

D-649

WILMA LEE (skipjack)

Wingate, Maryland

WILMA LEE is a 46.8' long two-sail bateau, or V-bottomed deadrise type of centerboard sloop, commonly referred to as a skipjack. She has a beam of 16.2', a depth of 4.5', and a gross registered tonnage of 20. She carries a typical skipjack rig of jib-headed mainsail and a single large jib with a club on its foot. Built in 1940 in Wingate, Maryland following traditional Bay design and construction methods, WILMA LEE is significant as being one of the 35 surviving traditional Chesapeake Bay skipjacks and a member of the last commercial sailing fleet in the United States. WILMA LEE is of special interest as being one of only two of the surviving skipjacks to have been built between the two World Wars.

Maryland Historical Trust State Historic Sites Inventory Form

Survey No. D-649

Magi No. 1006495833

DOE yes no

1. Name (indicate preferred name)

historic WILMA LEE

and/or common

2. Location

street & number _____ not for publicationcity, town Wingate _____ vicinity of _____ congressional district _____state Maryland _____ county Dorchester

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input 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 checked="" 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 checked="" 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 Captain Ralph L. Ruark

street & number _____ telephone no.: _____

city, town Wingate _____ state and zip code Maryland 21675

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

pository for survey records _____

city, town _____ state _____

7. Description

Survey No. D-649

Condition		Check one	Check one
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input 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 vessel is a 46.8' long two-sail bateau, or V-bottom deadrise type of centerboard sloop, commonly referred to as a skipjack. Built in 1940 in Wingate, Maryland, she is one of the working fleet of sailing oyster dredgeboats. She shows traditional cross-planked construction methods, had a beam of 16.2', a depth of 4.5', and a gross tonnage of 20. She carries a typical skipjack rig consisting of jib-headed mainsail and a large jib, and has a modified longhead bow and a square, or transom, stern. The wooden hull is painted the traditional white.

WILMA LEE has a neat, yachtlike appearance. Her bow has a straight, slightly raking stem, with a modified, rounded longhead beneath the bowsprit. Her transom stern is slightly raking, with a rounded tuck where the chine meets the transom below the waterline. A chock for the pushboat is mounted in the middle of the transom. There are full-length guards mounted on the hull at the sheer, as well as short guards mounted at the chine amidships; both sets protect the hull from the bumping of the dredges.

The single mast is set raked about 15° aft, and is set up with double shrouds adjustable by turnbuckles. There are a forestay, jibstay, and topping lift, the last of which leads to the end of the boom, which is jawed to the mast. A jib-headed mainsail is laced to the boom and carried on white-painted wood hoops at the mast. The large jib has a club along its foot. The bowsprit, braced with headrails leading back to the hull, is painted white but left bright at the end. It is rigged with double chain bobstays and chain bowsprit shrouds. In addition to the sail rig, the vessel carries a motorized pushboat suspended on davits at the stern.

The skipjack is flush-decked with several deck structures. These include: a wheelbox; with a white-painted wheel mounted on it; a cabin trunk with a slide atop a built-on door; a deck hatch; and a cuddy abaft the mast. The deck is surrounded by a pinrail, with a higher pipe safety rail aft, and a high, solid lograil forward. The vessel carries dredging gear in season.

Painted white, the skipjack is decorated with a red stripe beneath the guards at the sheer, red stripes on the longhead, brown trim on the top of the pinrail, and brightwork trim on the cabin roof, window frames, and wheelbox. Her name is painted on the bows in black letters, as well as on the transom.

8. Significance

Survey No. D-649

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

Specific dates	1940	Builder/Architect	Unknown
check: Applicable Criteria:	<input type="checkbox"/> A <input type="checkbox"/> B <input type="checkbox"/> C <input type="checkbox"/> D		
and/or			
Applicable Exception:	<input type="checkbox"/> A <input type="checkbox"/> B <input type="checkbox"/> C <input type="checkbox"/> D <input type="checkbox"/> E <input type="checkbox"/> F <input type="checkbox"/> G		
Level of Significance:	<input type="checkbox"/> national <input type="checkbox"/> state <input type="checkbox"/> local		

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

This vessel is significant as being one of the 36 surviving traditional Chesapeake Bay skipjacks and a member of the last commercial sailing fleet in the United States. Out of a fleet of hundreds of skipjacks that worked Bay waters in the early years of this century, today only this small number remain to carry on the tradition of working sail.

The skipjack evolved as a distinct type of Bay vessel in the 1890's as a cheaper-to-construct alternative to the earlier bugeyes and other traditional framed craft, in a period when shipbuilding costs were rising and the oyster catch was diminishing. The type was devised by enlarging (to 25 to 60 feet) the hull of the ordinary, unframed, square-sterned Bay crabbing skiff, and giving it a deadrise bottom, a-deck, a cabin, and a sloop rig. The result--with its unframed, hard chine, cross-planked, V-bottom--proved inexpensive to build, easy to repair, and could be constructed by a competent house carpenter. Skipjacks were specifically designed as oyster dredge boats, with wide beams and low freeboard lending stability and providing a large working space on deck. The single masted rig, with sharp-headed mainsail and large jib, was easy to handle, powerful in light winds, and handy in coming about quickly for another pass over the oyster beds.

The Maryland oyster season begins November 1 and ends March 15. Skipjacks must dredge under sail on all days except Mondays and Tuesdays, when they are allowed to use their motorized pushboat for dredging. The pushboat, normally carried on davits at the stern, is lowered into the water and literally "pushes" the skipjack along from behind, the nose of the pushboat resting against a "jig" on the stern of the skipjack. The pushboat can also legally be used to get the skipjack to and from the oyster beds each day. Each skipjack's crew is made up of the captain, who is often also the owner, and five crew members.

WILMA LEE is of interest as being one of only two of the surviving skipjacks to have been built between the two World Wars. She was built in 1940 in Wingate, Md., following traditional Bay-area design and construction methods. She has worked in the oyster-dredging fleet since her building and is presently based at Cambridge, Md.

Survey No. D-649

Magi No.

DOE yes no

Maryland Historical Trust State Historic Sites Inventory Form

CHESAPEAKE BAY SKIPJACK FLEET THEMATIC GROUP

1. Name (indicate preferred name)

historic WILMA LEE

and/or common

2. Location

street & number Bishops Head Road, Hearn's Creek n/a not for publication

city, town Wingate n/a vicinity of _____ congressional district First

state Maryland 024 county Dorchester 019

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"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
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	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> not applicable	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input type="checkbox"/> museum
			<input type="checkbox"/> park
			<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
			<input type="checkbox"/> religious
			<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input type="checkbox"/> other:

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name Captain Ralph L. Ruark

street & number _____ telephone no.: _____

city, town Wingate state and zip code Maryland 21675

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. n/a liber _____

street & number _____ folio _____

city, town _____ state _____

6. Representation in Existing Historical Surveys

title Survey of Surviving Traditional Chesapeake Bay Craft

date 1983-1984 federal state county local

depository for survey records Maryland Historical Trust, 21 State Circle

city, town Annapolis, state Maryland 21401



7. Description

Survey No. D-649

Condition		Check one	Check one	
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved	date of move
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed			<u>n/a</u>

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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
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		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates	1940	Builder/Architect	Unknown
check: Applicable Criteria:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> A	<input type="checkbox"/> B	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> C <input type="checkbox"/> D
and/or			
Applicable Exception:	<input type="checkbox"/> A	<input type="checkbox"/> B	<input type="checkbox"/> C <input type="checkbox"/> D <input type="checkbox"/> E <input type="checkbox"/> F <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> G
Level of Significance:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> national	<input type="checkbox"/> state	<input type="checkbox"/> local

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9. Major Bibliographical References

Survey No. D-649

See Thematic Group nomination cover form, Continuation Sheets No. 8-13.

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property less than one acre

Quadrangle name Wingate, MD

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UTM References do NOT complete UTM references

A

1	8	4	0	5	2	8	0	4	2	3	7	2	2	0
Zone				Easting				Northing						

B

Zone				Easting				Northing						

C

Zone				Easting				Northing						

D

Zone				Easting				Northing						

E

Zone				Easting				Northing						

F

Zone				Easting				Northing						

G

Zone				Easting				Northing						

H

Zone				Easting				Northing						

Verbal boundary description and justification

This working vessel is usually docked at the location indicated in Item 2. Historic boundaries are coterminous with the hull.

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	n/a	code	county	code
state		code	county	code

state	code	county	code
state	code	county	code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Anne Witty/ M. E. Hayward

Radcliffe Maritime Museum

organization Maryland Historical Society

date May, 1984

street & number 201 West Monument Street

telephone (301) 685-3750

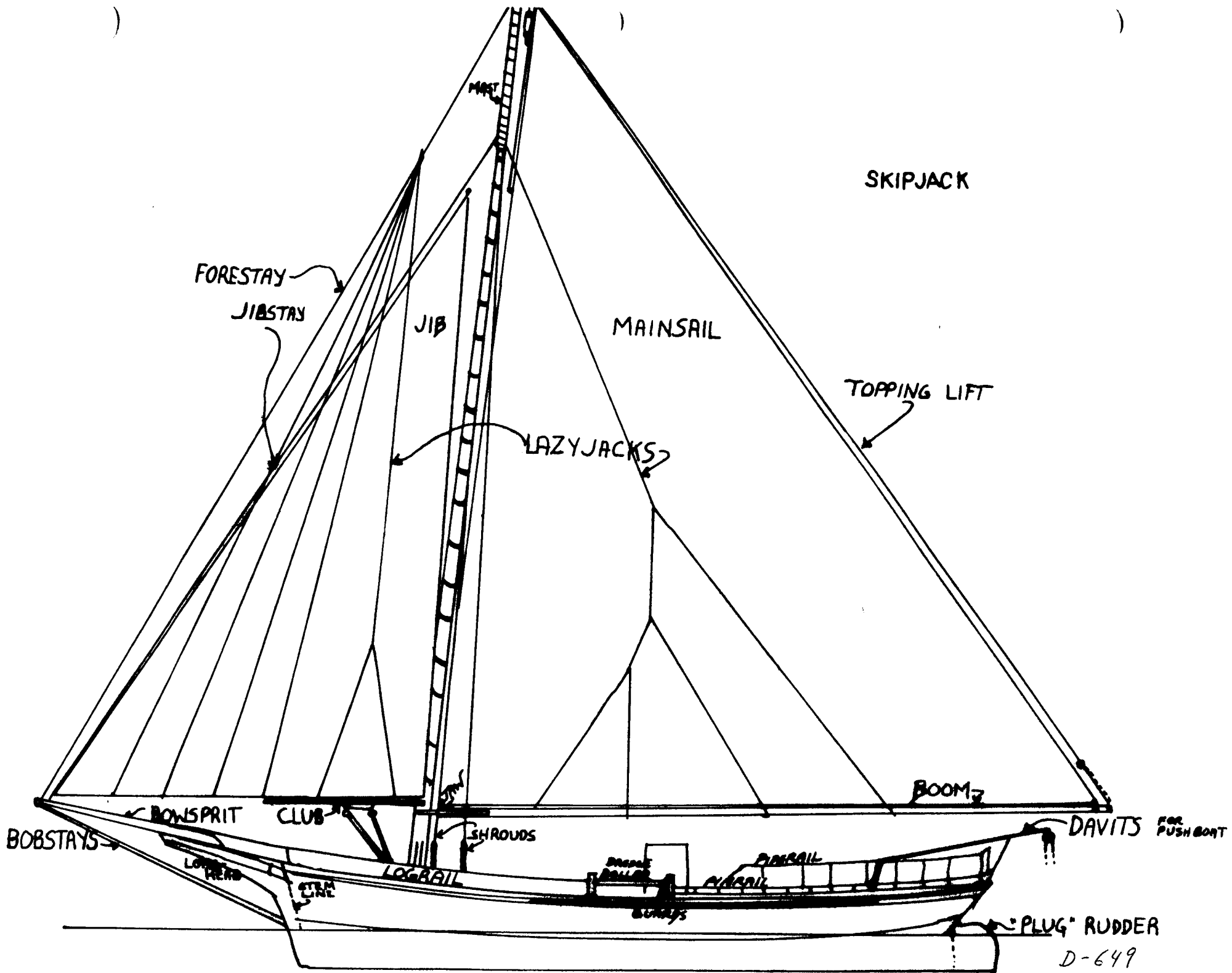
city or town Baltimore

state Maryland 21201

The Maryland Historic Sites Inventory was officially created by an Act of the Maryland Legislature to be found in the Annotated Code of Maryland, Article 41, Section 181 KA, 1974 supplement.

The survey and inventory are being prepared for information and record purposes only and do not constitute any infringement of individual property rights.

return to: Maryland Historical Trust
 Shaw House
 21 State Circle
 Annapolis, Maryland 21401
 (301) 269-2438





D-649

WILMA LEE
Cambridge, Md

stern
M. C. Wootton 10/83

Wilma Lee



D-649

WILMA LEE
Cambridge, Md

starboard side
M. C. Wootton 10/83

WILMA LEE

W



D-649

WILMA LEE
Cambridge, Md

port side under sail
M. C. Wootton 11/83

8720

Wilma Lee

WILMA LEE

WILMA LEE



D-649

WILMA LEE
Cambridge, Md

bow

M. C. Wootton 10/83

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Wilma Lee', written in a cursive style.

Wilma LEE