Drum Point Lighthouse Dedication

CMM Third Anniversary

After nearly ten years of fighting governmental red tape, funding problems and time consuming restoration, the dedication of the Drum Point Lighthouse is finally scheduled for this June 24 at 2:00 P.M. The official opening will highlight the third anniversary of the Calvert Marine Museum in its permanent quarters at the old Solomons School site. The Honorable Louis L. Goldstein, Comptroller of the State of Maryland, has agreed to serve as master of ceremonies. An invitation has been extended to Acting Governor Blair Lee to officially cut the ribbon.

On June 23, 1978, all members are invited to a picnic to be held under the lighthouse from 6:30 p.m. until dark. A peek preview will allow members to explore the lighthouse and see the results of years of work and restoration.

The opening of the Drum Point Lighthouse will mark the biggest event in the history of the Museum. You'll all be especially proud to be members of CMM on this occasion.

Drum Point Lighthouse Under Restoration.

PATUXENT RIVER FERRY

End of an Era

When the “Miss Solomons” tied-up at her dock in Solomons on December 16, 1977, an era of almost 60 years of continuous ferry service between Calvert and St. Mary’s counties ended. The next day the Thomas Johnson Memorial Bridge across the Patuxent River was opened and the ferry service was no longer needed.

In 1942 the Patuxent Naval Air Test Center in St. Mary’s County was opened with workers from Solomons, Calvert County, providing a large portion of the work force. Transportation across the two-mile wide Patuxent was essential. Captain Leon Langley provided that transportation on his “Miss Solomons”, a 48 foot Bay-built boat. Capable of carrying up to 49 passengers, “Miss Solomons” made one round trip to the Patuxent Naval Station nearly every working day for 35 years in fog, wind and rain. When a hurricane or ice prevented passage workers then had to make the hour road trip by car. That road trip has been reduced to eight miles by way of the bridge which forced the ferry service out of business.

Capt. Langley’s boat, however, was not the first ferry on the Patuxent River. In 1678 the Provincial Council of the Colony decreed that a ferry should be established at Ashcomb’s plantation on Point Patience. Since Town Point in St. Mary’s is directly across from Point Patience, the assumption is that the ferry linked those two points. That ferry still existed in 1694, but once the capital was moved from St. Mary’s City to Annapolis, the service fell into disuse.

Another very early ferry service existed in the upper Patuxent between Calvert and Prince George’s counties. Ferry Landing at the west end of Smithville Road (Route 525) connected to either Bowling Landing or Nottingham.

In more recent times ferry service was re-established across the Patuxent between Benedict in Charles County and Hollowing Point in Calvert. From the late 1920’s to the building of the Patuxent River Bridge in 1951, Captain Perry G. Henderson used a motorized scow to ferry automobiles and passengers across the river. Homeported in Benedict, Capt. Henderson responded to signals from the Calvert side when his services were needed; by day the sounding of the automobile’s horn, at night the blinking of the auto lights. Service was neither speedy nor prompt, but eventually passage was made.

Solomons, too, had other ferries before the “Miss Solomons.” Captain Ed Swift, a Virginian, came to Solomons around 1915 to fish pound nets. When fishing declined in the later Teens, Capt. Swift established a ferry service between Solomons and Millstone, now the site of the Navy’s steam power plant. Using his sharp-ended fishing boat, he towed a small scow on which he could load one automobile.

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PATUXENT RIVER FERRY  
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Around 1925 Capt. Swift had a larger boat built at M.M. Davis and Son along the lines of a small tug. Named for his son, the “Otho” carried passengers under a canopy-type cover and towed a larger scow on which several automobiles could be loaded. The Museum’s archives contain the correspondence between Capt. Swift and the M.M. Davis yard including a handwritten estimate breakdown of building costs at $1,106.16.

Capt. Swift’s Solomons landing was just north of the “shell pile,” approximately where Harbor Island Marina now stands. With a skilled maneuver of the “Otho,” Capt. Swift could swing the scow around and back it into the shore to the exact spot where the gangplank could be lowered for the safe unloading of the automobiles. The fare was one dollar for car and passengers. There was no schedule; service was provided on demand. Capt. Swift ran his ferry across the Patuxent into the 1930’s. The hurricane of 1933 drove it, along with many other boats, up into the Narrows. Service was discontinued shortly thereafter.

However, the area soon had a new ferry to link the two counties. John Quincy Adams of Colonial Beach, Virginia, started operating the “Miss Constance” in 1934. Millstone was still the St. Mary’s landing, but the Solomons terminal was moved to Captain Rodie Langley’s dock.

The “Miss Constance” was a barrel-sided, square-ended boat built to accommodate both passengers and vehicles. Several automobiles could be driven onto the deck for the boat was 59.8 feet long and 25.1 feet wide. Scheduled runs were made with the fare being $1.25. Reds Forrest and Stanley Adams were captain and engineer. This ferry ceased to operate in 1939.

Who were the passengers who made a ferry service necessary? Many were “drummers” - traveling salesmen - who toured rural areas taking orders for all kinds of merchandise to be supplied by their city-run wholesale houses. Many local people had their own boats in which they visited back and forth across the river. The Model T’s and Model A’s driven up the ramps were the mainstay of the ferry boat captains. Now the Thomas Johnson Memorial Bridge has made ferry boat service obsolete. Another era has ended.

DIRECTOR’S REPORT

This issue of the “Bugeye Times” marks the completion of nearly three years since the Museum opened its doors in its new home. In reflecting over this short span our achievements have been tremendous through the efforts of our staff, membership, and friends. I’ve highlighted below some of these events for 1977.

The Small Craft Shed, Lower Level exhibits, and Woodcarving Shop were officially dedicated.

Our educational programs were expanded and very well attended.

Our volunteer support has amazingly kept up with the pace of this growth as can be attested by the induction of three more members into the 1000-Hour Club. Our total volunteer force now numbers well over 200.

Our professional-like documentary film on the Drum Point Lighthouse was all the work of volunteer labor.

Museum attendance continues to increase causing concern among the staff of how to handle the expected visitor increase this summer because of the opening of the new Patuxent River bridge. This bridge, providing a dramatic view of the Museum, drops potential visitors practically at our door step.

Tremendous progress has been made in our next major exhibition “Fossils of Calvert Cliffs.” New quarters for the maritime collection are nearly complete.

This year was especially significant in the addition of two adjacent parcels of land, nearly doubling the original holdings, insuring future room for growth.

Perhaps our most significant achievement, however, is the go-ahead to hire a professional firm to review our present physical plant and program and to help develop an overall master plan for sound future growth.

To all our members, friends, and staff a warm felt THANKS. Without your support we could never have reached this point; with your continued support, the future looks bright. I hope to see all of you at the membership picnic and dedication of the Drum Point Lighthouse this June.

Capt. Swift’s Ferry “Otho” which carried passengers from Solomons to Millstone from c1925 to 1933.
CMM In The News

Bill Hall, our naval architect, presented a seminar on fiberglass workboat building at the Fourth Annual Del-Mar-Va Commercial Fisherman’s Trade Show in Ocean City, January 28. The Museum also manned a booth where our “Can You Identify” exhibit was well received.

Bill also recently had published an article in the March 1978 issue of Commercial Fisheries News titled “Basic Elements of Hull Design for Commercial Waterman Analyzed.”

Another of the Museum’s boats has made it big in the Chesapeake Bay Magazine, January 1978 issue. In an article called “Out Island in the Chesapeake,” Kent Mountford, former owner of the “Geda,” writes the complete history of the little Smith Island crab sap. This boat is now in our small craft collection, Kent, by the way, designed the new logo for the Bugeye Times.

Finally, the Museum is mentioned in Michael Platzen’s article, “The Black Heritage in Seafaring: where it’s to be found today.” Sea History No. 10, Spring 1978. This is in recognition of black oystermen in our “Life of the Waterman” exhibit.

CMM ANNOUNCES PLANS FOR NEW EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES CENTER

The Calvert Marine Museum has recently narrowed its search to two firms who will produce a master plan for the Museum’s physical growth. The main emphasis of this study will center around a youth-oriented, multipurpose educational center consisting of aquaria, waterfowl pond, Discovery Rooms, auditorium and necessary supportive requirements.

Our Museum is located at the tip of a peninsula yet the majority of our visitors, youth particularly, have little knowledge or appreciation of this estuarine environment despite its importance to the area’s economy and “quality of life.”

The aquaria and waterfowl pond are supportive of one another - one with outdoor emphasis and the other indoor. This unique association will enable the visitor, regardless of weather or season, to see an estuarine marsh habitat in its natural state (waterfowl pond) as well as artificial miniature habitats (aquaria) exemplifying species associations, life cycles, camouflage and protective coloration, etc., not normally visible by the human visitor to a marsh.

The Museum’s three basic themes: (1) paleontology of Calvert Cliffs, (2) estuarine natural history of Patuxent River, and (3) maritime history of Calvert County, will each be presented by a Discovery Room, a “hands-on” self-teaching, participatory environment where spoken words and books are secondary to actual doing. Unlike many museums where objects are behind glass and out of reach, visitors would be encouraged to handle fossils, use caulking tools, and feed crabs and waterfowl. There is no better learning experience.

Finally, the auditorium is important for the continuation of already existing educational programs. Orientation presentations would be handled here for youth and tour groups.

In summary, this Educational Resource Center will offer a unique learning environment for the community which the Museum serves.

ACQUISITIONS

MRS. MARION. Pot-bellied stove.
COL. CHARLES ROWAN. Coffee grinder.
CARROLL B. LUSBY. Drafting table and supplies, varietytype headliner.
NORM RIKER. Lesser Scaup and Barred Owl.
MRS. JEFFERSON PATTERSON. Wheelchair.
GLADYS BOWERS. Lesser Scaup.
DIANE WATSON. Coffee urn.
Baltimore Gas & Electric Co. Fossil exhibits for Discovery Room.
JOE LORE. 1937 and 1938 programs of Solomons Island Yacht Club Regatta.
MRS. C. FEATHERSTONE. 3 foot radio controlled model of Chris Craft.
HAMMON WEEHS. Oyster dredge hand winders.
NATHAN FRANK. Book on fossil marine mammals.
PAUL DREW. Stone axe head and canvas duck decoy.
EMILE HARTGE. 1932 Hall-Scott engine.
JACK BAIRD. Cow-nosed ray.
SUSAN CAREY. Pen and ink sketches of German ships moored in Solomons.
EDGAR WOODBURN. Cash register for Ship’s Store.

ACQUISITIONS

For the Drum Point Lighthouse
KEN and MARK PRATT. Lens pedestal with service arm; supply door with hardware; outhouse door; and wooden water tank.
BETTY BRISCOE. Coffee grinder.
MRS. T. H. WILLIAMS. Hand wash basin.
WILLIAM WEEHS. Pot-bellied stove.
ELEANOR CHADWICK. Nickel lamps.
MRS. RAY SHIPLEY. Linens.

ACQUISITIONS

Intra-Museum Co-operation Exchange
PORTSMOUTH LIGHTSHIP MUSEUM. Loan of a mechanical bell striker for lighthouse restoration.
SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION. Loan of paleontology specimens, and exhibit cases.
NEWARK MUSEUM. Returned CMM loan of Patuxent River Rail skiff.
ST. MARY’S CITY COMMISSION. Loan from CMM of nautical artifacts for temporary exhibit.
NATIONAL TOBACCO MUSEUM. (Upper Marlboro). Gift of tobacco exhibits from Baltimore Gas & Electric Co. through CMM.

SPECIAL RECOGNITION

RICHARD SEARS. Sails for model “Tigress.”
JIM HOGAN. Photographic work for paleontology exhibit.
THE ENTERPRISE. 300 copies of newspaper article on promotion of CMM.
EDWARD BARRETT. Assistance in rigging the hydraulic oyster dredge.

MEMORIAL GIFTS

In memory of Mrs. Edna Marsh Davis by her daughter, Mrs. Josiah D. Hanks III.
In memory of Dr. Lincoln Dryden by his wife, Mrs. Lincoln Dryden.
SPRING CALENDAR AND PROGRAM SCHEDULE

APRIL
15 Baltimore Harbor Maritime Tour. Full-day trip including "Five Fathom Lightship," "U.S. Constellation," Brown's Wharf Warehouse, and World Trade Center. Advanced registration and payment are required. CMM members $12.50, non-members $15.00. Fee includes bus, entrance, and lunch aboard the "Nobska."


MAY
5 Fossil Hound Night. Evening includes a behind-the-scenes tour of the paleontology lab and exhibit room, film, and fossil identification table. Be sure to bring those fossils you always wanted to identify!

13 D and E Lab "Creek Critters." A three-hour field experience exploring and collecting the estuarine life from the river, creeks and marshes near the Museum. Led by Brother Philip Spoelker, biology instructor at Ryken High. Pre-registration required, lab limited to 12 children in grades 10 or 11. Cost $1.50 members and $2.50 non-members.


JUNE

14 "Estuary Chesapeake." An illustrated lecture by Sharon Maves, educational researcher from the Chesapeake Bay Center for Environmental Studies.

23 Membership Pic Nic and Museum Birthday Party. 6:30 p.m. to dark. Members only. Bring your picnic supper. Dessert and beverages provided by CMM. Special preview of Drum Point Lighthouse. Dress casual.

JUNE Drum Point Lighthouse Dedication. 2:00 p.m. The Honorable Louis L. Goldstein, Comptroller of the State of Maryland, will be master of ceremonies.

All programs begin at 7:45 p.m. at the Museum unless otherwise noted. All programs are free to CMM members; $1.00 to non-members unless otherwise noted. For more information contact D. Ordwein 326-4162.

LOOKING AHEAD - To Be Scheduled

Field Trips - Behind the scenes at the waterfowl habitat, National Zoo. Tour of the Chesapeake Bay Center for Environmental Studies. Skipjack Cruises onboard the "Lady Katie," overnight cruises and one 5-day cruise. Tour of the Radcliffe Maritime Museum, Maryland Historic Society, Baltimore.


PRE-REGISTRATION FORM

☐ Baltimore Harbor Tour $12.50 for members $15.00 for non-members
☐ Skipjack “Lady Katie” cruises
☐ D & E Lab “Creek Critters” $2.50 members $3.50 for non-members
☐ Radcliffe Maritime Tour
☐ Woodcarving
☐ Chesapeake Bay Center for Environmental Studies Tour
☐ Sailing
☐ Nautical Knots
☐ Waterfowl Zoo Trip
☐ D&E Lab "Fossils"

Name ____________________________
Address __________________________
City ______________ State __________ Zip ________
Phone ______________ Amount Enclosed ________

send check and pre-registration form to: PROGRAMS, Calvert Marine Museum, P.O. Box 97, Solomons, Md. 20688.