

**Vickers House**  
**CH-724**  
**Cobb Island**  
**Private**

**Circa 1897**

Erected around 1897, the Vickers House is the oldest standing structure on Cobb Island. Overlooking Neale Sound and facing north, the Vickers House although altered, represents a local interpretation of the Queen Anne style. The 2 1/2 story frame dwelling includes an overall cross gable T-plan adorned with two octagonal spires located at the corners of the waterside, north elevation.

The Vickers House although altered, is significant as the earliest home on Cobb Island. In 1897, George Vickers a Philadelphian purchased Cobb Point, later known as Cobb Island. Vickers is said to have designed the dwelling himself and to oversee its construction using local labor. Perhaps most significant is the site's association with the early experiments of radio pioneer Reginald Aubrey Fessenden. In December of 1900 Fessenden, assisted by Frank W. Very, Vickers brother-in-law, sent the first intelligible wireless speech by electromagnetic waves. The waves were transmitted along the Neale Sound shore in front of the Vickers House.

# Maryland Historical Trust

## Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties Form

Inventory No. CH-724

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

historic Vickers House

other

### 2. Location

street and number 12380 Neale Sound Drive not for publication

city, town Cobb Island vicinity

county Charles

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

name Charles R. Chapman, Jr. & JoAnn Chapman

street and number 12380 Neale Sound Drive telephone 301-259-2078

city, town Cobb Island state MD zip code 20625-9999

### 4. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Charles County Courthouse tax map and parcel: 90 p. 1

city, town LaPlata liber 232 folio 282

### 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 type="checkbox"/> landscape	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce/trade	<input type="checkbox"/> recreation/culture	<u>1</u>
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> defense	<input type="checkbox"/> religion	
<input type="checkbox"/> site		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> domestic	<input type="checkbox"/> social	<u>2</u>
<input type="checkbox"/> object		<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation	
		<input type="checkbox"/> funerary	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<u>1</u>
		<input type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> unknown	<u>2</u>
		<input type="checkbox"/> health care	<input type="checkbox"/> vacant/not in use	
		<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> other:	
			<b>Number of Contributing Resources previously listed in the Inventory</b>	
			<u>1</u>	

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## 7. Description

Inventory No. CH-724

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### Condition

- |                                    |                                       |
|------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> excellent | <input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated |
| <input 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.

Erected around 1897, the Vickers House is the oldest standing structure on Cobb Island. Overlooking Neale Sound and facing north, the Vickers House although altered, represents a local interpretation of the Queen Anne style. The 2 1/2 story frame dwelling includes an overall cross gable T-plan adorned with two octagonal spires located at the corners of the waterside, north elevation. The dwelling can be divided into two principal sections. The first (Section A) faces the roadside and consists of a single pile, side gable structure with a steeply pitched roof. Attached to the rear of this is a cross gable structure that extends toward the water terminating with a pair of octagonal towers. (Section B) The roof is much shallower in this portion. A one-story enclosed porch extends from the roadside elevation and a covered promenade that also functions as a second story balcony runs the full length of the east elevation. The entire roof is covered with asphalt shingles. The frame is sheathed in novelty and simple weatherboard siding. Many of the original 2/2 windows were replaced in the 1950's. A concrete block and frame stable/carriage house and a small shed also share the site.

The riverside elevation includes a pair of 2/2 windows in the attic story above two replacement windows on the second floor. The first floor has been modified in the mid 20th century to include an extended bay running the length of the elevation and holding a large plate glass window. The octagonal towers include three narrow 1/1 windows on each of the first and second stories.

The east elevation of section B has three asymmetrical windows on the second floor. The first floor is sheltered by the promenade but includes three of the dwellings original 2/2 windows. Section A includes a large attic story window, likely altered from its original form, above a smaller second story window and door accessing the balcony. The first floor mirrors the second.

The roadside or south elevation includes a 2/2 window in the attic dormer and four replaced windows in the second floor. The first floor fenestration is obscured by an enclosed addition.

The west elevation includes three windows in the second story of section B and two original 2/2 in the first floor. The Section A is without fenestration on the gable end but includes a single second story window on the north wall. This elevation includes two first floor shed additions.

The interior, including materials and overall floorplan has been substantially altered from its original design. The wall between the dining room and study has been removed, the principal stair in the riverside parlor has been realigned, and original wall surfaced have been reclad with composition paneling.

## 8. Significance

Inventory No. CH-724

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> invention	<input 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 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** 1889 **Architect/Builder** Unknown

**Construction dates** 1889

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 Vickers House although altered, is significant as the earliest home on Cobb Island. In 1897, George Vickers a Philadelphian purchased Cobb Point, later known as Cobb Island. Vickers is said to have designed the dwelling himself and to oversee its construction using local labor. The Vickers family, including his wife Rosalie, their four children, the extended family and friends spent summers on the island while living in Pennsylvania for the remainder of the year. After 1912, Vickers suffered financial hardship after which time the family moved to the island permanently. According to one of George Vickers daughters, "they endured three winters in the big draughty summer home". In 1912 the Island was ordered by Vickers creditors to be sold. In 1918, the island was purchased by Robert Crain who over the next decade subdivided and developed the island into a weekend retreat for Washingtonians. After World War II many seasonal residents began to live year-round on Cobb Island.

Perhaps most significant is the site's association with the early experiments of radio pioneer Reginald Aubrey Fessenden. In December of 1900 Fessenden, assisted by Frank W. Very, Vickers brother-in-law, sent the first intelligible wireless speech by electromagnetic waves. The waves were transmitted along the Neale Sound shore in front of the Vickers House between two masts fifty feet high and one mile apart. One mast stood at Shipping Point while the other stood on the opposite side of the current bridge connecting Cobb Island with the mainland. Francis Very was an astrophysicist who taught at Western University of Pennsylvania which later became the University of Pittsburgh. His colleague, Fessenden was a professor of electrical engineering.

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## 9. Major Bibliographical References

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Inventory No. CH-724

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## 10. Geographical Data

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Acreage of surveyed property 1.68

Acreage of historical setting 342 acres

Quadrangle name Rock Point

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

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### Verbal boundary description and justification

The Vickers House is associated with Charles County Property Tax Map 90, parcel 1, Lot 580.

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## 11. Form Prepared By

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name/title Cathy Currey/Historic Sites Surveyor

organization Charles County Planning Dept

date 10/3/01

street and number 200 Baltimore Street

telephone 301-396-5815

city or town LaPlata

state MD zip code 20646

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 INVENTORY OF HISTORIC PROPERTIES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

Inventory No. CH-724

Section 8 Page 1

Vickers House  
name of property  
Charles County, MD  
county and state

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**Chain of Title:**

February 1971 Jennings L. Hanson and Mary Hanson, wife to Charles R. Chapman and JoAnn R. Chapman, wife. Lot 580 in Section A of Cobb Island. 73,200 square ft.  
**232/282**

December 1960 Madeline B. Sadtler and William F. Sadtler, husband to Jennings L. Hanson and Mary A. Hanson.  
152/24

March 1941 Arthur S. Witcomb, wife to David James Crawford and Madeline Barrett Crawford, wife.  
**73/560**

July 1926 Robert Crain et al to Arthur S. Witcomb and Martha E. Witcomb.  
**45/569**

November 1918 John A.S. Brown and Frank E. Schermerham, trustees et al of Philadelphia and Rosalie M. Vickers and George E. Vickers, husband to Robert Crain, Cobb Point, 342 acres. Same land upon which the Late Samuel Crown died siezed and possessed.  
**33/660**

March 1897 Robert Wannemacker of Philadelphia to Rosalie M. and George E. Vickers. 2 parcels.  
**JST 8/698**

**Parcel 1**  
1873 Edward B. Edelen to Samuel Crown of Washington D.C. part of Cobb Point Containing 100 acres. Same obtained from John Hammersley and wife in 1861 in GWC 5/97  
**GAH 4/256**

**Parcel 2**  
July 1869 Frank and Susan Reilly of Washington D.C. to Samuel Crown, \$4500. Cobb Point, conveyed to Reilly from John Hammersley and Glovinia his wife, August 1865. 244 acres and improvements. \$4500.  
**GAH 2/237**

See documentation for Pine Grove CH-703

MARYLAND INVENTORY OF HISTORIC PROPERTIES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

Inventory No. CH-724

Section 9 Page 1

Vickers House  
name of property  
Charles County, Maryland  
county and state

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**Major Bibliographic References:**

Ackerman, Clara Bailey. History of Cobb Island.  
Cobb Island Citizen's Association. Undated.

Brown, Jack D., et al. Charles County, Maryland, A History.  
Charles County Bicentennial Committee, 1976.

Charles County Land Records, Charles County Courthouse, LaPlata, Maryland.

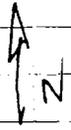
Hickling, Lee. An Illustrated History of Cobb Island.

Klapthor, Margaret Brown. The History of Charles County, Maryland.  
LaPlata, MD: Charles County Tercentenary, Inc., 1958.

RESOURCE SKETCH MAP

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

North arrow:



Name: VIGLERS HOUSE

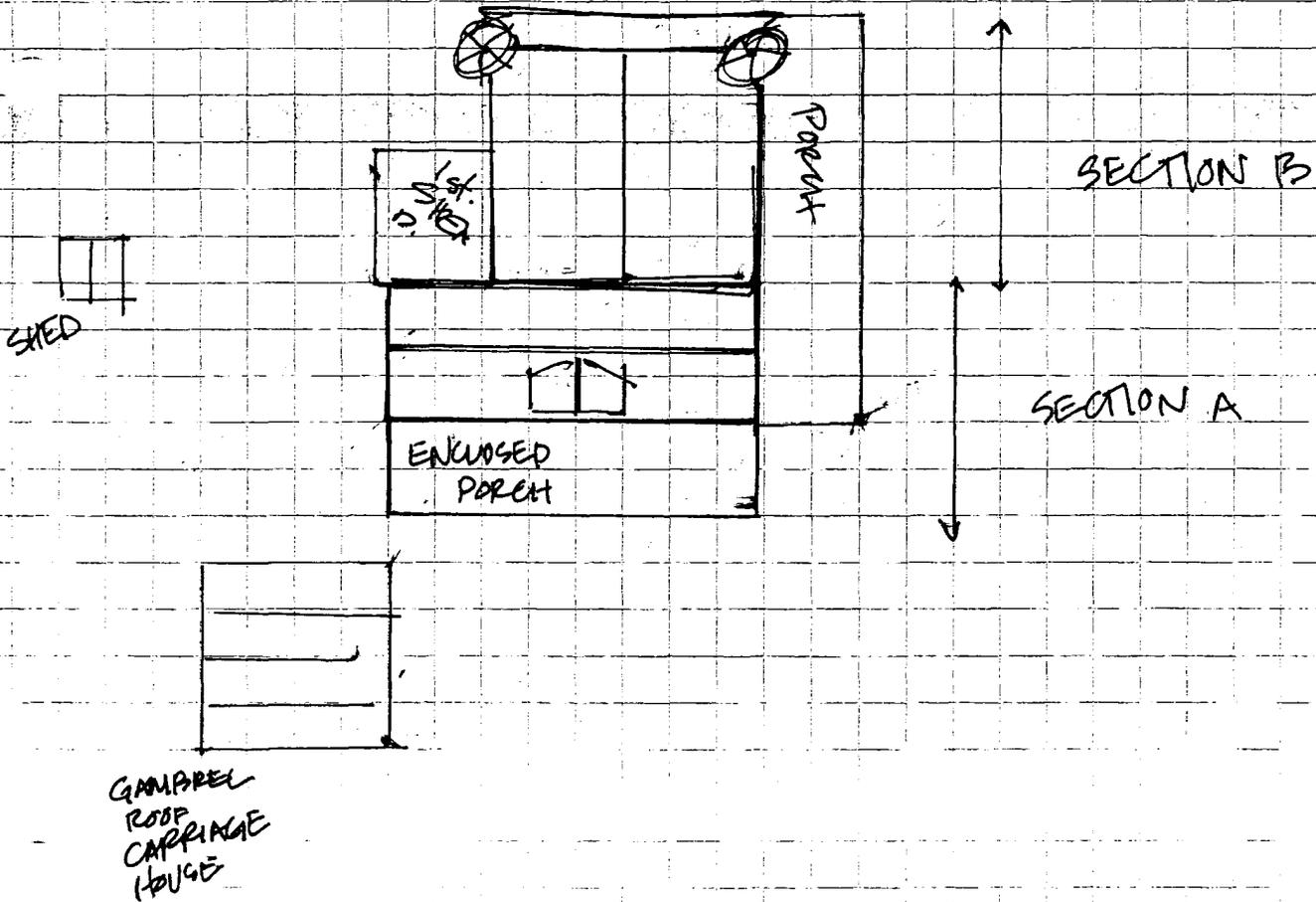
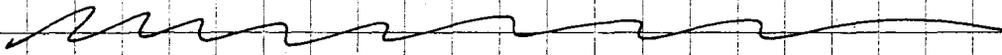
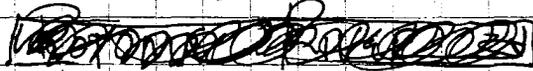
Address: 12380 NEALE SOUND DRIVE

CH - 724

Charles County, Maryland

COBB ISLAND  Vicinity

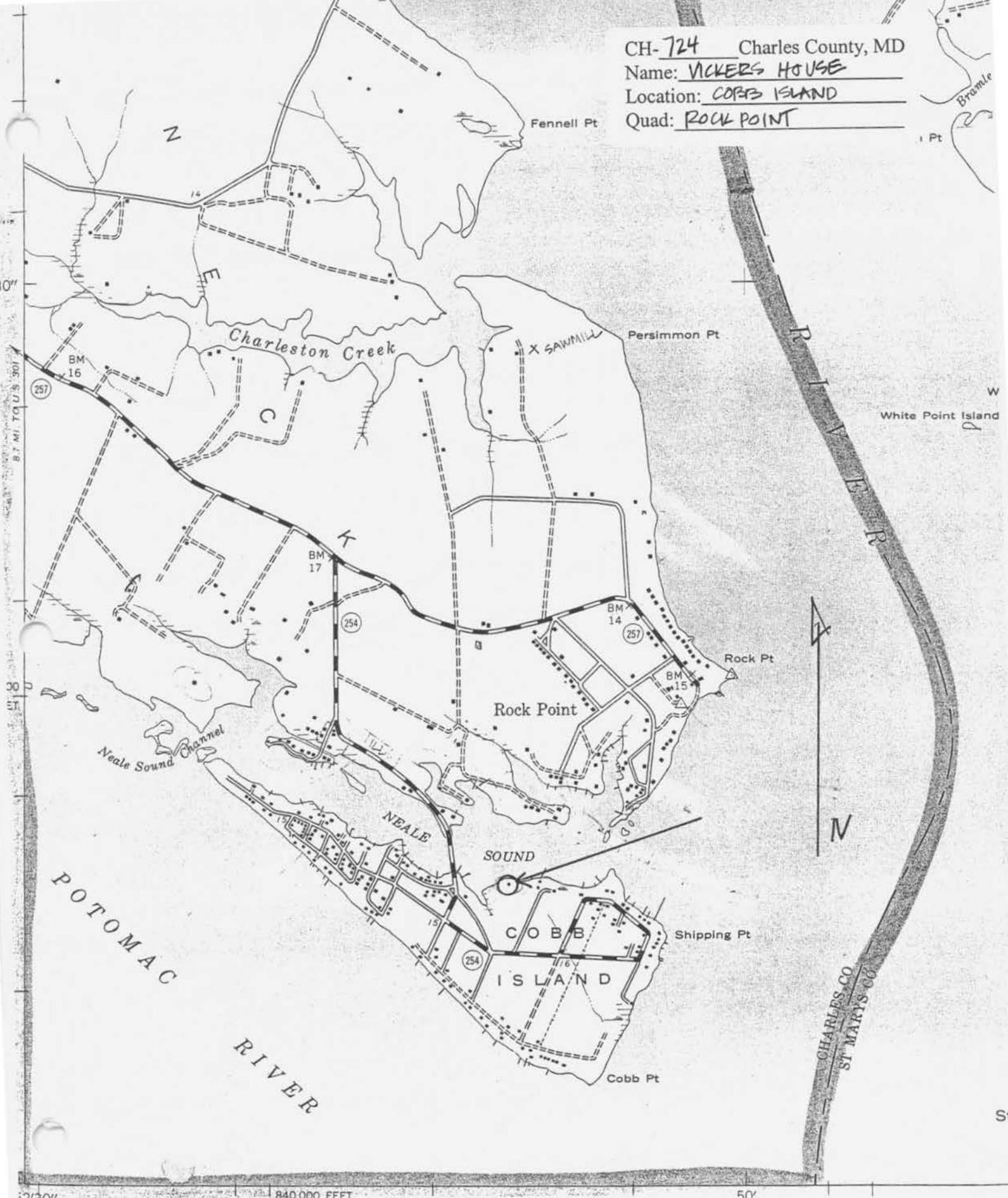
NEALE SOUND



Not drawn to scale

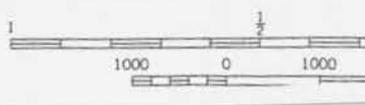
NEALE SOUND DRIVE

CH-724 Charles County, MD  
Name: VICKERS HOUSE  
Location: COBB ISLAND  
Quad: ROCK POINT



12'30" 840 000 FEET 50'

Mapped by the Army Map Service  
Published for civil use by the Geological Survey  
Control by USC&GS  
Topography from aerial photographs





CH 724

VICKERS HOUSE

CHARLES CO, MD

P. CORREY

8/2001

MD SHPO

EAST ELEVATION

1 OF 2



CH-724

VICKERS HOUSE

CHARLES CO, MD

C. CURREY

8/2001

MD SHPO

WEST ELEVATION

2012