

MARYLAND INVENTORY OF HISTORIC PROPERTIES

Maryland Historical Trust State Historic Sites Inventory Form

Survey No. 37-1200

Magi No.

DOE yes no

1. Name (indicate preferred name)

historic Sollers Wharf

and/or common

2. Location

street & number located near end of Sollers Wharf Road not for publication

city, town Lusby vicinity of congressional district

state Maryland county Clavert

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public	<input type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture <input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input 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 checked="" 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 checked="" 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 via Sollers Wharf Road

street & number Board of County Commissioners telephone no.: 535-1600

city, town 175 Main St. state and zip code MD 20678

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. CP-1200

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 type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved	date of move _____
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unexposed	a few piling	stubs	

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: The Sollers and Dowell Oyster House, located at this site, is in ruins. Spout Farm (CT-62), a late 18th century two-story frame structure with massive external chimneys and a two-storied galleried porch overlooks the steamboat landing. The former general store and post office, located below the house on the shore, has been converted into a community recreation hall. The bell located at the end of wharf which was used to summon the storekeeper is now in the collections of the Calvert Marine Museum.¹²⁷

Description: Sollers Wharf is a historic wharf site with no visible features on land or above mean low water.

Previously Existing Wharf Structures: A wharf, and livestock pen were located at this site. "Map of Calvert County Showing Topography and Election Districts" 1902 and "St. Mary's Folio" 1906 both show an unimproved road leading to the water directly below the Spout Farm House and not to the oyster house site. It does not indicate a landing or wharf. "Lower Part of Patuxent River, Maryland" 1907-08 depicts a simple wharf at the oyster house location with no other shore side structures. The site is referred to as "Sollers Ldg." "Chart no. 20 Natural Oyster Bars, Calvert and St. Mary's Counties" 1908 depicts a short simple wharf indicated as "Sollers Landing." "Soil Map Calvert County, Maryland" 1928 depicts a simple wharf located below the Spout Farm House at the same location as map 1902. Either there was once a steamboat wharf located at the general store site and later one at the oysterhouse site, or some of the maps are inaccurate. An unimproved road leads off of Sollers Wharf Road along the shore behind the general store and ends just opposite on the west side of the store. It is possible the steamboat wharf was once located at the general store site and the oysterhouse wharf was a second separate wharf. A 1889 plat of the area clearly indicated the "wharf" at that time was located near where the present oysterhouse ruins are located. If there was an earlier wharf, it predated 1889.¹²⁸ The 1979 underwater survey did not consider the presence of a second wharf site.

CMM photograph P-0141 is titled "Derelict steamboat wharf and Sollers and Dowell oyster house on St. Leonards Creek circa 1977." If the oyster house dates from 1916, it certainly was in

¹²⁷ *Inventory of Historic Sites in Calvert County, Charles County and St. Mary's County*, p. 15; the post office operated at least in 1884 and probably before and after this date.

¹²⁸ Calvert County Equity number 128; copy of plate deposited at Calvert Marine Museum.

8. Significance

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 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 1822–1931 **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.

Sollers 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.

Sollers Wharf was located at the end of Sollers Road, on the south side of St. Leonard Creek, up stream from Rodney Point, approximately 8 miles from the mouth of the Patuxent River. Apparently named after John Sollers who settled in Anne Arundel County in 1670 and later moved to Calvert County.¹³⁰ In 1907 the wharf generated \$1,432.71 in local freight, \$81.81 in through freight, and \$555.50 for passengers, for a total r
 The Sollers and Dowell Oyster House operated either at the steamboat wharf site or near it in the same cove from 1916 until 1946.¹³¹ This commercial operation had its receiving area located on

¹³⁰ Hamill Kenny, *The Placenames of Maryland, Their Origin and Meaning* (Museum and Library of Maryland History, Maryland Historical Society, Baltimore, Maryland, 1984), p. 246; and Charles Stein, *A History of Calvert County, Maryland* (privately published in cooperation with the Calvert County Historical Society, 1976), pp. 315-316.

¹³¹ Paula J. Johnson, *Working the Water: The Commercial Fisheries of Maryland's Patuxent River* (Charlottesville, Virginia, Calvert Marine Museum and The University Press of Virginia, 1988), pp. xvii and 152; and Michael Miller, “The Sollers and Dowell Oyster House as Material Culture: A Preliminary Report on Field Work in the Built Environment,” (Washington, D.C., academic paper for George Washington University, 1989), copy in Calvert Marine Museum library. Johnson gives the dates for the oyster company as 1936 to 1946, but Miller, pp. 4 and 7 gives the date 1916 as “when the Sollers Wharf house was first built.” The oyster company was

Continuation Sheet 7.1 Sollers Wharf

operation at the same time as the wharf was used by steamboats. Was the steamboat wharf separate from the oyster house wharf or one in the same? Is photograph P-0141 a photograph of the oyster house and are the remains of the steamboat wharf nothing more than piling stubs offshore and/or under the visible Sollers and Dowell Oyster House? This survey was unable to determine the exact relationship of one to the other; nor whether there was one or two different wharves. An aerial photograph taken in 1938 shows the Sollers and Dowell wharf, approximately 80 feet long, as well as an approximately 40 foot long pier with approximately 40 foot long "L" head located just off from the steamboat store site¹²⁹.

¹²⁹ Aerial photograph AHS 10-10, dated 1938, scale 1 inch equals 660 feet, Calvert Soil Conservation District, photostatic copy deposited at Calvert Marine Museum.

Continuation Sheet 8.1 Sollers Wharf

piles over the water as was the office building. Ruins of this commercial enterprise are still extant. A submerged cultural resource survey conducted at this site in 1979 revealed two sets of pier piling stubs off the shore where the Sollers and Dowell Oyster House was located. One set of piles, with a uniform diameter of approximately one foot, was just visible above the level of the water and ran outward from shore to where the water depth drops off. These pilings were reported to be in a "well-preserved state -- several of them were coated with creosote -- and are of contemporary origin." These piles may be part of the Sollers and Dowell Oyster House operation. A second set of piles was located just to the west of the first set, but they "were in far greater state of decay." This set of piles projected only a few feet above the creek bottom and was badly decomposed. These pilings formed no apparent linear progression. The pilings varied from 6 inches to a foot or more in diameter.¹³²

then called W. E. Sollers & Co. A humorous story associated with Sollers Wharf is one told by John Crane to Ralph Eshelman concerning his grandfather Mr. Turner. Turner took a load of tomatoes to the wharf for shipment to Baltimore, but the price offered was so low he refused to sell and in protest dumped the tomatoes into the water which turned red in color for several days.

¹³² Donald G. Shomette and Ralph E. Eshelman, "The Patuxent River Submerged Cultural Resource Survey: Drum Point to Queen Anne's Bridge, Maryland" (Maryland Historical Trust, 1981), pp. 210-215.



CF-1200
SOLLERS WHARF

wharf shed
operator house

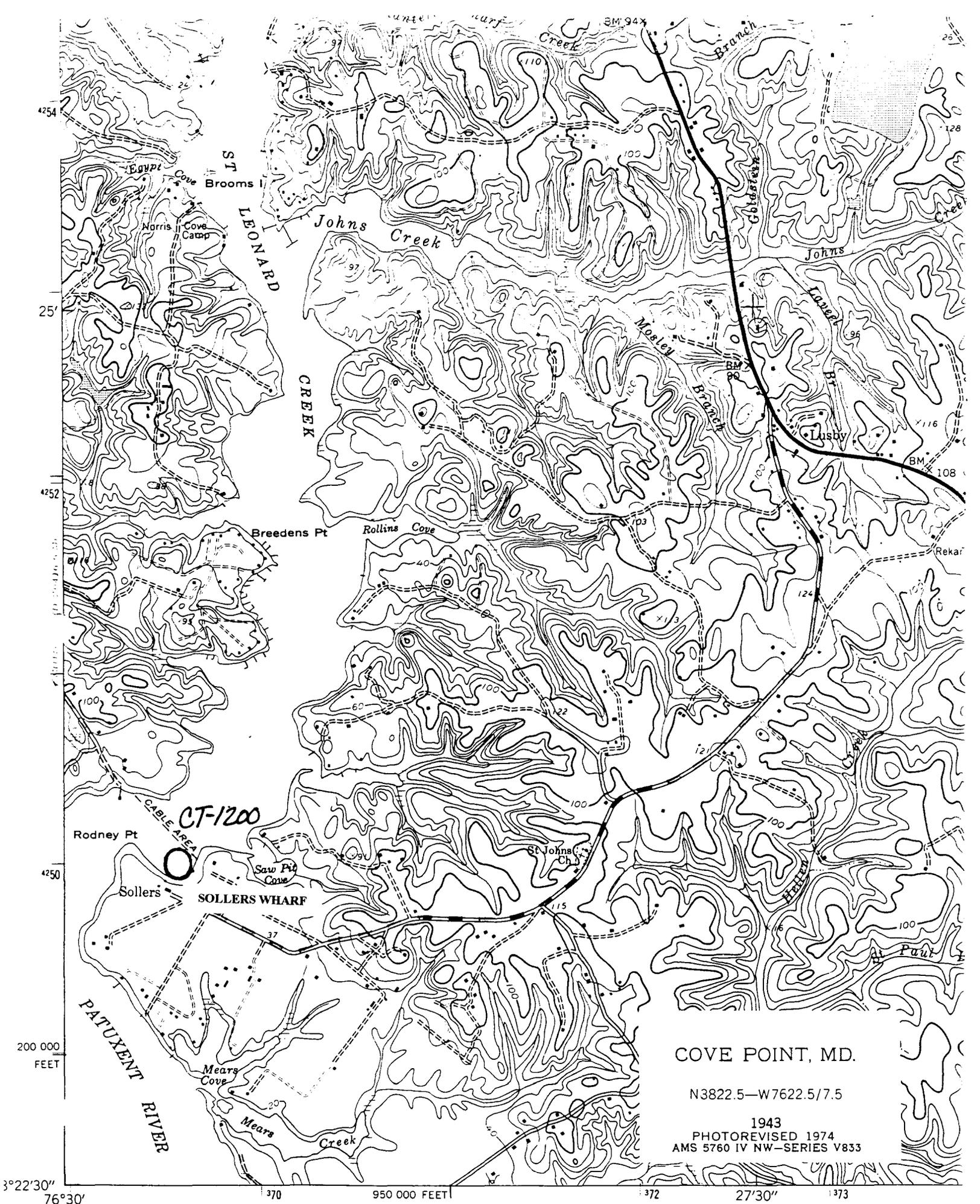
wharf stores at pier

Sollers Wharf

AWS 10-10

1978

Calvert Soil Conservation District



COVE POINT, MD.

N3822.5—W7622.5/7.5

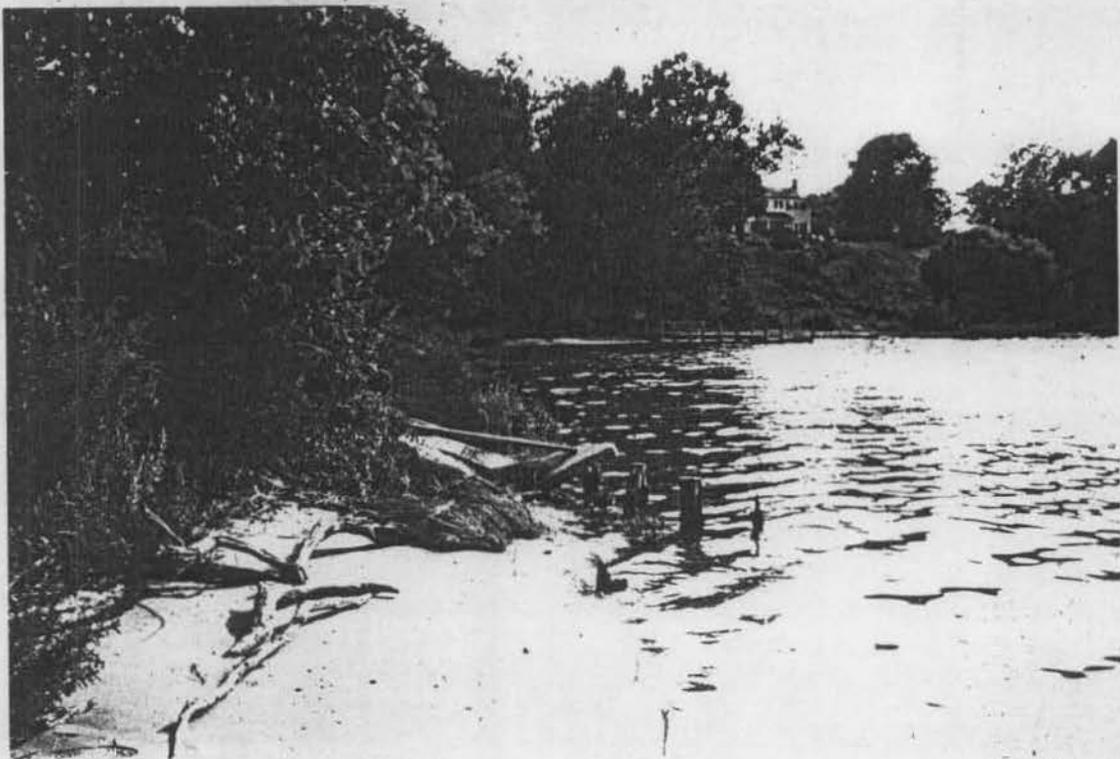
1943
 PHOTOREVISED 1974
 AMS 5760 IV NW—SERIES V833

200 000
 FEET

3°22'30" 76°30' 950 000 FEET 370 372 27'30" 373

Mapped by the Army Map Service
 Published for civil use by the Geological Survey





Sollers Wharf

CT- 1200

Sollers Wharf
Calvert Co., MD

Ralph Erdelman

Aug 1996

neg: MD SHPO

view south of piling stubs from near wharf-site;
Spout Farm House center of image; steamboat wharf
stare to right - out of image