

WARINGTON TOBACCO BARN  
3006 Enterprise Road  
Mitchelleville  
Prince George's County  
Maryland

HABS NO. MD-980

HABS  
MD  
17-MITV,  
2-

PHOTOGRAPHS AND  
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

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

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

WARINGTON TOBACCO BARN

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- Location: 3006 Enterprise Road, Mitchellville, Prince George's County, Maryland
- Present Owner: Maryland National Capital Park and Planning Commission (M-NCPPC), 6600 Kenilworth Avenue, Riverdale, Maryland 20737
- Present Use: The property is being used as a golf course, and the barn serves as a storage facility.
- Significance: The Warington tobacco barn is the best surviving example of a mid-19th century tobacco barn in Prince George's County. It exhibits features of early barn construction such as hewn and pegged posts and beams, hand-split vertical board siding and a steeply pitched gable-on-hip roof. Barns such as this were once a common feature of Prince Georges' rural landscape, but few early barns exist today. The barn was constructed ca. 1840-1850 by Marsham Waring, one of the most successful tobacco planters in the county.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Date of erection: The Warington tobacco barn was constructed shortly before the Civil War, ca. 1850.
2. Original and subsequent owners: Upon the death of Marsham Waring in October of 1860, the property known as Warington Plantation passed on to his wife, Violetta Waring (Will WAJ #1:174). It later passed to their daughters, Virginia Mackubin and Elizabeth Bowie, and then to his granddaughter, Amelia Belt. The property was eventually sold to Newton H. White, Commanding Officer of the U.S.S. Enterprise, in 1937 (Deed #483:177). His widow sold the property to M-NCPPC in 1971, and it was converted into a golf course.
3. Builder: The barn was built either by or for Marsham Waring.
4. Alterations, additions: The shorter end aisles are probably additions, as evidenced by nail holes for the original exterior siding on the central rectangular

portion of the barn. Also, the long north and south top plates have been extended in length in order to incorporate the east and west aisles.

B. Historical Context:

From its earliest days, tobacco production was the basis of the growth and development of Prince George's County. It determined the economy, settlement patterns and culture. Tobacco was used as a medium of exchange during the colonial period, and when the crop was good, Prince Georgians prospered. The agrarian-based system it fostered meant that early development remained scattered. Town development as seen in Bladensburg and Upper Marlboro centered around river ports, and tobacco warehouses and inspection stations. Most settlers raised tobacco, either working small farms or, if prosperous, on large plantations operated with slave labor. Eventually, the wealthier families bought up large tracts which passed from generation to generation, thereby creating a stratified society with the wealthy planters at the top. Before the Civil War, Prince George's was the largest tobacco growing county in the state, and at the height of its development. Although the large plantations were slowly broken up after the war, and farm products became more diversified, tobacco remained extremely important to the farm economy.

Tobacco barns such as the Warington barn, therefore, serve as a visual reminder of Prince George's historical roots--that of tobacco production. Once a common sight on the rural landscape, these barns have given way to obsolescence and changing economy. Only a handful of this type (hewn and pegged with a gable-on-hip roof) remain. This barn was built at the end of the height of tobacco prosperity in Prince George's County, at the eve of the Civil War.

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: The Warington Tobacco Barn is a rectangular barn with aisles on all four sides. It has a steeply pitched gable-on-hip roof. Its hand-hewn and pegged timber-frame construction reflects an early barn technology and is of interest as a survivor of its type.

2. Condition of fabric: The barn appears to be in good condition, although the roof is in poor shape, and in need of re-shingling. The hinged panels used to ventilate the tobacco crop have been nailed shut.

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Foundation: The hewn sill beams rest on concrete blocks, which presumably replaced the original stone blocks or piers.

2. Walls: The walls are covered with vertical board siding, some hand split, most circular sawn. Some boards are hinged (now nailed shut) to open for ventilation necessary to drying tobacco.

3. Structural system, framing: The barn is of braced-frame construction with hewn corner posts pegged to the hewn wall plate. There are four horizontal girts between the hewn sill beam and the plate. Four collar beams connect the rafters, joined by dove-tailed (and nailed) joints.

4. Openings:

a. Doorways and doors: The principal (north) elevation has a double, vertical-board door to the center, hung on long strap hinges. The south elevation has three large openings to accommodate farm machinery, etc. There is an opening to the center of both the shorter, east and west ends.

b. Windows: There are no windows. There are, however, hinged boards that open to allow for ventilation for the tobacco-drying process, dispersed along all the walls.

5. Roof:

a. Shape, covering: The barn has a steeply pitched gable-on-hip roof. It is covered with corrugated metal with wooden shingles over the exterior.

C. Site:

1. General setting and orientation: The barn faces north onto the golf course entry drive, off of Enterprise Road. It is not on the actual golf course itself but sits on an open, grassy lot. South of the barn is a hedgegrow which separates the barn and lot from a driving range.

2. Historic landscape design: The barn was once part of a tobacco plantation, the plantation house and other outbuildings of which are not longer extant. A brick mansion was later built (1939) and it became a dairy farm. The barn now sits alone.

### PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

#### A. Bibliography:

- Pearl, Susan G. and Shirley Blatz. Maryland Historical Trust State Historic Sites Inventory form, Warington Tobacco Barn, June 1988.
- Virta, Alan. Prince George's County, A Pictorial History, Norfolk, Virginia: Donning Company Publishers, 1984).
- Watson, James Douglas. Prince George's County, Past and Present (Washington, D.C.: Federal Lithograph Company, 1960).

### PART IV. PROJECT INFORMATION

Documentation of the Warington Tobacco Barn 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, was begun 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 on file with the HPC, as well as their extensive knowledge of county history. The large format photography was undertaken by HABS photographer Jack E. Boucher. The historical reports were prepared by HABS historian Catherine C. Lavoie who also accompanied the photographer into the field for on site investigations.