

ever, soon undertake more serious business with respect to the Fishery Force. In June 1880 it appointed the commander and deputy commander. In August of that year the board authorized repairs to the *Leila*, and in September it approved the purchase of a schooner.³⁰

Acting as the state's admiralty involved more than purchasing, equipping, and repairing ships. The board also became the focal point for complaints about the way its navy operated. Some citizens complained that the force was not aggressive enough; others, apparently those who were apprehended, complained that it was too aggressive. In either case, the board was called upon to listen to these complaints and to hold quasi-judicial hearings into the efficiency of the force in general and the competence of the officers in particular. Complaints were heard from Somerset County and Annapolis watermen on 4 February 1881, again from the Annapolitans on 22 December 1882, from the state's attorney for St. Mary's County Daniel Hammett in March 1883 and from his counterpart Daniel M. Henry in Dorchester County later the same month. More complaints were heard in December 1883.³¹

The complaints against the Fishery Force generally concerned the lack of protection—the "depredations of Dredgers and the inability of the Police sloop to give the necessary protection." The board responded for the most part by summoning the commander and his deputies and ordering them to be more vigilant. Occasionally it issued more direct orders. On 6 December 1883, for example, the board ordered the sloop *Governor Hamilton*³² to the Choptank River, where it was to establish a line from Black Walnut Point to Sharps Island and from Sharps Island to James Point and to remain there and enforce an observance of the line.³³ There was little else the board could do except to make sure that the fleet remained in good repair.

Some of the complaints concerning the Fishery Force were more particular, including charges leveled against individual officers. On 8 April 1881 the board conducted a hearing of sorts into charges against Capt. J. B. Wilson of the sloop *Mary Compton*. In September 1881 it considered complaints against Capt. C. J. B. Mitchell and actually examined witnesses. Mitchell, who was acquitted of wrongdoing, subsequently asked the board to pay his counsel fees. On 19 January 1882 the board rejected the request, noting that there were "no funds out of which the same could be paid."³⁴

Occasionally these complaints were of a pecuniary nature. Several times, for example, crew members grumbled about not being paid on time, and on 10 July 1884 the board announced that the failure of any deputy commander to pay his crew promptly would be deemed sufficient cause for his immediate removal from the service. Some problem must also have arisen about the deputy commanders ordering repairs to their vessels without proper authority, for on 29 September 1881 the board decreed that no commander or deputy commander should "create any debt for repairs or otherwise for or on account of any vessel under his command, without the previous sanc-

30. Ibid., 8 June, 5 August, 9 September 1880, vol. 1851-83, pp. 335, 337-39.

31. Ibid., 4 February 1881, 22 December 1882, 8 March, 22 March 1883, pp. 342, 409, 413-14; 6 December 1883, vol. 1883-1905, p. 2.

32. The board apparently adopted the practice, without recorded discussion, of naming the sloops after the mothers, wives, and daughters of the members of the board, and later after the board members themselves. The first sloop purchased by the board, the *Ida Moore*, was renamed the *Julia Hamilton*, probably after the daughter of Gov. William T. Hamilton, who served from 1880 to 1884. The sloop *Mary Compton* was probably named for a relative of Treasurer Barnes Compton. Other sloops were named the *Bessie Woolford* (the comptroller being Levin Woolford) and *E. B. Groome* (the governor being James B. Groome), the *Nannie Merryman* (an earlier treasurer [1870-72] being John Merryman), and the *Louisa Whyte* (the governor being William Whyte). Later vessels were named for the members themselves, as with the *Governor Hamilton*, the *Thos. J. Keating* (a state comptroller), and the *Governor Robert M. McLane*. At some point this practice changed, perhaps because the fleet became so large that there were not enough worthy public officials to supply names for all the boats. By 1916 most of the original boats had been scrapped or retired from service, and the new boats were either named after the counties or sported such names as *Music*, *Archer*, *Snookums*, *Murray*, *Buck*, *Folly*, and *Frolic*.

33. Ibid., 22 December 1882, vol. 1851-83, p. 409; 6 December 1883, vol. 1883-1905, p. 6.

34. Ibid., 8 April, 29 September 1881, 19 January 1882, vol. 1851-83, pp. 349, 372, 378.