

Capsule Summary  
SM-228  
Dent Tenant House #3  
Oakley  
Private

c. 1830-1840

Situated on a 109 acre agricultural tract called "Oakley" and/or "Mossey Lea" the Dent Tenant House #3 was constructed c. 1830-1840. This one-and-a-half story dwelling raises significant questions about the relationship between landowners and agricultural tenants in the early to mid-nineteenth century. Constructed during the Dent family ownership, the house exhibits an amount of architectural elaboration that is disproportionate with its size and its apparent function as a tenant house. The exterior measures only fourteen by twenty-two with the interior plan consisting of a narrow passage and parlor. The passage features an open string stair with scroll sawn brackets and a turned newel and balusters, while the parlor is dominated by a mantle decorated with vertical engaged columns and a cornice with trimwork that gradually flares out to an attenuated shelf. The exterior was also emphasized through the use of beaded and beveled shiplap siding and chamfered porch posts.

Oral tradition as well as architectural analysis conducted in the 1970s suggest that the house periodically served as a tenant house. The dwelling's architectural details, however, are not replicated in any other tenant house documented in St. Mary's County. This raises several questions. For instance, was the Dent family trying to attract reliable tenants through attractive housing options or was this merely an early dwelling constructed for a member of the Dent family? Bruce Blackistone, a descendent of the Dents, recalls family members calling the house "Uncle Et's" (referring to Elliot Johnstone Dent). Even in the twentieth century, it appears to have been occupied by members of the Dent family and not tenants.

SM-228, Dent Tenant House  
St. Mary's County  
Maryland Comprehensive State Historic Preservation Data

Historic Context

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

Resource Type

Category: Building  
Historic Environment: Rural  
Historic Function and Use: Residence  
Known Design Source: None

# Maryland Historical Trust State Historic Sites Inventory Form

## MARYLAND INVENTORY OF HISTORIC PROPERTIES

Survey No. SM-228

Magi No.

DOE  yes  no

### 1. Name (indicate preferred name)

historic Oakley

and/or common Dent Tenant House #3 (pref.), Dent House

### 2. Location

S side of Oakley Road, 0.1 mile SW of intersection of Oakley Rd. & Burch Rd.  
street & number not for publication

city, town Oakley

 vicinity of

congressional district 7

state Maryland

county St. Mary's

TM-39, G-13, P-150

### 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 Ida L. Dent Estate, c/o Wade Blackistone (POC: Bruce Blackistone)

street &amp; number 13304 Waterside Circle

telephone no.: 301-769-2627

city, town Germantown

state and zip code Md 20874

### 5. Location of Legal Description

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

liber 11

street &amp; number

folio 422

city, town Leonardtown

state Maryland

### 6. Representation in Existing Historical Surveys

title Dent Tenant House #3

date 1970s

 federal  state  county  local

repository for survey records Maryland Historical Trust

city, town Crownsville

state Md

## 7. Description

Survey No. SM-228

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

Contributing Resource Count: 2

The Dent Tenant House #3, constructed c. 1830-1840, is approximately 0.1 mile south of the intersection of Burch and Oakley Roads. Approached via a dirt farm road that extends south from Oakley Road, the Dent House is oriented on a north/south axis and is surrounded by cultivated fields of soybean. A line of agricultural buildings, that include a contributing tobacco house as well as a non-contributing crib/granary and chicken coop, radiate to the east of the dwelling.

The original section of the Dent House consisted of a one-and-a-half story, three bay, two room, frame dwelling with a gable roof and an exterior end brick chimney. In the early-twentieth century, several one story additions and exterior alterations expanded the limited living space but simultaneously obscured the dwelling's original appearance. Most of the original building rests on a foundation of stone and brick, while the additions lie on brick piers. While the exterior is largely covered with asbestos shingles, the original dwelling is sheathed with beveled and beaded shiplap siding as well as more conventional clapboard that is seen on the additions. The original dwelling's roof is covered with asphalt shingles while the newer sections are covered with metal roofing materials.

The primary or north elevation of the dwelling consists of the original block and an addition to the west. The original block is pierced by two, six-over-six, double-hung sash windows and a wide six-panel door. The siding on this elevation consists of beveled and beaded shiplap siding attached to the frame with cut nails. These bays are sheltered by an original shed roof porch with six-inch thick, chamfered porch posts that appear to have been installed in the early-twentieth century. The one story addition to the west is pierced by two, six-over-six windows. Its later construction date is revealed by its exposed jig sawn rafter tails as well as the low pitch roof. Asbestos shingles covered lap siding attached to the frame with wire nails. At the juncture of the addition and the original section is an exterior end brick chimney constructed in a four-to-one common bond. Just detached from the west addition is a c. 1840s meathouse that was converted into an office in the early twentieth century. The meathouse is sheathed with large random width flush siding attached to a braced hewn and pit sawn frame with cut nails. The north side of the meathouse is pierced by a six-over-six window.

The west elevation consists of the gable end of the original dwelling, the gable end of the west addition, the side of the south addition, and the gable end of the meathouse. The original dwelling and meathouse are blind, while the two additions are both pierced by a centrally located six-over-six window. An interior end chimney extends through the roof of the meathouse.

The south elevation consists of the side of the meathouse, the south addition's gable end, and the original dwelling's newly enclosed porch. The side of the meathouse is pierced by a six-over-six window. A four panel door is located near the junction of the meathouse and the south addition. The south addition is pierced by a six-over-six window and also features an exterior end brick chimney flue. The enclosed shed addition to the original section is pierced by a two, six-over-six windows.

# 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 checked="" 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 type="checkbox"/> state <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> local	

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

Situated on a 109 acre agricultural tract called "Oakley" and/or "Mossey Lea" the Dent Tenant House #3 was constructed c. 1830-1840. This one-and-a-half story dwelling raises significant questions about the relationship between landowners and agricultural tenants in the early to mid-nineteenth century. Constructed during the Dent family ownership, the house exhibits an amount of architectural elaboration that is disproportionate with its size and its apparent function as a tenant house. The exterior measures only fourteen by twenty-two with the interior plan consisting of a narrow passage and parlor. The passage features an open string stair with scroll sawn brackets and a turned newel and balusters, while the parlor is dominated by a mantle decorated with vertical engaged columns and a cornice with trim that gradually flares out to an attenuated shelf. The exterior was also emphasized through the use of beaded and beveled shiplap siding and chamfered porch posts.

Oral tradition as well as architectural analysis conducted in the 1970s suggest that the house served as a tenant house. The dwelling's architectural details, however, are not replicated in any other tenant house documented in St. Mary's County. This raises several questions. For instance, was the Dent family trying to attract reliable tenants through attractive housing options or was this merely a dwelling constructed for a member of the Dent family? Little documentary evidence has been recovered to illuminate who lived in the house. Bruce Blackistone, a descendent of the Dents, recalls family members calling the house "Uncle Et's" (referring to Elliot Johnstone Dent). Even in the twentieth century, it appears to have been occupied by members of the Dent family and not tenants.

Like many other houses from the mid-nineteenth century, such as Blair's Purchase (SM-125), the Dent Tenant House faces the main road (Oakley Road). The impetus for this orientation was so strong that the dwelling's primary elevation faces almost due north.

\*SEE ARCHITECTURAL DRAWING DRAWER FOR DRAWING.

# 9. Major Bibliographical References

Survey No. SY-228

Interview, Bruce Blackistone, December, 1997.

# 10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property 2 acres around house

Quadrangle name Leonardtown, Md

Quadrangle scale 1:24 000

UTM References do NOT complete UTM references

A	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
	Zone	Easting	Northing

B	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
	Zone	Easting	Northing

C	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
---	----------------------	----------------------	----------------------

D	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
---	----------------------	----------------------	----------------------

E	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
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F	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
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G	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
---	----------------------	----------------------	----------------------

H	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
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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
-------	------	--------	------

state	code	county	code
-------	------	--------	------

# 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Kirk E. Ranzetta, Historic Sites Surveyor

organization St. Mary's County Dept. of Planning & Zoning

date February, 1998

street & number 22740 Washington Street

telephone 301-475-4662

city or town Leonardtown

state Md

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

Dent Tenant House #3, SM-228  
St. Mary's County  
7.1 Description

The east elevation consists of the gable end of the original section. This side is pierced by a six-over-six window on the first floor and a six-over-six window that lights the attic story. While not visible when viewing the east elevation of the original dwelling, the meat house features a door constructed of vertical planks fastened with horizontal chamfered battens.

The original dwelling's interior consisted of two rooms; a narrow stair hall and a parlor. The stair hall exhibits an open string stair with turned balusters and newel. The stair is further embellished with modest scroll sawn brackets and vertical pieces of trim that imitate panelling. The parlor is dominated by an elaborate mantle decorated with vertical engaged columns planed with vertical fillets. The frieze features a centered square box. The cornice exhibits trimwork that gradually flares out to an attenuated shelf. While the second floor hall is not decorated, the bedroom features a modest mantle that consists of flat engaged columns, a plain frieze, and a squarish shelf. The rooms added in the twentieth century lack decorative attention and differentiation. The interior of the meathouse was sheathed with circular sawn, whitewashed horizontal boards attached to the frame with wire nails. The interior also features an exposed interior brick chimney flue. This interior sheathing and chimney flue do not appear original for the roof framing is blackened and a series of nails point to the building's use as a meathouse.

To the east of the main dwelling are a series of outbuildings that include a tobacco barn, crib, and chicken house. While the crib and chicken house were constructed in the early-twentieth century, the tobacco barn was probably constructed contemporary to the house in the 1830-1840s. Measuring approximately 80 ft by 20 ft, the frame barn is oriented on an east/west axis and sheathed with vertical boards attached to the earthfast frame with cut and wire nails. The roof is covered with raised seam metal. The south elevation is dominated by a shed extension that runs almost continually from east to west. The shed features one opening that does not have any doors. The east gable end features an opening into the south shed. The north elevation features one set of early-twentieth century double-doors located near the approximate center of the elevation. The west elevation is entirely open and does not feature any doors.

The earthfast frame of the barn is composed of hole-set cedar posts driven into the ground at eight-foot centers creating 10 structural bays. This is further divided into sixteen five-foot rooms for the storage of tobacco. In all there are six tiers in the barn for the curing of tobacco. While the hole-set posts represent the most distinctive feature of the barn, they are stabilized in a traditional manner by horizontal wall plates as they are mortise-and-tenoned into the wall plates. A series of hewn and pit sawn ties are lapped over the wall plates. These ties support a hewn flat false plate which buoys the common rafter roof. Each rafter pair is connected by a series of three common ties that half-lapped. Each rafter pair is then connected at the peak with bridle joint.

SM-228, Dent Tenant House #3

St. Mary's County

8.1 Significance

Chain-of-Title

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

Reference: Liber JMM 11, Folio 422

Grantee: John Francis Dent

Grantor: Fannie Jo Dent, Ruth Dent Burch & Elliot E. Burch, and Lettie Marshall Dent

Date: February 1939

Notes: After Fannie L. Dent dies, her heirs decide to sell the property to John Francis Dent. The property, called Mossey Lea, consists of two properties one containing 100 and the other 150 acres.

Reference: Liber JMM 10, Folio 229

Grantee: Fannie L. Dent

Grantor: Frances Katherine and Ida Louise Dent

Date: May 19, 1937

Notes: After the death of J. Marshall Dent (Will Record Liber MLC 1, Folio 154), the two tracts are sold by his heirs to Fannie L. Dent. J. Marshall Dent had received the properties from his father John F. Dent (Will Record Liber PHD 1, Folio 32).

## MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST

193 214 307

## INVENTORY FORM FOR STATE HISTORIC SITES SURVEY

**1 NAME**

HISTORIC

DENT TENANT HOUSE #3

AND/OR COMMON

**2 LOCATION**

STREET &amp; NUMBER

Oakley Road (MD 470)

CITY, TOWN

Oakley

\_\_\_ VICINITY OF

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

STATE

Maryland

COUNTY

St. Mary's

**3 CLASSIFICATION****CATEGORY** DISTRICT BUILDING(S) STRUCTURE SITE OBJECT**OWNERSHIP** PUBLIC PRIVATE BOTH**PUBLIC ACQUISITION** IN PROCESS BEING CONSIDERED**STATUS** OCCUPIED UNOCCUPIED WORK IN PROGRESS**ACCESSIBLE** YES: RESTRICTED YES: UNRESTRICTED NO**PRESENT USE** AGRICULTURE COMMERCIAL EDUCATIONAL ENTERTAINMENT GOVERNMENT INDUSTRIAL MILITARY MUSEUM PARK PRIVATE RESIDENCE RELIGIOUS SCIENTIFIC TRANSPORTATION OTHER:**4 OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME

Telephone #:

STREET &amp; NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

\_\_\_ VICINITY OF

STATE, zip code

**5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE,

REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

St. Mary's County Courthouse

Liber #:

Folio #:

STREET &amp; NUMBER

Washington Street and Courthouse Drive

CITY, TOWN

Leonardtown

STATE

Maryland

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE

DATE

 FEDERAL  STATE  COUNTY  LOCALDEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE

Sr-228

# 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 _____
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

---

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Later enlarged, this house began as a frame, one-story structure with one room and a side passage. A surviving outbuilding, altered but possibly a meat house or smokehouse, dates from the circa 1820 period.

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

# 8 SIGNIFICANCE

## PERIOD

- PREHISTORIC
- 1400-1499
- 1500-1599
- 1600-1699
- 1700-1799
- 1800-1899
- 1900-

- ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC
- ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC
- AGRICULTURE
- ARCHITECTURE
- ART
- COMMERCE
- COMMUNICATIONS

## AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW

- COMMUNITY PLANNING
- CONSERVATION
- ECONOMICS
- EDUCATION
- ENGINEERING
- EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT
- INDUSTRY
- INVENTION

- LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE
- LAW
- LITERATURE
- MILITARY
- MUSIC
- PHILOSOPHY
- POLITICS/GOVERNMENT

- RELIGION
- SCIENCE
- SCULPTURE
- SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
- THEATER
- TRANSPORTATION
- OTHER (SPECIFY)

---

SPECIFIC DATES Circa 1820 & later      BUILDER/ARCHITECT

---

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

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# 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

## 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY \_\_\_\_\_

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE COUNTY

STATE COUNTY

## 11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

ORGANIZATION

DATE

STREET & NUMBER

TELEPHONE

CITY OR TOWN

STATE

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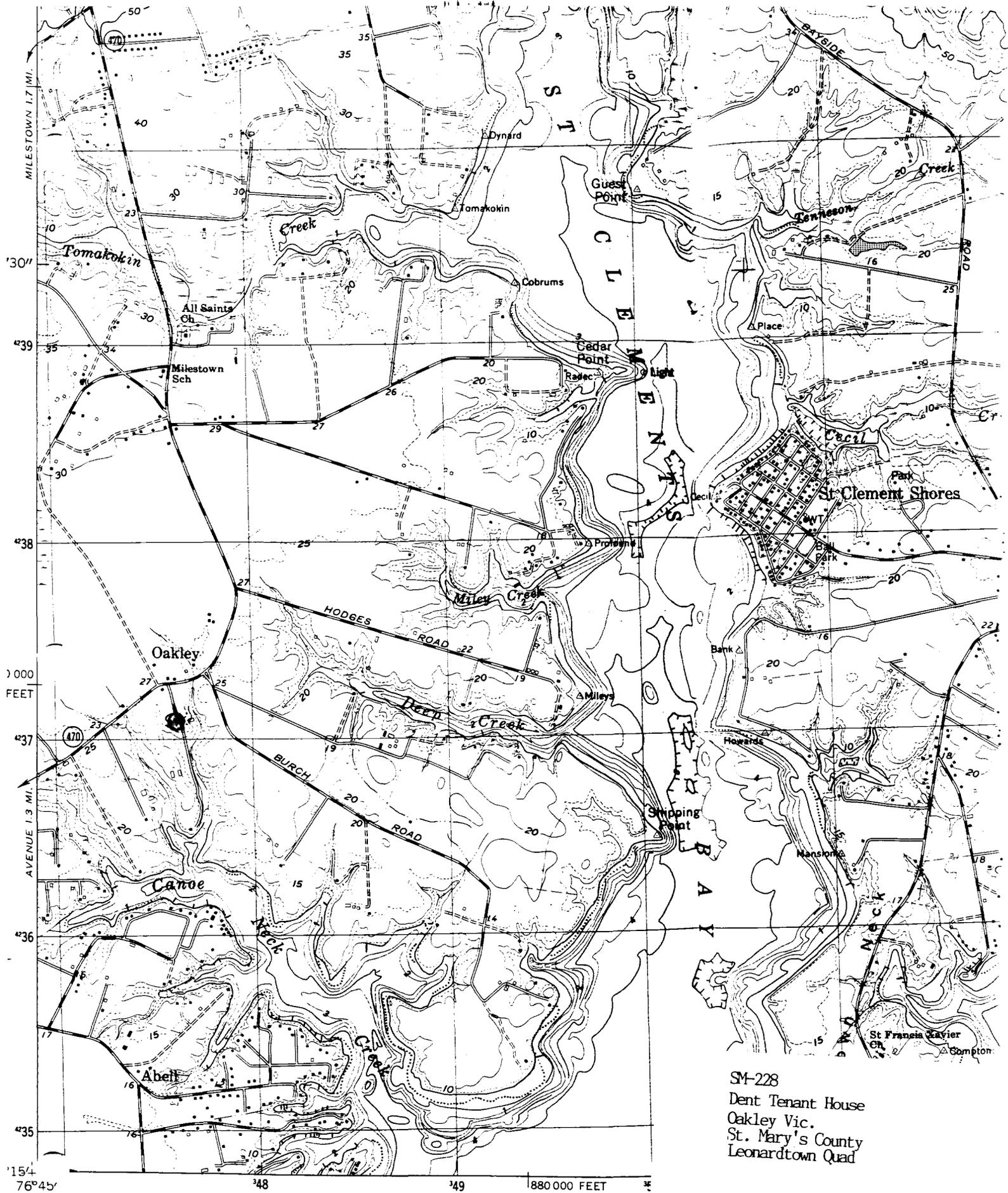
RETURN TO: Maryland Historical Trust  
The Shaw House, 21 State Circle  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401  
(301) 267-1438



Mapped, edited, and published by the Geological Survey  
 Control by USGS and USC&GS

LEONARDTOWN  
 QUAD

FORD)



SM-228  
 Dent Tenant House  
 Oakley Vic.  
 St. Mary's County  
 Leonardtown Quad

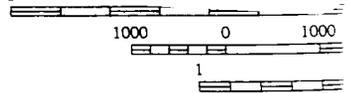
Mapped, edited, and published by the Geological Survey and the National Ocean Survey

Control by USGS and NOS/NOAA

Topography by photogrammetric methods from aerial photographs taken 1961. Field checked 1963

Bathymetry compiled by the National Ocean Survey from tide-coordinated hydrographic surveys. This information is not intended for navigation.

NATIONAL OCEAN SURVEY  
 HYDROGRAPHIC SURVEY





SM-228

Dent Tenant House #3

St. Mary's County

Kirk Ranerita

Dec/97

MD S&PO

N + E elevations

1 of 8



SM-228

Dent Tenant House #3

St. Mary's County

Kirk Ranzetta

Dec/97

hd SHPO

S + E elevations

2 of 8



SM-228

Dent Tenant House #3

St Mary's County

Kirk Ranzetta

Dec/97

Md SHPO

N+W elevations - meat house

3 of 8



SM-228

Dent Tenant House #3

St Mary's County

Kirk Ranzeita

Dec/97

Md SHPO

detail meathouse - W elevation

4 of 8



SM-228

Dent Tenant House #3

St. Mary's County

Kirk Ranzetta

Dec/97

Md SHPO

stair - looking E

5 of 8



SM-222

Dent tenant House #3

St. Mary's County

Kirk Ranzetta

Dec/97

Md SHPO

mantle - looking W

6 of 8



SM-222

Dent Tenant House #3

St. Mary's County

Kirk Ranetta

Dec/97

Md SHPO

Barn-looking F

7 of 8



SM-222

Dent Tenant House #3

St. Mary's County

Kirk Ranzetta

Dec/97

Md SHPO

Back to House - looking W

2 of 8