Capsule Summary
SM-456
Captain Clarence Biscoe House
Drayden vicinity
Private

Circa 1890

The Captain Clarence Biscoe House is significant both because of its use as a dormitory for workers employed by the St. Mary's Packing Company and because of its connection with Clarence Biscoe, one of the last pungey captains on the Chesapeake Bay. Although the building was altered by Captain Biscoe, its distinctive form strongly suggests its former use as a multi-family dwelling. Both the original interior and exterior finishes of the house are well-preserved.

Captain John S. Hebb purchased a large tract of "Part Westbury Manor" from the Wilson family in 1881. During Hebb's ownership, a canning factory was established on a 1 4/5 acre parcel of the tract. In 1925, Clarence Biscoe purchased the "St. Mary's Packing Company Lot" from the Hamilton Park Company of Baltimore. Biscoe demolished most of the packing company buildings located on the property when he made his home here.

SM-456, Captain Clarence Biscoe House
St. Mary's County
Maryland Comprehensive State Historic Preservation Plan Data

Historic Context

Geographic Organization:	Western Shore
Chronological/Developmental Period:	Industrial/Urban Dominance, 1870 - 1930.
Historic Period Theme:	Commerce

Resource Type

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

Survey No. SM 456

Magi No.

DOE ___yes ___no

Maryland Historical Trust
State Historic Sites Inventory Form

1. Name (indicate preferred name)

historic St. Mary's Packing Company Lot

and/or common Captain Clarence Biscoe House (pref.)

2. Location

street & number Cherryfield Road ___ not for publication

city, town Drayden ___ vicinity of congressional district 5

state Maryland county St. Mary's

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
___ district	___ public	X occupied	___ agriculture	___ museum
X building(s)	X private	___ 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 Craig R. & Bette G. Burngarner

street & number P.O. Box 63 telephone no.: (301) 994-2591

city, town Drayden state and zip code Maryland 20630

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. St. mary's County Courthouse liber MRB 425

street & number folio 14

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 456

Condition		Check one	Check one	
___ excellent	___ deteriorated	___ unaltered	___ original site	
X good	___ ruins	X altered	X moved	date of move c. 1925
___ 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: 8

The Captain Clarence Biscoe House is located at the end of an unpaved road, once known as "the old Hebb steamboat wharf road," off of Cherryfield Road in the vicinity of Drayden, St. Mary's County, Maryland. The Biscoe House was originally constructed as a multi-family dwelling for workers employed by the Saint Mary's Packing Company. Following his purchase of the property in 1925, Captain Biscoe adapted the dwelling for use as a single family home and demolished most of the remaining packing company structures. Captain Biscoe also constructed a series of outbuildings on the property for his own use. These are located to the south and east of the house. A summer home, built around the 1930s by one of the former Packing Company owners, is located on the southeast corner of the property. The Biscoe House faces south towards Carthagena Creek with the roof oriented on an east/west axis.

Built in the late 1800s, the house is supported by a brick pier foundation and sheathed with a combination of weatherboards and wood shingles. The roof is covered with asphalt shingles. Originally a long rectangular box, seven bays in width, Captain Biscoe removed two bays of the building and reoriented them to give the dwelling the form of an ell.

The south (main) elevation of the Biscoe House is mostly obscured by a series of additions constructed by Captain Biscoe in the 1920s and later. These additions are supported by concrete piers. A screened porch extends across the central three bays of the house. The seamed metal porch roof is supported by turned posts and the porch retains its original wood flooring and wainscoted ceiling. Behind the porch, the main block of the house is pierced by three four-light-over-three panel doors with narrow surrounds finished with an interior bead. An enclosed addition projects from the main block to the west of the porch. The eastern portion of this addition serves as a pantry and is pierced by a three-light window on the south side and a door on the east side. This exterior pantry is accessible from the porch only. The western section of the addition serves as a bathroom. The bathroom addition is pierced by a two-light window and a thirteen-light window. The second floor of the main block is pierced by four six-light windows. The gable end wing on the east end of the house is pierced by one six-over-six sash window with plain surrounds and a drip molding. One six-light window pierces the second floor. An interior brick chimney pierces the center of this wing's roof ridgeline. A portion of the porch, which originally wrapped around to the west elevation of the gable end wing, is now enclosed to serve as a mud room. The mud room is pierced by a four-light window on the south side.

The east elevation is sheathed with wood shingles. It is pierced by three six-

8. Significance

Survey No. SM 456

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
X 1800–1899	X commerce	___ exploration/settlement	___ philosophy	___ transportation
___ 1900–	___ communications	___ industry	___ politics/government	___ other (specify)
		___ invention		

Specific dates Unknown **Builder/Architect** Unknown

check: Applicable Criteria: __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.

The Captain Clarence Biscoe House is significant both because of its use as a dormitory for workers employed by the St. Mary's Packing Company and because of its connection with Clarence Biscoe, one of the last pungey captains on the Chesapeake Bay. Although the building was altered by Captain Biscoe, its distinctive form strongly suggests its former use as a multi-family dwelling. Both the original interior and exterior finishes of the house are well-preserved.

Captain John S. Hebb purchased a large tract of "Part Westbury Manor" from the Wilson family in 1881. Hebb, born on April 27, 1830, was the youngest son of John and Hopewell Lynch Hebb. An article, first published in the Baltimore Times and excerpted for the St. Mary's Beacon of June 25, 1885, notes that,

> "Captain John S. Hebb is perhaps, one of the most important men in the Pilots' Association. He is vice president of the Board of Supervisors and has much to do with directing its affairs. He is also examiner-in-chief of apprentices. He is connected with the Lynches of St. Marys' County who are well known as breeders of race-horses. He has been a pilot for nearly 40 years although he is only 56 years old. It has been 7 years since he was on active duty."

During Hebb's ownership, a canning factory was established on a 1 4/5 acre parcel of "Part Westbury Manor." It is unclear when this business was begun, although a St. Mary's Beacon article of June 20, 1889 notes that "Mr Hebb has erected a new wharf on Carthagena Creek, St. Mary's River, and the steamer J. E. Tygert is making regular calls there. All freight sent to the wharf will be carefully attended to." In 1903, Hebb sold 1 4/5 acres of the property, "known as the Saint Mary's Packing Company Lot," to Dr. Arthur Hebb, Thomas B. Webster, and Edwin H. Ford of Baltimore. In 1917, these grantees transfered their interest in the property to the "St. Mary's Packing Company of Baltimore City."

Sarah Adams, a local resident who remembers the existence of the canning factory when she was a child, noted that a scow would travel up and down the

9. Major Bibliographical References

Survey No. SM 456

See Attached

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property 1 4/5 Acre

Quadrangle name St. Mary's City

Quadrangle scale 1: 24000

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 that in deed

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 October 1994

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

city or town Leonardtown 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

PS-2746

over-six sash windows with wide surrounds and drip moldings on the first floor. Three six-light windows light the second story.

The north elevation is pierced by five six-over-six sash windows on the first floor and by five six-light windows on the second floor.

The west elevation of the main block gable end is pierced by one six-over-six sash window with plain surrounds on the first floor and one six-light window on the second floor. The bathroom addition which projects to the south of the main block is pierced by one two-light window on this west side. The west elevation of the ell is pierced on the first floor by a four-light-over-three-panel door which opens onto the screened porch. The mud room addition is pierced by a four-light-over-two-panel door. The second floor of the ell is pierced by two six-light windows.

Following the removal of some interior partition walls, Captain Biscoe divided the first floor of the house into four rooms. The west end of the house serves as the kitchen. From the kitchen, a door opens to the bathroom addition. A pair of built-in closets are located against the west wall of the kitchen. In the southwest corner of the room, a five-panel door provides access to a narrow, enclosed stairway probably built by Biscoe to provide access to the two bedrooms on the second floor. East of the kitchen, but still in the main block, is a parlor. A five-panel door on the east wall of this room connects it to the first floor of the ell. Here, a second parlor is located. To the south of this parlor is a smaller room which served the combined function of wash room and meat storage room. A ladder in the southwest corner of the room provides access to the unfinished attic above. A door from the washroom opens into the mud room. All of the rooms on the first floor, except for those additions constructed by Captain Biscoe, have both wainscoted walls and ceilings.

Two bedrooms are located above the kitchen. Both have built-in closets. A vertical panel door connects the bedrooms to the unfinished rooms above the two first floor parlors and the wash room. According to the current owner, Biscoe located a water storage tank in one of these unfinished rooms. This gravity powered tank provided the first floor with running water. The six-light windows which illuminate the second floor are unusual. In order to open the window, the sash is pushed outwards and then slid downwards into a pocket between the exterior and interior wall surface.

Three outbuildings are located to the south of the house. These include two sheds and a pump house. The shed located closest to the house is supported by wood piers and is sheathed with a combination of board and batten siding and asphalt shingles. The roof is covered with wood shingles. The shed faces east and has a gable roof oriented on a north/south axis. The east side of the shed is pierced by a four-panel door with plain surrounds flanked by a six-light window on either side. Two

six-light windows pierce the south end of the building. The second shed has a shed roof and also faces east. It is sheathed with corrugated metal and roofed with seamed metal. The shed is supported by wood piers. The east elevation of the shed is pierced by a vertical panel door. The shed is pierced by a six-light window on the north and west sides and by one two-light window on the south side. Both of these sheds are used for storage. The well house is located next to the creek. This structure was built over an artesian well which continued to gush fresh water until the 1980s. The well house faces east and has a gable roof oriented on an east/west axis. It is sheathed with board and batten siding and roofed with asphalt shingles. A door pierces the east side of the building.

A large vegetable garden was originally located to the west of the house. A small shed roof structure for the storage of tools stands next to the old garden bed. To the east of the house stand two garages. Both garages face west with a gable roof oriented on an east/west axis. They are sheathed with board and batten siding and roofed with metal. Double doors pierce the west elevation of the buildings.

Two additional outbuildings stand northeast of the garages. One of these is sheathed with board and batten siding and roofed with asphalt shingles. Captain Biscoe used this building for the storage of wood. The second structure served as a chicken coop. The chicken coop has a shed roof covered with corrugated metal. It is pierced by three doors and a six-light window on the south side.

waterways picking up tomatoes from local farms. The tomatoes would be towed back to the packing house and canned. She said that the company went out of business because the market became flooded with tomatoes and they were unable to sell their product. Mrs. Adams was unable to recall what stood on the property during the packing company's operation.

Clarence Biscoe lived near the packing company as a child and shared some of his memories of the site with Bette Bumgarner prior to his death. He recalled brick ovens located on the property where the workers would cook their meals. He referred to the packing company workers as "Bohemians." This suggests that the workers were Czech or Eastern European immigrants from Baltimore who were employed seasonally at the St. Mary's County company.

An old photo of the packing house dormitory, probably dating to the early 1900s, shows one long rectangular building pierced by seven doors on the first floor and seven windows on the second floor. Two interior brick chimneys pierce the roof ridgeline of the structure. According to Sarah Adams there were originally two of these dormitories which housed workers throughout the year. Each apartment in the building consisted of one room on the first floor and one room on the second floor. The second floor was probably accessible by means of a ladder-like stair such as that still located in the wash room.

In 1925, Clarence Biscoe purchased the 1 4/5 acre "St. Mary's Packing Company Lot" from the Hamilton Park Company of Baltimore. Biscoe demolished most of the packing company buildings located on the property except for one of the dormitories. Biscoe rolled the multi-family dwelling, using logs and a block and tackle, forty feet towards the shore of Carthagena Creek. Biscoe enclosed the house lot with a metal fence and proceeded to build a series of outbuildings on the property.

At his death in 1993, Captain Clarence Biscoe was thought to have been the last of the commercial Chesapeake Bay schooner captains. At the age of 21 he was the captain of the pungey schooner Julia Annie. Biscoe spent most of his life transporting cargo, lumber, fertilizer, and oysters throughout the bay and its tributaries. Biscoe also took fishing parties out into the bay, crabbed, and tonged oysters. Remakably, he continued to tong oysters until he was 97 years old. His wife, Gertrude Edwards Biscoe, often assisted him on the boat and raised chickens at their home. Although Biscoe's house is currently being used for storage, the current owner plans to restore the interesting structure for use as a dwelling.

Few canning factory related resources survive in St. Mary's County. Housing built for cannery workers is especially rare. It is unfortunate that more is not known about the history and operation of the St. Mary's Packing Company.

SM-456, Captain Clarence Biscoe House
St. Mary's County
8.1 Significance

Chain of Title

TO: Craig R. and Bette G. Bumgarner
FROM: Clarence J. Biscoe
RECORD: St. Mary's County Land Records, Liber MRB 425, folio 14.
DATE: August 4, 1988.
NOTES: Transfer of his life estate in the tract called the Saint Mary's Packing Company Lot being 1 4/5 of an acre. Same as MRB 335/389.

TO: Craig R. and Bette G. Bumgarner
FROM: Clarence J. Biscoe
RECORD: St. Mary's County Land Records, Liber MRB 335, folio 389.
DATE: February 12, 1987.
NOTES: Transfer of the tract called the Saint Mary's Packing Company Lot being 1 4/5 of an acre and the same as JMM 3/34. Gertrude I. Biscoe is now deceased.

TO: Clarence J. Biscoe and Gertrude I. Biscoe
FROM: The Hamilton Park Company of Baltimore City
RECORD: St. Mary's County Land Record, Liber JMM 3, folio 34.
DATE: February 17, 1925.
NOTES: Transfer of the Saint Mary's Packing Company Lot being 1 4/5 of an acre and the same as EBA 16/167.

TO: St. Mary's Packing Company of Baltimore City
FROM: Oscar Lee Ford of Pittsburg, and Charles J. Hopkins of Baltimore, Trustees, Jane Ford, widow of Edwin H. Ford, Arthur Hebb and Jeannette Hebb of Baltimore.
RECORD: St. Mary's County Land Records, Liber EBA 16, folio 167.
DATE: April 4, 1917.
NOTES: Transfer of a 1 4/5 acre parcel being the same as that in EBA 3/170.
Price: $5000

TO: Oscar Lee Ford, Charles J. Hopkins, Thomas B. Webster, Trustees.
FROM: Edwin H. Ford
RECORD: St. Mary's County Testamentary Record, Liber BC 1, folio 406.
DATE: March 22, 1915.
NOTES: Edwin H. Ford died March 17, 1915, leaving his property to the above described Trustees. Thomas B. Webster declined to serve as a Trustee, however.

TO: Edwin H. Ford
FROM: Thomas B. Webster
RECORD: St. Mary's County Land Record, Liber EBA 13, folio 265.
DATE: January 21, 1915.

SM-456, Captain Clarence Biscoe House
St. Mary's County
8.2 Significance

NOTES: Transfer of 1/3 interest in the Saint Mary's Packing Company Lot.

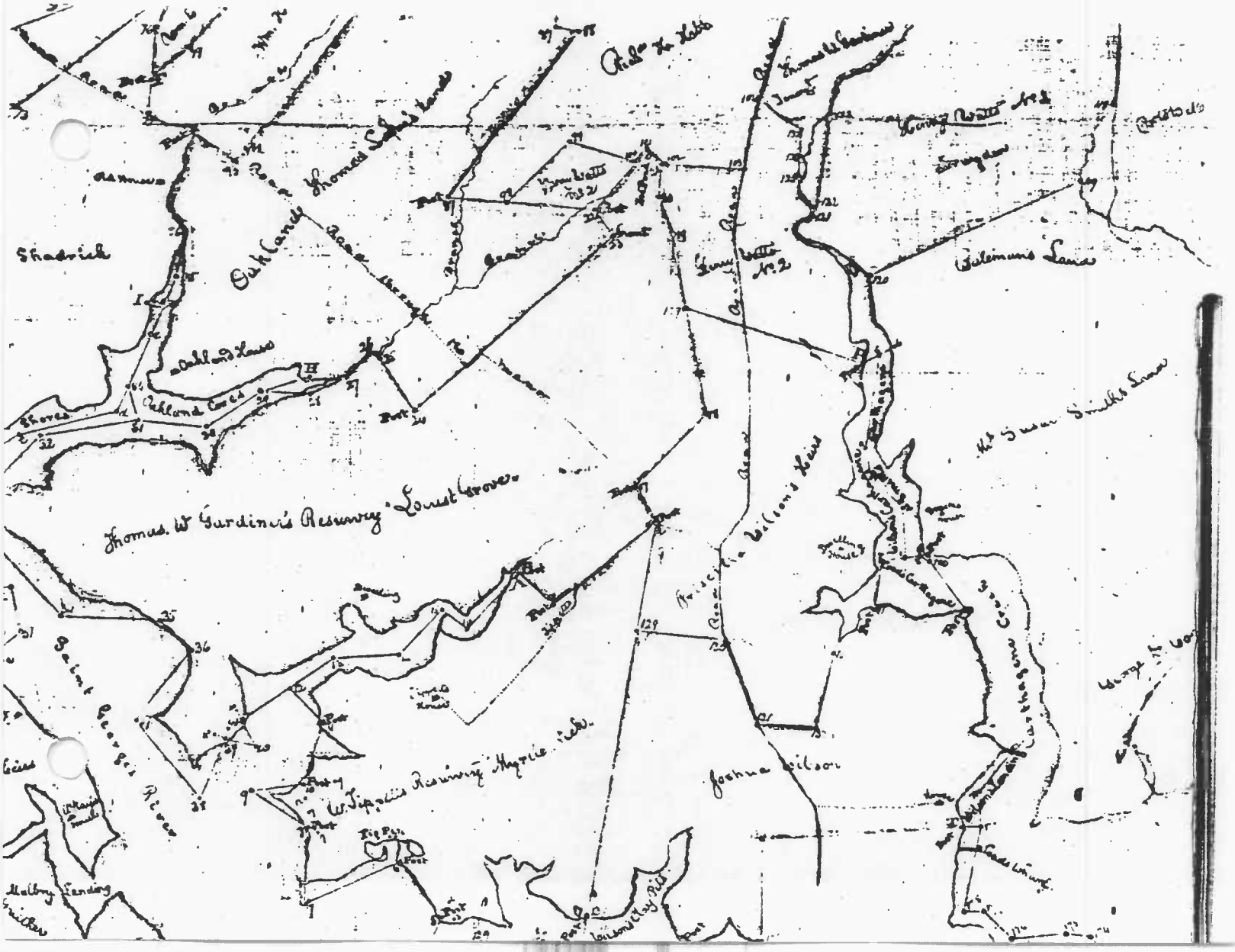
TO: Dr. Arthur Hebb, Thomas B. Webster, Edwin H. Ford of Baltimore.
FROM: Captain John S. Hebb and Mary L. Hebb of Baltimore.
RECORD: St. Mary's County Land Record, Liber EBA 3, folio 170.
DATE: April 14, 1903.
NOTES: Transfer to each a 1/3 interest in the 1 4/5 acre tract known as the Saint Mary's Packing Company Lot laid off out of "Part of Westbury Manor" and better known as the homestead of the late Joshua Wilson and also being part of the land John S. Hebb purchased of James H. Wilson, Trustee. Price: $45

TO: John S. Hebb
FROM: James H. Wilson, Trustee
RECORD: St. Mary's County Land Record, Liber JFF 5, folio 103.
DATE: July 12, 1881.
NOTES: Transfer of property as a result of a judgement in Circuit Court dated March 31, 1881 in the case James H. Wilson et al vs. Edwin A. Wilson et al (see Decree Record JFF 3/280). Sale of "Part Westbury Manor" being 227 acres more or less, the same of which Joshua Wilson died possessed.

TO: John S. Hebb of Baltimore
FROM: Mary E. Wilson
RECORD: St. Mary's County Land Record, Liber JFF 5, folio 102.
DATE: June 16, 1881.
NOTES: Transfer of my dower interest in "Part Westbury Manor" being 227 acres more or less and the same of which Joshua Wilson died possessed. The metes and bounds of this tract are described in JH 11/496.

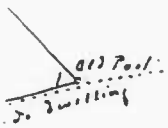
SM-456, Captain Clarence Biscoe House
St. Mary's County
8.4 Significance

Plat from the Benjamin Tippett Surveyor Log Book, Vol A: 1836-1856 showing the Biscoe property when owned by Joshua Wilson. Note that the property frontage on Carthagena Creek is identified as "Wilson's Landing."

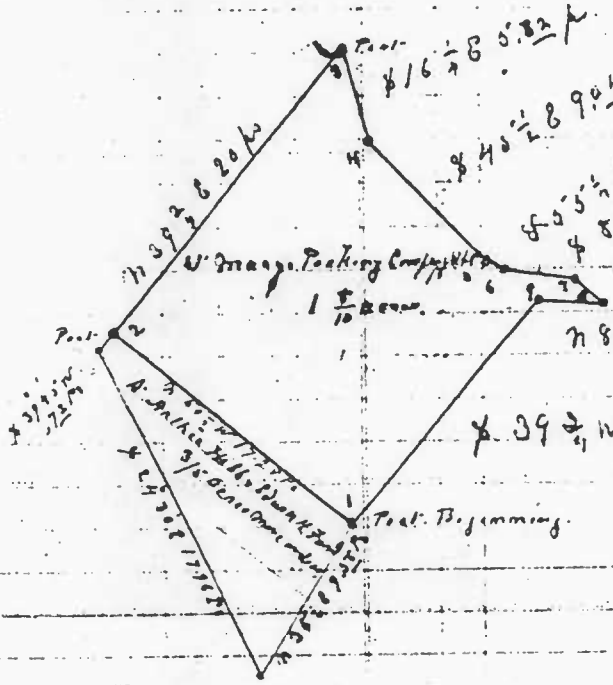


Source: George B. Dent Surveyor Log Book C, page 63.
St. Mary's County Historical Society

District of Saint Mary's
Surveyed by Order of Thos. J. Pearson
standing by the north side
dwelling of William T Ford
Decd. and thence running
6 poles to the said Notch
and N 37¾ W 3.55 poles to
post the beginning of the road
running up Said Turkey Neck
a slip by the east side of
said dwelling S 72½ E 8.16
and thence running S 43 E
8 poles more or less.
by George B. Dent



Saint Mary's Packing Company Lots Purchased of Capt John S Hebb and Mary E Hebb his wife of Baltimore City Maryland by Dr Robin Hebb. Thomas B Webster and Edwin H Ford of Baltimore City Maryland being part of Wealberry Manor, and Called Known as the Lots Homestead of the Late Joshua Wilson. and was sold to the Said Capt John S Hebb by James H Wilson trustee to Sell the Same. Located in the 2nd election District of Saint Mary's County Maryland. Beginning at a post Set on the Shore of Cathgine Creek an arm of the St Mary's River in Saint Mary's County Maryland and running through a field N 50 30 W 17.25 Ps to a post in a field. thence with Said field N 39 45 E 20 Ps to a post on the Shore of the Said Creek S 16 15 E 5.32 Ps. S 45 30 E 9.04 Ps. S 55¼ E 1.04 Ps. S 82½ E 4.05 Ps S 49½ E 1.92 Ps to the Point. thence running down said Shore N 84½ W 3.52 Ps. S 39¾ W 15.76 Ps to the beginning Containing 1 7/10 Acres More or Less March 25th 1903



SM-456, Captain Clarence Biscoe House
St. Mary's County
9.1 Bibliographical References

Adams, Sarah. Telephone Interview. October 1994.

Biscoe, Clarence J. and Gertrude. Interview. Patuxent River Folklife and Oral History Project. Calvert Marine Museum. 11 February 1982.

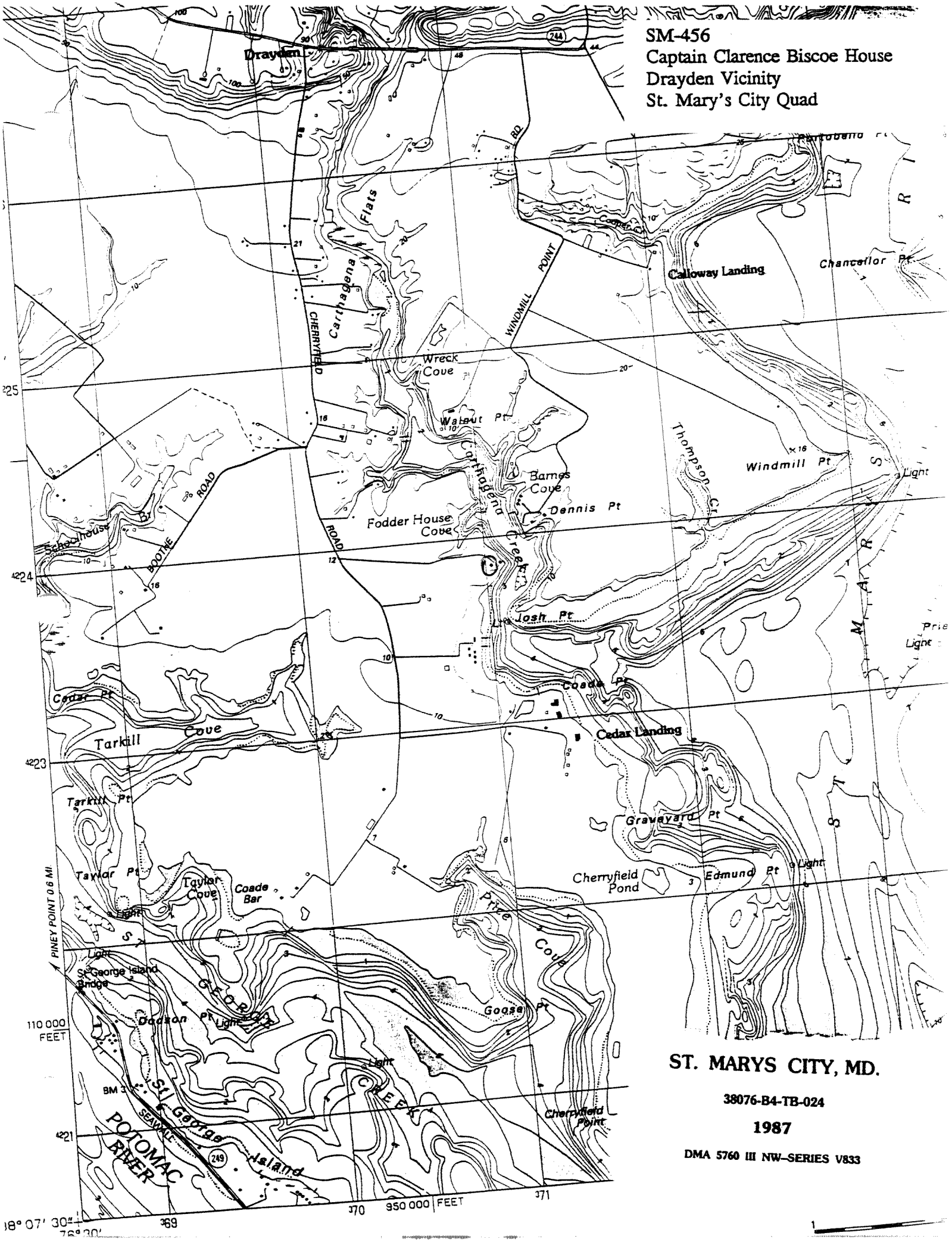
Bumgarner, Bette. Personal Interview. October 1994.

Burton, R. Lee, Jr. Canneries of the Eastern Shore. Centerville, MD: Tidewater Publishers, 1986.

"Clarence Jefferson Biscoe," The Enterprise 22 October 1993.

Shopes, Linda. "Women Cannery Workers in Baltimore, 1880-1943." Seventh Berkshire Conference on the History of Women. 21 June 1987.

SM-456
Captain Clarence Biscoe House
Drayden Vicinity
St. Mary's City Quad



ST. MARYS CITY, MD.

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1987

DMA 5760 III NW–SERIES V833

SM- 456

Capt Clarence [illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

1/94

MD SHPO

[illegible]

1/5

SH-456

Capt Clarence [illegible]

[illegible] Mary's County, MD

E. Hughes

11/94

[illegible]

NE elevation

2/5

SM-156

[illegible]

St Mary's [illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

SM-456

Cape Charles Bridge Thru

St Marys County, MD

[illegible]

1/4

MD SHPO

[illegible]

4/5