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Photo credit: Robert J. Hurry, Calvert Marine Museum, 09/2001

WILLIAM B. TENNISON (bugeye)

Inventory No.: **CT-799**

Other Name(s): **Buy-boat WILLIAM B. TENNISON**

Date Listed: **3/27/1980**

Location: **14150 S. Solomons Island Road (Calvert Marine Museum) , Solomons, Calvert County**

Category: **Object**

Period/Date of Construction: **1899; 1911**

NHL Date: **4/19/1994**

Description: The bugeye is a craft which exhibits the transition from log to frame construction in Chesapeake Bay sailing vessels. Bugeyes were first built of all log construction, then of logs with a partial frame, and finally of all frame and plank construction. The WM. B. TENNISON, of the intermediate log and frame type, displays this transition in addition to the later conversion of a sailing craft to a power craft. The WM. B. TENNISON has a length of 60.5', breadth of 17.5', and depth of 4.5'. Her official number is 081674. Her construction is typical log, of hewn heart pitch pine. Approximate thickness is 9" at the main log tapered to 6", 6" at turn of bilge tapered to approximately 3" at bend raising; well formed sheer; raked stem and stern posts; sawn oak transverse frames 31/2" x 4" spaced at approximately 30" centers; 2 1/2" x 8" sawn oak clamps; 6" sawn oak floor frames spaced approximately 5' intermediate of bulkhead; main members, floor frames, and clamps of galvanized drift bolted with clinch rings adequately fastened; refastened floor frames. Main members are sawn oak galvanized iron drift bolted. Transverse bulkheads are tongue and groove compartmental partially water tight, formed to athwartship stiffening. Decks are ship laid heart pitch pine, 2" x 2 1/2" caulked, painted, fastened with galvanized iron boat nails. The deck is fitted with hatch, coamings amidship, deemed adequate for storage of oysters while being transported.

Significance: The TENNISON is a Chesapeake Bay Bugeye built in 1899 and converted to a buy boat in 1906-07. She is one of the few log-hulled bugeyes left on the Bay. She is exemplary of the transition between log and frame and plank bugeyes, having basically a log hull with some frame and plank construction. She was also one of the first bugeyes to be converted to power for use as a buy boat, and the only such converted vessel known to survive on the Bay. By the late 1890s, suitable logs had grown scarce and most bugeyes were of frame and plank construction. Her construction in 1899 puts the TENNISON in the middle of the construction transition. Through the 1920s and 30s many sail-powered bugeyes continued to oyster with the skipjacks (the latter had largely taken over because they were cheaper to build and maintain), but by the late 1930s and early 1940s most bugeyes had left actual oystering, converting to power and serving as oyster buy boats or retaining sail but serving as yachts. The TENNISON came under power very early in the history of the bugeye on the Bay.

The vessel was originally constructed as a sharp stern with patent stern installed to provide additional work space. The pilot house is of tongue and groove cypress, rounded forward fitted with 3-drop windows, access door port and starboard with drop windows installed in pilot house sides; center helm with wheel and necessary instrumentation and controls, upper and lower berths to port forward to enclosed head, with access to engine room through hatch installed in pilot house sole. Jointer work and trim is of cypress tongue and groove painted. Her original rig included two masts, three sails, four pairs of oyster dredges, dredge cables, four dredge rollers, two hand winders, a large hatch on either side of the centerboard, and a small cabin aft. The rig was removed in 1906-07 when the boat was converted to power.

