Survey No. SM- 380

Magi No.

DOE __yes __no

Maryland Historical Trust
State Historic Sites Inventory Form

1. Name (indicate preferred name)

historic

and/or common Simpson Tobacco Barn

2. Location

street & number west side of Burch Road ___ not for publication

city, town Avenue X vicinity of Oakley congressional district First

state Maryland county St. Mary's

3. Classification

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

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

name Eleanor Simpson and Rachel Ryan, c/o William and Eleanor Simpson

street & number Box 83 telephone no.: (301) 769-2350

city, town Avenue state and zip code Maryland 20609

5. Location of Legal Description

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

street & number folio

city, town Leonardtown state Maryland

6. Representation in Existing Historical Surveys

title

date ___ federal ___ state ___ county ___ local

depository for survey records

city, town state

7. Description

Survey No. SM-380

Condition		Check one	Check one
___ excellent	___ deteriorated	___ unaltered	X original site
X 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.

DESCRIPTION

The Simpson Tobacco Barn is located on the west side of Burch Road approximately 1 1/4 mile southwest of the intersection with Oakley Road. The farm extends across a neck of land formed by St. Clements Bay to the east and south, Canoe Neck Creek to the southwest, and Deep Creek to the north.

The tobacco barn is a large rectangular structure oriented on an east-west axis. The main structure measures 24 feet 2 inches wide and 47 feet 10 inches long, with an original lean-to shed measuring 16 feet 2 inches wide extending the full length of the south facade of the barn.

Dating to the mid-19th century, the main section of the barn is laid out in a typical cross axial plan, with large double doors centered on the north and south facade walls, and narrow single doors centered on the east and west gable ends. Double doors are also centered on the south facade of the original south lean-to.

The exterior of the building is covered with vertical board siding, almost all of it circular sawn and secured with wire nails. This 20th century siding replaces original vertical siding, some of which survives on the north facade, secured with machine-made nails. The roof was originally covered with wood shingles, but is now covered with corrugated sheet metal roofing nailed to early shingle nailers. All of the exterior doors have been rebuilt in the 20th century, but the east and north doors retain large, early wrought strap hinges.

The interior of the barn is divided by tier poles into standard four-foot rooms, but the primary structural system consists of ten foot bays that are largely independent of the room system. The primary transverse aisle between the north and south doors is eight feet wide, flanked to east and west by two ten foot bays that are subdivided into the four foot rooms. The gable walls consist of a four foot bay forming the gable door in the center, flanked by one ten foot bay on either side. The facade and gable walls are framed with heavy, hewn corner posts and intermediate posts joined by four series horizontal rails that serve as nailing rails for the vertical exterior siding. A pair of down braces reinforce each cover post and the intermediate posts that flank the north and south doors are braced as well, each having one down brace joined to the facade sill and a second down brace joined to heavy traverse center aisle. A single row of round pine poles bisects the barn longitudinally from east to west on four foot centers, serving to support the tier poles. The vertical posts or poles are hewn flat on the north and south faces to within about two feet of the ground and have slots mortised through to receive the tier poles. They are set in the dirt floor at the base and are half-lapped to the tie beams at the top. The ground sills remain largely

See Continuation Sheet No. 1

intact, and are large, hewn timbers joined with the standard double tenoned joint universally found in tobacco barns in this region. The sills are supported by large local fieldstones beneath each of the corner posts and most of the intermediate posts.

The roof is of common rafter construction with three sets of collar beams joining each pair of rafters. The rafters are joined at the ridge with a pegged mortise-and-tenon joint and rest on flat, one inch false plates. A single "king post" is lapped against the first two collar beams in each rafter pair.

The lean-to shed is original and utilizes the same framing system and details as the main building. The south wall of the main barn was originally covered with vertical siding, even though it was not an exterior wall. Only nails and nail holes survive, however, as the siding was removed at some point. The lower portion of the south face of the roof framing on the main building is protected by the shed roof, and there are no shingle nailers or vacant nails from missing nailers, confirming that the shed is an original feature.

The central portion of the south wall of this shed has been rebuilt in the 20th century, as indicated by several circular south posts and an inserted section of the circular sawn top plate. The tie beams, rafters and gable framing are all original.

The most significant feature of the shed is the surviving framing evidence for an original enclosed room, presumably a stripping room at the east end of the shed. This room was formed by the vertical sheathing of the south wall of the main barn and the east and south walls of the shed, and a west wall framed into a heavy cross sill and tie beam. This wall has been dismantled, but mortises in the sill and tie beam established the location of two door posts and a series of vertical wall studs. nail holes in the top surfaces of the tie beams above this room indicate that it had a board ceiling, and the survival of a secondary transverse gift implies it had a wood floor as well. While no direct evidence of floor joists was noted, Simpson family tradition establishes that there was a floor.

8. Significance

Survey No. SM-380

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
X 1900–	___ communications	___ industry	___ politics/government	___ other (specify)
		___ invention		

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.

SIGNIFICANCE

Historic Context: Western Shore: 1815-1870
Agriculture, Architecture

Significant Features: Building Type
Plan: Cross axial
Details: Original stripping room transverse sills

The Simpson Tobacco Barn is an excellent example of a relatively common form of tobacco barn in Southern Maryland. The cross-axial plan and four-foot rooms are routinely found, and the overall size is typical among larger barns. The framing system follows a standard overall form, but is unusual in that four and eight foot incremental units that are uniformly found in barns with four-foot rooms are in this case combined with a structural system based primarily on ten-foot bays.

The most unusual feature of this barn is the clear evidence of an original enclosed room at the east end of the shed. While many barns have a room set aside for stripping the tobacco, this is a rare instance where the room can be determined to be original and of relatively careful construction, based on evidence of heavy, mortised door posts, a stud wall and board ceiling.

Dating evidence suggests this barn dates to the period circa 1830s to 1850s, most likely the 1850s. It is constructed almost entirely with hewn and pit-sawn timber (usually pre-Civil War), "mature" machine-made nails (circa 1830s-1880s), and employs the traditional form and plan. However, the false plates in the main barn are circular sawn one-inch planks and appear to be original. While circular saws were in use in Maryland by the 1830s, circular sawn material does not appear to have been widely available until mid-century.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Survey No. SM-380

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property _____

Quadrangle name _____ Quadrangle scale _____

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

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	Orlando Ridout V, Chief, Office of Survey and Registration		
organization	Maryland Historical Trust	date	Field Notebook MD-15 June 29, 1987
street & number		telephone	
city or town		state	

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

SM-380, Simpson Tobacco Barn
St. Mary's County
8.1 Addendum

The Simpson Tobacco Barn, constructed in the mid-nineteenth century, is a cross-axial plan structure located on the west side of Burch Road approximately 1 1/4 mile southeast of the intersection with Oakley Road. Once part of an extensive tract called "Canoe Neck," the farm largely revolved around nearby "Riverview" (SM-120) the home plantation of Jeremiah Alvey and Albert Burch in the mid-nineteenth century. Much of the farm is currently subdivided among the descendants of Albert Burch with the barn and surrounding fields currently owned by Eleanor Simpson and Rachel Ryan.

Perhaps coinciding with the architectural changes to Riverview (See SM-120) and the economic recovery of the farm in the 1830s-1840s, the Alvey family most likely constructed the Simpson Tobacco Barn. As an 1884 plat reveals, the barn was situated near the road to "Dan Shanks land" (what has become known as Shipping Point) and to the farm's woodlot called "Bluff Woods." The barn was also in close proximity to two tenant houses. Eleanor and William Simpson currently reside in a modern dwelling constructed on the site of the north tenant house. The south tenant house is no longer extant. The Simpson Tenant house (SM-604), located just south of the barn, was constructed in the early-twentieth century. This building recalls how much of the property was once farmed by resident neighborhood tenants.

As the 1884 plat reveals, Canoe Neck's landscape has changed little since the late-nineteenth century. The land divisions, fields, roads, woodlots, and house locations all represent rare survivals. An integral role in understanding this landscape is filled by the tobacco barn. While tobacco ceases to be the primary crop on the farm, the barn is still used for air-curing and storage. Corn and soybean represent the dominant crops currently grown on the property and surrounding farms. William Simpson and Col. Colin Foote Burch remembers when more tobacco barns were situated on the Simpson and Burch property, but in the 1980s a windstorm blew several of these structures down.

As previously noted by Orlando Ridout in 1987, the barn's most significant characteristic appears to be the provisions for a stripping room at the end of the shed. In St. Mary's County tobacco stripping could be conducted either within the barn, in an attached shed, or in a detached building. While most stripping shed feature provisions for heating, it is difficult to discern whether the Simpson Barn was ever outfitted with a stove and stove flue. This room may also have been an area used for tobacco prizing with either a vertical, horizontal, or sword prizes. These spaces were also usually floored but did not necessarily require heating.

SM-380, Simpson Tobacco Barn
St. Mary's County
8.2 Addendum

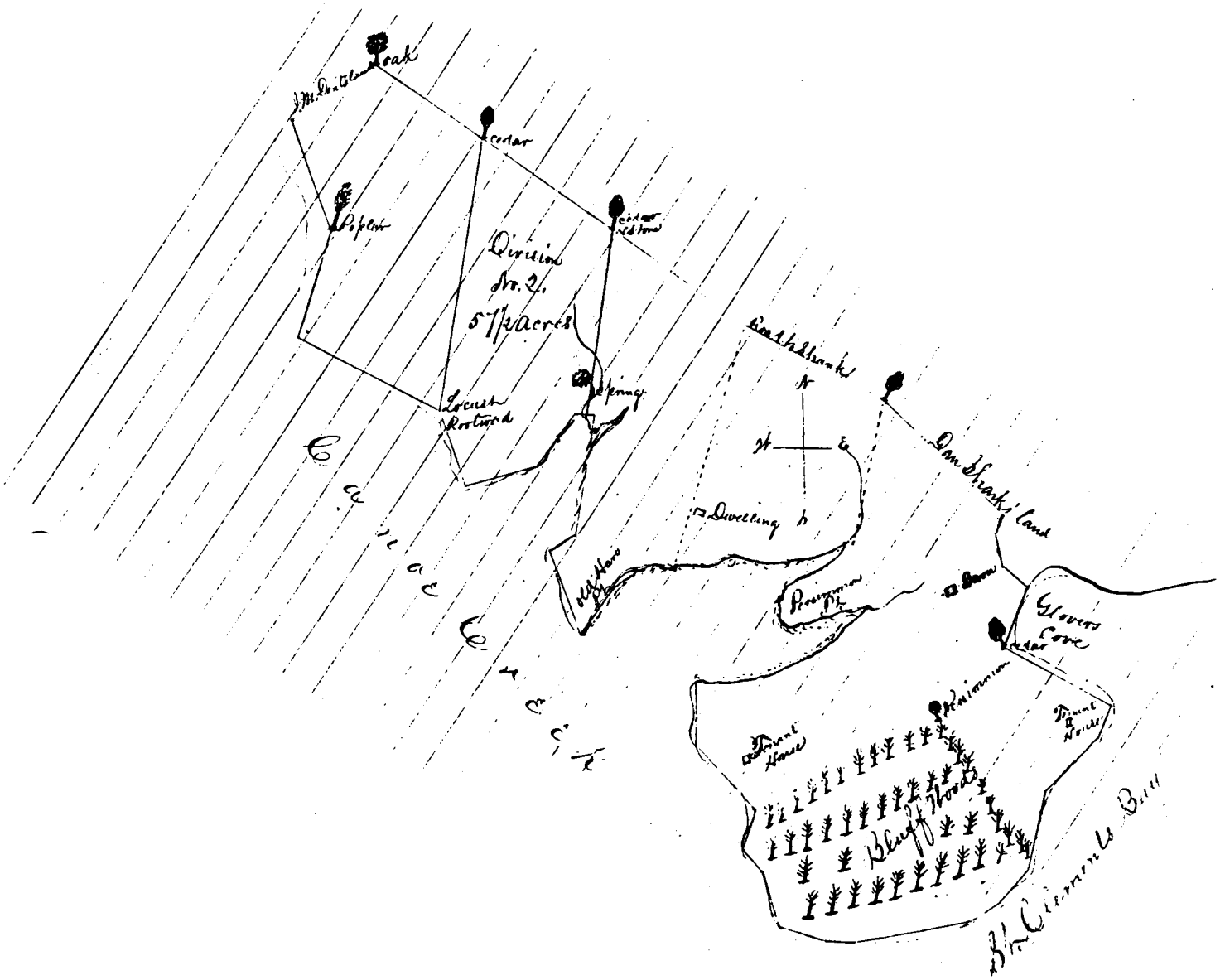


Figure 1. June 9, 1884 division plat of Albert Burch's "Canoe Neck" estate by surveyor W. J. Wathen. Compare this map with the April 11, 1993 aerial photo seen on Figure 2. Riverview (SM-120) is listed as the "Dwelling" and the Simpson Tobacco Barn (SM-380) is situated just west of Glovers Cove and St. Clements Bay. St. Mary's County Land Records, Decree Record Liber JFF 5, Liber 103. St. Mary's County Courthouse, Leonardtown, Maryland.

SM-380, Simpson Tobacco Barn
St. Mary's County
8.3 Addendum

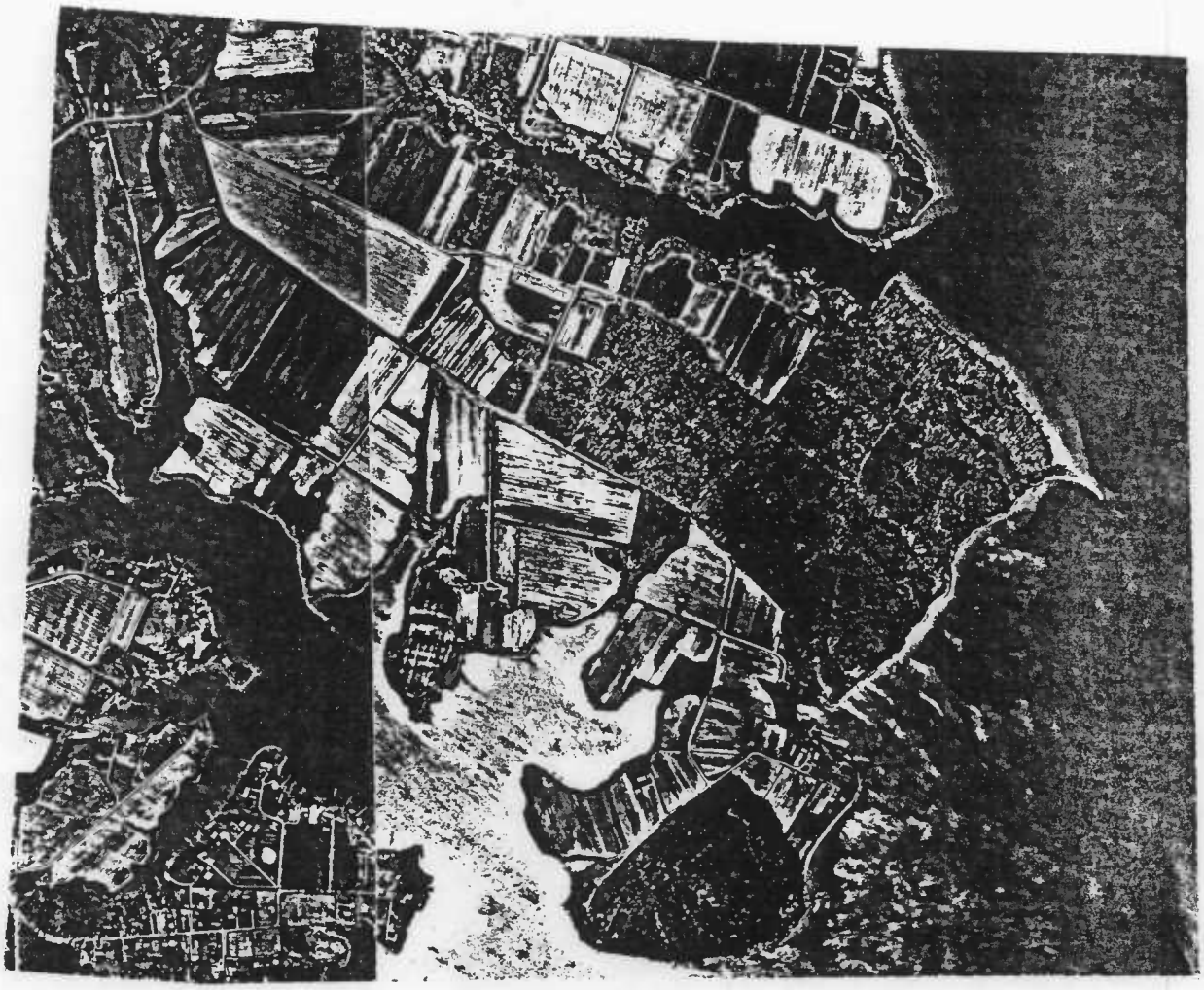
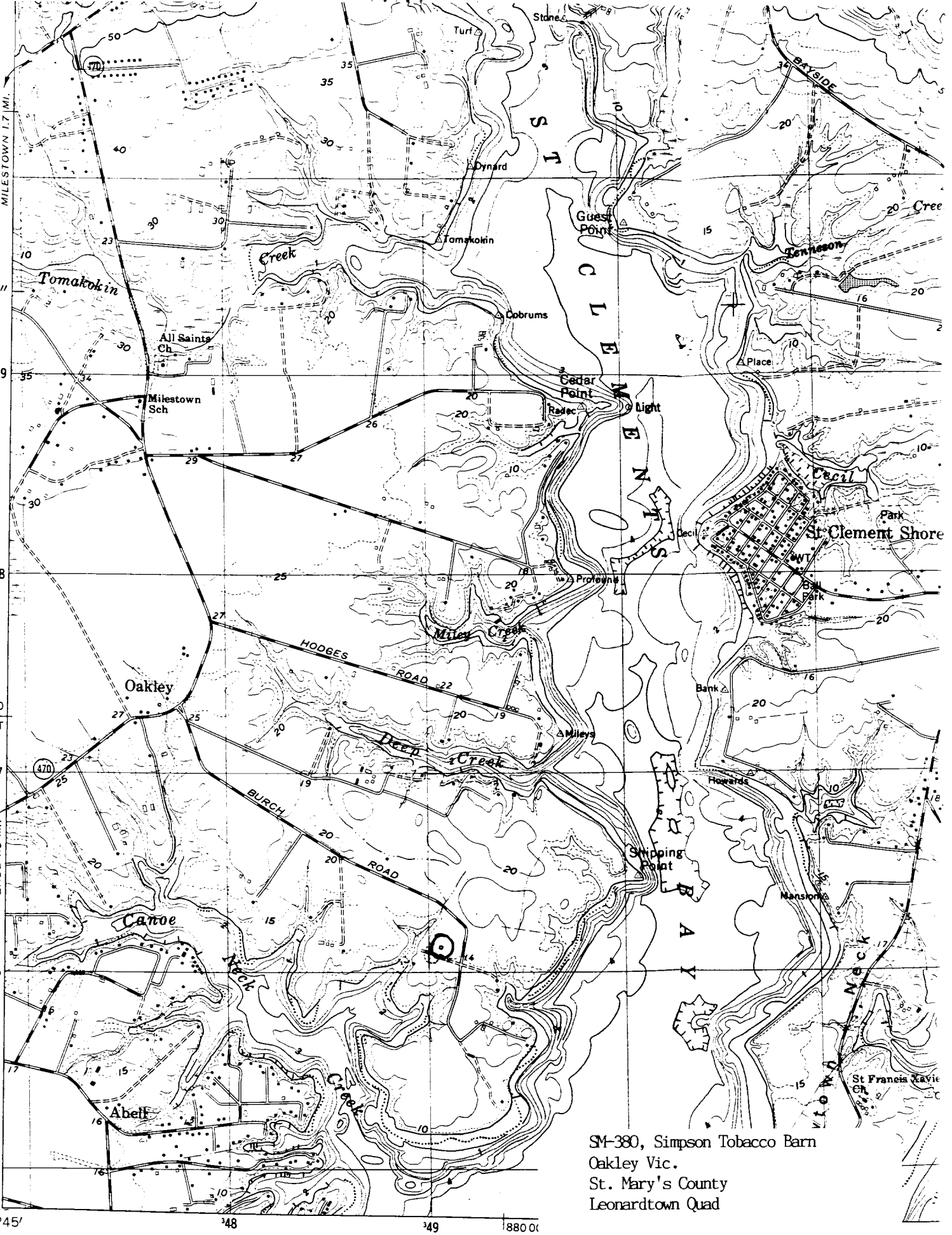


Figure 2. 4-11-93 aerial photo of Canoe Neck. The area is south of the main-east west road that bisects this peninsula was illustrated in the preceding plat. Canoe Neck Creek is situated to the south of the property while Deep Creek is situated to the north. Courtesy of St. Mary's County, Department of Planning & Zoning, Leonardtown, Maryland.

SM-380, Simpson Tobacco Barn
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 Agriculture
Resource Type	
Category:	Building
Historic Environment:	Rural
Historic Function and Use:	Tobacco Barn
Known Design Source:	None



SM-380, Simpson Tobacco Barn
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 Nat...

NATI... HYDROC...

SM-380

Simpson Tobacco Barn

St. Mary's County

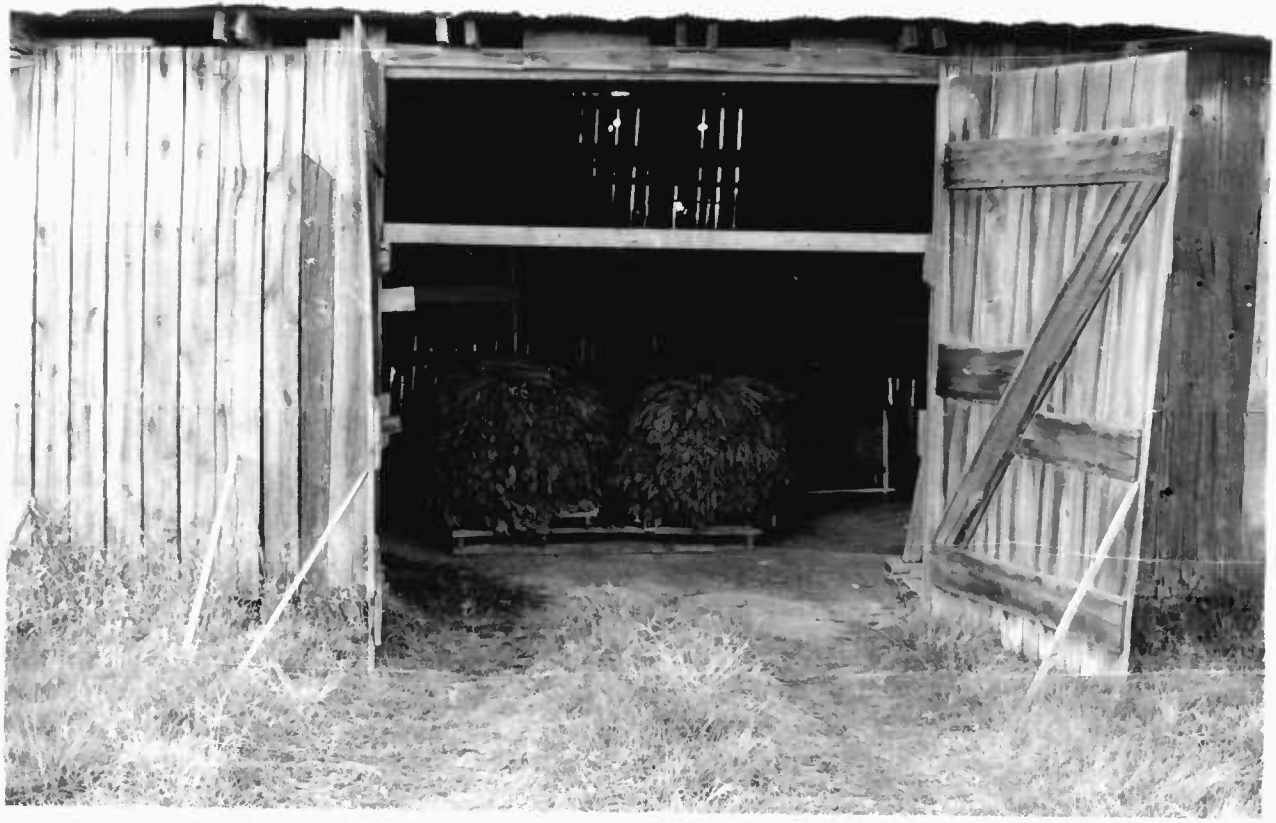
Kirk Ranzetta

Dec/97

MD SHPO

S + W elevations

1 of 2



SM-380

Simpson Tobacco Barn

St. Mary's County

Kirk Ranzetta

Dec/97

Md SHPO

S elevation - looking N at Tobacco barns

2 of 2