. His will is recorded in GCD 2:365. Helen will: HCA 26:427. The furnishings of the house and other personal property were assessed at \$1300 in 1866, 1868 and 1918.

<sup>19</sup>Deed 354:29. Subject to driveway Right of Way, described in Plat, Orphans Court HCA 27:216. 1894 Hopkins estate shows Thayer estate while 1907 Chandler map records subdivision between Bonifant Avenue and Sligo Avenue. Jordan & Smith's Addition, platted June 1, 1925 (4:301).

<sup>20</sup>Deed of Trust 397:365 (1926). Deeds 532:108, 532:109 (1931). Klingé Real Estate Atlas, 1931, M-NCPPC copy updated. Description of house from Equity Case #6115, 48:468 cited in Catherine Crawford's MHT form, 1983. Jordan was president of Investors Securities Corporation which sold land to create the Montgomery Country Club, by 1933, for which a frame building was built at the southeast corner of Pershing Drive and Springvale Road, now used by the Chelsea School.

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36/8 Riggs-Thompson House  
711 Pershing Drive

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The property was further subdivided in a community known as Evanswood. Houses were built along Cedar Street, in the front yard of the Riggs Thompson House. Other houses were planned for lots on the rest of the block, leaving the historic house on a 1.4-acre parcel fronting on Pershing Drive (Maple Lane). In 1933, the Sisters of Holy Names of Jesus & Mary, Inc. purchased the house and remaining undeveloped lots along Ellsworth Drive (Baltimore Road), Pershing Drive and Springvale (Hawley) Road.<sup>21</sup>

The Holy Names Academy opened in the Riggs-Thompson House as an elementary school. High school classes were added in 1936. In 1950, a two-story brick building was constructed facing Springvale Road, northeast of the historic house. Classes were moved out of the house, which has been used in more recent years as a convent and school annex.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>21</sup>Deed 560:445 (1933). 1931 Klingé Real Estate Atlas.

<sup>22</sup>"Girl's School Hit as Rolls Decline," *Montgomery Journal*, 2-12-1988. Construction date of brick school from Sanborn Insurance Map, 1933, corrected to 1963.

# Major Bibliographical References

Survey No. M:36/8

See attached

# 0. Geographical Data

Area of nominated property 4.8 acres

Quadrangle name \_\_\_\_\_

Quadrangle scale \_\_\_\_\_

Verbal boundary description and justification

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	code	county	code

# 1. Form Prepared By

Name/title	Clare Lise Cavicchi, Historic Preservation Planner		
Organization	Maryland National Capital Park and Planning Commission	date	5/98
Street & number	8787 Georgia Avenue	telephone	301-563-3400
City or town	Silver Spring	state	Maryland 20910-3760

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  
DHCD/DHCP  
100 Community Place  
Crownsville, MD 21032-2023  
410-514-7600

CONTINUATION SHEET  
36/8 Riggs-Thompson House  
711 Pershing Drive

Section 9:2

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Primary Sources:

Boyd, T. H. S. *The History of Montgomery County, Maryland*. Baltimore, Md: Regional Publishing Co, 1968. Originally published 1879, Clarksburg, Maryland.

Chapman Publishing Company, *Portrait and Biographical Record*, Sixth Congressional District, Maryland, 1898.

Equity Records, Montgomery County Courthouse, Rockville, Maryland.

Hewitt, Jack. National Photo Company Photographs. Private Collection.

Land Records, Montgomery County Courthouse, Rockville, Maryland. Deeds and Plats.

Maps:

Map of Defenses of Washington, *Atlas to Accompany Official Records of Union and Confederate Armies*, 1861-1865.

Chandler, George V. Lower Montgomery County. Linden, Md: 4-16-1907.

Deets and Maddox, *Real Estate Atlas*, 1917.

Hopkins, G. M. *Atlas of Fifteen Miles Around Washington, Including Montgomery County, Maryland*. 1879.

Hopkins, G. M. *Northern Virginia and Bethesda*, 1894.

Klinge *Real Estate Atlas*, 1931 and 1941.

Martenet and Bond, *Map of Montgomery County, Maryland*, 1865.

Maryland Geological Survey Map, Bethesda & Vicinity, 1910.

Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, 1927-1959.

*Prominent Personages of the Nation's Capital*. Washington, D.C.: The Washington Times Co, 1924.

*Washington Star*, George Washington Riggs, Obituary, August 1881.

*Who's Who in the Nation's Capital*. Washington: W. W. Publishing Company. 1923-24.

CONTINUATION SHEET  
36/8 Riggs-Thompson House  
711 Pershing Drive

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Secondary Sources:

Berger, Howard S. "Maryland Historical Trust Inventory Form: Resource #65-8: Green Hill, 2009 Van Buren Street, West Hyattsville, Maryland," M-NCPPC Prince George's County, 1990.

Cooling, Benjamin Franklin. *Jubal Early's Raid on Washington, 1864*. Baltimore: Nautical & Aviation Publishing Co, 1989.

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Smith, Kathryn Schneider (ed). *Washington at Home: An Illustrated History of Neighborhoods in the Nation's Capital*.

# Maryland Historical Trust State Historic Sites Inventory Form

## 1. Name (indicate preferred name)

historic William H. Thompson

and/or common Holy Names Convent-Academy

## 2. Location

street & number 711 Persinhing Dr. \_\_\_ not for publication

city, town Silver Spring \_\_\_ vicinity of congressional district 13th

state Maryland county Montgomery

## 3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> educational	<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
	<input type="checkbox"/> not applicable	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other:

## 4. Owner of Property (give names and mailing addresses of all owners)

name Sister of Holy Name of Jesus and Mary, Inc.

street & number 711 Pershing Dr. telephone no.:

city, town Silver Spring state and zip code Maryland, 20901

## 5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Montgomery County Courthouse liber 560

street & number folio 445

city, town Rockville state Md.

## 6. Representation in Existing Historical Surveys

title MNCPPC Historic Sites Inventory

date 1976 \_\_\_ federal  state  county \_\_\_ local

depository for survey records Park Historian's Office

city, town Rockville state Md.

7. DESCRIPTION	
CONDITION	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Good <input type="checkbox"/> Fair <input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated <input type="checkbox"/> Ruins <input type="checkbox"/> Unexposed (Check One)
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Altered <input type="checkbox"/> Unaltered <input type="checkbox"/> Moved <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Original Site (Check One)
DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE	
<p>The house has been greatly enlarged and remodeled but basically it is a large, two-story Victorian structure of frame construction. The main part has large, external chimneys and is capped with a slate, mansard roof. There are three, arched dormer windows projecting from this roof on the west side.</p>	

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

# 8. Significance

Survey No.

M:36-8

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below					
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion		
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science		
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture		
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/		
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater		
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation		
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention	<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)			

**Specific dates** circa. 1859 **Builder/Architect**

---

check: Applicable Criteria:  A  B  C  D  
and/or

Applicable Exception:  A  B  C  D  E  F  G

Level of Significance:  national  state  local

Prepare both a summary paragraph of significance and a general statement of history and support.

The William Thompson house is significant as an example of Victorian architecture typical of that constructed in Montgomery County from the mid-nineteenth through the early twentieth centuries. The house was probably built by George Riggs about 1859.<sup>1</sup> Riggs was vice-president of the Metropolitan National Bank.<sup>2</sup> George built his house on a tract of land referred to as "Girl's Portion" which he purchased in December of 1858 from James and Mary Ann Reynolds.<sup>3</sup>

In July of 1864, George and his wife, Janet, sold the house to Joseph Bryan for \$22,000.<sup>4</sup> Bryan immediately sold the house to William Thompson.<sup>5</sup> William had recently retired from the gas-fitting and plumbing business in which he had been quite successful.<sup>6</sup> William died in July of 1896 leaving his entire estate to his wife, Helen Lucretia Thompson.<sup>7</sup> Helen continued to live in the house until her death in May of 1923 at which point the house was willed to her sister, Sarah L. Pratt (William and Helen had no children).<sup>8</sup>

Sarah sold the house in June of 1924 to Constance Jordon.<sup>9</sup> In December of 1931 the house was following Constance's and her husband, Eldridge's, default on the mortgage. The house was then described as a frame dwelling containing fifteen or more rooms and four baths, with "all the modern improvements" including electricity. Also on the property was a small, single story dwelling, a garage and various other outbuildings.<sup>10</sup> The house was sold to Ruth Money for \$10,000.<sup>11</sup> Ruth immediately sold the property to Evans-Reid Corporation who sold the house on a two acre lot (sub-dividing the remaining acreage) in 1933.<sup>12</sup> The house then became the property of the present owners, Sisters of the Holy Names of Jesus and Mary, Inc.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>1</sup>The date given is based on the date the land was purchased, the date that it first appears on the tax records with improvements and the fact that Portrait & Biographical Records of the 6th Congress mentions the house which Thompson purchased formerly the home of George Riggs.

<sup>2</sup>Portrait & Biographical Records of the 6th Congress, p.768.

<sup>3</sup>Deed JGH 7/199, Mont. Co. Land Records.

<sup>4</sup>Deed EBP 1/281, " "

<sup>5</sup>Deed EBP 1/284, " "

<sup>6</sup>Portrait & Biographical Review, p.769.

<sup>7</sup>Will GCD 2/365, MC. Register of Wills

<sup>8</sup>Will HCA 26/427, " "

<sup>9</sup>Deed 354/29, M.C. Land Records

<sup>10</sup>Equity #6115, 48/468

<sup>11</sup>Deed 532/108, M.C. Land Records

<sup>12</sup>Deed 532/109 & 527/495

<sup>13</sup>Deed 560/445



MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST WORKSHEET

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

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

<b>1. NAME</b>					
COMMON: Holy Name Academy-Convent					
AND/OR HISTORIC: Wm. H. Thompson House					
<b>2. LOCATION</b>					
STREET AND NUMBER: 711 Pershing Drive					
CITY OR TOWN: Silver Spring					
STATE: Maryland		COUNTY: Montgomery			
<b>3. CLASSIFICATION</b>					
<b>CATEGORY</b> (Check One) <input type="checkbox"/> District <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Structure <input type="checkbox"/> Object		<b>OWNERSHIP</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Public    Public Acquisition: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> In Process <input type="checkbox"/> Both <input type="checkbox"/> Being Considered		<b>STATUS</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress	<b>ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC</b> Yes: <input type="checkbox"/> Restricted <input type="checkbox"/> Unrestricted <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)					
<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural	<input type="checkbox"/> Government	<input type="checkbox"/> Park	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation	<input type="checkbox"/> Comments	
<input type="checkbox"/> Commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> Industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> Private Residence	<input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify)	_____	
<input type="checkbox"/> Educational	<input type="checkbox"/> Military	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Religious	_____	_____	
<input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> Museum	<input type="checkbox"/> Scientific	_____	_____	
<b>4. OWNER OF PROPERTY</b>					
OWNER'S NAME:					
STREET AND NUMBER:					
CITY OR TOWN:		STATE:			
<b>5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION</b>					
COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.:					
Montgomery County Courthouse					
STREET AND NUMBER:					
CITY OR TOWN: Rockville		STATE: Maryland			
Title Reference of Current Deed (Book & Pg. #):					
<b>6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS</b>					
TITLE OF SURVEY:					
DATE OF SURVEY: <input type="checkbox"/> Federal <input type="checkbox"/> State <input type="checkbox"/> County <input type="checkbox"/> Local					
DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:					
STREET AND NUMBER:					
CITY OR TOWN:		STATE:			

M:36-8

7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION	(Check One)					
	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> Ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> Unexposed
	(Check One)			(Check One)		
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Altered	<input type="checkbox"/> Unaltered	<input type="checkbox"/> Moved	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Original Site		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The house has been greatly enlarged and remodeled but basically it is a large, two-story Victorian structure of frame construction. The main part has large, external chimneys and is capped with a slate, mansard roof. There are three, arched dormer windows projecting from this roof on the west side.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

**8. SIGNIFICANCE**

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

<input type="checkbox"/> Pre-Columbian	<input type="checkbox"/> 16th Century	<input type="checkbox"/> 18th Century	<input type="checkbox"/> 20th Century
<input type="checkbox"/> 15th Century	<input type="checkbox"/> 17th Century	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 19th Century	

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known)

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

<input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal	<input type="checkbox"/> Education	<input type="checkbox"/> Political	<input type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning
<input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> Engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> Religion/Phi-	<input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify)
<input type="checkbox"/> Historic	<input type="checkbox"/> Industry	losophy	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> Invention	<input type="checkbox"/> Science	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> Landscape	<input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Art	Architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> Social/Human-	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> Literature	itarian	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Communications	<input type="checkbox"/> Military	<input type="checkbox"/> Theater	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> Music	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation	_____

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

[Empty space for statement of significance]

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

**9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES**

**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		LATITUDE	LONGITUDE	
	Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds		Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds	
NW	° ' "	° ' "		° ' "	° ' "	
NE	° ' "	° ' "		° ' "	° ' "	
SE	° ' "	° ' "		° ' "	° ' "	
SW	° ' "	° ' "		° ' "	° ' "	

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY:

**Acreage Justification:**

**11. FORM PREPARED BY**

NAME AND TITLE:  
Michael F. Dwyer, Senior Park Historian

ORGANIZATION: M-NCPPC      DATE: 6/2/75

STREET AND NUMBER:  
8787 Georgia Ave.

CITY OR TOWN: Silver Spring      STATE: Maryland

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

Significance of this property is:  
 National     State     Local

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

CONTINUATION SHEET

M:36/8 Riggs-Thompson House (c.1859 )  
711 Pershing Drive



Current view of front elevation.

Photographer: Elizabeth Jo Lampl, Robinson & Associates, 8-1989.

CONTINUATION SHEET

M:36/8 Riggs-Thompson House  
711 Pershing Drive



Rear facade of mansard roofed block (center) with mid-20th century addition at right.  
Photographer: Joyce DeLaurentis, M-NCPPC, 5-1998.

CONTINUATION SHEET

M:36/8 Riggs-Thompson House  
711 Pershing Drive



Front view of house, taken between 1924 and 1931 when the property was owned by Eldridge Jordan. Roadway at right is today's Pershing Drive.

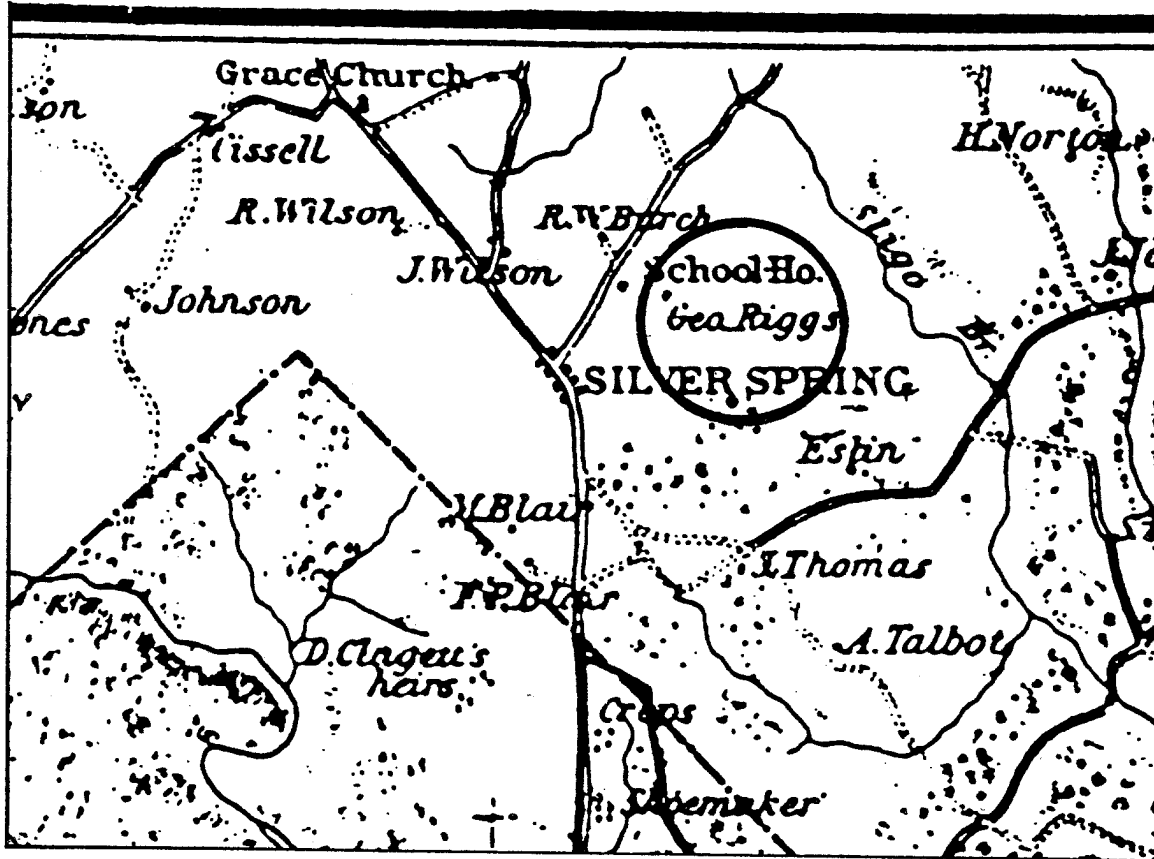
Source: National Photo Company, Jack Hewitt Collection

CONTINUATION  
M. 36/8  
Riggs-Thompson House



George Washington Riggs

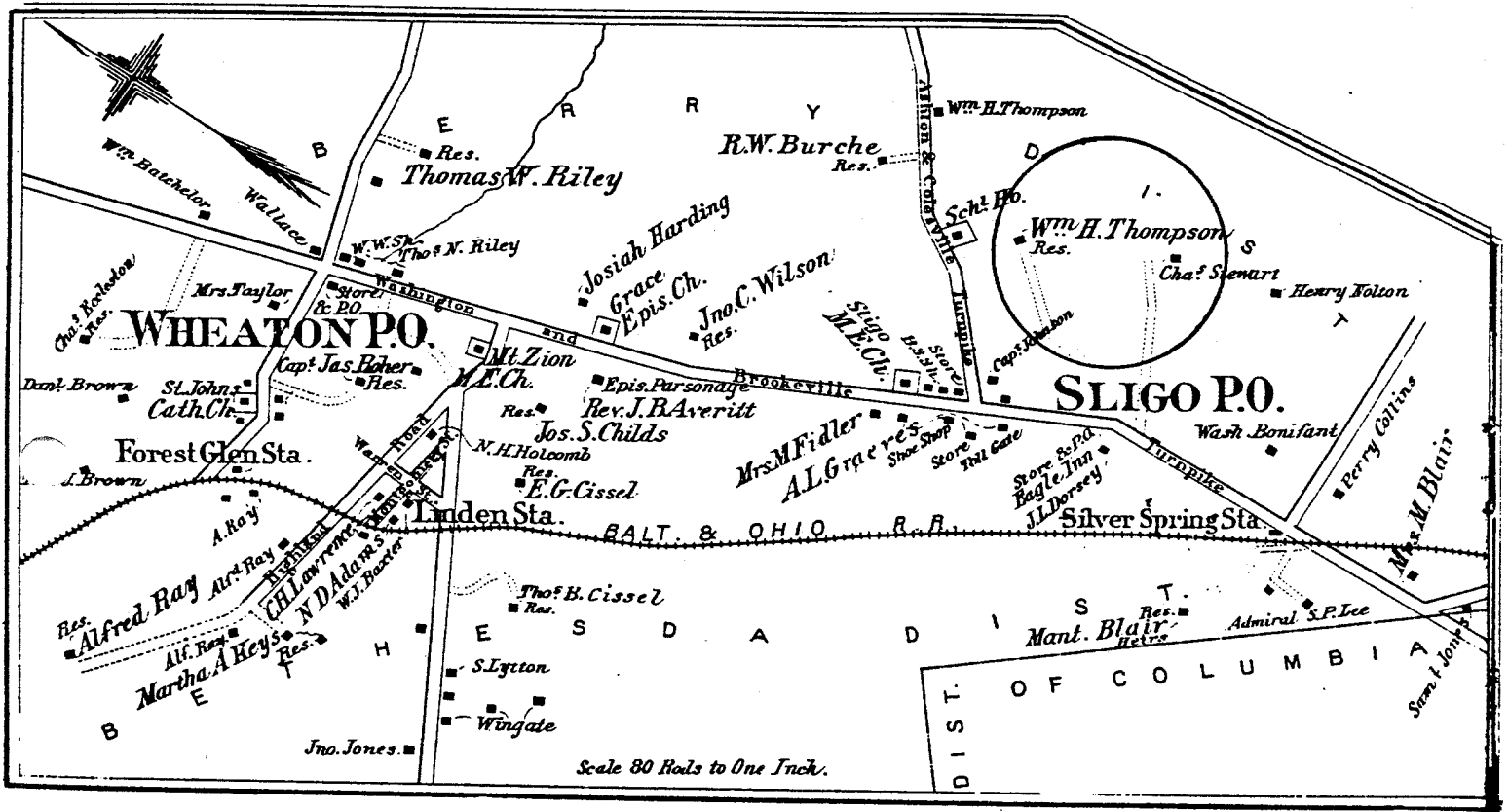
CONTINUATION SHEET  
M:36/8 Riggs-Thompson House  
711 Pershing Drive



George Washington Riggs created his country estate after purchasing land in the Sligo area in January 1857. Here he operated a working farm known for its fine-blooded cattle. Across Georgia Avenue, were the Blair family residences: Montgomery Blair's *Falklands*, and Francis Prescott Blair's *Silver Spring*. The triangular shaped D.C. boundary is seen at left.

Source: *Map of Defenses of Washington*, Atlas to Accompany Official Records of Union and Confederate Armies, 1861-1865. Library of Congress.

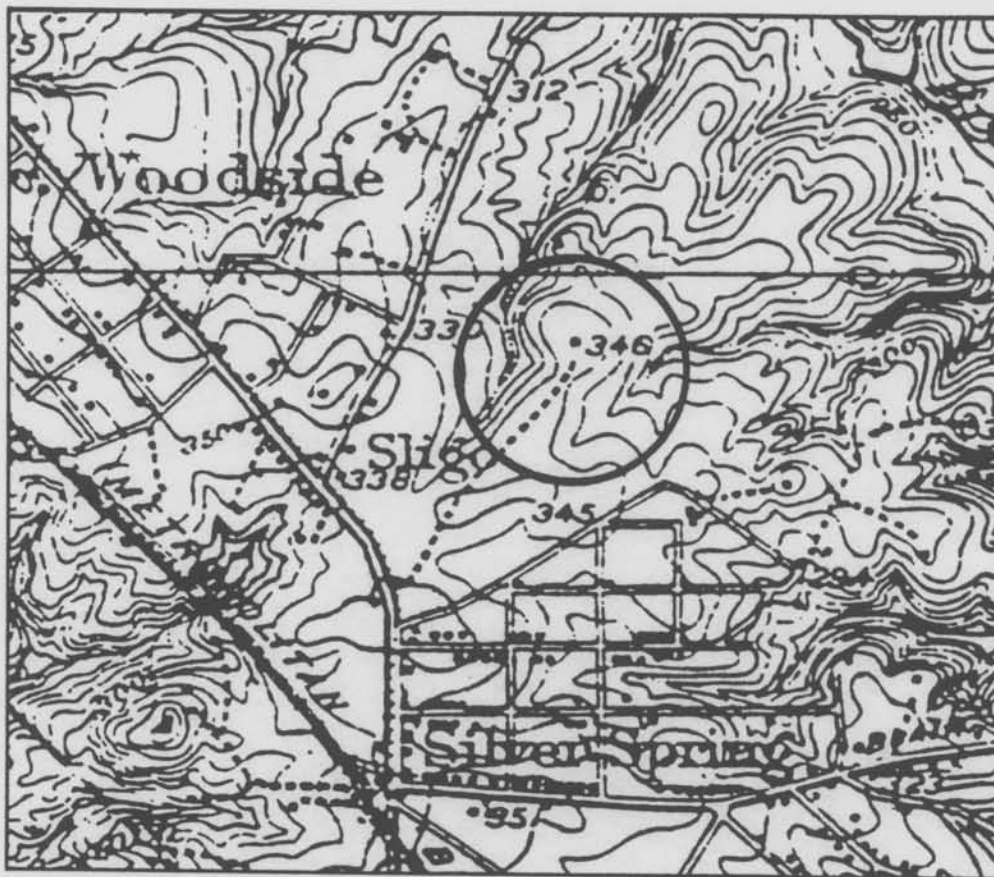
CONTINUATION SHEET  
 M.36/8 Riggs-Thompson House  
 711 Pershing Drive



William H. Thompson purchased the Riggs estate in 1864 and lived here until his death in 1896. The 160-acre estate was bounded on the east by the Washington-Brookeville Turnpike (Georgia Avenue) and on the north by the Ashton-Colesville Turnpike (Colesville Road).

Source: Hopkins, G. M. *Atlas of Fifteen Miles Around Washington, Including Montgomery County, Maryland.* 1879.

CONTINUATION SHEET  
M:36/8 Riggs-Thompson House  
711 Pershing Drive



Helen Thompson continued to live at the estate until 1923. As shown on this 1917 map, the house is situated on a knoll overlooking a branch of Sligo Creek (present site of Ellsworth Drive). The house was accessed from Georgia Avenue by a long driveway which is the approximate location of Pershing Drive. By this time, the southern boundary of the estate was Bonifant Street, in the subdivision known as Silver Spring Park.

Source: United States Geological Survey Map, 1917.



Riggs-Thompson House, 711 Pershing Drive  
Existing Buildings

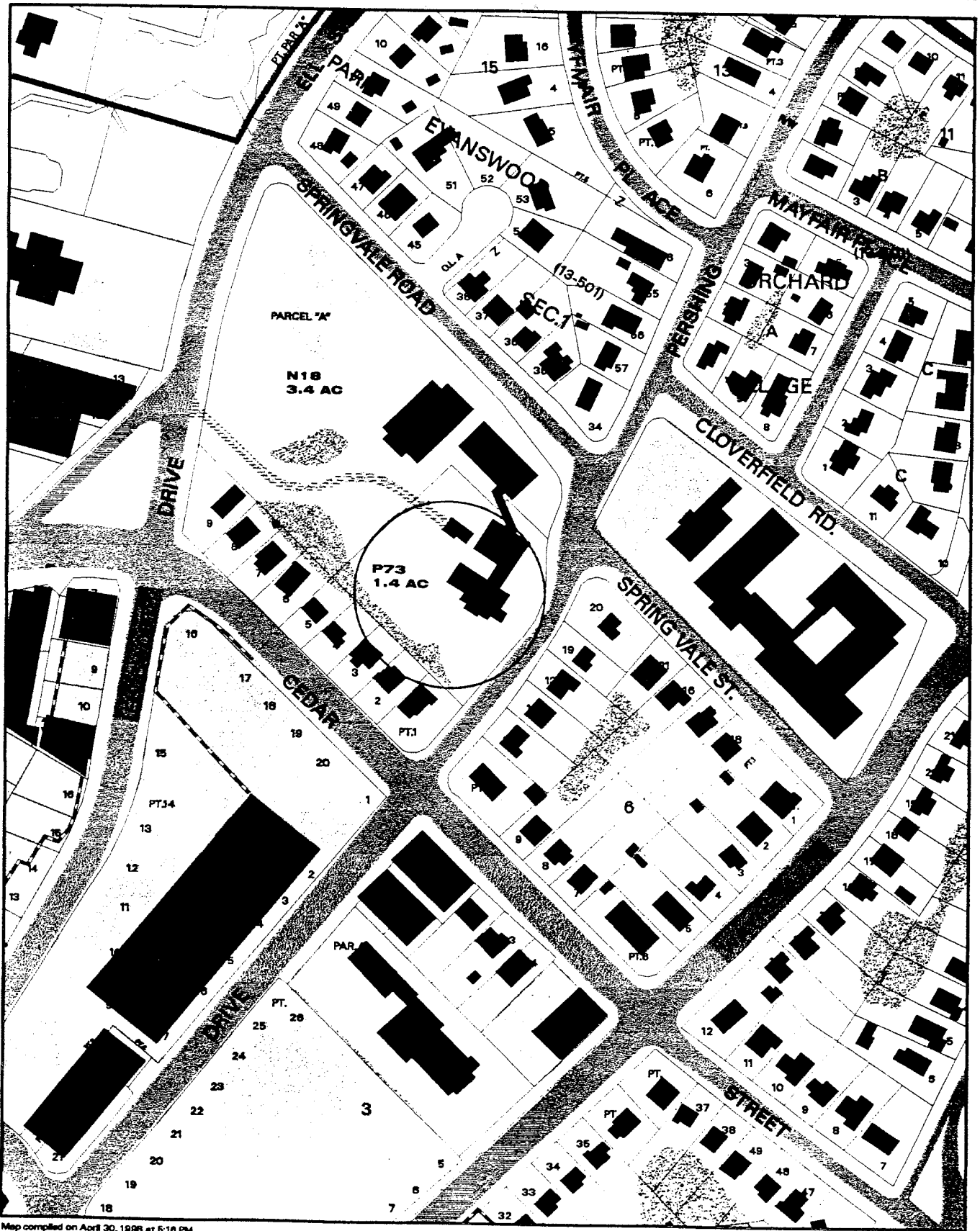
M:36-8

Construction Materials:

- Brick
- Frame
- Concrete Block

Source: Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, 1963

# Vicinity Map for Riggs-Thompson House (36/8) M:36-8



Map compiled on April 30, 1998 at 5:18 PM

## DISCLAIMER

The planimetric, property, and topographic information shown on this map is based on copyrighted Map Products from the Montgomery County Department of Park and Planning of the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission, and may not be copied or reproduced without written permission from M-NCPPC.

**MONTGOMERY COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF PARK AND PLANNING**  
 THE MARYLAND NATIONAL CAPITAL PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION  
 8787 Georgia Avenue - Silver Spring, Maryland 20910-3760

Key Map



N



0 Research & Technology Center 200



CONTINUATION SHEET

M:36/8 Riggs-Thompson House  
711 Pershing Drive



Looking northeast, aerial view showing Riggs-Thompson property before development. Photograph taken c1924-1925 before the estate was developed. Georgia Avenue and B&O Railroad cross in the foreground.

Source: National Photo Company. Jack Hewitt Collection

CONTINUATION SHEET

M:36/8 Riggs-Thompson House (c.1859 )  
711 Pershing Drive



Current view of front elevation.

Photographer: Elizabeth Jo Lampl, Robinson & Associates, 8-1989

CONTINUATION SHEET

M:36/8 Riggs-Thompson House  
711 Pershing Drive



Rear facade of mansard roofed block (center) with mid-20th century addition at right.  
Photographer: Joyce DeLaurentis, M-NCPPC, 5-1998.



M: 3618 Rigg-Thompson Home  
711 Parshing Drive  
5/7/98  
J. DeLaurantis

SOUTH ELEVATION



M: 36/8 Riggs-Thompson Home  
711 Pashley Dr.  
5-1-98  
J. DeLamarche

REAR ELEVATION OF ORIGINAL  
C1858 BRICK SECTION



M: 36/8 Regg - Thompson House  
711 Parshing Dr.  
5/2/98  
J. DeLaurentis

NORTH ELEVATION



Mi #36-8

NAME Wm. H. THOMPSON HSE (HOLY NAME  
CONVENT)

LOCATION 711 PERSHING DR, SILVER SPRING,  
MD.

FACADE S

PHOTO TAKEN 6/2/75

M. A. WYER