

D-416
William J. Thomas House
Cambridge
c. 1885
Private

The William J. Thomas house is distinguished from most other late nineteenth century dwellings in Cambridge by its mansard roof, a distinctive architectural hallmark of the Second Empire style that swept through the United States during the second half of the nineteenth century. This side hall/double-pile main block had projecting bay pavilions on two elevations, and the perimeter of the roof is enhanced with factory-made eave brackets. Adding further interest to the exterior are shallow pediment window cornices, another characteristic feature of houses and buildings dating from the mid to late nineteenth century. The Second Empire style, along with other revivalist styles from the post Civil War period, were favored by the professional and merchant class of businessmen who wanted to convey to the passersby their modern taste that aligned with leading architects of the time. The Hotel Dixon (D-345), which formerly stood on the corner of High and Spring streets, was another of the dominant examples of the Second Empire style in Dorchester County.

William J. Thomas, a successful Cambridge businessman, financed construction of this impressive dwelling on part of the property that he inherited from his father, Edward Thomas, and mother, Margaret Elizabeth Thomas. At the time of his mother's death in 1884, William J. Thomas sold his father's commercial property on High Street to Meyer Nathan for \$1875, and he evidently applied these proceeds to the construction of his new High Street residence. At the time houses of this complexity ranged in price

from \$1,500 to \$2,000. The house remained in Thomas family hands until 1913 when it was sold to Thomas W. Simmons.

Maryland Historical Trust Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties Form

Inventory No. D-416

1. Name of Property (indicate preferred name)

historic William J. Thomas House
 other Bryan House

2. Location

street and number 103 High Street not for publication
 city, town Cambridge vicinity
 county Dorchester

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

name Kathleen Hughes Wise and Melissa Wise Slacum
 street and number 103 High Street telephone _____
 city, town Cambridge state MD zip code 21613

4. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Dorchester County Clerk of Court liber 690 folio 538
 city, town Cambridge tax map 301 tax parcel 63 tax ID number 154542

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 at MHT
 Other: _____

6. Classification

Category	Ownership	Current Function	Resource Count
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	Contributing
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce/trade	<u>1</u>
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> defense	Noncontributing
<input type="checkbox"/> site		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> domestic	<u> </u> buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> object		<input type="checkbox"/> education	<u> </u> sites
		<input type="checkbox"/> funerary	<u> </u> structures
		<input type="checkbox"/> government	<u> </u> objects
		<input type="checkbox"/> health care	<u>1</u> Total
		<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:	
			Number of Contributing Resources previously listed in the Inventory
			<u> </u>

7. Description

Inventory No. D-416

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.

DESCRIPTION SUMMARY

The William J. Thomas house, known during the early twentieth century as the Bryan house, is two-and-a-half story, three-bay, side hall/double-pile plan frame house built in the Second Empire style around 1885. Supported on a raised brick foundation, the exterior is clad with aluminum siding, and the steeply pitched roof slope of the mansard is covered with wood shingles. The perimeter of the roof is accented with factory sawn brackets and the window lintels are enhanced with slightly arched cornices. The house extends deep into the lot, which is partially accented with a cast iron fence.

GENERAL DESCRIPTION

The William J. Thomas house, located at 103 High Street, is a two-and-a-half story, three-bay, mansard roofed frame house built around 1885. Raised on an elevated brick foundation, the exterior is sheathed with aluminum siding, and the steeply pitched mansard roof is covered with patterned wood shingles. Attached to the back of the mansard roofed main block is two-story gable roofed service wing, which is extended further by a single-story twentieth century gable roofed addition to the northwest and a two-story, partially enclosed shed roofed porch to the northeast.

The southeast (main) elevation is a three-bay façade with a side entrance in the northernmost bay. The elaborately detailed front door is flanked by diamond pane sidelights and a fanlight style muntin pattern in a rectangular transom. Single pane sash windows mark the two adjacent bays, and the window openings are flanked by louvered shutters and the window heads are accented with shallow pedimented molded cornices. The entire first floor front is sheltered by a flat roofed porch supported on square posts. The second floor includes a projecting center bay featuring a partially glazed double door and single pane sash windows in each side. The double door opening has a pedimented cornice. To each side of the projecting bay are paired single-pane sash windows flanked by louvered shutters and enhanced the same shallow pediment cornice. Stretching across the base of the mansard roof is a series of factory-produced cornice brackets. The mansard roof is defined by a single center dormer window capped with a shallow gable roof accented with a molded cornice, and to each side are paired single-pane sash dormers also featuring shallow pedimented cornices. The top edge of the mansard is trimmed with a complex molding that forms the outer edge of the nearly flat top roof surface.

The southeast side elevation is dominated by a projecting two-story mansard roofed pavilion pierced on its front face with tripartite series of single-pane sash windows, and the narrow sides of the pavilion are defined by single-pane sash windows as well. The window heads have the shallow pediment cornices. The mansard roof slope of the pavilion is highlighted by a single single-pane sash dormer. To the south (right) of the projecting pavilion are two single-pane sash windows that light each of the two floors, and two single-pane sash dormers light the attic. The same shallow arch pediment cornices enhance each of the openings.

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The northwest side elevation is an asymmetrical façade with three unevenly spaced windows lighting the first and second floors, and each opening is accented with a shallow pediment cornice. The entire wall elevation has a bracketed cornice above the second floor windows, and defining the mansard roof are four gable roofed single-pane sash dormers.

The northwest (rear) elevation of the main block is extended by a combination of two-story gable roofed or flat roofed sections. A two-story partially enclosed porch supported on tall brick piers extends from the back of the house.

8. Significance

Inventory No. D-416

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	architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> invention	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government
1900-1999	<input type="checkbox"/> art	entertainment/ recreation	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input checked="" 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 history	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation		<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other: _____

Specific dates

Architect/Builder

Construction dates

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 projects, complete evaluation on a DOE Form – see manual.)

SIGNIFICANCE SUMMARY

The William J. Thomas house is distinguished from other late nineteenth century dwellings in Cambridge by its mansard roof, a distinctive architectural hallmark of the Second Empire style that swept through the United States during the second half of the nineteenth century. This side hall/double-pile main block has projecting bay pavilions on two elevations, and the perimeter of the roof is enhanced with factory-made eave brackets. Adding further interest to the exterior are shallow pediment window cornices, another characteristic feature of houses and buildings dating from the mid to late nineteenth century. The Second Empire style, along with other revivalist styles from the post Civil War period, were favored by the professional and merchant class that wanted to convey to passersby their modern taste that aligned with leading architects of the time. The Hotel Dixon (D-345), which formerly stood on the corner of High and Spring streets, was another of the dominant examples of the Second Empire style in Dorchester County.

HISTORY AND SUPPORT

William J. Thomas, a successful Cambridge businessman, financed construction of this impressive dwelling on part of the property that he inherited from his father, Edward Thomas, and mother, Margaret Elizabeth Thomas.¹ At the time of his mother's death in 1884, William J. Thomas sold his father's commercial property on High Street to Meyer Nathan for \$1875,² and he evidently applied these proceeds to the construction of his new High Street residence. At the time houses of this complexity ranged in price from \$1,500 to \$2,000. The house remained in Thomas family hands until 1913 when it was sold to Thomas W. Simmons.³

¹ Dorchester County Will Book, EWL 1/371, Last Will and Testament of Edward Thomas, Written 20 June 1867, proved 29 July 1867, Dorchester County Register of Wills, Dorchester County Courthouse, Cambridge.

² Dorchester County Estate Record, File No. 2057, No. 151 Chancery, recorded 8 July 1884, Dorchester County Register of Wills, Dorchester County Courthouse, Cambridge, Maryland.

³ Dorchester County Land Record, WLR 5/477, 7 February 1913, Dorchester County Courthouse, Cambridge, Maryland.

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William J. Thomas House
103 High Street
Cambridge, Dorchester County, Maryland

Map 301, Parcel 63

690/538

Kathleen Hughes Wise

to

--.12.2005

Kathleen Hughes Wise and Melissa Wise Slacum

(103 High Street, formerly 9 High Street, the said Samuel Paul Wise III having departed this life on or about 5.21.1992)

PLC 180/478

Irving Denowitz

to

7.18.1973

Samuel Paul Wise III and Kathleen Hughes Wise

PLC 115/63

Katherine C. Johnson

to

6.15.1959

Irving Denowitz and Ruthann Denowitz

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RSM 48/228

Guy L. Bryan, Jr., Executor of Last Will and
Testament of Maria Lusia Bryan

to

11.4.1943

Harlan G. Johnson and Katherine C. Johnson

WHM 1/573

Thomas W. Simmons and Laura F. Simmons

to

1.1.1916

Maria Lusia Bryan and Guy L. Bryan

WLR 5/477

Emma E. Thomas, unmarried, Susan Thomas, unmarried,
J. Edward Cook, bachelor, Julia Thomas Sibley and Oscar
W. Sibley

to

2.7.1913

Thomas W. Simmons

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EWL 1/371

Last Will and Testament of Edward Thomas (Merchant)

to

Written
6.20.1867
Proved
7.29.1867

son, William Jackson Thomas and wife Margaret Elizabeth Thomas

No. 151, Chancery, Estate File No. 2057 Report of Sale of commercial property on High Street, sold to Meyer Nathan for \$1875.00, 7.8.1884 case filed after death of Margaret Elizabeth Thomas

“a large double two storied brick dwelling house with back building and a stable and other outbuildings; being the same property which was conveyed by James A. Stewart and wife to Edward Thomas and Harry C. Elliott,” 6.3.1865, FJH 6/174-75

FJH 6/27

William E. C. Laird

to

1.2.1865

Edward Thomas

\$3,250

FJH 445-47

Brice J. Goldsborough, Daniel M. Henry, Charles A. Mitchell,
Margaret A. Mitchell

to

12.9.1853

William E. C. Laird

9. Major Bibliographical References

Inventory No. D-416

Dorchester County Land Records, various volumes, Dorchester County Courthouse.

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of surveyed property _____

Acreage of historical setting _____

Quadrangle name Cambridge, MD Quadrangle Quadrangle scale: 1:24,000

Verbal boundary description and justification

The metes and bounds of this property are coincidental with the current boundary of the lot.

11. Form Prepared by

name/title	Paul B. Touart, Architectural Historian		
organization	Private Consultant	date	12.30.2011
street & number	P. O. Box 5	telephone	410-651-1094
city or town	Westover	state	Maryland 21871

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 21032-2023
410-514-7600

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- D-416, William J. Thomas House
Cambridge, MD Quadrangle -

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Continuation Sheet

Number 9 Page 5



D-416, William J. Thomas House captured in postcard view of High Street, first house on left, June 12, 1902, Collection of Paul Baker Touart.



D-416

Wm L THOMAS HOUSE

CAMBRIDGE, DORCHESTER CO, MD

Southeast ELEVATION

12/2011, PAUL B. TOWNT, PHOTOGRAPHER
NEZ/MD HISTORICAL TRUST

#1 OF 2



D-416

William L. Thomas House
Cambridge, Dixchester Cr., MD
Successor Elevation

12/2011, Paul B. Tourant, PASTOR,
NEB. Lind. Historical Trust

2 OF 2

1009165604

MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST WORKSHEET

NOMINATION FORM
for the
NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES, NATIONAL PARKS SERVICE

1. NAME				
COMMON:				
AND/OR HISTORIC:				
2. LOCATION				
STREET AND NUMBER:				
103 High Street				
CITY OR TOWN:				
Cambridge				
STATE:			COUNTY:	
Maryland			Dorchester	
3. CLASSIFICATION				
CATEGORY (Check One)		OWNERSHIP		STATUS
<input type="checkbox"/> District <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Structure <input type="checkbox"/> Object		<input type="checkbox"/> Public <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress
		Public Acquisition:		ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
		<input type="checkbox"/> In Process <input type="checkbox"/> Being Considered		Yes: <input type="checkbox"/> Restricted <input type="checkbox"/> Unrestricted <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)				
<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural	<input type="checkbox"/> Government	<input type="checkbox"/> Park	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation	<input type="checkbox"/> Comments
<input type="checkbox"/> Commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> Industrial	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private Residence	<input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify)	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Educational	<input type="checkbox"/> Military	<input type="checkbox"/> Religious	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> Museum	<input type="checkbox"/> Scientific	_____	_____
4. OWNER OF PROPERTY				
OWNER'S NAME:				
Samuel P. Wise III				
STREET AND NUMBER:				
103 High Street				
CITY OR TOWN:			STATE:	
Cambridge			Maryland	
			21613	
5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION				
COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC:				
Dorchester County Courthouse				
STREET AND NUMBER:				
206 High Street				
CITY OR TOWN:			STATE:	
Cambridge			Maryland	
			21613	
Title Reference of Current Deed (Book & Pg. #): Liber 180/Folio 338				
6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS				
TITLE OF SURVEY:				
DATE OF SURVEY:				
<input type="checkbox"/> Federal <input type="checkbox"/> State <input type="checkbox"/> County <input type="checkbox"/> Local				
DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:				
STREET AND NUMBER:				
CITY OR TOWN:				
STATE:				

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION	(Check One)					
	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> Ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> Unexposed
	(Check One)			(Check One)		
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Altered	<input type="checkbox"/> Unaltered	<input type="checkbox"/> Moved	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Original Site		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (If known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

This frame house consists of two and one half stories and has a mansard roof, with brackets supporting the overhanging eaves. There are three front bays and above each of the openings is a pointed arch. The door is flanked by sidelights with diamond shaped panes and there is a transom light above with muntins forming a ray pattern. There is a flat roofed, one story porch across the front supported by rectangular columns. The porch has a ballustrade with rectangular ballusters. The front yard is enclosed by an iron fence.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

8. SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- Pre-Columbian 16th Century 18th Century 20th Century
 15th Century 17th Century 19th Century

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known)

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- | | | | |
|--|--------------------------------------|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal | <input type="checkbox"/> Education | <input type="checkbox"/> Political | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric | <input type="checkbox"/> Engineering | <input type="checkbox"/> Religion/Phi- | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Historic | <input type="checkbox"/> Industry | losophy | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture | <input type="checkbox"/> Invention | <input type="checkbox"/> Science | _____ |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape | <input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Art | Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Social/Human- | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Commerce | <input type="checkbox"/> Literature | itarian | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communications | <input type="checkbox"/> Military | <input type="checkbox"/> Theater | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation | <input type="checkbox"/> Music | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation | _____ |

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

History:

This house was built in 1884 by Captain William J. Thomas, who inherited the land from his father, Edward Thomas, who also owned the adjoining property on the corner of Water and High Streets. The property has a long history of ownership, being part of the land between the church and the river that was once owned by William Murray. Where the house stands today, was once the office of Captain Sadrach Mitchell who owned this property until his death in 1853.

Significance:

This house shows the influence of the Second Empire style of architecture that originated in France and was adopted, with "Americanizations" by architects in this country during the second half of the 19th century. It is part of a group of large houses on the lower end of High Street, most of which date to the late 19th century and are of architectural interest.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Col. Clement Sullivan, article reprinted in the Daily Banner, April 23, 1925

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY			O R	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES		
CORNER	LATITUDE	LONGITUDE		LATITUDE	LONGITUDE	
	Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds		Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds	
NW	° ' "	° ' "		° ' "	° ' "	
NE	° ' "	° ' "		° ' "	° ' "	
SE	° ' "	° ' "		° ' "	° ' "	
SW	° ' "	° ' "		° ' "	° ' "	

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY:

Acreege Justification:

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE:

Catherine L. Moore,

ORGANIZATION

DATE

11/19/75

STREET AND NUMBER:

Route 3, Box 32

CITY OR TOWN:

Cambridge

STATE

Maryland

12.

State Liaison Officer Review: (Office Use Only)

Significance of this property is:

National State Local

Signature

103 HIGH STREET
CAMBRIDGE, MARYLAND

PLC 115/63

This house was built in 1885 by William J. Thomas, a druggist who operated a store on Poplar Street in the late nineteenth century. He inherited this lot and 101 High Street from his father Edward Thomas, who had purchased the land in 1865. Upon William Thomas's death in 1902 this house and lot were split off from the property at 101 High Street. The house remained in the Thomas family until 1913. Later in the twentieth century the house was in possession of Maria Luisa Bryan, wife of Guy L. Bryan. This house with the mansard roof is an example of "Second Empire" architecture, which originated in France and was popular in the United States in the late nineteenth century. It is one of several examples of styles from that period they may be found on the lower end of High Street and on adjacent Mill Street.

Sources:

Dorchester County Courthouse, Cambridge, Maryland.

Court Records.

Land Records.

Will Records.

Dorchester County Office Building, Cambridge, Maryland.

Assessment Records.

Boyd's Business Directory of the State of Maryland.... 1875. Washington:

Wm. H. Boyd, (1875), p. 344.

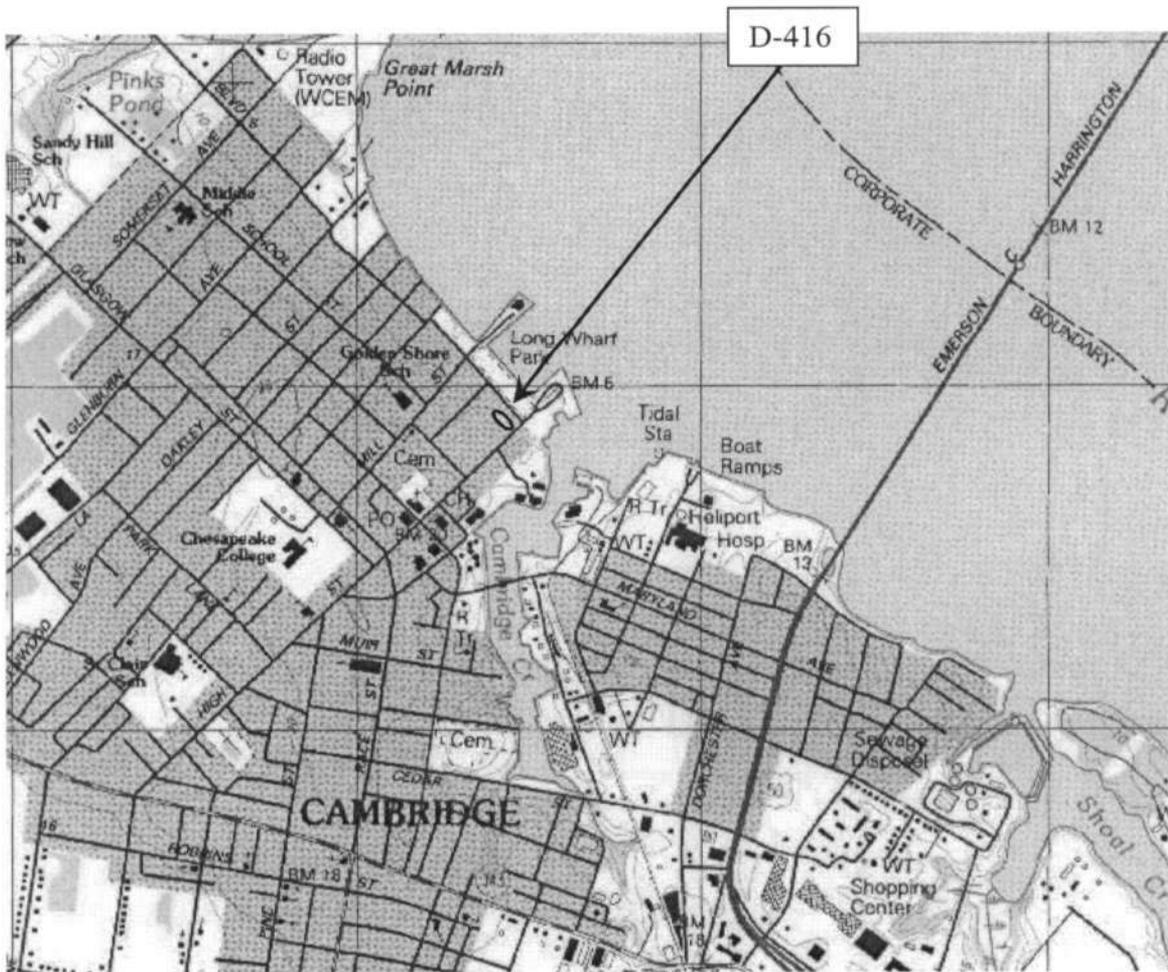
Cambridge Democrat and News, June 13, 1885/

Research by:

Terrance Walbert

1976

D-416
103 High St.
Cambridge
Cambridge Quad.
Dorchester Co.





103 HIGH ST., CAMBRIDGE, MD. - EAST FACADE - C. L. MOORE, 1970

D. 416

46%