

Capsule Summary  
SM-639  
Prospect Hill Farmhouse  
Leonardtwn Vicinity  
Private

c. 1889-1890

The Prospect Hill Farmhouse, constructed c. 1889-1890, is an imposing frame, two story, two room plan dwelling that once commanded expansive views of Breton Bay. Built by Mr. George Pabst, a wealthy New York merchant, the house represented a deviation from typical domestic architecture in St. Mary's County. Erected as a summer residence, the house featured a large interior chimney stack shared on the first floor by two rooms with a rear winder stair -- a floor plan more typically found in a New England farmhouse. Other interesting architectural features not typically found in the county are the series of small windows located near the eave line -- openings usually used for venting the attic story.

Judging from this architectural evidence, it appears as if Mr. Pabst appropriated different ideas about domestic architecture when he built the Prospect Hill Farmhouse -- ideas he may have taken from his native New York. Pabst's influence upon the property extended well beyond the architectural realm, however, for he also introduced progressive and alternative farming activities -- growing crops commercially such as turnips, cabbages, tomatoes, celery, as well as sweet potatoes as opposed to tobacco. He was also a founding member of the Leonardtown Farmers Club.

Today, the Prospect Hill Farmhouse as well as the surrounding property represent an extension of Mr. Pabst's progressive farming attempts and possibly his "northern" architectural sensibilities. While the house has been extensively renovated, enough evidence remains to raise important questions about the architectural motives of Mr. Pabst. Was he trying, for instance, to impose "northern" architectural and agricultural notions on a distinctively southern landscape? While questions such as this may go unresolved, the house and farm remain important for their association with the theme of improvement in the post-Civil War period and the role wealthy northern merchants played during this period.

SM-639, Prospect Hill Farmhouse  
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:	Agriculture 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-639

Magi No.

DOE  yes  no

## 1. Name (indicate preferred name)

historic Prospect Hill, Gilmotts Hills, Gilmoth's Hills

and/or common Prospect Hill Farmhouse (pref.)

## 2. Location

1 mile SE of intersection of Knight and Bull Road, on south side of Knight Rd  
street & number not for publication

city, town Leonardtown  vicinity of congressional district 3

state Maryland county St. Mary's County TM-40, G-17, Lot 1 P-94

## 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 Mark H. Henderson, Jr.

street & number 223 Lake Drive telephone no.: 301-475-7967

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 EWA 1026

street & number folio 555

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-639

<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: 1

The Prospect Hill Farmhouse is located approximately 0.5 miles southeast of the intersection of Knight Road and Bull Road near Leonardtown, Maryland. Situated on a rolling cultivated tract, the main dwelling is approached via a 0.1 mile long dirt farm road that extends south from Knight Road. On the east side of the drive is the Prospect Hill tenant house (SM-640) and to the west is the Prospect Hill tobacco house (SM-641). While the view is currently obscured by trees and overgrowth, the main dwelling once commanded an expansive view of Breton Bay. On the south side of the dwelling, a series of grassy terraces gracefully soften what is a rather steep slope down to Breton Bay.

The Prospect Hill Farmhouse, constructed c. 1890, is a two story, two room, single pile, frame dwelling with a one story ell. Erected on a common bond brick foundation, the dwelling's original sheathing was removed and replaced with asbestos shingles. The roof features an exposed cornice with the eaves supported at the corners with modest unfinished brackets. Pressed metal shingles cover the roof which is pierced by a large centrally located interior brick chimney. The ell, constructed in the mid-twentieth century, rests on a cinder block foundation and is sheathed with asbestos shingles. The roof is covered with pressed-metal shingles.

The primary or south elevation of the main dwelling is pierced by five bays on the first floor and four on the second. The first floor exhibits a centrally located two-pane-over-two panel door flanked on the west side by a two-pane-over-two-panel door and a one-over-one, double-hung, sash window and on the east side by two one-over-one windows each of which feature louvered shutters. The main door is partially sheltered by a shed roof awning, while a screened-in wrap around porch extends around the south side of the elevation. The second floor is pierced by three one-over-one windows and a paired set of slender one-over-one windows. Just above these bays are four, two pane, fixed sash windows which light the attic.

The west elevation consists of the main block's gable end and the rear ell's side. The main block is pierced on the first floor by a set of paired one-over-one windows and a single one-over-one window. This second window lights an original shallow shed roof projection which extends from the north side of the main block. This two story projection features a one-over-one window on its second floor. The rear ell features three, six-over-six windows and a two-pane-over-two-panel door. A centrally located, interior, brick chimney flue heats this one story addition.

The north elevation is composed of the ell's gable end and the main block's rear side. The ell projects northward from the center of the main block. The ell is pierced by a six-over-six window. The main block is distinguished by a projection topped by a cross gable. This projection is pierced on the second floor by a one-over-one window and on the attic story by a two pane fixed sash with a triangular crown. To the east of the projection is an original one story shed which is lit by a single one-over-one window.

The east elevation consists of the ell's side and main block's gable end. The ell is pierced by six-pane-over-three panel door, two six-over-six windows, and a two-pane-over-two panel door. The main block features a one-over-one window on the first and second floors, while a two pane fixed sash with a triangular crown lights the attic.

# 8. Significance

Survey No. SM-639

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 checked="" 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.

The Prospect Hill Farmhouse constructed c. 1889-1890 is an imposing frame, two story, two room plan dwelling that once commanded expansive views of Breton Bay. Built by Mr. George Pabst, a wealthy New York merchant, the house represented a deviation from typical domestic architecture in St. Mary's County. Erected as a summer residence, the house featured a large interior chimney stack shared on the first floor by two rooms with a rear winder stair -- a floor plan more typically found in a New England farmhouse. Other interesting architectural features not typically found in the county are the series of small windows located near the eave line -- openings usually used for venting the attic story.

Judging from this architectural evidence, it appears as if Mr. Pabst appropriated different ideas about domestic architecture when he built the Prospect Hill Farmhouse -- ideas he may have taken from his native New York. Fortunately, articles in the St. Mary's Beacon shed some light on his background as well as his activities on the farm.

In April of 1886, Pabst purchased the 243 acre Prospect Hill Farm from J. Thomas Abell. In less than a month the Beacon reported that "workmen are busily engaged in building on the Prospect Hill Estate."<sup>1</sup> In June workers were busy making bricks for a kiln Pabst proposed to burn on his property.<sup>2</sup> The workers, however, were not yet erecting the main house, however, for in October, a Baltimore Sun article which appeared in the Beacon noted that "his temporary house, barn, and outbuilding are up but his mansion proper is to be commenced in spring."<sup>3</sup> Delays must have hampered the project for it was not until June of 1889 that Pabst "ordered the lumber for a

1 St. Mary's Beacon, v41: 284, p3, c2, 6 May 1886.

2 SMB, v41: 290, p3, c2, 17 June 1886.

3 SMB, v47: 307, p3, c2, 14 October 1886.

# 9. Major Bibliographical References

Survey No. SM-639

See Significance 8.1.

# 10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property 2 acres around house

Quadrangle name Leonardtown

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"/>
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D	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
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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"/>
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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 6-18-98

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-639, Prospect Hill Farmhouse  
St. Mary's County  
7.1 Description

The interior of the Prospect Hill Farmhouse's interior is unconventional for the late-nineteenth century. The main block exhibits a hall-parlor plan that revolves around a centrally located stack. This traditional arrangement is uncommon for the timeperiod and region. Most, late-nineteenth century dwellings feature a center passage plan with the fireplaces located on the exterior ends. Another interesting feature is the rear projection which houses the winder stair. Ghosts indicate that the hall and parlor featured mantles, while other scars indicate the presence of shelving. A corner cupboard still survives in the west room. The door and window trim is relatively modest and undecorated. The second floor features a stair passage with a series of three bedrooms radiating from this central space. The most prominent feature in the partially excavated basement is a large stone base for the chimney. The ell consists of two rooms -- presumably the dining room and kitchen.

SM-639, Prospect Hill Farmhouse  
St. Mary's County  
8.1 Significance

new and handsome dwelling to be erected on his Prospect Hill Estate."<sup>4</sup> While these various articles help to affix a date on the house, they also relate how St. Mary's County became an important summer destination for wealthy merchants all along the eastern seaboard.

Indeed, in the aforementioned Baltimore Sun article, the reporter noted that two friends of Mr. Pabst, a Mr. George Borgfeldt and Mr. T.E. Studley "importers of fancy goods," planned on purchasing a site nearby. The article continued "It is thought other Northern men of means will follow the lead of these two wealthy gentlemen and purchase summer residences in St. Mary's County and handsomely improve them." The Sun as well as the St. Mary's Beacon had good reason to report the arrival of these elite businessmen. Almost as soon as Mr. Pabst arrived he set about improving not only the architectural appointments but also the agricultural arrangements -- regardless of the perceived cost. In 1886, for instance, he put large amounts of fertilizer down on his tenanted farm land -- free of charge to his sharecroppers, and he also cleared large amounts of acreage. He spent so much the paper reported that "already he has spent in improvements ten times the cost of the farm and he only seems to be well started in his operations."<sup>5</sup> Pabst turned to crops not extensively grown in the county such as cabbage, turnip, tomato, celery, as well as sweet potato and urged others to turn away from tobacco as a staple crop.<sup>6</sup> He also attempted to extend his influence by becoming an active founding member of the Leonardtown Farmers Club.<sup>7</sup>

Today, the Prospect Hill Farmhouse as well as the surrounding property represent an extension of Mr. Pabst's progressive farming attempts and his "northern" architectural sensibilities. While the house has been extensively renovated, enough evidence remains to raise important questions about the architectural motives of Mr. Pabst. Was he trying, for instance, to impose "northern" architectural and agricultural notions on a distinctively southern landscape? While questions such as this go unresolved, the house and farm remain important for their association with the theme of improvement in the post-Civil War period and the role northern merchants played in this historical theme.

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4 SMB, v49: 442, p3, c1, 6 June 1889.

5 SMB, v47: 307, p3, c2, 14 October 1886.

6 SMB, v 48: 376, p2, c4, 1 March 1888 and v48: 394, p3, c1, 5 July 1888 and v 50: 517, p3, c2, 4 December 1890.

7 SMB, v 48: 379, p3, c1, 22 March 1888.

SM-639, Prospect Hill Farmhouse  
St. Mary's County  
8.2 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 EWA 1026, Folio 555

Grantee: Mark H. Henderson, Jr.

Grantor: Knight Family Limited Partnership

Date: September 26, 1995

Notes: This deed includes the transfer of 163 acres which consists of parcels 94, 151, 196, and 195 on tax map 40. A provision is also made for Mary Elizabeth Johnson, a tenant on the property, to remain on the property for the remainder of her life.

Reference: Liber MRB 273, Folio 261

Grantee: Knight Family Limited Partnership

Grantor: Janet D. Knight

Date: June 13, 1977

Notes: Two parcels are sold to the Knight family. The 164 acre parcel called "Prospect Hill" is the tract where the site is located.

Reference: Liber JMM 11, Folio 391

Grantee: Harold and Janet D. Knight

Grantor: William G. Fenwick

Date: April 12, 1939

Reference: Liber JMM, 11, Folio 391

Grantee: William G. Fenwick

Grantor: Harold and Janet D. Knight

Date: April 12, 1939

Reference: Liber JMM 7, Folio 201

Grantee: Harold Knight

Grantor: Harry E. and Helen Wray Knight

Date: January 13, 1931

Notes: Prospect Hill is listed as containing 244.68 acres.

Reference: Will Record Liber BC 1, Folio 239

Grantee: Harry E. Knight

Grantor: Mary A. Knight

Date: April 12, 1899

Notes: Mary A. Knight devises much of her estate to Harry E. Knight.

Reference: Liber EBA 16, Folio 198

Grantee: Mary A. Knight

Grantor: Thomas M. Purnell, et al

Date: April 11, 1917

SM-639, Prospect Hill Farmhouse  
St. Mary's County  
8.3 Significance

Reference: Liber EBA 14, Folio 74  
Grantee: Thomas M. Purnell, et al  
Grantor: Helen O. Pabst (of Jersey City)  
Date: June 11, 1915

Reference: Liber JFF 12, Folio 209  
Grantee: Helen O. Pabst  
Grantor: George F. Pabst  
Date: September 9, 1890

Reference: Liber JFF 9, Folio 61  
Grantee: George F. Pabst (of Jersey City)  
Grantor: J. Thomas Abell  
Date: April 12, 1886

Reference: Liber JFF 6, Folio 486  
Grantee: J. Thomas Abell  
Grantor: Mary P. Wathen  
Date: September 1, 1883  
Notes: Here the property is listed as containing 243 acres +/- . Unfortunately, the deed does not contain a bean clause.

Reference: Liber JTB 2, Folio 249  
Grantee: Mary P. Wathen  
Grantor: George C. Morgan  
Date: March 4, 1856  
Notes: Called "Prospect Hill" the property contains 276 acres.

Reference: Liber JTB 2, Folio 246  
Grantee: George C. Morgan  
Grantor: Robert H. Wathen  
Date: March 4, 1856

Reference: Liber JTB 1, Folio 709  
Grantee: Robert H. Wathen  
Grantor: Clement Wathen  
Date: May 30, 1854

Reference: Liber WTM 2, Folio 256-257  
Grantee: Clement and Robert H. Wathen  
Grantor: Mary L. Ford (widow of Dr. Joseph Ford)  
Date: January 15, 1850  
Notes: Here the property is called "Gilmotts Hills" or "Prospect Hill" and is listed as containing 316 acres. During the division of Lewis Ford's estate, Lot #1 which contained the above tract was purchased by Dr. Joseph Ford from John H. Turner.

SM-639, Prospect Hill Farmhouse  
St. Mary's County  
8.4 Significance

Reference: Liber JH 12, Folio 279-281

Grantee: John H. Turner

Grantor: George W. Morgan, Sheriff

Date: February 13, 1838

Notes: Part of Gilmotts Hills (otherwise called Prospect Hill) was designated as Lot #1. It features 316 acres.

SM-639, Prospect Hill Farmhouse  
St. Mary's County  
8.5 Significance

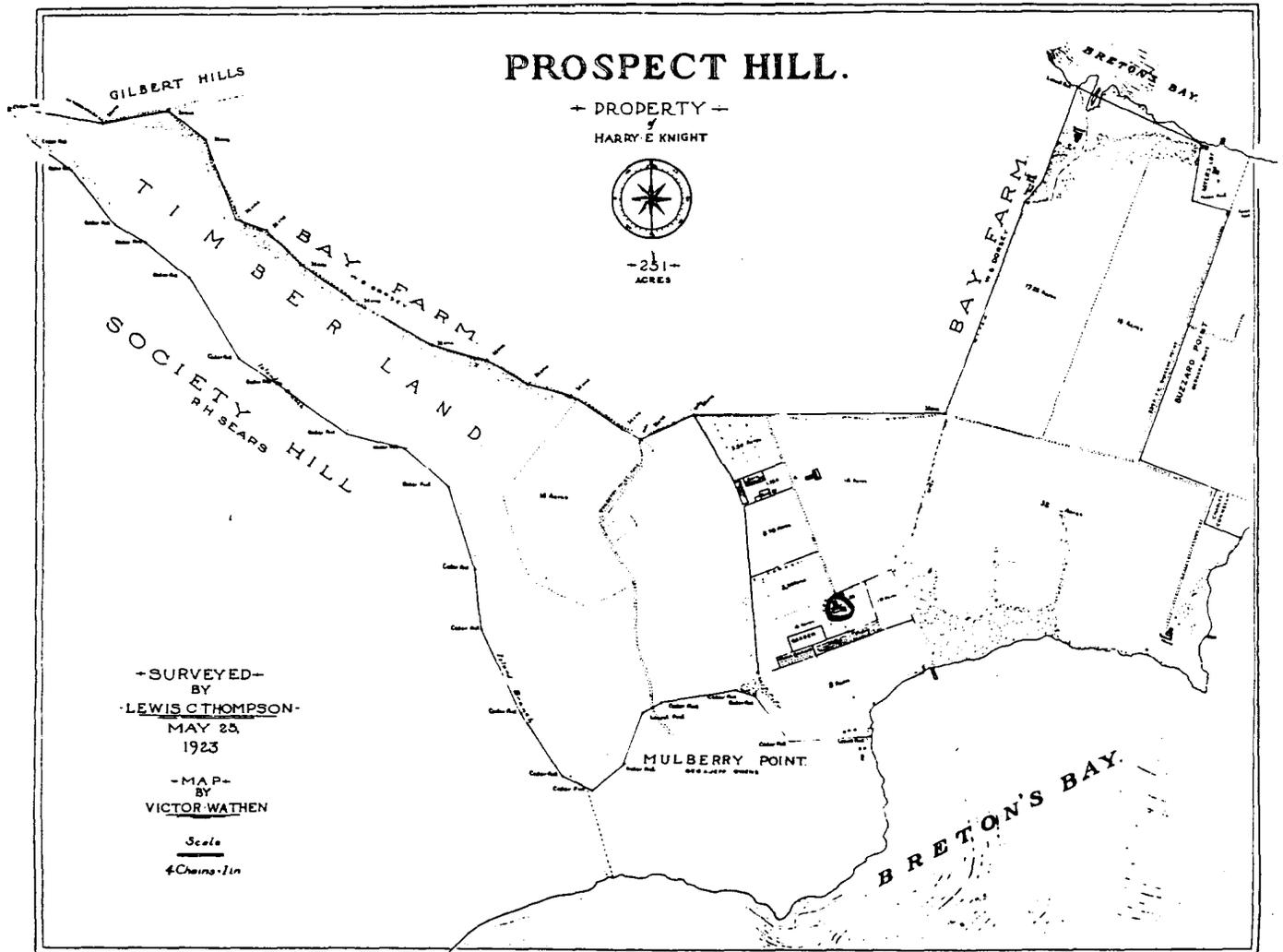


Figure 1. Map of survey of the Knight Farm. The Prospect Hill Farmhouse is located at the southern terminus of the farm road.

SM-639, Prospect Hill Farmhouse  
St. Mary's County  
8.6 Significance

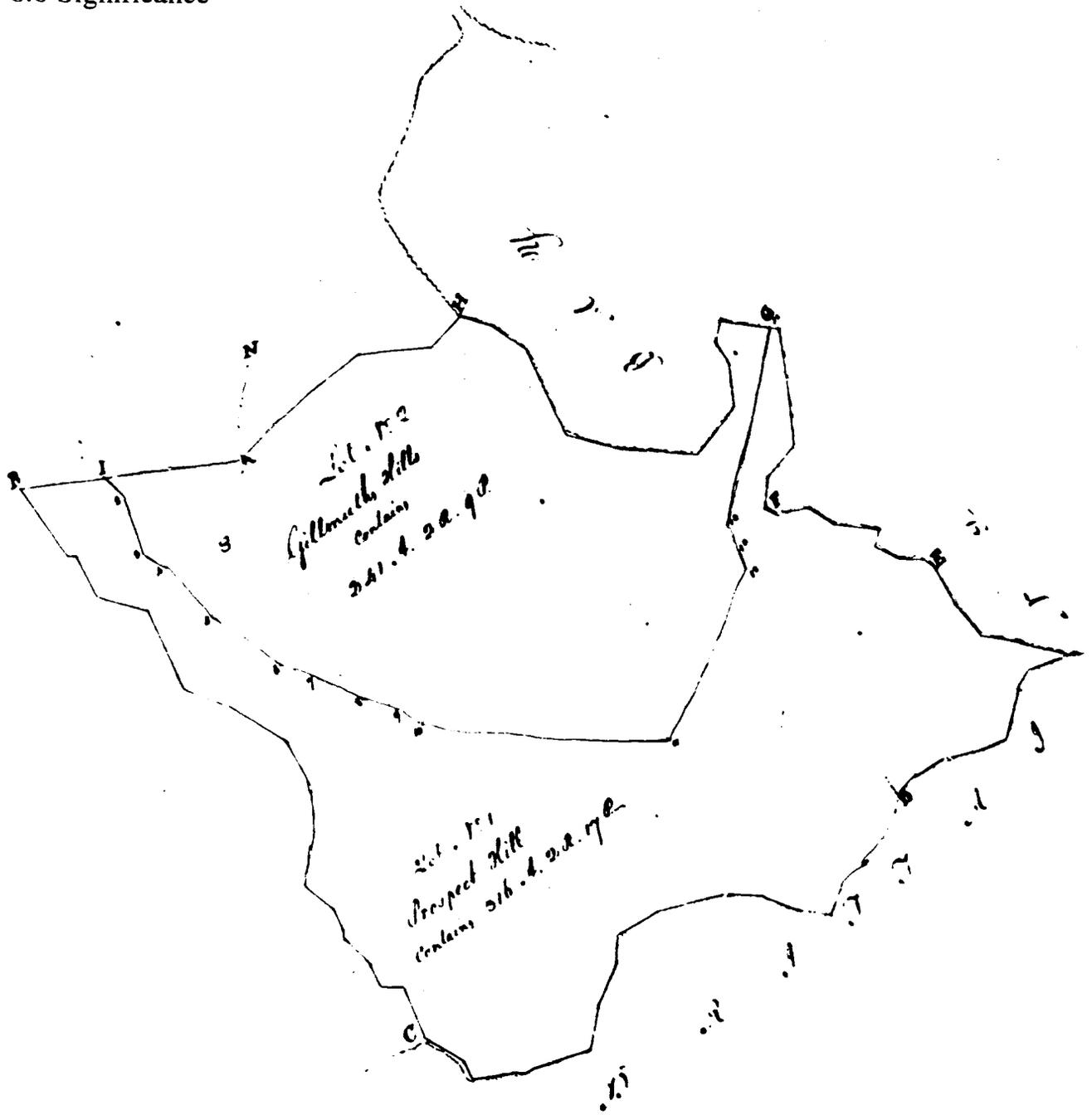
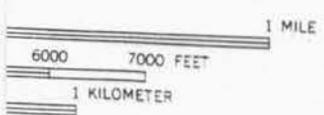


Figure 2. Survey of Prospect Hill and Gillmuths Hills by surveyor John T. Wathen, August 12, 1837. Land Commission Record, Liber JH 3, Folio 378.



SM-639  
 Prospect Hill Farmhouse  
 Leonardtown Vicinity  
 Leonardtown Quad



Heavy-dt  
 Medium-duty  
 Unimproved dirt  
 State Route

REDGATE 3 MI.  
 ST. MARYS CITY 14 MI.  
 1.5 MI. TO MD. 5  
 SEE 8 MI.



SM-639

Prospect Hill Farmhouse

St. Mary's County

Kirk Ranze Ha

May/98

Md SHPO

S+W elevations

1 of 2



SM-639

Prospect Hill Farmhouse

St. Mary's County

Kirk Ranzetta

May/98

-Md SHPO

N + E elevations

2 of 2