

Ratcliff Manor  
Near Easton  
Talbot County  
Maryland

HABS No. MD 89  
HABS  
MD.  
21-EATO.V

3-

PHOTOGRAPHS  
WRITTEN HISTORIC AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA  
District of Maryland

Historic American Buildings Survey

Prepared at Washington Office

ADDENDUM TO:  
RATCLIFFE MANOR  
(Henry Hollyday House)  
7768 Ratcliffe Manor Road  
Easton vicinity  
Talbot County  
Maryland

HABS MD-89  
*HABS MD,21-EATO.V,3-*

PHOTOGRAPHS

COLOR TRANSPARENCIES

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY  
National Park Service  
U.S. Department of the Interior  
1849 C Street NW  
Washington, DC 20240-0001

## HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

Addendum to:  
RATCLIFFE MANOR

HABS No. MD-89

Location: 7768 Ratcliffe Manor Road, Easton, Talbot County, Maryland. Ratcliff Manor is located at latitude: 38.762333, longitude: -76.111108. This point was obtained in 2016 using Google Earth (WGS84). There is no restriction on its release to the public.

Significance: Built between 1757 and 1762, Ratcliffe Manor is perhaps the finest, most sophisticated and intact mid-eighteenth century Georgian style plantation house on Maryland's Eastern Shore. It was built for wealthy merchant planter Henry Hollyday on what was originally a 1,000-acre tobacco plantation. Hollyday was, however, among the planters who early on transitioned from tobacco to grain production. This came in response to the depletion of soil that resulted from decades of single crop, and in particular, tobacco farming. Thus Ratcliffe Manor reflects the wealth of the planters who preemptively diversified from, or give up altogether, their tobacco production. Among Ratcliffe Manor's distinguishing architectural features are the near identical carriage and river front entries, with the latter overlooking an original boxwood garden and terraced landscape flanked by the Tred Avon River and Dixon Creek. Ratcliffe is recognized for its extraordinary and intact period brickwork and the sophisticated wood detailing that appears both inside and out.

Description: Ratcliffe Manor is a Georgian manor house comprised of a two-and-a-half story, five-bay, double-pile brick main block measuring 44' x 34' to which was appended a one-and-a-half story brick kitchen wing. The house has a distinctive jerkinhead roof, which is a rare survivor of early- to mid-eighteenth century design. Combining Flemish and English bond, the brickwork includes rubbed and gauged jack-arch window lintels, arched door lintels, molded brick stringcourse and water table, and large paired interior brick end chimneys. Ratcliffe Manor retains its twelve-over-twelve light windows and pronounced wood cornice with mullions. The five-room plan provides the more elaborate social spaces, comprising parlor and dining rooms, with a view of the garden and riverfront. A single-story Flemish-bond brick kitchen and pantry that adjoins the main block to the northwest side was likely built at the same time. The wing latter received a hyphen and single-story, hipped roof modern kitchen addition, also of brick construction, in 1953. Both the main block and original kitchen include Federal-period dormer windows.

The five-room interior plan comprises three smaller, more shallow rooms to the (carriage) front, including a center stair hall flanked by a study and service hall with stair, with larger unequally sized parlor and dining room to the rear. This plan has been compared with that of Kenmore, although the arrangement is also

similar to one that emerged in Annapolis at about the same time and was commonly used by the city's upper-class inhabitants. As with the Annapolis plan, the best room at Ratcliffe Manor is the garden-facing parlor or drawing room; it is fully paneled from floor to ceiling and features many finely carved details including a fireplace flanked by an arched shell-pattern, domed cabinet and closet. An elegant three-flight open stair rises to the second story landing opens from an elliptical arch with reeded pilasters.

History: Original owner Henry Hollyday was the son of James Hollyday and Sarah Covington Lloyd, merging two well-to-do local families. James Hollyday served as guardian of the vast estate of his father-in-law Edward Lloyd, III and thus his son as a child lived at the original Wye House. The current Wye House, built during the late eighteenth century (in 1784), is perhaps the only other Georgian plantation house that compares in quality and sophistication with Ratcliffe Manor. Ratcliffe remained in the Hollyday family until 1902 when it was purchased by Andrew A. Hathaway, who converted the farm to a dairy operation. The current landscape comprises a significant collection of outbuildings dating from that period including a dairy barn, milk house, silo, fodder house, hog house, chicken house, and machine house, as well as tenant and overseers houses, built between 1910 and 1935.

Sources: Bourne, Michael, "Ratcliffe Manor," Easton, Talbot County, Maryland. National Register Nomination Form, 1976. National Park Service, Department of the Interior, Washington, D.C.

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