Capsule Summary
SM-468
Howard J. Chesser House
St. George Island
Private 1916; circa 1920

The Howard J. Chesser House is significant as a well-preserved example of a modest, late Victorian waterman's home on St. George Island. The house is traditional in form, consisting of a center hall, single pile plan. The shingled cross gable and bracketed cornice returns are decorative details that survive intact.

In 1916 Howard J. Chesser purchased this lot, originally consisting of 1 7/100s acres, from Tyler D. Chesser. Here, he funded construction of a small house, consisting of one room and a hall on the first floor and two bedrooms on the second floor. A detached kitchen was also built on the property at this time.

Chesser enlarged the house in the 1920s, adding two rooms to both the first and second floors at the south end of the house. Around the same time, a hyphen connecting the kitchen to the main block of the house was constructed. The house remained in the Chesser family until 1977.

Howard Chesser was a buy boat captain. He bought seafood, especially oysters, from local watermen and transported it to markets in both Maryland and Virginia. His boats were the "M. J. Daugherty" and the "J. S. Smith," known by many simply as "Joe Smith." Mr. Chesser anchored his boats in St. George's Creek within view of his house.

SM-468, Howard J. Chesser 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:	Architecture

Resource Type

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

Survey No. SM 468

MARYLAND INVENTORY OF HISTORIC PROPERTIES

Magi No.

DOE __yes __no

Maryland Historical Trust State Historic Sites Inventory Form

1. Name (indicate preferred name)

historic

and/or common Howard J. Chesser 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street & number Route 249 ___ not for publication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 Richard F. and Isabella J. McCracken

street & number 244 Piney Point Road telephone no.: (301) 994 2162

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 MRB 479

street & number folio 488

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 468

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.

Contributing Resource Count: 1

The Howard J. Chesser House is located on the east side of Route 249 on St. George Island in St. Mary's County, Maryland. Two modern outbuildings stand on the east side of the house. The frame house consists of a two-story, five-bay main block with a one-story kitchen now attached by an enclosed hyphen on the east elevation. The house faces west with the roof on a north/south axis.

Built in two stages, the earliest section of the Chesser House is comprised of the two northern bays which date to 1916. The three southern bays date to the 1920s. The Chesser House has a brick pier foundation that has been infilled with cinderblocks. The exterior, originally sheathed with weatherboards, has recently been covered with vinyl siding. The roof is covered with asphalt shingles.

The west (main) elevation consists of a central, partially glazed entrance door on the first floor flanked on both the north and south by a pair of two-over-two sash windows with wide, plain surrounds. A porch supported by Doric columns extends across the full width of the first floor. The porch, which retains the wood floor and square balusters, has been enclosed with glass. The second floor is pierced by five six-over-six sash windows with louvered shutters. A cross gable breaks the roofline. The gable is sheathed with saw-tooth and square butt shingles and pierced by a diamond pane window.

The north elevation of the main block is a blind gable end finished with cornice returns. The returns are trimmed with decorative brackets. An interior brick chimney pierces the roof ridgeline at this north end of the house. To the east extends a hyphen that provides access between the main block and the one-story kitchen wing. The hyphen has a seamed metal roof and is pierced by a six-over-six sash window. The kitchen, which has a gable roof oriented on an east/west axis, is pierced by a modern, three-sided, bay window. This window replaced two small windows on the north elevation. A small, shed roof addition extends to the east of the kitchen.

The east elevation of the main block is pierced by two six-over-six sash windows to the north of the hyphen and by a door to the south of the hypen. The door provides access between the main block and a porch attached to the south side of the kitchen. The second floor of the main block is pierced by five six-over-six sash windows. The gable end of the kitchen is blind and finished with cornice returns. A cinderblock chimney stands against the exterior of the wing. An interior brick chimney pierces the roof ridgeline of the wing at the east end.

The south elevation of the kitchen is pierced by a modern sliding glass door.

8. Significance

Survey No. SM 468

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	_X_ architecture	___ education	___ military	___ social/ humanitarian
___ 1700–1799	___ art	___ engineering	___ music	___ theater
___ 1800–1899	___ commerce	___ exploration/settlement	___ philosophy	___ transportation
_X_ 1900–	___ communications	___ industry	___ politics/government	___ other (specify)
		___ invention		

Specific dates 1916 **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.

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9. Major Bibliographical References

Survey No. SM 468

Chesser, Wendell, Personal Interview, January 1995

Adams, Gayle. Who's Who of St. George Island, Vol. 1 Piney Point: h.p., 1991

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property .957 Acres

Quadrangle name St George Island

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. Mary'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

The door opens onto a side porch that extends the full width of the kitchen and the hyphen. A car port extends south of the porch towards the edge of the driveway. The hyphen is pierced by a two-over-two sash window. The south gable end of the main block is identical to the north end.

The interior of the main block originally consisted of a center hall, single-pile plan. Heart pine floors are exposed throughout the house. The north parlor is accessible through a pair of French doors. The original window and door moldings with bull's eye corner blocks remain in place here. The partition wall between the hall and the south parlor has been removed. The narrow stair to the second floor is located in the southeast corner of the south parlor. Only four steps of the open string stair are visible. The remainder of the stair is enclosed.

The second floor consists of a small hall, two bedrooms, and a bathroom. The bathroom was originally a third bedroom. Five-panel doors open to these second floor rooms.

A five-panel door opens between the first floor of the main block and the hyphen. The hyphen is a narrow hall that provides access to the one-room kitchen.

Two modern outbuildings are located on the east side of the house. Both are one-story, gable-roofed buildings sheathed with artificial siding.

SM-468, Howard J. Chesser House
St. Mary's County
8.1 Significance

Chain of Title

TO: Richard F. McCracken and Isabella J. McCracken
FROM: Richard E. Wilson and Eliot Girsang
RECORD: St. Mary's County Land Record, Liber MRB 479, folio 488.
DATE: June 26, 1989.
NOTES: Transfer of .957 acres.

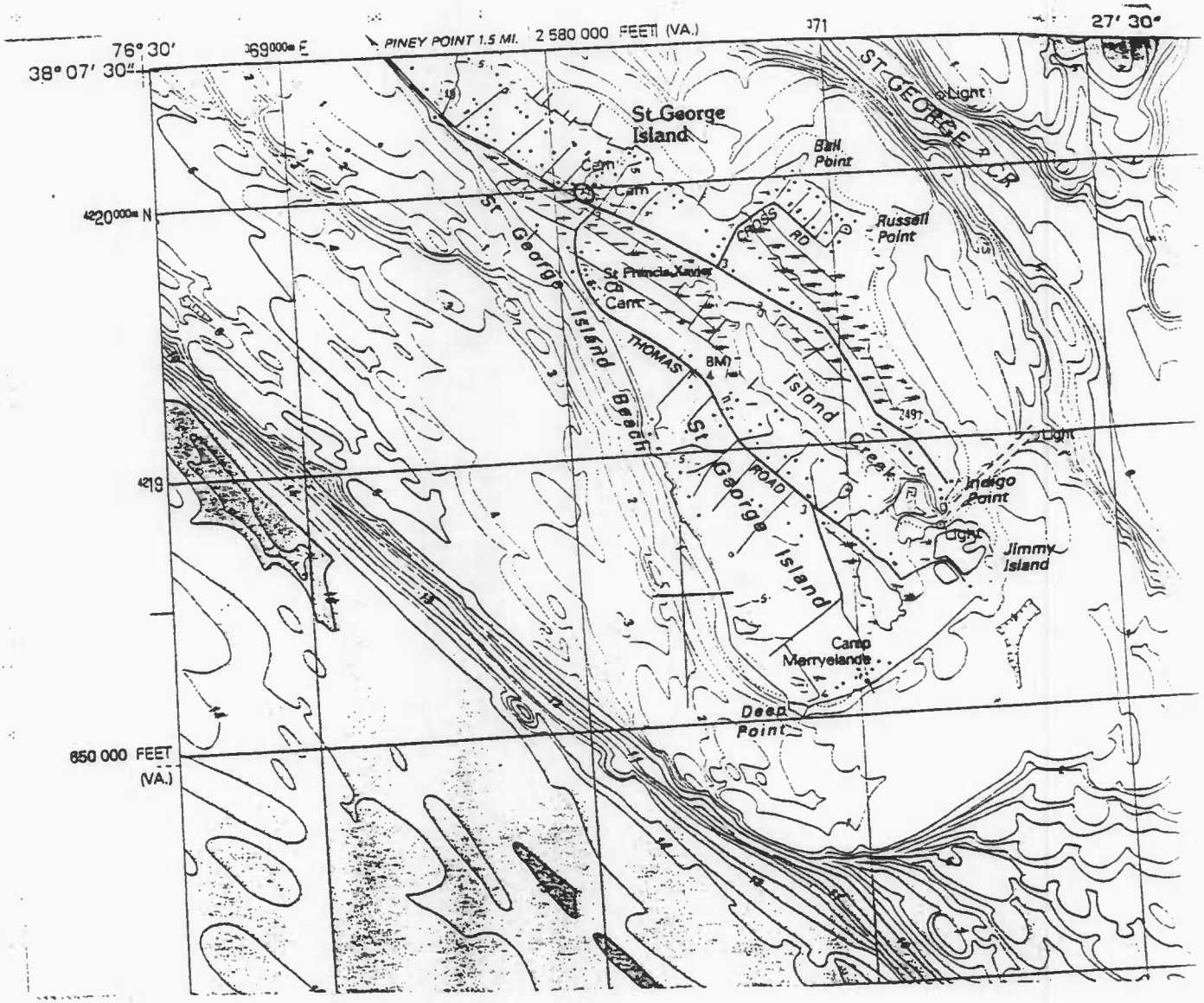
TO: Richard E. Wilson and Eliot Girsang
FROM: Robert A. Price
RECORD: St. Mary's County Land Record, Liber MRB 382, folio 445.
DATE: October 31, 1987.
NOTES: Transfer of .957 acres.

TO: Robert A. Price
FROM: Cornice O. Tinsley and Anna E. Tinsley, by Cornice O. Tinsley her attorney in fact.
RECORD: St. Mary's County Land Record, Liber MRB 163, folio 170.
DATE: November 14, 1983.
NOTES: Transfer of .957 acres.

TO: Cornice O. Tinsley and Anna E. Tinsley
FROM: Virnona E. Chesser, widow.
RECORD: St. Mary's County Land Record, Liber MRB 282, folio 173.
DATE: October 19, 1977.
NOTES: Transfer of 1 7/100 acres.

TO: Howard J. and Verona E. Chesser
FROM: Tyler D. Chesser, unmarried.
RECORD: St. Mary's County Land Record, Liber EBA 15, folio 108.
DATE: May 10, 1916.
NOTES: Transfer of 1 7/100 acres.

SM-468
Howard J. Chesser House
St. George Island
St. George Island Quad



ST. GEORGE ISLAND, MD.–VA.

38076-A4-TB-024

1987

DMA 5760 III SW–SERIES V833

SM-468

Howard J. Chesser House

St Mary's County, MD

E. Hughes

12/94

MD SHPO

SM Elevation

1/2

SM-466

Howard J. Chesser House

St Mary's County, MD

E. Hughes

12/94

MD SHPO

NE Elevation

2/2