

Capsule Summary
SM-461
St. George Island United Methodist Church
St. George's Island
Private

1925

The St. George Island United Methodist Church is significant as one of two extant churches located on St. George's Island. The current church building, constructed in 1925, replaced an earlier structure built in 1876. The church remains largely unaltered except for the addition of vinyl siding over the original weatherboard exterior. Set back from the road in a grove of trees and surrounded by grave markers, the church is a picturesque island landmark. Historically, it has been an important part of the spiritual and social fabric of the lives of island residents.

The history of the island's Methodist congregation dates to the 1850s. Until 1852, the island was owned by the Roman Catholic Church. During the 1850s and 1860s, it was divided into parcels and sold to the public. Many of the people who purchased land on St. George's Island were watermen who came from the Eastern Shore of Maryland and Virginia. Unlike most St. Mary's Countians, these island settlers were Methodists.

According to local tradition, Methodist residents of St. George's Island first met in a one-room log schoolhouse. In 1876, the first Methodist church was constructed using materials imported from Salisbury, Maryland. This first church was demolished in 1925 and replaced by the building which is currently in use. In 1965, a cinderblock Fellowship Hall was constructed.

SM-461, St. George Island United Methodist Church
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: Religion

Resource Type

Category: Building

Historic Environment: Village

Historic Function and Use: Church

Known Design Source: None

Maryland Historical Trust State Historic Sites Inventory Form

1. Name (indicate preferred name)

historic

and/or common St. George Island United Methodist Church

2. Location

street & number Route 249 not for publicationcity, town St. George Island vicinity of congressional district 5state Maryland county St. Mary's

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input 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 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 St. Mary's Circuit Methodist Episcopal Church c/o St. Geo. Island United Methodist Trusteesstreet & number P.O. Box 38 telephone no.: (301) 862 2052city, town Piney Point state and zip code Maryland 20674

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. St. Mary's County Courthouse liber. JMM 3street & number folio 255city, 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

Condition		Check one	Check one
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" 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: 1

The St. George Island United Methodist Church is located on the east side of Route 249 near the junction of Route 249 and Thomas Road on St. George's Island. The church and the cemetery that surrounds it are set back from the road and are enclosed by a chain link fence. The Fellowship Hall, a cinderblock building constructed in 1965, stands between the church and Route 249. The former parsonage, now used for Sunday School classes, is a cinderblock building located south of the Fellowship Hall. The church faces west with its roof oriented on a north/south axis.

Built in 1925, the church is supported by concrete piers which have been infilled with brick. The exterior is sheathed with german vinyl siding. The jerkin roof is covered with asphalt shingles.

The west (main) elevation consists of a six bay main block with a two-story entrance vestibule and bell tower wing which acts as the southernmost bay. This wing is capped by a pyramidal roof surmounted by a metal cross. The first floor of the wing is pierced by a double six-panel door entrance sheltered by a metal awning. Above the door are a series of three louvered vents with wide surrounds and triangular heads. The main block of the church is pierced by four six-over-six sash colored glass windows with wide surrounds and triangular heads. These windows also have louvered shutters. The northernmost bay of the church is a modern door. The west roof slope of the church is pierced by an interior brick chimney.

The south elevation of the bell tower wing is pierced by one nine-light-over-three-panel door with a four-light transom. The door and transom are bordered a by wide, plain surround with a triangular head. A wheelchair ramp extends from the west elevation of the church to this side entrance door. Three louvered vents with wide surrounds and triangular heads are located above the door. The main block of the church is pierced by two six-over-six sash colored glass windows with wide surrounds and triangular heads.

The east elevation of the church is pierced by six six-over-six sash colored glass windows with wide surrounds and triangular heads.

The north elevation of the main block is pierced by two four-over-four sash windows with wide surrounds and triangular heads. The north side of the bell tower is pierced by one four-over-four sash window with wide surrounds, a triangular head, and louvered shutters. Three louvered vents with the same surrounds are located above this window.

8. Significance

Survey No. **SM 461**

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 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 type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input 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 1925 **Builder/Architect** Unknown

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.

The St. George Island United Methodist Church is significant as one of two extant churches located on St. George's Island. The current church building, constructed in 1925, replaced an earlier structure built in 1876. The church remains largely unaltered except for the addition of vinyl siding over the original weatherboard exterior.

The history of the island's Methodist congregation dates to the 1850s. Until 1852, the island was owned by the Roman Catholic Church. During the 1850s and 1860s, it was divided into parcels and sold to the public. Many of the people who purchased land on St. George's Island were watermen who came from the Eastern Shore of Maryland and Virginia. Unlike most St. Mary's Countians, these island settlers were Methodists.

According to Regina Combs Hammett, Methodist residents of St. George's Island first met in a one-room log schoolhouse built on land purchased in 1857. Methodism on the island waned in the early 1870s, but then rebounded in 1876. In 1876, the Methodist congregation numbered about 18. In July of that year Walter and Elizabeth Chesser, Tyler and Tibettia Chesser, and Samuel and Mary Trader granted 3/5 of an acre to the Trustees of the Methodist Episcopal Church. During the next few months dinners were held to raise money to purchase materials for the construction of a church on the lot. A delegation, consisting of Captain Wesley Chesser, Captain Tyler Chesser, and Captain Richard Bell, was sent to Salisbury, Maryland to purchase the necessary building supplies. The church was completed by the end of the year.

Transportation between St. George's Island and the mainland provided a challenge for the ministers who served the island congregation. Prior to the construction of a bridge in 1921, the minister made his way to the island by boat. According to one source, "The minister would drive his buggy to the Milburn house just across the river from the island, and a white flag would be raised to signify that the minister was waiting to be picked up by boat." (Note: The "Milburn House" may be Weston (SM-47) and the river St. George's Creek, formerly known as St. George's

9. Major Bibliographical References

Survey No. Sm 461

See Attached

10. Geographical Data

Acreege of nominated property 1 Acre more or less

Quadrangle name St. George Island

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

One acre surrounding the church and extending from the church lot to Route 249

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

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

SM-461, St. George Island United Methodist Church
St. Mary's County
7.1 Description

The interior of the church vestibule is sheathed with modern wood paneling. The door and window surrounds are plain except for a modest crown molding. The vestibule was originally separated from the main block of the church by a pair of double doors which have been removed.

The main block of the church is sheathed with wainscoting from the floor to the chair rail. Above the chair rail, the wall is covered with modern wood paneling. The ceiling of the church is wainscoted. Three rows of wooden pews extend from east to west across the church interior creating two major aisles and two minor aisles. Twenty-one pews fill the main block of the church. Nine additional pews are located at the south end of the church in an area which, at one time, could have been separated from the main block by a series of sliding wooden doors. These doors have been removed. The north end of the church consists of a central altar raised two steps above ground level. The altar is separated from the seating area by an altar rail. The pulpit is located to the west of the altar. The choir, now occupied by an organ, is located to the east of the altar.

SM-461, St. George Island United Methodist Church
St. Mary's County
8.1 Significance

Chain of Title

TO: St. Mary's Circuit Methodist Episcopal Church
FROM: Trustees of the United Methodist Church of St. George's Island
RECORD: St. Mary's County Land Record, Liber JMM 3, folio 255.
DATE: August 17, 1925.
NOTES: Transfer of all property held by the Trustees being the same as that in JMM 2/180 on which the new church building has been recently constructed, three lots described in EBA 13/488, and JFF 2/193.

TO: John Henderson et al, Trustees.
FROM: James A. and Ruth R. Fenwick
RECORD: St. Mary's County Land Record, Liber JMM 2, folio 180.
DATE: February 11, 1924.
NOTES:

TO: George Chesser, Wesley Chesser, Tyler Chesser, E.G. Thomas, Burton Graham, Edward Brown, Cleveland Chesser, John W. Henderson, James Crowder, Trustees of St. George's Methodist Episcopal Church
FROM: Samuel Trader
RECORD: St. Mary's County Land Record, Liber EBA 13, folio 488.
DATE: October 2, 1915.
NOTES: Transfer of three lots.

TO: Walter Chesser, William J. Simpkins, Ephrem Chesser, Walter Crowder, Walter Wesley Chesser, Trustees.
FROM: Walter Wesley Chesser and Elizabeth Ann Chesser, Tyler D. and Tabetha Elizabeth Chesser, Samuel and Mary Trader.
RECORD: St. Mary's County Land Record, Liber JFF 2, folio 193.
DATE: July 25, 1876.
NOTES: Transfer of a parcel "for the purpose...of having a Church house for the preaching of the gospel and for the worship of Almighty God."

SM-461, St. George Island United Methodist Church
St. Mary's County
8.2 Significance

River.) Services were held at 8:00 pm on the first and third Sunday of every month. The minister, who lived at a parsonage located at Cedar Point, would then spend the night on the island.

The old church was demolished in 1925 and replaced by the building which is currently in use. The new building is located on a parcel granted by James and Ruth Fenwick in 1924. It is contiguous to the old church lot. In 1965, the cinderblock Fellowship Hall was constructed. The church, set back from the road in a grove of trees and surrounded by grave markers, is a picturesque island landmark. Historically, it has been an important part of the spiritual and social fabric of the lives of island residents.

SM-461, St. George Island United Methodist Church
St. Mary's County

9.1 Major Bibliographical References

Biondi, Patricia. "Research Findings on the Methodist Churches in St. Mary's County, Maryland," Chronicles 33.6 (June 1985): 1-8.

Biscoe, Rhona, Walter Thomas, et al. "The Birth and History of the United Methodist Church, St. George Island, Maryland." N.p.: n.p., n.d.

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

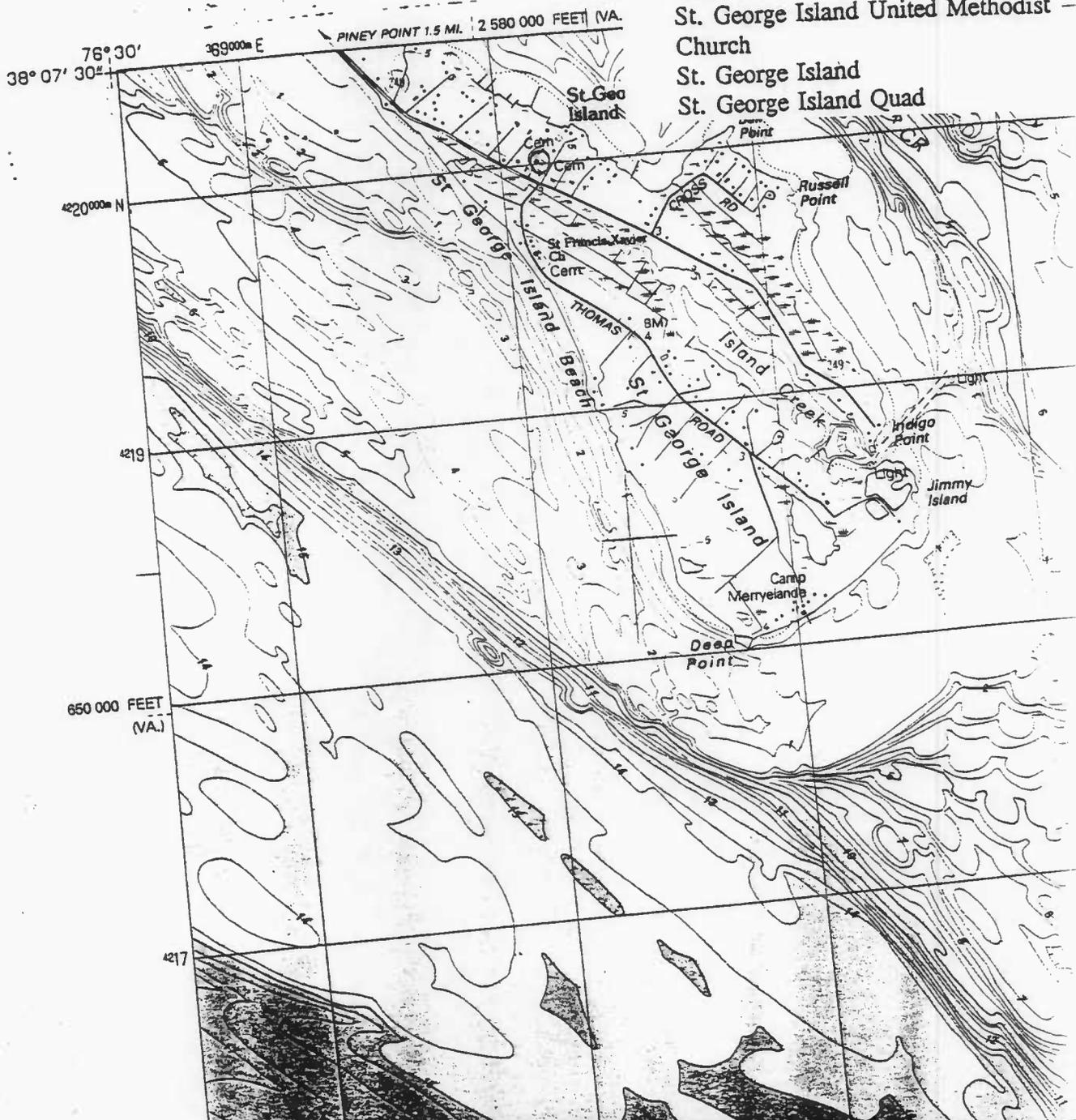
Thomas, June. Telephone Interview, October 1994.

SM-461

St. George Island United Methodist Church

St. George Island

St. George Island Quad



● INTERIOR—GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, RESTON, VIRGINIA—1987
2 610 000 FEET (VA.)

ROAD CLASSIFICATION

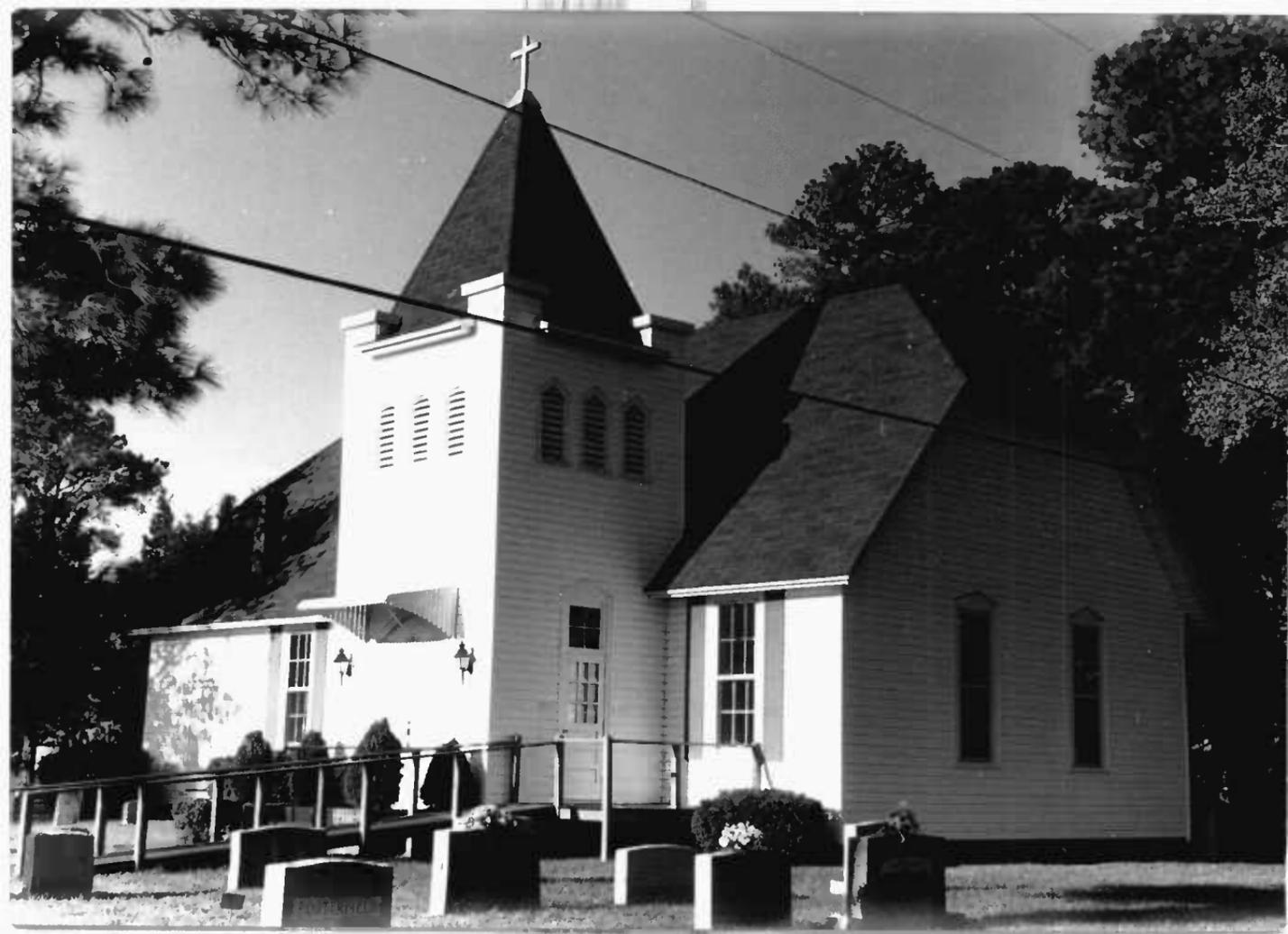
Primary highway, hard surface	Light-duty road, hard or improved surface ...	
Secondary highway, hard surface	Unimproved road ...	
Interstate Route	U. S. Route	State Route

ST. GEORGE ISLAND, MD.—VA.

38076-A4-TB-024

1987

DMA 5760 III SW—SERIES V833



SM-461

St. George Island Unit 1 Methodists

St. Mary's County, MD

E. Hughes

12/14

MD SHPD

2nd floor

1/2



SM-461

St. George Island United Methodist Church

St. Mary's County, MD

E. Hughes

E 1/34

MS 5112

W elevation

2/2