

Capsule Summary  
SM-816  
Combs Creek Marine Railway  
Compton vicinity  
Private

circa 1870s

The Combs Creek Marine Railway is just one of a greatly diminishing number of railways once commonly seen along the county's numerous creeks, inland bays, and sheltered harbors. Once at the center of a thriving community of watermen, boat builders, maritime merchants, and laborers, the railway remains in operation. The original winch is still used. The maker's name and location as well as the patent and reissue dates are all included on the machinery. William H. Smith, Incorporated of Springville, New York made the winch when it was originally patented on May 12, 1874. On July 19, 1881 the winch was apparently reissued possibly because of defects. Interestingly a sloppily welded seam is visible on the winch. Important resources such as marine railways are quickly being replaced by hydraulic lifts as a means of pulling boats out of the water and storing or repairing them.

Historic photographs of the Combs Creek Marine Railway from the late-nineteenth to early twentieth century are currently held by the Calvert Marine Museum. These resources as well as any oral history or documentary research about the railway should be collected during future recordation efforts.

# Maryland Historical Trust Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties Form

Inventory No. SM-816

## 1. Name of Property (indicate preferred name)

historic Combs Creek Marine Railway

other

## 2. Location

street and number W side of Combs Creek, just E of 21670 Joe Hazel Road \_\_\_ not for publication

city, town Compton x\_ vicinity

county St. Mary's

## 3. Owner of Property (give names and mailing addresses of all owners)

name Kevin and Linda Barnes

street and number 21670 Joe Hazel Road telephone N/a

city, town Leonardtown state Md zip code 20650-2516

## 4. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. St. Mary's County Courthouse tax map and parcel TM-39, P-34

city, town Leonardtown liber MRB 400 folio 231

## 5. Primary Location of Additional Data

- Contributing Resource in National Register District
- Contributing Resource in Local Historic District
- Determined Eligible for the National Register/Maryland Register
- Determined Ineligible for the National Register/Maryland Register
- Recorded by HABS/HAER
- Historic Structure Report or Research Report at MHT
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

## 6. Classification

Category	Ownership	Current Function	Resource Count	
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape	Contributing
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commerce/trade	<input type="checkbox"/> recreation/culture	Noncontributing
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> defense	<input type="checkbox"/> religion	<input type="checkbox"/> buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> site		<input type="checkbox"/> domestic	<input type="checkbox"/> social	<input type="checkbox"/> sites
<input type="checkbox"/> object		<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> transportation	<input type="checkbox"/> structures
		<input type="checkbox"/> funerary	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> objects
		<input type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> unknown	<input type="checkbox"/> Total
		<input type="checkbox"/> health care	<input type="checkbox"/> vacant/not in use	
		<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> other:	
				<b>Number of Contributing Resources previously listed in the Inventory</b>
				<u>0</u>

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## 7. Description

Inventory No. SM-816

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### Condition

excellent       deteriorated  
 good             ruins  
 fair               altered

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

The Combs Creek Marine Railway is situated on the west bank of Combs Creek, a tributary of Breton Bay and ultimately the Potomac River near the rural community of Compton, Maryland. The railway slopes downward from west to east and lies just to the south of the house with the address of 21670 Joe Hazel Road (SM-817). The property is bounded by residential lots to the north and south, Combs Creek to the east, and Joe Hazel Road to the west.

The marine railway consists of a engine and winch situated on an incline approximately forty feet above the waterline of Combs Creek. Two rails extend east to west from the engine and wench and well into the water. Piers positioned astride the submerged rails aid in pulling boats up onto a wood frame carriage specially equipped with rail car wheels. The boat is then pulled up on the carriage that rests on the rails until it is well above the water and can be easily accessed for painting or scraping. The iron winch is marked with the makers name, location as well as patent and reissue dates. It reads "Winfield H. Smith, Inc., Springville, New York." It says further that it was "Pat May 12, 1874 reissued July 19, 1881."

# 8. Significance

Inventory No. SM-816

Period	Areas of Significance	Check and justify below		
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> health/medicine	<input type="checkbox"/> performing arts
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> invention	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-1999	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment/ recreation	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 2000-	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> ethnic heritage	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/ settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> social history
	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> maritime history	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation		<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other:

**Specific dates**

**Architect/Builder**

**Construction dates**

Evaluation for:

National Register

Maryland Register

not evaluated

Prepare a one-paragraph summary statement of significance addressing applicable criteria, followed by a narrative discussion of the history of the resource and its context. (For compliance projects, complete evaluation on a DOE Form – see manual.)

The Combs Creek Marine Railway is just one of a greatly diminishing number of railways once commonly seen along the county's numerous creeks, inland bays, and sheltered harbors. Once at the center of a thriving community of watermen, boat builders, maritime merchants, and laborers, the railway remains in operation. The original winch is still used. The maker's name and location as well as the patent and reissue dates are all included on the machinery. William H. Smith, Incorporated of Springville, New York made the winch when it was originally patented on May 12, 1874. On July 19, 1881 the winch was apparently reissued possibly because of defects. Interestingly a sloppily welded seam is visible on the winch. Important resources such as marine railways are quickly being replaced by hydraulic lifts as a means of pulling boats out of the water and storing or repairing them.

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## 9. Major Bibliographical References

Inventory No. SM-816

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Hammett, Regina Combs. History of St. Mary's County, Maryland: 1634-1990. Ridge, Md: Self-published, 1994.

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## 10. Geographical Data

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Acreage of surveyed property 1.16 acres  
Acreage of historical setting 1.16 acres  
Quadrangle name Leonardtown                      Quadrangle scale: 1:24 000

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### Verbal boundary description and justification

The property is bounded by residential lots to the north and south, Combs Creek to the east, and Joe Hazel Road to the west. A more specific description of the properties boundaries can be found in St. Mary's County Land Records Liber MRB 400, Folio 231.

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## 11. Form Prepared by

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name/title	Kirk E. Ranzetta, Historic Sites Surveyor		
organization	St. Mary's County Department of Planning & Zoning	date	August, 2000
street & number	22740 Washington Street	telephone	301-475-4662
city or town	Leonardtown	state	Maryland

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The Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties 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.

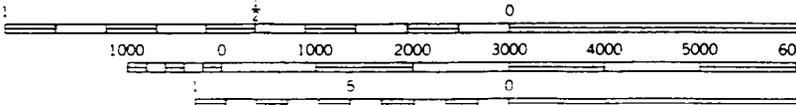
The survey and inventory are being prepared for information and record purposes only and do not constitute any infringement of individual property rights.

return to:                      Maryland Historical Trust  
   DHCD/DHCP  
   100 Community Place  
   Crownsville, MD 21032-2023  
   410-514-7600



21'30" ROAD ENDS 1 MI (ST. CLEMENTS ISLAND) 53 55

SCALE 1:24 000



SM-816  
 Combs Creek Marine Railway  
 Compton  
 St. Mary's County  
 Leonardtown Quad

CONTOUR INTERVAL 10 FEET  
 DASHED LINES REPRESENT 5-FOOT CONTOURS  
 NATIONAL GEODETIC VERTICAL DATUM OF 1929  
 BATHYMETRIC CONTOUR INTERVAL 1 METER WITH SUPPLEMENTARY  
 0.5 METER CONTOURS—DATUM IS MEAN LOW WATER



Sm - 816

Combs Creek Marine Railway

St. W.

High Power

Red 30

at 5470

Looking N

1 + 2



01 -816

Combs Creek Marine Railway

San Diego County

Point Loma

San Diego

11/11/11

Looking E

2/2