

July 5, 1997

**Investigation of Pier Remains Believed Associated with Hancock's
Resolution**

Project Report

**Maritime Archaeological and Historical Society
PO Box 44382 L'Enfant Plaza
Washington, DC 20026**

**Prepared for:
Friends of Hancock's Resolution Advisory Committee
Anne Arundel County**

Investigation of Pier Remains Believed Associated with Hancock's
Resolution

Project Report

Ms. Esther Doyle Read
Principal Archaeological Investigator

by
Tom Hammill, Dr. Ray Hayes, Jaime Henderson, Brenda Howard,
David Kerr and Tom Berkey

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Summary

On June 21 and June 28, 1997, members of the Maritime Archaeological and Historical Society (MAHS) conducted a survey of the pier remains believed to be associated with the Hancock House (hereafter referred to as Hancock's Resolution). The house is said to be the oldest structure in Maryland, north of the Severn River and this pier is believed to have been used to ship farm produce from the Hancock farm to markets in Baltimore. The pier site is located on the north shore of Back Creek, west of Bodkin Creek entrance, on the southern shore of the Patapsco River where it joins Chesapeake Bay. The pier is now located on property belonging to Mr. Charles Crue, who graciously allowed us access to the pier area and provided photos of it dating back to 1959.

The survey revealed a raised pier area about 40 feet wide, extending about 70 feet into the water from the present shoreline on a bearing of 220 degrees magnetic. This raised area, which is under a minimum of one foot of water during normal tidal conditions, appears to have been created by use of wooden cribbing around the perimeter with earth, sand and rocks used as fill material. The depth of water at the end of the pier varied from about 2.5 to 3.5 feet. The remains of old wooden pilings were found underwater extending away from the left end of the pier along a bearing of about 200 degrees magnetic for a distance of 127 feet (refer to site sketch at Appendix 3) out into the creek. The depth of water at the furthest piling was 8-10 feet. It is speculated that the pilings were part of a narrower pier extending into deeper water to permit docking deeper draft vessels. A 1959 photo of the pier area showed apparent pilings, leaning against each other, protruding above the water which may have been the collapsing remains of this narrower pier. Two bottle bottoms found in the water on the raised pier portion were dated to approximately the beginning of this century. On June 28, a brief wading survey of Marsh Cove, located 1/4 mile east of the pier site, was conducted. No significant features or artifactual material were found.

A further survey of the pier area for datable artifacts and a further review of earlier land surveys, historical records and maps may provide further information about this pier.

Introduction

As part of the current efforts to restore Hancock's Resolution as an historical center, MAHS was asked to survey an old pier site and another nearby shoreline site on Back Creek associated with Hancock's Resolution to determine if anything remains of the pier and if artifactual material remains.

The survey was sponsored by the Friends of Hancock's Resolution, Anne Arundel County.

Ms Esther Doyle Read of the Baltimore City Life Museum served as principal archaeological investigator for the project. Members of the Friends of Hancock's Resolution Advisory Committee participating in the survey included: Jim Morrison, Tim Doyle, Mr. & Mrs. Charles Crue, and Buzz Parsley. During an initial orientation visit, Al Luckenbach, Anne Arundel County archaeologist, Ms. Donna Ware, Anne Arundel County Historic Sites Planner, and long time area residents Brantley Marshall, Charles Calvert, and Bob Cook provided extensive background information about the area.

Tom Berkey served as MAHS project coordinator for the survey. Members of MAHS participating in the survey included: Dave Kerr, Tom Hammill, Dr. Ray Hayes, Jaime Henderson, and Brenda Howard

The goal of this project was to perform a 1-2 day survey of the designated pier area and if possible, a brief survey of Marsh Cove and report the results.

Environmental Setting

A Site Location Map consisting of the southern portion of the Sparrow Point and northern portion of Gibson Island Quadrangle Charts is at Appendix 1.

The pier and Marsh Cove sites are located in the tidal, estuarine setting of Back Creek. Sediments surrounding the site consisted primarily of silt with nearby patches of sand. The landform currently consists of rolling sandy lowlands bordering an estuarine environment. Land use up to the beginning of the twentieth century was primarily agricultural farmland. In mid century the land was increasingly converted to residential use. Much of the former farmland has become forested with fast growing pine trees. *Residential*.

Background Research and Historic Context

Hancock House, at Bayside Beach on the west side of the Bodkin Creek entrance is said to be the oldest structure in Maryland north of the Severn River. The stone house was built by Stephen Hancock, a British military officer in the mid-1600s. During the War of 1812, when it was the home of Captain Francis Hancock, it served as a signal station to warn Baltimore of the approach of the British Fleet above Annapolis. The house remained in the Hancock family until 1962 when it was willed to the Historic Annapolis Society. It was opened to the public for a short time before being closed for lack of funds.¹ Efforts are currently underway by the Friends of Hancock Resolution to restore and reopen the house as an historic center.

Previous research into the history of Hancock's Resolution and its environs is contained in the Hancock's Resolution Visitor's brochure², a copy of which is at Appendix 2.

During most of its history up to the beginning of the twentieth century, the lands of the Hancock family were used for agricultural purposes and water craft provided basic transport and served as the primary method for shipping produce to the markets in Baltimore. Piers, with their natural concentration of this activity, would appear to be an excellent source of artifactual material which could provide further information about this aspect of life at Hancock's Resolution.

Field Methodology

Survey methodology consisted of conducting an initial wading reconnaissance of the pier area to determine what remains could be found. Main features found on the site were trilaterated using pilings on the adjacent pier as initial baseline points. During this phase of operations, a more permanent surveyor's marker was located in the vicinity of the pier as well as a nearby well head. The pier pilings were trilaterated to these more permanent datum markers.

Field Results

The survey revealed a raised pier area about 40 feet wide, extending about 70 feet into the water from the present shoreline on a bearing of 220 degrees magnetic. This raised area, which is under a minimum of one foot of water during normal tidal conditions, appears to have been created by use of wooden cribbing around the perimeter with earth, sand and rocks used as fill material. The depth of water at the end of the pier varied from about 2.5 to 3.5 feet. The remains of old wooden pilings were found underwater extending away from the left end of the pier along a bearing of about 200 degrees magnetic for a distance of 127 feet (refer to site sketch at Appendix 3) out into the creek. The depth of water at the furthest piling was 8-10 feet. It is speculated that the pilings were part of a narrower pier extending into deeper water to permit docking deeper draft vessels. A 1959 photo of the pier area showed apparent pilings, leaning against each other, protruding above the water which may have been the collapsing remains of this narrower pier. On June 28, a brief wading survey of Marsh Cove, located 1/4 mile east of the pier site, was conducted. No significant features or artifactual material were found.

Summary and Conclusions

A brief survey of the pier area associated with Hancock's Resolution was conducted and prominent features of the site were mapped.

A further survey of the pier area for datable artifacts and a further review of earlier land surveys, historical records and maps may provide further information about this pier.

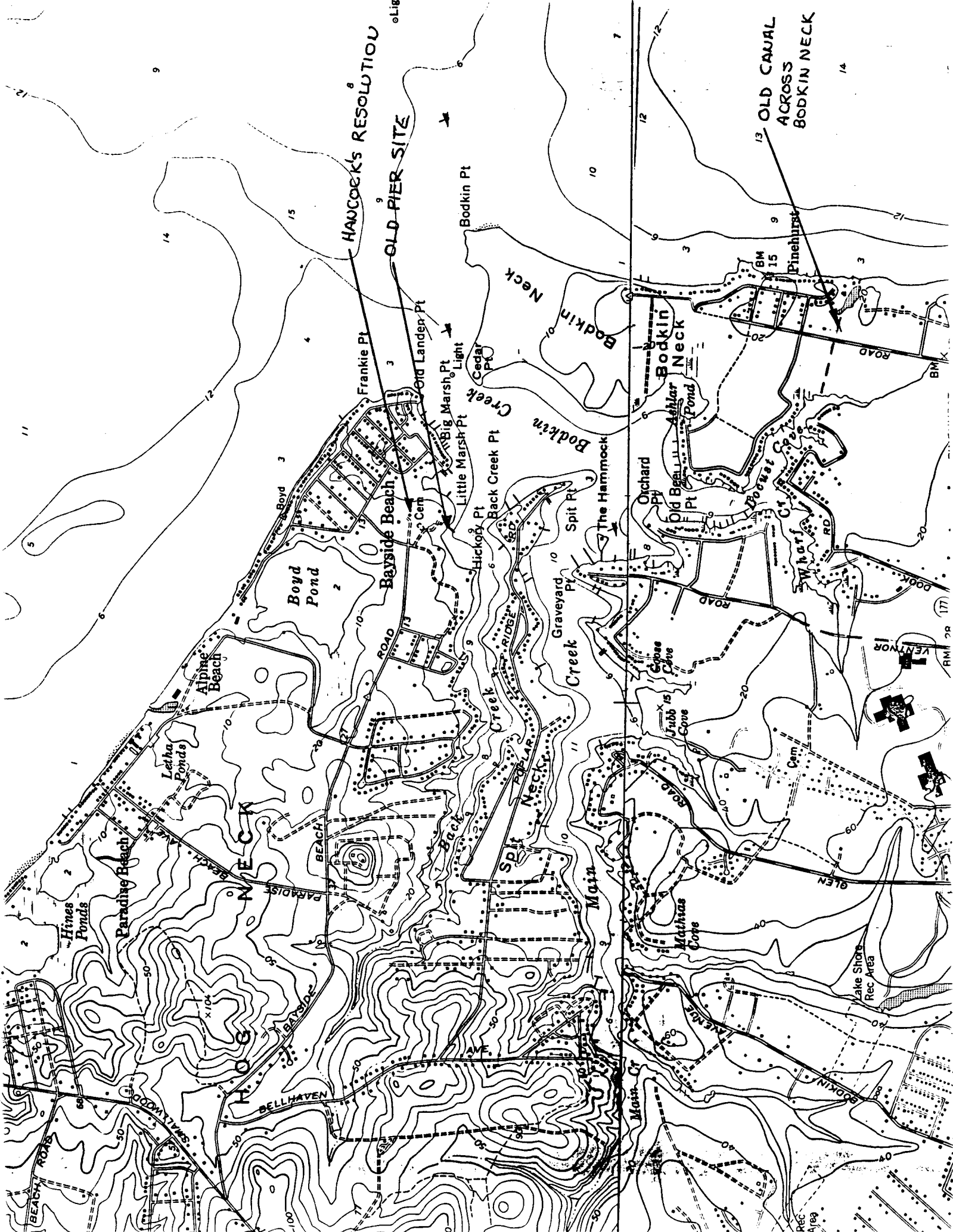
References Cited

¹ Robert C. Keith, Baltimore Harbor A Picture History (Ocean World Publishing Co., 1982) 20.

² Hancock's Resolution, A Visitor's Guide (???????)

Appendices

- Appendix 1 Site Location Map
- Appendix 2 Hancock's Resolution Visitor's Brochure
- Appendix 3 Site Survey Map
- Appendix 4 Copies of Photographs of Pier Area Dated 1959 and 1990 (courtesy of Mr. Charles Crue)
- Appendix 5 Maryland Archaeological Site Survey: Historic Data Form



HAUCCOCK'S RESOLUTION

OLD PIER SITE

OLD CANAL ACROSS BODKIN NECK

Boyd Pond

Bayside Beach

Bodkin Neck

Bodkin Neck

Bodkin Neck

Bodkin Neck

Bodkin Neck

Bodkin Neck

Bodkin Neck

Bodkin Neck

Bodkin Neck

Bodkin Neck

Bodkin Neck

Bodkin Neck

Bodkin Neck

Paradise Beach

Alpine Beach

Leiha Ponds

Hines Ponds

Boyd Pond

Little Marsh Pt

Big Marsh Pt

Old Landen Pt

Frankie Pt

Bodkin Pt

Cedar Pt

Hickory Pt

Back Creek Pt

Spit Pt

The Hammock

Orchard Pt

Old Bell Pt

Pinehurst

BEACH ROADS

LEIHA PONDS

HINES PONDS

BOYD POND

LITTLE MARSH PT

BIG MARSH PT

OLD LANDEN PT

FRANKIE PT

BODKIN PT

CEDAR PT

HICKORY PT

BACK CREEK PT

SPIT PT

THE HAMMOCK

ORCHARD PT

OLD BELL PT

PINEHURST

OLD CANAL ACROSS BODKIN NECK

BEACH ROADS

LEIHA PONDS

HINES PONDS

BOYD POND

LITTLE MARSH PT

BIG MARSH PT

OLD LANDEN PT

FRANKIE PT

BODKIN PT

CEDAR PT

HICKORY PT

BACK CREEK PT

SPIT PT

THE HAMMOCK

ORCHARD PT

OLD BELL PT

PINEHURST

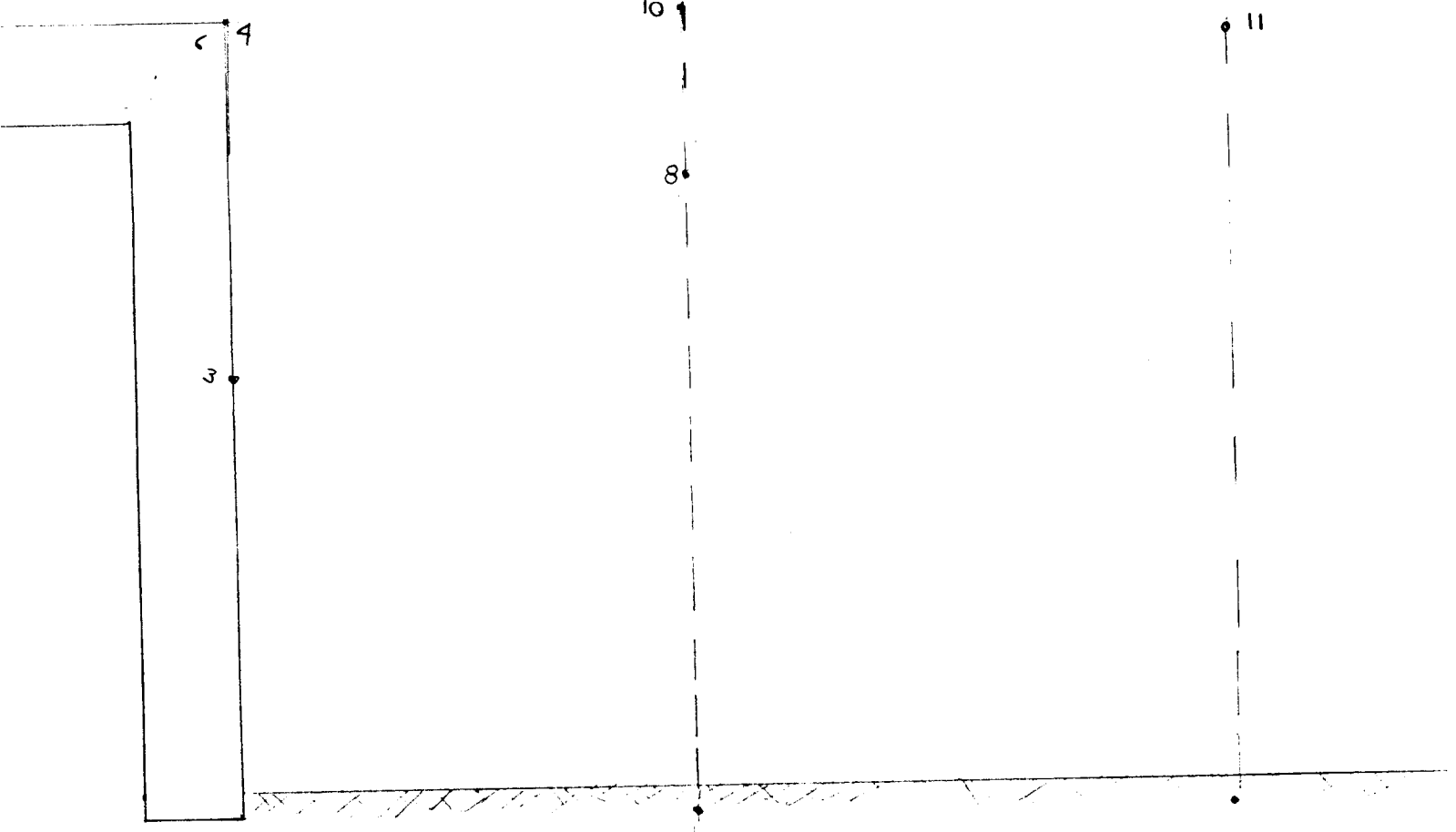
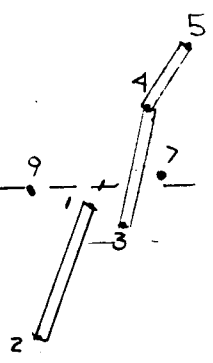
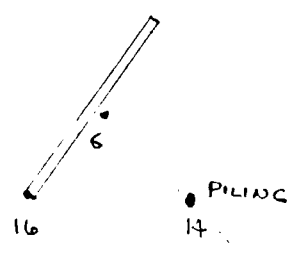
OLD CANAL ACROSS BODKIN NECK

10

9

8

7



SURVEYOR'S PIPE