

Capsule Summary  
SM-663  
Morris Movie House  
Avenue  
Private

c. 1929

Moving picture entertainment was first brought to Avenue in the late-1920s when Andrew Jackson Morris and his wife Grace showed a silent movie in a garage that was located on the northeast corner of Hatchet Thicket and Colton's Point Roads. In 1929 the couple decided to build a more permanent one story, gable-front, frame theater. Unlike the impermanent theaters that initially developed in Leonardtown, this specially built movie house featured a long seating section, a stage, and a balcony for the picture equipment. As related by Charles and "Bebe" Grace Gibson, the theater showed both "talkies" as well as silent movies during the early days. The Gibsons also remember that much of the property surrounding the theater was used during the summer for a number of different carnivals, medicine shows, church festivals, and other events.

Over the years the building was used for a variety of purposes and as a result was modified several times. The exterior, for instance, was covered with vinyl siding and the primary elevation has received a new set of windows. More importantly, however, the movie house is still occupied by a sandwich and seafood store continuing the commercial tradition of the site. When accompanied by the nearby Morris House (SM-662) and the Morris/Gibson Store (SM-659), the appearance and function of Avenue at the beginning of the twentieth century becomes much clearer. These buildings also tell the story of the Morris and Gibson families who made the crossroads an invaluable commercial center.

SM-663, Morris/Gibson Movie 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  
Modern Period, 1930-present

Historic Period Theme: Architecture  
Economic  
Social/Education/Cultural

Resource Type

Category: Building

Historic Environment: Rural crossroads

Historic Function and Use: Movie Theater

Known Design Source: None

**Maryland Historical Trust**  
**State Historic Sites Inventory Form**

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

historic

and/or common Morris/Gibson Movie House

**2. Location**

street & number NE corner of Hatchet Thicket and Colton's Point Rds. \_\_\_ not for publication

city, town Avenue \_\_\_ vicinity of congressional district 7

state Md county St. Mary's TM-46, G-5, P-448

**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 checked="" 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 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 Charles H. and Frances V. Banagan

street & number Box 59 telephone no.: 301-769-3184

city, town Avenue state and zip code Md 20609

**5. Location of Legal Description**

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. St. Mary's County Courthouse liber EWA 1079

street & number folio 453

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-663

<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

Standing at the northwest corner of Colton's Point and Hatchet Thicket Roads in the rural crossroads community of Avenue is the Morris/Gibson Movie House. Oriented on an east/west axis, the building is situated on a flat one acre parcel. Conveniently located at the corner of two roads, the movie house remains visually linked with other resources associated with the Morris and Gibson families including the Morris/Gibson Store (SM-659) and House (SM-663). The property boundaries include the two intersecting roads on the west and south sides, a wooded tract on the east, and an open parcel to the north.

Constructed c. 1929, the Morris/Gibson Movie House is a one story, gable front, frame commercial building with a small one story rear frame addition. While the foundation is not currently visible, the movie house is largely sheathed with vinyl siding. A box cornice lies at the intersection of the wall and corrugated metal covered roof. A single, interior side brick chimney flue protrudes from the roof near the north side of the building. Several modern alterations have obscured the building's original appearance, but its overall form and some interior architectural elements belie the movie house's function.

Like many rural stores during the early twentieth century, the movie house's primary or west elevation consists of a gable front entry. Modern changes have altered the original sheathing materials for the elevation has been clad in brick laid in an all stretcher bond. The fenestration has also been modified as it includes a modern door and a set of three modern picture windows. The retention of the cornice returns helps to frame the otherwise unadorned elevation.

The north elevation consists of the main block and rear addition's side. The main block is pierced by two, large, one-over-one, double-hung sash windows. The rear addition features a single door entry that is shaded by a shed roof porch.

The east elevation consists of the main block and rear addition's gable ends. The main block is pierced by a door, while the rear addition is pierced by a two-over-two window. An exterior end, cinder block chimney flue extends up the center of the addition's wall.

Like the main block's north elevation, the south elevation features two, large, one-over-one windows. The rear addition, meanwhile, is lit by a single two-over-two window.

The interior has been divided into two rooms in order to accommodate its present use as a seafood carry out and deli, but several architectural accoutrements remain. Below a chair rail, for instance, is what appears to be the original matchstick wainscotting. The balcony has also been retained. Situated immediately over the front or west entrance, this space is entered via a winder stair located in the southwest corner of the front room.

# 8. Significance

Survey No. SM-663

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> theater
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800–1899	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
<input checked="" 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:  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.

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SM-663, Morris Movie 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 EWA 1079, Folio 453

Grantee: Charles H. and Frances V. Banagan

Grantor: Myrtle E. Faunce

Date: August 2, 1996

Notes: Containing 1.01 acres, a plat of the property was made on August 21, 1973 by J.R. McCrone.

Reference: Liber EWA 1069, Folio 248

Grantee: Myrtle E. Faunce

Grantor: David R. and Patricia A. Hutchinson, personal representatives of William T. Hutchinson

Date: June 26, 1996

Reference: Liber EWA 1001, Folio 235

Grantee: William T. Hutchinson

Grantor: Myrtle E. Faunce

Date: September 28, 1995

Reference: Liber DBK 198, Folio 24

Grantee: Myrtle E. and Henry S. Faunce

Grantor: Joseph Clement Mattingly

Date: September 13, 1973

Reference: Liber CBG 122, Folio 223

Grantee: Joseph Clement Mattingly

Grantor: Emory and Sadie M. Ellis, et al

Date: September 27, 1965

Notes: The tract is listed as #2 and contains 2 acres on the east side of the public road leading from Oakley to Palmers.

Reference: Liber CBG 65, Folio 48

Grantee: Grace H. and Charles F. Gibson

Grantor: Grace H. Morris, et al

Date: August 20, 1956

Reference: Liber JMM 9, Folio 329

Grantee: Grace H. Morris

Grantor: Alma M. Ellis, et al

Date: October 26, 1935

Reference: Liber EBA 19, Folio 190

Grantee: A. J. Morris

Grantor: Wade H. and Lillia D. Blackistone

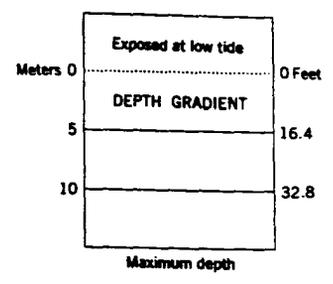
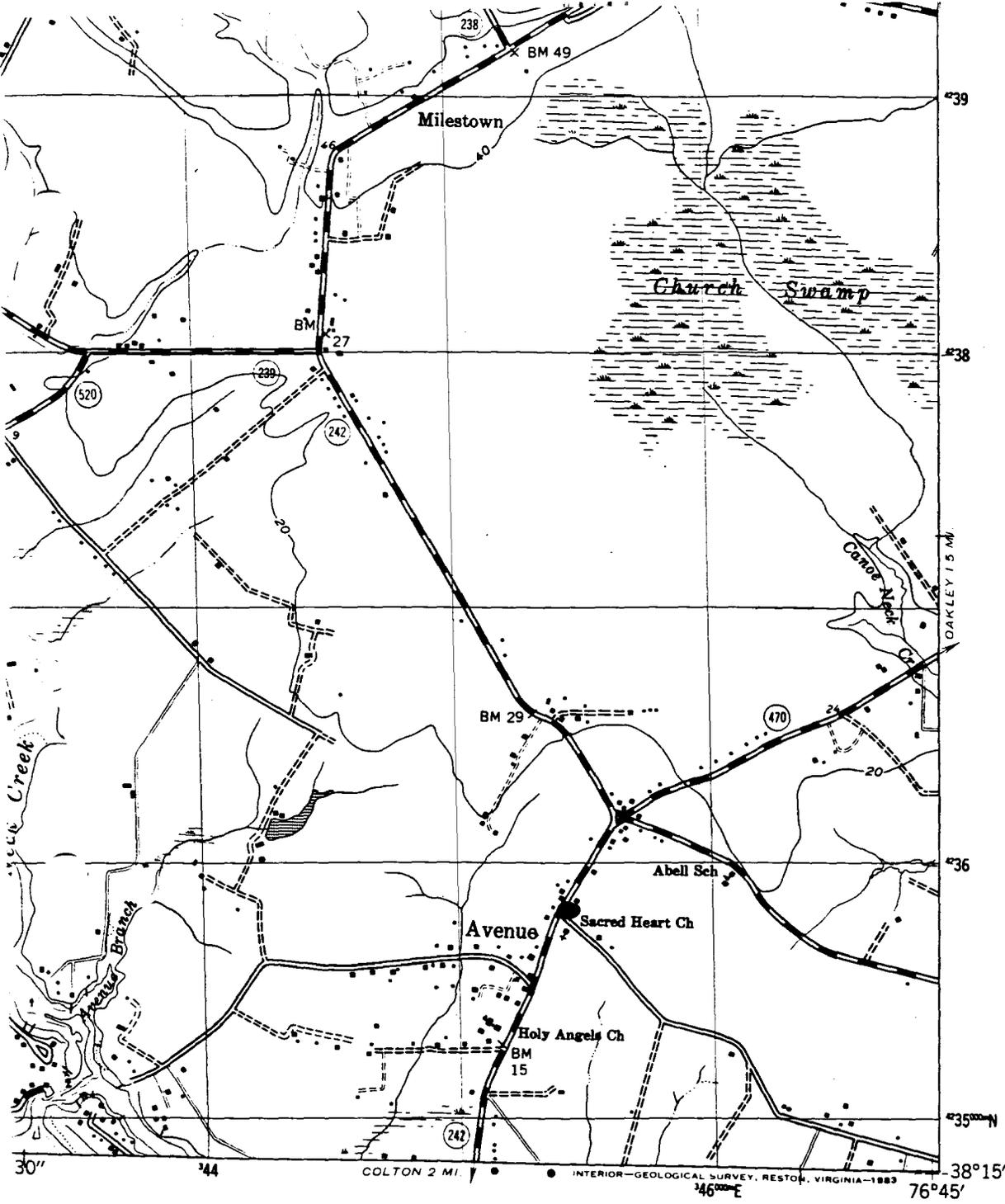
Date: March 20, 1920

Notes: Here the tract is listed as containing three acres. No previous deed is mentioned.

- 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 3.048

To convert meters to feet  
multiply by 3.2808

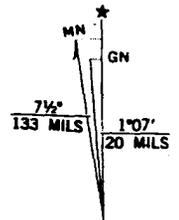


**ROAD CLASSIFICATION**

Medium-duty ——— Light-duty ———

Unimproved dirt = = = = =

○ State Route



**ROCK POIN**  
38076-C7-TB-1

1943  
PHOTOREVISE  
BATHYMETRY AC  
DMA 5660 IV SE-SE

SM-663, Morris Movie House  
Avenue  
St. Mary's County  
Rock Point Quad

(ST. CLEMENTS ISLAND)  
5660 I IN

COLTON 2 MI

INTERIOR—GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, RESTON, VIRGINIA—1983







