

Maryland Historical Trust State Historic Sites Inventory Form

Survey No. T-531

Magi No.

DOE yes noCHESAPEAKE BAY SKIPJACK FLEET THEMATIC GROUP

1. Name (indicate preferred name)

historic HILDA M. WILLING

and/or common

2. Location

street & number Gibsontown Road n/a not for publication

city, town Tilghman n/a vicinity of congressional district First

state Maryland 024 county Talbot 041

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input checked="" 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 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 Robert Sweitzer

street & number telephone no.: 886-2284

city, town Tilghman state and zip code Maryland 21671

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 MD 21401

7. Description

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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			n/a _____

Prepare both a summary paragraph and a general description of the resource and its various elements as it exists today.

This vessel is a 40' long two-sail bateau, or V-bottomed deadrise type of centerboard sloop, commonly referred to as a skipjack. She was built in 1905 in Oriole, Maryland for work in the oyster dredge fleet. She has a beam of 14', a depth of 3.1', and a net registered tonnage of 6. She is Bay-built, using typical cross-planked construction methods and carries a typical skipjack rig of jib-headed mainsail and a large jib. She has a longhead or clipper bow and a square stern. The wooden hull is painted the traditional white.

HILDA M. WILLING has a sharp raking stem with a curved longhead beneath the bowsprit which is painted white but left bright at its end. She is square-sterned with a rudder mounted on pintles on the transom and a jib for the pushboat mounted to starboard on the transom. There are guards mounted on the sides of the hull amidships to protect it from the bumping of the dredges.

The single mast is set up with double shrouds adjusted by means of turnbuckles, as well as a forestay and jibstay. There is a topping lift leading to the end of the boom, which is jawed to the mast at its forward end. Lazyjacks are used for furling both the mainsail and the jib. The mainsail, laced to the boom, is jib-headed and the large jib has a club on its foot. The bowsprit is set up with double chain bobstays and chain bowsprit shrouds. In addition to the sail rig the skipjack carries a motorized pushboat suspended over the stern on davits.

The skipjack is flush-decked with several deck structures. These include: a wheelbox and wheel; cabin; and box over the winder engines. There is a solid log rail forward and a pinrail aft. Dredging gear includes oyster dredges, rollers mounted on the rails amidships, winders, and winder engine.

The vessel is painted white with brightwork trim at the end of the bowsprit. Trailboards carried on the longhead have the name HILDA M. WILLING in gold letters. The name is also painted on nameboards mounted on the bows.

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 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	1905	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 type="checkbox"/> G <input type="checkbox"/> none
Level of Significance:	<input checked="" 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 35 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.

HILDA M. WILLING is of interest as being one of the older skipjacks still dredging in the Chesapeake fleet. She was built in 1905 in Oriole, Maryland following traditional Bay-area design and construction methods. She has worked in the oyster-dredging fleet since her building and is presently based at Tilghman Island. The vessel is one of the 21 surviving working skipjacks to have been built previous to 1912, although, like the other members of the fleet, she has been much repaired over the years in true Chesapeake fashion.

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

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property less than one acre

Quadrangle name Tilghman, MD

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UTM References do NOT complete UTM references

A

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

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Zone Easting Northing

C

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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
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state	code	county	code
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11. Form Prepared By

name/title Anne Witty/ M. E. Hayward

organization Radcliffe Maritime Museum
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
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