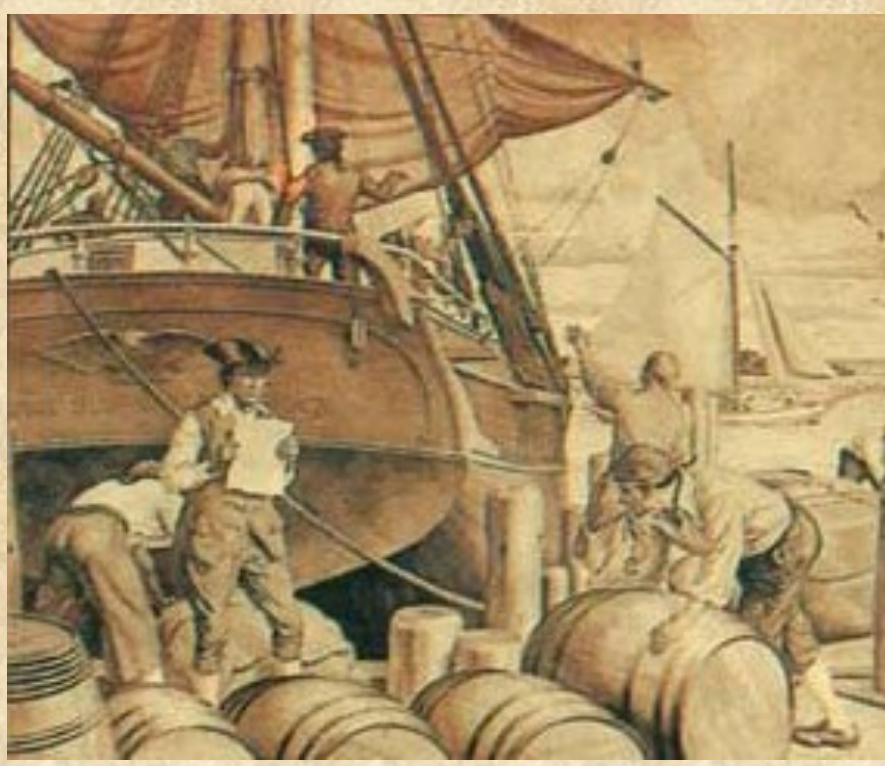


Fast Ships out of Baltimore 7

*“She sat as light and buoyant on the water
as a graceful swan”*

-Unidentified spectator at *Chasseur’s* launch



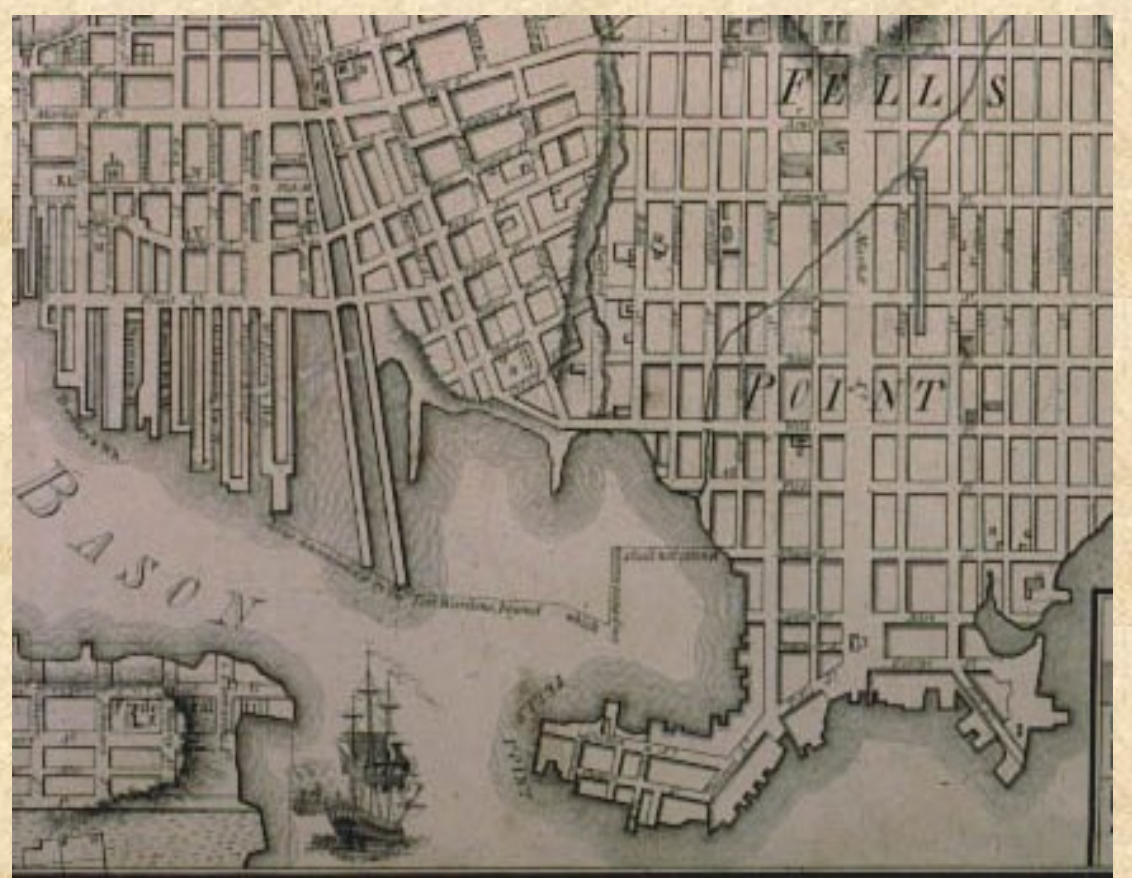
In early Maryland the easiest way to move people, raw materials or other products was by water. Every planter had a boat of some kind - for visiting, fishing, or carrying goods to market. To satisfy the local need for vessels, small shipyards developed around the bay and

its tributaries. Local craftsmen integrated native log canoe building techniques and traditional methods, and soon began to experiment with ways to improve speed and performance. By 1750, Chesapeake shipyards were producing small craft for local use and ships for the coastal and West Indies trade; and those vessels were developing a reputation for speed.



Gray's Inn Creek Shipyard, c. 1750. The scene depicts a typical shipyard and the types of vessels found in the Chesapeake in this period.

The need for ships during and after the Revolution spurred shipbuilding in Baltimore's deep water area called Fell's Point. By 1809 there were 9 shipyards, 11 sail makers, 4 ropewalks and 8 ship chandleries in the area; and about 40% of the population worked in the maritime trades. Fell's Point builders like Thomas Kemp and William Price



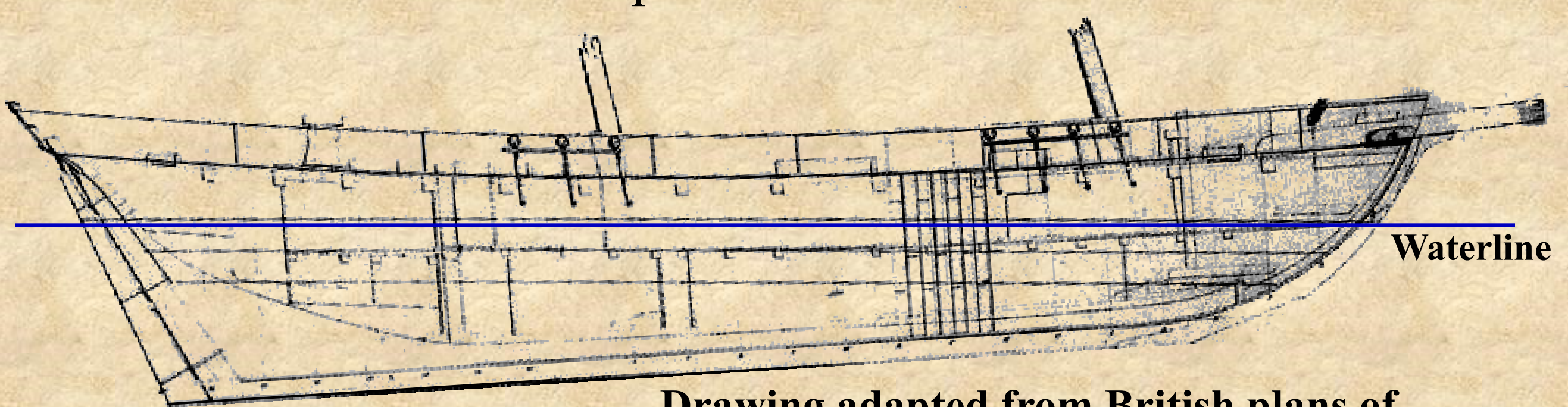
Fell's Point, Warner and Hanna's 1801 'Plan of the City of Baltimore'

became expert at building sleek vessels that were well suited to smuggling, privateering, or any situation where speed, evasion and surprise were important. Often called “sharp” or “privateer-built”, the design was the result of the builders' willingness to experiment with the features they observed in other fast vessels. These ships became known as “Baltimore pilot schooners” or “Baltimore Flyers.”

“You might as well try to catch a bird flying.”

-Joseph Alameda of the *Kemp*, 1815

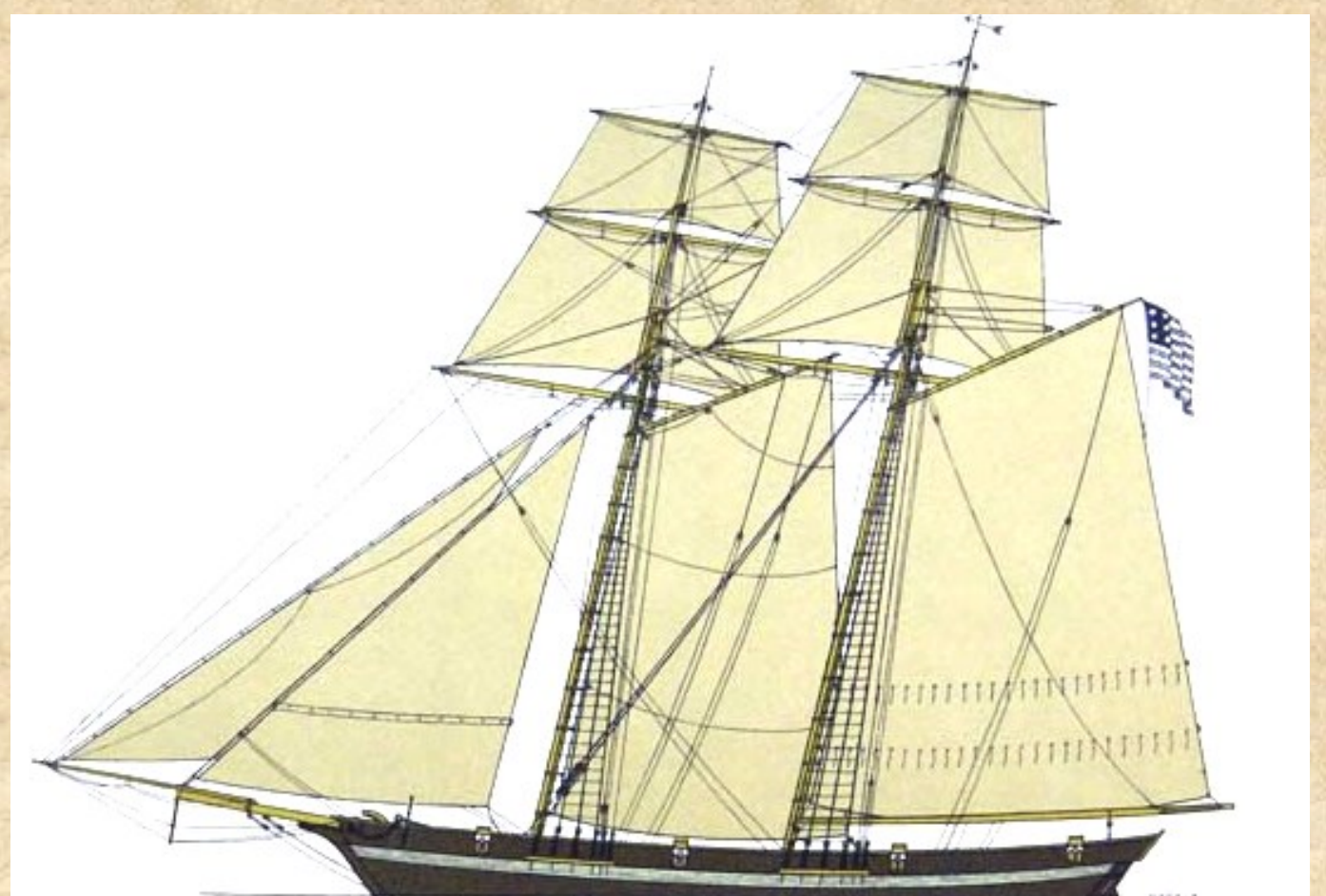
By 1810, the pilot schooner's reputation for speed and agility was well known, based on their success as blockade runners, privateers and smugglers during the Revolution, the Quasi-War with France and the European conflicts.



Drawing adapted from British plans of HMS Musquitobit, formerly Lynx of Baltimore.

Design characteristics:

- . Flush deck and low freeboard.
- . Fine entry forward with pronounced keel drag aft.
- . Tall, raked masts.
- . Basic topsail schooner rig, but adaptable to other sail plans.
- . No figurehead or ornaments.



The result? A fast, maneuverable ship that could catch most other vessels or out-run any ship they couldn't overpower.

Between 1810 - 1815, Fell's Point builders would produce over 150 of these fast vessels for owners from Baltimore and other cities. Several of them would become famous as the most successful privateers of the war.

Next: The Business of Privateering

