

D-828
Bishops Head Survey District
Bishops Head
c. 1820 – c. 1950

Bishops Head is the name used to identify a village, a peninsula, a marsh and a point of land in southwestern Dorchester County. The Bishops Head peninsula is bounded on the east by Fishing Bay and on the west by Hooper's Straits. Bishops Head Point is located at the tip of the peninsula, which is said to have the shape of a Bishop's Head, thereby inspiring the name. While colonial settlement of the region can be traced to the seventeenth century, the land was thinly populated throughout the seventeenth, eighteenth, and early nineteenth centuries. There was enough of a population by the second quarter of the nineteenth century to establish a Methodist Church in an emerging crossroads village at the headwaters of Fox and Tedious Creek. The trustees acquired a small plot of land for a meeting house in 1839.

An indication of the state of development for the community is provided by the U.S. Coast Survey map of the Mouth of the Honga River and Hooper's Straits issued in 1848. The Wingate-Bishops Head road winds through an upland landscape east of Fox Creek where large and small cleared fields, patches of woodland bordered marsh.

When an initial post office was established in this community is not known, but by the mid nineteenth century it was located at a place called "Hart's Store," named for proprietor George Hart who owned a small plantation and the store located along the road that passed through the area. (See D-30) The village of "Bishops Head" surfaces in name during the third quarter of the nineteenth century, presumably after 1866 when George Hart elected to relocate to a farm near Lakesville. When the Lake, Griffing, and Stevenson atlas was published in 1877, the Strait Election District map identified the community as Bishops Head Post Office, which was most likely located in the old

Hart store then owned by Christopher C. Fallin, who purchased the Fox Creek farm from Hart around 1866. The 1877 atlas map also indicates how the village had evolved since the 1848 coastal map was drawn. Numerous houses were built along its principal roads. The 1877 map indicates approximately twenty separate houses, the St. Thomas Church, the Fallin store, and School No. 1.

With the publication of the gazetteer, the *Maryland Directory* in 1878, Bishop's Head was described in the following manner:

Bishop's Head

Is situated 36 miles from Cambridge, on a narrow neck of land, between Fishing bay on the east and the Honga River on the west. These waters abound in fine oysters, and large quantities are caught by the inhabitants daily during the season, and shipped to market. The climate is temperate and healthy. Land is clay subsoil, most all cleared; sells for \$30 per acre; produces 20 bus. wheat, 50 oats, 150 potatoes and 50 corn; no tobacco or had raised. Good churches and schools near. Population 100. E. Murphy, postmaster.

The commerce and economy associated with the seafood trade, and particularly oysters during the third quarter of the nineteenth century, coupled with an agrarian production from small to medium sized farms, sponsored steady population growth across southwestern Dorchester County. It even inspired plans for building railroad south from Cambridge across Church Creek, Lake and Strait election districts to access the seafood and agricultural riches in southwestern Dorchester County. The branch railroad line, however, was never realized.

The early twentieth century brought modest investments in additional housing in the village of Bishops Head, and house forms followed popular national styles. New construction in the immediate village slowed during the mid to late twentieth century. During the last twenty years, occupancy of the existing housing stock has declined by resident owners with some properties purchased as second houses. Others have been left to deteriorate. No longer used for farming, the fields have grown up in woods, which along with the area marshes, are prime hunting territory.

Maryland Historical Trust Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties Form

Inventory No. D-828

1. Name of Property (indicate preferred name)

historic Hart's Store
 other Bishops Head Survey District (preferred)

2. Location

street and number _____ not for publication _____
 city, town Bishops Head vicinity _____
 county Dorchester

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

name Various Owners
 street and number _____ telephone _____
 city, town _____ state MD zip code 21869

4. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Dorchester County Clerk of Court liber _____ folio _____
 city, town Cambridge tax map _____ tax parcel _____ tax ID number _____

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	Contributing
<input type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce/trade	<u>25</u>
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> defense	Noncontributing
<input type="checkbox"/> site		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> domestic	<u>25</u>
<input type="checkbox"/> object		<input type="checkbox"/> education	Total
		<input type="checkbox"/> funerary	
		<input type="checkbox"/> government	
		<input type="checkbox"/> health care	
		<input type="checkbox"/> industry	
		<input type="checkbox"/> landscape	
		<input type="checkbox"/> recreation/culture	
		<input checked="" 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

7. Description

Inventory No. D-828

Condition

excellent deteriorated
 good ruins
 fair 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 village and community of Bishops Head is located in the Strait Election District of Dorchester County, and the name refers to a village as well as a larger peninsula and point of land bounded by Fishing Bay and Hooper's Straits. The village is centrally located in this larger peninsula where a distinct grouping of nineteenth and early to mid twentieth century dwellings, a church, and a vacant store are oriented to the Wingate-Bishops Head Road, Saint Thomas Church Road, West Tedious Creek Road. Approximately thirty (30) contributing resources define the immediate village, and a more disperse scattering of historic structures are located in the larger area in the immediate environs of the village of Bishops Head. The buildings largely ranged in date from c. 1880 to c. 1950, although one structure in particular, the George Hart farmhouse (D-30) is a much older dwelling that dates to the first quarter of the nineteenth century, and it is the oldest identified building in the survey district.

GENERAL DESCRIPTION

The village of Bishops Head is centered around the intersection of several county roads with the Wingate-Bishops Head Road winding through the community en route to another community on the peninsula, Crocheron. (See D-832) In the center of the village is the intersection of the Wingate-Bishops Head Road, West Tedious Creek Road, and St. Thomas Church Road. This intersection is the location of the Tom Jones' Market (D-827), a historic commercial location that has been a site for a store since the early nineteenth century. Located north and east of the store is the George Hart farmhouse, the oldest dated building in Bishops Head. The two-and-a-half story front section that faces the road is a Victorian addition to a much older rear wing dating to the first quarter of the nineteenth century. Tom Jones' Market is a single-story frame store built around 1935 with a hip roofed, covered entrance, and tapered posts on rusticated concrete block plinths.

Another early site with a later building is the St. Thomas M. E. Church standing south and west of the market building. The St. Thomas Methodist congregation acquired a small lot of ground in 1839 for the purposes of erecting a meeting house. The extant building is a large, gable-front, Gothic Revival inspired frame church built in 1900-01. The church is joined on the lot with a nineteenth and twentieth century cemetery.

Located along these streets is a collection of approximately twenty-five (25) additional buildings that contribute to the village of Bishops Head. They range from two-story, two- or three-bay, single-pile frame structures, a few of which have paneled corner pilasters that date to the late nineteenth century to early twentieth century bungalow style houses. A bungalow style house on the Wingate-Bishops Head Road is a story-and-a-half frame house featuring Tuscan columns and Victorian brackets. A shed dormer marks the roof. There are other bungalow house types with a single-story, gable-front form.

Also defining the village of Bishops Head are a few mid twentieth century frame Ranch style houses with

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Name Bishops Head Survey District
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medium pitched gable roofs. At the north end of the village is the St. Thomas Church Hall, a single-story gable-front frame structure featuring a gable-front vestibule and banks of six-over-six sash windows. It was likely built as a school and converted to the church hall when the county-wide school system was consolidated.

8. Significance

Inventory No. D-828

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 checked="" 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	entertainment/ <input type="checkbox"/> recreation	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 2000-	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> ethnic heritage	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/ <input type="checkbox"/> 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	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 AND HISTORY AND SUPPORT

Bishops Head is the name used to describe a village, a peninsula, a marsh and a point of land in southwestern Dorchester County. The Bishops Head peninsula is bounded on the east by Fishing Bay and on the west by Hooper's Straits. Bishops Head Point is located at the tip of the peninsula, which is said to have the shape of a Bishop's head, thereby inspiring the name. While settlement of the region can be traced back to the seventeenth century, the land was thinly settled throughout the seventeenth, eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. There was enough of a population by the second quarter of the nineteenth century to establish a Methodist Church, and the trustees acquired a small plot for a meeting house in 1839.¹

An indication of the state of development for the community area is provided by means of the U.S. Coast Survey map of Mouth of the Honga River and Hooper's Straits issued in 1848.² The Wingate-Bishops Head Road winds through the landscape east of Fox Creek where there are large and small cleared fields, patches of woodland bordered by marsh.

When the initial post office service was extended to this area is not known, but by the mid nineteenth century it was known as "Hart's Store," named for George Hart who owned a small plantation and store bordering the road that passed through the area. The village of Bishops Head surfaces in name during the third quarter of the nineteenth century, presumably after 1866 when George Hart elected to relocate to a farm near Lakesville. When the Lake, Griffing, and Stevenson atlas was printed in 1877, the Strait District map identified the community as the Bishops Head P.O, which was most likely located in the old Hart Store now owned by Christopher C Fallin, who purchased the Fox Creek farm from Hart around 1866. The 1877 atlas map also indicates how the village had evolved since the 1848 coastal map. Numerous houses were built along its principal roads. The 1877 map indicates approximately twenty separate houses, the St. Thomas Church, and School No. 1.³

¹ Dorchester County Land Record, ER 17/150, 10 January 1839, Dorchester County Courthouse, Cambridge, Maryland.

² A. D. Bache, Superintendent, U.S. Coast Survey, Mouth of Honga River and Hooper's Straits, Eastern Shore Maryland, 1848, National Archives, College Park, Maryland

³ John L. Graham, ed. The 1877 Atlases and Other Early Maps of the Eastern Shore of Maryland, Wicomico Bicentennial

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With the publication of the *Maryland Directory* in 1878, Bishop's Head was described in the following manner.

Bishop's Head

Is situated 36 miles from Cambridge, on a narrow neck of land, between Fishing bay on the east and Honga River on the west. These waters abound in fine oysters, and large quantities are caught by the inhabitants daily during the season, and shipped to market. The climate is temperate and healthy. Land is clay subsoil, most all cleared; sells for \$30 per acre; produces 20 bus. wheat, 50 oats, 150 potatoes and 50 corn; no tobacco or hay raised. Good churches and schools near. Population 100. E. Murphy, postmaster.⁴

The commerce and economy associated with the seafood trade, particularly oysters during the third quarter of the nineteenth century, sponsored the steady population growth across southwestern Dorchester County. It even inspired the discussion of building a railroad south from Cambridge across Church Creek, Lake and the Strait election districts to access the seafood riches in upper Tangier Sound. The branch line railroad, however, was never built.

The early twentieth century brought modest investments in additional housing in the village of Bishops Head, and house forms followed popular bungalow and later Ranch style designs. New construction in the immediate village slowed during the mid to late twentieth century. During the last twenty years, occupancy of the existing housing stock has declined by resident owners with some properties purchased as second houses. Others have been left to deteriorate. The marsh and non-tidal woodlands are used mostly for hunting. There is next to no farming in the immediate area.

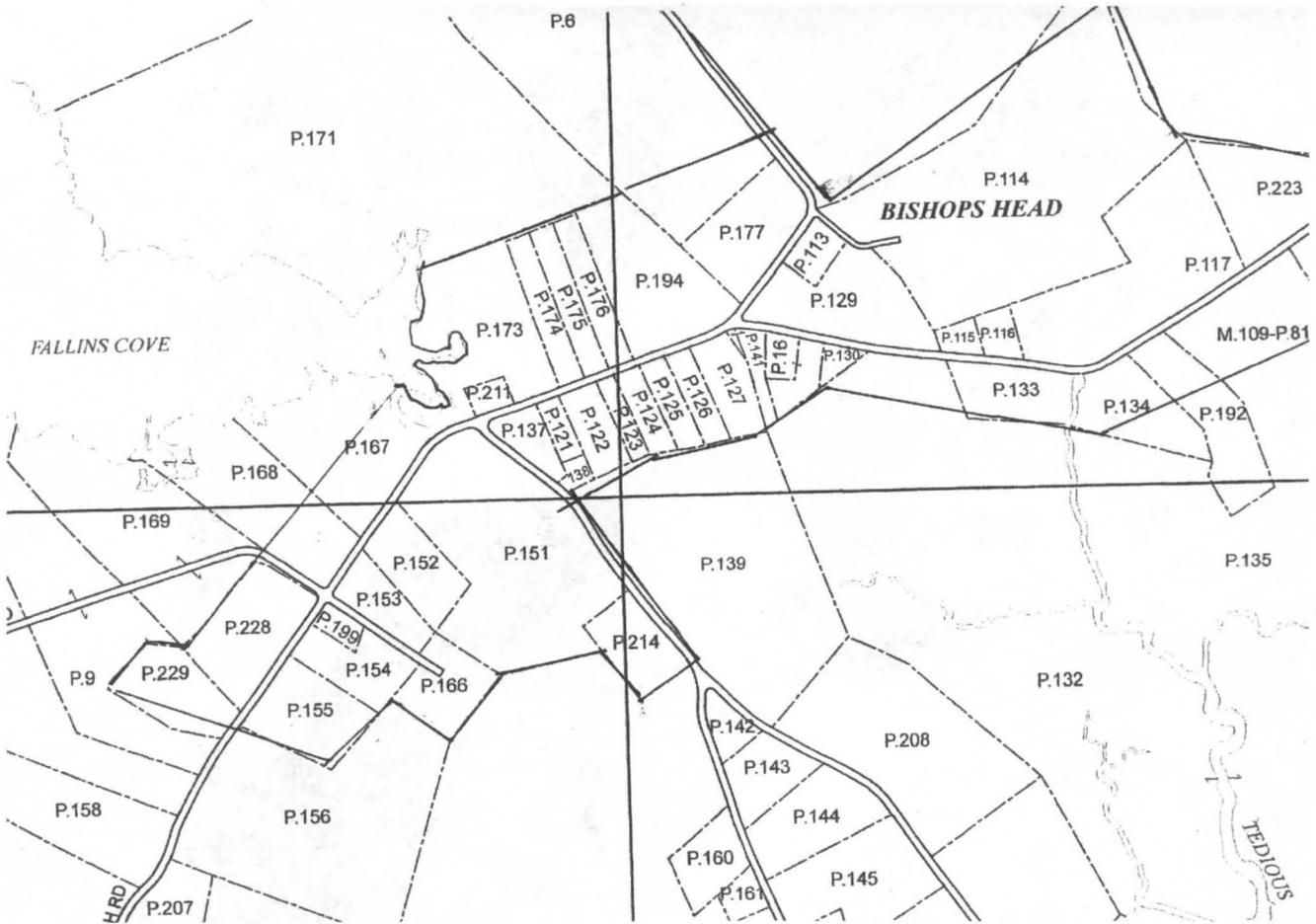
Even though the Bishops Head community has a long and interesting history, the district itself of surviving buildings does not possess enough architectural significance to warrant listing on the National Register of Historic Places.

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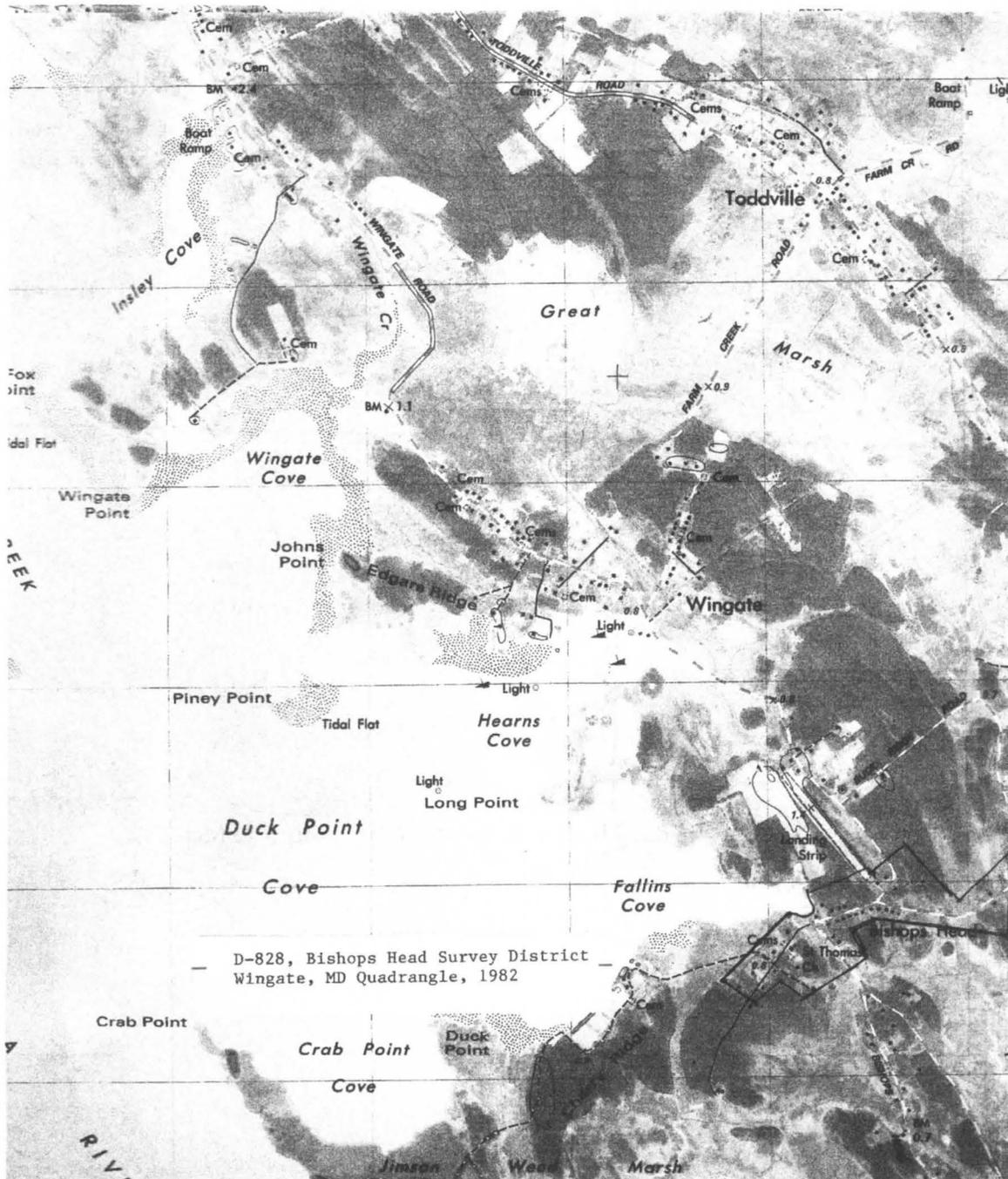
Bishops Head Survey District, preliminary working boundary, Dorchester County Tax Map 108.

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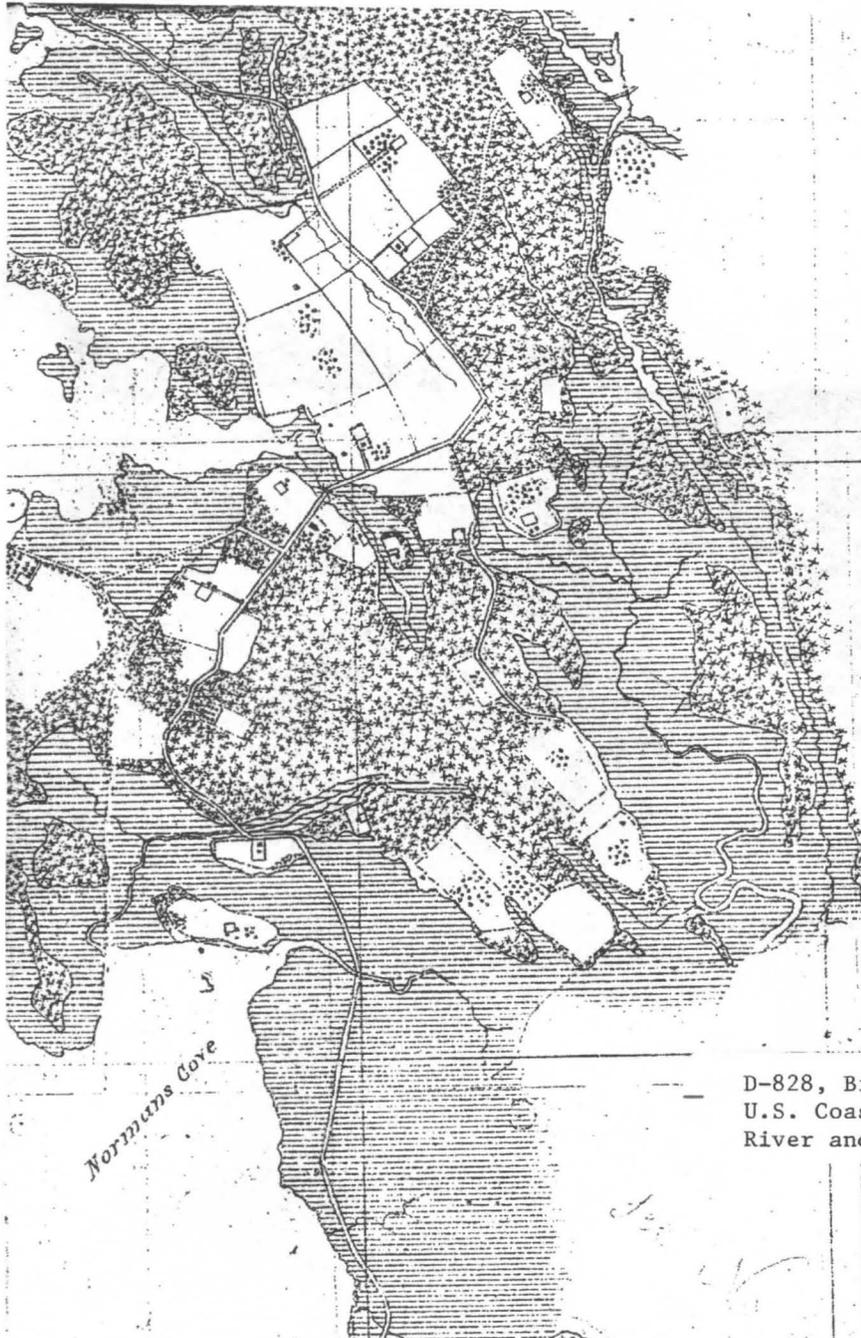


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D-828, Bishops Head Survey District
U.S. Coast Survey, Mouth of Honga
River and Hooper's Straits, 1848

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D-828, Bishops Head Survey District, Fox Creek landscape, looking northwest, Paul Baker Touart, 10.2013.

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D-828, Bishops Head Survey District, Bishops Head Road looking west, Paul Baker Touart, 10.2013.

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D-828, Bishops Head Survey District, Bishops Head Road looking west, Paul Baker Touart, 10.2013.

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D-828, Bishops Head Survey District, St. Thomas M. E. Church in background, Paul Baker Touart, 10.2013.

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Name Bishops Head Survey District
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9. Major Bibliographical References

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Dorchester County Land Records, various volumes, Dorchester County Courthouse, Cambridge, Maryland

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of surveyed property 30 +/- acres

Acreage of historical setting _____

Quadrangle name Wingate, MarylandQuadrangle 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		
organization	Private Consultant	date	10/4/2013
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.

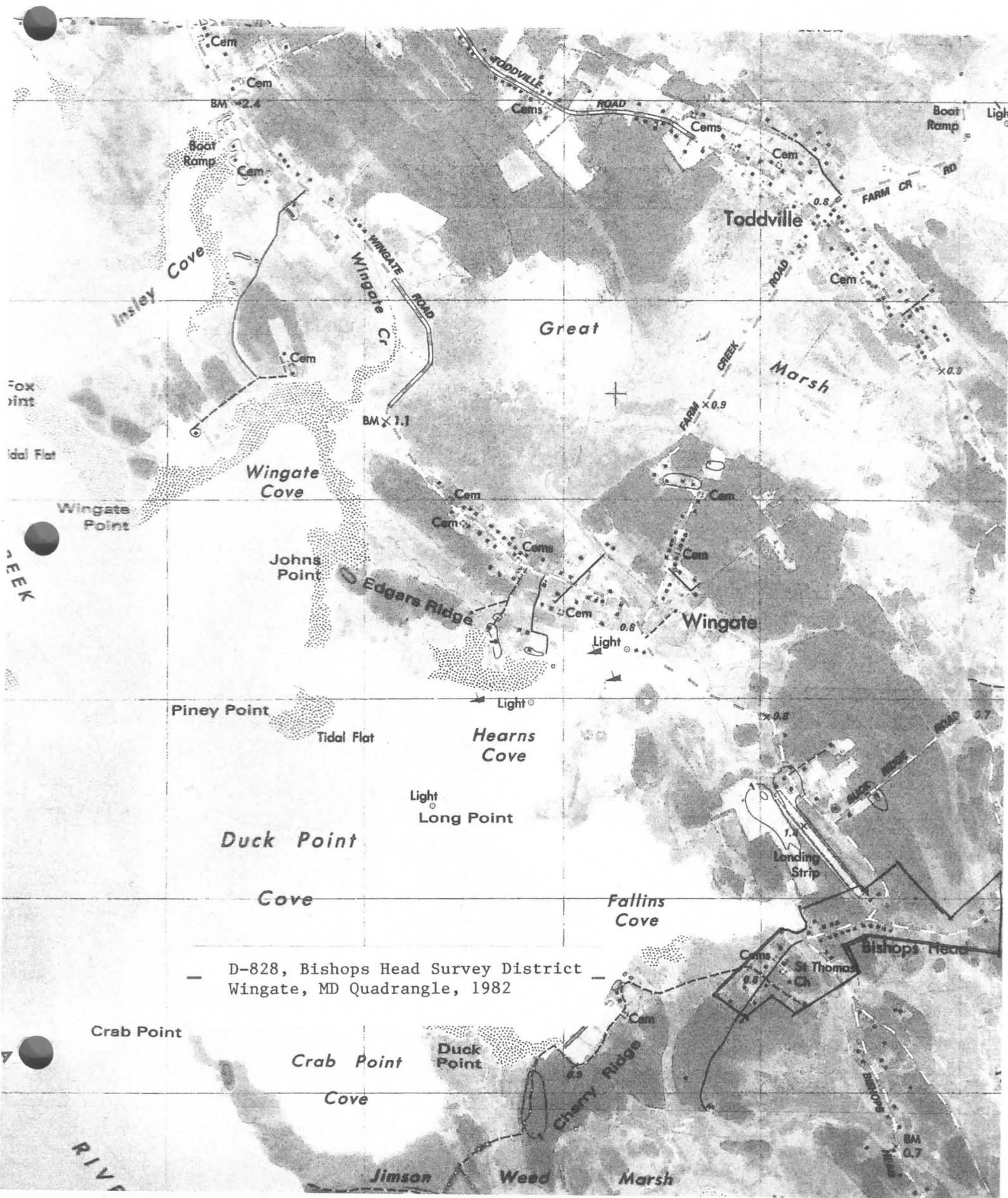
return to: Maryland Historical Trust
DHCD/DHCP
100 Community Place
Crownsville, MD 21032-2023
410-514-7600

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Inventory No. M

Name
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D-828, Bishops Head Survey District
 Wingate, MD Quadrangle, 1982



D-828

Visitors Items Survey District

Ray Carter and Marsha

Visitors Items, Decatur A, and

10. 2018, Paul B. Toussaint photo.

Nov / WD. HISTORICAL TRANS

#1 of 4



D-829

Visitors Items Survey District

Visitors Items, DORCHESTER Co., MD

10.2013, Paul B. Toward, Pittsv.

N22. / MB. HISTORICAL TRUSS

2 OF 4



D-928

BISITORS HEAD Survey DISTRICT
BISITORS HEAD ROAD, DORCHESTER C., MD.
10.2013, PAUL B. TOWART, PHOTOGRAPHER
NEE/MO. HISTORICAL TRUST

#3 of 4



D-828

BISHOPS ITEM Survey District

St. Thomas M. E. Church in Burkwood

10, 2013, Paul B. Touart, pastor.

BISHOPS ITEM, Dorchester Co. MD.

NEB./MD. HISTORICAL TRUST

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