

Capsule Summary
SM-143
St. George Island Survey District
St. George Island
Private

Circa 1860 - 1930

St. George Island is significant both because of its early history as a Jesuit property and because of its more recent history as a community dominated by families of oystermen and river pilots. Also notable is the island's reputation as a popular summer resort during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Significant structures on the island date from between 1860 and 1940 and represent various historic themes, including architecture, religion and commerce. Most of the buildings that survive on the island are residences. Almost all of the buildings are occupied and have been modernized.

SM-143, St. George Island Survey District
St. Mary's County
Maryland Comprehensive State Historic Preservation Plan Data

Historic Context

Geographic Organization: Western Shore

Chronological/Developmental Period: Agricultural/Industrial Transition, 1815-1870.
Industrial/Urban Dominance, 1870 - 1930.

Historic Period Theme: Architecture
Commerce
Religion

Resource Type

Category: District

Historic Environment: Rural

Historic Function and Use: Church
Residence

Known Design Source: None

Maryland Historical Trust
State Historic Sites Inventory Form

 MARYLAND INVENTORY OF
 HISTORIC PROPERTIES

Magi No.

DOE yes no
1. Name (indicate preferred name)

historic

and/or common St. George Island survey District
2. Location

street & number

 not for publicationcity, town St. George Island vicinity of

congressional district

state Marylandcounty St. Mary's
3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> not applicable	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property (give names and mailing addresses of all owners)
name See Attached

street & number

telephone no.:

city, town

state and zip code

5. Location of Legal Description
courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. See Attached

liber

street & number

folio

city, town

state

6. Representation in Existing Historical Surveys

title

date

 federal state county local

pository for survey records

city, town

state

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one	
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input type="checkbox"/> original site	
<input type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved	date of move _____
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed			

Prepare both a summary paragraph and a general description of the resource and its various elements as it exists today. Contributing Resource Count: 30

St. George Island is located at the southern tip of the Valley Lee District in St. Mary's County, Maryland. The island is connected to the mainland by a modern bridge that extends across "the Straits." The island is bounded on the east by St. George's Creek and the mouth of the St. Mary's River. The Potomac River is located on the west and south. The Potomac River side of St. George Island has eroded significantly over time. Rip rap has been installed on the river shore to protect the island from further depredation.

The shape of St. George Island resembles a "Y." A creek, referenced as "Island Creek" in deeds dating to the 1850s, bisects the lower portion of the island. A small body of land, formerly an island, projects into the mouth of the creek. Known as "Jimmy Island," it is now connected to the western leg of St. George Island. The island landscape consists of stands of loblolly pine trees that alternate with fields of marsh grass and manicured house lots. Route 249 (Piney Point Road) connects the island to the mainland. The road crosses the bridge and extends to the southern tip of the island's eastern leg. Ball Point Road branches off of Route 249 to the east. Thomas Road branches off of Route 249 to the west and ends at the southern tip of the island's western leg.

Within the county, the island is considered an election district unto itself, known as the Ninth Election District. The island population totals about 271 people, 90% of which are white. The structures located on the island number 169, 25% of which are occupied only occasionally. In addition to houses, these structures include two churches, a restaurant, the St. George Island Improvement Association, and a variety of small businesses. In 1994, a sewage system was installed on the island. This improvement is expected to encourage new building here.

The built landscape of St. George Island has changed significantly over the years. Two of the island's largest landmarks, the Potomac Hotel and the Hobbs Hotel, have been demolished. Most commercial structures, including the Adams Store, the Trice Store, the Evans Store, and the Thomas Store, are no longer standing. Most of the historic buildings that remain on the island are residences.

Houses studied as part of this survey range in construction date from around 1860 to the 1940s. All are frame buildings and many now serve as summer vacation homes. Notably, the oldest houses tend to face the water, while the newer ones are oriented to face the road. Houses are generally dispersed across the island. There is no focal point of cluster development, although subdivision of older single house lots has resulted in denser modern building practices. In addition, current building requirements stipulating that new structures be built above the flood plain have led to the construction of new homes with unusually high foundations.

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400–1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500–1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600–1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700–1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800–1899	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900–	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates **Builder/Architect**

check: Applicable Criteria: A B C D
 and/or
 Applicable Exception: A B C D E F G
 Level of Significance: national state local

Prepare both a summary paragraph of significance and a general statement of history and support.

St. George Island is significant both because of its early history as a Jesuit property and because of its more recent history as a community dominated by families of oystermen and river pilots. Also notable is the island's reputation as a popular summer resort during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Significant structures on the island date from between 1860 and 1940 and represent various historic themes, including architecture, religion and commerce. Most of the buildings that survive on the island are residences. Almost all of the buildings are occupied and have been modernized.

In the early seventeenth century, "St. George's Island" appears to have been located within the boundaries of St. George's Hundred. The hundred, established by the Colonial Assembly in January 1637/38, extended from the western shore of the St. Mary's River to the eastern shore of the Potomac River. The island, located at the confluence of these two rivers, originally consisted of 1,000 acres.

The first owners of the island were the Jesuits, who became possessed of the property as a result of Lord Baltimore's Condition of Plantation. In 1638, Father Philip Fisher, alias Thomas Copley Esquire, took up "Saint George's Island" for the use of the Jesuits. Due to changes in the law which stripped Jesuits of the right to own land, Copley turned ownership of the island over to Cuthbert Fenwick in 1641. Fenwick held the land in trust until 1663. Between 1663 and 1806, St. Inigoes Manor, including St. George Island, was conveyed to a series of Trustees. In 1806, the title was again returned to the Jesuits, and placed in the name of the Corporation of Roman Catholic Clergymen.¹

During the period of Jesuit ownership, St. George Island was used primarily as grazing land. The records show that both cattle and sheep were raised here. In 1667, a John Hopper resident on the Island recorded his mark for cattle and hogs with

¹ See Beitzell and Bourjaily for information regarding the early history of the island.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Survey No. SM 143

See Attached

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property _____

Quadrangle name St. George Island & Piney Point

Quadrangle scale 1:24 000

UTM References do NOT complete UTM references

A	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
	Zone	Easting	Northing

B	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
	Zone	Easting	Northing

C	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
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D	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
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E	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
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F	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
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G	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
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H	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
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Verbal boundary description and justification

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	code	county	code
state	code	county	code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Elizabeth Hughes, Historic Sites Surveyor

organization St. Mary's County Planning & Zoning date December 1994

street & number 328 Washington Street telephone (301) 475 4662

city or town Leonardtwn state Maryland

The Maryland Historic Sites Inventory was officially created by an Act of the Maryland Legislature to be found in the Annotated Code of Maryland, Article 41, Section 181 KA, 1974 supplement.

The survey and inventory are being prepared for information and record purposes only and do not constitute any infringement of individual property rights.

return to: Maryland Historical Trust
 Shaw House
 21 State Circle
 Annapolis, Maryland 21401
 (301) 269-2438

MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST
 DHCP/DHCD
 100 COMMUNITY PLACE
 CROWNSVILLE, MD 21032-2023
 514-7600

SM-143, St. George Island Survey District
St. Mary's County

4.1 Owners of Surveyed Properties

1. Edward T. Adams House (SM-452) CBG 18/198
Bruce Mulno
1319 Corcoran Street NW
Washington, D.C. 20009-4310
(202) 332-2639
2. St. Francis Xavier Chapel (SM-460) JFF 11/107
St. George Catholic Church
P.O.Box 9
Valley Lee, MD 20692
(301) 994-0607
3. St. George United Methodist Church (SM-461) JMM 3/255
St. Mary's Circuit M.E. Church c/o Trustees
P.O.Box 38
Piney Point, MD 20674
(301) 862-2052
4. Thomas B. Adams House (SM-465) MRF 142/149
David and Regina Morgan
P.O.Box 93
Piney Point, MD 20674
(301) 994-0755
5. Thomas L. Crowder House (SM-466) DBK 157/446
Frances Vitiello
P.O.Box 214
Piney Point, MD 20674
(301) 994-2372
6. G. Edward Thomas House (SM-467) EWA 743/237
Julius and Agnes M. Orosz
277 Thomas Road
Piney Point, MD 20674
(301) 994-1723
7. Howard J. Chesser House (SM-468) MRB 479/488
Richard and Isabella McCracken
244 Piney Point Road
Piney Point, MD 20674
(301) 994-2162

SM-143, St. George Island Survey District
St. Mary's County
4.2 Owners of Surveyed Properties

8. George Trice House (SM-469) MRB 20/46
10631 Miller Road
Oakton, VA 22124
(703) 281-9157
9. Millard B. Twilley House (SM-470) MRB 356/8
Benedict P. and Judith A. Jarboe
P.O.Box 281
Piney Point, MD 20674
(301) 994-0412
10. Walter F. Crowder House (SM-471) EWA 927/475
Donald D. and Pamela W. Mundell
Piney Point, MD 20674
(301) 994-2013
11. Camp Merryland (SM-472) MRB 189/398
Michael F. and Teresa Evans
P.O.Box 193
Piney Point, MD 20674
(301) 994-1648
12. William Biscoe House (SM-473) JMM 3/83
William B. and Rhona G. Biscoe c/o Julie Petroff
P.O.Box 270
Piney Point, MD 20674
(301) 994-9280

SM-143, St. George Island Survey District
St. Mary's County
7.1 Description

One of the oldest houses still standing on the island is the Thomas L. Crowder House (SM-466). Probably built around 1865, the one-and-a-half story structure is located on the Island Creek. It seems likely that in its earliest form, the house consisted of one room on the first floor and one room in the upper half story. The house has been enlarged over the years.

The Thomas B. Adams House (SM-465) and George Trice House (SM-469) are also significant because of their age. Both have side passage/double-pile plans and appear to date to the 1860s. Unlike the Trice House, the Adams House was moved to its current location in the early twentieth century because of the threat posed by the encroaching Potomac River.

One of the largest houses on the island is the Edward T. Adams House (SM-452). Built around 1890 by local carpenter Jack Forrester, the house was the home of one of the Adams brothers, proprietors of the Potomac Hotel. Unlike most houses on the island, the Adams House faces north towards an old road bed that once extended to the Potomac Hotel steamboat wharf.

The traditional form of the Howard J. Chesser House (SM-468) is representative of a handful of island dwellings. Built for a buy boat captain in 1916, the Chesser House has a center hall/single pile plan and a decorative shingled cross gable on the front elevation. The formerly detached kitchen, located on the east side of the house, survives and was attached to the house in the 1920s.

Two island houses that are remarkable for their plan are the Walter F. Crowder House (SM-471) and the William Biscoe House (SM-473). Although they are not duplexes, both have two entrance doors on the front elevation. While this particular plan is also found in houses on the mainland of St. Mary's County, it appears there in a lesser degree than on the island. There may be some link between this house plan and the origin of St. George Island settlers from the Eastern Shore of Maryland and Virginia.

In the early twentieth century, three carpenters accomplished most of the house building on St. George Island. These men were Captain Ben Brown, his brother Ed Brown and James McKenny. In the 1920s, they built the hipped-roof Millard B. Twilley House (SM-470) and G. Edward Thomas House (SM-467). They also constructed the cabins at Camp Merryelande (SM-472) in the 1930s.

In addition to houses, two churches stand on the island. The oldest of these is St. Francis Xavier Chapel (SM-460). Built in 1893, the chapel was recently restored. The St. George Island Methodist Church (SM-461) was built in 1925. This church is the second building on the lot, replacing an earlier structure built in 1876.

SM-143, St. George Island Survey District
St. Mary's County
8.1 Significance

the Provincial Court.² Other records note that two servants were living on the island in charge of cattle in 1678.³

Because of the island's unprotected position, it was invaded on two occasions by British forces. On July 15, 1776, a fleet of 80 sail vessels led by Lord Dunmore were anchored in the St. Mary's River. From this fleet, ten boats of British soldiers landed on the island in search of wood and water. By the 19th, the British had set up entrenchments. According to a British deserter, the fleet intended only "to wood and water on the Island, burn all, or most of their small craft, and proceed to Sea."⁴

The daily landings of British soldiers continued until a band of St. Mary's County militia men were encamped on the island about a week later. The militia, led by Thomas Price, complained of the difficulties of the island camp. Price wrote to the Council of Safety that "This is a shocking country every thing scarce water we are Oblidged to haul near three Miles no Liquor but bad whisky to Drink every Body fatigued and Tired of the Place."⁵ Following some small skirmishes, the British finally left the bay in early August.

British forces returned to the island in 1781. Anticipating their landing on the island, Colonel Richard Barnes wrote to Thomas Sim Lee in February, noting his distrust of island residents. He wrote,

"The Enemy have constantly landed on St. Georges Island whenever they have come up Potomack and I am well satisfied the People on the Island give them every information they want, it is supposed that one of them conducted them up Smith's Creek. I therefore think it would tend to the security of the county that they should be removed from the Island, and If such a measure can be authorised should recommend that it may be done, there are not more than three or four Familys on the Island with hardly any effects..."⁶ The British began landing on the island in April and continued through June. Again, their purpose was "in gitting Masts etc. for Ships off St. Georges

² J. Hall Pleasants, ed. Proceedings of the Provincial Court, 1666-1670. Archives of Maryland LVII (Baltimore, MD: Maryland Historical Society, 1940): 219.

³ Beitzell 32.

⁴ William Hand Browne, ed. Journal and Correspondence of the Maryland Council of Safety, July 7, 1776 - December 31, 1776. Archives of Maryland, XLVII (Baltimore, MD: Maryland Historical Society, 1893): 84.

⁵ William Hand Browne, ed. Journal and Correspondence of the Maryland Council of Safety, July 7, 1776 - December 31, 1776. Archives of Maryland, XLVII (Baltimore, MD: Maryland Historical Society, 1893): 139.

⁶ J. Hall Pleasants, ed. Journal and Correspondence of the State Council, January 1, 1781 - December 31, 1781. Archives of Maryland, XLVII (Baltimore, MD: Maryland Historical Society, 1930): 75.

SM-143, St. George Island Survey District
St. Mary's County
8.2 Significance

Island, where there is good Pine for the Purpose.”⁷

British forces landed on the Island again during the War of 1812. On November 2, 1813, a marauding expedition under the leadership of Admiral Cockburn robbed island residents and burned four houses and a barn.⁸ Father Neale, a Jesuit priest, described the damages in a letter. He wrote,

“Last Wednesday I visited St. George's Island and viewed with affliction [sic] the great devastation made by the English in their last visit...They have burnt every house...They had cut down 25 or 26 large oaks, all white oaks excepting two or three...They burnt as much of the fencing as they could, as also the Marshes. In a word they have left sufficient proof that they would have destroyed the whole had it layed in their power...”⁹

Following the reports of these attacks in the early nineteenth century, little is known about life on the island except that the Jesuits continued to use the land for the grazing of livestock. It was not until 1850 that a significant change affected the island. In this year, the Jesuits advertised St. George Island for sale, noting that the island was rich in natural grasses beneficial to a trade in cattle.¹⁰ Charles Lancaster acted as agent and attorney for the Jesuits in these transactions. Most of the island's buyers came from the Eastern Shore of Maryland and the Northern Neck of Virginia. Generally, they were watermen and river pilots. The names of some of these first settlers were Chesser, Robrecht, Adams, Shiles, Smith, Poe, Thomas, Henderson, Trice, Roszell, Moore, Crowder, Trader, Knell, and Jackson.¹¹

Almost all of these first settlers were Methodists, making the island one of the only Protestant strongholds in the dominantly Catholic county. Over time, Catholics also moved to the island. Initially, friction between these two religious groups was a significant source of tension on the island. According to one source, Catholic families built homes on the west side of the island, while Protestant homes were located on the east side of the island. With the influx of many non-native islanders in the twentieth century, this division has blurred. Nevertheless, some residents say that prejudice between the two groups still exists.

⁷ J. Hall Pleasants, ed. Journal and Correspondence of the State Council, January 1, 1781 - December 31, 1781. Archives of Maryland, XLVII (Baltimore, MD: Maryland Historical Society, 1930): 299.

⁸ William M. Marine, The British Invasion of Maryland, 1812-1815 (Hatboro, PA: Tradition Press, 1965): 53.

⁹ Edwin Warfield Beitzell, Jesuit Missions of St. Mary's County 1960 (Abell, MD: n.p., 1976):160.

¹⁰ Beitzell 335.

¹¹ Regina Combs Hammett, History of St. Mary's County, Maryland 1634-1990. (Ridge, MD: n.p., 1991) 200.

SM-143, St. George Island Survey District
St. Mary's County
8.3 Significance

During the Civil War, islanders were again caught between two opposing sides in the conflict. Some islanders served as river pilots for Union troops. Others worked as blockade runners, transporting goods and passengers to Virginia. For the most part, islanders' political views were integrally linked to their business concerns.

Between 1870 and 1900, the population of St. George Island grew considerably. The first St. George Island Methodist Church (SM-461) was built in 1876 and the St. Francis Xavier Chapel (SM-460) was built in 1896. An Episcopal chapel, since removed, was built around 1892. During this period both the Potomac Hotel and the Hobbs Hotel were built on the island. These hotels, served by a 100 foot steamboat wharf that extended into the Potomac River, were patronized by visitors from Washington D.C., Baltimore, and Alexandria. Although both hotels have been demolished, the Thomas B. Adams House (SM-465) and the Edward T. Adams House (SM-452) stand on the Potomac Hotel property.

During this time, most islanders worked the water. They were generally oystermen or buy boat captains. Some worked as carpenters on the side or used their boats to haul goods to and from the city. For many years the St. George Island Creek was occupied by their boats. At night, the lights on the boats made the creek look like a small village on the water.

In the early 1900s, four stores were located on the island, including the Adams Brothers' Store, the J. C. Hobbs' Store, the G. Edward Thomas Store, and the Burton Graham Store. Still, periodic shopping trips to Swann's Store (SM-446) at Piney Point and J. W. Dent's Store in Drayden remained a necessity. These stores carried groceries, dry goods, and general merchandise. They provided the largely self-sufficient islanders with items that could not be produced at home. Today, no stores remain on the island.

Significant changes in island life occurred following World War I. In 1918 the Potomac Hotel closed and the seasonal influx of visitors largely ceased. In 1921, a wooden bridge connecting the island to the mainland was built. Prior to that time, transportation was generally by boat. Shortly after construction of the bridge, automobiles appeared on the island. In 1925, children began attending Great Mills High School. At the same time, jobs opened up in the cities that lured some of the younger generation of islanders away from the county. The attraction of these jobs increased following World War II.

During World War II, life on the island was affected by the presence of the Navy. The U.S. Navy Torpedo Test Unit at Piney Point used the waters surrounding the island to test the accuracy of torpedos produced in Alexandria, Virginia. From 1941 until the end of the war, watermen were forced to share their workplace with the noisy and

SM-143, St. George Island Survey District
St. Mary's County
8.4 Significance

occasionally dangerous test range. Some of the targets associated with these tests are still visible on the Potomac River side of the island. Deep Point, a site located at the southern end of the island off of Thomas Road, was used in conjunction with the tests as well.

Today, the island population consists of few watermen. Many of the residents are retired or occupy their homes only seasonally. Still, both native islanders and recent land owners are fiercely proud of their unique island home. Although islanders remain independent and private people, they do work together to achieve common goals through the St. George Island Improvement Association.

Most residents recognize the need to document and preserve the history of the island. In addition to the occasional newspaper article or essay in the journal of the St. Mary's County Historical Society, a two-volume set of books entitled Who's Who of St. George Island has done much to record the stories of island life during the first half of the twentieth century. Over the years, a series of individuals including David Sayre, Walter Thomas, and Mrs. Rex Adams have researched island history with the intent of publishing a book. Unfortunately, nothing has been made available to the public to date.

The preservation of historic buildings on the island is recognized as less of a priority than the documentation of oral history. Many of the old homes have been sheathed with modern materials and enlarged by a series of pragmatic and unsympathetic additions. Although modern buildings outnumber historic structures, the island landscape is notable for the collection of late nineteenth and early twentieth century buildings that do survive.

SM-143, St. George Island Survey District
St. Mary's County
9.1 Bibliographical References

Beitzell, Edwin Warfield. Life on the Potomac River. Abell, MD: n.p., 1968.

----- The Jesuit Missions of Saint Mary's County. Abell, MD: n.p., 1960.

Bourjaily, Abigail. "Historical, Linguistic Background of Saint George's Island, St. Mary's County, Maryland, Part I" Chronicles 13.11 (1965): 198-206.

----- "Historical, Linguistic Background of Saint George's Island, St. Mary's County, Maryland, Part II" Chronicles 13.12 (1965): 209-218.

Chesser, Helen Brown. "St. George Island Memories," Chronicles 40.1 (1992): 98-104.

Committee for the Celebration of St. George's Hundred Day. Old St. George's. N.p.: n.p., 1984.

"The Davis Family of St. Georges Island, Maryland." N.p.: n.p., n.d.

Lumpkins, Maggie Henderson. "Memories of St. George Island," Chronicles 40.1 (1992): 104-106.

Marine, William M. The British Invasion of Maryland, 1812-1815. Hatboro, PA: Tradition Press, 1965.

Who's Who of St. George Island, Vol. 1. Ed. Mary Gale Adams. Piney Point, MD: n.p., 1991.

111-43

Fighting for Food: British Foraging Operations at St. George's Island

JOHN M. LUYKX

IN MID JULY 1776, A BRITISH FLEET OF SOME EIGHTY VESSELS ENTERED THE POTOMAC and anchored to the east of St. George's Island in the mouth of the St. Mary's River in Maryland.¹ Soon thereafter British regulars landed on the island to forage for water, cattle, and provisions. For more than a fortnight major elements of the fleet remained in this area, raiding and plundering the island daily. They were constantly engaged or harassed by the Maryland militia which had assembled here and was positioned in the vicinity of St. George's Island. In early August the fleet weighed anchor and sailed away, never to be seen again in Maryland waters. Why had the fleet come to St. Mary's County, and how did the Maryland militia defend against the British raiding expeditions on the island?

During the years immediately preceding the American Revolution, the royal governors of both Virginia and Maryland were still recognized in their official capacity as representatives of King George III. They had, however, gradually lost power and influence as well as the respect of their colonial subjects. The Virginia governor, Lord Dunmore, originally popular in 1771 when he was appointed by the king, lost favor rapidly after he twice dissolved the Virginia House of Burgesses in 1772 and 1774. During this period the House of Burgesses had proposed the creation of a Committee of Correspondence for Colonial Grievances. When the governor secretly removed military stores from the provincial magazine at Williamsburg in April 1775, the exasperated Virginians forced him, his family, and his official entourage to evacuate Williamsburg and find refuge aboard a man-of-war of the British fleet.² In reprisal Lord Dunmore then commenced a series of predatory raiding expeditions from the stronghold of a small British fleet along the Virginia coasts, shores, and rivers, particularly in the James River, in the lower Chesapeake Bay, and in Hampton Roads. These raids were primarily intended to rally the many Loyalists who still remained in the colony and eventually to resume control of the colony from the Governor's Palace in Williamsburg.

Mr. John M. Luykx, LCDR, USN (Retired), is Head of the Navigation Department at the Harry Lundeberg School of Seamanship, Piney Point, Maryland.

1. Jeremiah Jordan to the Maryland Council of Safety, July 15, 1776, in *The Archives of Maryland*, ed. William H. Browne *et al.*, 72 vols. to date (Baltimore, 1883-), 12: 51.

2. *Virginia Gazette*, June 9, 1775, Supplement.

SM-143
ST. GEORGE ISLAND
terminus of Maryland Route 249

Known for its crabs and boat races, St. George Island is largely a summer resort. It juts into the Potomac River, commanding a view both up and down stream. The British captured the island in both the American Revolution and the War of 1812.

The Island was originally part of the St. Inigoes Manor grant to the Jesuits, who sold it circa 1850.

SM-143
1901434327

MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST WORKSHEET

NOMINATION FORM
for the
NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES, NATIONAL PARKS SERVICE

1. NAME

COMMON: *St. George's Island*
AND/OR HISTORIC:

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER:
Piney Point Road (MD 249)
CITY OR TOWN:
south of Piney Point
STATE: *Maryland* COUNTY: *St. Mary's*

3. CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> District <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Structure <input type="checkbox"/> Object	<input type="checkbox"/> Public <input type="checkbox"/> Private <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Both	Public Acquisition: <input type="checkbox"/> In Process <input type="checkbox"/> Being Considered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress
PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)			
<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Commercial <input type="checkbox"/> Educational <input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> Government <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial <input type="checkbox"/> Military <input type="checkbox"/> Museum	<input type="checkbox"/> Park <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private Residence <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Religious <input type="checkbox"/> Scientific	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) _____ _____

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNER'S NAME:
(Multiple)
STREET AND NUMBER:
CITY OR TOWN: STATE:

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.:
St. Mary's County Courthouse
STREET AND NUMBER:
Washington Street and Courthouse Drive
CITY OR TOWN: STATE:
Leonardtwn Maryland

Title Reference of Current Deed (Book & Pg. #):

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY:
DATE OF SURVEY: Federal State County Local
DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:
STREET AND NUMBER:
CITY OR TOWN: STATE:

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION	(Check One)					
	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> Ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> Unexposed
	(Check One)			(Check One)		
	<input type="checkbox"/> Altered	<input type="checkbox"/> Unaltered		<input type="checkbox"/> Moved	<input type="checkbox"/> Original Site	

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Blank area for describing the present and original physical appearance of the site.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

8. SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

<input type="checkbox"/> Pre-Columbian	<input type="checkbox"/> 16th Century	<input type="checkbox"/> 18th Century	<input type="checkbox"/> 20th Century
<input type="checkbox"/> 15th Century	<input type="checkbox"/> 17th Century	<input type="checkbox"/> 19th Century	

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known)

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

<input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal	<input type="checkbox"/> Education	<input type="checkbox"/> Political	<input type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning
<input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> Engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> Religion/Philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify)
<input type="checkbox"/> Historic	<input type="checkbox"/> Industry		_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> Invention	<input type="checkbox"/> Science	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> Landscape	<input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Art	<input type="checkbox"/> Architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> Social/Human-itorion	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> Literature	<input type="checkbox"/> Theater	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Communications	<input type="checkbox"/> Military	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> Music		_____

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

St. Georges' Island was captured by ~~both~~ the British in the Revolution and the war of 1812.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

SM-113

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

National Archives
 State Archives
 Local Archives
 Other

Public Domain
 Copyright
 Other

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA ST. Mary's City and St. George's Island Quads

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY				OR	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES				
CORNER	LATITUDE		LONGITUDE		LATITUDE		LONGITUDE		
	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds
NW	°	'	"	°	'	"	°	'	"
NE	°	'	"	°	'	"	°	'	"
SE	°	'	"	°	'	"	°	'	"
SW	°	'	"	°	'	"	°	'	"

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY:

Acreage Justification:

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE:

ORGANIZATION: _____ DATE: _____

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN: _____ STATE: _____

12. State Liaison Officer Review: (Office Use Only)

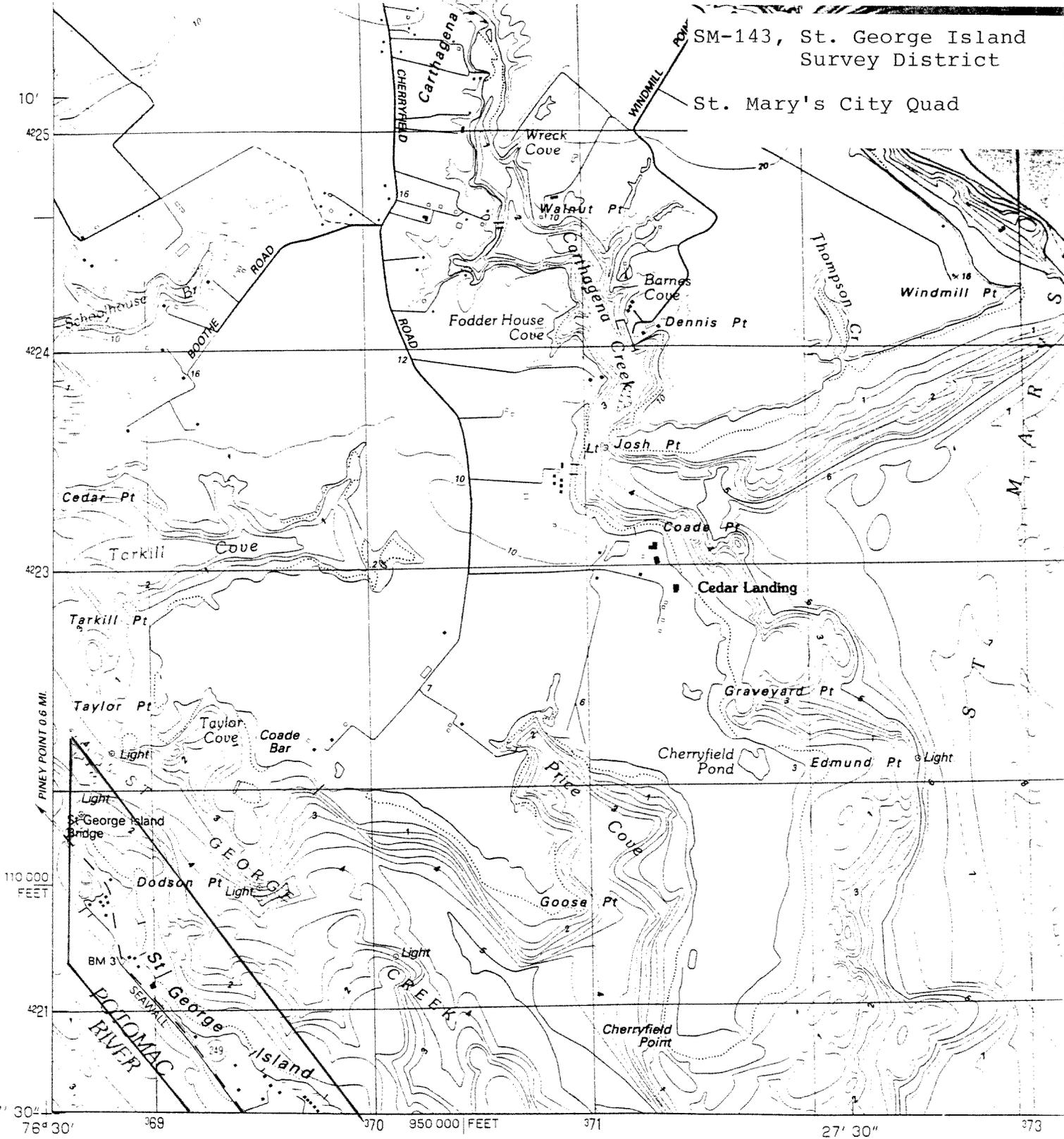
Significance of this property is:

National State Local

Signature _____

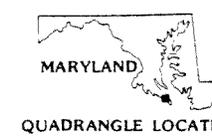
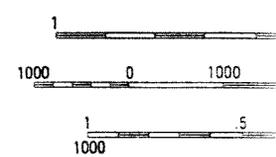
SM-143, St. George Island
Survey District

St. Mary's City Quad



(KINSALE)
5660 II SE

Produced by the United States Geological Survey
and the National Ocean Service
Control by USGS, NOS/NOAA, and DMA
Topography by photogrammetric methods from aerial photographs
taken 1981. Field checked 1982. Map edited 1987
Supersedes Army Map Service map dated 1943
Bathymetry compiled by the National Ocean Survey from
tide-coordinated hydrographic surveys. This information is
not intended for navigational purposes
Mean low water (dotted) line and mean high water (heavy
solid) line compiled by NOS from tide-coordinated aerial
photographs. Apparent shoreline (outer edge of vegetation)
shown by light solid line
Projection and 10,000-foot grid ticks: Maryland coordinate
system (Lambert conformal conic)
1000-meter Universal Transverse Mercator grid, zone 18
1927 North American Datum
To place on the predicted North American Datum 1983,
move the projection lines 9 meters south and
28 meters west as shown by dashed corner ticks



ST. MARYS CITY, MD.

38076-B4-TB-024

1987

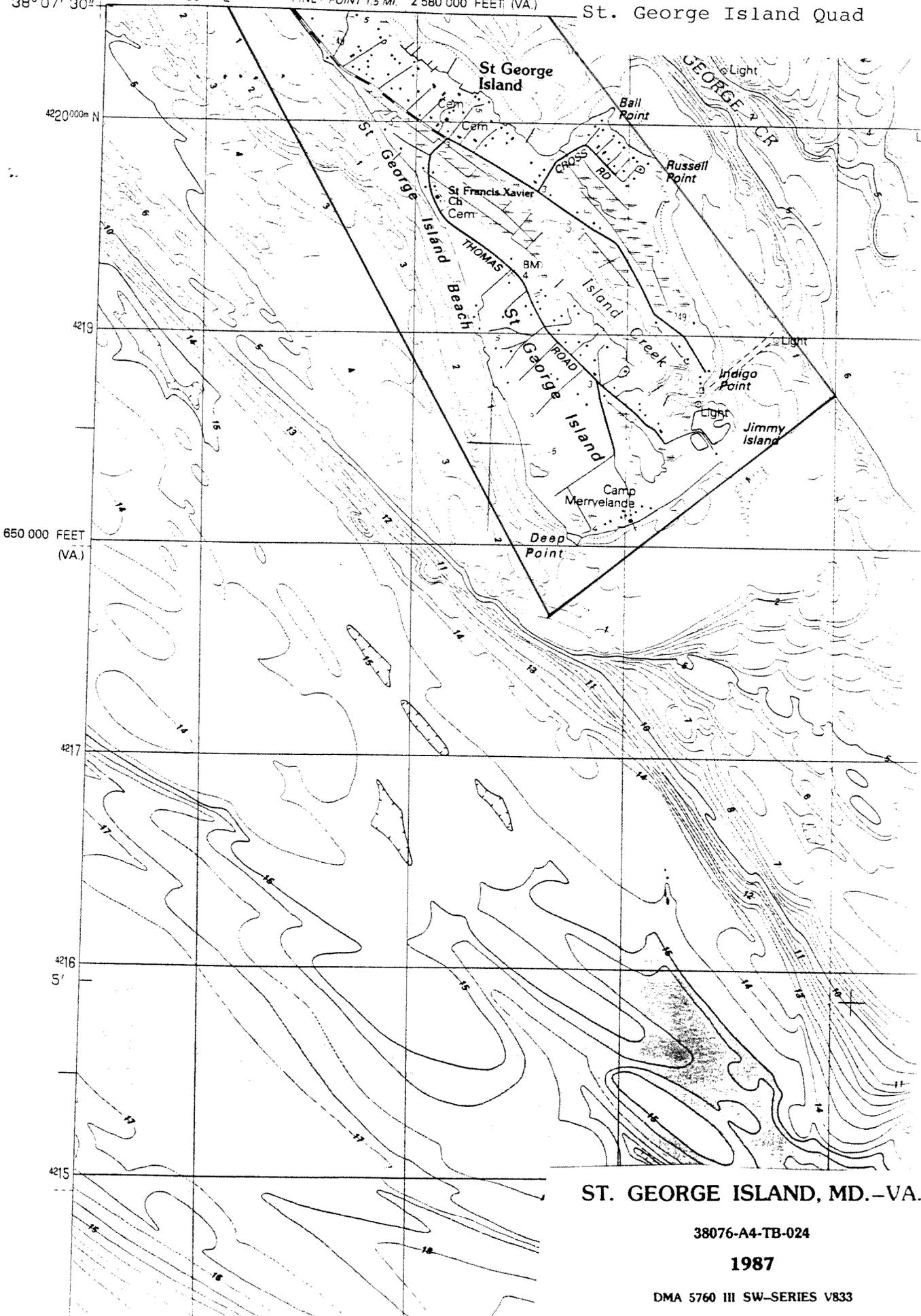
DMA 5760 III NW-SERIES V833

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
GEOLOGICAL SURVEY

SM-143, St. George Island
Survey District

76° 30' 38" 07' 30" W
3690000 E
PINEY POINT 1.5 MI. 2 580 000 FEET (VA.)

St. George Island Quad



ST. GEORGE ISLAND, MD.-VA.

38076-A4-TB-024

1987

DMA 5760 III SW-SERIES V833





