



**POMPEY CALLAWAY HOUSE**

Elliston, Montgomery County

*Virginia Landmarks Register, June 20, 1989*

*National Register of Historic Places, November 13, 1989*

*(The Pompey Callaway house is included in the multiple property nomination  
"The Prehistoric and Historic Resources of Montgomery County")*

051-006

**Pompey Callaway House**

Elliston, Montgomery County

This 1910 house in the historically black section of the town of Elliston is the individual architectural expression of a former slave working with traditional forms of building practices. Pompey Callaway was born a slave in Franklin County. The Callaway name comes from his owner, and tradition holds that Callaway was a nephew of his master. His Franklin County origins apparently made a strong impression on Pompey Callaway for his Elliston house is said to have been modeled on the home of his former master. This would explain why a house completed in 1910 has the appearance of one normally dating from the late antebellum period.

In planning his house Pompey Callaway employed the three-bay, center-passage, single-room-deep format known as the I house, a house type employed for many Virginia vernacular dwellings from the mid-eighteenth century on. The semi exterior end chimneys on Callaway's home are also an early form. Such chimneys are found frequently on brick houses of Virginia's piedmont and southwest sections dating from the early nineteenth century. Interestingly, although Callaway's Chimneys follow traditional form, the house is more up-to-date than it would appear because the chimneys do not serve fireplaces but are used to carry stove flues. Other archaic features are the basement opening, treated here as air vents with vertical iron rather than as glazed windows. Likewise, the entrance with its sidelights and transom could easily be mistaken for an entrance of the antebellum period.

Although Callaway was employed as a station worker in Elliston, he was clearly skilled in the building trades. Not only did he undertake the actual construction of his house, he made his own bricks. He crushed and tempered the clay and shale in his own pug mill or "horse mill." Nightly he drew water for the process from the forty-foot well. He molded the bricks by hand and fired them in a kiln near the house. The brickwork is laid in seven-course American bond rather than faced with brick veneer, then coming into common use.

The structure took many years to complete because Callaway's labor on the house was confined to weekends. Callaway's pride in his personal heritage resulted in one of the most substantial black-owned houses in the county dating from the early twentieth century. Except for a modern one-story rear addition, the house has survived with practically no alterations

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