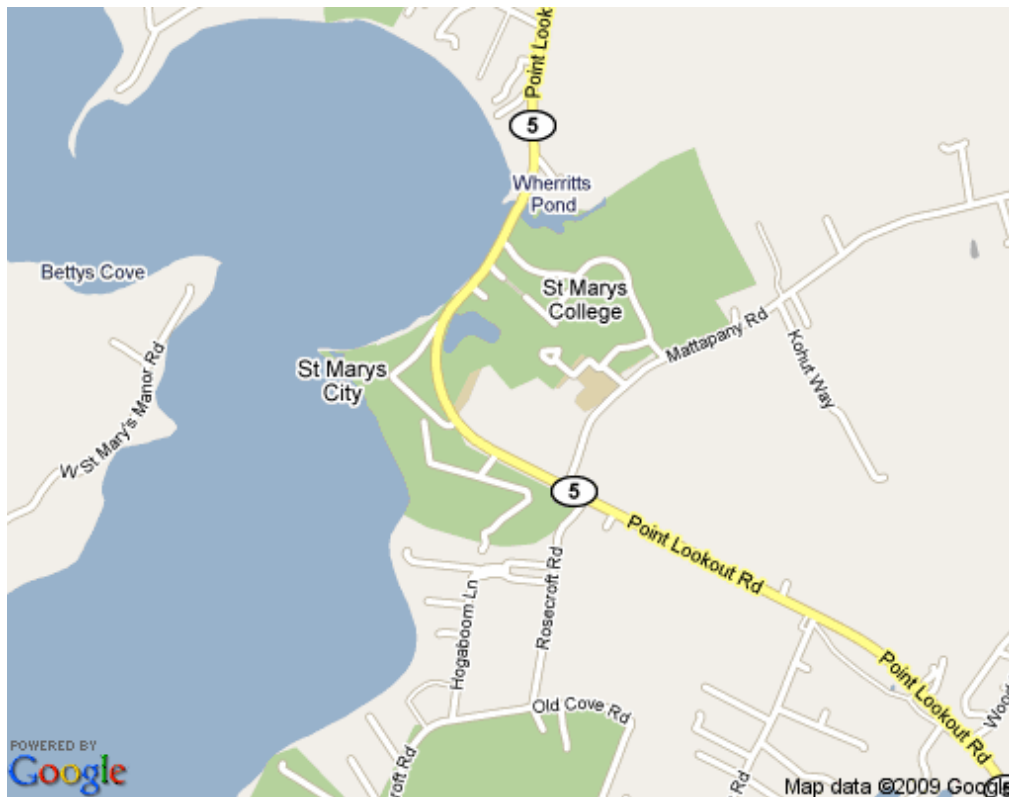
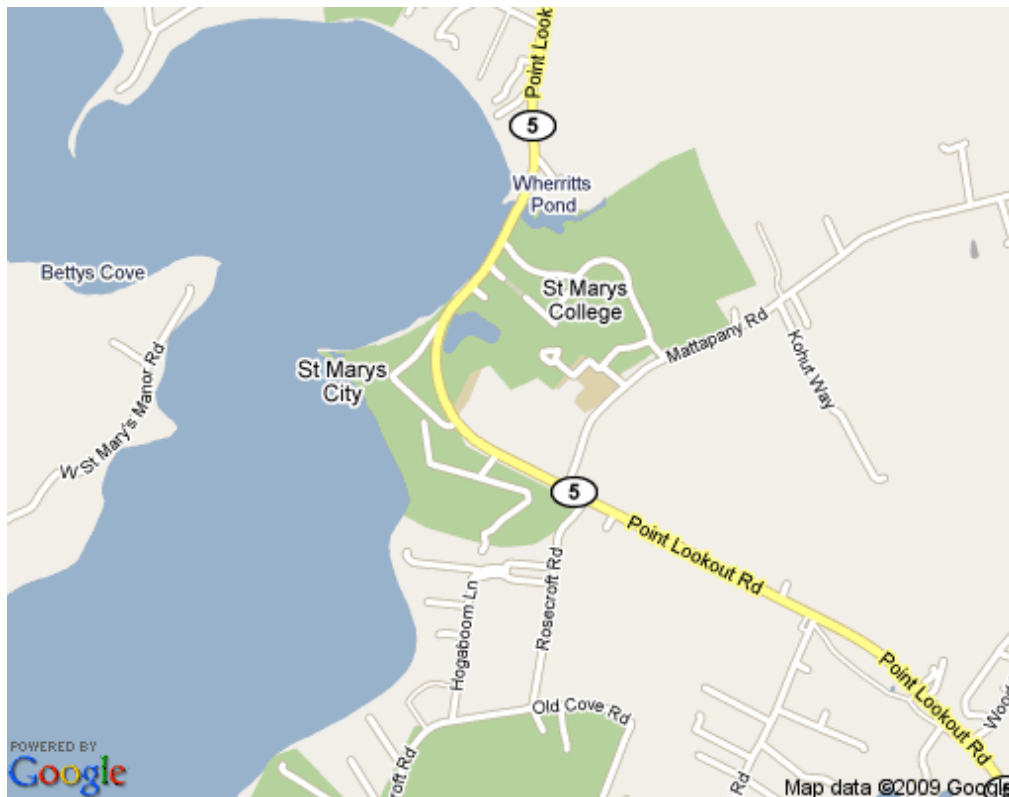


St. Mary's City, in St. Mary's County is a small unincorporated community near the southernmost end of the state on the western shore of the Chesapeake Bay. It is located on the eastern shore of the St. Mary's River, a tributary of the Potomac River. St. Mary's City is the fourth oldest permanent settlement in British North America and is considered the birthplace of religious toleration in America, owing to the Act Concerning Religion. The city was also the first place in America where a woman asked for the right to vote, and a man of African descent voted in the Assembly at one point.





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History

St. Mary's City was founded in 1634 by a group of English settlers. They arrived on the exploration ships *Dove* and *Ark*. They were led by Leonard Calvert, son of George Calvert, a Catholic English politician. The land was originally given to George Calvert by King James I, but he died before it was established. The Calverts wanted a centralized city, and St. Mary's was even laid out according to a Baroque town plan, but most residents of St. Mary's City preferred to live on tobacco plantations in the surrounding countryside. The colony was also meant to be the capital of the new Maryland Colony, which was owned by the Calvert family, or the Lords Baltimore. A Yaocomico Indian village previously occupied the location, and the English settlers coexisted with them. In the second half of the 17th century, St. Mary's City had an economic boom. This was caused by the successful tobacco farming and the increase of population, which allowed the construction of public buildings. 11Some of the buildings that were built were a state house, a Jesuit chapel, a jail, an inn, and many other public buildings in addition to private houses. Since the town was meant to be a Catholic town, there were often fights between Protestants and Catholics. In 1689, the religious tensions became so great that there was a Protestant revolution

against the Lords Baltimore. In 1695, the English Crown appointed royal governors and moved the capital of Maryland to Annapolis. The colonial statehouse was then turned into a Protestant church in the same year. In 1704, the Catholic churches and schools were closed in accordance to the new governor's rules. After its role as the capital was taken, St. Mary's City became obsolete. There were still inhabitants, but they were mostly farmers. There were very little 17th century buildings still standing by the mid-20th century, when archaeologists started to study the site.

Present-day St. Mary's City is primarily the location of [St. Mary's College of Maryland](#) and Historic St. Mary's City which runs a tourist center and archaeological site devoted to colonial St. Mary's. Today it is one of the premier archaeological sites on the East Coast.

Archaeological History

St. Mary's City is known for its archaeological research sites. The digs began in 1971^[2], and in the same year, a museum was established. Since then, much of the old city has been found, though there is still much to be discovered. Here is a list of some important finds:

- A 1645 fort with a surrounding moat, claimed to be the only physical evidence of the English Civil War in the American Colonies.^[3]
- Facon de Venise Glassware
- A set of [Kutahya](#) ceramics, one of two only known examples found on America.^[4]
- 3 rare 17th-century lead coffins
- A quantity of lead type, indicating that the site on which it was found was the [William Nuthead](#) Printing House. The print was the first in the [Southern Colonies](#).^[5]
- [St. John's Freehold](#), where Maryland's citizen government was instituted.
- Garret Van Sweringen's Inn, a 17th century in founded by [Garret Van Sweringen](#), a leader in St. Mary's City's development.

St. Mary's College

[St. Mary's College of Maryland](#)

External links

- [Historic St. Mary's City](#)
- [St. Mary's College of Maryland](#)
- [Citizens For the Preservation of Historic St. Mary's City](#)

References

1. ? <http://www.stmaryscity.org/History.html> Lines 46-49
2. ? <http://www.stmaryscity.org/Archaeology.html> Lines 15-16
3. ? <http://www.stmaryscity.org/Archaeology.html> Lines 30-33
4. ? <http://www.stmaryscity.org/Archaeology.html> Line 28
5. ? <http://www.stmaryscity.org/Archaeology.html> Lines 48-56