

T-685
William Tarr House
St. Michaels
private

c. 1860

It is clear from the research on this St. Mary's Square lot that William Tarr financed the construction of this two-story frame house sometime after he purchased "Lot 34" in 1841 from Matthew Spencer for \$88. The exterior architectural features of the building suggest the house was assembled during the 1850s or 1860s. In 1867, the Circuit Court of Talbot County authorized the sale of Tarr's house to reconcile his debts, but in the same year the property, described as "One house and lot on St. Mary's Square...being lot 34 on Town Plot," was transferred to Lewis Tarr for \$400. The property remained in Tarr family hands until the 1930s. Around World War II the house was purchased by William B. and William G. Harper, and Harper family members held title to the property until 1974.

The William Tarr house is one of the best preserved of the mid nineteenth-century dwellings on St. Mary's Square. Now used as a dress museum, the two-story, three-bay frame exterior has not been significantly altered. Plain weatherboard siding and a decorative turned post porch as well as six-over-six sash windows with louvered shutters contribute to the well-preserved nature of the house. The small frame outbuilding that stands in the back yard is one of the few nineteenth-century detached kitchens to survive in St. Michaels.

Survey No. T-685

Magi No. 2106852503

DOE yes no

Maryland Historical Trust State Historic Sites Inventory Form

1. Name (indicate preferred name)

historic WILLIAM TARR HOUSE

and/or common HARPER HOUSE

2. Location

street & number 400 St. Mary's Square not for publication

city, town St. Michaels vicinity of congressional district First

state Maryland county Talbot

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 checked="" 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 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

street & number telephone no.:

city, town state and zip code

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Talbot County Clerk of Court liber 548

street & number Talbot County Courthouse folio 126

city, town Easton state 21601

6. Representation in Existing Historical Surveys

title

date federal state county local

pository for survey records

city, town state

7. Description

Survey No. T-685

| | | | | |
|--|---------------------------------------|---|---|--------------------|
| Condition | | Check one | Check one | |
| <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.

The William Tarr house, more recently known as the Harper house, stands at 400 St. Mary's Square in the center of St. Michaels, Talbot County, Maryland. The two-story, three-bay frame house faces east with the main gable roof oriented on a north/south axis.

Built around 1860, the two-story, center hall frame dwelling is supported by a low brick pier foundation and is sheathed with weatherboard siding. The medium pitched roof is covered with asphalt shingles. Attached to the south gable end is a two-story, two-bay wing of the same construction. Standing behind the house is a small single-story, frame outbuilding that formerly served as a detached kitchen.

The east (main) facade is a symmetrical three-bay elevation with a center four-panel door entrance and flanking six-over-six sash windows. The windows are hung with louvered shutters and the door is topped by a three-light transom. Stretching across the entire first floor is a turned post porch that retains decorative corner brackets and a standing seam tin roof. The second floor is lighted by three evenly spaced six-over-six sash windows hung with louvered shutters as well. The cornice above is boxed and trimmed with bed and crown moldings.

The north gable end is marked by a new brick chimney and flush ends. The south side, on the other hand, is fully covered by the two-story, two-bay wing that is detailed in the same way as the main block. Six-over-six sash windows light each floor and an interior brick stack protrudes through the roof.

The back of the main block is covered on the first floor by a single-story shed roofed kitchen that rests on a concrete block foundation. Three six-over-six sash windows light the second floor.

The interior was not seen.

The former detached kitchen has been relocated and currently stands in the far northwest corner of the lot on concrete block piers. The squarish weatherboard frame structure is covered by a gable roof with a layer of asphalt shingles. A board door marks the east side, while a four-panel door and a four-over-four sash window defines the south side. Inside the exposed framing members retain a fading coat of whitewash. Evident in the north gable end is the covered over opening for the former brick chimney.

8. Significance

Survey No. T-685

| 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 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: 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 William Tarr house is one of the best preserved of the original nineteenth-century dwellings on St. Mary's Square. Now used as a dress museum, the two-story, three-bay frame exterior has not been significantly altered. Plain weatherboard siding and a decorative turned post porch as well as six-over-six sash windows with louvered shutters contribute to the well-preserved nature of the house. The small frame outbuilding that stands in the back yard is one of the few nineteenth-century detached kitchens to survive in St. Michaels.

HISTORY AND SUPPORT

It is clear from a chain-of-title of this property that William Tarr erected this two-story frame house sometime after he purchased "Lot 34" in 1841 from Matthew Spencer for \$88.(56/109) The architectural features of the house suggest the house was assembled during the 1850s or 1860s. In 1867, the Circuit Court of Talbot County authorized the sale of Tarr's house to reconcile his debts, but in the same year the property, described as "One house and lot on St. Mary's Square...being lot 34 on Town Plot" was transferred to Lewis Tarr for \$400.(73/505) The property remained in the Tarr family until the 1930s. Around World War II the house was purchased by William B. and William G. Harper, and Harper family members held title to the property until 1974.(487/643)

WILLIAM
~~WALTER~~ TARR HOUSE

T-685

YEAR: 1979 VOL: 548 PAGE: 126

FROM: Gerald W. and Joanne T. Gaster (Delaware City, Del.) PRICE:

TO: Gerald W. Gaster

NOTES Transfer was in two parcels. Parcel one was lot 35 (with small house built by the Harpers. Parcel two was this one. Begins on the west side of St. Mary's Square at the N corner of lot 33; run with St. Mary's Square N 23 40' W 60 feet; then S 66 15' W 100 feet to the back of lot 24; then S 23 45' E 60 feet to lot 33; then to the beginning. It is lot number 34 on the plat of St. Michaels. Conveyed to Gerald W. Gaster and Joanne T. Gaster by T. Walter Harper and Irma S. Harper 1974, 487/643.

YEAR: 1974 VOL: 487 PAGE: 643

FROM: T. Walter Harper and Irma S. Harper PRICE:

TO: Gerald W. Gaster and Joanne T. Gaster

NOTES Same description.

Parcel two conveyed to Harpers by Lee S. Gillis 1956, 331/394.

YEAR: 1956 VOL: 331 PAGE: 394

FROM: Lee S. Gillis and Florence Marie Gillis PRICE:

TO: T. Walter Harper and Irma S. Harper

NOTES Title clearance.

Conveyed to Lee S. Gillis by William B. Harper and T. Walter Harper 1956, 331/392.

Conveyed to William B. and T. Walter Harper by Lee S. Gillis 1952, 295/250

Conveyed to Lee S. Gillis by William B. Harper, William G. Harper, and T. Walter Harper 1952, 295/251.

Conveyed to William B. Harper, William G. Harper, and T. Walter Harper by Thomas C. Coulbourn and Myra L. Coulbourn 1942, 251/587.

YEAR: 1942 VOL: 251 PAGE: 587

FROM: Thomas C. Coulbourn and Myra L. Coulbourn PRICE:

TO: William B. Harper and William G. Harper

NOTES Same description.

Conveyed to Martha B. Coulbourn by Thomas C. Coulbourn 1938, 242/425

Devised by Martha B. Coulbourn to her nephew, Thomas C. Coulbourn by her will, 1940, 25/167.

YEAR: 1938 VOL: 242 PAGE: 425

FROM: Thomas C. Coulbourn, Extr. of Daniel R. Coulbourn PRICE: \$1,250

TO: Martha B. Coulbourn

NOTES Same description.

Bought by Martha B. Coulbourn at a public sale in 1938. Sale held by Thomas C. Coulbourn under the terms of Daniel Coulbourn's will (1931, 24/165).

Conveyed to Daniel R. Coulbourn by Lucy F. Tarr and Mollie W. Tarr 1930, 223/89.

YEAR: 1930 VOL: 223 PAGE: 89

FROM: Lucy F. Tarr and Mollie W. Tarr PRICE:

TO: Daniel R. Coulbourn

NOTES Same description.

Deed states that this is the same property Lewis Tarr obtained from James D. Mansfield in 1867. That this is also the first parcel in a deed, Charles L. Tarr and wife, heirs of Lewis Tarr, dcd. to Laura V. Tarr 1900, 133/416. It was devised to Lucy Florence Tarr, Mollie Walton Tarr and Olin Hicks Tarr by the will of Laura V. Tarr (1910, 20/108). Olin Hicks Tarr died 1925 and willed his interest in the property to his two sisters.

YEAR: 1900 VOL: 133 PAGE: 416

FROM: Charles L. Tarr and wife PRICE:

TO: Heirs of Lewis Tarr*

NOTES Heirs of Lewis Tarr: Charles L. Tarr, Rosetta Tarr, Sarah Matilda Harrison and James E. Harrison, George M. Tarr and Willie Tarr, Lucy F. Tarr, Emma H. Tarr, Mollie W. Tarr, Olin H. Tarr, and Oliver H. Tarr and Susan Tarr of West Virginia.

Two lots: parcel one is lot 34 on St. Mary's Square.

YEAR: 1867 VOL: 73 PAGE: 505

FROM: James D. Mansfield, Jr. and Margaret and Susan A. Tarr PRICE: \$400

TO: Lewis Tarr

NOTES "One house and lot on St. Mary's Square" and adds "being lot 34 Town Plot". Purchased by William Tarr from Matthew Spencer.

YEAR: 1867 VOL: 73 PAGE: 504

FROM: Charles H. Mansfield, late sheriff PRICE:

TO: James D. Mansfield

NOTES By authority Circuit Court decree 24 Jan 1864, case James D. Mansfield against William Tarr. Sold to James D. Mansfield one town lot with improvements on St. Mary's Square number 34,

YEAR: 1841 VOL: 56 PAGE: 109

FROM: Matthew Spencer PRICE: \$88

TO: William Tarr

NOTES Same description as 56/99. Lot number 34.

YEAR: 1841 VOL: 56 PAGE: 99

FROM: Edward Tennant and Sophia B. Tennant PRICE: \$185

TO: Matthew Spencer

NOTES One lot on St. Mary's Square on west side, marked number 34 on plat. Also the Swamp Lot (First lot on N side of Mulberry Street).

YEAR: 1839 VOL: 54 PAGE: 252

FROM: Thomas Tennant and Mary Tennant PRICE: \$500

TO: Edward Tennant

NOTES As part of the settlement of their father, Samuel Tennant's estate, Edward on payment of \$500 gets 11 acres west of St. Michaels (part of Martingham) plus two lots on the Main Road, numbers 27 and 28, also lot 34 on St. Mary's Square and the "swamp lot". All of these, except 34, were acquired by Samuel Tennant as "abandoned" or "vacant" land -for which he received patents or certificates from the Land Office at Annapolis.

YEAR: 1818 VOL: 40 PAGE: 544

FROM: Andrew Orem PRICE: p6 lsh

TO: Samuel Tennant

NOTES Lot number 34. Part of "Jane's Progress" in Braddock's Square.

YEAR: 1781 VOL: 21 PAGE: 198

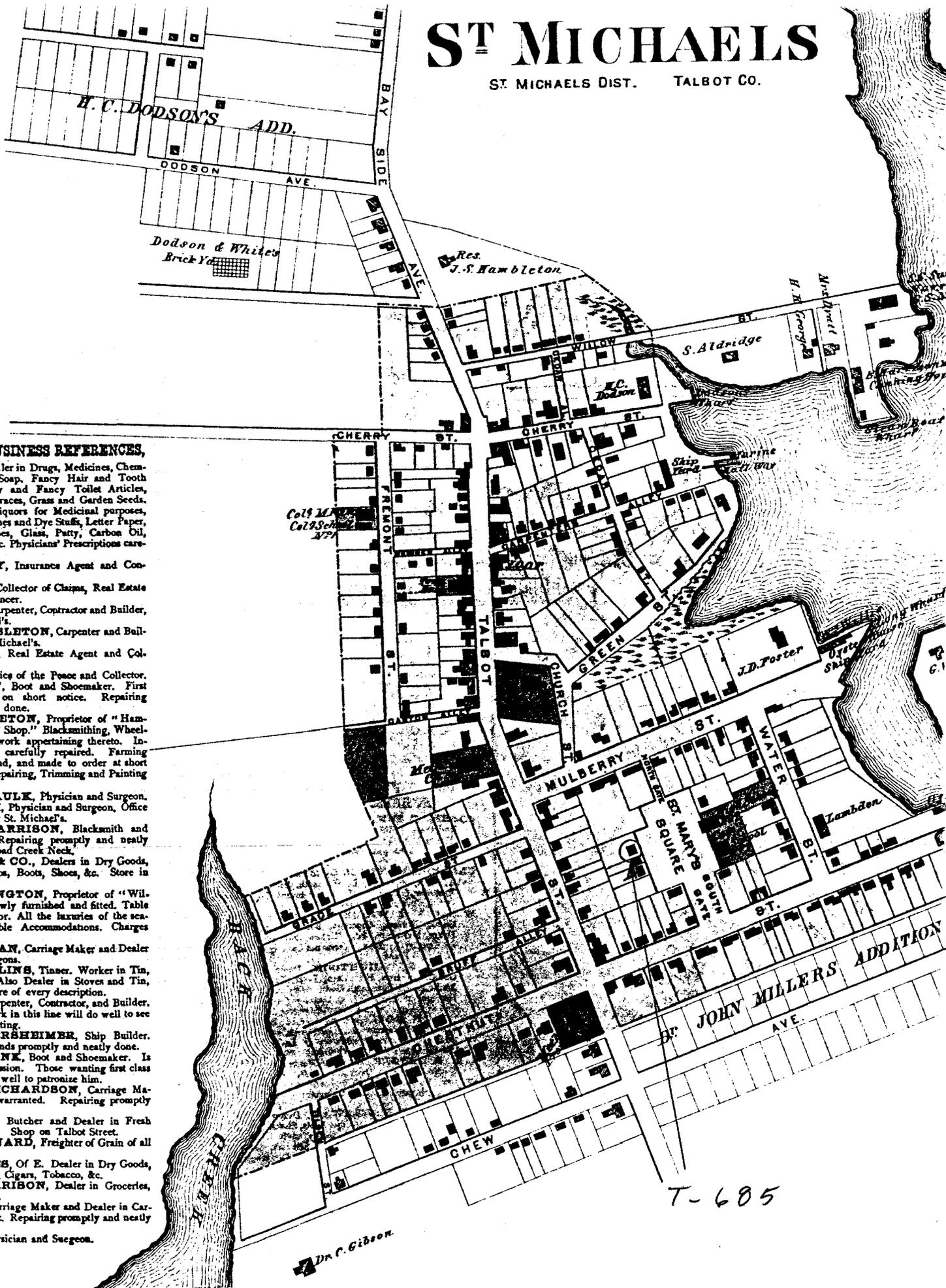
FROM: James Braddock PRICE: p250 sp.

TO: Andrew Orem

NOTES Included in this sale were lots 20, 1/4 of 21, 34, and 35. Payment was "in gold money". Although high, Braddock was getting between 40 and 60 pounds for his lots and prices probably fluctuated with the progress of the War.

ST MICHAELS

ST. MICHAELS DIST. TALBOT CO.

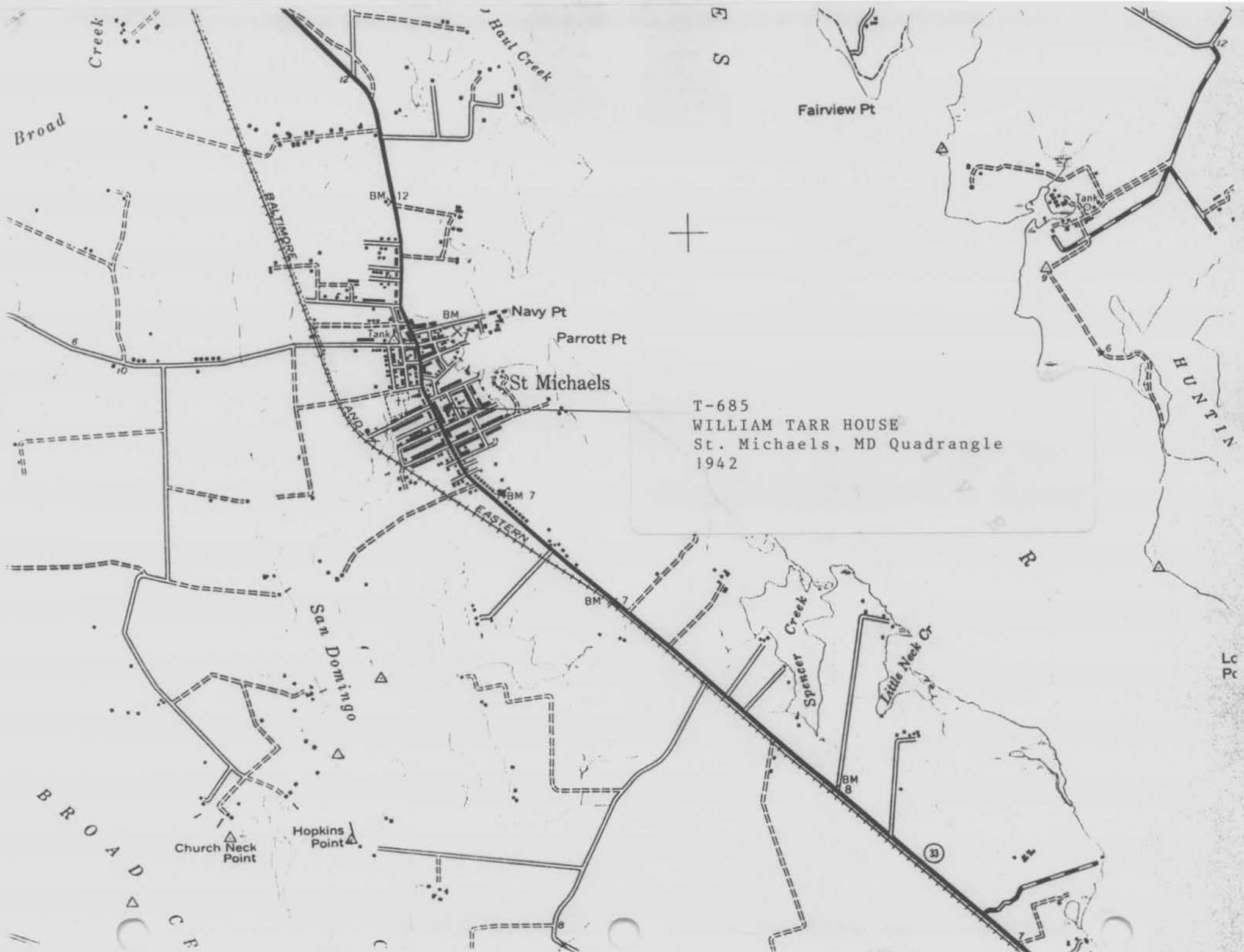


ST. MICHAEL'S BUSINESS REFERENCES,

- DODSON**, Dealer in Drugs, Medicines, Chemicals, Fine Toilet Soap, Fancy Hair and Tooth brushes, Perfumery and Fancy Toilet Articles, Saws, Shoulder-Braces, Grass and Garden Seeds, Wine and Liquors for Medicinal purposes, Oils, Varnishes and Dye Stuffs, Letter Paper, Ink, Envelopes, Glass, Putty, Carbon Oil, Stoves, Chimneys, &c. Physicians' Prescriptions carefully Compounded.
- HADDAWAY**, Insurance Agent and Conveyancer.
- W. DEAN**, Collector of Claims, Real Estate and Conveyancer.
- IS DYOTT**, Carpenter, Contractor and Builder, Shop at St. Michael's.
- JED H. HAMBLETON**, Carpenter and Builder, Shop at St. Michael's.
- ES P. OON**, Real Estate Agent and Collector of Taxes.
- SPAN**, Justice of the Peace and Collector.
- SMITHMAN**, Boot and Shoemaker. First class work done on short notice. Repairing promptly and neatly done.
- S. HAMBLETON**, Proprietor of "Hambleton's Mechanical Shop." Blacksmithing, Wheelwrighting, and all work appertaining thereto. Incomplete Machinery carefully repaired. Farming Implements on hand, and made to order at short notice. Carriage Repairing, Trimming and Painting Specially.
- WILLIAM CAULK**, Physician and Surgeon.
- JAMES BETH**, Physician and Surgeon, Office and Residence near St. Michael's.
- LIAM S. HARRISON**, Blacksmith and Wagon Maker. Repairing promptly and neatly done. Shop in Broad Creek Neck.
- J. NEAVITT & CO.**, Dealers in Dry Goods, Notions, Hats, Caps, Boots, Shoes, &c. Store in Broad Creek Neck.
- N. T. HARRINGTON**, Proprietor of "Williams House." Newly furnished and fitted. Table carefully catered for. All the luxuries of the season. Ample Stable Accommodations. Charges moderate.
- NIEL J. KILMAN**, Carriage Maker and Dealer in all kinds of Wagons.
- ORGE W. COLLINS**, Tinner. Worker in Tin, Sheet Iron, &c. Also Dealer in Stoves and Tin, and Sheet Iron ware of every description.
- E. BLADES**, Carpenter, Contractor, and Builder. Persons having work in this line will do well to see him before contracting.
- SEPH HERGERSHEIMER**, Ship Builder. Repairing of all kinds promptly and neatly done.
- IVER FAIRBANK**, Boot and Shoemaker. Is skillful in his profession. Those wanting first class work done will do well to patronize him.
- RISON & RICHARDSON**, Carriage Makers. All work warranted. Repairing promptly and neatly done.
- J. HOLLAND**, Butcher and Dealer in Fresh Meats of all kinds. Shop on Talbot Street.
- FT. C. R. LEONARD**, Freighter of Grain of all kinds to any point.
- OMAS BLADES**, Of E. Dealer in Dry Goods, Notions, Groceries, Cigars, Tobacco, &c.
- EMIL HARRISON**, Dealer in Groceries, Confectioneries, &c.
- S. KILMON**, Carriage Maker and Dealer in Carriages, Wagons, &c. Repairing promptly and neatly done.
- A. DODSON** Physician and Surgeon.

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Dr. C. Gibson



T-685
WILLIAM TARR HOUSE
St. Michaels, MD Quadrangle
1942



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WILLIAM TARR HOUSE

St. Michaels, Talbot County, MD

Northeast elevation

12/88, Paul Touart, photographer

Negative/MD Historical Trust



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WILLIAM TARR HOUSE

St. Michaels, Talbot County, Md

East elevation

12/88, Paul Touart, photographer

Negative/MD Historical Trust



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WILLIAM TARR HOUSE

St. Michaels, Talbot County, MD

Southeast elevation of old kitchen

12/88, Paul Touart, photographer

Negative/MD Historical Trust