

CT-791

GEDA (Jenkins Creek crab scrape)

Solomons, Maryland

GEDA is a 17'7" long cross-planked V-bottom skiff of the Smith Island type known as a "Jenkins Islander" or "Jenkins Island crab scrape." Built at Smith Island, Maryland by Leon Marsh in the 1950s it never had a sail but was powered by a light engine. It is now on display at the Calvert Marine Museum. The vessel gains its significance for being an example of an important indigenous Bay craft--the V-bottomed, deadrise skiff that developed in the 19th century for crabbing, fishing, and oystering, and for being a surviving example of one of the many local types of skiffs built in the Bay area, in this case the type known as a "Jenkins Islander."

# Maryland Historical Trust State Historic Sites Inventory Form

Survey No. CT-791

Magi No. 0507905833

DOE  yes  no

## 1. Name (indicate preferred name)

historic GEDA

and/or common Jenkins Creek crab scrape CMM 77-2

## 2. Location

street & number \_\_\_\_\_ not for publication

city, town Solomons \_\_\_\_\_ vicinity of \_\_\_\_\_ congressional district

state Maryland \_\_\_\_\_ county Calvert

## 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> educational	<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial	<input 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 Calvert Marine Museum

street & number \_\_\_\_\_ telephone no.: 326-3719

city, town Solomons \_\_\_\_\_ state and zip code Maryland 20688

## 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

depository for survey records \_\_\_\_\_

city, town \_\_\_\_\_ state

## 7. Description

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<b>Condition</b>		<b>Check one</b>	<b>Check one</b>
<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 checked="" 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 is a 17'7" long cross-planked V-bottom skiff of the Smith Island type known as a "Jenkins Islander" or "Jenkins Island crab scrape." It has a beam of 6' and a depth of 2'2". Built at Smith Island, Maryland by Leon Marsh in the 1950s, it never had a sail but was powered by a light engine. The white-painted wooden skiff is on display at the Calvert Marine Museum, Solomons.

The boat is Bay-built using cross-planked construction, with a plank-on-edge keel and a "box" keelson. The planking is fastened to the keel in a herringbone pattern. There are sawn hanging knees supporting the washboards and two bilge stringers running the length of the bottom. There is vertical staving at the bow where the bottom planking meets the straight, raking stem vertically. The boat has a shallow, square transom. In shape the hull is distinctive for its pronounced rocker to the sheer and deep forefoot, and is relatively flat amidships. The rudder is hung on a post set just inboard of the lower edge of the transom; it is a balance rudder. There is a 1"-wide rubrail along the sheer, as well as a finger-rail topping the sheer plank.

GEDA is half-decked, with a rectangular cockpit and 14"-wide washboards lining the sides. Fittings include the low finger-rail and a small "hawse-hole" pierced in the stem. There is an engine mount in the stern and a small 2-blade propellor and shaft. Originally the boat was powered with a 5-horsepower air-cooled Wisconsin engine, and later with a Sears 5-HP. The tiller may have been rigged with steering ropes; there is a small iron pipe attached to the head of the rudder shaft on the stern.

When the boat was given to the Museum the bottom boards were re-nailed and she was given a new coat of paint. With a white hull, the boat is decorated at the bow where her name, GEDA, is painted in green with red accents, embellished with simple floral and scroll motifs. She is a small version of the Jenkins Islander.

# 8. Significance

Survey No. CT-791

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 checked="" 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** c. 1950 **Builder/Architect** Leon Marsh

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.

This vessel is significant for being an example of an important indigenous Bay craft-- the V-bottomed deadrise skiff that developed in the 19th century for crabbing, fishing, and oystering, and for being a surviving example of one of the dozens of local types of skiffs built, in this case, the type known as a Jenkins Creek boat or Jenkins Islander.

The Chesapeake Bay crabbing skiff is an indigenous type which is to be seen in many different local forms and variations (at least 15), reflecting design innovations by particular builders or definite regional characteristics. The V-bottom, deadrise form, first seen in the local skiff/bateau vessel type, was later adapted by local boatbuilders the larger skipjack, or two-sail bateau. Thus, these surviving examples of Chesapeake-area skiffs are important in understanding the construction techniques and design innovations still to be seen today in the surviving skipjack fleet. They also were the means of carrying out an important local occupation--crabbing, fishing, and oystering.

GEDA is an example of a particular type of Bay skiff known as a Jenkins Creek boat or Jenkins Islander. They design has a characteristically deep forefoot and considerable rocker to its sheer, giving the bow an "upturned" look. The design results in a stable craft with a good deal of freeboard, strong enough when powered by a small engine, to pull a dredge or "scrape" for crabs. In addition to being a good example of a local type GEDA is also important for illustrating the continuity of boatbuilding using traditional designs. Built in the 1950s at Smith Island, Maryland by Leon Marsh, she is not an old boat, but her design follows 19th century precedents. The skiff design was well enough adapted for watermen's work to be produced through the mid-20th century, though such later examples as GEDA were meant for power rather than oar or sail. GEDA is also distinctive for the use of painted decoration, unusual in such a small boat. The patterns are similar to those found on the trailboards of larger Bay craft such as skipjacks and log canoes and stem from a tradition of marine decoration dating from ancient times.

The skiff GEDA (pronounced "Jee-da") was found in Solomons and bought and subsequently restored by Kent and Nancy Mountford in Solomons before donation to the Museum in 1977. Through discussions with her builder Leon Marsh, of Smith Island, the Mountfords learned that GEDA sold new for \$220 and scraped (dredged) for crabs in Tangier Sound before being sold off Island to a Patuxent River fisherman. GEDA and two sister vessels built by Marsh were scaled-down Jenkins Creek "crab scrapes," taking their name from a creek near Crisfield, crab capital of the Eastern Shore and Smith Island's major market.

# 9. Major Bibliographical References

Survey No. CT-791

Kent Mountford, "'Out Island' in the Chesapeake," MSS, 1976. Calvert Marine Museum  
Howard I. Chapelle, Chesapeake Bay Crabbing Skiffs (St. Michaels: Chesapeake Bay Maritime  
Museum, n.d.)  
William Warner, Beautiful Swimmers

# 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property \_\_\_\_\_

Quadrangle name \_\_\_\_\_

Quadrangle scale \_\_\_\_\_

UTM References do NOT complete UTM references

A 

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Zone Easting Northing

B 

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Zone Easting Northing

C 

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D 

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E 

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H 

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Verbal boundary description and justification

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

state	code	county	code

# 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Anne Witty/ M.E. Hayward

organization Maryland Historical Society date 5/84

street & number 201 W. Monument St. telephone 685-3750

city or town Baltimore state Maryland

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



17' JENKINS GREEK GRAB SCRAPE "GEDA"

ALAN CHESLEY  
1980



CT-791

GEDA  
Solomons, Md

bow  
M.C. Wooton

4/84

CT-791



CT-791

GEDA  
Solomons, Md

stern  
M.C. Wootton

4/84

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