

Homestead (John Engle House)

Built 1834 by John Engle

Resource History

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Between the Rivers didn't quite get this one right. The land was not granted to Melchor Engle. And it was not until 1808 when the land finally reached the hands of Philip Engle Jr. (son of Philip Sr. who was son of Melchor Engle).

This land was part of a larger tract granted by Thomas Lord Fairfax to William Stroope (Strupe) in 1762. William's son Jacob inherited the tract and then sold 286 acres to his son (probably William Stroope (Strupe) by Lease & Release in 1778 for £100 (BC DB 5/138). William Strupe (the younger) sold the 286-acre tract to Samuel Hardesty "of Montgomery County, Maryland" in 1789 for £480. Presumably by this time the land was improved to some degree, although considering its proximity to the Potomac River, at the time in the process of being developed by the Patowmack Navigation Company, the land would likely have been quite valuable. Prior to 1790, this tract apparently was never taxed in Berkeley County.

1790 – Samuel Hardesty of Montgomery Co., Maryland sold the 286 acres to Frederick Sly (Sligh) for £700 (BC DB 10/53).

“Beginning at a post on the line of Division between the said William Strupe and John Merrit about 38 poles from the bank of the river Patowmack the Beginning corner of the original tract thence along the lines of the Same N 66° 30' W 226 poles to a walnut Tree thence S 23° W 154 poles to a post in the center head of a Spring at the line of William Halls Deed near and at the north side of Elk branch thence S 62° E 30 poles to a Black Oak in a hill thence S 15° W 36 poles to two white oaks corner to Joseph MCommis deed thence along the line of the Same S 77° E 277 poles to a post in the line of MCommis and corner to John Merritt and then along Merritts line N 3° W 109 poles to the Beginning containing 286 acres of land...”

Frederick Sly was assessed for his 286 acres in 1790 at a rate of 7/2. This assessment rate never changed under Sly ownership (through 1805).

1798 – Matthew (Mathias) Sly, son of Frederick Sly, was assessed for two houses in Berkeley County: one in the “country” valued at \$210, and one “at the mill” valued at \$131.25.

Both of these houses were likely log construction.

“Sligh's Mill” later became known as “Strider's Mill” and was located on the south side of the tract, on the north side of Elk Branch (see 1852 Brown map).

1808 – Mathias Slyh [sic], Henry Slyh, and Thomas & Mary (Sly) Melvin, heirs of Frederick Slyh [sic], sold 224 acres of the tract to Philip Ingle (Engle) and John Daniels for \$5,169.25 (JC DB 4/476).

The property was described as adjoining U.S. land, "Slyh's Mill & lot," John Morrow, Strider, and the spring.

Frederick Sly died about 1800 and the property was taxed under the heirs through 1803, then under Mathias Sly in 1804 and 1805.

In 1806 and 1807 Philip Engle Jr. was assessed for the 286 acres "of Slyh" at the 7/2 rate.

In 1809 (no record for 1808), Philip Engle Jr. was assessed for the 286 acres (7/2) and John Engle was assessed for 224 acres "of M. Sly" (8/11).

In 1810, the apparent confusion was resolved and Philip Engle Jr. & John Daniels were assessed (together) for 224 $\frac{3}{4}$ acres valued at a rate of 8/11.

This new assessment rate may indicate the construction of the stone house.
Or it may indicate the separation of this property from the mill lot.

In 1813, Engle and Daniels divided the property and each was assessed separately for 112 acres valued at a rate of 8/11.

In 1816, although there was no deed for it, Philip Engle Jr. was assessed for both parcels of 112 acres, one "of J. Daniels."

1820 – The Philip Engle Jr. heirs were assessed for 224 acres with a building value of \$500.

Before his death, Philip Engle Jr. had also purchased a nearby tract from the heirs of William Jones (see William Engle House). This tract had no building value in 1820.

1826 – By 1825, Philip Engle Jr. was deceased and in 1826 two of the heirs, Jesse Engle and Lydia (Engle) Moler, sold their interest in the property to their brothers John and William Engle.

Still taxed under the name of Philip Engle Jr. heirs, the building value on the 224 acres remained at \$500 through 1831.

1832 – The remaining heirs divided up the Philip Engle Jr. property – two tracts divided three ways according to the tax record:

Philip Engle – 112 acres with \$500 building value

John Engle – 112 acres with \$0 building value

William Engle – 155 acres with \$0 building value (new log house added in 1833; new [stone] house in 1844)

1834 – John Engle constructed a "new stone house" on his 112 acres, recorded in the 1835 tax record valued at \$890.

1841 – Reassessment year. John Engle's building value fell to \$800.

Philip Engle's building value rose to \$750.

1848 – The division of the Philip Engle Jr. real estate was made official. The division of the 224 acres apparently followed the old lines of division between Philip Engle Jr. and John Daniels (back in 1813) which must have confused the surveyor William McPherson who labeled the John Engle allotment as “John Daniels” (see attached plats, JC DB 30/200).

Despite the 1849 date on the Homestead addition datestone, there was no rise in assessment value on the John Engle building values throughout the 1840s.

John Engle’s 1851 building assessment value was \$1,000. In 1856 he was assessed for a new barn valued at \$836. When John Engle’s assessment was combined with his railroad property in 1857, his building value rose to \$2,500.

In 1851, the value on Philip’s buildings fell to \$700 and stayed there through 1856. Another reassessment in 1857 brought the value up to \$800 but by then Philip had combined his farm acreage with the parcel he purchased adjoining the railroad, shown on the 1852 map with a building.

The attached 1867 plat of the John Engle property shows where the house and barn are located (also two wells)(JC DB 2/164). (Lot 9 on the plat is where Alta Vista is located I think)

The property remains in the Engle family, owned by Kenneth Dale Gageby, son of Eva Virginia Engle, daughter of Lodonzo C. Engle, son of Jacob H. Engle, son of John Engle (I think this was all in a deed of trust and it was in this document that it said the tract was part of a 1754 Melchor Engle grant from Fairfax, which is simply not correct).