

**CAPSULE SUMMARY**

**CT-1284**

**Broomes Island Post Office**

**8320 Broomes Island Road**

**Broomes Island, Calvert County**

**1947**

**Private**

The Broomes Island Post Office, situated at the north corner of the intersection of Broomes Island Road and Church Road, is an excellent example of a 20th-century rural community post office in Calvert County. When constructed in 1947 by Thawley E. Parks, the original post office was a small one-room building that was subsequently enlarged in 1964 to include office space, a mail sorting/work area, and a small lobby. Elsie Parks served as the Postmaster from 1947 until her retirement in 1972. Parks continues to own the building, which is currently leased by the United States Postal Service and serves the Broomes Island community.

Constructed in 1947, the original one-room building was enlarged by an addition in 1964. Set on a concrete-block pier foundation, the one-story, wood-frame building is clad in asbestos shingles. The foundation has been encased in aluminum sheeting. Two exterior-end concrete-block chimneys rise above the asphalt-shingled, cross-gable roof, which features wide eaves and exposed rafter tails. The original façade faced south, but with the 1964 addition, the façade was re-oriented to the west on Broomes Island Road.

# Maryland Historical Trust

## Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties Form

Inventory No. CT-1284

### 1. Name of Property (indicate preferred name)

historic Broomes Island Post Office

other

### 2. Location

street and number 8320 Broomes Island Road not for publication

city, town Broomes Island vicinity

county Calvert

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

name Elsie L. Parks

street and number 8312 Broomes Island Road telephone not available

city, town Broomes Island state MD zip code 20615

### 4. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Calvert County Courthouse tax map and parcel: M38A, P16

city, town Prince Frederic liber ABE folio 768

### 5. Primary Location of Additional Data

- Contributing Resource in National Register District
- Contributing Resource in Local Historic District
- Determined Eligible for the National Register/Maryland Register
- Determined Ineligible for the National Register/Maryland Register
- Recorded by HABS/HAER
- Historic Structure Report or Research Report
- Other

### 6. Classification

Category	Ownership	Current Function	Resource Count	
			Contributing	Noncontributing
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce/trade	1	
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> defense		
<input type="checkbox"/> site		<input type="checkbox"/> domestic		
<input type="checkbox"/> object		<input type="checkbox"/> education		
		<input type="checkbox"/> funerary	1	0
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> government		
		<input type="checkbox"/> health care		
		<input type="checkbox"/> industry		
		<input type="checkbox"/> landscape		
		<input type="checkbox"/> recreation/culture		
		<input type="checkbox"/> religion		
		<input type="checkbox"/> social		
		<input type="checkbox"/> transportation		
		<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress		
		<input type="checkbox"/> unknown		
		<input type="checkbox"/> vacant/not in use		
		<input type="checkbox"/> other:		
			<b>Number of Contributing Resources previously listed in the Inventory</b>	
			0	

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## 7. Description

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Inventory No. CT-1284

### Condition

<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> altered

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Prepare both a one paragraph summary and a comprehensive description of the resource and its various elements as it exists today.

The Broomes Island Post Office is located at 8320 Broomes Island Road in Broomes Island in Calvert County, Maryland. The post office is situated at northwest corner of the intersection of Broomes Island Road and Church Road. Situated on a level, grassy lot, the building is set close to the road with a small paved parking area to the west. Constructed in 1947, the original one-room building was enlarged by an addition in 1964. Set on a concrete-block pier foundation, the one-story, wood-frame building is clad in asbestos shingles. The foundation has been encased in aluminum sheeting. Two exterior-end concrete-block chimneys rise above the asphalt-shingled, cross-gable roof, which features wide eaves and exposed rafter tails. The original façade faced south, but with the 1964 addition, the façade was re-oriented to the west on Broomes Island Road.

### EXTERIOR DESCRIPTION

The original façade or south elevation of the post office is two bays in width. It is pierced by a single-leaf side entry. The four-light, two-panel wood door is framed by a square-edged surround. The wood steps that led to the entry have been removed and replaced by a concrete step. This entry is no longer in use. Adjacent to the entry is a single 2/2 window with a square-edged surround and sill and louvered shutters.

The east elevation is pierced by a 2/2 horizontal sash window, with a narrow wood surround and sill. This window pierces the main block of the post office. The main block also features a concrete-block exterior-end chimney. The one-story, rear addition is pierced by a single-leaf flush door with a narrow wood surround. The second exterior-end chimney also adorns this elevation, on the rear addition. Slightly different than the earlier chimney, this chimney features concrete-block construction with a brick cap and four courses of stretcher-bond brick at the center of the chimney breast.

The main block of the post office is not visible from the north elevation, being entirely obscured by the 1964 addition. This elevation is pierced by a 2/2 horizontal sash window with a narrow wood sill and surround. It is framed by louvered shutters.

The west elevation serves as the current façade of the post office and presents three bays in width. It is pierced by a single-leaf plate glass metal door and two 2/2 horizontal sash windows with narrow wood sills and surrounds. Both windows are further adorned by louvered shutters. Concrete steps and a ramp for the physically disabled lay at the southwest corner of the building.

### INTERIOR DESCRIPTION

The interior of the post office has been drastically altered with the 1964 addition and little original fabric remains. Originally, the post office was a small one-room building that has subsequently been enlarged to include office space, a mail sorting/work area, and a small lobby. In the original building, the floors are covered with wall-to-wall carpeting and the walls and ceilings are clad in wallboard. The only remaining feature in the original one-room post office is the oil burning Sieglermatic stove, which continues to heat the building in the winter. A portion of the original building was partitioned off to accommodate the lobby and metal postage boxes. The lobby features twelve-inch square vinyl floor tiles, simulated wood paneling on the walls, and wallboard covered ceilings. A Formica-clad counter with a metal roll-up door above separates the lobby from the office and workspace to the rear. Like the main block, the office and workspace in the addition are finished with wall-to-wall carpeting and wallboard on the walls and ceilings. A single-leaf Dutch door separates the office from the lobby.

## 8. Significance

Inventory No. CT-1284

Period	Areas of Significance	Check and justify below		
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> health/medicine	<input type="checkbox"/> performing arts
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> invention	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> politics/government
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-1999	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment/ recreation	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 2000-	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> ethnic heritage	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/ settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> social history
	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning		<input type="checkbox"/> maritime industry	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation		<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other:

**Specific dates** 1947 **Architect/Builder** Unknown

**Construction dates** 1947; 1964

Evaluation for:

National Register  Maryland Register  not evaluated

Prepare a one-paragraph summary statement of significance addressing applicable criteria, followed by a narrative discussion of the history of the resource and its context. (For compliance reports, complete evaluation on a DOE Form - see manual.)

The Broomes Island Post Office, situated at the north corner of the intersection of Broomes Island Road and Church Road, is an excellent example of a 20th-century rural community post office in Calvert County. When constructed in 1947 by Thawley E. Parks, the original post office was a small one-room building that was subsequently enlarged in 1964 to include office space, a mail sorting/work area, and a small lobby. Elsie Parks served as the Postmaster from 1947 until her retirement in 1972. Parks continues to own the building, which is currently leased by the United States Postal Service and serves the Broomes Island community.

### HISTORY OF THE POST OFFICE IN CALVERT COUNTY

Perhaps the most socially significant of Calvert County public buildings are the numerous late-19th- and 20th-century rural post offices that are scattered throughout the county, of which the Broomes Island Post Office is an excellent example. Rural and small town post offices were critical communication links between the local community and the outside world, as well as an important federal presence in an area without any other significant government building either on the local, state or federal level. Located at key transportation locations such as river landings or crossroads and frequently operated out of an existing residence or store, the rural post office provided both a practical and social venue for local residents who often had to travel significant distances to retrieve their mail. Furthermore, post offices were often built with private money by individuals with a philanthropic interest, or more frequently, an interest in bringing more people to their store or landing. These individuals or members of their family were generally the postmasters of the post office, a position that was viewed with great respect and affection in the community and in the County in general.

In 1796, just four years after the permanent establishment of a national post office, three post offices were authorized in Calvert County in the communities of Huntingtown, Lower Marlboro and St. Leonard. (1) Few additional post offices were established in the county until the late nineteenth century when post offices began to be established in large numbers all over the county. As the post office was closely tied to transportation routes, this burst of new post office establishment may reflect a significant improvement in transportation land routes following the close of the Civil War. In some cases, these post offices were short lived and subject to the willingness of private citizens to financially subsidize and operate them, such as that at Mill Mount. Other post offices became more or less permanent mail locations and were eventually taken over by the United States Postal Service, such as the Barstow, Chesapeake Beach and Owings post offices.

Unlike mail delivery in urban areas where mail was being handled and delivered to people's doors by federal postal workers by the mid-nineteenth century, rural mail delivery was slower, more expensive, and hardly convenient. Mail delivery was made to area post offices only periodically, and due to the long distances some residents had to travel to get to the post office, trips to the post office were often delayed until they could be combined with other essential errands. (2) Postal service maps from the late 19th century give some idea of where mail was being delivered by the federal government and how frequently. In 1869 and throughout

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the period, mail came into the county from both Washington, D.C. and Baltimore land routes, and the water routes from as far as Philadelphia. The major postal land route, which originated in Washington, D.C. and ran through Dunkirk, Sunderland, Huntingtown, Prince Frederick, Port Republic, and St. Leonard was traveled up to 6 times a week, while secondary routes from these major stops to outlying towns such as Lower Marlboro, Willows, Broomes Island and Olivet were traveled less frequently. (3) The major water route during this period came down the Chesapeake Bay, making stops along the way at wharves and landings such as Plum Point, Governors Run and Drum Point, then proceeded up the Patuxent River where it crossed back and forth between St. Mary's County and Calvert County.

Post offices during the early 20th century were generally contained within general stores. This was a practical arrangement for county residents as well as an economically advantageous one for the proprietor of the general store, as residents could obtain their mail and necessary goods in the same trips. In rarer cases, post offices might be operated out of a private residence. Particularly during the second quarter of the 20th century, however, many freestanding post offices were constructed. The Broomes Island Post Office was one such building. These freestanding buildings were single-story one or two room wood frame structures with gable roofs. Interiors featured a wood counter to separate the customer from the postmaster, wood post office boxes, and shelves lining the walls for packages and supplies. These rural post offices largely fell out of use in the third quarter of the 20th century when the United States Postal Service improved rural free delivery and Calvert County residents could receive their mail in mailboxes on their own property.

### HISTORY OF THE BROOMES ISLAND POST OFFICE

The first Broomes Island Post Office was established by the United States Postal Service on June 29, 1889. (4) At that time, Zacharia Monnett was named the first Postmaster of the Broomes Island Post Office, which was located in Earl Barnes Store (demolished). In the ensuing two decades, the post office and the postmaster changed frequently, with service alternately being operated out of the Barnes Store and the houses of individual postmasters. It is unknown why the continual shift in location and operating instruction occurred so frequently. In 1913, Marion Duke was appointed Postmaster and she returned operation of the postal service to the Barnes Store. At that time, Earl Barnes attended to the mail and Marion Duke attended to the books. In 1918, Barnes was appointed Postmaster and operation continued at his store until 1928, when it was destroyed by fire. William Barnes, Earl Barnes' father, was next appointed Postmaster in 1929 and he operated the postal service from a small building on his son Levi Barnes' property. William Barnes served as Postmaster until 1940, when Levi Barnes was appointed to the position. (5)

In 1947, Elsie Parks was appointed Postmaster. For a short time, she operated the postal service from her house, which is adjacent to the current post office. At that time, her husband, Thawley E. Parks constructed the current Broomes Island Post Office. The post office is owned by Elsie Parks, who leases the building to the United States Postal Service. The Parks purchased the half-acre property on which the house and post office are situated from Garfield F. Horsman on September 30, 1939. In 1964, an addition was constructed to accommodate the growing population and consequent mail service of the Broomes Island community, and the building was reoriented to front on Broomes Island Road. Elsie Parks continued to serve as Postmaster until 1972.

In February 1973, Jean Denton was named Postmaster and, in 1975, the Broomes Island Post Office was upgraded from a Fourth Class Post Office to a Third Class Post Office. By 1978, the small post office was serving nearly 145 families on Broomes Island. Currently, the post office is considered a Level II post office, and Shirley Weems is the Postmaster.

### CHAIN OF TITLE

March 12, 1930: William J. Elliot to Garfield F. Horsman  
Land Records of Calvert County  
Liber AAH 23, Folio 457

# Maryland Historical Trust

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September 30, 1939: Garfield F. Horsman to Elsie L. Parks and Thawley E. Parks  
Land Records of Calvert County  
Liber AAH 43, Folio 258

February 1988: Charlotte Faye Wentz, personal representative of the Estate  
of Thawley E. Parks, to Elsie L. Parks  
Land Records of Calvert County  
Liber ABE 437, Folio 768

### ENDNOTES

1. "Post Offices of Calvert County," Post Offices, Vertical Files, Calvert County Historical Society, Prince Frederick, MD.
2. "History of the United States Postal Service," on the World Wide Web at <http://www.usps.gov/history>.
3. "Post Route Map of the States of Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Delaware and Maryland and the District of Columbia with adjacent parts of New York, Ohio, Virginia and West Virginia," 1869, Geography and Map Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.; "Post Route Map of the States of Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Delaware and Maryland and the District of Columbia with adjacent parts of New York, Ohio, Virginia and West Virginia," May 15, 1879, Geography and Map Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.; and "Post Route Map of the States of Maryland and Delaware and of the District of Columbia Showing Post Offices with the Intermediate Distances on Mail Routes in operation on the 1st of March, 1900," Geography and Map Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.
4. "Post Offices of Calvert County," Post Offices, Vertical Files, Calvert County Historical Society, Prince Frederick, MD.
5. "The Islander," Vol. 1, No. 9, (Broomes Island Civic League, April 1978), p. 3.

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## 9. Major Bibliographical References

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See continuation sheet.

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## 10. Geographical Data

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Acreage of surveyed property 0.82 acresAcreage of historical setting 0.50 acresQuadrangle name Broomes IslandQuadrangle scale 1:24,000

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Verbal boundary description and justification

The Broomes Island Post Office has been associated with Parcle 16, as denoted on Tax Map 38A, since 1947.

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## 11. Form Prepared By

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name/title R. Weidlich and C. Albee, Architectural Historiansorganization E.H.T. Traceries, Inc.date 8/26/02street and number 1121 Fifth Street, N.W.telephone 202/393-1199city or town Washingtonstate DC zip code 20001

The Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties 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  
DHCD/DHCP  
100 Community Place  
Crownsville MD 21032  
410-514-7600

**Maryland Historical Trust**  
**Maryland Inventory of**  
**Historic Properties Form**

Inventory No. CT-1284

Name Broomes Island Post Office

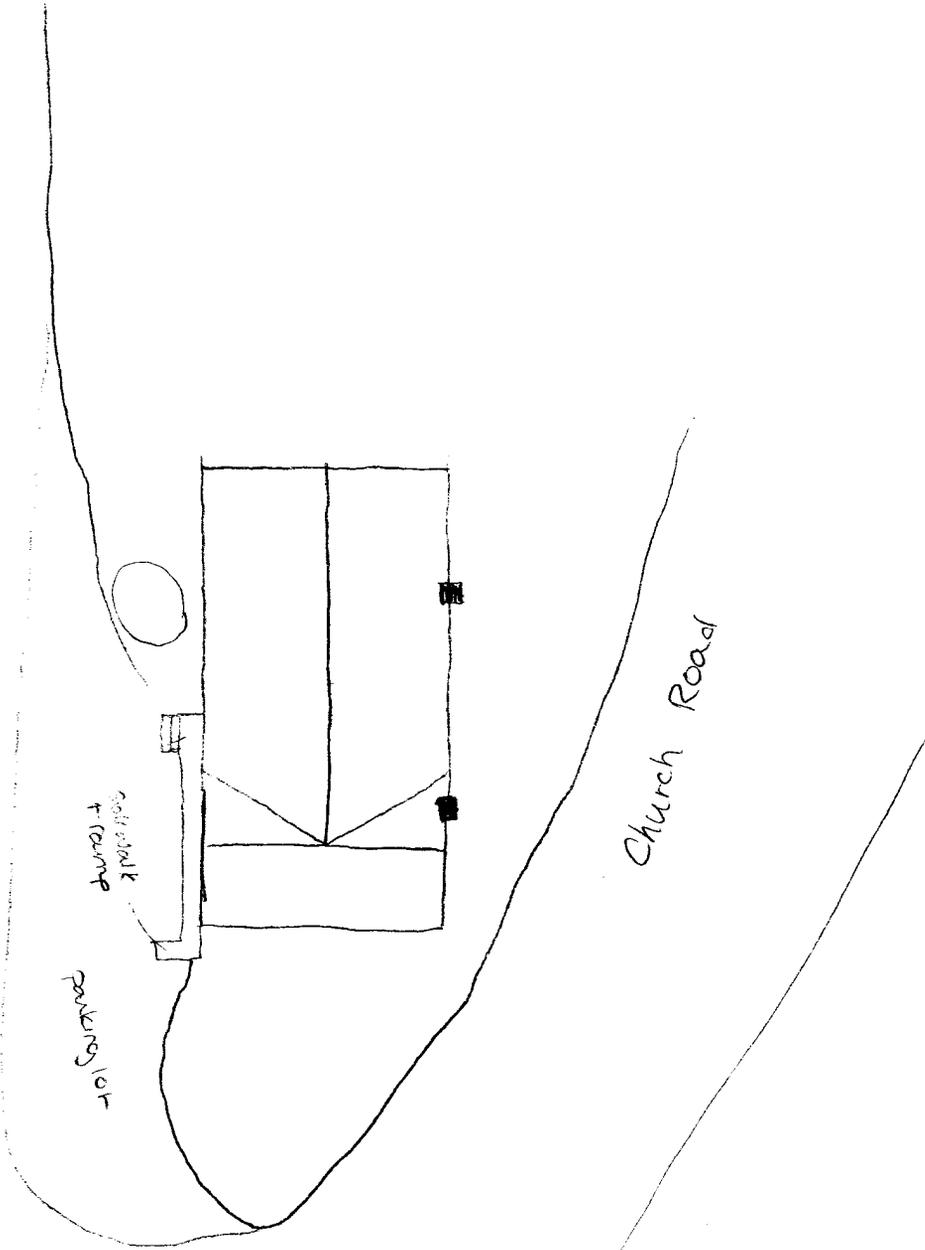
Continuation Sheet

Number   9   Page   1  

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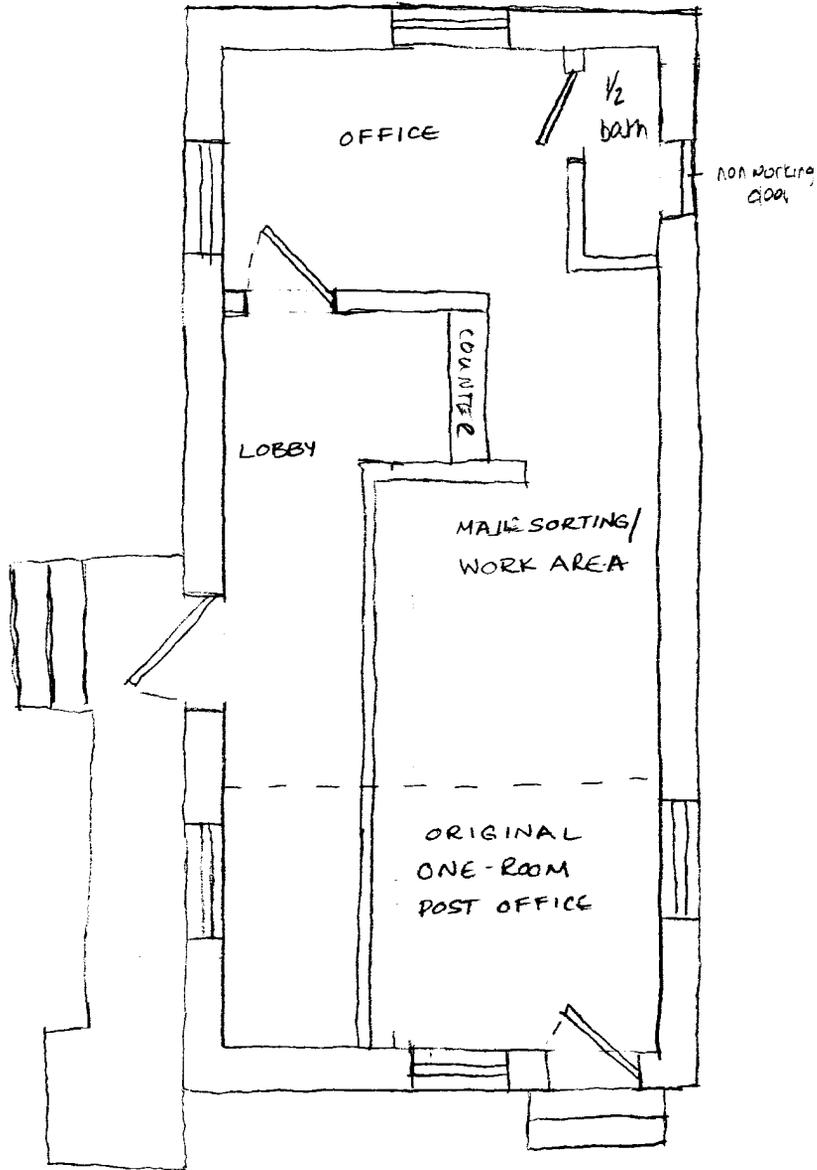
"Post Offices of Calvert County," Post Offices, Vertical Files, Calvert County Historical Society, Prince Frederick, Maryland

Broomes Island Road



Church Road

RESOURCE SKETCH MAP  
CT-1284  
Broomes Island Post  
Office  
8320 Broomes Island Rd  
Broomes Island, Calvert County, MD  
APRIL 2002  
N↑



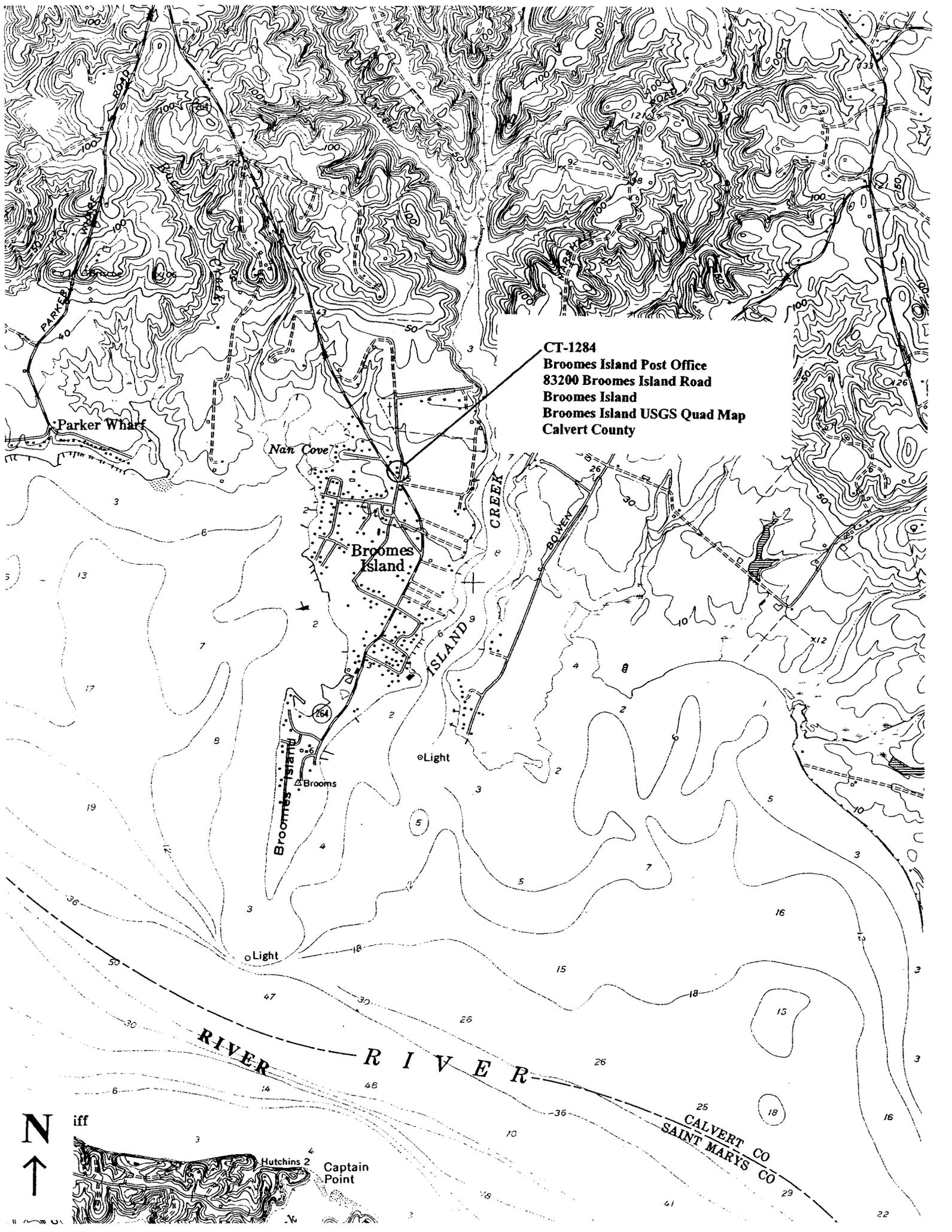
FIRST FLOOR PLAN

NOT DRAWN TO SCALE

CT-1284  
BROOMES ISLAND  
POST OFFICE  
8320 BROOMES  
ISLAND ROAD  
BROOMES ISLAND, CALVERT  
COUNTY, MD

APRIL 2002





CT-1284  
Broomes Island Post Office  
83200 Broomes Island Road  
Broomes Island  
Broomes Island USGS Quad Map  
Calvert County

Parker Wharf

Nan Cove

Broomes Island

CREEK

BOWEN

Light

Broomes Island

Brooms

Light

RIVER RIVER

CALVERT CO  
SAINT MARYS CO



Hutchins 2  
Captain Point



CT-1284

BROOMES ISLAND POST OFFICE  
8320 BROOMES ISLAND ROAD  
CALVERT COUNTY, MD

EHT TRACERIES

APRIL 2002

MARYLAND SHPO

SOUTHEAST ELEVATION, LOOKING NORTHWEST

1 OF 6



CT-1284

BROOMES ISLAND POST OFFICE

8320 BROOMES ISLAND ROAD

CALVERT COUNTY, MD

EHT TRACERIES

APRIL 2002

MARYLAND SHPO

NORTHEAST ELEVATION, LOOKING SOUTHWEST

2 OF 6



CT-1284

BROOMES ISLAND POST OFFICE  
8320 BROOMES ISLAND ROAD  
CALVERT COUNTY, MD  
EHT TRACERIES

APRIL 2002

MARYLAND SHPO

NORTHWEST ELEVATION, LOOKING SOUTHEAST

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CT-1284

BROOMES ISLAND POST OFFICE

8320 BROOMES ISLAND ROAD

CALVERT COUNTY, MD

EHT TRACERIES

APRIL 2002

MARYLAND SHPO

SOUTHWEST ELEVATION, LOOKING NORTHEAST

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CT-1284

BROOMES ISLAND POST OFFICE  
8320 BROOMES ISLAND ROAD  
CALVERT COUNTY, MD  
EHT TRACERIES  
APRIL 2002  
MARYLAND SHPO

MAIL SORTING ROOM, LOOKING EAST  
5 OF 6



CT-1284

BROOMES ISLAND POST OFFICE

8320 BROOMES ISLAND ROAD

CALVERT COUNTY, MD

EHT TRACERIES

APRIL 2002

MARYLAND SHPO

LOBBY, LOOKING SOUTHEAST

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