K-268

Belle View
Near Rock Hall
c. 1852

Belle View is a closely dated, mid-19th century, frame, vernacular farmhouse. Its 20th century remodeling, however, has greatly diminished what architectural significance it may have had. Perhaps of greater interest is the history of the land on which it stands.

The farm occupies a small section of the 1658 grant of 1500 acres to John Langford, one of the closest allies of Cecilius Calvert. Having immigrated originally to Kent Island from Kent, England in 1637, Langford was most likely granted this tract as a reward for his support of the Calverts evidenced in a pamphlet he authored (1655) in their defense against their Puritan critics. Earlier he had served in the Assembly in the year of his immigration, as well as in 1641-42. Appointed Surveyor General in the latter year, Langford served in that capacity until 1648.

Langford's Neck, as the tract was called, is one of the earliest grants in Kent County.[1] Greys Inn Creek, on its south side bears the name of Langford's alma mater in England, while the large creek to the north shares his surname. Langford probably died in England after 1666, the year in which the land was sold.[2]

In the early 18th century, the majority of Langford's Neck was acquired by John Smithers. Smithers had his acquisition resurveyed in 1735 under the same name but by this time the total acreage had decreased by almost 500 acres to 1040.[3] Smithers appears to have lived on the southern

part of the property which was sold later in the century to the Greshams. The northern section on which Belle View is situated was called "Cooks," a name which appears to be the name of an owner or occupant of the land.

Belle View's origins begin with the purchase of 68 acres at the head of Spring Cove by Augusta Browne, wife of James Browne.[4] By 1852, the Browns had built the present house, for in the Tax Assessment of that year the buildings were referred to as "new Frame House & other Buildings in good repair, formerly to John Hynson and E. Curry."[5]

When new, the house was a very late example of Federal architecture. At a time when other dwellings were being decorated with corner pilasters, brackets and other Greek Revival and Italianate details, Belle View was devoid of ornamentation. Its plan was similar to Melfield or Plaindealing in the 2nd District, with side hall and double parlors in the tall, two-story section and two rooms adjoining the hall in a one-and-a-half-story wing.

The farm remained in the possession of Augusta Browne until her death in 1876. She left it to her niece, Charlotte Augusta Strong (nee Wickes).[6] The following year it was shown in the Atlas as the property of Strong's husband, T. R. Strong.

In 1918, the Strong heirs sold Belle View to Herman Copeland of Alleghany County.[7] During the long ownership of the Brownes and Strongs the property grew in acreage from 68 to 176 1/2. From 1918 to 1995 there have been six owners.

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1. Patents, Lib. Q, fol. 328, 1658.
2. Pappenfuss, p. 516.
3. Patented Certificates, No. 125, Debt Books, 1733-1769.
4. Land Records, Lib. JFG 11, fol. 753.
5. Kent County Tax Assessment, 1st District, 1852.
6. Wills, Lib. EC 1, fol. 214.
7. Land Records, Lib. APR 3, fol. 492.

Survey No. K-268

Magi No.

DOE ___yes ___no

MARYLAND INVENTORY OF HISTORIC PROPERTIES

Maryland Historical Trust State Historic Sites Inventory Form

1. Name (indicate preferred name)

historic Langford's Neck; Cook's

and/or common Belle View

2. Location

street & number 4545 Piney Neck Road ___ not for publication

city, town Rock Hall ___ vicinity of congressional district 1st

state Maryland county Kent

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	___ yes: restricted	___ government	___ scientific
	___ being considered	___ yes: unrestricted	___ industrial	___ transportation
	X not applicable	X no	___ military	X other: hunting Lodge

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

name P. & P. Mg.,Inc., c/o Francis J. Hickman

street & number 10057 Perkins Hill Rd. telephone no.: 410-778-0217

city, town Chestertown state and zip code Maryland 21620

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Kent County Courthouse liber LHP 143

street & number Cross Street folio 227

city, town Chestertown state Maryland

6. Representation in Existing Historical Surveys

title Kent County Windshield Survey

date 1968 ___ federal X state ___ county ___ local

depository for survey records Maryland Historical Trust

city, town Crownsville state Maryland

7. Description

Survey No. K-268

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

At the southern end of Piney Neck east of Rock Hall, are four farms of various sizes. "Belle View" is the northernmost of the four and contains two houses, one, a Twentieth Century structure of no architectural merit and the other a mid 19th Century frame structure which was altered and allowed to deteriorate in the 20th Century.

"Belle View" is a two-part frame dwelling composed of a two-bay, 1½ story service wing, measuring 27'-0" x 29'-9" and a three bay two story section measuring 29'-0" x 32'-3". Both sections appear to have been constructed at the same time. It's present appearance is un-distinguished, the walls being covered with asbestos siding and the roof with asphalt shingle. The 6/6 sash windows are devoid of shutters. A two-part leanto porch protects the entrance to each section on the west side. A full length hip roof porch stretches across the east facade of the taller section. There is a single chimney built on the exterior of the south gable and an interior chimney within the north gable kitchen wing.

In the Twentieth Century, a leanto was added to the north gable of the taller section in front of the service wing. Its current floor plan consists of two rooms in the service wing, the northernmost room having an enclosed stair adjacent the fireplace. Access to the taller section is gained through the 20th Century leanto, which houses half of the kitchen. The other half is within the main block of the house, but there is no seperation. The wall was removed to the second story. The rest of the main block is one large room with fireplace centered on the gable. A stair ascents from the center of the block in a westerly direction.

A basement is located beneath the main block, but it is an after-thought and is about three or four feet within the boundation perimeter.

Originally, the house had a standard plan with side stair hall and two parlors to south. The stair probably ascended in the opposite direction from its current configuration. There would have been a door between the stairhall and kitchen wing, much the same as Melfield, east of Chestertown. The foundations remaining in the cellar/crawl space exist for two interior chimneys centered on the gable wall of the two south parlors. Evidence of their existance remains on the second floor.

The kitchen or service wing is relatively un-altered, although all the window trim and most of the door trim was replaced in the 20th Century remodeling.

The house is significant only because it is a good 'study' building as it has been dated by the 1852 Tax Assessment as a "New Frame House...".

I

8. Significance

Survey No. K-268

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

Specific dates btn 1848-1852 **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.

"Belle View" is a closely dated mid 19th Century frame vernacular farm house. It's 20th Century remodeling has greatly diminished its architectural significance. The farm occupies a small section of the 1658 grant of 1500 acres to John Langford, one of the closest allies of Cecilius Calvert.

"Langford's Neck" is one of the earliest land grants in Kent County off of Kent Island. A contemporary grant is Rich Neck Manor, now in Talbot County, but at the time in Kent County. John Langford, for whom the land was patented, immigrated from Kent, England in 1637/38 to Kent Island. He had been educated at Gray's Inn and is probably responsible for naming the creek on the south side of his grant. His name was given the large creek to the north of his property. Langford served in the assembly in the year of his immigration as well as 1641/42. He was appointed surveyor general in the latter year and served until 1648. In 1655 he wrote a pamphlet in defience of the proprietor against Calvert's puritain critics. Puppenfuss attributed "Langford's Neck" as a reward for writing the pamphlet. Langford probably died in England after 1666, the year the land was sold.

The majority of Langford's Neck was acquired by John Smithers in the early 18th Century. Smithers had his acquisition re-surveyed in 1735 under the same name, but reduced to 1040 acres. Smithers appears to have lived on the southern part of the property which was sold later in the cenutry to the Grishams. The northern section on which Belle Aire is situated was called "Cooks" but that name appears to be the name of an owner or occupant of the land.

The architectural interest in the farm begins when Augusta Browne, wife of James Browne purchase 68 acres from Benedict and Eliza Brevitt at the head of Spring Cove, formerly the estate of Charlotte Hynson. By 1852, the Browns had built the present house for in the Tax Assessment of that year the buildings were referred to as "New Frame House and other Buildings in good repair, formerly to John Hynson and E. Curry....".

The farm remained in the possession of Augusta Browne until her death in 1876. She left it to her niece Charlotte Augusta Strong (nee Wickes). The following year it was shown on the Atlas as the property of Mrs. Strong's husband, T.R. Strong.

In 1918 the Strong heirs sold "Belle View" to Herman Copeland of Alleghany Co., MD. During the long ownership of the Brownes and Strongs the property grew from 68 acres to 176½ acres. From 1918 until 1995 there have been six owners.

Dr. & Mrs. Arthur Mitten were responsible for constructing the cottage south of the house during their ownership between 1946 and 1969.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Survey No. K-268

Kent County Land Records, Maryland State Archives and Kent County Courthouse

Puppenfuss, E., Maryland Legislators

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 Michael Bourne

organization Historical Society of Kent County **date** 1995

street & number P.O. Box 665 **telephone** 410-778-3499

city or town Chestertown **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

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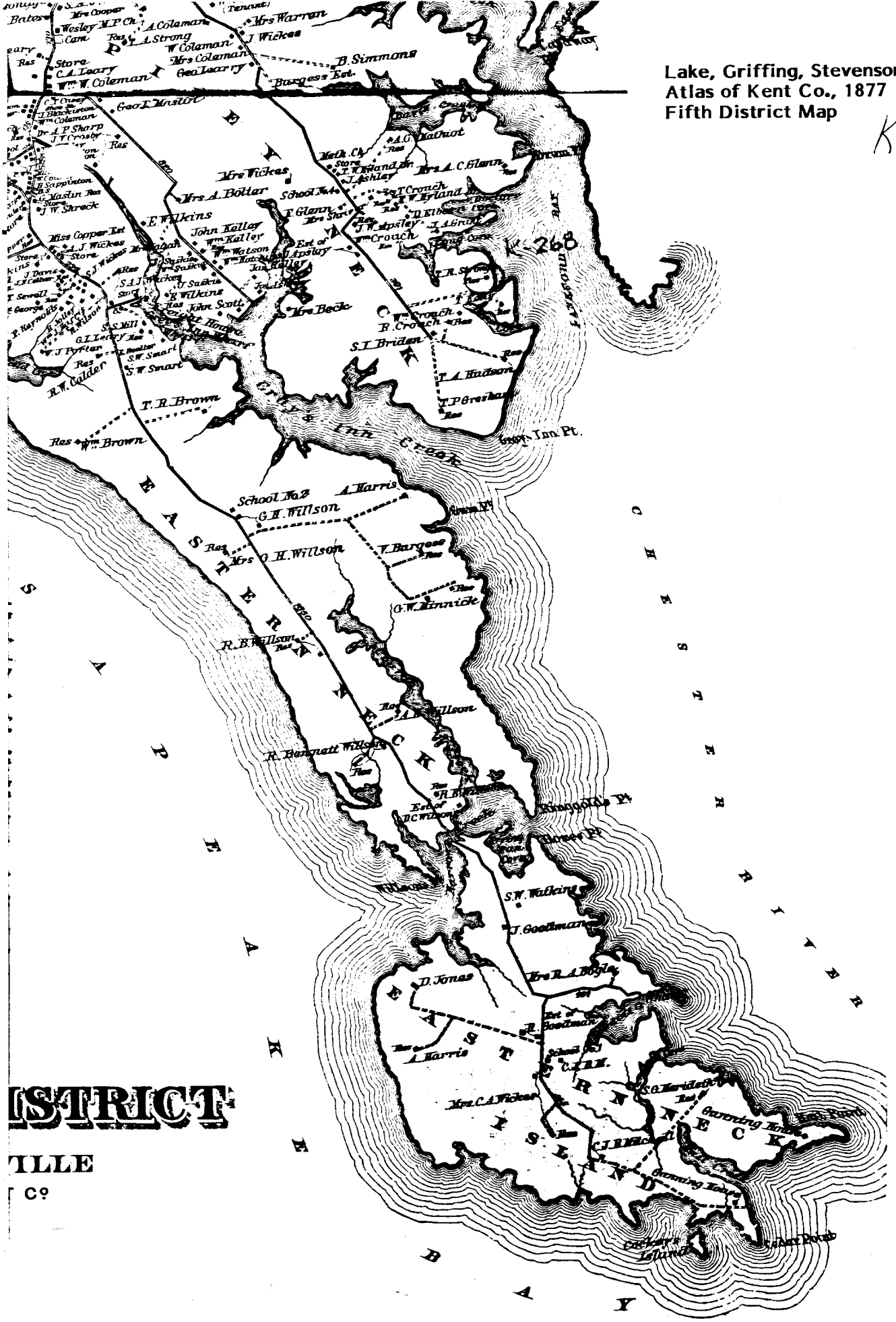
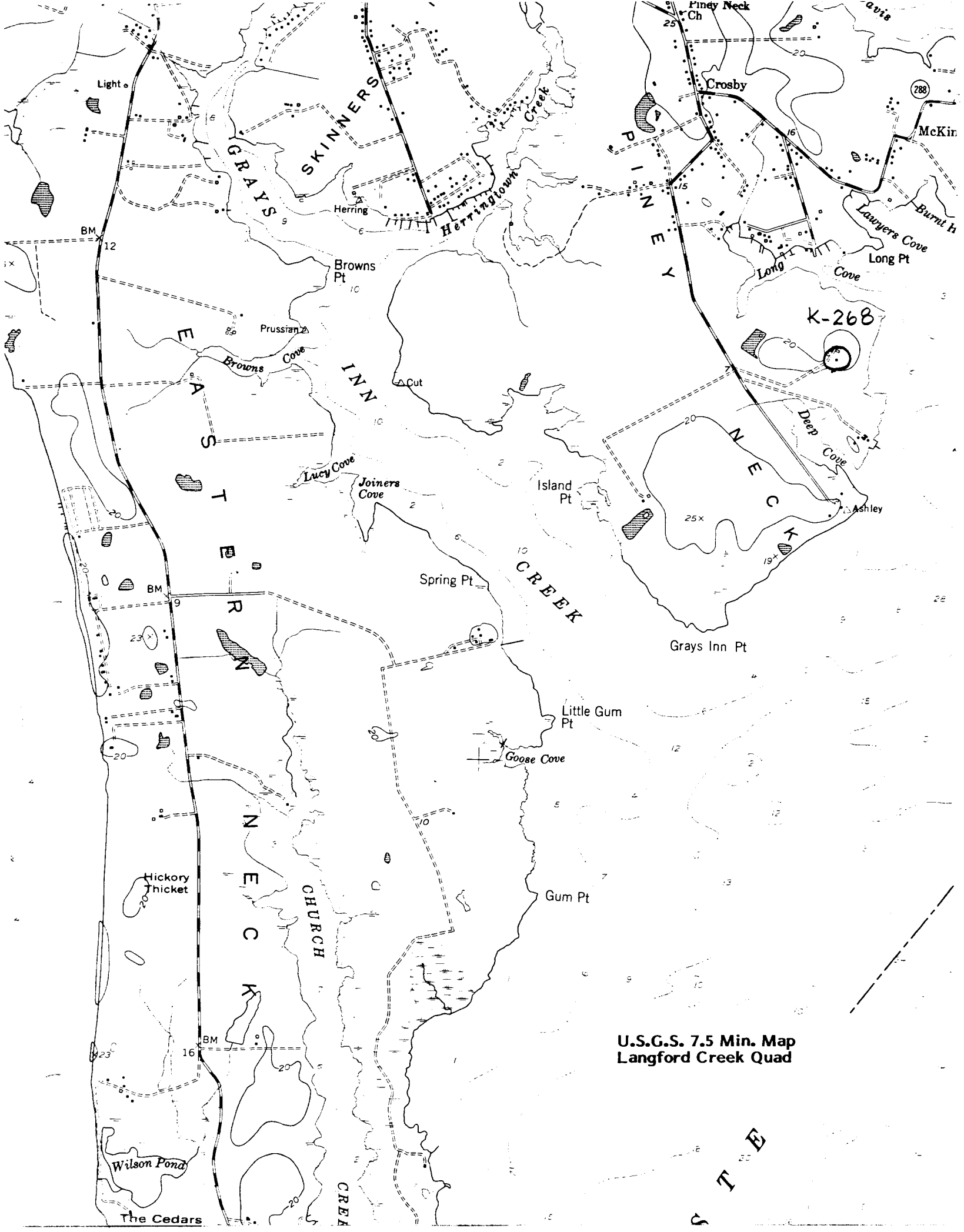
100 COMMUNITY PLACE
CROWNSVILLE, MD 21032-2023
514-7600

PS-2746

Lake, Griffing, Stevenson
Atlas of Kent Co., 1877
Fifth District Map

K-268





U.S.G.S. 7.5 Min. Map
Langford Creek Quad

Belle View K-268

East

M. Bourne

Winter 1996

1/2

Belle View K-268

N.W.

M. Bourne

Winter 1996

2/2