

K-151  
Buttonwood Farm  
Galena  
Private

1796 with Victorian  
remodeling

Buttonwood Farm, on the south side of Route 213 a short distance west of the Galena crossroads, is the closest farm to Galena. In fact, the house and much, though apparently not all, of the farm are within the corporate limits. The farm is not a large one, about 125 acres. Evidently a rather simple, conventional three-bay-wide, two-storey, brick Federal house built c. 1796, it is now a 2-1/2 storey building with central gable, Victorian dormers, a deep bay window on two storeys, and large Victorian porch; the rear wing has a secondary facade. The plan is central hall, with rear ell wing. A large one-storey room with roof parapeted was built to the east of the main section about 1900; the parapet is only in the front; the roof is a side-shed. The house at Buttonwood Farm is an exuberance of Victoriana in a brick Federal shell. All removable evidences of the earlier house were whisked away and new building parts and trim installed, some of the latter with a sentimental wedding-bell theme. The wing appears to be entirely from the Victorian period. The alterations reflect both the apparent prosperity of the owner who did them and an apparent distaste for the old, out-of-fashion style. The Victorian remodeling of Buttonwood is one reflection of the kinds of changes that have happened with old buildings in Kent County. Those that are in the most original today are most frequently those whose owners did not have the means to remodel them or those houses that were often tenanted. The late nineteenth century, with peach and other fruit crops booming, was a period of conspicuous consumption in Kent County. Houses appear to have been a primary reflection of local prosperity. The house at Buttonwood has an unusually constructed two-storey bay window. Most bays of the period were three-part and constructed in an almost standard way. The east bay at Buttonwood is five-part and hence considerably deeper and more noticeable.

# Maryland Historical Trust State Historic Sites Inventory Form

## 1. Name (indicate preferred name)

historic Wedding Bells House; Red Gables

and/or common Buttonwood Farm (preferred)

## 2. Location

street & number South side Rt. 213 (Cross St.), 800 feet  
west of Main Street \_\_\_ not for publication

city, town Galena  vicinity of congressional district

state Maryland county Kent

## 3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> not applicable	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other:

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

name William A. Briscoe

street & number Buttonwood Farm telephone no.: 648-5162

city, town Galena, state and zip code Maryland 21635

## 5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Kent County Courthouse liber WHG 10

street & number Cross Street folio 346, 372

city, town Chestertown state Maryland

## 6. Representation in Existing Historical Surveys

title Maryland Historic Sites Inventory - HABS Inventory

date February 24, 1969  federal  state  county  local

depository for survey records Maryland Historical Trust, 21 State Circle

city, town Annapolis state Maryland 21401

# 7. Description

Survey No. K-151

<b>Condition</b>		<b>Check one</b>	<b>Check one</b>	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site	
<input type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved	date of move _____
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed			

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

Buttonwood Farm, on the south side of Route 213 a short distance west of the Galena crossroads, is the closest farm to Galena. In fact, the house and much, though apparently not all, of the farm are within the corporate limits. The farm is not a large one, about 125 acres. The house is a Federal period building with a thoroughgoing Victorian remodeling. Evidently a rather simple, conventional three-bay-wide, two-storey, brick Federal house built c. 1796, it is now a 2-1/2 storey building with central gable, Victorian dormers, a deep bay window on two storeys, and large Victorian porch. The interior has been similarly Victorianized. The plan is central hall, with rear ell wing. A large one-storey room with roof parapeted was built to the east of the main section about 1900; the parapet is only in the front; the roof is a side-shed.

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# 8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

**Specific dates** Circa 1796 & 1875-1900 **Builder/Architect**

check: Applicable Criteria:  A  B  C  D  
and/or

Applicable Exception:  A  B  C  D  E  F  G

Level of Significance:  national  state  local

Prepare both a summary paragraph of significance and a general statement of history and support.

The house at Buttonwood Farm is an exuberance of Victoriana in a brick Federal shell. All evidences of the earlier house were whisked away and new building parts installed--except for the basic exterior structure. The wing appears to be entirely from the Victorian period. The alterations reflect both the apparent prosperity of the owner who did them and an apparent distaste for the old, out-of-fashion style. The Victorian remodeling of Buttonwood is one reflection of the kinds of changes that have happened with old buildings in Kent County. Those that are in the most original today are most frequently those whose owners did not have the means to remodel them or those houses that were often tenanted. The late nineteenth century, with peach and other fruit crops booming, was a period of conspicuous consumption in Kent County. Houses appear to have been a primary reflection of local prosperity. The house at Buttonwood has an unusually constructed two-storey bay window. Most bays of the period were three-part and constructed in an almost standard way. The east bay at Buttonwood is five-part and hence considerably deeper and more noticeable.

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Buttonwood is one of those Victorian houses with two facades, primary and secondary. The secondary facade is on the east side of the wing, where there is a central gable, though it serves no functional purpose as lighting a stair or providing a small sitting space, as such gables sometimes do. The interior space behind this central gable is simply a storage attic, accessible through the east third story bedroom, through a door in the place a dormer would be if there were no intersecting roof there.

The main, brick section at Buttonwood is three bays wide and two deep. Its north, main facade is laid in Flemish bond. Both gable ends and the rear side are laid in 1-to-5 common bond, though to window-sill level the bond appears to be 1-to-3. The front facade only has a plain, unmolded water table, with 1-to-3 bond. The bricks of the main facade appear to be somewhat larger than those elsewhere, and joints are smaller. The main facade has a two-course belt.

The wing is now covered except within the south porch with horizontal, lapped aluminum siding applied over horizontal, lapped weatherboard. That appearing in the porch has an exposure of 4-1/2" to 4-3/4". The c. 1900 one-storey addition is covered with white aluminum siding.

The chimneys are Victorian. The main section has a chimney at each gable end, within the wall at the center. The brick is deep red, and the chimneys have a two course band with two courses corbelled and below. There is a three-course corbelled base. There is a chimney in the main wing, near the center. It is built of lighter red brick. Perhaps originally serving a kitchen stove, it is now a flue for the furnace in the cellar. It has the same banded corbelling as the main section chimneys but no corbelled base. The circa 1900 one-storey wing, which was used for a time as a sort of separate apartment, with its own kitchen (now gone), has an exterior chimney to its rear. This chimney is now painted black.

The main entry is in the central bay of the main section. The outer jambs are panelled, with a total of five panels that are recessed and molded with cove and ovolo. The wood sill is heavy. There are movable louver shutters from the sill to the bottom of the hood frieze, with one large recessed and raised panel in the lower one-quarter of the shutters with ogee-and-bevel panel molding that is larger but similar to that of the window shutters, which each have two lower panels in one-third of the shutter height. The door jambs and head are plain except for stopped chamfers on the exterior. There is a four-light transom with green and yellow/gold colored glass. The yellow lights are at the outside. The transom frame is also chamfered. The transom bar is compound. The transom lintel is panelled corresponding to each transom light. There are sidelights on each side over two panels on each side that are equal in size. The glass is clear. The architrave is hooded, with three brackets equally spaced on the frieze, each with deeply incised musical eighth notes that are now picked out in black paint. This is a touch of sentimental Victorianism. According to the family, this was so that all within would live in harmony. The hood brackets are the same style as on the window hoods and porch cornice, though the porch brackets are larger. The

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hood has a cyma recta crown and a bed molding of cove and ovolo. The door is also Victorian. There are four equal panels below the lock rail, with a wide panel above with a festoon, or swag, with wedding bells and bows at either end, now also painted black to bring out the design on the white door. There is a brass knob and backplate. At eye level there is an approximately square glass panel, with a wide, narrow panel above. The panels of the door are all recessed and slightly raised, with compound panel molding.

Windows are double-hung with 1-over-1 lights. All windows of the first two storeys of the main facade are paired; there are, therefore, five sets. Gable end windows are single, except in the location of the deep bay window. The first storey facade windows have the same hood as the main entry, as does the center-bay window pair of the second storey. The shutters are tripartite, with movable louvers, fixed louvers, and a panel.

According to family oral tradition, the house was built in 1796 by William Armstrong, Sr. The property then seems to have been called McKey's Purchase, or McCay's Purchase. This William Armstrong was said to have served in the War of 1812 and been a member of the Presbyterian church in Georgetown. He farmed this farmed and owned a store in Galena, which then would have been called Georgetown Crossroads. The next owner appears to have been William Armstrong, Jr., and then John Medford Armstrong, apparently a son, probably the owner for the longest period in the nineteenth century and perhaps the one responsible for the Victorian remodeling. His grave and those of his numerous family are out in a fenced burial ground in the back yard: his first wife Aramenta Johnson and five children from that marriage and his second wife E. E. A. W. Johnson and two children from that marriage. John Medford Armstrong died in 1889, having been a mainstay of Shrewsbury Parish and a large landholder besides this farm.

The house was built at the edge of the small crossroads village that was first called Down's Crossroads, named first during the eighteenth century for the innkeeper whose establishment was at the northwest corner of the crossroads. His inn was expanded with additions in the nineteenth century and became known as Pennington's Hotel. It, along with much of the rest of Galena, burned in the great fire of 1893. A gas station stands there today. No one seems to know if the long row of outbuildings to the north of that lot might have been stabling for the hotel. During the early nineteenth century Down's Crossroads became known as Georgetown Crossroads, since roads intersected there leading to the main crossing of the Sassafras River at Georgetown, several miles to the north. From the Galena crossroads one could take a road south and east to Massey and into Delaware (Duck Creek, or Smyrna). This was known as an early "great" road. Going east from the crossroads took the traveler to Sassafras and the important north-south road that came up from Queen Anne's County and through Millington and Massey to Sassafras, and then into Cecil County via Warwick, then up into northern Delaware. The westerly road from Galena went to Chestertown and points inbetween. This road, combined with the road that turned north in Galena, was part of the first post road down the Eastern Shore from the north. There was a secondary post road route down the western shore, but for a considerable time during the eighteenth century the road through Georgetown Crossroads was the more important. It crossed to Annapolis from Rock Hall via a packet.

The house is now named Buttonwood because of the very large sycamore tree that stands there. Other names for it have been Red Gables, since evidently the gables were painted that color (probably a very deep, Spanish red) during the late nineteenth century. This is very likely the color of the gables in a photograph taken not long after the turn of the century, when an early automobile is also shown. There also seems to be gas lighting at the street. Whether Galena then had a central gas lighting system then is not known, but it is possible that this household made its own acetylene gas as wealthier households sometimes did during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The house has also been called the Wedding Bells house because of the repetition of what could be taken to be wedding bells as

decoration, as on the front door, the newel, and the porch brackets. This house and Duckhollow in Georgetown (K-117) were very similar in their Victorian remodelings. Both were Federal houses, and both had central gables and dormers added to them, along with a wealth of Victorian details. Duckhollow has been de-Victorianized, however, while Buttonwood remains with the Victorian remodeling intact. In fact, there are no original materials remaining from the Federal house, not even stored in barns. It is only a Federal brick shell.

3 bays x 2 bays <sup>start from</sup> w/ L + 1 story frame  
flat roof rising off SW corner

Flambard on N - Cornice elsewhere

N. window lengthened and widened  $\frac{1}{2}$  sash  
double window on facade

Door w/ trans + sidelights 7 over shutters

Porch w/ brack - fluted columns - found  
balustrade - 2 sides of bldg (N+E)

3 brick belt

Cornice above center window + above W side

Overhang cornice w/ brackets -

frame gable - center flanked by 2 large dormers

Chimney - each gable w/ 19<sup>th</sup> cent cap.

K-151

Galena, formerly called Downes' Crossroad, retains only two buildings which appear to date from the 18th century. The Briscoe House is the only one of brick and has been so altered that it is difficult to recognize its original form. It is three bays long and two bays deep with a steep "A" roof. The north facade is laid in Flemish bond, painted white, and there is a three brick belt course between floors. The windows of the north facade are double with 1/1 sash and louvered shutters. Located in the center bay, the door has sidelights and transom. A one story porch with bracket cornice, fluted columns and bold turned balustrade, occupies the north and east sides of the building. The cornice of the main roof matches that of the porch, with overhand and brackets. In the center of the roof is a large frame gable flanked by an oversized dormer on each side. West gable windows have decorative cornices above them. Chimneys are bold example of the late Victorian style. On the east side of the south facade is a two story frame "L" and off the southwest corner is a one story flat roof wing (reminescent of 19th century law offices).

This house is a good example of what happened to an old house when later generations had sufficient funds to 'modernize'.





7.5 MINUTE SERIES (TOPOGRAPHIC)

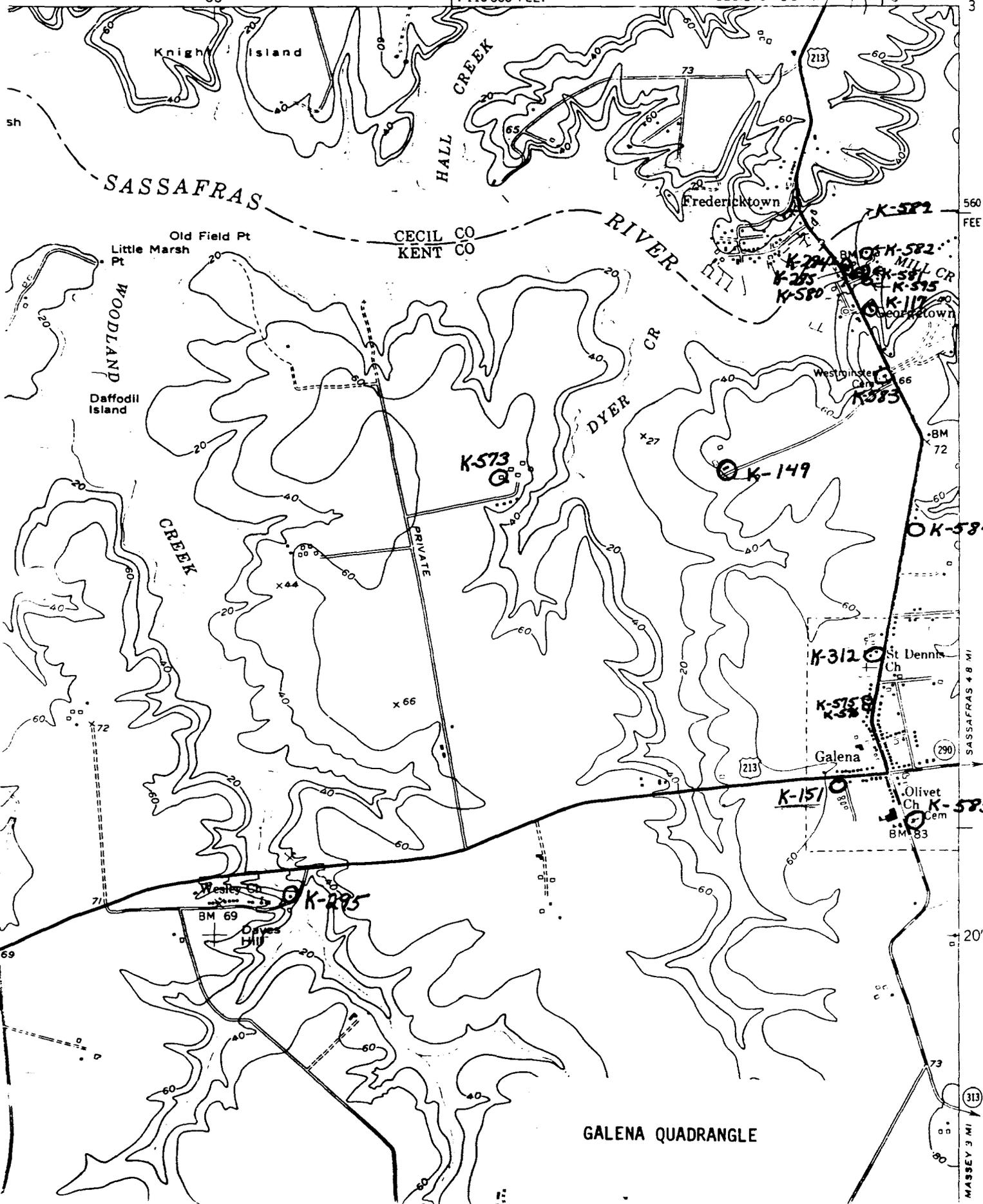
SW/4 CECILTON 15' QUADRANGLE

ELKTON 18 MI  
CECILTON 28 MI

K-151 75°52'33"

55'

1110000 FEET



SASSAFRAS

HALL CREEK

RIVER

DYER CR

WOODLAND

CREEK

Old Field Pt  
Little Marsh Pt

CECIL CO  
KENT CO

Fredericktown

K-572

560  
FEET

BM 05 K-582  
MILL CR  
K-581  
K-580  
K-117  
K-575

Westminster

66

BM 72

K-573

K-149

K-584

K-312

St Dennis Ch

K-575  
K-574

Galena

213

K-151

Olivet Ch

BM 83

K-585

Wesley

K-295

BM 69

GALENA QUADRANGLE

MASSEY 3 MI



K-151

Buttonwood

Cross Street, Galena

M. Q. Fallaw - 4/3/85

View to northeast

K151  
#2A  
Uacc.



K-151  
Buttonwood  
Cross Street, Galena  
M. Q. Fallaw - 4/18/85  
View to southwest

K151

#17

Dir Sec.