

Bowieville
NEAR Leeland, Md.

HABS No. MD 6044
HABS
MD.
19-LELDV

PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA
District of Washington, D.C.

Historic American Buildings Survey
Delos H. Smith, District Officer
1707 Eye St., N.W., Washington, D.C.

Addendum To:
BOWIEVILLE
(Robert Bowie House)
522 Church Road South
Leeland vicinity
Prince George's County
Maryland

HABS NO. MD-644

HABS
MC
17-LELDV,
1-

PHOTOGRAPHS AND
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
Washington, D.C. 20013-7127

HABS
MD
17-LELD.V,
1-

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

BOWIEVILLE
(Robert Bowie House)

HABS NO. MD-644

- Location: 522 Church Road South, Leeland vicinity, Prince George's County, Maryland
- Present Owner: Maryland Community Developers, Inc. Albert W. Turner, President, 7600 Fountain Bleu Drive, Lanham, Maryland 20801
- Present Occupant: The house itself is vacant, but caretakers Mr. & Mrs. James Queen live on the property (Mrs. Queen has lived here since she was a child, and worked in the house for the previous owner).
- Present Use: The house has stood vacant for many years, its future undetermined.
- Significance: Bowieville is one of the finest examples of the Federal style in Prince George's County. Features such as its symmetry, elliptical fanlights at the entry and between the parlors, tripartite windows, bowed rear porch and other Adamesque details, exemplify the Federal style. Bowieville reflects the prosperity of the tobacco economy of Prince George's County, as well as the prominence of the Bowie family. The Bowies had extensive landholdings in the county and were important politically. Bowieville was built by Mary Wootton Bowie, daughter of Governor Robert Bowie, on property she inherited from her father, and is very similar in styling to his home, Mattaponi, which is also of brick covered with stucco.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Date of erection: Bowieville was built ca. 1820 on property which Mary Bowie received following the death of her father, Robert Bowie, in 1818. The appraisal of Mary Bowie's real estate in 1826 states, "There is on the land, a large new brick dwelling house... two stories high, besides the basement...."

2. Original and subsequent owners:

- 1818 Robert Bowie died leaving this tract of land to his daughter, Mary Mackall Bowie Wootton Bowie
- 1825 Mary Bowie died 4 August 1825 leaving her property to her children
- 184? Deed ?
Robert Bowie, executor of the estate of Mary Bowie
To
William J. Berry
- 1858 Will, Administration #782
William J. Berry
To
Jeremiah Berry
"I give and devise unto my son Jeremiah Berry my plantation known as 'Bowieville' upon which he now resides together with all the personal property which may be thereon at the time of my death".
- 1867 Deed HB 1:12, 18 December 1867
Sarah Eliza Berry
To
Jeremiah Berry
"whereas... in consideration of \$24,700.50... 2/3 having been paid by a certain William J. Berry, late... and 1/3 thereof by ... Thomas Clagett for the use and benefit of his daughter, the said Sarah Eliza Berry... all that tract of land... upon which Jeremiah Berry now resides known as "Bowieville", containing six hundred and seventeen and a half acres... Sarah Eliza Berry is desirous of conveying into said Jeremiah Berry all of her undivided right... in consideration of natural love and affection and the sum of ten thousand dollars..."
- 1876 Deed HB 12:39, 8 December 1876
Jeremiah and Catherine S. Berry
To
Ellen M. Boggs of Georgetown, Washington, D.C.
Tract of land situated in Queen Anne district in the County of Prince Georges... owned by and in the possession of the said Jeremiah Berry

BOWIEVILLE
(Robert Bowie House)
HABS NO. MD-644 (page 3)

called and known as "Bowieville," containing 353 2/3 acres." \$16,500.

- 1926 Will WTD 1:120, 19 January 1926, Administration #3867
Ellen M. Boggs of Georgetown, Washington, D.C.
To
Katherine S. Berry
- 1927 Will WTD 3:457, Administration #4195 (probated 8 November 1927)
Katherine S. Berry
To
Mary Lawrence Berry
Said property... under will of my mother, Ellen M. Boggs... to my daughter, Mary Lawrence Berry, absolutely... my farm known as Bowieville... where I am now residing, together with furniture and household effects in my dwelling house on said farm..."
- 1935 Will WTD 3:572, 5 February 1935, Administration #5457
Mary Lawrence Berry
To
Francis Fairfax Roberts
- 1935 Deed 434:269, 14 September 1935
Francis Fairfax Roberts and Clarence M. Roberts, her husband
To
Harold Owen Knapp and Mary Page Knapp
"Bowieville" containing 220.8 acres
- 1960 Will, Administration #13,277
Harold Owen Knapp
To
Mary Page Knapp
"unto my beloved wife Mary Pale Knapp all my jewelry, clothing and household effects... interest in my residence and farm owned by my wife and me... called "Bowieville" and "Church Field"... 264.8 acres
- 1968 Will, Administration #18788
Mary Page Knapp
To
Various heirs, brother, nieces & nephews, etc.

BOWIEVILLE
(Robert Bowie House)
HABS NO. MD-644 (page 4)

1969 Agreement, Administration #18788, 7 November
1969
M. Jennings Von Der Heyde, executor of the
estate of Mary Page Knapp
To
Maryland Community Developers, Inc.
"Bowieville" 311.5 acres, \$1,090,250.00

3. Builder: The actual builder is unknown, but Bowieville was built for Mary Mackall Bowie Wootton Bowie.

4. Original plans and construction: No original plans have been found. The real estate appraisal conducted in 1826, following the death of Mary Bowie describes the house as "... a large new brick dwelling house, rough cast (stuccoed), finished in the best manner, two stories high, besides the basement..."

5. Alterations and additions: No major additions have been made to Bowieville. The wing is built over the original basement kitchen, suggesting that it is contemporary with the main block of the house. However, an historic drawing of the house (ca. 1820-1840) shows only a stoop, with steps to the side, in front of the center doorway of this wing. The current doorway to the east of it is shown as a window on this rendering.

B. Historical Context:

Mary Mackall Bowie Wootton Bowie (daughter of Robert Bowie, widow of Turner Wootton and Thomas Contee Bowie) had Bowieville (or "Bowie's Villa" as it is referred to in the appraisal upon her death) constructed in the early 1820s. The 1826 appraisal conducted by John Contee states, "I hereby certify that we have valued the real estate above mentioned and estimate the annual value thereof at \$1,200 current money. There is on the land, a large new brick dwelling house, rough cast (stuccoed), finished in the best manner, two stories high, besides the basement, with all the necessary outbuildings..." (Wills, docket #1810, Prince George's County Courthouse).

The property on which it was constructed she received upon the death of her father in 1818. Her father, Robert Bowie, was twice governor of Maryland (1803-06 and 1811-12). His home, "Cedars" and later, "Mattaponi," resemble Bowieville and perhaps provided Mary Bowie the inspiration for Bowieville. (Mattaponi, built ca. 1745,

BOWIEVILLE
(Robert Bowie House)
HABS NO. MD-644 (page 5)

was altered and wings added ca. 1820. It too is of brick construction covered with stucco). Bowieville, an elegant Federal-style mansion, thus reflects the wealth and social standing of the county's elite. The property itself was a tobacco plantation, as the 1826 appraisal also lists six new and three old tobacco houses. The inventory of her personal property also indicated that she owned at least two dozen slaves (mixed ages and sex).

Mary Mackall Bowie married Turner Wooton in 1794. He died just two years later, leaving her a widow with one son, William Turner Wooton. She married again to her third cousin, Thomas Contee Bowie in 1801, and together they had nine children. He died suddenly in 1813 at their home Essington. After his death, Mary began the construction of Bowieville. She too, however, died on August 3, 1825, at the age of 55. Her son Robert Bowie served as executor of her estate. He evidently attempted to maintain a home here, perhaps for the benefit of his under-aged brothers and sisters.

The property remained in the Bowie family until the 1840s. Due to legal problems, or perhaps the desire to divide the estate amongst the many heirs, Bowieville was sold to William J. Berry. Bowieville remained in the Berry family until 1935.

William J. Berry was a prominent citizen and had extensive land holdings in Prince Georges County. He purchased this farm with the assistance of his father-in-law, Thomas Clagett. As stated in a later deed, William Berry paid 2/3 and Thomas Clagett 1/3 "... for the use and benefit of his daughter, the said Sarah Eliza Berry..." (deed HB 1:12). At the time of William Berry's death in 1858, however, he was residing elsewhere, but still farming Bowieville. According to his will, he devised onto his wife, Sarah, a home "at my dwelling plantation known as "Chelsea", which was to be inherited by his son, William Berry. To his son, Jeremiah Berry, "my plantation known as Bowieville upon which he now resides..."

Jeremiah married Katherine Stewart Boggs of Georgetown (daughter of Commodore Brenton Boggs) in 1866. They conveyed Bowieville to Ellen M. Boggs of Georgetown, in December of 1876 (Deed HB 12:39). However, they evidently continued to reside there, as the Hopkins Atlas of 1879 reads, "Jerry Berry, Res(idence) 'Bowieville' 780 a(cres)".

Ellen M. Boggs, according to her will, maintained a primary residence in Georgetown. Upon her death in 1926 she conveyed Bowieville to her daughter, Katherine S. Berry, who did reside here. The inventory of the personal property of Katherine S. Berry following her death in 1927 gives the value of the furnishings in each room. A list of the rooms indicates their use. They are follows: library, front parlor, back parlor, hall (front), back hall, pantry, dining room, kitchen, upstairs hall, bedrooms 1, 2, and 3, maid's room. Katherine Berry's farm "known as Bowieville... where I am now residing..." was passed by her will to her daughter, Mary Lawrence Berry.

Mary passed away soon after, in 1935 leaving Bowieville to Frances Fairfax Roberts who sold it the same year, thus ending nearly one hundred years of Berry family ownership. Mary's personal inventory lists the furnishings room by room, indicating a grand home lavishly filled with antiques, fine china, etc. The administration papers accompanying her will also mentioned Gustav A. Buchheister, to be paid for managing the Bowieville farm, and her inventory lists 10,000 pounds of tobacco. This indicates that Bowieville was still, after over one hundred years, a tobacco farm.

Bowieville was purchased in 1935 by Harold Owen Knapp and his wife, Mary Page Knapp. They continued to farm the property, living out their lives here. Mary died, predeceased by her husband, in 1968. Having had no children, Bowieville was conveyed into Mary's family. According to the appraisal, "The topography is somewhat superior... Property is improved by a large dwelling, tenant houses, barns and other outbuildings. However, in our opinion, the highest and best use is modern development, and the improvements add no value to the property." Thus, Bowieville was sold to Maryland Community Developer, Inc. The property remains undeveloped and the house in fairly good but deteriorating state.

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: Bowieville is an excellent example of both Federal-style architecture and of the grand tobacco plantation house in Prince George's County.

The exterior retains its fine detailing including entry with elliptical fanlight, bowed rear porch with walk-out, jib windows, low hipped roof with balustrade, etc. It also contains some of the finest interior detailing in the county which includes plaster cornices and ceiling medallions, a wide elliptical arch between the parlors, elegant three-story stairway, fine mantels, panelling under the windows, wood graining, etc.

2. Condition of fabric: Bowieville appears have its original architectural details intact. However, it has been abandoned for many years and is in need of repair and maintenance.

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Overall dimensions: Bowieville has a large, rectangular, two-story main block, five bays wide (four, at rear) and three bays deep, with a low hipped roof. To the east side is a lower two-story, two-bay-by-three-bay, gable-roofed kitchen wing. The facade has a central entry pavilion with a gable front. To either side of the pavilion are two large windows. The rear has a large, bowed porch supported by Doric columns. There are only four bays across the rear, the middle two with wooden paneled, jib-doors that open out for access to the porch from the rear parlors.

2. Foundations: The foundation is brick. The structure is covered with stucco and no distinction is made between the foundation and the walls. There is, however, a high basement lit by windows to the front and west side in the main block and in the north rear and east side elevations of the wing.

3. Walls: The walls are brick, covered with a smooth stucco surface.

4. Structural system, framing: Bowieville is of load-bearing brick construction.

5. Porches, stoops, balconies: A deep rectangular porch with a bowed center runs the length of the rear of the main block. The flat roof has a classical entablature with crenellated molding in the cornice, a plain wide frieze, with molding below. It is supported by seven Doric columns with fluting at the top. They are of wood construction (vertical boards) built in segments. There is a flat, matching pilaster at either end of the facade. The porch has a brick floor, with brick steps to either

side of the bowed area (floor bows to match porch roof).

The east front entry has a wide, stone stoop with graduated steps which flare out towards the bottom, with an iron rail. Atop the low hipped roof of the main block is a widow's walk. The porch along the length of the south front of the kitchen wing. It has a wooden floor resting on brick piers with an iron rail. The wooden steps are to the side, against the wall. There is a shed roof, an extension of the main roof, two stories up, which shades the porch.

6. Chimneys: The main block has four, symmetrically balanced, interior end chimneys, two at each of the east and west sides. They are narrow, rectangular brick chimneys covered with stucco, with a single corbelled edge around the top. At the east end of the kitchen wing is another interior brick chimney at the gable end (same as others).

7. Openings:

a. Doorways and doors: The main entry at the south front of the house has an elaborate surround. The double doors are flanked by fluted Doric columns which support a beaded entablature which is recessed above the door and extended over the columns and sidelights, and continues along the side walls or reveals. Above the door is an elliptical fanlight. There are three-light sidelights with recessed panels below. This entire doorway is recessed with panelled reveals to either side and above the fanlight. On the outside wall, a classical entablature rests on two large, fluted doric columns, atop the elliptical entry. The double doors are three panel, the top panel being smaller.

The two middle bays of the north rear facade serve as both windows and doors. The two wooden panels below the windows open to form jib doorways. At the south front elevation of the kitchen wing there are two entries. They are located at the first floor and accessed by a porch. Both are recessed and have transoms. The first is located at the far west end where the wing meets the main block. The second is to the middle of the facade. There is a doorway to the rear of the east side elevation of the kitchen wing. It is mid-level between the basement and first floor and has a transom above.

b. Windows: The typical window is a large, six-over-six-light sash window with thin muntins, a simple ovolo surround set into the brick wall, and a stone sill (no lintels). On the second floor of the facade pavilion above the main entry is a tripartite window. It consisting of a six-over-six-light sash flanked by doric pilasters with a narrow, sidelight-like, two-over-two-light sash to either side. As mentioned, the middle two bays on the first-story, north rear have wooden jib doorways. At the basement level, there are three-over-three-light sash windows at the south front and west side the main block and on the north rear and east side of the kitchen wing. In the gable end of the facade pavilion is a semi-circular opening with an arched six-light casement to the center and louvered vents to either side.

8. Roof:

1. Shape, covering: The main block of the house has a low hipped roof with a widow's walk at the top (there is access to this walk from the attic level). There is a gable front, atop the facade pavilion, and a single dormer at the side and rear elevations. The roof is covered with asphalt shingles. The east side wing has a low, side-gabled roof. It too is covered with asphalt shingles.

2. Cornice, eaves: Bowieville has a wide, stepped cornice in the main block, along all four sides of the hipped roof. The roof of the wing projects to form a covering over the south front doorways. To the rear of the wing is a simple, narrow cornice board.

3. Dormers: The single dormer which appears to the center of both the rear and sides of the main block is a gable-roofed dormer with simple, recessed-panel pilasters to either side. The windows are six-over-six-light sash. The simple stepped surround has a round-arched top.

C. Description of Interior:

1. Floor plans:

a. First floor: To the center front of the main block is an entry hall with a doorway to either side and two ahead on the rear wall. The west side

doorway opens up into a library with a fireplace at the west exterior wall. The east side doorway opens onto the enclosed stairhall. East of this is a doorway connecting the main house with the wing. The doorway to the west side of the north rear wall opens into the large northwest parlor and the doorway to the west opens into the northeast parlor. These two parlors are adjoined by a large doorway with pocket doors and an elliptical fanlight. Both rooms have fireplaces to the center of the exterior walls. Each of these rooms also includes one of the windows with wood-panel, jib doors which open onto the rear porch.

In the northeast room on the east wall, north of the fireplace is a doorway into the wing, which enters into the current kitchen. To its east wall, in the northeast corner, is a door into a stairway. The stair leads to an outside entry, at the landing, and then turns and continues down to the cellar. Returning to the kitchen, there is a doorway in the southeast corner into a pantry area. Through this is the front room of the wing, the dining room, connecting on the west side with a hallway. On the north side of the hall is the back stairway. On the west side is a bathroom and a short hall to an outside entry.

b. Second floor: The second floor follows the same plan with bedrooms over the first-floor rooms. At the top of the stair is an enclosed hall with a doorway to either side. The doorway to the east leads into the bedrooms over the service wing (kitchen, dining and pantry) and the doorway to the west leads into a square hall as at the first-floor entry. Off of this hall, which is lit by a tripartite window, are three bedrooms. There are two large bedrooms over the twin parlors and one smaller bedroom over the library to the front. In the service wing are two smaller bedrooms and a bath and linen storage area (built-in drawers).

c. Third floor: The stair rises all the way to the third story where there is a room to either side of the stairway, towards the rear of the house. There is also a trap door onto the roof where there is a flat, balustraded widow's walk.

d. Cellar: From the cellar stair, there is a long hall along the rear wall. There is a doorway to the

immediate south into what was probably the original, and/or summer, kitchen with a large cooking fireplace. There are a couple of closets and a workroom to the west of it. At the end of the cellar hall is a double doorway into a large utility room where the furnace is located, with another utility room off of it.

2. Stairways: The main stairway is an open-well, two-flight stair which winds its way to the third floor. Enclosed in a separate hall to the east of the center hall entry, it rises along the east wall of the stairhall, has a landing along the outside, south wall (which is lit by a window, partially blocked by the stairway but positioned in such a way as to not upset the exterior balance), turns and continues along the west wall to the second floor. The balustrade is simple yet elegant, with a delicate, rounded, tapering newel post. The end of the handrail forms the rounded newel cap. The balusters are approximately one inch square, two per tread (with the exception of one on the first step). It is an open-string stair with scrolls. The wall beneath the stair is panelled and there is a closet under the stair. There is a back stair in the kitchen wing. It is an enclosed, single-flight stair.

3. Flooring: There is well-worn, hardwood flooring throughout the house.

4. Wall and ceiling finish: The walls are plaster (with badly peeling paint). Among the many fine interior details of Bowieville are the plaster ceiling medallions in the two parlors (northeast and northwest rooms), and in the entry hall. There are stepped architrave cornices in the first-floor rooms of the main block. Below the recessed, splayed windows there is wood panelling. There is chair rail in the library (southwest room). The baseboards are wide with a cyma recta molding along the top.

5. Openings:

a. Doorways and doors: The doorways in the entry hall and twin parlors of the first story of the main block have elaborate surrounds of symmetrically molded trim with a convex, fluted center piece flanked by fluted cavetto. The doorways in the entry hall were wood grained (as revealed under the peeling paint). The doorways in all other rooms have a stepped architrave. The doors are six-panel,

cross-and-open-bible.

The parlors (northeast and northwest rooms) are adjoined by a large, panelled pocket-door entry with an elegant elliptical fanlight (like that over the main entry). The heavy, beaded molding of the arch is supported by flanking, fluted Doric pilasters like those found in the doorways. There are pilasters in the reveals as well. Other fine detailing includes beading and two small carved birds resting at the center of the arch. The pocket doors are also six panel.

b. Windows: The windows in the main block are recessed with splayed reveals with panelled shutters which fold into the reveals. Below both the windows and reveals are wood panels. The wood panels in the two central north rear bays (one in each of the northeast and northwest parlors) are jib doors which open onto the rear porch. The windows in the twin parlors have surrounds matching those of the doorways with symmetrical molded trim with bull's eye corner blocks. In the other rooms, the windows are surrounded with stepped architrave trim. In the service wing, the stepped architrave trim is slightly simpler and the reveals are not splayed with space for the shutters as in the main block.

6. Decorative features and trim: The two adjoining parlors (northeast and northwest rooms) have identical patterned marble mantels with rounded columns. The northwest mantle is variegated black-and-white, and the other is more charcoal in color. In the library (southwest room) there is a wooden mantle, also with rounded columns resting on square blocks with a fluted, curved bracket on top, supporting the mantel shelf. The frieze below the mantel shelf has a panel of squared vertical fluting to the center, with horizontal fluting to either side. The mantels in the three upstairs bedrooms of the main block are similar to this one.

7. Hardware: There is a large, old box lock on the front door.

8. Mechanical equipment: There is a cooking fireplace in the original kitchen in the cellar which retains its cranes for hanging pots over the fire. There is a bake oven located to the side. It is a cast iron, oval shaped oven (door missing) labeled "John Bouis, Patent

Baltimore." Below it is a cast-iron fire box (door also missing) and below that is a clean-out chute.

D. Site:

1. General setting and orientation: Bowieville is approached by a dirt road, with a steep drive running directly in front of the house. It sits atop the crest of a hill which affords it a view of rolling fields in every direction. The house faces south with little frontage before the hill slopes downward. From the rear, however, the porch gives access to a large open yard.

2. Historic landscape design: There are a number of mature trees surrounding the house, including a large magnolia to the south front. A drawing of Bowieville entitled "Robert Bowie, Esq. Prince Georges Cty, Maryland" (therefore 1826-1840s) gives the appearance of a broader front yard. Perhaps there has been some erosion since that time. It also shows a tall fence, in sections with large piers between them, to the west side of the house, and what appears to be a brick wall with a large, solid wooden gate to the east side.

3. Outbuildings: The 1826 appraisal of Mary Bowie's real estate lists six new tobacco houses, three old tobacco houses as well as "all necessary outbuildings..." However, there are no historic outbuildings left on the property today. There is the metal superstructure of a wind-powered pump, the propeller of which has fallen off. This, along with a cinder block tenant house and sheds, are located to the east of the house.

PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

A. Early Views: Bowieville was documented by HABS on April 21, 1936, when photographer John S. Brostrup took two views. The first view shows the front facade. Very little has changed. A railing had been added to the front stoop since then, but otherwise the only noticeable change was the deterioration that has taken place and the overgrowth of surrounding shrubbery. The second view shows the elliptical fanlight between the two parlors.

Included in the Pictorial Archive of Early American Architecture (Prince Georges Co., Md.- 17, Box #4) of the Prints & Photographs Div., Library of Congress is a view (ca. 1930s) of the central, front section of the house (with two women standing on the front porch).

There is a drawing of Bowieville (ca. 1820s-1840s) labeled "Robert Bowie, Esq. Prince Georges Cty., Maryland." This author saw a copy in the possession of Daniel and Lynda Hill Fillipelli of Pleasant Hills, Upper Marlboro, Md.

B. Bibliography:

1. Primary and unpublished sources:

Bourne, Michael and Nancy Miller (Maryland Historical Trust) National Register of Historic Places Inventory--Nomination Form, Bowieville, prepared July 1972.

Prince Georges County Land Records, deeds and equity records as cited within the text.

Prince Georges County Register of Wills, wills, real estate and personal inventories as cited within the text.

2. Secondary and published sources:

Bowie, Effie Gwynn. Across the Years in Prince George's County (Richmond, Va.: Garrett & Massie, Inc., 1947).

Virta, Alan. Prince George's County; A Pictorial History (Prince George's County, Maryland: Donning Company Publishers, 1984).

Prepared By: Catherine C. Lavoie
Historian
March 1990

PART IV. PROJECT INFORMATION

Documentation of Bowieville was undertaken as part of a cooperative project between the Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS) and the Maryland National Capital Park and Planning Commission on behalf of the Prince George's County Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) to document select sites throughout the county. A memorandum of agreement was signed in August of 1988 and the project, to span one year, began in January of 1989. Gail Rothrock, director, and Susan G. Pearl, research historian, made the selection of sites. They also provided access to their historical research and information on file with the HPC, as well as their extensive knowledge of Prince Georges County history. The large format photography was undertaken by HABS photographer Jack E. Boucher. The historical report was prepared by Catherine C. Lavoie, HABS historian, who also accompanied the photographer into the field for on-site investigation.