

CAPSULE SUMMARY

CT-706

Olivet Post Office

13720 Olivet Road

Lusby, Calvert County

1930s

Private

The Olivet Post Office is located at the end of Olivet Road at the confluence of St. John and Mill Creeks in the historic community of Olivet, Calvert County, Maryland. Postal service initially began in the rural community of Olivet in January 1893. At that time, the post office was located in a general store owned by the Lusby family. In the 1930s, Sue Dixon, a member of the Lusby family, and her husband William Dixon, constructed the one-room, freestanding post office up the hill from the previous location. The post office remained in operation until service was discontinued in 1968. Descendants of the Lusby family have continued to retain ownership of the building, now vacant, to the present day.

The vernacular, utilitarian building is set close to a recently paved cul-de-sac on a level lot that gently slopes down to the water's edge. The post office, which faces west, is one story in height and two bays in width. Set on a rock-faced concrete block pier foundation, the building is clad in wood German siding. A single interior-end brick chimney with a slightly corbeled cap rises above the side-gabled roof of asphalt shingles. The roof is further detailed by wide eaves and exposed rafter tails. A full-width, shed-roof porch with square wood post supports dominates the façade. The interior of the post office retains its one-room plan and such original features as the wood counter and mailboxes.

7. Description

Inventory No. CT-706

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

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

The Olivet Road Post Office, constructed during the 1930s, is located at the end of Olivet Road at the confluence of St. John and Mill Creeks in the historic community of Olivet, Calvert County, Maryland. The vernacular, utilitarian building is set close to a recently paved cul-de-sac on a level lot that gently slopes down to the water's edge. The post office, which faces west, is one story in height and two bays in width. Set on a rock-faced concrete block pier foundation, the building is clad in wood German siding. A single interior-end brick chimney with a slightly corbeled cap rises above the side-gabled roof of asphalt shingles. The roof is further detailed by wide eaves and exposed rafter tails. A full-width, shed-roof porch with square wood post supports dominates the façade. The interior of the post office retains its one-room plan and such original features as the wood counter and mailboxes.

EXTERIOR DESCRIPTION

The façade or west elevation of the post office is two bays wide with a three-bay-wide porch. The main entry consists of a single-leaf wood door that features three horizontal panels below with four lights above. Adjacent to the entry is a 2/2 window with a narrow wood sill. Both the door and the window are framed by square-edged wood surrounds. The porch features a shed roof clad in modern asphalt shingles like that of the main roof, square wood posts, and tongue-and-groove wood flooring. Two concrete steps lead to the porch. At the southwest corner of the building, one of the rock-faced concrete-block piers of the foundation has been replaced with a plain concrete-block pier.

The south elevation of the post office features a single 2/2 window that is detailed in the same manner as the one on the west façade with a narrow wood sill and a square-edged wood surround. There is no other ornamentation on this elevation. The east elevation also features a 2/2 window like that of the west façade, although the lower sash of the window has been boarded shut from the interior with plywood. On the north elevation of the building, there are no window or door openings. In the peak of the gable end of the north elevation is a rectangular louvered wood vent with a narrow wood surround.

INTERIOR DESCRIPTION

The interior of the Olivet Post Office is one single room with narrow wood strip flooring and wallboard nailed to the walls and ceilings. A floor covering featuring a polychromed block pattern suggestive of the mid-nineteenth century is nailed to the wood floor. Window and door surrounds are square wood moldings with no pronounced sill articulation. The narrow square interior chimney projects from the north wall venting the ca. 1940s kerosene stove, a replacement of the original wood-burning stove according to the current owner, William Dixon. The room is divided into two spaces by a wood-frame counter, separating the customer space from that of the postal worker. On top of the counter are post office boxes with the names of Olivet residents. Along the west and east walls of the post office interior are various wood shelves and counters. A wood trap door to the attic is present in the ceiling close to the south wall. The attic was not accessible at the time of the survey.

8. Significance

Inventory No. CT-706

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 c1930; 1968

Architect/Builder Unknown

Construction dates c1930

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 Olivet Post Office is located at the end of Olivet Road at the confluence of St. John and Mill Creeks in the historic community of Olivet, Calvert County, Maryland. Postal service initially began in the rural community of Olivet in January 1893. At that time, the post office was located in a general store owned by the Lusby family. In the 1930s, Sue Dixon, a member of the Lusby family, and her husband William Dixon, constructed the one-room, freestanding post office up the hill from the previous location. The post office remained in operation until service was discontinued in 1968. Descendants of the Lusby family have continued to retain ownership of the building, now vacant, to the present day.

HISTORY OF THE POST OFFICE IN CALVERT COUNTY

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 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 late 19th 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

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Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties Form

Inventory No CT-706

Name Olivet Post Office

Continuation Sheet

Number 8 Page 1

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, such as Olivet. 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 OLIVET POST OFFICE

The first Olivet Post Office was authorized in January of 1893, and was established by the Lusby family in an existing general store that sat between the current post office site and the water's edge at Lusby Point. (4) Because of its convenient location to waterborne traffic, the Olivet Post Office was successful. In the 1930s, Sue Dixon, a member of the Lusby family, and her husband William Dixon, constructed a new one-room, freestanding post office building just up the hill from the old location. The post office remained in operation under the same family until being discontinued in 1968. Descendants of the Lusby family have retained ownership of the building, now vacant, to the present day.

CHAIN OF TITLE

May 11, 1925: Charles S. Lusby, et al to Sue E. Dixon, et vir and William R. Dixon
Land Records of Calvert County
Liber AAH 12, Folio 357

February 18, 1986: Estate of Sue L. Dixon to William R. Dixon, Jr. (5)
Land Records of Calvert County
Liber ABE 360, Folio 735

ENDNOTES

1. "Post Offices in 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.; William Dixon, interview by Carrie E. Albee, Olivet, MD, May 21, 2002.
5. Reference made to Estate No. 3738, Calvert County Orphans Court.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Inventory No. CT-706

See continuation sheet.

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of surveyed property 0.84 Acres

Acreage of historical setting Unknown

Quadrangle name Solomons Island

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

Verbal boundary description and justification

The Olivet Post Office has been assoicated with Parcel 579, as denoted on Tax Map 44, since its construction circa 1930.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title R. Weidlich and C. Albee, Architectural Historians

organization E.H.T. Traceries, Inc.

date 8/26/02

street and number 1121 Fifth Street, N.W.

telephone 202/393-1199

city or town Washington

state 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-706

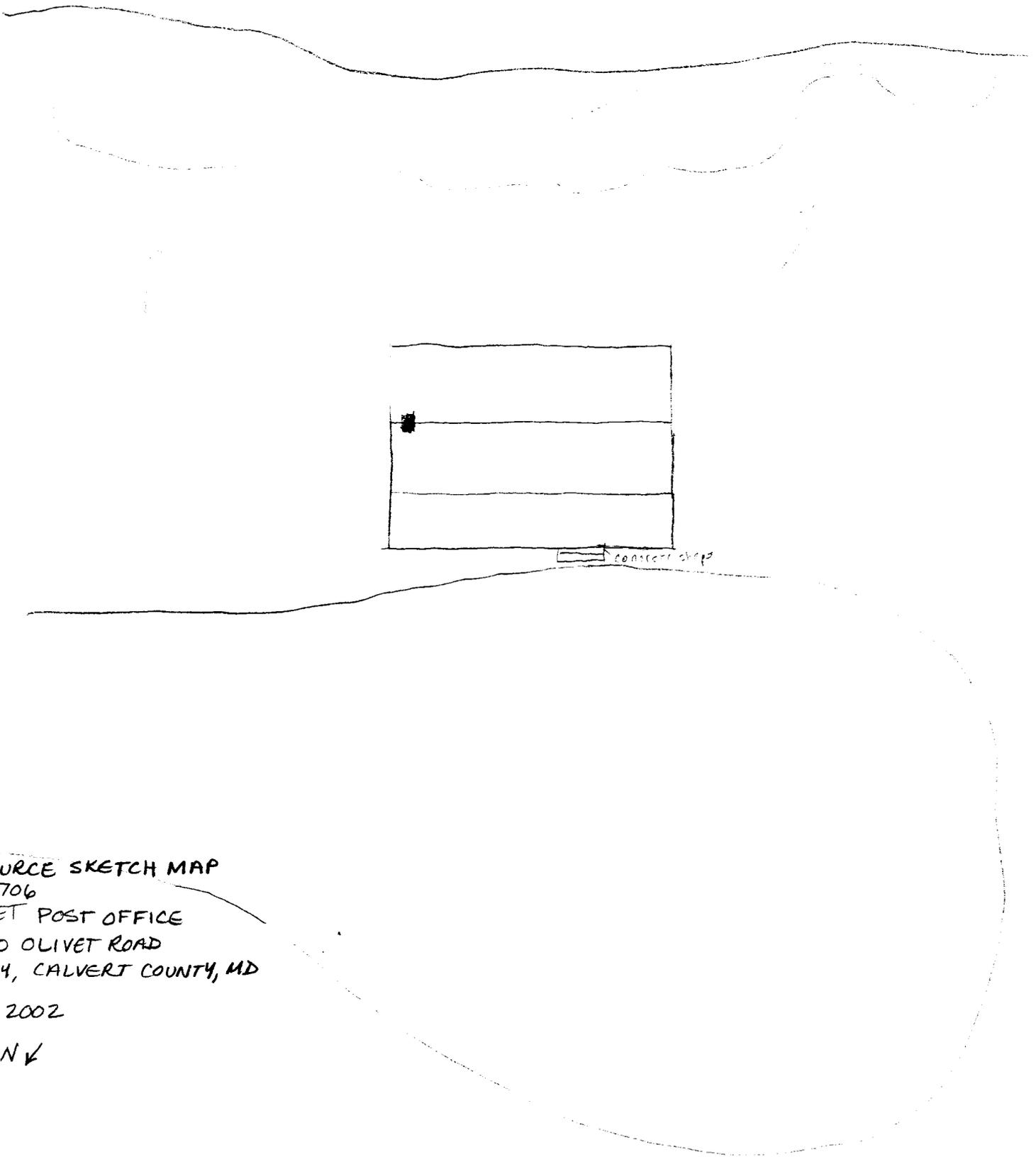
Name Olivet Post Office

Continuation Sheet

Number 9 Page 1

"History of the United States Postal Service, " on the World Wide Web at <http://www.usps.gov/history>.

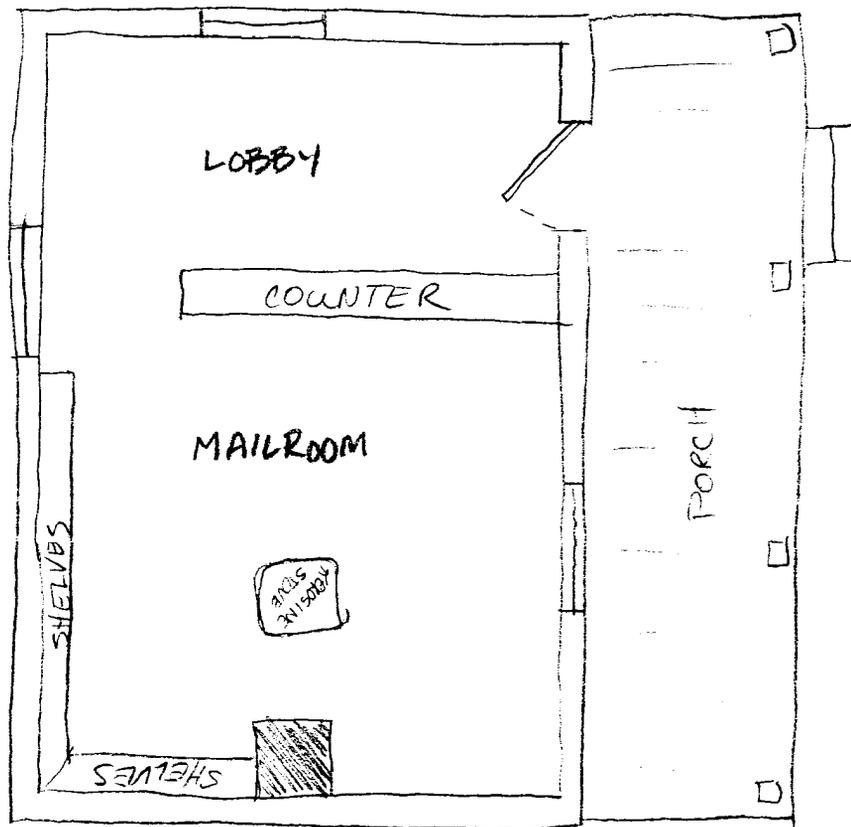
WATER



RESOURCE SKETCH MAP
CT-706
OLIVET POST OFFICE
13720 OLIVET ROAD
LUSBY, CALVERT COUNTY, MD

1/4 2002

N ↓



CT-706

OLIVET POST OFFICE
13720 OLIVET ROAD
LUSBY, CALVERT COUNTY, MD

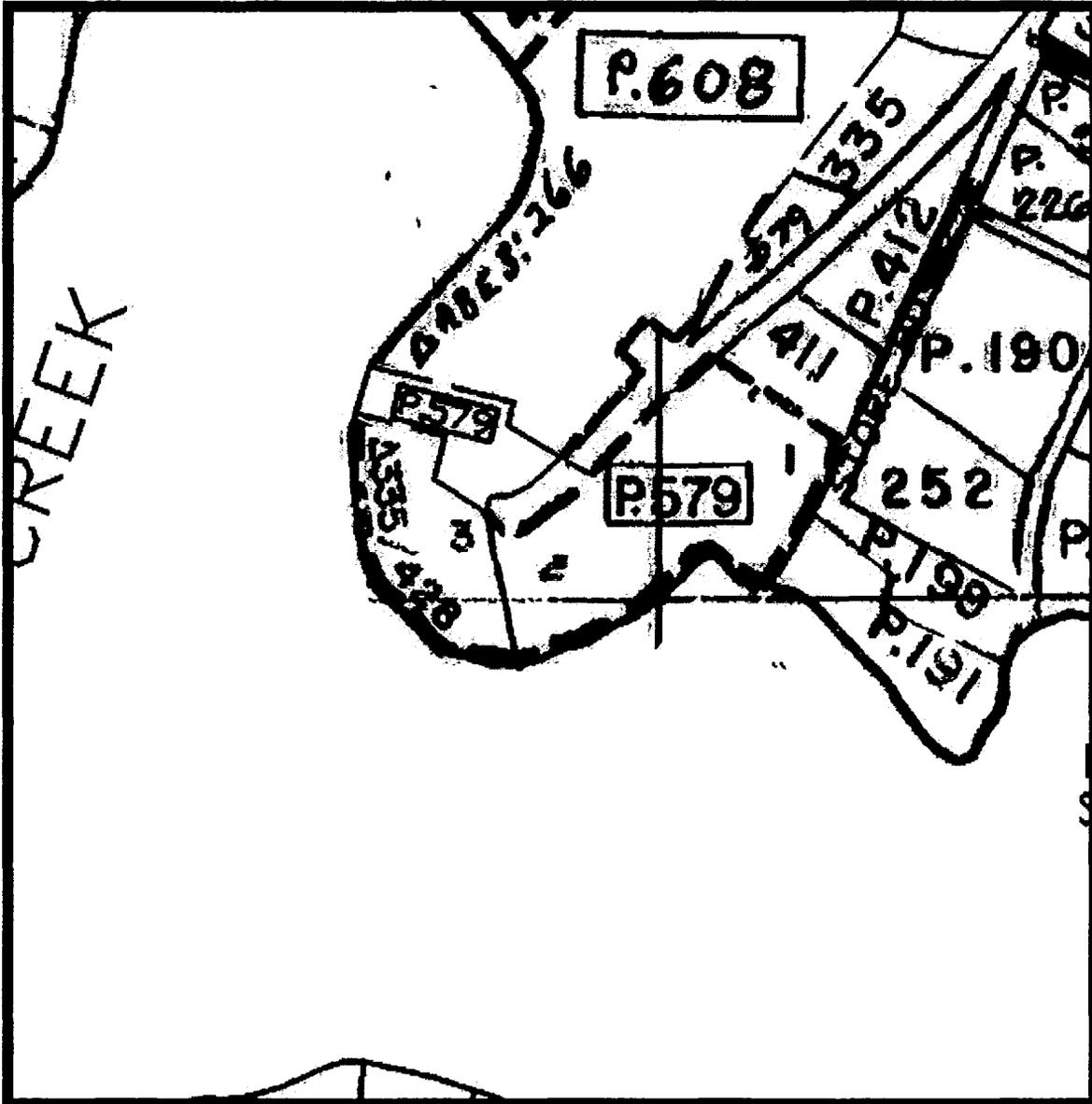
FIRST FLOOR

NOT DRAWN TO SCALE

MAY 2002

	Maryland Department of Assessments and Taxation CALVERT COUNTY Real Property Data Search	Go Back View Map New Search
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District - 01 Account Number - 197185



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For more information on electronic mapping applications, visit the Maryland Department of Planning
web site at www.mdp.state.md.us



CT-706

OLIVET PHOTO OFFICE

13720 OLIVET ROAD

CALVERT COUNTY, MD

EAT TRACERIES

MAY 2002

MARYLAND SHPO

NORTHWEST ELEVATION, LOOKING SOUTHEAST

1 OF 5



CT-706

OLIVET POST OFFICE

13720 OLIVET ROAD

CALVERT COUNTY, MD

EHT TRACERIES

MAY 2002

MARYLAND SHPO

SOUTH CORNER, LOOKING NORTH

2 OF 5



CT-706

OLIVET POST OFFICE

13720 OLIVET ROAD

CALVERT COUNTY, MD

EAT TRACERIES

MAY 2002

MARYLAND SHPO

EAST CORNER, LOOKING WEST

3 OF 5



CT-706

OLIVET POST OFFICE

13720 OLIVET ROAD
CALVERT COUNTY, MD

EAT TRACERIES

MAY 2002

MARYLAND SAPO

LOBBY, LOOKING WEST

4 OF 5



CT-706

OLIVET POST OFFICE

13720 OLIVET ROAD

CALVERT COUNTY, MD

EHT TRACERIES

MAY 2002

MARYLAND SAPO

POST OFFICE LOBBY, VIEW SOUTHEAST

5 OF 5



CT-706
Olivet Post Office
Olivet Road, Olivet
Calvert County, MD

Merry Stinson
March, 1980