

Capsule Summary  
SM-158  
Etta Gunnell Farm  
Leonardtown Vicinity  
Private

c. 1850s

The main house at the Etta Gunnell Farm, a one-and-a-half-story, braced-frame, hall-parlor plan dwelling with a one-story kitchen wing, is located on a 54 acre tract at the intersection of Maryland Routes 5 and 234. Constructed in the early-1850s on a tract called "Part of Hopton Park" by Zephaniah and Mary Glovenia Nelson, the dwelling has been significantly altered by several subsequent additions and modern renovations. The dwelling, however, retains its original framing and overall form to represent a significant example of a modest landowner's dwelling. Like the Joy/Johnson House (SM-168), the house at the Etta Gunnell Farm originally featured an exterior end chimney on the north gable end and a shared stack on the south side between the south room and kitchen wing. This room arrangement was a common strategy to integrate domestic service into mid-nineteenth century dwellings. A braced frame tobacco barn with a shed addition, erected c. 1850, is located to the northwest. The tobacco barn is constructed on a stone foundation of hewn and pit sawn framing members and features intermediate vertical braces that extend or hang from structural ties to support the horizontal tobacco poles. These braces extend to the floor unlike those found in the Drydocking Farm Barn (SM-545). Together, the barn and the house provide an accurate glimpse of the mid-nineteenth century agricultural landscape in St. Mary's County.

SM-158, Etta Gunnell Farm  
St. Mary's County  
Maryland Comprehensive State Historic Preservation Plan Data

Historic Context

Geographic Organization:	Western Shore
Chronological/Developmental Period:	Agricultural/Industrial Transition, 1815-1870
Historic Period Theme:	Agriculture Architecture

Resource Type

Category:	Structures
Historic Environment:	Rural
Historic Function and Use:	Dwelling, Tobacco Barn
Known Design Source:	None

# Maryland Historical Trust State Historic Sites Inventory Form

MARYLAND INVENTORY OF  
HISTORIC PROPERTIES

Survey No. SM-158

Magi No.

DOE  yes  no

## 1. Name (indicate preferred name)

historic Nelson House

and/or common Etta Gunnell Farm, "Part of Hopton Park"

## 2. Location

street & number 0.1 mile N of intersection of Route 5 and Route 234 on the W side of Rt. 5  not for publication

city, town Leonardtown \_\_\_\_\_ vicinity of \_\_\_\_\_ congressional district 3

state Maryland \_\_\_\_\_ county St. Mary's \_\_\_\_\_ TM 32, P 2

## 3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" 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 checked="" 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 type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other:

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

name Joseph Vallandingham and Associates c/o William J. Fitzgerald

street & number PO Box 288 \_\_\_\_\_ telephone no.: (301) 475-7000

city, town Mechanicsville \_\_\_\_\_ state and zip code Maryland 20659

## 5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. St. Mary's County Courthouse \_\_\_\_\_ liber MRB 539

street & number \_\_\_\_\_ folio 138

city, town Leonardtown \_\_\_\_\_ state Maryland

## 6. Representation in Existing Historical Surveys

title Etta Gunnell Farm

date August 1970 \_\_\_\_\_ federal  state \_\_\_\_\_ county \_\_\_\_\_ local

depository for survey records Maryland Historical Trust

city, town Crownsville \_\_\_\_\_ state Maryland

# 7. Description

<b>Condition</b>		<b>Check one</b>	<b>Check one</b>	
<input 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 checked="" 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.

Contributing Resource Count: 2

Located on a 54.65 acre tract, the Etta Gunnell Farm is 0.2 miles north of the intersection of Deep Falls Road (Route 242) and Maryland State Route 5, near Leonardtown, Maryland. The house is approached via a 0.2 mile dirt road intermittently lined with cedar trees. The main house lies perpendicular to the dirt drive and is oriented on a east/west axis with its primary elevation facing east. The property also contains two tobacco barns. One barn, c. 1850, is oriented on a north/ south axis while the other, c. 1920s, is oriented on a east/west axis. The fields surrounding the house and barns are still cultivated, but the tract is slated for development and the house will most likely be demolished.

The main house, constructed c. 1850s, is a one-and-a-half story, four-bay, braced-frame dwelling with a stone foundation, gable roof, one story gable-end ell and several twentieth century additions and changes that obscure the house's original appearance. The entire house is sheathed with vinyl siding, while the roof is covered with asphalt shingles. There are also two brick chimneys--one exterior end chimney located on the north gable end and a chimney shared by the one story ell and the main block.

The primary or east elevation of the main block features four asymmetrically placed bays that lie behind a screened-in, vinyl covered porch with a centrally located aluminum screen door. From south to north the bays consist of a four-over-four, double-hung sash window, two modern wood doors--each with three stepped glass panes, and a six-over-six, double-hung sash window. The roof of the main block is pierced by two gable dormers. Each dormer has a one-over-one double-hung sash window. The east elevation of the one story south gable ell features a single wood door although evidence in the interior suggests that it was also once pierced by a four-over-four window.

The south elevation consists of the one story ell's gable end, the gable end of the main block and a shed roof addition and enclosed porch to the west of the main block. The ell features a centrally placed four-over-four window (now covered over) while the main block features a pair of single pane windows that light the attic story. The square shaped brick chimney, located between the ell and main block is stepped back from the main block, but is still shared by both sections. The shed roof addition to the main block features a set of paired, six-over-six windows. To the west of this shed is a porch--now entirely enclosed with vinyl sidng and topped by an aluminum awning.

The west elevation of the main section is obscured by the modern additions, but a dormer window with a set of paired six-over-six windows pierce the roof. The one story ell features a wood door and a six pane, fixed sash window. The shed roof addition features a small one-over-one window and a series of three, six-over-six and a one, one-over-one windows--all presently shaded by the vinyl enclosed porch. The shed roof addition also features another set of three, six-over-six windows. Immediately to the north of the shed addition is another one story gable roof addition that features a single exterior cinder block furnace flue.

# 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/ humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700–1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800–1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900–	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		

Specific dates	Builder/Architect
check: Applicable Criteria: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> A <input type="checkbox"/> B <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> C <input type="checkbox"/> D and/or	
Applicable Exception: <input type="checkbox"/> A <input type="checkbox"/> B <input type="checkbox"/> C <input type="checkbox"/> D <input type="checkbox"/> E <input type="checkbox"/> F <input type="checkbox"/> G	
Level of Significance: <input type="checkbox"/> national <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> state <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> local	

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

The main house at Etta Gunnell Farm, a one-and-a-half-story, braced-frame, hall-parlor plan dwelling with a one-story kitchen wing, is located on a 54 acre tract at the intersection of Maryland Routes 5 and 234. Constructed in the early-1850s by Zephaniah and Mary Glovenia Nelson, the dwelling has been significantly altered by several subsequent additions and modern renovations. The main house, however, retains its original framing and overall form to represent a significant example of a modest landowner's dwelling. Like the Joy/Johnson House (SM-168), this dwelling originally featured an exterior end chimney on the north gable end and a shared stack on the south side between the south room and kitchen wing. This room arrangement was a common strategy to integrate domestic service into mid-nineteenth century dwellings. The tobacco barn is constructed on a stone foundation of hewn and pit sawn framing members and features intermediate vertical braces that extend from structural ties to the floor to support the horizontal tobacco poles. These braces are similar to those found in the Dryadocking Farm Barn (SM-543) except these braces extend to the dirt floor.

The Etta Gunnell Farm house was constructed soon after Zephaniah Nelson purchased a 115 acre tract called "Part of Hopton Park." The tract, formerly belonging to James Thompson (of Robert), was owned by Nelson until he died in 1874. Upon his death the property was transferred to his wife as well as his eight children that included George Ignatius Nelson, John Francis Nelson, Ann Elizabeth Mills, Obediah Nelson, William Audd Nelson, Mary Francis Nelson, and Stacy Samuel Nelson. The Nelson family eventually sold the farm as the result of a circuit court case between Samuel S. Nelson et al vs Wallace Nelson et al in 1936. On January 14 of the that year, Etta Gunnell purchased the property at auction. It was during her ownership when many of the alterations to the house were done. Heirs of Ms. Gunnell owned the tract until 1990. A residential subdivision is now planned for the property.

**10. Geographical Data**

Acreage of nominated property 54.65 acres

Quadrangle name Leonardtown, Md

Quadrangle scale 1:24 000

UTM References do NOT complete UTM references

A 

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Zone Easting Northing

B 

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Zone Easting Northing

C 

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D 

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E 

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F 

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G 

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H 

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**Verbal boundary description and justification**

Same as per deed description.

**List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries**

state	code	county	code

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title Kirk E. Ranzetta, Historic Sites Surveyor

organization Department of Planning and Zoning date April 1997

street & number 22740 Washington Street telephone (301) 475-4662

city or town Leonardtown state Maryland

The Maryland Historic Sites Inventory 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  
Shaw House  
21 State Circle  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401  
(301) 269-2438

MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST  
DHCP/DHCD  
100 COMMUNITY PLACE  
CROWNSVILLE, MD 21032-2023  
514-7600

SM-158, Etta Gunnell Farm  
St. Mary's County  
7.1 Description

The north elevation features the gable end of the main section and the blind gable end of the rear gable roof addition. The main section is dominated by a centrally located exterior end brick chimney with a single set of shoulders. The stone base of the chimney, while repointed and covered with portland cement, steps out two inches on the three visible sides.

The interior of the main house has been extensively remodeled obscuring the main block's original two room, single pile floor plan and its decoration. The interior has been converted into a center passage plan with a winder stair to the attic story above with all divisions in the attic now removed. No mantles or door and window trim appear to survive. The interior of the one story, one room ell remains largely intact. The room was originally unfinished as evidenced by the blackened ceiling joists and wall studs. A large, undecorated, brick fireplace with a wood lintel and a brick hearth projects into the room suggesting that this room originally served as the kitchen.

The property also features a c. 1850s tobacco barn. Resting on a stone foundation, the braced frame barn with hewn and pit sawn framing members features a single entry on the north elevation and an open shed on the south side. The entry door features wrought strap hinges and pintels. The exterior is sheathed with vertical boards and the roof is covered with raised-seam and corrugated metal. The interior is divided into ten, four foot rooms with six tiers of tobacco poles. Pit sawn and barked intermediate supports for the tobacco poles extend from the top joist to the ground. Unlike the intermediate braces that hang from a structural tie beam found at Drydocking Farm Tobacco Barn (SM-526), these supports actually touch the ground. The shed has been divided into stalls presumably for domestic farm animals. It is supported by a series of earthfast cedar posts.

SM-158, Etta Gunnell Farm  
St. Mary's County  
8.1 Significance

Chain-of-Title

(All deeds are located at the Land Records Office, St. Mary's Courthouse, Leonardtown, Maryland unless otherwise noted.)

Deed Reference: Liber MRB 539, Folio 138

Grantee: Joseph Vallandingham & Assoc c/o William J. Fitzgerald

Grantor: Margaret Johnston Abraham and Joseph F. Mitchell

Date: June 1, 1990

Notes: This 54.65 acre tract called "Part of Hopton Park" was sold at auction for \$425,000 (Circuit Court Record, CA 89-193).

Deed Reference: Liber JMM 9, Folio 384

Grantee: Etta Gunnell

Grantor: A. Kingsley Love and William Aleck Loker, trustees

Date: January 14, 1936

Notes: The 115 acre property was again sold at auction as the result of a circuit court case between Samuel S. Nelson et al vs. Wallace Nelson, et al.

Deed Reference: Liber EBA 7, Folio 117

Grantee: George I. and William A. Nelson and Samuel S. Nelson

Grantor: Enoch B. and Katherine Abell

Date: March 11, 1908

Deed Reference: (Will Record) Liber JTMR 1, Folio 352

Grantee: Mary G. Nelson

Grantor: Zepheniah Nelson

Date: April 25, 1874

Notes: The 115 acre property is willed to Mary Glovenia Nelson. The will also lists several of their children as benefactors including George Ignatius Nelson, John Francis Nelson, Ann Elizabeth Mills, Obediah Nelson, William Audd Nelson, Mary Francis Nelson, and Sary Samuel Nelson.

Deed Reference: Liber WTM 2, Folio 327

Grantee: Zepheniah Nelson

Grantor: E. Leo Spalding

Date: December 27, 1850

Notes: The 115 acre tract is listed as "formerly belonging to James Thompson of Robert."

Deed Reference: Liber JH 1, Folio 520

Grantee: James Thompson of Robert

Grantor: William T. Maddox

Date: January 8, 1828

Notes: Here the property is listed as containing 120 acres. Notably, the description of the property, however, is different from previous deeds.

S M -158    ETTA GUNNELL FARM  
Leonardtown  
Private

early 19th century

This 1 1/2-story frame house is four bays in length with a two-bay kitchen wing at one end. An H-shaped chimney is shared by this kitchen and one room of the main house. A single exterior chimney stands at the other end. An addition was built across the rear of the main block circa 1930. The dormers also date from the 20th century.

MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST WORKSHEET

1901585335

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

**1. NAME**

COMMON:  
Gunnell Farmhouse (Etta Gunnell Farm)

AND/OR HISTORIC:

**2. LOCATION**

STREET AND NUMBER:  
Clements Road (MD 234) (MD 234)

CITY OR TOWN:  
Leonardtown

STATE: Maryland COUNTY: St. Mary's

**3. CLASSIFICATION**

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input type="checkbox"/> District <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Object <input type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Structure <input type="checkbox"/> Object	<input type="checkbox"/> Public <input type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both	Public Acquisition: <input type="checkbox"/> In Process <input type="checkbox"/> Being Considered	<input type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress
PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)			
<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial <input type="checkbox"/> Educational <input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> Government <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial <input type="checkbox"/> Military <input type="checkbox"/> Museum	<input type="checkbox"/> Park <input type="checkbox"/> Private Residence <input type="checkbox"/> Religious <input type="checkbox"/> Scientific	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) _____ _____ _____

Yes:  
 Restricted  
 Unrestricted  
 No

**4. OWNER OF PROPERTY**

OWNER'S NAME:  
Etta Gunnell

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN: STATE:

**5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.:  
St. Mary's County Courthouse

STREET AND NUMBER:  
Washington Street and Courthouse Drive

CITY OR TOWN: STATE:  
Leonardtown Maryland

Title Reference of Current Deed (Book & Pg. #):

**6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE OF SURVEY:

DATE OF SURVEY:  Federal  State  County  Local

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN: STATE:

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

7. DESCRIPTION

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

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

*The Gunnell Farmhouse is a 1 1/2-story frame house three bays long with exposed end chimneys.*

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

8. SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

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

SPECIFIC DATE(s) (If Applicable and Known) c. 1830

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

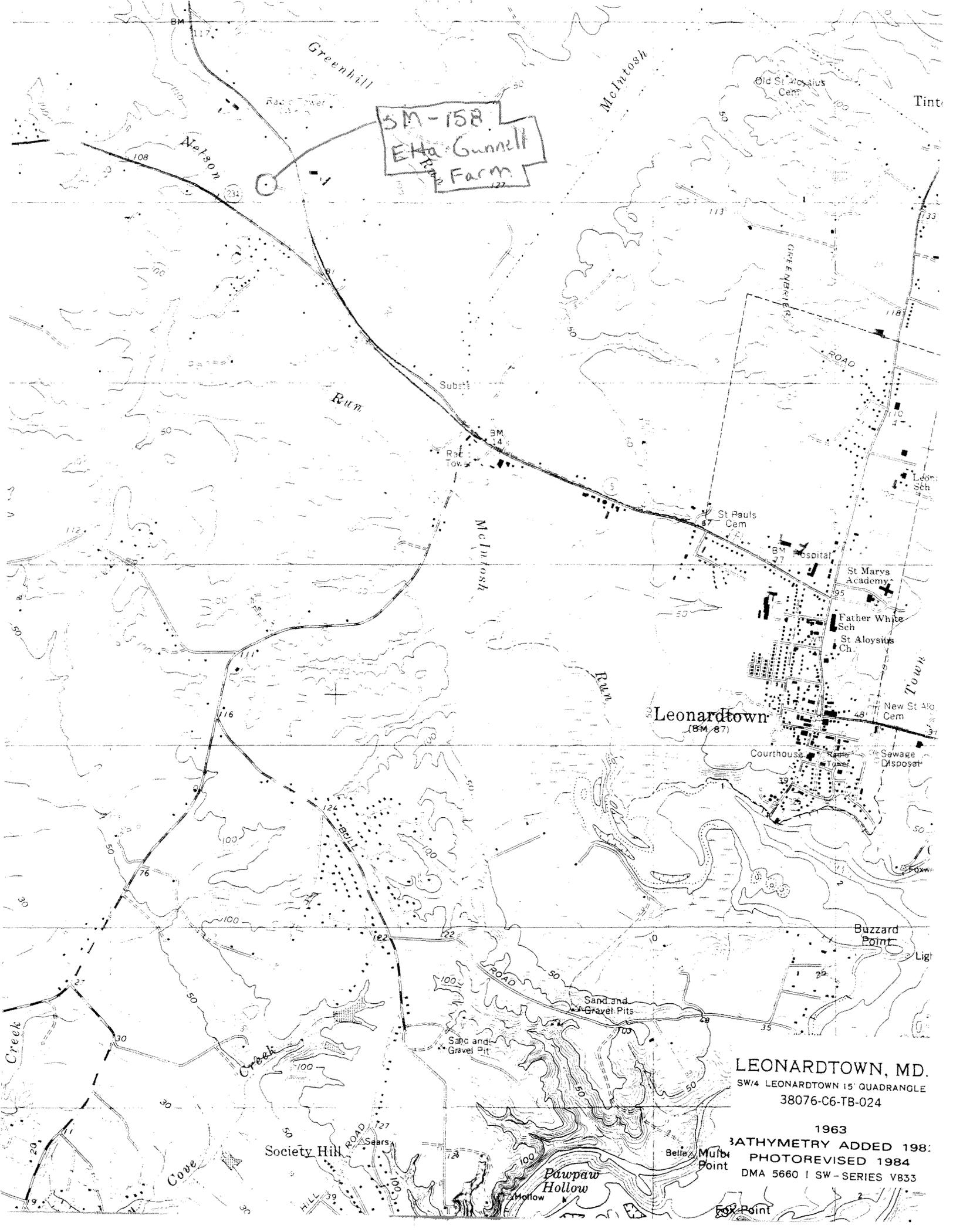
- |   |  |   |   |
|---|--|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Aboriginal</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Historic</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Architecture</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Art</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Commerce</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Communications</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Conservation</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Education</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Engineering</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Industry</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Invention</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Landscape Architecture</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Literature</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Military</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Music</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Political</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Religion/Philosophy</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Science</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Social/Humanitarian</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Theater</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Transportation</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify)</li> <li>_____</li> <li>_____</li> <li>_____</li> <li>_____</li> <li>_____</li> <li>_____</li> </ul> |
|---|--|---|---|

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Blank area for the Statement of Significance.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS





SM-158  
E Ha Gunnell  
Farm

LEONARDTOWN, MD.  
SW/4 LEONARDTOWN 15' QUADRANGLE  
38076-C6-TB-024

1963  
BATHYMETRY ADDED 198:  
PHOTOREVISED 1984  
DMA 5660 I SW-SERIES V833

Fox Point



SM-158

Etta Gunnell Farm

↳ Mary's County, Md

Kirk Kanze

March, 1977

1.1 SHPO

F. S. elevation

of 6



SM-158

Etta Gunnell Farm

1. Mary's County, Md

Kirk Rancetta

March, 1997

MD SHPO

S + W elevation

= fl6



SM-158

Fitts Ginnell Farm

St. Mary's County, Md

Kirk Ranzetta

March, 1997

MJ - HPO

replace, kitchen, looking N

2 of 6



SM-158

Etta Gunnell Farm

St. Mary's County, Md

Kirk Rancetta

March 1997

wd SH80

T, S elevations, barn

4 of 6



SM-158

Etta Gunnell Farm

St. Mary's County, Md

Kirk Ranzetta

March, 1997

Md SHPO

W + N elevations, barn

5 of 6



SM-158

Etta Gunnell Farm  
St. Mary's County, Md.

Kirk Rancetta

March, 1997

1/1 SHPO

Interior, looking W

6 of 6