

Historical Shoreline Configurations
At Cove Point From Original Patents
And Later Shoreline Surveys

J. Court Stevenson and Karen Sundberg

Horn Point Environmental Laboratory
Center for Environmental & Estuarine Studies
University of Maryland System
P.O. Box 775, Cambridge MD 21613

(ph:410/221- 8442, E-mail: court@hpel.cees.edu)

Final Report To:

Cove Point Natural Heritage Trust
2100 Cove Pt. Rd., Lusby, MD 20697

Ruth Mathes, President

1997

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Acknowledgments	6
Project Summary	7
Chap. I. Introduction	10
Chap. II. "The Goarey Details"	20
Chap. III. Land Patents Along Calvert Cliffs	26
Chap. IV. Background of Great Eltonhead Manor	40
Capt. V. The Eltonhead Family in the Chesapeake	50
Chap. VI. The Sewalls, Groomes and Bournes at Eltonhead Manor	63
Chap. VII. The "Bigwigs" of Eltonhead Manor: The Rousby and Fitzhugh Families.....	76
Chap. VIII. The Other Landholders of Eltonhead in Mid-18th Century	88
Chap. IX. The Golden Age at Eltonhead Manor	97
Chap. X. Eltonhead In the Revolutionary and Early Federal Periods	110
Chap. XI. Eltonhead Manor in the 19th and 20th Centuries	135
References	161
Appendix A: Wills	169
Appendix B: Inventories	201
Appendix C: Chancery Records	208
Appendix D: Deeds	219
Appendix E: Patents	227
Appendix F: Miscellaneous Manuscripts and News Clips	234

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1. The Acreage of Owners of Eltonhead Manor Listed in Proprietary Debt Books 1753-1758.	89
Table 2. The Acreage Eltonhead Manor Owners Listed in Debt Books of the Proprietary, 1761-1768.	100
Table 3. Owners of Eltonhead Manor Listed in the Debt Books of the Proprietary 1771-1774.	107
Table 4. Owners of Eltonhead Manor Listed in the Tax Assessment of 1782.	119
Table 5. Owners of Eltonhead Manor Listed in the Tax Assessment of 1783.	128

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1. Recent Navigation Chart of Cove Point and Vicinity.	11
Figure 2. Migration of Cove Point, 1842-1944.....	12
Figure 3. St. Leonards Creek in the Vicinity of The Goare as Portrayed in Sedwick and Sommervell Plat and Present Day USGS Topographic Quadrangle.....	16
Figure 4. Emanuel Bowen Map of Chesapeake Bay, 1752.	17
Figure 5. Original Land Surveys, Lower Cliffs Hundred, Calvert County, MD.	27
Figure 6. Calvert County in the Colonial Era.	41
Figure 7. Portion of Augustine Herman Map of Virginia and Maryland, 1673.	43
Figure 8. Great Eltonhead Manor Plus Devils Woodyard, Rocky Point and Foxes Walk Land Surveys.	45
Figure 9. The Eltonhead Genealogy in the 16th and 17th Centuries.	59
Figure 10. The Genealogy of the Sewells in the mid- to late-1600s.....	63
Figure 11. Bourne Genealogy in the Late 17th and 18th Centuries.....	72
Figure 12. Eltonhead Manor in the 1730s Divided Into Parcels (over a 1942 U.S.G.S base Map).	75
Figure 13. The Rousby Genealogy from mid-1600 to mid-1700.....	77
Figure 14. The Genealogy of Col. William Fitzhugh of Virginia and Maryland.....	83
Figure 15. Genealogy of John Clare and his Eight Children.	94
Figure 16. Portrait of William Fitzhugh by C.W. Peale.....	105
Figure 17. Portion of Map of the State of Maryland by Dennis Griffith, 1795.....	115
Figure 18. The Bourne and Hungerford Genealogy in the mid- to late-18th Century.	132

Figure 19. The Genealogy of Jesse Jacob Bourne and his wife Anne Elt in the 18th and 19th Centuries.....	139
Figure 20. Tract Names which superseded “Eltonhead Manor” by the 19th Century on a U.S.G.S. Map.	142
Figure 21. The Hungerford Genealogy from mid-1700 to mid-1800.	145
Figure 22. Site map of lighthouse at Cove Point in 1849.....	152
Figure 23. Proposed Breakwater for Cove Point in Dec of 1849 by H.N. Easby.....	153
Figure 24. Site plan of lighthouse area at Cove Point in 1985.....	154
Figure 25. 1902 Maryland Geological Survey Map of Calvert County (Source: MD Hall of Records).	158
Figure 26. Portion of 1987 U.S.G.S. Cove Point Quadrangle Map Showing Direction of Sediment Transport (DMA 5760 IV NW-Series V833).....	160

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We would like to especially thank Ruth Mathes and Don Gartman for their continuing support throughout this project. Their enthusiasm and suggestions have helped to sustain us through hours of drudgery in our search through the records. We of course are indebted to the people who have gone before us and made the first start in assembling the records of Calvert County in such a way that historical information might be extracted with some efficacy: especially Ailene Hutchins, Mildred Bowen O'Brien and Charles F. Stein. In addition, the staff at the Maryland Hall of Records, Maryland Historical Society, Maryland Historical Trust, Calvert County Historical Society, U.S. National Archives, McKeldin Library, Talbot Library and Horn Point Library all have contributed enormously to our work. In particular, Darlene Windsor at Horn Point has been of great help in obtaining materials. We appreciate especially Michael Kearney who always provided interesting insight into constructing the Eco-history of this region. Catherine Stevenson aided with numerous logistics and read portions of the manuscript, making helpful suggestions along the way.

PROJECT SUMMARY

One of the environmental questions regarding Cove Point which has been raised in recent years concerns the stability of the shoreline configuration in relation to the continuing erosion and the relative (including land subsidence) sea-level rise (i.e. over a meter since settlement) in the mid-Chesapeake Bay region. Previous shoreline plotting indicated that Cove Point has moved in a southerly direction over the last 150 years. The management question is: How fast has it moved and what can we expect of this area in the future? Previous plots of shorelines show a migration of 100-200 ft per hundred years since the 1840s. Construction of the Cove Point Lighthouse in 1828 stabilized its position to some extent. As yet there is no consensus concerning the rate of movement before the nineteenth century.

One approach we have successfully utilized in the past to answer similar questions involves looking not only at the first photographic sequences (1937-38) in the mid-Bay region, but also at historical maps and ultimately the original patents for quantification of shoreline changes. To do this, the early patents are plotted out and overlain on the present shoreline. We have documented significant erosion on the eastern shore of Chesapeake Bay using this approach. The boundaries of original patents are first recorded and then entered into AutoCAD®. The images can then be manipulated using a Geographic Information System (i.e. ARC/INFO), to obtain rates of change since settlement (circa 1650). Because the Calvert County land records were largely destroyed by two fires in 1882, other Provincial Court records along with wills, inventories, reports of land commissions, early plats, rent rolls and federal tax assessments were used, in combination with post-1882 county records, to map the original tracts along the Calvert Cliffs shoreline, south of Parker Creek. Due to sketchy county records and errors in the previous County History, most of our effort went into constructing an accurate historical sketch of the area.

We found that the earliest patent (essentially the initial land grant from Lord Baltimore) for this area was called **Eltonhead Manor**. This was first patented in the name of Edward Eltonhead in 1653, but a small portion was first settled by William Hambleton. The bulk of the patent was bought by Henry Sewall, Chancellor of Maryland, a close friend of the third Lord Baltimore. Henry Sewall went back to England shortly thereafter and the tract was re-patented in 1664 by Samuel Groome, an early sea Captain. He in turn sold it to Samuel Bourne about 1680. The Bourne family retained possession of most of **Eltonhead Manor** through 1725 when it was split into two equal parts, with the western most 2,500 acres being bought by John Rousby. He consolidated his portion of **Eltonhead Manor** with several other tracts into a plantation which came to be called **Rousby Hall**. John Clare is the first person referenced in any historical record (we have found thus far) which actually makes a reference to Cove Point. The western-most portion of **Eltonhead Manor** was

eventually possessed by Col. William Fitzhugh of Virginia, who had married Rousby's widow in 1752. The tract owned by the Bournes was eventually fragmented between four owners in the 1730's and eventually 19 owners had possession of it by 1782. The part of **Eltonhead Manor** which comprised Cove Point was sold by Dorcas Bourne in 1828 to the U.S. Government for the building of the lighthouse. Thereafter **Eltonhead Manor** became increasingly fragmented, but there were several owners who had large tracts, notably Frederick and Felipe Barreda in the 19th century and Joseph C. Webster in the 20th century.

Our other objective was the mapping of the pre-settlement (circa 1650) vegetation cover of this area using annotations of boundary trees of the original patents. In addition to the shoreline patents of the Lower Cliffs Hundred and the Eltonhead Hundred, several other independent patents near St. Leonards Creek were included in this analysis. While these additional patents did reveal several trees as markers, we were unable to map out the majority of the patents due to a lack of specific information in the patent. Boundaries were frequently listed as "a branch in a creek", "a cove in the river" or "St. Leonards Creek" without mentioning direction or distance and would require much more time to analyze and ascertain their geographical location.

Based on the evidence we have assembled, our mapping shows a mixed hardwood forest dominated by oak, with no pine at all recorded in the original surveys. The first pine, as a boundary marker, was mentioned 30 years after first settlement in a patent called **Coopers Lott**, adjoining **Eltonhead Manor**. Several "Pockhickory" trees were recorded in the mid 17th century surveys which we interpreted to mean simply hickory trees (*Carya spp.*). Surprisingly high numbers of locust trees were present in the 1650s along the high cliffs northwest of Cove Point. Locusts are usually not climax trees and indicate some kind of disturbance, most likely cliff erosion, clearing and burning by Indians. The mention of chestnut trees was also of interest to us. A late 17th-century plat of **The Goare** north of Cove Point, as well as other records of scattered chestnut in **Eltonhead Manor** suggests this species had widespread distribution through the 19th century. Since chestnut blight decimated this species along the mid-Atlantic in the 1920s, the reduction in chestnut pollen should be a robust indicator for future dating of sediments in the Cove Point marshes.

In addition to the forests on the high ground and marshes along the coastline, extensive "moors" and swamps were present on the northernmost boundary of the Cove Point Liquid Natural Gas (LNG) tract in 1652, suggesting the existence of extensive areas of non-tidal wetlands, possibly the result of beaver making dams to impound water. This and a later watermill in the area may have kept sediments from reaching the Bay. Therefore the traditional source of "new sediment" for the nourishment of Cove Point was further up the Bay at Calvert Cliffs. Sediment inputs to Cove Point may have been augmented during the mid-19th century by increased runoff when the north end of **Eltonhead Manor** and **Devils Woodyard** were cleared for

agriculture and dams were abandoned. Although tobacco fields were increasingly abandoned during the 19th century, and woodlands allowed to take their place, cycles of timber cutting most likely contributed to additional erosion of soils in this hilly terrain. The first detailed geological map in 1902 depicts a marsh fringe that extended northward from Cove Point almost to Rocky Point. Because of recent sediment attrition, counter to our expectations, the shoreline north of the present boardwalk appears to be receding at least as rapidly as the shoreline jutting out southeasterly to Cove Point. However, we found no evidence for the assertion that Cove Point was located much further north than it is at present.

CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTION

Cove Point is one of the most striking features of the geomorphology of the western shore of Chesapeake Bay. Navigation charts of the mid-Chesapeake (Fig. 1) indicates it as an anomaly. In contrast to the 100-foot high fossil-bearing cliffs at Rocky Point¹ to the north, Cove Point is a flat sand-spit jutting out into the mid-Bay. Although the Cove south of the Point presented a useable site for docking steamboats in the 19th and early 20th centuries, the region was viewed with mixed emotions by sailors. The low lying spit could also pose a serious risk to navigation. Shomette (1982) found that at least seven vessels met with disaster in the waters off Cove Point. Coming down from Baltimore, a pilot would stay as close to the shoreline as possible, using the cliffs for protection from northwesterly winds. In order to reduce the potential danger posed by Cove Point, the U.S. Government purchased land there to build the second lighthouse in Maryland in 1828. Although it has been heightened over time, it is still standing on the original foundation. However, because of the stabilization of Cove Point, there has been speculation that by anchoring the tip of this shifting sand-spit we may be fighting long term geological processes along this shoreline. The ramifications of shoreline dynamics need to be better understood in order to attempt to manage the coastline of Cove Point. Indeed this is an area of high relative sea-level rise (RSR) in Chesapeake Bay.² The potential for shoreline change especially at mid-Bay is particularly worrisome in view of global warming predictions, which will produce sea levels even higher than present (Stevenson and Kearney 1996).

Singewald and Slaughter documented the southern movement of Cove Point (Fig. 2). However, additional controversy concerning the rate of movement of Cove Point in large measure arises from what might at first appear to be a straight forward description of the settlement along the lower Cliffs of Calvert County by Charles F. Stein, author of the History of Calvert County (1976, p. 34&35):

¹ Designated as "Point of Rocks" on some maps, it lies between Cove Point and Calvert Cliffs Nuclear Power Plant owned by BG&E Co.

² Relative sea-level (RSR) rise is a combination of several processes, including actual sea-level rise, shoreline erosion and land subsidence. Due to subsidence, RSR is especially rapid at mid-Bay near the mouth of the Patuxent River (Holdahl and Morrison 1974).

Figure 2. Migration of Cove Point, 1842-1944 (from: Singewald & Slaughter 1949).

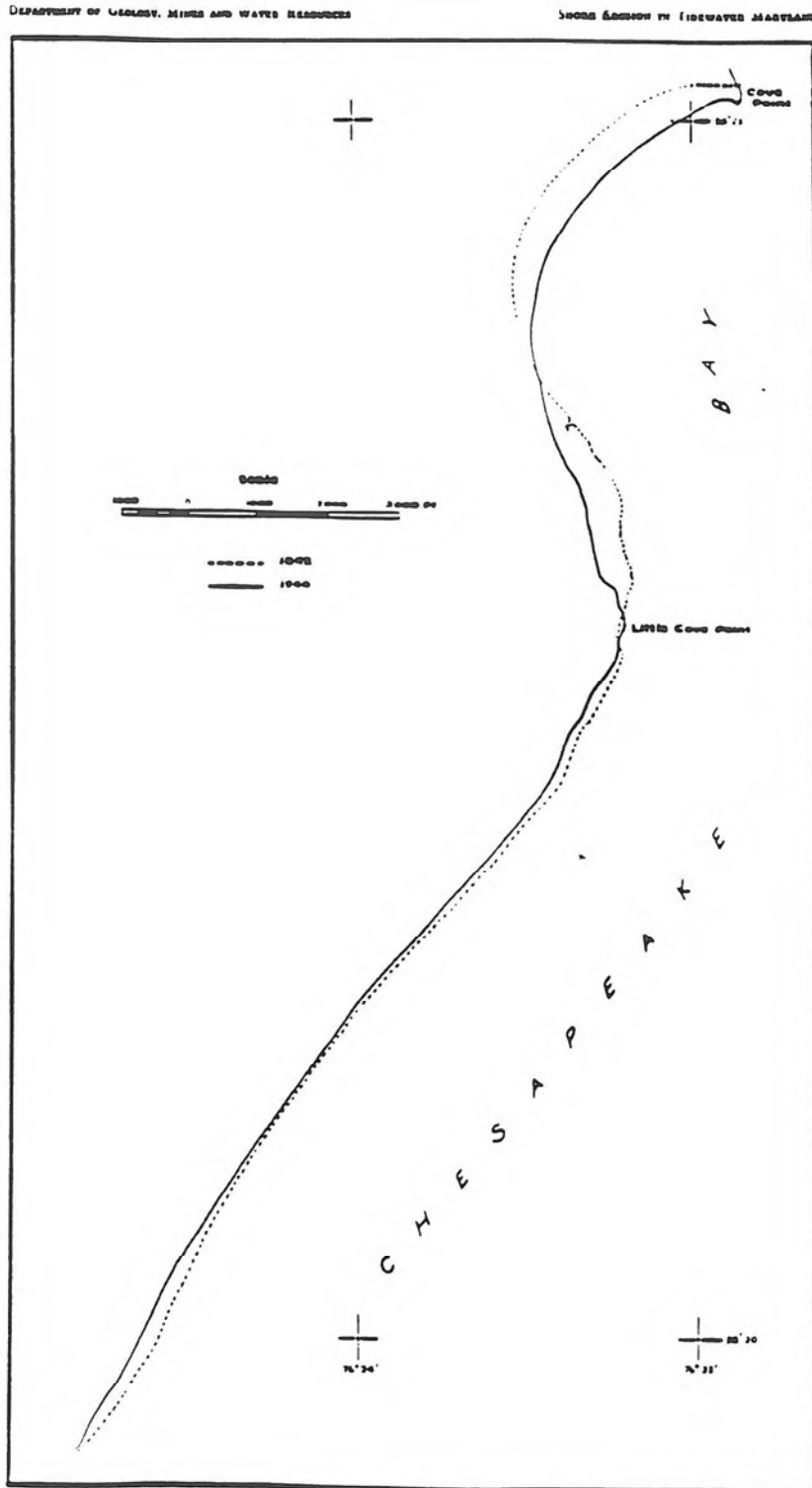


PLATE 10. Shore Line Changes from Cove Point to 2 1/2 Miles South of Little Cove Point, Calvert County

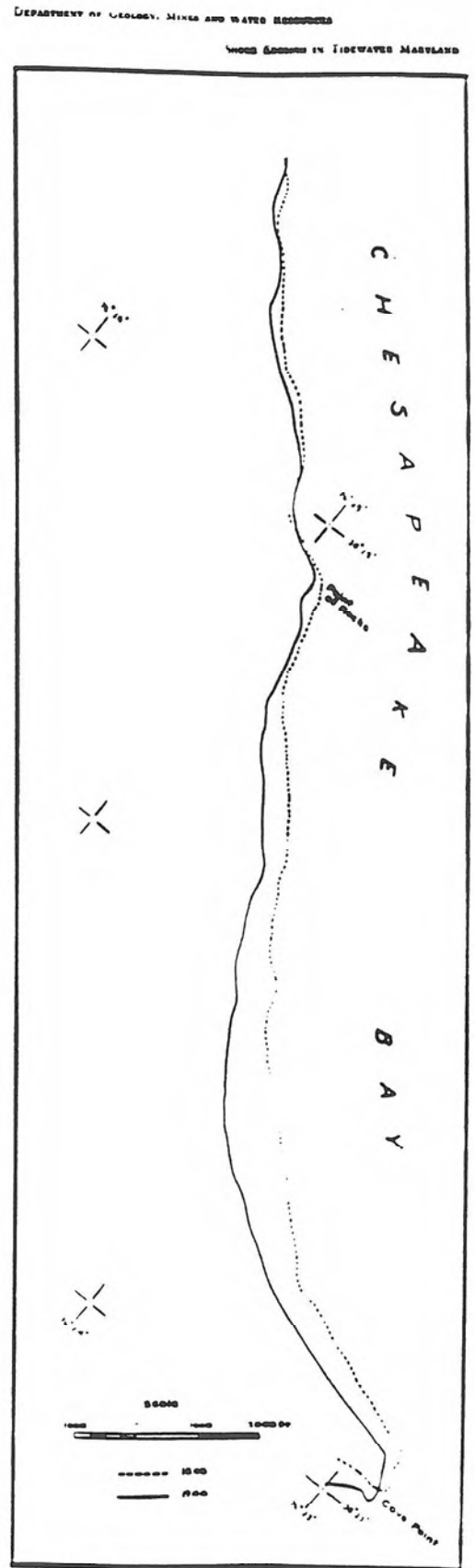


PLATE 9. Shore Line Changes over 1 Mile North of Point of Mouth to Cove Point, Calvert County

Preston's Cliffs³ or **Charlesgift** was a grant of 1,000 acres to Richard Preston. **Norwood** nearby, was a grant to Captain John Norwood, Puritan sheriff of Anne Arundel County. Below **Norwood** was **Theobush Manning**, a grant to Thomas Manning and Edward Dorsey... The Manning property was situated at Cove Point, and below this lay **Eltonhead Manor**....derived from Edward Eltonhead, the owner of **Eltonhead Manor**, the largest Manorial grant in Calvert County....Captain Thomas Manning was one of the early Puritan settlers of Calvert County. In 1651 he was granted, jointly with Edward Dorsey of Anne Arundel County, a tract of 600 acres of land on the Lower Cliffs of Calvert...Thomas Manning settled on this 600 acre tract called **Theobush Manning**. Thomas Manning patented the adjacent tract called **The Goare** in 1653. Goare is an old English word meaning a point of land projecting into the bay, and the location of **The Goare**, as shown on old maps, is that of the location now called Cove Point, site of the oldest and most picturesque lighthouse in Maryland.⁴

From the above, it appeared at the outset of our study that two original patents comprised the land in the vicinity of Cove Point: **Theobush Manning** and **The Goare**. Furthermore, at least the former property was still in the Manning family well into the 18th century, according to Stein (1976): "Thomas Manning was listed on Lord Baltimore's Tax List of 1733 as the owner of six slaves, indicating that he was a substantial planter of that period. The Debt Book of 1753 lists Thomas Manning as owner of 253 acres of **Theobush Manning**, and the same tract continued in the possession of the Manning family throughout the Colonial era."

From a preliminary search of the original land records at the Hall of Records in Annapolis, we determined that **Theobush Manning** actually was first called **Thepbush Manning** and dates to a 1651 certificate of survey for Thomas Marsh (MD Patents; Liber AB&H, folio 261):

Laid out for Thomas Marsh of the County of Anne Arundel, Merchant, a Tract of land lying on the West side of Chesapeake Bay next to the land of John Norwood beginning at a marked dead tree, the said tree being the southernmost bound of the said Norwood Land and running South East and by South down the bay for the length of three hundred perches to a marked Locust tree bounded on the South with a line drawn West from the said Locust for the length of three hundred and twenty perches. On the West with a line drawn North West and by North from the end of the Western line unto the Land of the said Norwood. On the north with the said Land on the east

³ We use bold type to designate tract names throughout this report.

⁴ As it turns out, the present lighthouse at Concorde Point on the east side of Havre de Grace, predates the Cove Point Lighthouse.

*with the said bay containing and laid out for six hundred acres more or less.....Robert Clark, Surveyor.*⁵

The above tract was patented again ten years later by Thomas Manning and Edward Dorsey in 1661 (MD Patents; Liber 4, folio 541):

in consideration that Thomas Marsh transported six persons into this province of Maryland, as appeareth upon the Entry's, made in our County of Anne Arundel,...do hereby grant Thomas Edward Dorsey assigned of these Thomas Marsh all that parcel of land called Thepbush Manning lying on the West side of CHESAPEAKE Bay next to the land of John Norwood beginning at a MARKED DEAD tree the said tree being the southernmost bound of the SAID NORWOOD land and running South East and by South down the BAY FOR THE length of three hundred perches to a marked Locust Tree. BOUNDING ON the South with a line drawn West from the said LOCUST for length of three hundred and twenty perches on the west WITH A Line drawn North West and by North from the end of THE WESTERN Line unto the land of the said Norwood. On the North with SAID LINE On the East with the said bay containing SIX Hundred acres more or less... ⁶

Two years later **Theobush Manning** was patented again by Thomas Manning (without Thomas Dorsey) for three hundred acres (MD Patents; Liber 7, folio 98). Another 300-acre tract, **The Goare**, was surveyed for Thomas Manning soon thereafter (MD Patents; Liber 5, folio 449):

...laid out for Capt. Thomas Manning of this province a parcel of land called The Goare being in Calvert County lying on the West side of Chesapeake Bay near the Cliffs, Beginning at the South West Corner tree of a parcel of land granted to the said Manning and Edward Dorsey, Assignees of Thomas Marsh and running West and by South into the main Swamp of Saint Leonards Creek, bounding on the west with the said swamp till it intersect the Land of Mr. Richard Bennett called Lower Bennett, on the North with the said land, on the East with the head Lines of the Land from the Bayside, on the South with the West and by

⁵ We will use italics to indicate the original document we consulted was handwritten. When the document has already been transcribed (e.g. from the Archives of Maryland) or we are quoting from a secondary source (e.g. Stein 1976), we have used Times New Roman font. Original spelling, abbreviations (e.g. m^r =mister, s^d =said, y^r = your, etc.), and lack of punctuation of the original records has been maintained throughout this report.

⁶ Capital letters are blanks in the transcript at the Hall of Records which were lost (possibly water damage) in the copying process. We have filled in the blanks from the earlier and later descriptions.

South Line, containing and laid out for three hundred acres more or less....by Tho. Truman, deputy Surveyor.

The description above gave us the first clue that there might be a problem with **The Goare**. St. Leonard's Creek is several miles from the present LNG terminal property and it seemed to be a stretch to consider it the original patent for Cove Point. Furthermore an undated "Resurvey Plat" (Fig. 3) for a court case, Sedwick vs. Somervell (Maryland Hall of Records, Annapolis: Index 112, Series No. S 64, Access. No. 40282-133, location B5-9-3), shows that **The Goare** was not really on Chesapeake Bay as were the adjoining tracts of **Norwood, Fuller and Theobush Manning**. Therefore since these tracts seemed to fall several miles north of the present Cove Point site, it suggested either:

- 1- that Stein (1976) was essentially in error in his assessment that **The Goare** was part of the original Cove Point patent; or alternatively,
- 2- that Cove Point has moved at a rapid rate southward in excess of a mile per century!

Although the latter seemed remote, "A New and Accurate Map of Virginia and Maryland (Fig. 4) by Emanuel Bowen in 1752 showed what appeared to be a sandy spit projecting into the bay substantially north of where Cove Point now lies! Could it actually be that Cove Point was a much more ephemeral feature before the lighthouse was built? In order to resolve these important issues, a detailed analysis of the history of the original patents and a plotting of boundaries (using AutoCAD®) of contiguous tracts in the region was necessary. The patents were copied on a lap top PC from originals at the Maryland Hall of Records in Annapolis. They were then transformed, one line per heading, into metes and bounds, and analyzed. Plotting was first carried out using AutoCAD® Software. We assumed that a surveyor's chain had 100 links (1 link = 0.66 foot). Each 25-link segment was equal to one perche (p) (Horsey, 1974 p. 116). Thus a perche equaled 16.5 feet (i.e. 320 p to a mile). The word perche in the land records is also used (confusingly) as an area and technically should be called a square perch. There are 160 square perches in an acre. For convenience, original tracts were first plotted out in perches. Lines that are putative were indicated as dashed lines on the plots. In areas where the heading intersects areas of great relief (a sharp rise or fall in elevation), we expect an overestimate in the distances recorded on the original land patents. Thus, our plots of the original surveys should theoretically always exceed the true distances (we made no attempt to correct for any differences due to hilly terrain of the western shore), and direct overlay of our plots with ortho-rectified photos or maps is not expected to be 1:1.

Figure 3. St. Leonards Creek in the Vicinity of The Goare as Portrayed in Sedwick and Sommervell Plat and Present Day USGS Topographic Quadrangle.

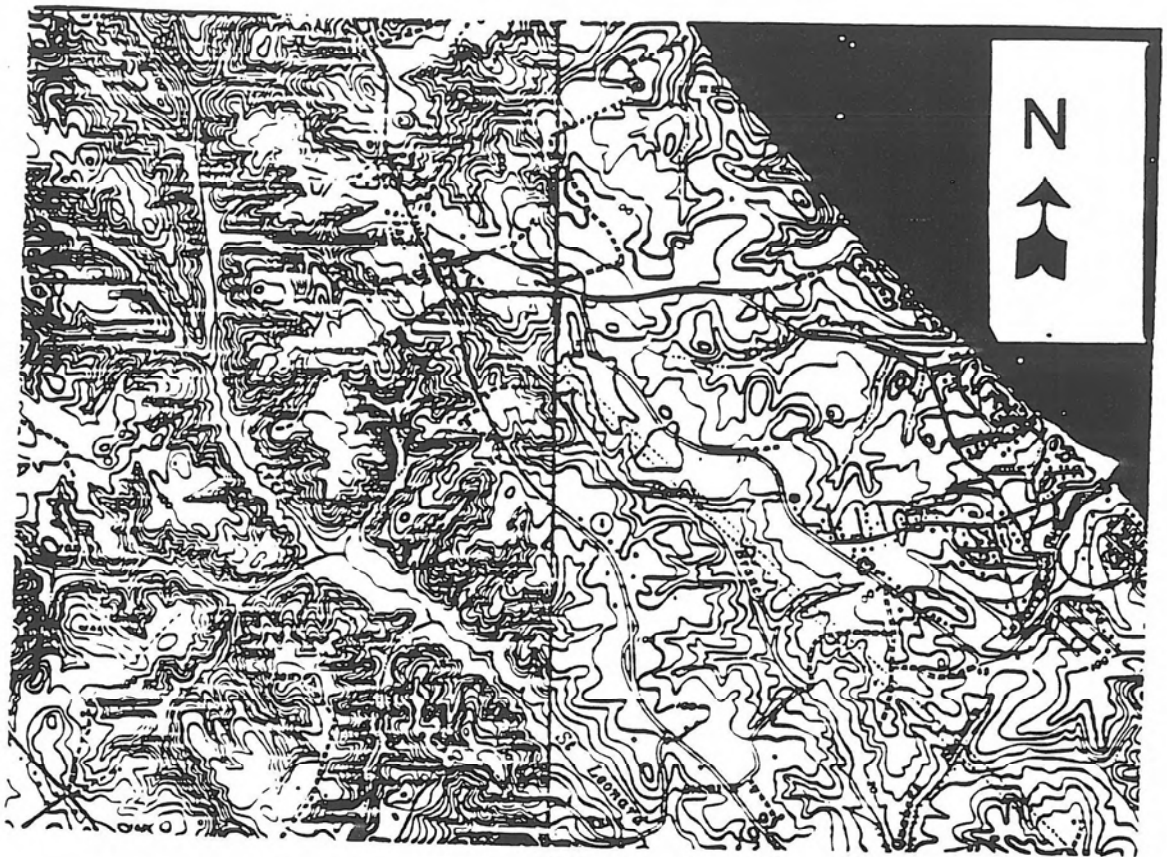




Figure 4. Emanuel Bowen Map of Chesapeake Bay, 1752.

The compass headings are another matter (and a less easily correctable source of error than hilly terrain above). Throughout the colonial period the magnetic compass was the only field tool available to surveyors for determining direction. They, of course, could make astronomical observations and a combination of these showed that the needle of the compass was subject to systematic declination from true north. The art and science of surveying and astronomy progressed in the 18th century. Not only did it become obvious that the earth was an oblate spheroid, instead of a sphere (as Sir Isaac Newton had postulated), but also magnetic north did not usually correspond with true north. There were bills introduced into the Maryland Legislature as early as 1770 attempting to set standard correction procedures for surveyors to reduce errors in land surveys (Archives of Maryland Vol. LXII, p. 470-476). For the entire set of records, we first assumed that magnetic North was declined 9° to the west of true North (as indicated on current U.S.G.S. quadrangles along the Calvert County coastline). Since declination may drift as much as 1 degree every 20 years, directions often had to be adjusted to produce optimal fit.

The ordinal points on the 32-point mariners' compass used in colonial surveys in Maryland were transformed to the nearest degree of modern 360-degree compass headings (see Horsey 1974, Chap. 4 for more details). These are given below to aid those who might wish to extend our work. Indeed most historians and archeologists seem reluctant to systematically plot out tracts of historical interest, possibly because the headings seemed ambiguous. The lack of careful plotting has led to misinterpretations in the historical record and we offer the following to clarify at least part of the confusion:

<u>Ordinal Point</u>	<u>Degrees</u>	<u>Ordinal Point</u>	<u>Degrees</u>
North	= 00.00°	South	= 180.00°
North by East	= 11.25°	South by West	= 191.25°
North North East	= 22.50°	South South West	= 202.50°
North East by North	= 33.75°	South West by East	= 213.75°
North East	= 45.00°	South West	= 225.00°
North East by North	= 56.25°	South West by West	= 236.25°
East North East	= 67.50°	West South West	= 247.50°
East by North	= 78.75°	West by South	= 258.75°
East	= 90.00°	West	= 270.00°
East by South	= 101.25°	West by North	= 281.25°
East South East	= 112.50°	West North West	= 292.50°
South East by East	= 123.75°	North West by West	= 303.75°
South East	= 135.00°	North West	= 315.00°
South East by South	= 146.25°	North West by North	= 326.25°
South South East	= 157.50°	North North West	= 337.50°
South East by South	= 168.75°	North by West	= 348.75°

In addition to the work above, a careful tracking of old maps and the land records of Calvert County was undertaken. Since many of the latter were destroyed in the courthouse fire in 1882, land transfers had to be inferred from other records including wills, census listings and newspaper advertisements. Although much more laborious than originally anticipated, this exercise has allowed us to reconstruct not only when Cove Point and vicinity was originally settled and but how it was transformed by later generations to its present state. Although much has been said about “a sense of place” seldom do we have the opportunity to focus on a particular tract through several hundred years. We offer this in hopes that the reader will stay with us through this often convoluted saga. We hope that the reader will remember (as we have had to over and over again in our research) the axiom “the devil is in the details”.