Capsule Summary
SM-228
Dent Tenant House #3
Oakley
Private

c. 1830-1840

Situated on a 109 acre agricultural tract called "Oakley" and/or "Mossey Lea" the Dent Tenant House #3 was constructed c. 1830-1840. This one-and-a-half story dwelling raises significant questions about the relationship between landowners and agricultural tenants in the early to mid-nineteenth century. Constructed during the Dent family ownership, the house exhibits an amount of architectural elaboration that is disproportionate with its size and its apparent function as a tenant house. The exterior measures only fourteen by twenty-two with the interior plan consisting of a narrow passage and parlor. The passage features an open string stair with scroll sawn brackets and a turned newel and balusters, while the parlor is dominated by a mantle decorated with vertical engaged columns and a cornice with trimwork that gradually flares out to an attenuated shelf. The exterior was also emphasized through the use of beaded and beveled shiplap siding and chamfered porch posts.

Oral tradition as well as architectural analysis conducted in the 1970s suggest that the house periodically served as a tenant house. The dwelling's architectural details, however, are not replicated in any other tenant house documented in St. Mary's County. This raises several questions. For instance, was the Dent family trying to attract reliable tenants through attractive housing options or was this merely an early dwelling constructed for a member of the Dent family? Bruce Blackistone, a descendent of the Dents, recalls family members calling the house "Uncle Et's" (referring to Elliot Johnstone Dent). Even in the twentieth century, it appears to have been occupied by members of the Dent family and not tenants.

SM-228, Dent Tenant House
St. Mary's County
Maryland Comprehensive State Historic Preservation Data

Historic Context

Geographic Organization:	Western Shore
Chronologicial/Developmental Period:	Agricultural-Industrial Transition, 1815-1870
Historic Period Theme:	Architecture

Resource Type

Category:	Building
Historic Environment:	Rural
Historic Function and Use:	Residence
Known Design Source:	None

MARYLAND INVENTORY OF HISTORIC PROPERTIES

Survey No. SM-228

Magi No.

DOE __yes __no

Maryland Historical Trust State Historic Sites Inventory Form

1. Name (indicate preferred name)

historic Oakley

and/or common Dent Tenant House #3 (pref.), Dent House

2. Location

street & number S side of Oakley Road, 0.1 mile SW of intersection of Oakley Rd. & Burch Rd. ___ **not for publication**

city, town Oakley x **vicinity of** **congressional district** 7

state Maryland **county** St. Mary's TM-39, G-13, P-150

3. Classification

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

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

name Ida L. Dent Estate, c/o Wade Blackistone (POC: Bruce Blackistone)

street & number 13304 Waterside Circle telephone no.: 301-769-2627

city, town Germantown state and zip code Md 20874

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. St. Mary's County Courthouse liber 11

street & number folio 422

city, town Leonardtown **state** Maryland

6. Representation in Existing Historical Surveys

title Dent Tenant House #3

date 1970s ___ **federal** x **state** ___ **county** ___ **local**

depository for survey records Maryland Historical Trust

city, town Crownsville **state** Md

7. Description

Survey No. SM-228

Condition		Check one	Check one
___ excellent	_X_ deteriorated	___ unaltered	_X_ original site
___ good	___ ruins	_X_ altered	___ moved date of move _____
___ fair	___ unexposed		

Prepare both a summary paragraph and a general description of the resource and its various elements as it exists today.

Contributing Resource Count: 2

The Dent Tenant House #3, constructed c. 1830-1840, is approximately 0.1 mile south of the intersection of Burch and Oakley Roads. Approached via a dirt farm road that extends south from Oakley Road, the Dent House is oriented on a north/south axis and is surrounded by cultivated fields of soybean. A line of agricultural buildings, that include a contributing tobacco house as well as a non-contributing crib/granary and chicken coop, radiate to the east of the dwelling.

The original section of the Dent House consisted of a one-and-a-half story, three bay, two room, frame dwelling with a gable roof and an exterior end brick chimney. In the early-twentieth century, several one story additions and exterior alterations expanded the limited living space but simultaneously obscured the dwelling's original appearance. Most of the original building rests on a foundation of stone and brick, while the additions lie on brick piers. While the exterior is largely covered with asbestos shingles, the original dwelling is sheathed with beveled and beaded shiplap siding as well as more conventional clapboard that is seen on the additions. The original dwelling's roof is covered with asphalt shingles while the newer sections are covered with metal roofing materials.

The primary or north elevation of the dwelling consists of the original block and an addition to the west. The original block is pierced by two, six-over-six, double-hung sash windows and a wide six-panel door. The siding on this elevation consists of beveled and beaded shiplap siding attached to the frame with cut nails. These bays are sheltered by an original shed roof porch with six-inch thick, chamfered porch posts that appear to have been installed in the early-twentieth century. The one story addition to the west is pierced by two, six-over-six windows. Its later construction date is revealed by its exposed jig sawn rafter tails as well as the low pitch roof. Asbestos shingles covered lap siding attached to the frame with wire nails. At the juncture of the addition and the original section is an exterior end brick chimney constructed in a four-to-one common bond. Just detached from the west addition is a c. 1840s meathouse that was converted into an office in the early twentieth century. The meathouse is sheathed with large random width flush siding attached to a braced hewn and pit sawn frame with cut nails. The north side of the meathouse is pierced by a six-over-six window.

The west elevation consists of the gable end of the original dwelling, the gable end of the west addition, the side of the south addition, and the gable end of the meathouse. The original dwelling and meathouse are blind, while the two additions are both pierced by a centrally located six-over-six window. An interior end chimney extends through the roof of the meathouse.

The south elevation consists of the side of the meathouse, the south addition's gable end, and the original dwelling's newly enclosed porch. The side of the meathouse is pierced by a six-over-six window. A four panel door is located near the junction of the meathouse and the south addition. The south addition is pierced by a six-over-six window and also features an exterior end brick chimney flue. The enclosed shed addition to the original section is pierced by a two, six-over-six windows.

8. Significance

Survey No. SM-228

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

Specific dates **Builder/Architect**

check: Applicable Criteria: x A ___B x C ___D
and/or
Applicable Exception: ___A ___B ___C ___D ___E ___F ___G

Level of Significance: ___national ___state x local

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

Situated on a 109 acre agricultural tract called "Oakley" and/or "Mossey Lea" the Dent Tenant House #3 was constructed c. 1830-1840. This one-and-a-half story dwelling raises significant questions about the relationship between landowners and agricultural tenants in the early to mid-nineteenth century. Constructed during the Dent family ownership, the house exhibits an amount of architectural elaboration that is disproportionate with its size and its apparent function as a tenant house. The exterior measures only fourteen by twenty-two with the interior plan consisting of a narrow passage and parlor. The passage features an open string stair with scroll sawn brackets and a turned newel and balusters, while the parlor is dominated by a mantle decorated with vertical engaged columns and a cornice with trim that gradually flares out to an attenuated shelf. The exterior was also emphasized through the use of beaded and beveled shiplap siding and chamferred porch posts.

Oral tradition as well as architectural analysis conducted in the 1970s suggest that the house served as a tenant house. The dwelling's architectural details, however, are not replicated in any other tenant house documented in St. Mary's County. This raises several questions. For instance, was the Dent family trying to attract reliable tenants through attractive housing options or was this merely a dwelling constructed for a member of the Dent family? Little documentary evidence has been recovered to illuminate who lived in the house. Bruce Blackistone, a descendent of the Dents, recalls family members calling the house "Uncle Et's" (referring to Elliot Johnstone Dent). Even in the twentieth century, it appears to have been occupied by members of the Dent family and not tenants.

Like many other houses from the mid-nineteenth century, such as Blair's Purchase (SM-125), the Dent Tenant House faces the main road (Oakley Road). The impetus for this orientation was so strong that the dwelling's primary elevation faces almost due north.

*SEE ARCHITECTURAL DRAWING DRAWER FOR DRAWING.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Survey No. SM-228

Interview, Bruce Blackistone, December, 1997.

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property 2 acres around house

Quadrangle name Leonardtown, Md **Quadrangle scale** 1:24 000

UTM **References** do NOT complete UTM references

	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
A				B			
C				D			
E				F			
G				H			

Verbal boundary description and justification

Same as per deed description.

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 Kirk E. Ranzetta, Historic Sites Surveyor

organization St. Mary's County Dept. of Planning & Zoning **date** February, 1998

street & number 22740 Washington Street **telephone** 301-475-4662

city or town Leonardtown **state** Md

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

PS-2746

Dent Tenant House #3, SM-228
St. Mary's County
7.1 Description

The east elevation consists of the gable end of the original section. This side is pierced by a six-over-six window on the first floor and a six-over-six window that lights the attic story. While not visible when viewing the east elevation of the original dwelling, the meat house features a door constructed of vertical planks fastened with horizontal chamfered battens.

The original dwelling's interior consisted of two rooms; a narrow stair hall and a parlor. The stair hall exhibits an open string stair with turned balusters and newel. The stair is further embellished with modest scroll sawn brackets and vertical pieces of trim that imitate panelling. The parlor is dominated by an elaborate mantle decorated with vertical engaged columns planed with vertical fillets. The frieze features a centered square box. The cornice exhibits trimwork that gradually flares out to an attenuated shelf. While the second floor hall is not decorated, the bedroom features a modest mantle that consists of flat engaged columns, a plain frieze, and a squarish shelf. The rooms added in the twentieth century lack decorative attention and differentiation. The interior of the meathouse was sheathed with circular sawn, whitewashed horizontal boards attached to the frame with wire nails. The interior also features an exposed interior brick chimney flue. This interior sheathing and chimney flue do not appear original for the roof framing is blackened and a series of nails point to the building's use as a meathouse.

To the east of the main dwelling are a series of outbuildings that include a tobacco barn, crib, and chicken house. While the crib and chicken house were constructed in the early-twentieth century, the tobacco barn was probably constructed contemporary to the house in the 1830-1840s. Measuring approximately 80 ft by 20 ft, the frame barn is oriented on an east/west axis and sheathed with vertical boards attached to the earthfast frame with cut and wire nails. The roof is covered with raised seam metal. The south elevation is dominated by a shed extension that runs almost continually from east to west. The shed features one opening that does not have any doors. The east gable end features an opening into the south shed. The north elevation features one set of early-twentieth century double-doors located near the approximate center of the elevation. The west elevation is entirely open and does not feature any doors.

The earthfast frame of the barn is composed of hole-set cedar posts driven into the ground at eight-foot centers creating 10 structural bays. This is further divided into sixteen five-foot rooms for the storage of tobacco. In all there are six tiers in the barn for the curing of tobacco. While the hole-set posts represent the most distinctive feature of the barn, they are stabilized in a traditional manner by horizontal wall plates as they are mortise-and-tenoned into the wall plates. A series of hewn and pit sawn ties are lapped over the wall plates. These ties support a hewn flat false plate which buoys the common rafter roof. Each rafter pair is connected by a series of three common ties that half-lapped. Each rafter pair is then connected at the peak with bridle joint.

SM-228, Dent Tenant House #3
St. Mary's County
8.1 Significance

Chain-of-Title
(All deeds are located at the Land Records Office, St. Mary's County Courthouse, Leonardtown, Maryland unless otherwise noted.)

Reference: Liber JMM 11, Folio 422
Grantee: John Francis Dent
Grantor: Fannie Jo Dent, Ruth Dent Burch & Elliot E. Burch, and Lettie Marshall Dent
Date: February 1939
Notes: After Fannie L. Dent dies, her heirs decide to sell the property to John Francis Dent. The property, called Mossey Lea, consists of two properties one containing 100 and the other 150 acres.

Reference: Liber JMM 10, Folio 229
Grantee: Fannie L. Dent
Grantor: Frances Katherine and Ida Louise Dent
Date: May 19, 1937
Notes: After the death of J. Marshall Dent (Will Record Liber MLC 1, Folio 154), the two tracts are sold by his heirs to Fannie L. Dent. J. Marshall Dent had received the properties from his father John F. Dent (Will Record Liber PHD 1, Folio 32).

SM-228

MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST

INVENTORY FORM FOR STATE HISTORIC SITES SURVEY

1 NAME

HISTORIC
DENT TENANT HOUSE #3
AND/OR COMMON

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER
Oakley Road (MD 470)
CITY, TOWN
Oakley
__ VICINITY OF
CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT
STATE
Maryland
COUNTY
St. Mary's

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE	
__DISTRICT	__PUBLIC	__OCCUPIED	__AGRICULTURE	__MUSEUM
__BUILDING(S)	X PRIVATE	__UNOCCUPIED	__COMMERCIAL	__PARK
__STRUCTURE	__BOTH	__WORK IN PROGRESS	__EDUCATIONAL	__PRIVATE RESIDENCE
__SITE	**PUBLIC ACQUISITION**	**ACCESSIBLE**	__ENTERTAINMENT	__RELIGIOUS
__OBJECT	__IN PROCESS	__YES: RESTRICTED	__GOVERNMENT	__SCIENTIFIC
	__BEING CONSIDERED	__YES: UNRESTRICTED	__INDUSTRIAL	__TRANSPORTATION
		__NO	__MILITARY	__OTHER:

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME
Telephone #:
STREET & NUMBER
CITY, TOWN
STATE, zip code
__ VICINITY OF

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

Liber #:
Folio #:
COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. St. Mary's County Courthouse
STREET & NUMBER
Washington Street and Courthouse Drive
CITY, TOWN
Leonardtown
STATE
Maryland

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE
DATE
__FEDERAL __STATE __COUNTY __LOCAL
DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS
CITY, TOWN
STATE

SM-228

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
__EXCELLENT	__DETERIORATED	__UNALTERED	X ORIGINAL SITE
__GOOD	__RUINS	X ALTERED	__MOVED DATE_____
__FAIR	__UNEXPOSED		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Later enlarged, this house began as a frame, one-story structure with one room and a side passage. A surviving outbuilding, altered but possibly a meat house or smokehouse, dates from the circa 1820 period.

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

3 M-228

8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
__PREHISTORIC	__ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	__COMMUNITY PLANNING	__LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	__RELIGION
__1400-1499	__ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	__CONSERVATION	__LAW	__SCIENCE
__1500-1599	__AGRICULTURE	__ECONOMICS	__LITERATURE	__SCULPTURE
__1600-1699	__ARCHITECTURE	__EDUCATION	__MILITARY	__SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
__1700-1799	__ART	__ENGINEERING	__MUSIC	__THEATER
__1800-1899	__COMMERCE	__EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	__PHILOSOPHY	__TRANSPORTATION
__1900-	__COMMUNICATIONS	__INDUSTRY	__POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	__OTHER (SPECIFY)
		__INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES Circa 1820 & later BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

SM-228

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY _____

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE COUNTY

STATE COUNTY

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

ORGANIZATION DATE

STREET & NUMBER TELEPHONE

CITY OR TOWN STATE

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RETURN TO: Maryland Historical Trust
The Shaw House, 21 State Circle
Annapolis, Maryland 21401
(301) 267-1438

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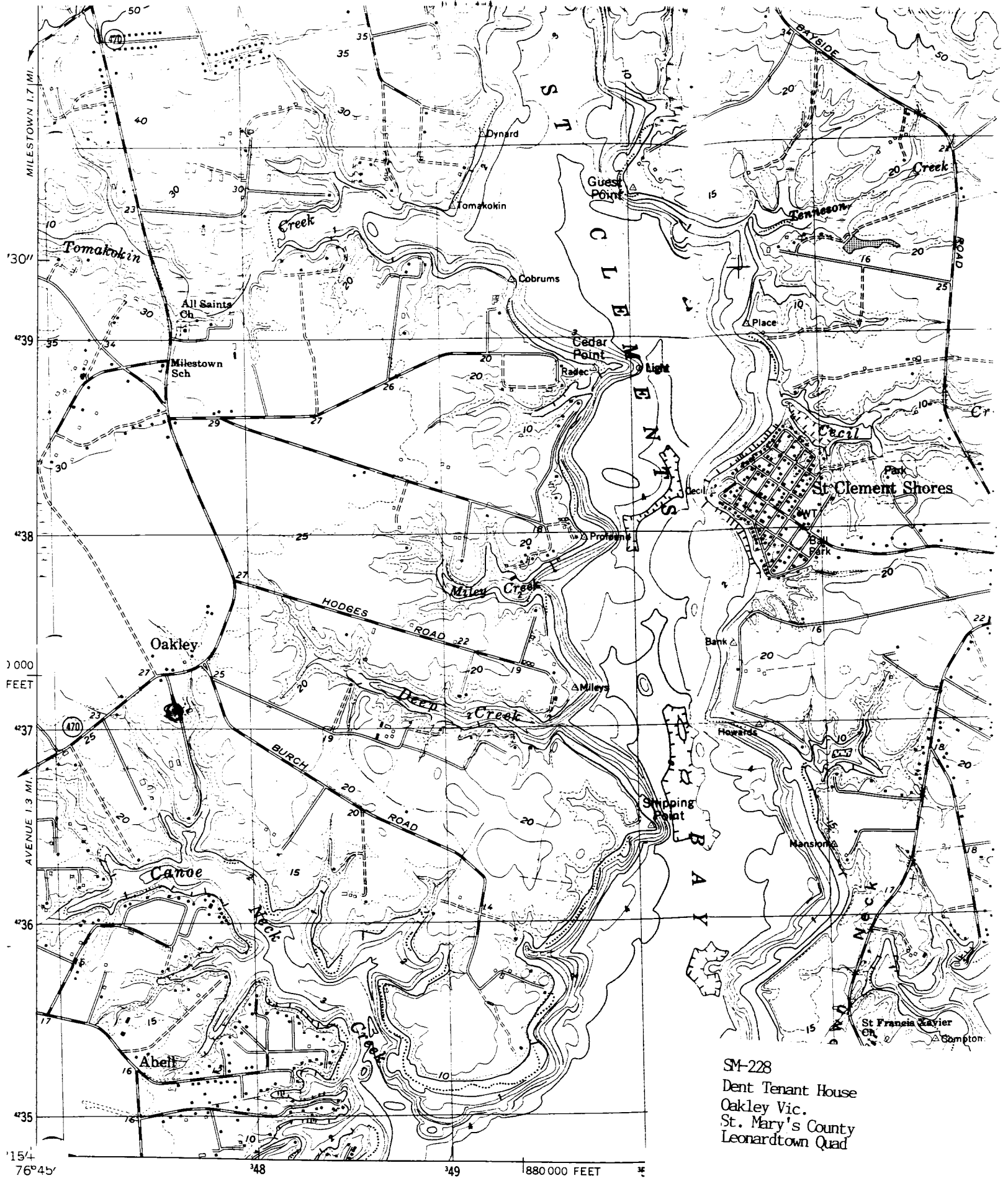

SM-228
Dent Tenant House
Oakley Vic.
St. Mary's County
Leonardtown Quad

Mapped, edited, and published by the Geological Survey and the National Ocean Survey

Control by USGS and NOS/NOAA

Topography by photogrammetric methods from aerial photographs taken 1961. Field checked 1963

Bathymetry compiled by the National Ocean Survey from tide-coordinated hydrographic surveys. This information is not intended ...

NATIONAL OCEAN SURVEY
HYDROGRAPHIC SURVEY INDEX

1000 0 1000
1

SM-228
Dent Tenant House #3
St. Mary's County
Kirk Ranzenta
Dec/97
Md SHPO
N + E elevations
1 of 8

SM-228
Dent Tenant House #3
St. Mary's County
Kick Ranzetta
Dec/97
Md SHPO
S + E elevations
2 of 8

SM-228
Dent Tenant House #3
St Mary's County
Kirk Ranzetta
Dec/97
Md SHPO
N + W elevations - meathouse
3 of 8

SM-228
Dent Tenant House #3
St Mary's County
Kirk Ranzetta
Dec/97
Md SHPO
detail meathouse - W elevation
4 of 8

SM-228
Dent Tenant House #3
St. Mary's County
Kirk Ranzetta
Dec/97
Md SHPO
Stair - looking E
5 of 8

SM-222
Dent Tenant House #3
St. Mary's County
Kirk Ranzetta
Dec/97
Md SHPO
mantle - looking W
6 of 8

SM-223
Dent Tenant House #3
St. Mary's County
Kick Ranzetta
Dec/97
Md SHPO
Barn - looking E
7 of 8

SM-222
Dent Tenant House #3
St. Mary's County
Kirk Ranzetta
Dec/97
Md SHPO
Barn to House - looking W
2 of 2