

Capsule Summary
SM-452
Edward T. Adams House
St. George Island
Private

Circa 1890

The Edward T. Adams House is significant as the home of one of the proprietors of the Potomac Hotel, the first boarding house on St. George Island. The Adams House is one of the few buildings to survive on the island that is associated with its history as a vibrant summer resort. This well-preserved, two-and-a-half story structure is also one of the largest homes on the island.

In 1855, Thomas B. Adams purchased a 100 acre part of the tract "St. George's Island" from the Roman Catholic Church. By 1875 he and his four sons had established a hotel equipped with a bar-room, bath-houses, a wharf, and a store on the property. By 1891 the "Potomac Hotel" consisted of 37 rooms and twelve additional guest cottages.

Edward T. Adams probably built his house around 1890. Rex Adams has stated that the house was certainly standing by 1895, the year of his birth. The substantial structure faces north towards an old road bed that originally extended from the steamboat wharf to St. George's Creek. According to one source, the house consisted only of the main two-and-a-half story block and a one-story kitchen wing. The two-story southern wing was supposedly added at a later date.

The Potomac Hotel ceased operation in the early twentieth century, and in the 1930s the hotel was demolished. Over time, the steamboat wharf deteriorated, guest cottages were sold and moved from the property, and outbuildings such as the dance pavilion were taken down or adapted for other uses. All that remains of this once active resort are the homes of two of its founders: Thomas B. Adams (SM-452) and Edward T. Adams.

SM-452, Edward T. Adams House
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: Commerce

Resource Type

Category: Building

Historic Environment: Village

Historic Function and Use: House

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 Edward T. Adams House

2. Location

street & number East Side of Route 249 not for publicationcity, town St. George Island vicinity of congressional district 5state Maryland county St. Mary's

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 | Public Acquisition | Accessible | <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 Bruce Mulnostreet & number 1319 Corcoran Street N.W. telephone no. (202) 332 2639city, town Washington, state and zip code D.C. 20009 4310

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. St. Mary's County Courthouse liber CBG 18street & number folio 198city, town Leonardtown state Maryland

6. Representation in Existing Historical Surveys

title

date federal state county local

depository for survey records

city, town state

7. Description

Survey No. SM 452

| | | | | |
|------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------|--------------------|
| Condition | | Check one | Check one | |
| <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: 1

The Edward T. Adams House is located on the east side of Route 249 on St. George Island in St. Mary's County, Maryland. The house stands alone in a large open field except for a small cluster of trees and a two-car garage. The main block of the house is a two-and-a-half story structure with a cross gable at the roofline that extends the width of each elevation. A two-story, single pile wing and a one-story kitchen wing extend from the south elevation. The house faces north.

Built in the 1890s, the Adams House is a frame structure supported by a brick pier foundation. The exterior is sheathed with weatherboard siding. The roof is covered with wood shingles. An interior brick chimney projects from the center of the main block.

The north (main) elevation of the house is obscured by a two-story porch with square post supports and square post balusters. The first story of the porch has been enclosed with louvered windows. The first floor of the house consists of a central six-panel entrance door with four-light sidelights and an arched fanlight. One two-over-two sash window flanks the door on either side. The second floor is pierced by a central fifteen-light door flanked by one two-over-two sash window on either side. The eave is pierced by a six-light window with plain, plank shutters.

The west elevation is lit on the first floor by one two-over-two sash window with louvered shutters. A second window originally located here is now infilled. The second floor is lit by two two-over-two sash windows with louvered shutters. The eave is pierced by one six-light window with plain, plank shutters. This gable end is finished with cornice returns supported by decorative sawn brackets. A two-story wing extends to the south which is covered by a two-story porch with square post supports and square balusters. The first story of the porch is enclosed with louvered windows. The second story is screened. The first floor of the wing is pierced by a four-panel entrance door and a two-light window. The second floor is pierced by a four-panel entrance door and a two-light window. A one-story wing extends to the south of the two-story wing. This wing is pierced by one two-light window with louvered shutters.

The south elevation of the main block is mostly obscured by the two-story wing, although one two-over-two sash window lights both the first and second floor. The south gable end of the wing is blind on the south elevation and finished with cornice returns. An interior brick chimney pierces the south end of the roof ridgeline. The one-story kitchen wing is also blind and finished with an interior brick chimney which pierces the roof ridgeline.

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 Unknown Builder/Architect Jack Forrester

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 Edward T. Adams House is significant as the home of one of the proprietors of the Potomac Hotel, the first boarding house on St. George Island. The Adams House is one of the few buildings to survive on the island that is associated with its history as a vibrant summer resort. The well-preserved, two-and-a-half story structure is also one of the largest homes on the island.

In 1855, Thomas B. Adams purchased a 100 acre part of the tract "St. George's Island" from the Roman Catholic Church. Adams is listed as a farmer in the 1860 census. The census shows that he, his wife, and his nine children were born in Virginia. An article in the St. Mary's Beacon dated August 26, 1875 suggests that Adams helped his sons construct a hotel on the property sometime around 1873 or 1874. The article notes,

"Monday evening at seven we again found anchor east in the mouth of the St. Mary's River. Going on shore, where we remained until about twelve, we were astonished at the improvements which have been made on the Island within the last two years. An elegant Hotel, handsomely furnished, fine bar-room, bath-houses, wharf, store, etc.

The genial manners and courteous bearing of the young Messrs. A. will, we are satisfied, ensure success to this splendid summer resort."

In a deed of 1884, when Thomas Adams transferred the property to his four sons, the land is described as occupied by the "Potomac Hotel." An 1891 Personal Estate Inventory for Robert J. Adams notes that the hotel had 37 numbered rooms, most of which were furnished with two single beds and a table. Twelve cottages, some of which were two-stories in height, provided additional lodging for guests. At least one of these cottages survives and has been converted for use as a small dwelling. Besides the hotel and cottages, the Thomas B. Adams House (SM-465) and a store also stood on the property at this time.

SM-452, Edward T. Adams House
St. Mary's County
7.1 Description

The east elevation of the main block is pierced on the first floor by one two-over-two sash window with louvered shutters and a pair of louvered shutters which probably cover a door. The shuttered door is no longer accessible from the interior. The second floor is pierced by two two-over-two sash windows with louvered shutters. The eave is pierced by one six-light window with plain, plank shutters and finished with cornice returns supported by decorative, sawn brackets. The first floor of the two-story wing has a projecting three-sided bay lit by two two-light windows with louvered shutters. The second floor is lit by two two-light windows with louvered shutters. The one-story wing is lit by one two-light window with louvered shutters.

The interior of the main block consists of a north entrance door which opens into an interior stair hall running east to west. A bathroom has been inserted into the east end of the hall. The stair rises from the west to the east and has turned balusters, a molded handrail, and a turned newell post. The stair is finished with scroll sawn brackets. A four-panel door at the west end of the hall opens into the west parlor. This door, like all interior doors in the main block of the house, has a molded surround with bulls-eye cornerblocks. In addition, the interior of the door jamb is finished with a fluted molding. Shelving has been built into the northeast corner of the parlor. A mantel located on the east partition wall consists of fluted pilasters mounted on large, bulls-eye cornerblocks. The mantel frieze is fluted and has a shelf supported by turned brackets. A door opens from the west parlor to the east parlor which is identically finished. Two closets have been built into the east parlor. The second floor of the main block is identical to the first floor with a bathroom built into the east end of the stairhall and an east and west bedroom. The mantels in these bedrooms consist of tapered pilasters with a flat frieze and a molded band along the top of the frieze. The mantel in the east bedroom is finished with a mantel shelf.

The interior of the two-story south wing consists of one room on the first floor which has been converted into a modern kitchen. The second floor bedroom is simply finished.

The one outbuilding on the property is a cinderblock garage roofed with asphalt shingles. The garage is pierced on the west side by two garage doors, on the south and east sides by one two-light window, and on the north by a partially glazed entrance door. An exterior cinderblock chimney stands against the north elevation.

SM-452, Edward T. Adams House
St. Mary's County
8.4 Significance

The hotel season began in June and ended on September 30th. The hotel accommodated 75 to 100 guests, most of whom were visitors from the Washington area. A dance pavilion and bowling alley were also included on the Hotel grounds. In the evening, guests would dance to a violin, piano, and drum trio from Alexandria. Often, local residents came to the hotel to watch. During the day, guests entertained themselves boating, fishing, swimming, and crabbing. Visitors could lounge in the summer houses and on the pier located on the hotel property along the St. George's Creek shore. For boarders' convenience, a steamboat wharf extended from the Adams property about 100 feet into the Potomac River. Both day and night steamers provided transportation for hotel guests.

While the hotel was generally well received by Islanders, some Methodist residents objected to the existence of the hotel bar room. As a result, the Adams brothers arranged for the construction of an Episcopal chapel to accommodate their Protestant guests. In 1892, the Adams brothers transferred a one acre parcel to the Vestry of William and Mary Parish. Here an Episcopal chapel stood until the 1940s when it was deconstructed and moved to Charles County.

The financial success that the hotel and store business brought to the Adams family is reflected in a story reported in the St. Mary's Beacon of 1902. In that year, the county issued for sale \$22,000 worth of bonds to pay for the rebuilding of the courthouse. On the day of the sale, a crowd gathered to bid on the bonds. Much to the surprise of all in attendance, Edward T. Adams, who had arrived wearing an oil skin coat and the hat of a waterman, purchased all of them.

Edward T. Adams probably built his house around 1890. Rex Adams has stated that the house was certainly standing by 1895, the year of his birth. The substantial structure faces north towards an old road bed that originally extended from the steamboat wharf to St. George's Creek. According to one source, the house consisted only of the main two-and-a-half story block and a one-story kitchen wing. The two-story southern wing was supposedly added at a later date.

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SM-452, Edward T. Adams House
St. Mary's County
8.1 Significance

Chain of Title

TO: Rex Adams and Celestine Adams
FROM: Ross Adams and Virginia Adams
RECORD: St. Mary's County Land Records, Liber CBG 18, folio 198.
DATE: April 2, 1946.

NOTES: Transfer of of two tracts. Tract No. 2 being known as "Part of St. George's Island" or "Fairview" or the "Adams Brothers Property" including the "Edgar Adams Lot," the Potomac Hotel, storehouse, lands, buildings, cottages, etc.

TO: C. Reginald Adams and Celestine A. Adams
FROM: William O. E. Sterling, single
RECORD: St. Mary's County Land Records, Liber CBG 18, folio 197.
DATE: April 2, 1946.
NOTES: Transfer of same as above.

TO: William O. E. Sterling
FROM: C. Reginald Adams, Celestine A. Adams, E. Ross Adams, Virginia K. Adams
RECORD: St. Mary's County Land Records, Liber CBG 18, folio 196.
DATE: April 2, 1946.
NOTES: Transfer of same as above.

TO: C. Reginald Adams and E. Rosa Adams
FROM: Flora Elizabeth Sanford and Herman H. Sanford, Ida Louise Adams, Ida I. Adams.
RECORD: St. Mary's County Land Records, Liber JMM 3, folio 180.
DATE: July 18, 1925.
NOTES: Transfer of 61 acres more or less originally but "in consequence of the rapid washing away of the same is assessed as 36.5 acres..." The grantors are heirs of Edward T. Adams to whom Benjamin Adams devised his interest in the property.

TO: Benjamin F. Adams and Edward T. Adams
FROM: James B. Adams and Sarah A. Adams, Lena E. Springer and Lewis R. Springer, Anita Guyther, William R. Adams and Jennie S. Adams, Maud L. Adams, Annie E. Foxwell and Charles R. Foxwell, Charles J. Foxwell, Marie B. Guyther, Mary C. Guyther, Margaret M. Doulan and Thomas P. Doulan, Miriam L. Howe and Thomas Howe, Thomas E. Adams and Mary L. Adams, William B. Adams and Minnie M. Adams being heirs at law of Adams Brothers.
RECORD: St. Mary's County Land Records, Liber EBA 10, folio 227.
DATE: April 26, 1912.
NOTES: Transfer of above being about 40 acres and not including the Edgar Adams lot. Price: \$857.14

SM-452, Edward T. Adams House
St. Mary's County
8.2 Significance

TO: Edward T. Adams
FROM: Benjamin F. Adams
RECORD: St. Mary's County Testamentary Records, Liber BC 1, folio 306.
DATE: December 11, 1923.
NOTES: Transfer of all real estate.

TO: Edward T. Adams, Benjamin F. Adams, Thomas W. Adams
FROM: Carrie V. Adams
RECORD: St. Mary's County Land Records, Liber JFF 13, folio 549.
DATE: January 13, 1893.
NOTES: Transfer of a 1/4 interest, being her dower interest, in "Part of St. George's Island" being 74 acres more or less, the same as that sold as the result of a judgement in equity case No. 733

TO: Benjamin F. Adams
FROM: Thomas W. Adams and Edward T. Adams
RECORD: St. Mary's County Land Records, Liber JFF 13, folio 126.
DATE: December 17, 1891.
NOTES: Transfer of 1/3 interest in "Part of St. George's Island" including all the buildings, Hotel, store, and dwelling thereon being 74 acres more or less.
Price: \$2700

TO: Thomas W. Adams and Edward T. Adams
FROM: Benjamin F. Adams, Trustee
RECORD: St. Mary's County Land Records, Liber JFF 13, folio 125.
DATE: December 17, 1891.
NOTES: Transfer of "Part of St. George's Island" as result of judgement in case B.F.Adams, Thomas W. Adams, Edward T. Adams vs. Carrie V. Adams et al. Purchased for \$8000. Prior to this deed Robert J. Adams died intestate in 1891. The inventory (JTMR-PTB 1/162) for Adams lists the hotel as having 37 numbered rooms most of which were furnished with two single beds and a table.

TO: Robert J. Adams, Edward T. Adams, Benjamin F. Adams, Thomas W. Adams
FROM: Thomas B. Adams and Elizabeth B. Adams
RECORD: St. Mary's County Land Records, Liber JFF 7, folio 395.
DATE: September 11, 1884.
NOTES: Transfer of "Part of St. George's Island" or "Fairview" being 100 acres more or less including the property known as the Potomac Hotel now occupied by the said R. J. Adams, Benjamin F. Adams, Thomas W. Adams, and Edward T. Adams also all the title to a small tract of land which our son Edgar Adams died seized and possessed being 5 acres adjoining the above described land. This tract "embraces all the land which we now possess." Price: \$3000

SM-452, Edward T. Adams House
St. Mary's County
8.3 Significance

TO: Thomas B. Adams

FROM: Charles C. Lancaster, agent of the corporation of the Roman Catholic clergyman of Maryland.

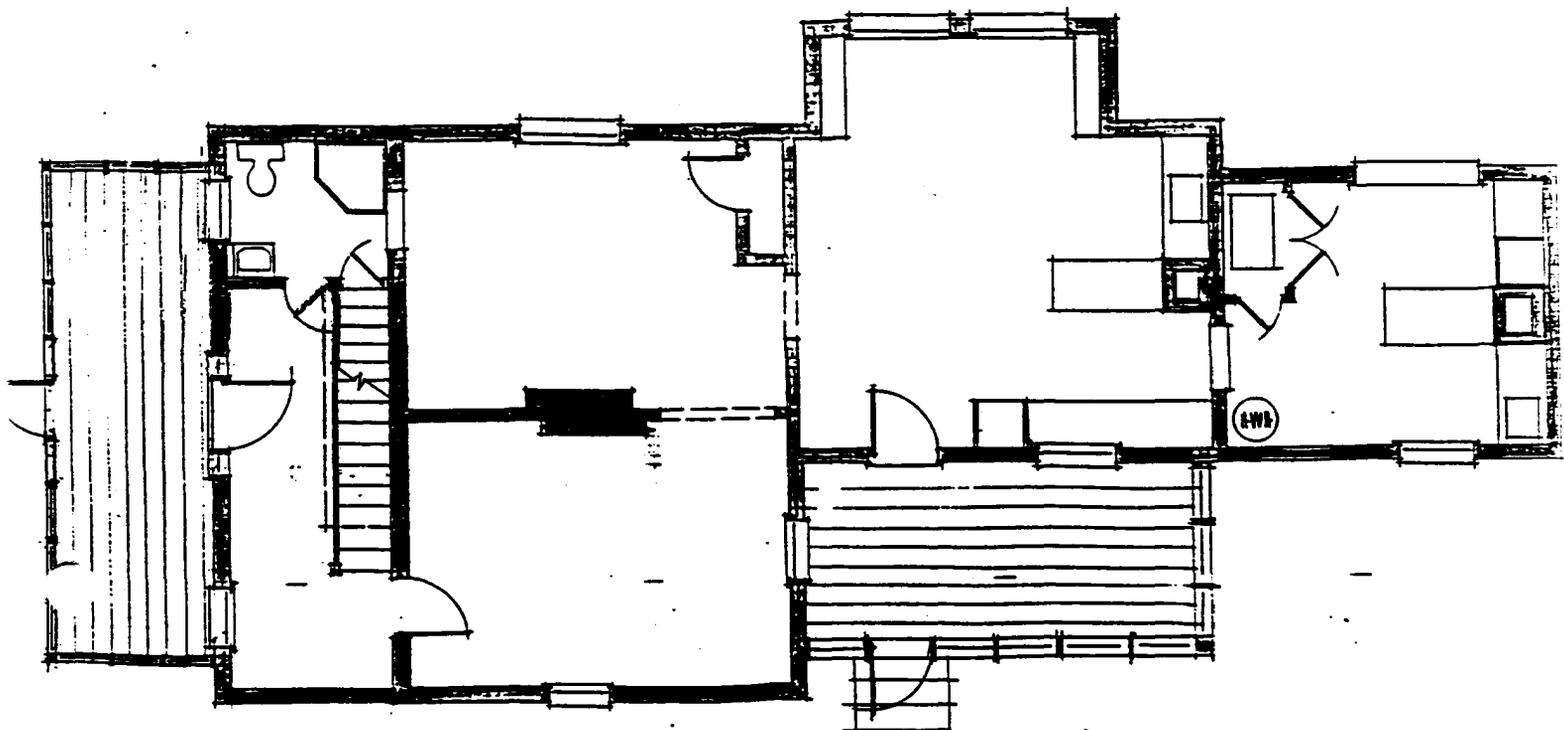
RECORD: St. Mary's County Land Records, Liber JTB 2, folio 251.

DATE: December 13, 1855.

NOTES: Transfer of a part of a larger tract commonly called "St. George's Island" being 100 acres more or less. Price: \$1413.72

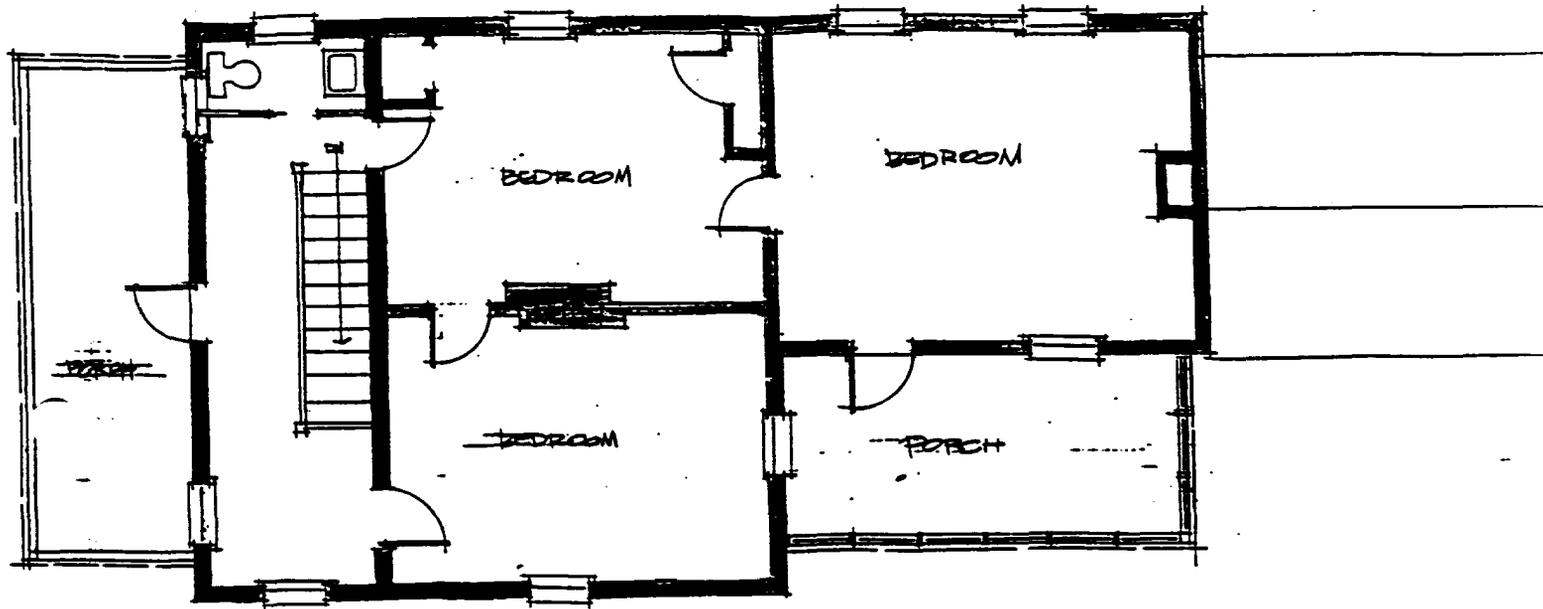
SM-452, Edward T. Adams House
St. Mary's County
8.5 Significance

First floor plan of the Thomas B. Adams House as of 1995.
Source: Michael Adams.



SM-452, Edward T. Adams House
St. Mary's County
8.6 Significance

Second floor plan of the Thomas B. Adams House as of 1995.
Source: Michael Adams.



SM-452, Edward T. Adams House
St. Mary's County
8.7 Significance

Postcard showing the Adams Hotel on St. George's Island.

Source: St. Mary's County Historical Society Vertical Files.

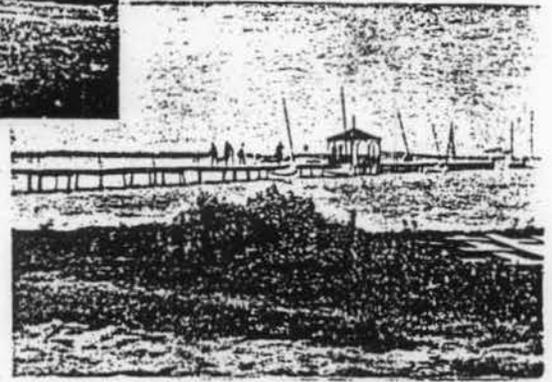
Adams Hotel



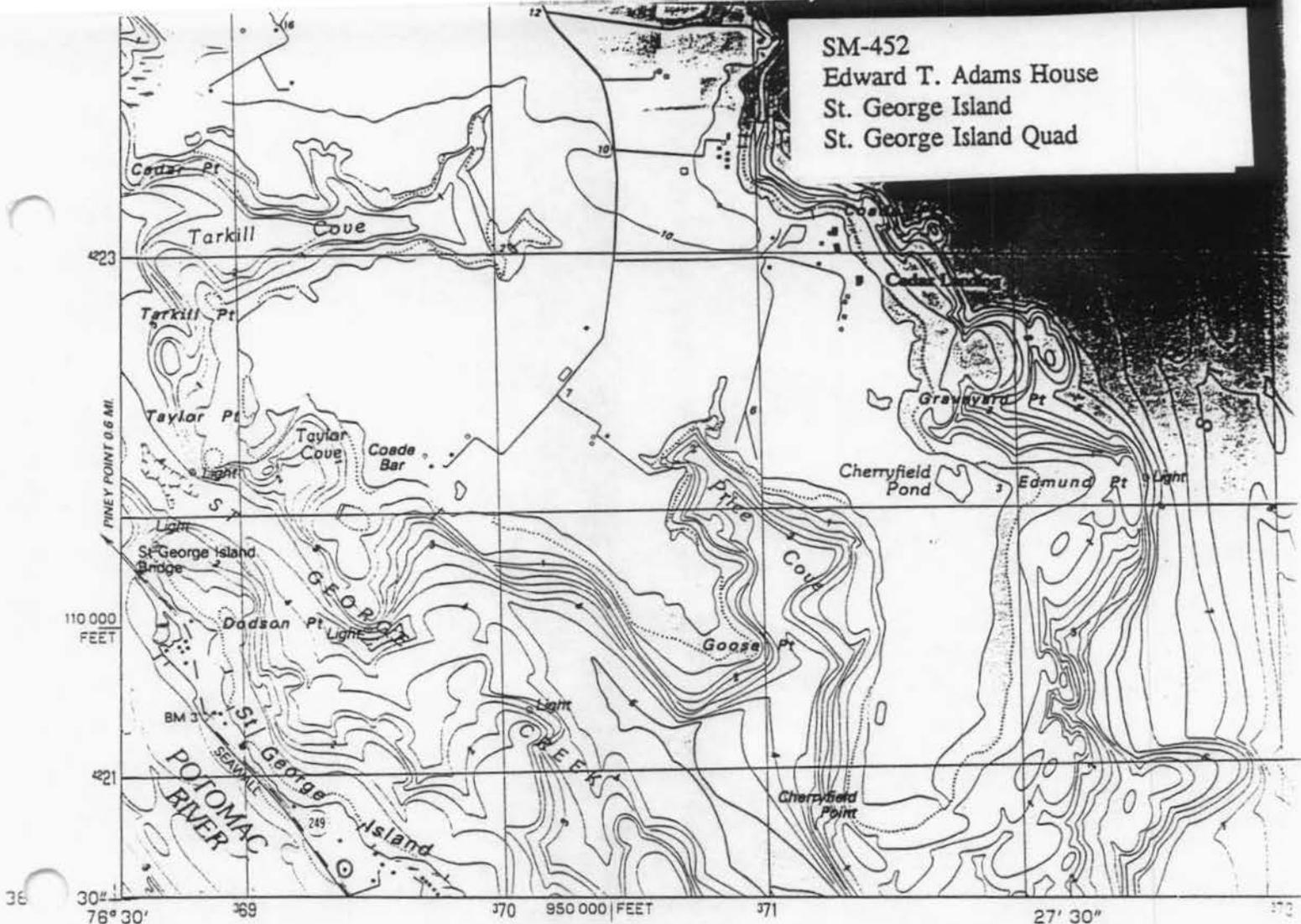
*BILL
DICKIN*

ADAMS' HOTEL
ST. GEORGE'S ISLAND, ST. MARY'S COUNTY
MARYLAND

ELLEN



SM-452
 Edward T. Adams House
 St. George Island
 St. George Island Quad



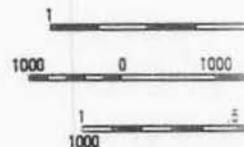
Produced by the United States Geological Survey
 and the National Ocean Service
 Control by USGS, NOS/NOAA, and DMA
 Topography by photogrammetric methods from aerial photographs
 taken 1981. Field checked 1982. Map edited 1987
 Supersedes Army Map Service map dated 1943

Bathymetry compiled by the National Ocean Survey from
 tide-coordinated hydrographic surveys. This information is
 not intended for navigational purposes
 Mean low water (dotted) line and mean high water (heavy
 solid) line compiled by NOS from tide-coordinated aerial
 photographs. Apparent shoreline (outer edge of vegetation)
 shown by light solid line

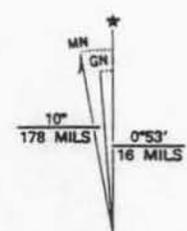
Projection and 10,000-foot grid ticks: Maryland coordinate
 system (Lambert conformal conic)
 1000-meter Universal Transverse Mercator grid, zone 18
 1927 North American Datum

To place on the predicted North American Datum 1983,
 move the projection lines 9 meters south and
 28 meters west as shown by dashed corner ticks

There may be private inholdings within the boundaries of
 the National or State reservations shown on this map
 Fine red dashed lines indicate selected fence and field lines where
 generally visible on aerial photographs. This information is unchecked



QUADRANGLE LOCATION



UTM GRID AND 1987 MAGNETIC
 DECLINATION AT CENTER OF
 UTM GRID AND 1987 MAGNETIC
 DECLINATION AT CENTER OF

Route State Road
ST. MARYS CITY, MD.

38076-B4-TB-024
1987

DMA 5760 III NW-SERIES V833

Polyconic projection. 10,000-foot grid ticks based on Maryland
 coordinate system
 1000-meter Universal Transverse Mercator grid ticks,
 zone 18, shown in blue
 1927 North American Datum
 To place on the predicted North American Datum 1983
 move the projection lines 9 meters south and

UTM GRID AND 1985 MAGNETIC NORTH
 DECLINATION AT CENTER OF SHEET

Revisions shown in purple and woodland compiled by the

(KINSALE)
 5680 11 SE





SM-452

Edward T. Adams House

St. Mary's County, MD

E. Hughes

10/94

MD SHPO

NW elevation

2/9



SM-452

Edward T Adams House

St. Mary's County, MD

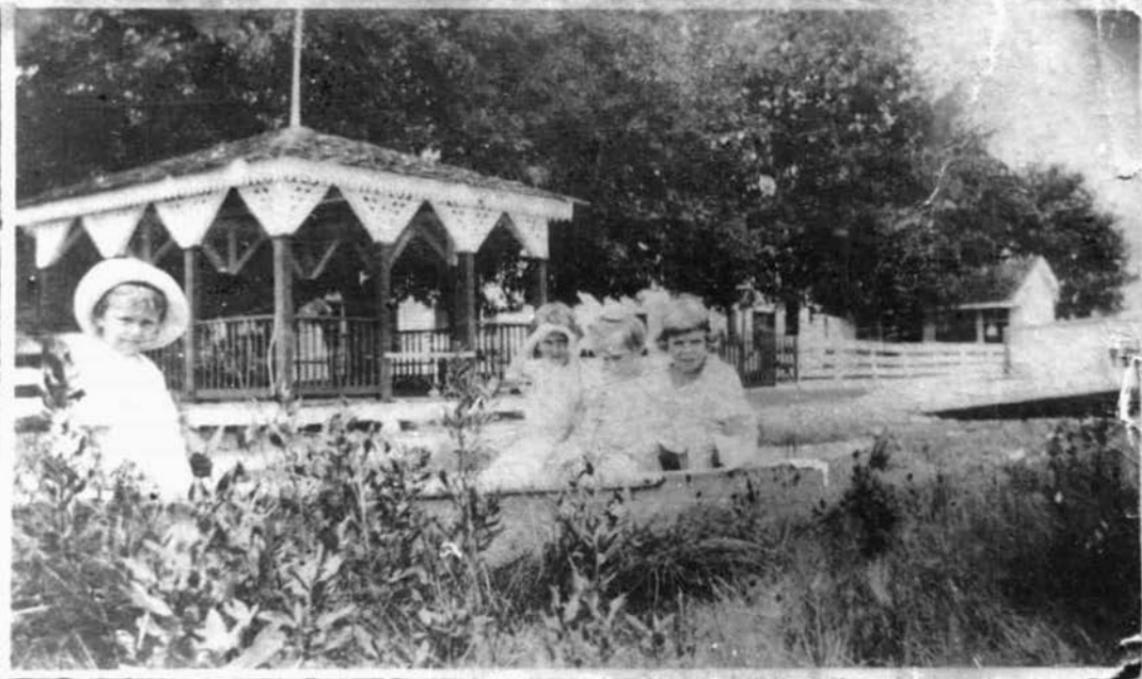
E. Hughes

10/94

MD SHPO

E elevation

3/4



SM-AS2

Edward T Adams House

St. Mary's County, MD

E. Hughes

12/94

112 SHPO

Historic photo - Source: Mac Taylor Chesser

Dance pavilion and St. George Creek shore

4/+