

CT-793

Leatherbury sailing skiff
Solomons, Maryland

This vessel is a 19'8" long V-bottomed, deadrise skiff built by Captain Charles Edward Leatherbury on the West River, probably c. 1930. The skiff, typical of Leatherbury's work, is on display at the Calvert Marine Museum. The vessel gains its significance for being an example of an important indigenous Bay craft--the V-bottomed, deadrise skiff that developed in the 19th century for crabbing, fishing, and oystering. It is of special interest for having been built by a well-known late 19th, early 20th century local boatbuilder and for being in an excellent state of preservation, virtually unaltered. The skiff was probably used as a part of the charter business that Leatherbury ran on the West River, renting skiffs such as this to pleasure sailors and crabbers.

Survey No. CT-793

Magi No. 0507935833

DOE yes no

Maryland Historical Trust State Historic Sites Inventory Form

1. Name (indicate preferred name)

historic

and/or common Bateau - Leatherbury sailing skiff CMM 76-381

2. Location

street & number _____ not for publication

city, town Solomons _____ vicinity of _____ congressional district _____

state Maryland _____ county Calvert _____

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public	<input type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> educational	<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input checked="" 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 Calvert Marine Museum

street & number _____ telephone no.: 326-3719

city, town Solomons _____ state and zip code Maryland 20688

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. _____ liber _____

street & number _____ folio _____

city, town _____ state _____

6. Representation in Existing Historical Surveys

title _____

date _____ federal state county local

depository for survey records _____

city, town _____ state _____

7. Description

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Condition		Check one	Check one	
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input type="checkbox"/> original site	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input 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.

This boat is a V-bottomed or deadrise centerboard sailing skiff with a catboat rig-- a single mast and sail set well up in the bow. Built by Captain Charles Edward "Ed" Leatherbury (1863-1952), probably on the West River at Galesville, Maryland, the skiff is typical of Leatherbury's work. She measures 19'8" long, with a beam of 7'2" and a depth of 1'8". The stem is curved and the transom stern is raking. The wooden boat is painted white with black trim on the rubrail. It is on display at the Calvert Marine Museum at Solomons, Maryland.

The skiff was built using cross-planked construction methods, like most of the Chesapeake deadrise skiffs. The cross-planked bottom is secured to a full-length plank keel, reinforced with "shoes" on the interior of the hull. The planks are fastened to stringers or chine-liners at the chine. There is vertical staving at the bow. At the transom, raked about 15° aft, the bottom planks are "tucked" up above the waterline, where they meet the transom and sides. A rudder is hung outboard on pintles, with the tiller led in over the stern.

The boat is half-decked, with washboards fairing into the foredeck, which is strip-planked with inch-wide planks and a wide central plank serving as a strongback supporting the mast. The centerboard trunk is centered on the plank keel, with wide floorboards set between the trunk and the chine-liners. The interior is open aft of the foredeck, except for stern sheets and washboards.

The sailing rig is a single, unstayed, plumb-set mast, fitted with an aluminum sail slide, and a single dacron sail laced to the boom, which is jawed to the mast. For display purposes, the mast has been cut down. The sail is displayed, furled, along with the boat.

Some repairs were undertaken when the boat was donated to the Museum, but she is essentially unaltered. Bottom boards were re-nailed and the rudder repaired. The boat was re-painted white, with black trim on the half-round rubrail, green interior, and red copper paint on the floorboards and below the waterline.

8. Significance

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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 type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates c. 1930 **Builder/Architect** Charles Edward "Ed" Leatherbury

check: Applicable Criteria: A B C D
 and/or
 Applicable Exception: A B C D E F G

Level of Significance: national state local

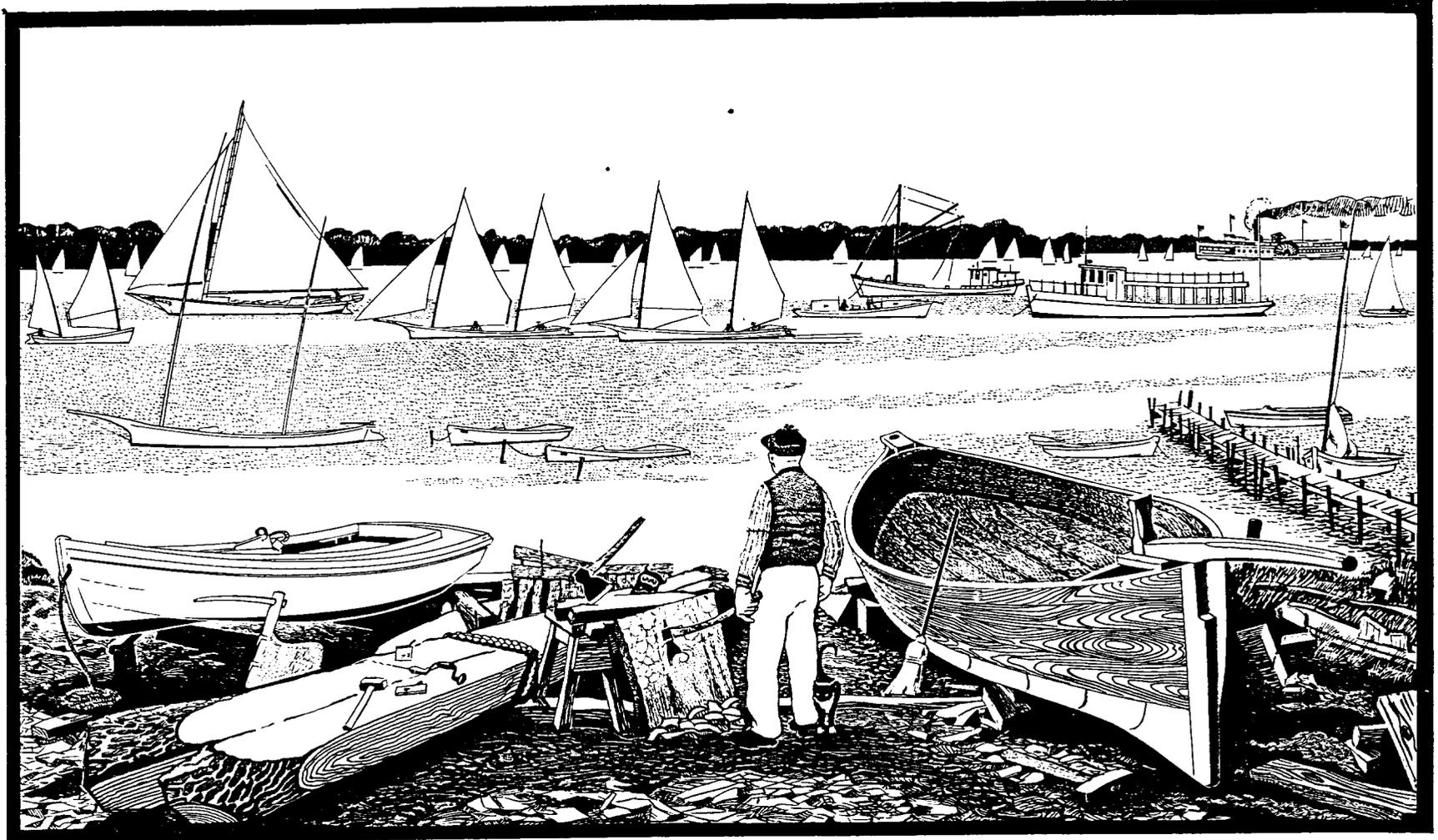
Prepare both a summary paragraph of significance and a general statement of history and support.

This small vessel is significant as representing an important and long-standing type of small Bay workboat--the Chesapeake crabbing skiff. This example has particular significance as having been built by a well-known late 19th, early 20th century local boatbuilder and for being in an excellent state of preservation, virtually unaltered. Leatherbury's skiffs are of especial interest as no two skiffs that he built over a long career were ever alike--a fact which reflects the local boatbuilders' reliance on "rack of eye" and long-standing traditional construction methods rather than formal plans. It is of interest to compare this crabbing skiff with another Leatherbury example in the collection of the Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum (Survey no.

The sailing skiff type, of which there were many local variations built on the Chesapeake, was a light, stable type of craft used for crabbing, gill-netting, and oystering. This example was used both for work and for pleasure in the charter business run by Captain Charles Edward "Ed" Leatherbury on the West River, Maryland. This skiff is significant as being a fine example of his work, as well as showing the skiff's suitability for both work and pleasure. As displayed in the Calvert Marine Museum its open layout reveals the methods used by Leatherbury and other Bay boatbuilders to bring a cross-planked bottom to the vertical at the bow.

Ed Leatherbury (1863-1952) became a noted boatbuilder on the West River where his shop was located near the steamboat landing. He learned carpentry and housebuilding from his father and sailed on Bay schooners and later on steamboats, beginning about 1880. He became "Master of Bay Steamers" on the Old Bay Line to Norfolk. He also bought a bugeye and used it to buy and haul oysters to Baltimore markets. According to relatives he built boats in the morning and bought oysters in the afternoon, a pattern he followed for most of his life except for a tour of duty aboard a mine sweeper during World War I.

As a boatbuilder Leatherbury built log canoes and skiffs by "rack of eye," using the traditional tools of adze, broad axe, hand saw, brace and bit, draw knife, and planes. The canoe DART was his last, his 26th canoe and one of the only, if not the only, 9-log canoes ever built. Besides canoes he built "20 or 30 skipjacks," a number of deadrise fishing boats, a brogan, row boats by the score, and a "flotilla" of bateaux, of which this vessel is one example. These single-masted, 15' or 16'-long cross-planked skiffs were rented to pleasure sailors and casual crabbers on the West River, where Leatherbury ran a charter business. He was clearly a master of traditional Bay boatbuilding, both versatile and prolific and his vessels are preserved at Mystic Seaport, the Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum, as well as here at the Calvert Marine Museum.



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CAPTAIN ED LEATHERBURY, BOAT BUILDER



CHARLES EDWARD LEATHERBURY, 2ND SON OF RYKEL DEALE AND CHARLES PURNELL LEATHERBURY, WAS BORN IN SHADY SIDE, MARYLAND JULY 5, 1863. HE HAD 4 BROTHERS; JOHN, WILLIAM, FRANK, AND ROBERT MURRAY, AND ONE HALF SISTER, JENNY, AND ONE HALF BROTHER, TAYLOR.

"CAPTAIN ED" BECAME A BOAT BUILDER OF NOTE AT HIS HOME NEAR THE STEAMBOAT LANDING ON THE WEST RIVER. SCHOOLED IN SHADY SIDE, HE LEARNED CARPENTRY AND HOUSE BUILDING FROM HIS FATHER.

STILL IN HIS TEENS, HE SIGNED ABOARD A BAY SCHOONER HAULING FREIGHT ON THE CHESAPEAKE BAY. SHORTLY THEREAFTER, IN ABOUT 1880 HE WAS LURED TO THE EXCITEMENT OF THE STEAMBOAT. HE ROSE TO BE "MASTER OF BAY STEAMERS" ON THE BAY LINE TO NORFOLK.

SOMETIME LATER HE PAID A HIGH PRICE FOR A BUGEYE AND EARNED ITS COST EACH YEAR BUYING OYSTERS AND RUNNING THEM TO MARKET IN BALTIMORE. THIS SEEMS TO HAVE SET THE PATTERN, FOR FROM THEN ON, EXCEPT FOR A HITCH IN THE NAVY, HE BUILT BOATS IN THE MORNING AND BOUGHT OYSTERS IN THE AFTERNOON.

MARRIED TO LILLY HARTOE IN 1886, THE PAIR HAD 3 CHILDREN, PURNELL, HELEN, AND MACK.

THIS DRAWING SHOWS A HANDSOME 54-YEAR OLD NAVY MAN WHO SERVED IN WORLD WAR I ABOARD A MINE SWEEPER IN THE ATLANTIC OCEAN.

CAPTAIN ED TOOK PRIDE ON BEING UP WITH THE TIMES AND WAS ONE OF THE FIRST IN THE AREA TO HAVE AN AUTOMOBILE, A BUICK, AND ELECTRIC LIGHTS IN HIS HOME. COMPLETE WITH HIS OWN GENERATOR.

APPARENTLY, CAPTAIN ED HAD BEEN BUILDING LOG CANOES FOR SOME TIME AND NO ONE REMEMBERS HIM USING PLANS. HE BUILT THEM, HE SAID, "BY RACK OF EYES" USING ADZE, BROAD AXE, HAND SAW, BRACE AND BIT, DRAW KNIFE, AND AN ASSORTMENT OF PLANES.

HE TOOK PASSENGERS TO ANNAPOLIS ON HIS MOTOR BOAT "WEST RIVER" AND WHEN IMPROVED ROADS AND BETTER LAND TRANSPORTATION CUT INTO THIS BUSINESS HE REMOVED THE BOATS LARGE CABIN AND SHE "BOUGHT OYSTERS."

THE DART WAS HIS LAST CANOE, THE 26' HE THOUGHT. NINE STRAIGHT LOGS WERE BOLTED TOGETHER AND SHAPED UP TO THE WATER LINE. THEN NATURALLY CURVED WING CHUNKS OR RISERS WERE ADDED UP TO THE DECKING WHICH WAS INSTALLED OVER "NATURAL KNEE" BRACES. THE LOG CANOE'S LOVELY, GRACEFUL LINES AND STIRRING HIGH PERFORMANCE HAVE ENDEARED THEM TO THE FEW LUCKY SAILORS WHO HAVE HAD THE CHANCE TO SAIL ON THEM.

BESIDE THE 26 CANOES HE BUILT 20 OR 30 SKIPJACKS, AN UNDETERMINED NUMBER OF DEADRISE FISHING BOATS LIKE THE 45 FT. "MILDRED G", A BROGAN NAMED "SNAPPER", ROW BOATS BY THE SCORE, AND A FLOTILLA OF "BATEAUS" THE 15 OR 20 FT. LONG, CAT-BOAT RIGGED SAILING SKIFFS THAT HE MAINTAINED TO RENT TO GREEN HORN SAILORS ON THE WEST RIVER. SOME OF THESE BOATS CAN STILL BE SEEN HERE ABOUTS. HIS CANOE THE "FLY" IS IN THE MARINERS MUSEUM AT MISTIC CONNECTICUT AND ONE OF HIS BATEAUS IS DISPLAYED AT THE CHESAPEAKE BAY MARITIME MUSEUM AT ST. MICHAELS, MARYLAND.

CAPTAIN ED LEFT US IN APRIL 1952 - WE LOVE THE MEMORY OF OUR GREAT UNCLE ED - A SPECIAL MAN.





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Leatherbury Skiff
Solomons, Md

bow

M.C. Wootton 4/84



CT-793

Leatherbury Skiff
Solomons, Md

starboard bow
M. C. Wootton 4/84

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