

K-312

1884

Rectory of St. Dennis Church

Galena

Private

The 2-1/2 storey main section of the brick rectory of St. Dennis Roman Catholic Church is sited with its main, south facade facing the town, not the road. The rectory was built in 1884 with bricks from the parish's first church, built in 1855-56 near Lambson Station. The main facade is three bays wide on each level, with the middle, main-entry bay a projecting pavilion carried up through the third level. However, while using a facade that called for symmetry, the planners of this building nevertheless built it asymmetrically. The pavilion is noticeably off-center to the west, evidently to provide more space on the interior to one room (the east parlor) rather than the other (the west dining room). The style is Victorian Gothic Revival that in its execution bears some resemblance to the house at Hickory Ridge Farm (K-639), whose owner-builder, Samuel Jackson Johnson, was a parishioner at the time of the building of the rectory. The side-bay windows of the first and second storeys of the facade are double, the first-storey ones with shallow, segmental arches. On the facade roof slope there is a large, gable-roofed dormer in each side bay. The rear (north) roof slope has a larger dormer more akin to a central gable, though it is built like a dormer. The pavilion has a gable-roofed canopy on the first storey, a single window on the second, and its third level treated like the nearby dormers. At the west end a lower two-storey brick kitchen wing was built at the same time as the main section, and a contemporary brick one-storey office wing with gable roof is perpendicular to the main section at the rear. There is now a hyphen connecting the rectory with the 1934 stone church to the north. The rectory is both like other Kent County vernacular Victorian Gothic Revival houses of its period and unlike them. The 1880s were the years of the height of the style in Kent County, and numerous large buildings were built in it. The facade would have looked generally familiar to upper-county residents with its three-bay, central entry arrangement, steep gable roof, and gable-roofed dormers. However, local buildings in this style were frame, not brick, and the pavilion is not seen elsewhere in the upper county. There is a house with a pavilion in the county appearing to date from the same period, but it is in

Quaker Neck (the Atkinson Farm, K-455). The paired windows were also unusual.

At the time, the size and the apparent grandeur of the rectory also caused comment within Catholic circles, where some considered it scandalous that such a building should be built to house only one priest. According to Thomas Becker, the Bishop of Wilmington at the time, the rectory was a "palatial residence," and he considered the cost "alarming." It was sometimes referred to as "Bradford's Folly," for George S. Bradford who was the first priest in charge of the Kent County missions and who took up residence in the rectory after it was completed. It is said to be the first rectory built with a separate office space intended for office use.

# Maryland Historical Trust

## State Historic Sites Inventory Form

### 1. Name (indicate preferred name)

historic

and/or common Rectory of St. Dennis Roman Catholic Church

### 2. Location

West side Rt. 213 (Main Street), .4 mile north of Rt. 290, Galena  
street & number \_\_\_ not for publicationcity, town Galena \_\_\_ vicinity of congressional districtstate 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 checked="" 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 St. Dennis Church

street & number telephone no.:city, town Galena state and zip code Maryland 21635

### 5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Kent County Courthouse liberstreet & number Cross Street foliocity, town Chestertown state Maryland

### 6. Representation in Existing Historical Surveys

title Unknowndate \_\_\_ federal \_\_\_ state \_\_\_ county \_\_\_ local

depository for survey records

city, town state

# 7. Description

Survey No. K-312

<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.

Located on the west side of Main Street near the northern edge of Galena, the 2-1/2 storey main section of the brick rectory of St. Dennis Roman Catholic Church is sited with its main, south facade facing the town, not the road. The rectory was built in 1884 with bricks from the parish's first church, built in 1855-56 near Lambson Station. The main facade is three bays wide on each level, with the middle, main-entry bay a projecting pavilion carried up through the third level. However, while using a facade that called for symmetry, the planners of this building nevertheless built it asymmetrically. The pavilion is noticeable off-center to the west, evidently to provide more space on the interior to one room (the east parlor) rather than the other (the west dining room). The style is Victorian Gothic Revival that in its execution bears some resemblance to the house at Hickory Ridge Farm (K-639), whose owner-builder, Samuel Jackson Johnson, was a parishioner at the time of the building of the rectory. There may be a connection. The side-bay windows of the first and second storeys of the facade are double, the first-storey ones with shallow, segmental arches. On the facade roof slope there is a large, gable-roofed dormer in each side bay. The rear (north) roof slope has a larger dormer more akin to a central gable, though it is built like a dormer. The pavilion has a gable-roofed canopy on the first storey a single window on the second, and its third level treated like the nearby dormers. At the west end a lower two-storey brick kitchen wing was built at the same time as the main section, and a contemporary brick one-story office wing with gable roof is perpendicular to the main section at the rear. There is now a hyphen connecting the rectory with the 1934 stone church to the north.

# 8. Significance

<b>Period</b>	<b>Areas of Significance—Check and justify below</b>			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning.	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input checked="" 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 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** 1884 **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 rectory is both like other Kent County vernacular Victorian Gothic Revival houses of its period and unlike them. The 1880s were the years of the height of the style in Kent County, and numerous large buildings were built in it. The facade would have looked generally familiar to upper-county residents with its three-bay, central entry arrangement, steep gable roof, and gable-roofed dormers. However, local buildings in this style were frame, not brick, and the pavilion is not seen elsewhere in the upper county. There is a house with a pavilion in the county appearing to date from the same period, but it is in Quaker Neck (the Atkinson Farm, K-455). The paired windows were also unusual. At the time, the size and the apparent grandeur of the rectory also caused comment within Catholic circles, where some considered it scandalous that such a building should be built to house only one priest. It supposedly was larger than even the bishop's house. According to Thomas Becker, the Bishop of Wilmington at the time, the rectory was a "palatial residence," and he considered the cost "alarming." It was sometimes referred to as "Bradford's Folly," for George S. Bradford who was the first priest in charge of the Kent County missions and who took up residence in the rectory after it was completed. It is said to be the first rectory built with a separate office space intended for office use. The total cost was \$4,560 for dismantling the old church, building the rectory, digging a well, building a stable, and providing a chicken house and fencing, plus a few improvements to the old frame church. It was quite an undertaking for a relatively newly established parish in a county where there were not many Catholics, though it should be remembered that the parish's staunchest supporters were prominent farmers, who generally were made wealthy during this period by bumper peach (and other fruit) crops. It was a period of conspicuous consumption in Kent County.



The end wing for the kitchen was one bay wide in the rear (north) with double window with arch on the first storey and a single window above. The second storey was used to house a cook-housekeeper. Originally the wing seems to have had a porch on its south side, but now there is a rather nondescript brick, two-storey, two-bay wing in its place, with a very shallow shed roof from the kitchen roof. The kitchen wing's rear wall was flush with the main section's wall in the rear, but the wing was shallower and hence set back from the main section in the front. The two-storey kitchen addition filled this space and more, protruding beyond the main-section facade.

The circulation plan of the main section is a T. There is a central passage with stair, but it leads to a long, rather narrow hall along the north side of the first storey with access at its west end to the dining room, at its east end to an exterior door that has now become the main entry, to the parlor en route, and to the rear office wing. The stair is what some would call "backwards" in relation to the original main entry, being entered at the rear of the stair hall rather than the front near the door. The original main entry, functionally rather poorly located, has been closed and a powder room installed in it on the first storey. The main entrance is now through the door into the east end, in the north bay, through a one-storey enclosed porch with a shallow gable roof that spans the east end. This enclosed porch seems to have replaced an earlier, open porch.

The walls of the original sections are laid in common 1-to-7 bond with quite wide joints. The brick is dark, somewhat mottled, and appears handmolded. Reportedly, one reason for dismantling the old brick church at Lambson Station (other than preferring to be in Galena, a population center) was that the brick of the 35' x 50' church proved unsatisfactory within a very short time after its building in 1855-56. The church, in fact, had been built unusually quickly, within six months. Within ten years the bricks had been judged to have been built of inferior local clay that was supposedly not the best for the purpose. One commentator said that the bishop felt that the church "on Mr. Dennis McCauley's estate, should be taken down and a new dry one built near Galena, which seems to be the best place. The old church (still not yet thirteen years old) could scarcely be repaired and made fit for anything. The people admit this unanimously." However, the cleaned and re-used bricks have served well at the rectory for over 100 years, appearing to be in good condition. They may have been made at a brickyard shown on the 1877 atlas map of Kent County as Moses Lambson's brickyard, very close to the location of the Dennis McCauley farm where the first church was built on a corner of the property. The later additions (to the kitchen and enclosed porch) use the same brick bond as the original building (1-7 common), but are built with mid-twentieth-century common red brick.

There now are three chimneys of the probable original four. They are placed without regard to symmetry but where wanted. Logically, the kitchen wing would have had a chimney for cooking, unless a stove was vented into the dining room chimney in the main section, in the adjacent wall. This chimney is located within the wall within the west gable end of the main section. It is quite thin above the roof. It is of dark-red brick (perhaps not

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the same as the main-wall brick, or else it is weathered differently) and has a corbelled cap, out and in. It seems to be covered by a masonry cap, evidently to keep out birds and debris because it has been closed for use. A second chimney exits through the ridge and rises through the parlor's west wall, adjacent to the stair hall. It heated the parlor. Its construction is the same as the west chimney. The third chimney is on the north side of the main section, to heat the office wing. It is lower and placed to be inconspicuous. It partially protrudes from the main bloc, running up the north side of the rear central gable/dormer's east pilaster. The gable's window was moved off-center to the west to accommodate the chimney. This chimney has the same details as the others and also is thin. It is closed for use below, in the office.

There is a cellar under part of the building, under only the stair hall and the kitchen. Port Deposit granite is used for the walls but not above ground level. Only brick shows on the exterior. The twentieth-century additions appear, at least partially, to have concrete block foundations, with crawl spaces.

The roofs of the original building are now covered with large, interlocking, vari-colored asphalt shingles that are also used in the main-section gable ends and the face of the central gable and pavilion dormer. Most likely the original material in these locations was wood shingles. The pavilion is brick only to the general cornice level, to the below-eave frieze. The church is planning remodeling to remove this asphalt material and to reshingle with wood shingles.

The main entry in present use is in the east gable end, in the north bay, within the enclosed end porch. Head and jambs with chamfered edges (stopped) indicate that there probably was a transom at this entry. The door is a replacement (two lights over two pairs of panels), and the architrave molding is covered by the porch wall material of sheet paneling. The porch is used now as a chapel. The jambs themselves are enriched with heavy central reeding and outside fillets.

The original main entry on the south facade has its transom and door opening closed with plywood. The emphasis here is on the tall and narrow, befitting the Gothic Revival style. The transom is tall (c. 33" at center, including the bar) and round-headed and c. 39" wide, with a round-headed brick arch. The transom soffit and jambs are not visible but are perhaps treated with the same motif as on the interior, with fillets on each side of bold central reeding. The outside edges of both transom and door jambs are chamfered. There is a large (7" tall) stone sill of perhaps unpolished marble. Concrete steps and integral small stoop are in place, protruding beyond the width of the brick pavilion. There is an applied gable-roofed canopy with steep pitch over the door. It is supported by large (31" tall x 21" deep), bold, simply-sawn built-up brackets with pyramidal cap applied to the front end of the upper leg. There is an ornamental bargeboard with rounded ends that partially closes in the tympanum of the gable. There is an applied sunburst/peacock feather fan? with heavy horizontal piece below. The

(continued)

vergeboards have spaced bullseyes in pairs between pairs of applied half-round molding strips.

Other entries are into the south kitchen wing (utility room, with access to kitchen) and on the west side of the office wing. Here there is a heavy wooden lintel as at the cellar windows. The door is a replacement, like the one at the present porch main entry. There are concrete steps and a small stoop in place. The jamb edges are also chamfered here, and the same reeded detail is on the jamb faces and head soffit.

The stair rises from the rear of the building to the front. It is dogleg and open-string. There are two painted balusters per tread; they are turned and with fluted octagonal center sections. The rail is continuous to the end of the run on the third storey. The rail is broad and simply molded. The newel is a bold Victorian catalogue newel with octagonal base that has most faces with recessed and molded panels. There are turned sections and an octagonal shaft with faces paneled. The treads appear to be pine grained to appear as oak.

Windows were originally double-hung with 2-over-2 lights; some have been replaced with new sash with 8-over-8 lights.

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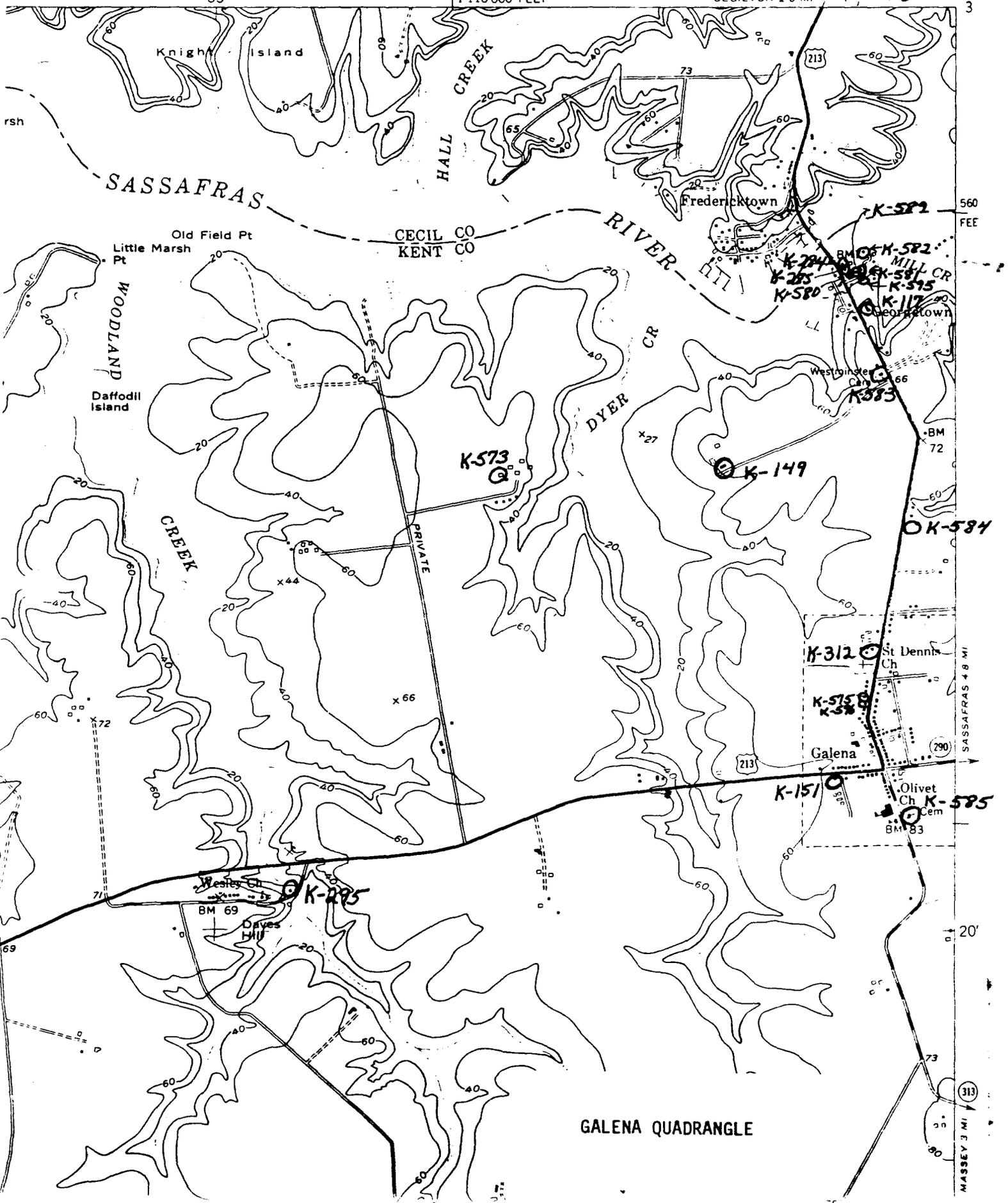
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K-312

Rectory of St. Dennis R. C. Church

Main Street, Galena

M. Q. Fallaw - 8/16/85

View to east



K-312

Rectory of St. Dennis R. C. Church

Main Street, Galena

M. Q. Fallaw - 8/22/86

View to west

K-312-11