Capsule Summary
SM-465
Thomas B. Adams House
St. George Island
Private Circa 1860

The Thomas B. Adams House is significant as one of the earliest houses that survives on St. George Island. It is also significant as the home of the founder of the Potomac Hotel, one of the first boarding houses on the Island. Although the house has been enlarged and partially sheathed with artificial siding, it is generally well-preserved and retains most of its original interior finishes.

In 1855, Thomas B. Adams purchased a 100 acre part of the tract "St. George's Island" from the Roman Catholic Church. Adams, who is listed as a farmer in the 1860 census, probably built the house here soon after his move to the Island. The census shows that he, his wife, and his nine children were born in Virginia.

Twenty years after the family's move to Maryland, Adams helped his sons to construct a hotel on the St. George Island property. By 1891 the "Potomac Hotel" complex consisted of a 37 room main hotel, 12 cottages, a store, bowling alley and dance pavilion. Today, only the Adams' family dwelling, described as "Mother's Cottage" in the St. Mary's County Land Records, and the Edward T. Adams House (SM-452) are all that remain on the hotel grounds.

SM-465, Thomas B. Adams House
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.
Historic Period Theme:	Architecture

Resource Type

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

Survey No. SM 465

Magi No.

DOE ___yes ___no

MARYLAND INVENTORY OF HISTORIC PROPERTIES

Maryland Historical Trust State Historic Sites Inventory Form

1. Name (indicate preferred name)

historic Grandmother's Cottage; Mother's Cottage

and/or common Thomas B. Adams House

2. Location

street & number Route 249 ___ not for publication

city, town St. George Island ___ 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 David W. & Regina Morgan

street & number P.O. Box 93 telephone no.: (301) 994 0755

city, 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 MRF 142

street & number folio 149

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 465

Condition		Check one	Check one	
___ excellent	___ deteriorated	___ unaltered	___ original site	
X good	___ ruins	X altered	X moved	date of move c. 1906
___ 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: 1

The Thomas B. Adams House is located at the end of an unpaved road on the east side of Route 249 on St. George Island in St. Mary's County, Maryland. The house faces St. George's Creek on the east and is bordered by a stand of tall pine trees on the north. The Edward T. Adams House (SM-452) property borders the Thomas B. Adams House on the south side. Originally, these two houses were separated by a carriage road that led from the Adams steamboat wharf on the Potomac River to St. George's Creek. A slight rise in the landscape, which constitutes the old road bed, is still visible. Three outbuildings stand on the property. The house faces east with the principal gable oriented on an east/west axis.

Built in the 1860s, the Thomas B. Adams House is a two-story, ell-shaped, frame structure with modern additions on the south and west elevations. The house is supported by a brick pier foundation. The exterior is sheathed with weatherboard and vinyl siding. The roof is covered with asphalt shingles.

The east (main) elevation consists of a two-bay gable end main block . This gable end is covered by a substantial two-story, gable roof porch with a cement pad floor, square post supports and a square post balustrade. Behind the porch, the first floor of the house is pierced by a modern entrance door and a six-over-six sash window with narrow, molded surrounds. The second floor of the house is pierced by a four-panel door and a six-over-six sash window. To the west of the gable end block extends a one-story addition constructed around 1970. The addition is pierced by two six-over-six sash windows with louvered shutters. The second floor of the ell rises above the one-story addition. The ell is pierced by two six-over-six sash windows with louvered shutters.

The south elevation of the main block's first floor is obscured by the one-story 1970 addition. The addition is pierced by two six-over-six sash windows with louvered shutters. The second floor of the main block is blind. The gable end of the ell is pierced on the first floor by two six-over-six sash windows with louvered shutters. The second floor is pierced by one six-over-six sash window with louvered shutters. A louvered vent pierces the eave. The windows that light the ell have narrow surrounds with an interior bead. This gable end is finished with molded cornice returns. An interior brick chimney pierces the roof ridgeline. A one-story shed roof addition extends to the west. The addition is pierced by a six-over-six sash window with louvered shutters.

The west elevation of the ell's first floor is obscured by a modern one-story addition. The addition is pierced by two pairs of six-over-six sash windows with

8. Significance

Survey No. SM 465

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	___ 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 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 Thomas B. Adams House is significant as one of the earliest houses that survives on St. George Island. It is also significant as the home of the founder of the Potomac Hotel, one of the first boarding houses on the Island. Although the house has been enlarged and partially sheathed with artificial siding, it is generally well-preserved and retains most of its original interior finishes.

In 1855, Thomas B. Adams purchased a 100 acre part of the tract "St. George's Island" from the Roman Catholic Church. Adams, who is listed as a farmer in the 1860 census, probably built the house here soon after his move to the Island. The census shows that he, his wife, and his nine children were born in Virginia.

Twenty years after the family's move to Maryland, Adams helped his sons to construct a hotel on the St. George Island property. An article in the St. Mary's Beacon dated August 26, 1875 notes,

"Monday evening at seven we again found anchor east in the mouth of the St. Mary's River. Going on shore, where we remained until about twelve, we were astonished at the improvements which have been made on the Island within the last two years. An elegant Hotel, handsomely furnished, fine bar-room, bath-houses, wharf, store, etc.

The genial manners and courteous bearing of the young Messrs. A. will, we are satisfied, ensure success to this splendid summer resort."

In 1884, Thomas Adams transfered the property to his four sons. At this time the land is described as occupied by the "Potomac Hotel." An 1891 Personal Estate Inventory for Robert J. Adams notes that the hotel had 37 numbered rooms, most of which were furnished with two single beds and a table. Twelve cottages also stood on the property, some of which were two-stories in height. At least one of these cottages survives and has been converted for use as a small dwelling.

In addition to the hotel and cottages, a store and a dwelling were part of the

9. Major Bibliographical References

Survey No. SM 465

Rex Adams, Personal Interview, December 1994

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property 1.410 acres

Quadrangle name St. Mary's City

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

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. Mfary's County Planning & Zoning date December 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

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

PS-2746

louvered shutters. A wood deck extends west of the addition. The second floor of the house is pierced by three six-over-six sash windows with narrow, molded surrounds and louvered shutters. The northern two bays of the house are capped by the gable end of the main block. This gable is finished with molded cornice returns. A louvered vent pierces the eave.

The north elevation of the modern one-story addition is pierced by a four-light-over-three-panel door. The main block is pierced by two six-over-six sash windows with louvered shutters. A small shed roof addition projects from house, housing the furnace. The second floor is pierced by two six-over-six sash windows with louvered shutters. An exterior cinderblock chimney stands against the wall of this elevation.

The interior of the main block originally consisted of a side hall, double pile plan. The wall separating the two parlors on the north side of the house has been removed to create one large room. The windows in this room are surrounded by an interior bead and an exterior cyma curve. The open string hall stair is paneled and finished with a turned newell post, turned balusters, and scroll sawn brackets. A four-panel door opens to a closet underneath the stair revealing circular sawn lumber and mature machine cut nails. This door, and all original doors in the house, are hung on decorative metal hinges. At the west end of the hall, a four-panel door opens to a bathroom added in the late 1940s. The ell consists of one room on the first floor and one room on the second floor. Three bedrooms and one bathroom are located on the second floor. The original plaster walls remain in place on the second floor. Four-panel doors with a beveled interior surround open off of the hall into the bedrooms.

Three outbuildings stand on the property. A cinderblock garage with an asphalt shingle roof is located closest to the house. To the west stands a small shed roof chicken house sheathed with vinyl siding and roofed with asphalt shingles. The four-panel door is flanked on either side by an eight-light casement window. North of the chicken house is a gable roof garden shed sheathed with artificial siding and roofed with asphalt shingles.

Adams complex. The dwelling, described as "the Home House" in the inventory, consisted of four bedrooms, a parlor, dining room, and kitchen. This structure is probably the Thomas B. Adams House, later referred to as "Mother's Cottage" in the land records.

The hotel season began in June and ended on September 30th. The hotel accomodated 75 to 100 guests, most of whom were visitors from the Washington area. A dance pavilion and bowling alley were also included on the Hotel grounds. In the evening, guests would dance to a violin, piano, and drum trio from Alexandria. Often, local residents came to the hotel to watch the evening dances. During the day, guests entertained themselves boating, fishing, swimming, and crabbing. Visitors could lounge in the summer houses and on the pier located on the hotel property along the St. George's Creek shore. For boarders' convenience, a steamboat wharf extended from the Adams property about 100 feet into the Potomac River. Both day and night steamers provided transportation for hotel guests.

While the hotel was generally well received by Islanders, some Methodist residents objected to the existence of the hotel bar room. As a result, the Adams brothers had an Episcopal chapel built for their Protestant guests. In 1892, the Adams brothers transfered a one acre parcel to the Vestry of William and Mary Parish. The chapel stood until the 1940s when it was deconstructed and moved to Charles County.

Over time, the Potomac River encroached upon the Thomas B. Adams house. Around 1901 it became necessary to move the structure which had been located about 400 feet west of the present sea wall. Rex Adams recalls the move which was accomplished by Celethial Potter and his horse Nellie. For many years after the river had overtaken the house lot, the artesian well that served the home continued to bubble up fresh water into the Potomac. Watermen who knew where the well had been located could actually dip buckets down into the well and pull the cool drinking water to the surface.

By the 1930s, the hotel was no longer active and it was demolished. According to local tradition, some of the lumber from the Hotel was used in the construction of nearby Oakwood Lodge. Only the Thomas B. Adams House and the Edward T. Adams House now stand on the property that originally comprised the grounds of the Potomac Hotel.

SM-465, Thomas B. Adams House
St. Mary's County
8.1 Significance

Chain of Title

TO: David Wesley Morgan and Regina Morgan
FROM: E. Ross Adams and Virginia K. Adams
RECORD: St. Mary's County Land Records, Liber MRF 142, folio 149.
DATE: June 6, 1968.
NOTES: Transfer of 1.410 acres being part of CBG 18/198.

TO: E. Ross Adams and Virgnia K. Adams
FROM: C. Reginald Adams and Celestine A. Adams
RECORD: St. Mary's County Land Records, Liber CBG 18, folio 198.
DATE: April 2, 1946.
NOTES: Transfer of Tract 1 "...beginning at the southwest corner of the building "Mother's Cottage..." being part of "Part of Saint George's Island" or "Fairview" or the "Adams Brothers Property" including the "Edgar Adams Lot," the Potomac Hotel, storehouse lands, buildings, cottages, etc., being part of CBG 18/197.

TO: C. Reginald Adams and Celestine A. Adams
FROM: William O. E. Sterling
RECORD: St. Mary's County Land Record, Liber CBG 18, folio 197.
DATE: April 2, 1946.
NOTES: Transfer of two tracts, tract one being CBG 18/196.

TO: William O. E. Sterling
FROM: C. Reginald Adams and Celestine A. Adams, E. Ross Adams and Virginia K. Adams
RECORD: St. Mary's County Land Record, Liber CBG 18, folio 196.
DATE: April 2, 1946.
NOTES: Transfer of property in order to partition and divide land. Transfer of two tracts, tract 1 being the same as JMM 3/180 excepting those lots that have been conveyed out.

TO: C. Reginald Adams and E. Rosa Adams
FROM: Flora Elizabeth Sanford and Herman H. Sanford, Ida Louise Adams, Ida I. Adams.
RECORD: St. Mary's County Land Records, Liber JMM 3, folio 180.
DATE: July 18, 1925.
NOTES: Transfer of 61 acres more or less originally but "in consequence of the rapid washing away of the same is assessed as 36.5 acres..." The grantors are heirs of Edward T. Adams to whom Benjamin Adams devised his interest in the property.

SM-465, Thomas B. Adams House
St. Mary's County
8.2 Significance

TO: Benjamin F. Adams and Edward T. Adams
FROM: James B. Adams and Sarah A. Adams, Lena E. Springer and Lewis R. Springer, Anita Guyther, William R. Adams and Jennie S. Adams, Maud L. Adams, Annie E. Foxwell and Charles R. Foxwell, Charles J. Foxwell, Marie B. Guyther, Mary C. Guyther, Margaret M. Doulan and Thomas P. Doulan, Miriam L. Howe and Thomas Howe, Thomas E. Adams and Mary L. Adams, William B. Adams and Minnie M. Adams being heirs at law of Adams Brothers.
RECORD: St. Mary's County Land Records, Liber EBA 10, folio 227.
DATE: April 26, 1912.
NOTES: Transfer of above being about 40 acres and not including the Edgar Adams lot. Price: $857.14

TO: Edward T. Adams
FROM: Benjamin F. Adams
RECORD: St. Mary's County Testamentary Records, Liber BC 1, folio 306.
DATE: December 11, 1923.
NOTES: Transfer of all real estate.

TO: Edward T. Adams, Benjamin F. Adams, Thomas W. Adams
FROM: Carrie V. Adams
RECORD: St. Mary's County Land Records, Liber JFF 13, folio 549.
DATE: January 13, 1893.
NOTES: Transfer of a 1/4 interest, being her dower interest, in "Part of St. George's Island" being 74 acres more or less, the same as that sold as the result of a judgement in equity case No. 733

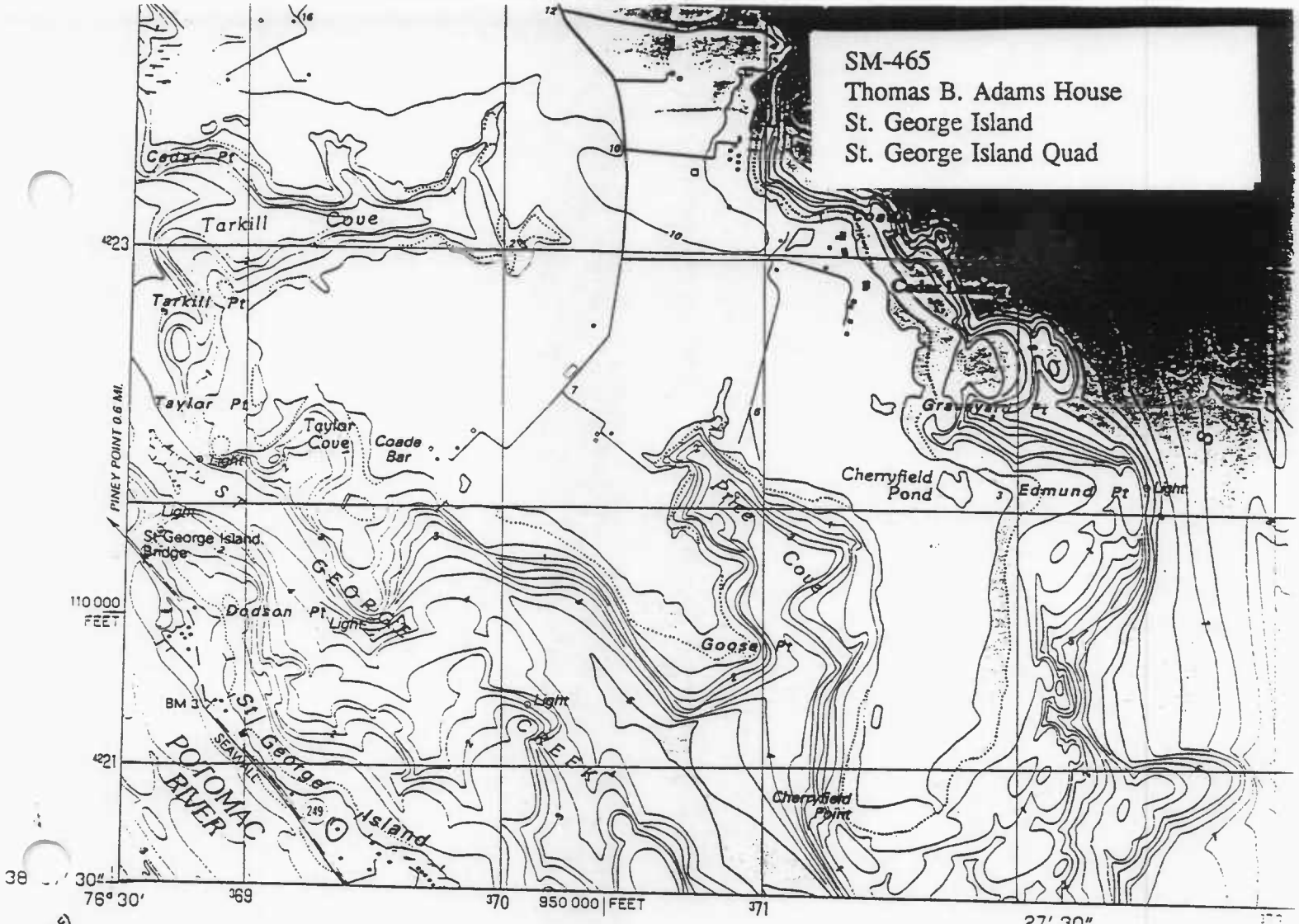
TO: Benjamin F. Adams
FROM: Thomas W. Adams and Edward T. Adams
RECORD: St. Mary's County Land Records, Liber JFF 13, flio 126.
DATE: December 17, 1891.
NOTES: Transfer of 1/3 interest in "Part of St. George's Island" including all the buildings, Hotel, store, and dwelling thereon being 74 acres more or less.
Price: $2700

TO: Thomas W. Adams and Edward T. Adams
FROM: Benjamin F. Adams, Trustee
RECORD: St. Mary's County Land Records, Liber JFF 13, folio 125.
DATE: December 17, 1891.
NOTES: Transfer of "Part of St. George's Island" as result of judgement in case B.F.Adams, Thomas W. Adams, Edward T. Adams vs. Carrie V. Adams et al. Purchased for $8000. Prior to this deed Robert J. Adams died intestate in 1891. The inventory (JTMR-PTB 1/162) for Adams lists the hotel as having 37 numbered rooms

most of which were furnished with two single beds and a table.

TO: Robert J. Adams, Edward T. Adams, Benjamin F. Adams, Thomas W. Adams
FROM: Thomas B. Adams and Elizabeth B. Adams
RECORD: St. Mary's County Land Records, Liber JFF 7, folio 395.
DATE: September 11, 1884.
NOTES: Transfer of "Part of St. George's Island" or "Fairview" being 100 acres more or less including the property known as the Potomac Hotel now occupied by the said R. J. Adams, Benjamin F. Adams, Thomas W. Adams, and Edward T. Adams also all the title to a small tract of land which our son Edgar Adams died seized and possessed being 5 acres adjoining the above described land. This tract "embraces all the land which we now possess." Price: $3000

TO: Thomas B. Adams
FROM: Charles C. Lancaster, agent of the corporation of the Roman Catholic clergyman of Maryland.
RECORD: St. Mary's County Land Records, Liber JTB 2, folio 251.
DATE: December 13, 1855.
NOTES: Transfer of a part of a larger tract commonly called "St. George's Island" being 100 acres more or less. Price: $1413.72



(KINSALE) 5860 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
There may be private inholdings within the boundaries of the National or State reservations shown on this map
Fine red dashed lines indicate selected fence and field lines where generally visible on aerial photographs. This information is unchecked

1
1000 0 1000
1
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MARYLAND
QUADRANGLE LOCATION

BAT

MN
GN
10°
178 MILS
0°53'
16 MILS

UTM GRID AND 1987 MAGNETIC
DECLINATION AT CENTER OF
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DECLINATION AT CENTER OF

Route State Rou

ST. MARYS CITY, MD.

38076-B4-TB-024

1987

DMA 5760 III NW-SERIES V833

Polyconic projection. 10,000-foot grid ticks based on Maryland coordinate system
1000-meter Universal Transverse Mercator grid ticks, zone 18, shown in blue
1927 North American Datum
To place on the predicted North American Datum 1983 move the projection lines 9 meters south and

UTM GRID AND 1985 MAGNETIC NORTH DECLINATION AT CENTER OF SHEET

Revisions shown in purple and woodland compiled by the

SM-165

Thomas [illegible]

St. Mary's County

E Hughes

12/94

MD [illegible]

E [illegible]

[illegible]

SM-465

Thomas E Adams House

St Mary's [illegible]

E. Hughes

12/94

MD [illegible]

E Elevation

2/3

SH-465

Thomas & [illegible] House

St. Mary's County

E Hughes

12/94

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3/3