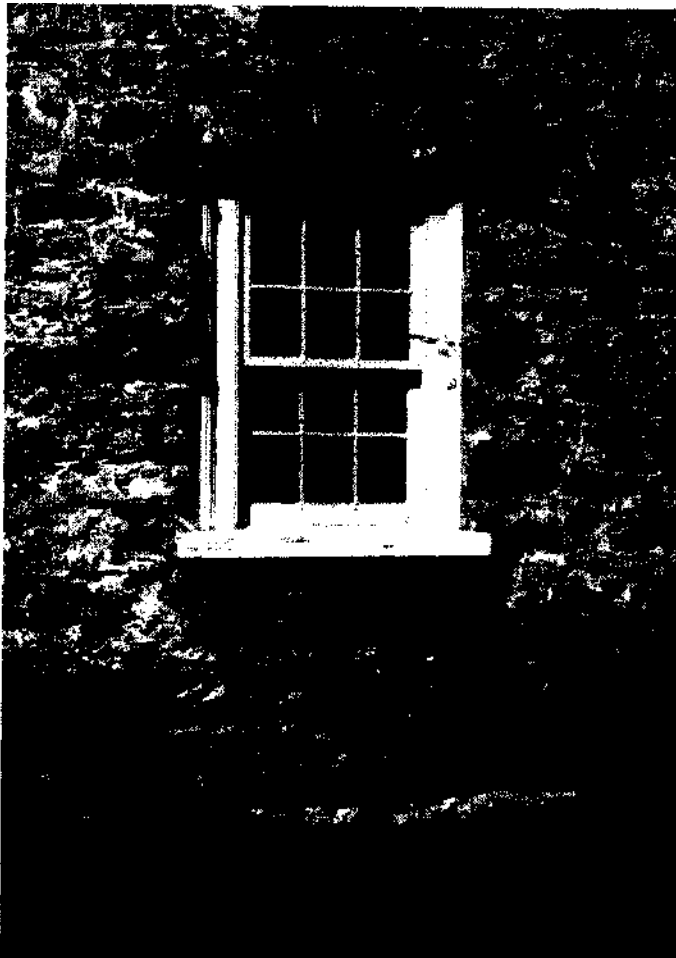


# GERMAN COLONIAL ARCHITECTURE IN FREDERICK COUNTY: THE MILL POND HOUSE — DEARBUGHT — THE HESSIAN BARRACKS

History leaves behind many records; they can be in writing, illustrations and photographs, artifacts, or buildings. This survey will focus on examples of colonial architecture left behind by German settlers in Frederick County.

Frederick County is the only region in Maryland which abounds in German colonial (and German colonial style) architecture. Three



*The Mill Pond House. Photo courtesy of Bridgitte Voelkel Fessenden.*

buildings and their sites — Mill Pond House, Dearbought Farm, and the Hessian Barracks — are of special interest to the author for their architectural as well as historical qualities; many more examples throughout the county are waiting to be discovered and admired.

All three buildings exist today in their original location: Mill Pond House, located between Frederick and Walkersville on a tract of land called "Broadview Acres" near Harmony Grove along the Monocacy River, unfortunately has been allowed to deteriorate and is in ruins. Nearby Dearbought Farm, the fate of which is uncertain, is in need of immediate restoration and protection. The Hessian Barracks represent historical preservation at its best and are listed on the National Register of Historical Places. The buildings, located in the southeastern part of Frederick, are in excellent condition. They have been used by the Maryland School for the Deaf for many years and are well maintained.

## Historical Overview

Daniel Nead writes, that "... it was not until the coming of the German settlers, who by their thrift and industry showed the possibilities of the fertile fields, that the colony began to make rapid strides forward..." (*The Pennsylvania German*). The major impetus for German immigration to Frederick County came in 1732, when Lord Baltimore offered two hundred free acres to prospective settlers at a rent of one percent per year, starting after three years. German families from southeastern Pennsylvania moved into the area along the Monocacy to cultivate the land that was offered to them. Many Germans also left Pennsylvania

a's back counties because they provided little protection from Indian attacks. Pennsylvania's legislature, with a Quaker majority, refused to provide defense funds.

One of the first recorded German settlements in Maryland was called Village of Monocacy. It was settled in 1729 in the area which would later become Frederick. Houses were constructed from logs, as was a small church which is considered to be the mother church of the Lutheran and German Reform denominations in Maryland (replaced by a brick building in 1834). Families sometimes lived one or two decades in such simple log dwellings before they had accumulated enough wealth to construct the "mansion" of their dreams. Two distinctive types of building methods and materials were used by Maryland-Germans in the construction of their homes: medieval half-timber work with wattles (Mill Pond House) and solid stone (Dearbought, Hessian Barracks). Although Mill Pond House was the only known medieval house to survive into the twentieth century, several stone houses from the colonial period, including Dearbought and the Hessian Barracks, are still standing in Frederick County. It is the stone houses built by the second generation of Maryland-Germans which are generally referred to as "German Colonial" and which radiate strength and permanence, simplicity, sincerity and, above all, prosperity of their owners who had fully assimilated "im neuen Land" (in the New World) and intended to stay.

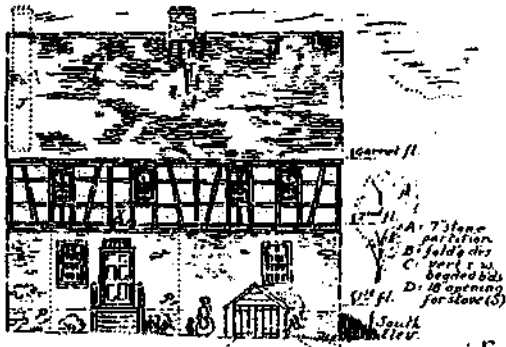
The major characteristics of both building styles are: large, vaulted cellars (generally located directly below the kitchen and accessible from there); four-room arrangements with a central hall [*Hausflur*], the stair (located on one side of the hall near the front door), the kitchen [*Küche*], and a small chamber [*Kammer*] for sleeping or storage purposes directly behind it. The rest of the chambers are situated to the rear of the house and upstairs. Chimneys are massive and in the center of the house; the fireplace services the kitchen. High pitched roofs frame spacious, vented attics covered with thatched roofs at first, later with shingles and then tin.

## **MILL POND HOUSE**

This house no longer exists as a recognizable structure and is physically only evidenced by fragmented ruins and its cellar, but it was nevertheless the only known surviving Maryland example of half-timber, wattle-and-daub construction, popular in German countries and England from the middle ages up to the nineteenth century. The land called the "Mill Pond" was conveyed by Daniel Dulaney to the miller Jacob Stoner (Steiner) in 1746, and it can be assumed that the house was built shortly thereafter. A mill which had probably been constructed in the 1730's was already operating nearby. The house fronted on the old Annapolis road which once connected the Frederick-Woodsboro Turnpike and the Frederick-Emmitsburg Turnpike.

H. Chandlee Forman describes the Mill Pond House in his book *In Tidewater Maryland* complete with detailed plans. His drawings show a structure measuring approximately 30 feet by 40 feet, two and one-half stories in height, with a four-bay facade on the south side. The first floor and the foundation were built of native stone, the second floor and the east- and west-end gables above the second floor of the house were of half-timbered construction with a wattle-and-daub filling (a type of basketwork made up of evenly spaced saplings interwoven on both sides with split branches, over which are daubed layers of mud mixed with chopped straw to hold the mud together) Early on this part was covered on the exterior with clapboards in order to protect the plaster from the elements. A central chimney served one large cooking fireplace in the kitchen and the master chamber directly above; a second chimney was added later in the southwest corner of the house. The roofing, probably originally wooden shingles, had been replaced with slate.

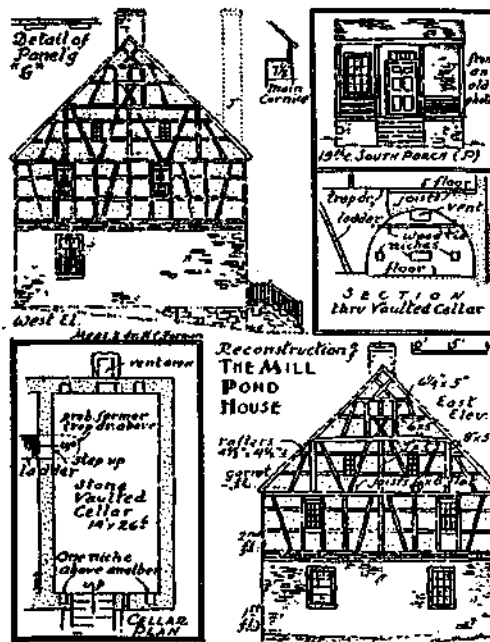
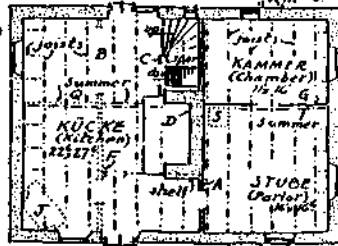
Mill Pond House's interior followed the so-called "Quaker Plan," which featured a good sized *Kueche* (main or keeping room) with a large fireplace and a partition with a door near the center of the house, leading to two rooms beyond: a *Stube* (parlor) and a *Kam-*



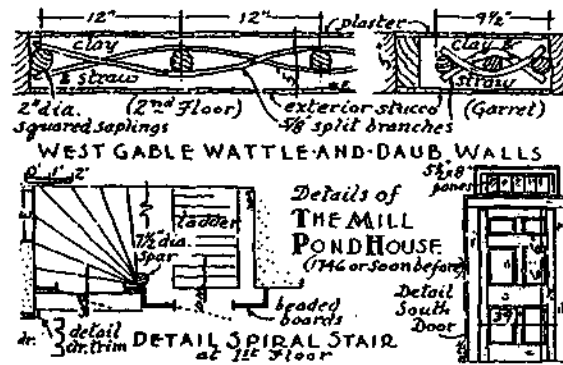
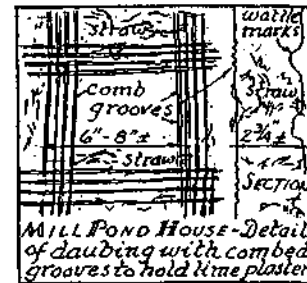
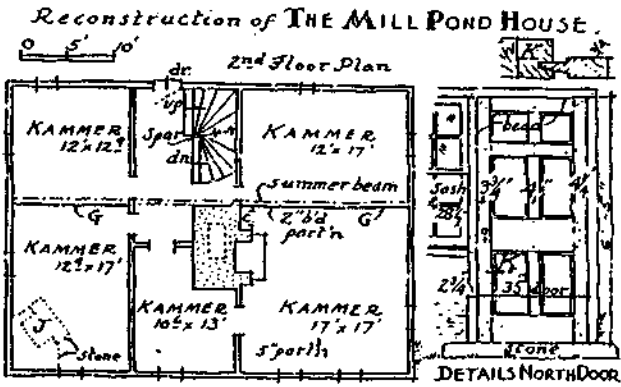
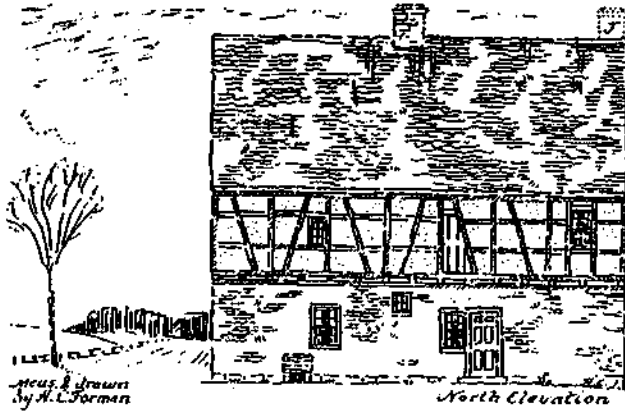
**Reconstruction of THE MILL POND HOUSE**

(1746 or soon before)

- F. 5 wattle-and-daub partition (1/2" of)
  - G. Vert. wood wall-boards, 2" thick:
  - J. later chimney
  - P. later porch
  - Q. later partit'n
  - R. evidence of later bonded claps, under porch roof (gone)
- Moas & Forman  
by H. C. Forman



Drawings by H. C. Forman. Courtesy of the Estate of H. C. Forman



Drawings by H. C. Forman. Courtesy of the Estate of H. C. Forman

*mer* (bedroom) the *Stube* being the larger room of the two. The size of the *Kueche* was 22 feet, 6 inches by 27 feet, 6 inches, and represented one of the largest residential rooms in Maryland (before the addition of wattle-and-daub partitions which divided the spaces into four sections). Five additional bedrooms were located on the second floor and could be reached by a circular staircase which wound around a pole made of one piece of wood approximately 23 feet tall. Wide floor joists had layers of clay and straw between them, and large summer beams 6 1/2 inches by 9 inches ran longitudinally from one end of the house to the other on both floors. A vaulted cellar 14 feet wide located under the eastern end of the building and accessible by an outside cellarway with stone steps as well as from the inside via a stepladder, was used for storing perishable goods.

While it is unfortunate that Mill Pond House was allowed to deteriorate, Mr. Forman's research and drawings are unique and offer detailed, clear information on the half-timbered building technique which marks the transition from all-timber to masonry construction and which was practiced by *early* German settlers in Maryland.

#### **DEARBOUGHT FARM**

Situated on over 300 acres near Ceresville, just south of the former Frederick-Woodsboro Turnpike (the present-day Maryland Route 26), on a tract of land that was part of the Dulaney Lands and bought by Sebastian Derr, a barrel maker, in 1755. A house of log and stone was built during the same year and represents one of the oldest houses in the county. A second house for one of Sebastian's sons was built in 1775, as well as several smaller structures, including a cooper's house, serving various purposes. Passing from one generation to the next, the property is still owned by the same family and run as a dairy farm, although the original houses have not been occupied for quite some time and are in poor condition.

The Dearbought Farm houses are another fine example of German colonial architecture. The two and one-half story first house, which was built by Sebastian Derr in 1755, is constructed out of log and stone with clapboard siding added later to all but the western wall. Different quality stone was used, with the front facade receiving better treatment. Two two-story, same-height additions feature some brick in the gable section on the south wall. These

*Dearbought Farm,  
1755, West Side.  
Photos courtesy of  
Brigitte Voelkel  
Fessenden.*



additions are attached to the main house on its south wall and cover only a little bit more than half of its depth.

Measuring approximately 40 feet by 40 feet, the main house has a three-bay facade, with the main entry door to the side, and two windows with a semi-circular brick arch topping the window openings on the first floor. The front porch, a nineteenth-century addition, stretches from the center of the west wall across the north wall and along the east wall. A

Dearbought's original interior layout probably consisted of a "Küche" which took up about half the space on the first floor and a central chimney serving the kitchen and the room above the kitchen, similar to the layout in the Mill Pond House. Two rooms behind the "Küche," partitioned off by a wattle-and-daub wall, functioned as parlor and chamber. It is possible that the location of the staircase was different from the present; the access area to the cellar might provide clues as to the original



*Dearbought Farm, 1755, NorthSide. Photos courtesy of Brigitte VoelkelFessenden.*

back door on the eastern side of the house is located exactly opposite the main entry door on the west wall, as are the windows on the second floor directly above those doors. The roof's original wooden shingles were replaced with tin; its steep pitch and the delicately carved brackets under the roof overhang in the north wall and around two small gable windows contribute to the Germanic character of the house. The original central chimney has been replaced by two chimneys, one each on the north and south walls, built probably during the middle of the nineteenth century. Both additions have their chimneys in the original location on the south wall.

location. The second floor most likely contained four chambers.

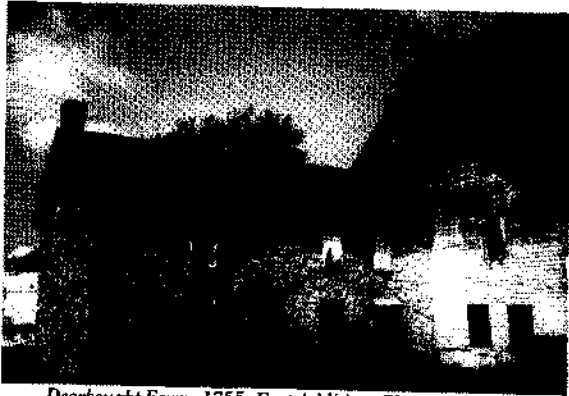
While the first addition to the original building could be accessed from the older main house on both the first- and the second-floor level, the second addition was accessible from the first-floor level only. Both additions consisted of one room on the first and second floor and have an eastern orientation; further research is needed to determine their function and purpose.

Dearbought Farm is unique in that all of the additions and accessory buildings have survived the current day and are still owned by the same family. One can only hope that a faithful restoration will take place in the near future.

*German Colonial Architecture in Frederick County*



*Dearbought Farm, 1755,  
West. Photos courtesy of  
Brigitte Voetkel Fessenden.*



*Dearbought Farm, 1755, East Addition. Photos courtesy of  
Brigitte Voetkel Fessenden.*

*Dearbought Second House, 1755.  
Photos courtesy of Brigitte Voetkel Fessenden.*





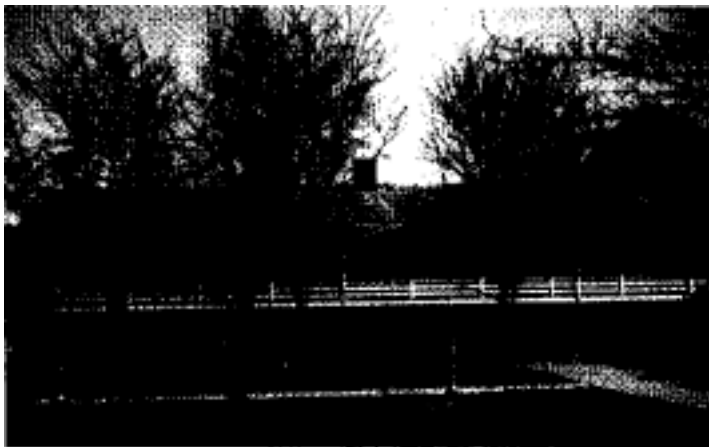
*Hessian Barracks, 1777. Photos courtesy of Brigitte Voelkel Fessenden.*

### **THE HESSIAN BARRACKS**

Built in 1777 as a military post, the Hessian Barracks (also called "The Old Revolutionary Barracks") consisted of two "L"-shaped, two-story, stone buildings with the short arms of the "L's" facing each other. Situated on an eminence at the south end of Frederick, the barracks were first occupied by a large number of Germans captured as prisoners of war at Bennington and Saratoga. The prisoners had been rented out to George III of England by the

Landgraf of Hessen-Kassel to help subdue the revolution in the American colonies. Some sources insist that the Hessian prisoners built the barracks, but the official version credits Abraham Faw, a local builder, with contracting and building the Barracks. Records show that he received 1500 pounds currency in June of 1777 and 1000 pounds in November of the same year. It is most likely that local labor was used first and that the prisoners helped with the construction and the completion of the project after their arrival in May of 1777. Maryland-German regiments under Captain Brown were ordered to act as the Hessian's guards, which surely must have caused some conflict among those Germans.

The Barracks were used to house English and Hessian prisoners from 1777 to 1783 and French prisoners during the undeclared naval war with France in 1799. After that time the buildings functioned as a public arsenal, being the main arms depository in western Maryland, and as an army in-



*Hessian Barracks, 1777. Photos courtesy of Brigitte Voelkel*



specter's office. During the Civil War, the Barracks were used by both armies as a hospital. Since 1867 the Barracks have been home to the Maryland School for the Deaf.

The West Barracks Building was torn down in 1874 to make room for a new large main building, with the remaining Barracks being put to various uses, such as storage and living quarters for employees of the School. An extensive renovation took place in 1971, which restored the building to its colonial character. Today the Barracks are in excellent condition and are used as a museum, depicting the history of the Hessian Barracks from 1777 until 1868.

The Hessian Barracks represent another good example of German Colonial architecture and are probably the only non-residential colonial building left in Maryland. Despite the removal of one of the two twin structures, the historic atmosphere of the site has been retained and serves its educational purpose. Nearly one hundred years of American history can be learned by studying the history of the Hessian Barracks.

— Brigitte Voelkel Fessenden  
Baltimore, Maryland



*Hessian Barracks, 1777. Photos courtesy of  
Brigitte Voelkel Fessenden.*



*Hessian Barracks, 1777. Photos courtesy of Brigitte Voelkel Fessenden.*

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