

Capsule Summary  
SM-622  
Edwin Palmer House  
Abell Vic.  
Private  
(Page 1)

1896

In 1896, local tobacco and corn farmer Edwin Palmer and his wife Lydia contracted with local boatbuilder and master carpenter Willie Thompson to build a two story, three bay, single-pile, center-passage plan frame house on the banks of St. Patrick's Creek near Abell, Maryland. Facing east, towards the land approach, the new dwelling symbolized the Palmer's agricultural rather than maritime orientation. While the house relayed conventional late-nineteenth and early twentieth century form and modest architectural embellishment, the dwelling is architecturally significant as a particularly good example of the house type. The house is also important as the birthplace of a prominent boatbuilder and son of Edwin and Lydia Palmer. Wilmer Palmer, born in 1900, became one of the most highly skilled fore-to-aft dory boat builders in the seventh voting district of St. Mary's County during the 1940s and 1950s.

While the Edwin Palmer House's exterior has been clad in vinyl siding and the windows replaced with modern sash, the dwelling retains several distinctive architectural features. The porch, for instance, features turned porch posts, and a finely detailed set of panelled French doors which lead into the formal center passage. The dwelling also features a circular attic window, an abbreviated scroll sawn vergeboard with pendant, as well as three corbelled brick chimneys. While an expression of Edwin and Lydia Palmer's prosperity, the dwelling also relayed the family's agricultural priorities.

In sharp contrast to his farming-oriented father, Wilmer Palmer became a boatbuilder beginning in the 1920s. Noting his father Edwin "could hardly hit a nail straight," Wilmer Palmer often helped his father with harvesting tobacco and corn during seasonal lulls in his boat repair and building enterprise.<sup>1</sup> Soon after Edwin Palmer died in 1933, Wilmer acquired the house and

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<sup>1</sup> Interview of Wilmer Palmer by Paula Johnson, April 7, 1983, Calvert Marine Museum, PRP PJR90, PJR91, and PJR92.

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SM-622, Edwin Palmer House  
St. Mary's County  
Maryland Comprehensive State Historic Preservation Data

Historic Context

Geographic Organization:	Western Shore
Chronological/Developmental Period:	Industrial/Urban Dominance, 1870-1930
Historic Period Theme:	Architecture Agriculture

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-622

Magi No.

DOE  yes  no

**1. Name** (indicate preferred name)

historic Part of Collingwood, Farrum, Cobrum, & Bedlam Neck

and/or common Edwin Palmer House (pref.)

**2. Location**

0.2 of a mile W of int. of Wilmer Palmer Rd. & Golden Thompson Rd., on Wilmer Palmer Road  
street & number  not for publication

city, town Abell  vicinity of congressional district 7

state Maryland county St. Mary's TM-46, G-18, P-66

**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 Creighton W. Palmer

street & number PO Box 45 telephone no.: 301 769-2160

city, town Abell state and zip code Maryland 20606

**5. Location of Legal Description**

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. St. Mary's County Courthouse liber MRB 450

street & number folio 449

city, town Leonardtown state Md

**6. Representation in Existing** Historical Surveys

title

date  federal  state  county  local

depository for survey records

city, town state

# 7. Description

Survey No. SM-622

<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 Edwin J. Palmer House is located approximately 0.1 mile west from the intersection of Golden Thompson and Wilmer Palmer Roads near Abell, Maryland. Approached via Wilmer Palmer Road, the dwelling is oriented on an east/west axis with the primary elevation aligned with the access road and the rear elevation overlooking St. Patrick's Creek. The building is situated on a small promontory and is surrounded by a number of commercial boat building and service facilities including Palmer's Boatbuilding Shop (SM-624), Palmer's Marine Railway (SM-623), as well as the Wilmer Palmer House (SM-621).

Constructed in 1896, the Edwin J. Palmer House is a two story, three bay, "L" plan, frame dwelling with a gable roof. Resting on a brick pier foundation, the building's walls are sheathed with "German" or beveled vinyl siding. The cornice is enclosed and the roof is covered with raised seam metal. Three interior brick chimney flues pierce the roof line and all exhibit elaborate corbelling.

The primary or east elevation features a symmetrical fenestration consisting of three bays. On the first floor, the center bay consists of French doors that exhibit panelling and compass head glazing. This door is flanked on either side by long one-over-one, double-hung sash windows (All windows in the house are the same types of sash unless otherwise noted). All of these bays are shaded by a porch supported by a series of turned posts. The second floor of the elevation is pierced by three windows. Immediately above the central bay is a cross gable that exhibits a circular attic window. The cross gable is further highlighted by a pendant and a modest scroll sawn vergeboard.

The north elevation consists of the front section's gable end the side of the rear ell. The elevation is pierced by two windows on the first and second floors. There is no indication that the rear ell was added at a later date as it appears to have been constructed simultaneously. The elevation is otherwise unadorned.

The west elevation is consists of the rear ell's gable end and the rear of the main block. The rear ell is pierced on the first, second, and attic story by a window. At the junction of the main block and ell is a small one story addition. The addition is pierced by a small window. The first and second floor of the main block is pierced by two windows. A screened-in porch supported by turned posts shades the first floor bays.

The south elevation consists of the ell's side and the main block's gable end. The first floor of the ell has been expanded by the one story addition. The addition is pierced by a window and a four pane-over-three panel door. The ell's second floor is pierced by a single window. The first, second, and attic story of the main block each feature one window.

The interior was not accessible at the time of the visit. Judging from the fenestration, the two interior floors follow a center passage, single-pile plan with a one room ell off the main block's west side.

# 8. Significance

Survey No. SM-622

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 checked="" 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.

In 1896, local tobacco and corn farmer Edwin Palmer and his wife Lydia contracted with local boatbuilder and master carpenter Willie Thompson to build a two story, three bay, single-pile, center-passage plan frame house on the banks of St. Patrick's Creek. Facing east, towards the land approach, the new dwelling symbolized the Palmer's agricultural rather than maritime orientation. While the house relayed conventional late-nineteenth and early twentieth century form and modest architectural embellishment, the dwelling is architecturally significant as a particularly good example of the house type. The house is also important as the birthplace of a prominent boatbuilder and son of Edwin and Lydia Palmer. Wilmer Palmer, born in 1900, became one of the most highly skilled fore-to-aft dory boat builders in the seventh voting district of St. Mary's County during the 1940s and 1950s.

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<sup>1</sup> Interview of Wilmer Palmer by Paula Johnson, April 7, 1983, Calvert Marine Museum, PRP PJR90, PJR91, and PJR92.

# 9. Major Bibliographical References

Survey No. SM-622

Interview with Creighton W. Palmer, February, 1998.

# 10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property 3.12 acres

Quadrangle name Stratford Hall

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"/>
---	----------------------	----------------------	----------------------

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
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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 4-27-98

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-622, Edwin Palmer House  
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 MRB 450, Folio 449

Grantee: Creighton W. Palmer

Grantor: Mary Elizabeth Palmer

Date: January 3, 1987

Notes: The tract, containing 3.12 acres, is called "Part of Collingwood."

Reference: Liber CBG 85, Folio 67

Grantee: Mary Elizabeth Palmer

Grantor: Wilmer E. and Veronica Palmer

Date: November 27, 1959

Notes: Wilmer Palmer inherited the property from his father Edwin J. Palmer (see MLC 1, 380).

Reference: Liber JMM 2, Folio 493

Grantee: Edwin J. Palmer

Grantor: Ellen D. Palmer, et al

Date: September 20, 1924

Reference: Liber JJG 3, Folio 354

Grantee: Edwin J. Palmer

Grantor: Samuel E. F. Palmer, executor of John Palmer

Date: February 17, 1896

Notes: Here the parcel includes 175 acres.

Reference: Liber JFF 9, Folio 464

Grantee: John Palmer

Grantor: George R. Gaither, Jr.

Date: March 27, 1887

Notes: George R. Gaither, Jr. assumed the mortgage of John Palmer after he died. The property here is listed as containing 440 acres.

Reference: Mortgage Record, Liber JFF 5, Folio 196

Grantee: Thomas H. Gaither

Grantor: Sarah A. Long

Date: September 12, 1881

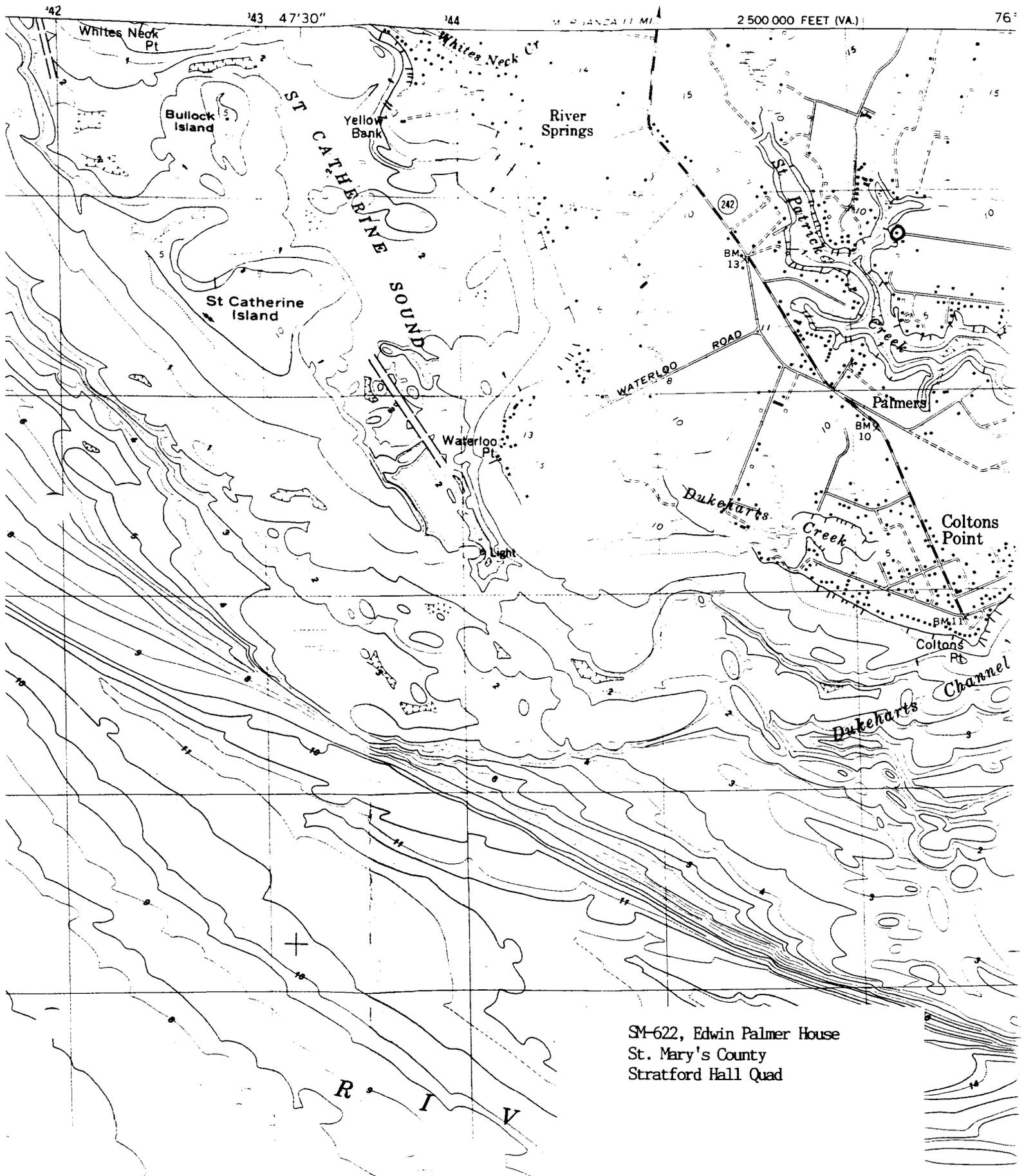
Reference: Will Record, Liber JTMR 1, Folio 358

Grantee: Sarah A. Long

Grantor: John B. Long

Date: May 13, 1874

Notes: No previous deed is listed.





SM-622

Edwin Palmer House

St. Mary's County

Kirk Ranzetta

April/98

1D SHPO

E+N elevations

1 of 2



SM-622

Edwin Palmer House

St. Mary's County

Kirk Kancotta

April/98

MD SHPO

Wt S elevations

2 of 2