

Maryland Historical Trust
State Historic Sites Inventory Form

MARYLAND INVENTORY OF
HISTORIC PROPERTIES

Survey No. DT-1189

Magi No.

DOE yes no

1. Name (indicate preferred name)

historic Lyons Creek Wharf

and/or common

2. Location

street & number located near the end of Lyons Creek Road not for publication

city, town Dunkirk, vicinity of congressional district

state MD county Calvert

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 type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> park
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> structure	<input checked="" 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 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 State of Maryland waters; land access through Patuxent Palisades

street & number Corporation, 12026 Palisades Dr. telephone no.:

city, town Dunkirk state and zip code MD 20754-9432

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. M.D.A.T. liber ABE

street & number Goldstein Building, 200 Duke St. folio 613/ 295

city, town Prince Frederick state MD 20678

6. Representation in Existing Historical Surveys

title

date federal state county local

depository for survey records

city, town state

7. Description

Survey No. DT-1189

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

CONTRIBUTING RESOURCE COUNT: 1

Standing Wharf Structures: None.

Associated Standing Wharf Structures: None.

Description: Lyons Creek Wharf is a historic wharf site with no visible features on land or above mean low water, except piling stubs.

Previously Existing Wharf Structures: "Map of Calvert County Showing the Topography and Election Districts" 1902 does not depict a wharf, only an unimproved road leading to the water and two structures on the northeast side of the road near the river. "Patuxent Folio" 1907 does not depict a wharf but indicates a road led to the water and one structure was located on the northeast side of the road near the river. "Patuxent River Jones Point To Hills Bridge and Upper Marlboro" 1908 calls it "Lyon's Creek Ldg." and depicts a square wharf with one structure on the northeast corner of the wharf and a cluster of three other structures onshore near the wharf plus an abandoned structure east of the other structures. Just to the north on the river the chart has "Week's ho N.W. chy," meaning Weeks house northwest chimney. This refers to a chart triangulation reference. "Soil Map Calvert County, Maryland" 1928 has the same base map of the 1902 map above with no depiction of the wharf. "Lower Marlboro Quad" 1953 PR 1979 calls it "Lyons Creek Wharf" but gives no wharf depiction. Two structures are located near the wharf site. The best depiction of the wharf is from the "Coast and Geodetic Survey Descriptive Report Topographic Sheet No. 2878, Upper Patuxent River from Jones Point to Hill's Bridge and Western Branch to Upper Marlboro, Maryland" 1908. A drawing clearly shows a square-shaped wharf with a structure located near the north side of the wharf and four other structures located immediately onshore next to the wharf. The Week's house is also depicted showing the location of the chimney.

CMM photograph P-2126 is an undated distant view of the wharf but little detail is discernable. CMM photographs P-2646 and 2647 taken in January 1956 show only the pile stubs from the wharf. An aerial photograph dated 1938 shows the New York Silicate Company structures and a small square wharf approximately 40 feet long directly off from the largest of the company structures. Whether this is the remains of the steamboat wharf or a later configuration related to the silica company, is not known.⁹⁵

⁹⁵ Aerial photograph AHS 7-21, dated 1938, scale 1 inch equals 660 feet, Calvert Soil Conservation District, photostatic copy deposited at Calvert Marine Museum.

8. Significance

Survey No. Ct-1189

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 checked="" 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 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 checked="" 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 1857-1926 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.

Lyons Creek Wharf is one of twenty historic steamboat wharf/landing sites identified in "Calvert County Steamboat Wharves and Landings: Architectural Level Survey and Inventory." This survey and inventory was completed in 1996 by Eshelman & Associates for the Calvert County Historic District Commission with funding from the Calvert County Board of County Commissioners. The final report includes a context study which places the historic significance of these steamboat wharf and landing sites within the broad pattern of local county history and regional history of the Chesapeake Bay. The study falls within the theme of "Transportation" within the time periods of "Agricultural-Industrial Transition (1815-1870)" and "Industrial/Urban Dominance (1870-1930)." Refer to this study for a general historical review and historical significance of the resources as a whole. Lyons Creek Wharf was located near the end of Lyons Creek Road, directly on the Patuxent River, approximately 43 miles above its mouth, and just south of its confluence with Lyons Creek. The road is gated for use by the Palisades Subdivision. Past the gate, the road becomes an unimproved road which turns north and follows the river until it ends at a low spot along the bank of the river. A small boat pier and boat ramp are located at the wharf site. Some pilings are visible immediately downstream from the present pier. A wharf was built at this location at least by 1855, probably by Lewis McK. "Capt." Griffith (1800-1883). A deed dated August 26, 1853, refers to the site as "Patuxent Landing." The Pumphrey fishery located just to the south may have made use of the steamboat service.⁹⁶

Lyons Creek Wharf became an important landing in 1885 when Hills Landing, located further up the river, was closed to steamboat service due to channel siltation. Bristol Landing, located down river from Hills Landing and up river from Lyons Creek was the uppermost steamboat landing on the Patuxent by the 1900s. Despite repeated dredging of the channel, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers recommended in 1907 that no further work be done to keep the Bristol Landing open, and Lyons Creek soon became the northernmost steamboat landing on the river. By 1921 commerce had fallen to the point where steamer service was limited to weekends only.⁹⁷ In 1907 the wharf generated \$385.55 in local freight, \$112.95 in

⁹⁶ Calvert County Deeds SS number 5 F.346.

⁹⁷ Donald Shomette and Ralph Eshelman, "The Patuxent River Submerged Cultural Resource Survey, Drum Point to Queen Anne's Bridge, Maryland" (Annapolis, Maryland: Maryland Historical Trust, 1981), p. 290. Henry Gannett, *Gazetteer of Maryland* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1904), p. 50, refers to "Lyons Creek" as wharf on Patuxent

Continuation Sheet 7.1 Lyons Creek Wharf

During the boat survey of the site a cluster of pilings, approximately 28 feet wide and extending approximately 45 feet into the river, was visible at low tide. The pilings were about 8 inches in diameter. Nearly all of the pilings were in four linear rows parallel to the shore. The second outer most piling row was approximately 10 feet shoreward from the first piling row, the third row approximately 9 feet shoreward from the second row, the fourth approximately 9½ feet from the third, and the shore approximately 16½ feet from the fourth row. The general overall shape of the wharf was a rectangle approximately 28 feet wide by approximately 45 feet long.

Continuation Sheet 8.1 Lyons Creek Wharf

through freight, and \$17.50 for passengers, for a total revenue of \$516.00.⁹⁸

Lyons Creek was also the location of the New York Silicate Company site (Patuxent River Mining Site CT-79) where diatomaceous earth and glauconitic sand were mined during the 1880s until the 1960s. Diatomaceous earth, also called diatomite, is composed of siliceous skeletons of one-celled plants called diatoms, and was first mined in Calvert County in 1822. Diatomite was used as a filtering agent, absorbent, insulation, and a polishing powder. William Weed, a New Yorker who made his home in nearby Rose Hill, Calvert County, was the first to discover its value in the refining of sugar in the 1880s. Glauconitic sand, a potassium iron aluminosilicate, also called green sand, was used as a fertilizer. In 1907, mines from this area made Maryland the leading producer of diatomaceous earth in the United States. The mines were located along the Patuxent River between Lyons Creek and Halls Creek. The New York Silicate Company and later the Maryland Silica Company were among the first to work the area in the late 19th century. In 1908 it was reported "considerable freight is shipped" from the "silica mines" at "Lyons Creek Landing."⁹⁹ A chunk of cement, awash along the shoreline just inside the pilings, is probably related to one of the former silica mine buildings which were located at this site.

River, Calvert County.

⁹⁸ "Maryland Delaware & Virginia Railway Company Annual Report, Statement of Freight and Passenger Revenue by Wharves for the Fiscal Year Ending December 31st, 1907." Original in private ownership, copy deposited in collections of Calvert Marine Museum.

⁹⁹ *Inventory of Historic Sites in Calvert County, Charles and St. Mary's County*, p. 49; "Historic Sites Context Study and National Register Evaluation for Calvert County, Maryland, p. 4-28; H. E. Volks, *Geography and Geology of Maryland* (Baltimore, Maryland Geological Survey 1957), p. 264; and "Coast and Geodetic Survey Descriptive Report Topographic Sheet No. 2878, Upper Patuxent River from Jones Point to Hill's Bridge and Western Branch to Upper Marlboro, Maryland" 1908, copy at Calvert Marine Museum.

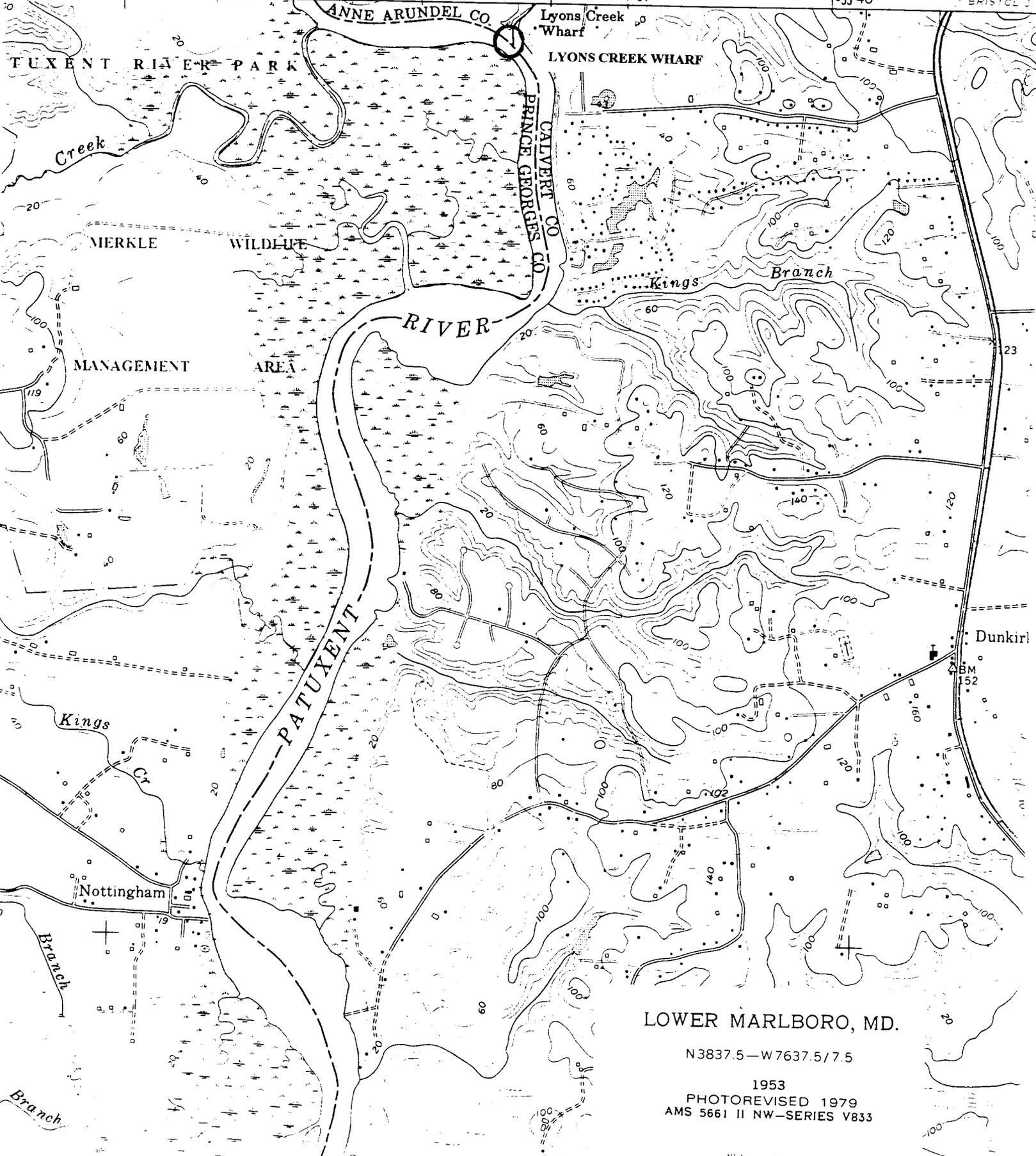


CT-1189
LYONS CREEK WHARF

↑
wharf
site

CT-1189

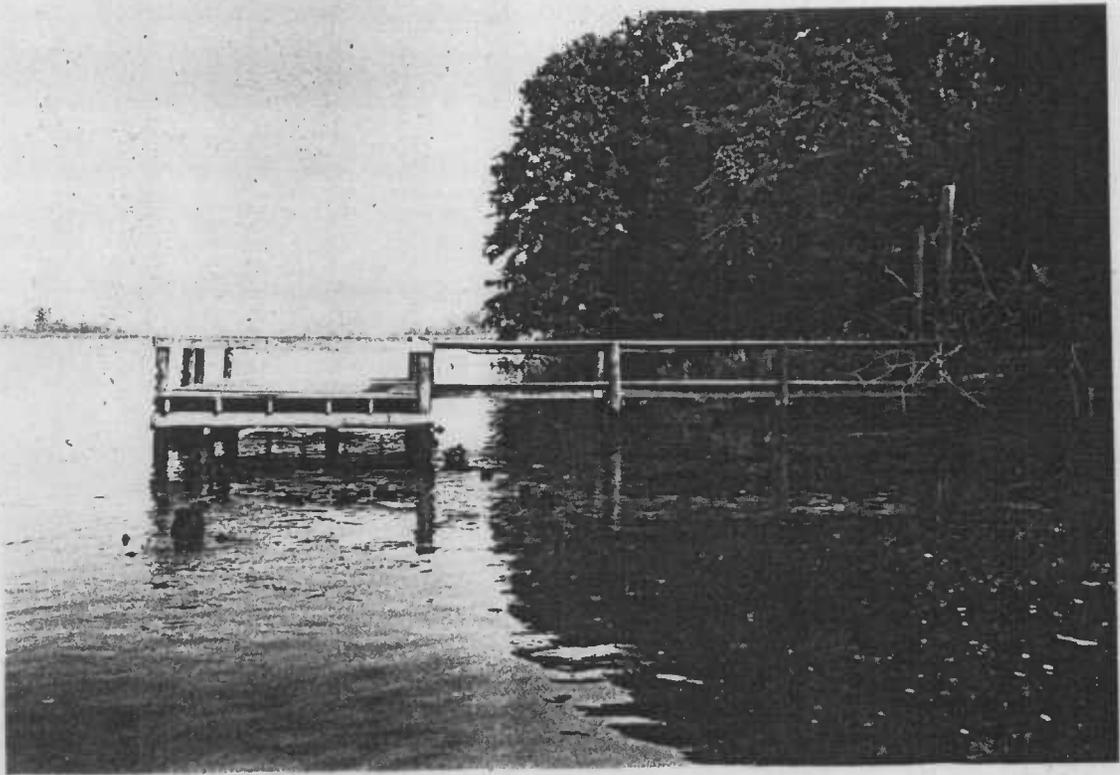
351 42'30" 352 5661 SW (BRISTOL) 353 1354 355 40' 7.3 MILES BRISTOL



LOWER MARLBORO, MD.

N3837.5 - W7637.5/7.5

1953
PHOTOREVISED 1979
AMS 5661 II NW-SERIES V833



CT-1189

Lyons Creek Wharf
Calvert Co., MD

Ralph Estelmann
Aug 1996

neg: MD SHAD

view up river of wharf site; piling stubs visible at
low water

Lyons Creek Wharf