

Capsule Summary  
SM-221  
James C. Wise House and Store  
Beauvue  
Private

Circa 1885

The James C. Wise House is significant as a well-preserved example of a substantial late nineteenth-century dwelling finished with Victorian detailing. Although the house has been sheathed with vinyl siding, it retains many of its original exterior elements and decorative interior features. Originally the hub of Beauvue, the site of the house is little altered.

James C. and Maggie E. Wise purchased 263 acres of Greenwell's Offset and Kingston in 1883 from Elizabeth (Abell Bedoo) Hall. It seems likely that they erected their home on this property soon after they purchased the tract. An old photograph of the house, dating to circa 1905, survives in the possession of Rita Wise Martin.

James Clinton Wise also erected a store on the site. A photograph of the one-story, frame store, fitted with a wrap-around porch, illustrates Regina Combs Hammett's History of St. Mary's County. According to Hammett, James Wise named this area "Beauvue" because of the beautiful view visible from the store location. Unlike the most recent store building, the earlier store faced south. The Wise Store sold general merchandise and hosted the Beauvue post office from 1892 to 1915. On Christmas Eve of 1915 the store burned to the ground.

Wise rebuilt a store near the site of the earlier structure almost immediately. This building was larger than the previous store, containing a four or five room living area on the second floor. Both the house and the store were owned by the Wise family until 1968. In 1995 the store was demolished.

SM-221, James C. Wise House and Store  
St. Mary's County  
Maryland Comprehensive State Historic Preservation Plan Data

Historic Context

Geographic Organization: Western Shore

Chronological/Developmental Period: Industrial/Urban Dominance, 1870-1930.

Historic Period Theme: Architecture  
Commerce

Resource Type

Category: Structure

Historic Environment: Rural

Historic Function and Use: Residence  
Store

Known Design Source: none

# Maryland Historical Trust State Historic Sites Inventory Form

MARYLAND INVENTORY OF  
HISTORIC PROPERTIES

Magi No.

DOE  yes  no

## 1. Name (indicate preferred name)

historic

and/or common James C. Wise House and Store

## 2. Location

street & number Route 244 (at Breton Beach Road)  not for publicationcity, town Leonardtown  vicinity of congressional district 5

state Maryland county St. Mary's

## 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 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 James M. and Peggy L. Ritter

street &amp; number Rt. 1 Box 80A1 telephone no.: 301-475-9804

city, town Leonardtown state and zip code MD 20650

## 5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. St. Mary's County Courthouse liber MRB 315

street &amp; number folio 305

city, town Leonardtown state MD

## 6. Representation in Existing Historical Surveys

title

date  federal  state  county  local

pository for survey records

city, town state

# 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 checked="" 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.

Contributing Resource Count: 1

The James C. Wise House is located on the east side of Route 244 across from its intersection with Breton Beach Road near Leonardtown in St. Mary's County, Maryland. The house is located on a rise in the landscape. One outbuilding stands on the east side of the house. Until this spring, a two-story, frame store stood at the base of the hill on which the house stands. The house faces west with the principal gable oriented on a north/south axis.

Built around 1885, the house consists of a two-and-a-half story, side hall/double-pile plan main block and a slightly shorter two-story, single-pile southern kitchen wing. The house is supported by a continuous brick foundation and is sheathed with vinyl siding. The roof is covered with metal shingles.

The west (main) elevation is pierced by a deeply molded four-panel entrance door with a three-light transom and three-light-over-single-panel sidelights. The door opens onto a shallow wood deck supported by brick piers. This deck replaced a porch that originally extended across the elevation. Two four-over-four sash windows with louvered shutters pierce the wall surface to the south. The second floor is pierced by three four-over-four sash windows with louvered shutters. The roofline is broken by a central cross gable. This gable is pierced by a shuttered four-over-four sash window with a rounded upper sash. These windows all have a wide wood sill. An interior brick chimney pierces the roof slope at the south end of the house. The southern two-story wing is stepped back from the exterior wall of the main block creating a space that is infilled by a shed roof porch. The porch roof is supported by chamfered posts trimmed with scroll sawn brackets. The first floor, formerly occupied by the dining room, is pierced by a four-panel door and two four-over-four sash windows with louvered shutters. The second floor is pierced by four of these windows. An interior brick chimney pierces the roof ridgeline of the wing.

The south elevation of the wing is pierced by a door on the first floor. A one-story, screened porch extends to the east of the wing. The roof of the porch is finished with a square post baluster.

The east elevation of the southern wing is pierced by a partially glazed door and two four-over-four sash windows. The screened porch addition extends across the full width of the wing. The second floor is pierced by two four-over-four sash windows and a multi-light door that opens onto the roof of the first floor porch. The main block is pierced by two four-over-four sash windows and a deeply molded entrance door with a transom and sidelights identical to those on the west elevation. The second floor is pierced by three two-over-two sash windows. An interior brick

# 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 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 checked="" 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**  None **Builder/Architect**  Unknown

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 James C. Wise House is significant as a well-preserved example of a substantial late nineteenth-century dwelling finished with Victorian detailing. Although the house has been sheathed with vinyl siding, it retains many of its original exterior elements and decorative interior features. Originally the hub of Beauvue, the site of the house is little altered.

The Wise House stands on one of two tracts, being "Greenwell's Offset" and "Kingston." William S. L. Abell died possessed of this property in 1859. All of his estate, including his dwelling, was devised to his wife Mary E. Abell. Mary Abell devised a 163 acre portion of that property, located southwest of Route 244, to her son-in-law Robert Bedoo in 1873. The remainder of the property was devised to Mary Abell's daughter, Elizabeth, following her death around 1880.

James C. and Maggie E. Wise purchased 263 acres of Greenwell's Offset and Kingston in 1883 from Elizabeth (Abell Bedoo) Hall. It seems likely that they erected their home on this property soon after they purchased the tract. An old photograph of the house, dating to circa 1905, survives in the possession of Rita Wise Martin.

James Clinton Wise also erected a store on the site. A photograph of the one-story, frame store, fitted with a wrap-around porch, illustrates Regina Combs Hammett's History of St. Mary's County. According to Hammett, James Wise named this area "Beauvue" because of the beautiful view visible from the store location. Unlike the most recent store building, the earlier store faced south. The Wise Store sold general merchandise and hosted the Beauvue post office from 1892 to 1915. On Christmas Eve of 1915 the store burned to the ground.

Wise rebuilt a store near the site of the earlier structure almost immediately. This building was larger than the previous store, containing a four or five room living area on the second floor. Both the house and the store were owned by the Wise family until 1968. In 1995 the store was demolished.



SM-221, James C. Wise House and Store  
St. Mary's County  
7.1 Description

chimney pierces the roof slope at the south end of the main block. A wood deck extends across the full width of the east elevation.

The north gable end elevation is pierced by two four-over-four sash windows with louvered shutters on both the first and second floors. The eave is pierced by a four-over-four sash window with a rounded upper sash.

The interior consists of a hall with an open string stair. The stair has a turned newel post and turned balusters. The steps are trimmed with sawn brackets and the waist is paneled. A four-panel door with a metal box lock opens to a closet underneath the stair. Four-panel doors with metal box locks and reeded architraves open to the two south parlors. The mantel in the southeast parlor consists of plain pilasters and a five-part frieze. The two end blocks and the central block of the frieze are raised. Above the frieze is a shallow mantel shelf. The southwest mantel is more ornate, consisting of reeded pilasters and a five-part frieze. Two of the frieze blocks are reeded. The first floor of the southern wing consists of one room accessible from the southeast parlor.

Beneath the main block of the house, hewn sills and hewn and pit sawn joists are visible. Some of these joists have been reinforced with circular sawn and reciprocal sawn timbers. No nails were visible.

A meathouse is located on the east side of the house. The meathouse faces west with the gable oriented on an east/west axis. The building sits on a cement slab and is sheathed with vertical board siding. The roof is covered with asphalt shingles. Adjoining the meathouse to the south is a small, shed roof structure, probably built for use as a chicken coop.

The store that originally stood at the base of hill was a two-story, frame structure sheathed with artificial siding and roofed with asphalt. It faced west with the principal gable oriented on a north/south axis. The store telescoped out to the south, consisting of a three bay main block with a slightly shorter two-story, two-bay wing, and a one-story, two-bay wing.

SM-221, James C. Wise House and Store  
St. Mary's County  
8.1 Significance

Chain of Title

TO: James M. and Peggy L. Ritter  
FROM: Robert E. Cammack  
RECORD: St. Mary's County Land Record, Liber MRB 315, folio 305.  
DATE: October 20, 1986.  
NOTES: Transfer of 3.00 acres. See plat at MRB 25/97.

TO: Robert E. Cammack  
FROM: Robert E. and Patricia W. Cammack  
RECORD: St. Mary's County Land Record, Liber MRB 561, folio 208.  
DATE: No date.  
NOTES: Transfer of "Greenwell's Offset" and "Kingston" being 160 acres.

TO: Robert E. Cammack  
FROM: Virginia L. Wise, widow, Mary Wise Kelley and Paul J. Kelley, Ann Wise Loker, William Aleck Loker, Jr., heirs of Charles B. Wise.  
RECORD: St. Mary's County Land Record, Liber DBK 144, folio 407.  
DATE: September 9, 1968.  
NOTES: Transfer of "Greenwell's Offset" and "Kingston" being 160 acres. Charles Wise died intestate.

TO: Charles B. Wise  
FROM: James C. Wise, widower.  
RECORD: St. Mary's County Land Record, Liber EBA 19, folio 372.  
DATE: January 6, 1921.  
NOTES: Transfer of two parcels reserving a life estate. Parcel 1 being 100 acres, the same of which Mary E. Abell died possessed and the same as JFF 6/316. Parcel 2 being 60 acres, part of EBA 16/86.

Parcel 1

TO: James C. Wise  
FROM: Elizabeth A. Hall and Alfred B. Hall  
RECORD: St. Mary's County Land Record, Liber JFF 6, folio 316.  
DATE: April 7, 1883.  
NOTES: Transfer of 100 acres of "Greenwell's Offset" and "Kingston" the same of which Mary E. Abell died possessed. Presumably, this 100 acre tract included the dwelling house mentioned in JAC 6/188. Elizabeth A. (Abell) Hall appears to be the heir of Mary E. Abell who died sometime between 1873 and 1881. A mortgage of April 15, 1881 (JFF 5/5) shows that the Halls were possessed of the property by that time. Mary E. Abell may have died outside of St. Mary's County as no testamentary records could be found for her in the St. Mary's County courthouse. Price: \$550.

SM-221, James C. Wise House and Store  
St. Mary's County  
8.2 Significance

TO: Mary E. Abell, devisee of W. S. L. Abell  
FROM: Benjamin G. and Martha E. Harris  
RECORD: St. Mary's County Land Record, Liber JTB 4, folio 236.  
DATE: December 3, 1863.

NOTES: In 1846, Harris agreed to sell to William S. L. Abell, deceased, tracts called "Kingston" containing about 50 acres and about 1847 did sell another small piece of land commonly called "Kingston resurveyed," supposed to contain about 35 acres more or less being in the aggregate 85 acres. Abell then devised all his real estate to his wife Mary E. Abell.

TO: Elizabeth Abell  
FROM: William S. L. Abell  
RECORD: St. Mary's County Testamentary Record, Liber JTMR 1, folio 40.  
DATE: March 22, 1859.  
NOTES: Transfer of all real estate.

TO: William S. L. Abell  
FROM: Julia Van Riswick  
RECORD: St. Mary's County Land Record, Liber JH 10, folio 278.  
DATE: July 24, 1834.  
NOTES: Transfer of "Greenwell's Offset" being between 200 and 300 acres that formerly belonged to Captain John Greenwell, deceased. Julia Van Riswick is one of the residuary devisees of said Captain of 1/4 part and by purchase of other 3/4 parts; also Taunton Dean's Hill being 40 acres the land of which Thomas Van Riswick died seized and afterwards purchased by Julia Van Riswick.

Parcel 2

TO: Maggie E. Wise and James C. Wise  
FROM: Thomas M. Higgs and Lucretia F. Higgs  
RECORD: St. Mary's County Land Record, Liber EBA 16, folio 85.  
DATE: February 19, 1917.

NOTES: Both parties are tenants of a tract erroneously supposed to contain 163 acres. With this deed they divide the tract in half, with Mr. and Mrs. Wise receiving 66 acres.

TO: Thomas M. Higgs and Lucretia F. Higgs  
FROM: Maggie E. Wise and James C. Wise  
RECORD: St. Mary's County Land Record, Liber EBA 16, folio 53.  
DATE: January 23, 1917.  
NOTES: Transfer of 1/2 undivided interest in the 163 acre tract "Greenwell's Offset."

SM-221, James C. Wise House and Store  
St. Mary's County  
8.3 Significance

TO: Maggie E. Wise, wife of James C. Wise  
FROM: Alfred B. Hall and Elizabeth A. Hall (formerly Elizabeth A. Bedoo)  
RECORD: St. Mary's County Land Record, Liber JFF 6, folio 315.  
DATE: April 7, 1883.  
NOTES: Transfer of "Greenwell's Offset" being 163 acres. Price: \$1500.

TO: Elizabeth A. Bedoo  
FROM: William Henry Bedoo and Elizabeth J. Bedoo  
RECORD: St. Mary's County Land Record, Liber JFF 2, folio 92.  
DATE: February 26, 1876.  
NOTES: Robert C. Bedoo, lately deceased, made a verbal will granting some property to William Henry Bedoo who now relinquishes his right to it. The property in question is "Greenwell's Offset" being 163 acres. Elizabeth Bedoo is the widow of Robert.

TO: Robert C. Bedoo  
FROM: Mary E. Abell  
RECORD: St. Mary's County Land Record, Liber JAC 6, folio 188.  
DATE: February 17, 1873.  
NOTES: Transfer of "Greenwell's Offset" being 163 acres, all that portion of the farm upon which I reside lying southwest of the main road passing in front of my dwelling house except the barn and the yard thereto attached located on the northeast corner of said land, said barn and yard containing about 1/2 acres of land. Price: \$2970.45

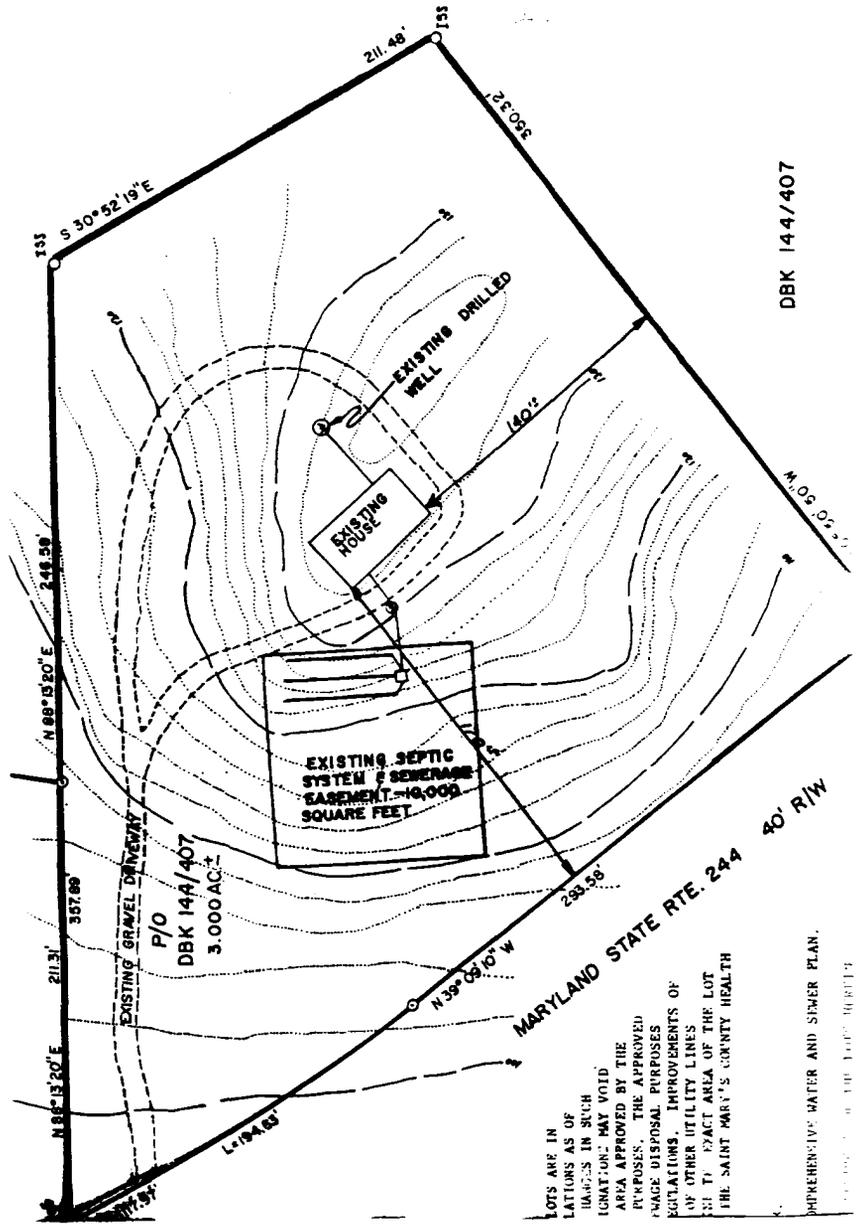
TO: Elizabeth Abell  
FROM: William S. L. Abell  
RECORD: St. Mary's County Testamentary Record, Liber JTMR 1, folio 40.  
DATE: March 22, 1859.  
NOTES: Transfer of all real estate.

TO: William S. L. Abell  
FROM: Julia Van Riswick  
RECORD: St. Mary's County Land Record, Liber JH 10, folio 278.  
DATE: July 24, 1834.  
NOTES: Transfer of "Greenwell's Offset" being between 200 and 300 acres that formerly belonged to Captain John Greenwell, deceased. Julia Van Riswick is one of the residuary devisees of said Captain of 1/4 part and by purchase of other 3/4 parts; also Taunton Dean's Hill being 40 acres the land of which Thomas Van Riswick died seized and afterwards purchased by Julia Van Riswick.

SM-221, James C. Wise House and Store  
 St. Mary's County  
 8.4 Significance

Plat showing James C. Wise House

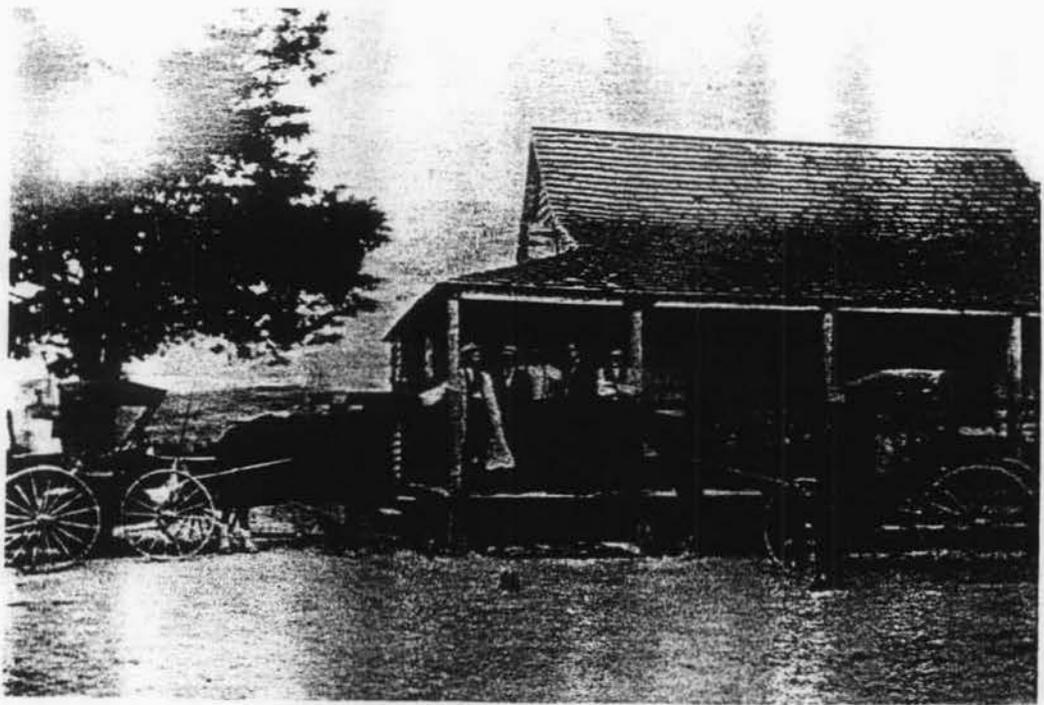
Source: St. Mary's County Land Records, Liber MRB 25, folio 97.



SM-221, James C. Wise House and Store  
St. Mary's County  
8.5 Significance

Photograph of the first James C. Wise store on this site, circa 1910.

Source: Regina Combs Hammett, History of St. Mary's County, 1634-1990. (Ridge, Md: n.p., 1991): 167.



BEAUVUE POST OFFICE ca. 1910

Pictured left to right: Dr. Thomas Lynch, Unknown, William Paul "Willie" Wise, Louis Herbert Wise (storekeeper), James Clinton Wise (first postmaster and father of Willie and Herbert). The store/post office burned in 1915.

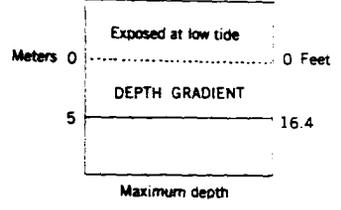
(Picture courtesy of Rita Wise Martin)

SM-221  
 James C. Wise Hse & Store  
 Beauvue  
 Leonardtown Quad



Feet	Meters
1	.3048
2	.6096
3	.9144
4	1.2192
5	1.5240
6	1.8288
7	2.1336
8	2.4384
9	2.7432
10	3.0480

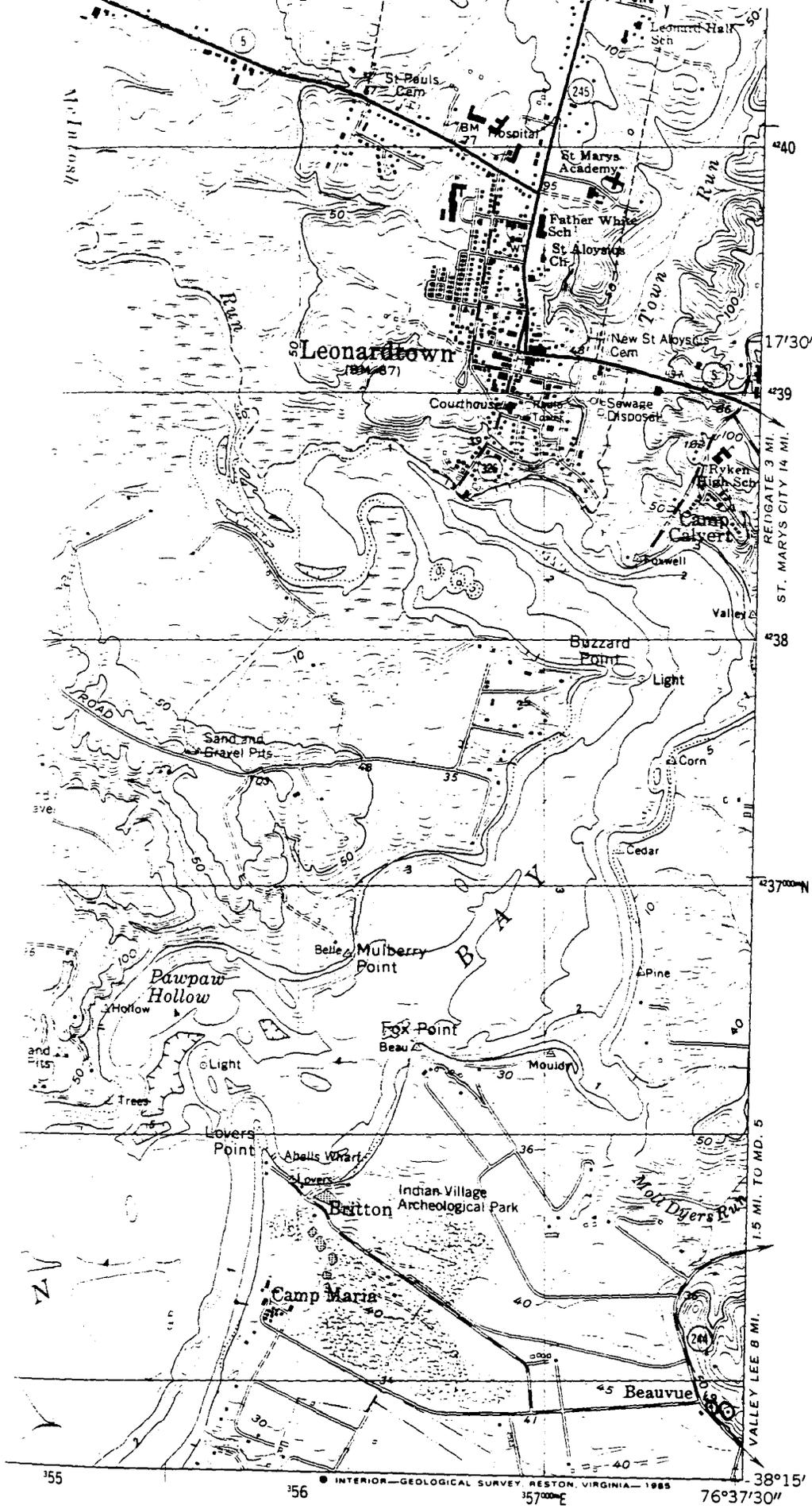
To convert feet to meters  
 multiply by .3048  
 To convert meters to feet  
 multiply by 3.2808



ROAD CLASSIFICATION

Heavy-duty		Light-duty	
Medium-duty		Unimproved dirt	

(PINEY POINT)  
 5660 II NE





SM-221

James E. White Paper and Stone

St. Mary's College

MS SPAN

Y5

SVI E. W. W. W. W.



0116321

James ... House ...

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NE

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SM-221

James C. Wise House and Store

St. Mary's County  
MD SHPD

E Hughes

3/5

NW EHV - Hist. photo from Mrs. Herman  
Martin.  
Circa 1905



SM-231

James K. Pine

The Pine

4/5



SM-231

James G. White - Stone

Dr. Mary J. Stone

Call 405

405 405

5/5

11/20/2010