

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

FOR NPS USE ONLY	
RECEIVED	JAN 9 1980 MAR 27 1980
DATE ENTERED	

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*  
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

**1 NAME**

HISTORIC

Motor Vessel Bancroft

AND/OR COMMON

**2 LOCATION**

STREET & NUMBER

Fell's Point

\_\_\_ NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Baltimore City

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

Third

STATE

Maryland

\_\_\_ VICINITY OF

CODE

24

COUNTY

Baltimore City

CODE

510

**3 CLASSIFICATION**

*(Independent city)*

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	<b>PUBLIC ACQUISITION</b>	<b>ACCESSIBLE</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT
Boat	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY
			<input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
			<input type="checkbox"/> PARK
			<input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENC
			<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
			<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
			<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
			<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:

**4 OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME

H. Roland Read

STREET & NUMBER

1906 Aliceanna Street, Fell's Point

CITY, TOWN

Baltimore

\_\_\_ VICINITY OF

STATE

Maryland

21231

**5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE,  
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Vessel Documentation Office

STREET & NUMBER

Department of Transportation, U. S. Coast Guard

CITY, TOWN

Baltimore

STATE

Maryland

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE

DATE

\_\_\_ FEDERAL \_\_\_ STATE \_\_\_ COUNTY \_\_\_ LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE

# 7 DESCRIPTION

## CONDITION

EXCELLENT  
 GOOD  
 FAIR

DETERIORATED  
 RUINS  
 UNEXPOSED

## CHECK ONE

UNALTERED  
 ALTERED

## CHECK ONE

ORIGINAL SITE  
 MOVED DATE \_\_\_\_\_

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DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The motor vessel Bancroft is a glass-cabin launch built in 1925 by the City of Baltimore. She is a documented work vessel of five net tons, licensed to carry six or less passengers for hire in the coasting trade. She has a registered length of 28.7 feet, her beam is 8.6 feet, and her draft is 2.6 feet. This vessel strongly resembles older steam launches in hull form. The hull has a moderate sheer, a straight keel with some drag, a rounded forefoot with nearly straight and upright stem rabbet, upright stern post, and thin modified elliptical transom of moderate overhang. Her mid-section is formed with short rise floor on round bilges, and she has upright topsides. The trunk cabin is long and high with large rectangular drop windows. The hull is constructed of fir planking, copper sheathed, with oak frames. All repairs have been made in the original style. The vessel is gas-screw driven and was originally powered with a Palmer 2-cylinder reciprocating engine, which was replaced with a Chris-Craft 6-cylinder L-head engine in 1956.

# 8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW				
PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION	
1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE	
1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE	
1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN	
1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER	
1800-1899	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION	
1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)	
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION			

SPECIFIC DATES      1925

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The motor vessel Bancroft is a glass-cabin launch built in 1925 by Baltimore City's Bureau of Harbors under the supervision of Bancroft Hall, Harbor Engineer. From the 1890s through the 1940s vessels of her design were used as water taxis, crew boats, light freight handlers, pilot boats, delivery craft for ship chandlers, etc. They were prevalent in servicing commercial vessels until after World War II, when boats with planing hulls, larger engines, and faster speeds replaced them. (Chappelle, National Watercraft Collection.) The Bancroft, once of many, is today one of only a few examples of this type, on the East Coast.

The Bancroft was used continually for pier inspection by the City of Baltimore harbor engineer until 1966, when the Baltimore Harbor Bureau was merged into the Maryland Port Authority. Subsequently she was auctioned as surplus property and privately purchased. She is presently licensed to carry six or less passengers in the coasting trade.

Launches like the Bancroft strongly resemble the older steam launch in hull form and are well suited for hot weather cruising in protective waters or where shelter can be quickly reached, such as the Chesapeake Bay. There are half-models in the Smithsonian Institution collection with hull designs similar to the Bancroft's. The Chesapeake maritime Museum in St. Michaels, Maryland has the hull of a vessel that closely resembles the Bancroft on exhibit; however, it is not operative.

The future of the Bancroft depends on her owner's success in securing a maritime grant from the National Trust for Historic Preservation under the Maritime Heritage Preservation Grant Program. She could be used as a water taxi between Fell's Point and the Baltimore Inner Harbor after restoration.

# 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

- Brewington, M.V., Chesapeake Bay, A Pictorial Maritime History, 1953.
- Bodine, A. Audrey, Chesapeake Bay and Tidewater, rev. ed., 1967
- Bodine, A. Audrey, Bodine's Baltimore, 1973.
- Chapelle, Howard, I., The National Watercraft Collection, 1960.
- U.S.C.G., Merchant Vessels of the U.S., CG-408, Dept. of Trans., 1977.

**UTM NOT VERIFIED**

# 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

**ACREAGE NOT VERIFIED**

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY N/A

QUADRANGLE NAME Baltimore East Quadrangle

QUADRANGLE SCALE 1:24000

UTM REFERENCES

A	1,3	3,6,2,7,1,0	4,3,4,9,0,2,0	B			
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C				D			
E				F			
G				H			

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

*permanent docking site is pier at foot of Anne St. in Fells Point area of Baltimore. Saw 3-14-80*

N/A

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

# 11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

H. Roland Read, Owner and Captain M/V BANCROFT

ORGANIZATION

DATE

March 12, 1979

STREET & NUMBER

1906 Aliceanna Street

TELEPHONE

(301) 342-9386

CITY OR TOWN

Baltimore

STATE

Maryland 21231

# 12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL

STATE

LOCAL

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

*[Signature]* 1-2-80

TITLE

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER

DATE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

*W. Ray Luce*

DATE

3/27/80

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

ATTEST: *Emme Jane Saxe*

DATE

3-14-80

CHIEF OF REGISTRATION

*Regional Coordinator*