

1987

S-117
Island Belle
Smith Island
private

1916

The Island Belle, assembled in 1916, was used for sixty-one years as the principal means of public transportation between Smith Island and Crisfield. Built on Smith Island, the forty-eight foot by fourteen foot vessel was designed with a round stern, a dead rise wood hull, and a forward pilot house. The Island Belle had a capacity of twenty tons with top speed reaching eight knots. Like its successors, the Island Belle provided the islanders with a dependable link to doctors, schools, and stores in Crisfield and delivered mail, food, and necessities on a daily schedule. It has been the hope of many residents that the Island Belle could be raised from its harbor location and used in the island's tourist trade.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY
RECEIVED
DATE ENTERED

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

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

1 NAME

HISTORIC

Vessel Island Belle

AND/OR COMMON

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

Smith Island, Maryland, dockage;
Crisfield, Maryland, Port of Call

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

VICINITY OF

First

STATE

Maryland

CODE

24

COUNTY

Somerset

CODE

039

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	N/A <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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL
		<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:

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

Captain Frank Dize; Captain Allen Tyler

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

Ewell

VICINITY OF

STATE

Maryland

21824

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

STATE

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

DATE

FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	N/A <input type="checkbox"/> MOVED DATE _____
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Island Belle is a vessel built in 1916 on Smith Island off the shore of Somerset County, Maryland in the Chesapeake Bay. Her ports of call are Smith Island and Crisfield and her main route the fourteen mile distance between them across Tangier Sound.

The Belle has a round stern, dead rise wood hull with a forward pilot house of the tugboat Look. The superstructure aft of the pilot house consists of a raised deck house with square port holes. Passengers ride on the top deck or below in the deck house (9' x 9'). Sliding doors provide access to the hold where two large rooms accommodate folding chairs or provide storage space. These rooms are approximately 11' x 21'. Just forward of the sliding doors to the deck house are two davits for lifting and swinging heavy freight into the holding room area. These davits are mounted one on each side of the vessel. Above the deck house is an extended wooden railing to accommodate additional freight or to serve as a safety railing for passengers riding on the top deck.

The engine room contains a Gray Marine diesel. The hull design is of a low profile, Bay-built styling. The Belle is capable of speeds not in excess of eight knots and can be navigated in the roughest seas of Tangier Sound with dependability. She has one smoke stack, a low fantail railing, and partial side railing with turned spindles. Her trail boards are painted black with letters in gold leaf; they are mounted atop the pilot house for good visibility.

The boat is painted twice a year, all white with buff railing and window trim on the pilot house. She has a tail board of interesting design, and the United States mail boat flag is flown from the stern mast. The Belle is complete with all Coast Guard approved equipment for communication and navigation.

Specifications:

- Weight-----13 tons
- Length-----48 feet
- Width-----14 feet
- Power-----671 Gray Marine diesel
- Speed-----8 knots
- Capacity-----20 tons



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 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 checked="" 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 type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)	
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION			

SPECIFIC DATES **1916**

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Island Belle is unique in the transportation systems in Maryland. From 1916 until 1977 this vessel provided the only regular transportation between Smith Island, the state's only "water-locked" settlement, and the mainland. It carried the island residents to doctors, schools, and stores and brought them mail, milk, and necessities; it was the island's life line. The Belle also took the fish, fowl, blue crabs, turtles, and skins exported by the islanders to the mainland for shipment to Baltimore.

The boat, constructed on the island by islanders, has carried some islanders from infancy to their last ride for burial. With the purchase in 1977 of a replacement boat, the Island Belle has become a legend and a tourist attraction.

The single industry on Smith Island is the harvesting of seafood, and the tourists provide the only other major source of income. It is hoped that the Island Belle can be kept afloat and running to help attract visitors interested in seeing this unique part of Bay tradition.

9) MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Warner, William, Beautiful Swimmers,

10) GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY N/A

UTM REFERENCES

A	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING

B	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
D	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

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

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11) FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Reverend Henry Zollinhofer

ORGANIZATION

Smith Island United Methodist Churches

STREET & NUMBER

CITY OR TOWN

Ewell

1 km

DATE

January 27, 1978

TELEPHONE

301-425-3081

STATE

Maryland 21824

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

TITLE

DATE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

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

DATE

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

ATTEST:

DATE

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER



ISLAND BELLE

S-117

Island Belle

Smith Island, Somerset Co., Md

Photographer unknown

Negative/Md Historical Trust