Ceremonies Mark Opening of Lore Oyster House

After several years of research, planning, and installing the exhibit, the Lore Oyster House building of the Calvert Marine Museum opened to the public on Saturday, June 30, with appropriate ceremonies to which all members of the Calvert Marine Society were invited. Under threatening skies, but with only a brief shower to dampen the post-opening reception, about 150 officials, museum members, and the public were on hand to see the ribbon cutting, to tour the new exhibit, and to enjoy refreshments served on the former oyster-unloading area on The Narrows.

Calvert Countian and Maryland State Comptroller, Louis L. Goldstein, served as master of ceremonies for the opening. Mr. Goldstein brought greetings from Maryland Governor Hughes and commented on the significance of the occasion and the importance of the work of the museum. He also introduced the various officials present representing the national, state, and county governments. Two of the museum staff chiefly responsible for the preparation of the exhibit, Bette Bumgarner, director of exhibits, and Paula Johnson, folklorist, were then introduced. Each described briefly her part in the project and thanked staff members, volunteers, and funding agencies – such as the National Endowment for the Humanities and the Maryland Humanities Council – for support which had made the exhibit possible. Two special presentations were made: the certificate naming the Lore Oyster House to the National Register of Historic Places was presented by Peter Kurtze on behalf of the Maryland Historical Trust; County Commissioner Pete Grover presented a

NEW TELEPHONE NUMBER FOR MUSEUM

ADDITIONAL TELEPHONE LINES HAVE BEEN ADDED AT THE MUSEUM TO PROVIDE BETTER SERVICE. IN CALLING, PLEASE USE THIS NUMBER:

(301) 326-2042
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bronze plaque to identify the building as a Calvert County Historic District property.

The keynote remarks, made by State Senator Bernie Fowler, were most appropriate as a preliminary to a viewing of the exhibit itself. Senator Fowler spoke of the mixed feelings concerning the establishment of this museum exhibit. On the one hand, the preservation of the Lore Oyster House and the exhibit of artifacts of the commercial fisheries of the Patuxent River will help commemorate this once-important industry. But on the other hand, the exhibit demonstrates dramatically the changes that have taken place in a relatively few years with the loss of more and more facilities for the seafood industry in Southern Maryland—a result largely of the decline in the viability of the Bay itself. Solomons began as an oyster boom town, but has now lost virtually all of its once-thriving processing facilities. As commendable as is the preservation of information about the seafood industry in the present CMM exhibit, the situation recognized in the exhibit should be a source of concern to all citizens of the state and should challenge all of us to support the current efforts to restore the Bay and its tributaries to their former viability.

The ceremonies closed with the introduction of various members of the Lore family present, notably Joseph C. Lore, Jr., the son of the founder of the Lore Oyster Packing House and owner for many years, and his son-in-law, Alton S. Kersey, who managed the plant during the later years of the company's operation. Other family members were also introduced and their contributions mentioned. A special introduction was of Joe Buck, a company employee for forty-five years. Still living in Dowell, Buck represented the many local citizens who found employment in the Lore Company during its ninety-year history.

A ribbon cutting by Messrs. Lore and Kersey ended the official ceremony. Guests then toured the exhibit areas, greeted the Lores and officials present, and enjoyed refreshments. Sunday, July 1, marked the first regular day of the museum’s Lore Oyster House building and the extensive exhibit that has been titled “Seasons of Abundance, Seasons of Want: Making a Living from the Waters of the Patuxent.” Museum members during the summer enjoyed this exhibit, which was operated under the new admission policy described in the Summer issue of the Bugeye Times. That issue also included a history of the Lore company written by Paula Johnson. A brochure describing the company, the exhibit, and the Patuxent seafood industry is now being prepared, and a more extensive catalog is under consideration.

State Comptroller Louis Goldstein (left) at opening of Oyster House exhibit with Lore family members (from left): Alton S. Kersey, Joanne Lore Kersey, Virginia (Mrs. Joseph C., Jr.) Lore, Virginia Lore von Zielinski, and Joseph C. Lore, Jr.

— Photo by Carl Fleischhauer

Joe Buck (center), an employee of the Lore Company for 45 years, is greeted by Ralph Eshelman (right), museum director. Comptroller Goldstein is at left.

— Photo by Carl Fleischhauer
Making of an Exhibit:  
The Inside Story of the Oyster House

A visit to the new commercial fisheries exhibit at the J. C. Lore & Sons Oyster House takes you along a decked walkway through re-created scenes, including a fishing shanty, an eel shack, and the front porch of a crab house. You can step into a re-created clam-shucking room, walk through a restored oyster-shucking room, and stand adjacent to two re-created workboat decks rigged with oystering gear. You can see huge blow tanks and a canning machine used for packing oysters, as well as an enormous iron pot for tarring pound nets, a variety of eel pots, crab pots, barrels, and buckets.

As one would expect, a considerable amount of thought and planning went into the placement of these objects and structures, as well as in the direction and construction of the decked pathway. Just how much thought and planning that was involved is something CMM's director of exhibits, Bette Bumgarner, knows better than anyone, since she was responsible for the exhibit design.

Not surprisingly, the oyster house building presented numerous challenges. The building made a fine oyster packing house and because it did, there were certain features that were not conducive to displaying artifacts, documents, or photographs. For example, its site at the water's edge was ideal for buying and shipping oysters but posed a problem for the museum roughly twice a year, during especially high tides. Watermarks along the walls indicated that these tides reached various levels, from four to ten inches above the floor. The levels varied because the floor sloped -- again, an advantage for an oyster packing company (the water could run to central drains) but a problem for exhibit design. Because the structure is on the National Register of Historic Places it could not be altered in any significant way to alleviate the tide problem. Bumgarner's solution was to design decking of wood treated with preservatives for the entire exhibit area. CMM's cabinet-maker, Alan Manuel, and volunteer George "Rip" Van Winkle constructed the decking above the high tide mark.

As an oyster packing operation, the building was not centrally heated or cooled, nor was the humidity controlled. Thus, anything displayed in an exhibit would have to withstand both damp Januaries and humid Auguts, typical of the Tidewater. While such an environment is usual for tools and gear, it would be unacceptable for original documents and photographs. All historic documents such as letters of patent were photographed, allowing for the display of photographic reproductions. In addition, all photographs were mounted on sealed panels with special adhesives and coated with varnish for protection against extreme cold, heat, and humidity.

Another important design consideration centered on the nature of the artifacts that were to be featured in the exhibit and how those artifacts related to the expectations of museum visitors. The commercial fisheries collection consists of gear used by commercial watermen, as well as tools and equipment used by seafood packing-house workers. These objects are familiar sights in the Patuxent region in their natural environments, such as in watermen's backyards, storage sheds and barns, piled along the shore, or in use on workboats. These contexts differ greatly from a museum building where visitors often expect to see very old, valuable (in a dollar and cents sense), beautiful, or unusual objects. How, then, to present these artifacts, many of which are neither old nor valuable nor beautiful nor unusual yet which are significant to the history of the Patuxent River? And further, how to present them in such a way so that their true significance (and their use) will be understood?

The solution to this design problem was to re-create the appropriate contexts for these artifacts whenever possible. The oyster house itself is an appropriate setting for a display

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Hemipristis serra Agassiz

Perhaps some of the most interesting and attractive teeth found among the fossils of Calvert Cliffs are those of an extinct requiem shark, Hemipristis serra Agassiz. Although common during the early Tertiary period, H. serra, a member of the family Charcharhinidae, had disappeared from North American waters by the end of the Miocene epoch. The only living species in the genus Hemipristis is H. elongatus, of which a few specimens have been recorded from the Red Sea, the east coast of Africa, the west coast of India, and the Gulf of Thailand. Hemipristis serra, having no common name, is often referred to as the “Red Sea” or “Indian Ocean” shark. It is curious to note that scientists were aware of the extinct H. serra before they discovered the existence of H. elongatus. It is, however, through the study of this extant fish that we are able to gain some knowledge of the fossil shark.

Similarities of teeth and vertebrae indicate that in all probability H. serra resembled H. elongatus in appearance and habitat. It would have been a gray colored shark inhabiting the shallow coastal waters of temperate or tropical seas. The first dorsal fin would have been large and located far in front of the pelvis fin. The upper lobe of the tail would have been longer than the lower. Uncharacteristic spiracles-water intake organs located behind the eyes—coupled with characteristic asymmetrical teeth would have readily distinguished it from other Charcharhinids. Hemipristis serra would have been a fairly large shark. Hemipristis elongatus reaches lengths of almost eight feet. Its teeth, however, are much smaller than the fossilized teeth of H. serra, specimens of which from North Carolina have been reported to measure close to two inches. A large lateral tooth from Calvert Cliffs would average around an inch to an inch and one-half in length.

Hemipristis serra means “serrated half saw” and is an apt description of one of the shark’s lateral or side teeth. Broad-based and triangular-shaped, the tooth has a rounded, swollen ridge running down the rear of the crown. The tip curves gently backward and both cutting edges of the blade are strongly serrated. These serrations increase in size from the base of the crown to a point near the tip where they cease altogether. A deep nutritive groove penetrates the base of the root giving it a particular “gull wing” cross section. Color depends on the matrix in which the fossil was buried.

The stout lower and upper front teeth are sharp and narrow, with piercing prong-like tips that twist backward over a bulging tripod-shaped root. The serrations on these anterior teeth are missing or reduced to small slender cusps at the base of the tooth. As the location of the tooth shifts toward the rear of the mouth, the crown broadens and the serrations increase in size and number.

Recent Fossil Finds at Calvert Cliffs

Calvert Cliffs is considered by many to be the world’s foremost collecting locality for marine Miocene fossils, some twelve million to twenty million years old. The cliffs have been chosen as one of the one-hundred most significant geological sites in the northeastern United States, as a result of nomination by CMM director Ralph Eshelman and CMM member Peter Vogt. Several particularly interesting finds have been made at the cliffs this summer.

In June, teenagers Wesley Williams and Sean Ramp discovered near Chesaapeake Beach the lower jaws—with many teeth still in place—and other bones of a large sperm whale. These jaws are larger (about five feet long) and more complete than any other previously-found lower jaws of the rare sperm whale Orycterocetus. CMM and Smithsonian staff worked to remove the remains, with transportation assistance from the Navy’s Randle Cliff facility. In addition to local newspaper and radio coverage, the whale made the front page of the Washington Post and appeared in other newspapers nationwide on an Associated Press release. Two television news programs and a talk show also covered the find.

In August, long-time museum members Wally and Betty Ashby discovered a partial seal skeleton near Parkers Creek. Although still being prepared, preliminary indications are that much of the vertebral column is present. It is hoped that this specimen will contain some of the elements missing in the only other partial seal skeleton from Calvert Cliffs, found also by Wally Ashby in 1979. (See the spring 1980 issue of the Bugeye Times for more on fossil seals.) Seals are rare at Calvert Cliffs, but are significant in being the oldest-known seals from anywhere in the world. Most finds, however, have been only of single bones.

Fossil sea cows of Calvert Cliffs were described by Daryl Domning in the spring 1984 issue of the Bugeye Times. Since then CMM interpreter Jeff O’Neill found a skull fragment of a dugong near Little Cove Point, indicating that sea cows also occur in the St. Mary’s Formation.

Making of an Exhibit

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on the oystering industry, while for the claming, fishing, eelng, and crabbing industries, other contexts had to be created. This involved searching for structures such as a shanty where a waterman would typically store his nets, weights, corks, and other gear. Similarly, Bumgarner designed the claming section of the exhibit by partially re-creating a shucking room based on photographs of the Lowery Seafood Company’s clam house at Broome’s Island. Her design solution to presenting heavy oystering gear, such as patent tongs and an oyster dredge, was to construct part of a workboat deck to show how this gear would be used. Photographs, both historic and contemporary, were incorporated to further illustrate the artifacts in use.

These are but a few of the factors which contributed to the overall design of the oyster house exhibit. The production was carried out through the efforts of nearly everyone on the staff of the museum, and with expert assistance from volunteers “Rip” Van Winkle and Bob Siemon.

Paula Johnson
CMM CLUB CORNER

The five clubs sponsored by the Calvert Marine Museum have all resumed their activities and have planned programs for the fall. The meeting times and most of their activities are listed in the Fall Calendar and Program Schedule that is part of the Bugeye Times. If you have a particular interest, you may want to consider joining one of these clubs.

On October 14 at PRAD, the Patuxent Small Craft Guild will raffle off a 14-foot cypress skiff—now on display in the small boat shed—with proceeds used for the guild's restoration and building projects. Tickets at $1.00 each will be available from the CMM stand at PRAD or from guild members. On October 6, guild members will attend the Mid-Atlantic Small Craft Festival II at the Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum in St. Michaels.

Baltimore Gas and Electric Company Contributes $35,000 to the Museum's Master Key Fund

In July, Mr. John C. Smith, a public affairs representative of BG&E, presented a check for $15,000 to the museum Board of Governors' chairman, Mrs. Ellen W. Zahniser, and the director of development, Mrs. Jennifer H. D'Elia. This is the first part of a three-year, $35,000 contribution to be used to help CMM with its capital campaign, the Master Key Fund. Baltimore Gas and Electric has been a supporter of the museum since 1970 with their first donation of $100. In 1983, BG&E became the first Corporate Patron. This continued support through the years with other contributions and in-kind gifts demonstrates their interest in the museum's programs, concepts, and goals.

Earlier issues of the Bugeye Times have described the interest of businesses in supporting CMM. Since the previous issue, Calvert Marina and Woodburn’s Food Market have increased their corporate support to patrons and, as such, have received a copy of the John Barber print shown in this issue. New corporate partners include the following:

- Briscoe, Kenney, Kaminez & Lacer
- Calvert County Cable Vision, Ltd.
- Lighthouse Properties, Inc.
- J. Frank Raky Insurance, Inc.
- Terra Maric Tours
- Buck Distributing Co.
- Coca-Cola Bottling Co.
- of Annapolis, Md., Inc.
- Port of Call Liquors, Inc.
- Solomons Crabhouse
- Twin Shields Gold Club

Master Key T-Shirt

The museum has designed a new T-shirt, specifically to raise money toward our NEH challenge grant. We think you will like it as much as we do. Royal blue with gold lettering, it sells for $8.00. Shirts will be sold during Patuxent River Appreciation Days, October 13 and 14; after that, they may be purchased in the gift shop.

A Membership Lawn Party to Remember!

More than 150 members of the Calvert Marine Society joined in a summer evening picnic around the museum's new boat basin on August 18. With pleasant weather and a gentle breeze from Back Creek, members and their families sat at tables placed on the walkway around the basin and enjoyed their own picnic suppers, supplemented by beverages and desserts supplied by the society. The Calvert County Consort provided light music during the early part of the evening. Badminton, croquet, and volleyball were available for those with sufficient energy to participate, and tours of the Drum Point Lighthouse and two trips of the Wm. R. Tennison were among the activities of the evening.

This was perhaps the most successful of the several summer parties that have been held for the members of the society. Although it has been expected that the new boat basin would add significantly to the museum's facilities, this members' party clearly demonstrated that fact. Further contributing to the evening's success were the planning and work of the museum's staff and a number of volunteers.

Mrs. Ellen Zahniser, chairman of the CMM Board of Governors, accepts painting, “Buying Oysters at Drum Point,” from Bay artist John M. Barber, ASMA. Commissioned by CMM, the painting is a memorial to James H. Buys, first board chairman. Lithographic prints made from the painting were recently offered for sale to CMS members and will be available to the public.

A Different Christmas Gift
With Double Benefit

If you are having trouble choosing a gift for a friend or relative, why not consider giving a membership in the Calvert Marine Society? This would be an appropriate gift for anyone interested in the Chesapeake Bay or Solomons area. In addition to keeping your friends and relatives informed about activities of the museum, including its many programs during the year, your gift would benefit the museum and help assure its future growth. An application card is included with this issue.
PRINTS OF BRIAN HOPE PAINTING OF WESTMORELAND
NOW AVAILABLE

Late in 1983 the museum received an original painting
donated by Brian Hope, Chesapeake Bay pilot and Bay artist.
The painting, which is part of the permanent collections of the
museum, depicts a typical scene of the early 1890's--the arrival
of the sidewheel steamboat Westmoreland at the wharf on
Solomons Island. Included in the scene are the Solomons-
built bugeye, Sanxton Hubbard, along with the wharf build-
ings and--in the background--Solomons House, the oldest
house still existing on the island.

Brian Hope, a member of the American Society of Marine
Artists, is increasingly recognized as one among a group of
artists interested in preserving through artistic documentation
the maritime history of the Chesapeake Bay. A graduate of
the U. S. Merchant Marine Academy at King's Point, N. Y.,
Capt. Hope is a licensed Bay pilot for whom painting is an
avocation. An article in the Autumn 1984 issue of Maryland
Magazine includes a photograph of Capt. Hope and illustra-
tions of two of his maritime paintings.

To make this interesting painting more widely available,
the museum has had an edition of 1,000 lithographic prints
prepared, all numbered and signed by the artist. Although the
first 250 prints have been reserved for presentation to corpor-
ate members of the museum, the remaining prints are now
available to members and the public, with the proceeds going
toward meeting the NEH challenge grant. Purchases may be
made at the museum gift shop or by mail order. The cost is
$35.00 for each print; $6.00 for postage and handling.

Museum Receives Grant from the
Institute of Museum Services

The Institute of Museum Services, a federal agency that
offers general operating support to the nation's museums, has
awarded a grant of $30,223 to CMM for the current fiscal year.
This grant will help the museum continue to serve as an edu-
cational and cultural resource for its members and for the
thousands of visitors each year. The museum's grant is one of
only 530 awards made by IMS from some 1,245 applications
for the 1984 General Operating Support competition.

NEH Challenge Grant Update

As of September 10, the museum has received in eligible membership moneys, donations, grants, gifts,
and pledges approximately $194,000 toward the National Endowment for the Humanities challenge grant.
To all those responding to this challenge, many thanks.