BOAT BASIN COMPLETED

Calvert County’s Mayfest weekend on May 5 and 6 included a number of exciting events throughout the county, with many at Solomons. The most interesting to the members of the Calvert Marine Society, however, was the dedication of the new boat basin, completing the first phase of an ambitious program to expand the museum’s facilities. After a groundbreaking ceremony on September 20, 1983 (reported in the Winter 1983 issue of the Bugeye Times), work on this phase proceeded during the fall, winter, and spring.

Despite problems with the weather during the winter and spring, the contractor made a special effort in April to have the major work completed so that the dedication could be held successfully on Saturday, May 5. Under an almost cloudless sky, with pleasant temperatures, several hundred people gathered at noon on the new decking beneath the Drum Point Lighthouse or sat on the new bulkhead across the basin. A number of county and state officials welcomed the audience and noted the importance of the Calvert Marine Museum in preserving so much of Southern Maryland’s maritime history and in attracting visitors to the county. The keynote speaker, Dr. John Toll, president of the University of Maryland, was especially strong in praising the several organizations in Solomons for their part in both environmental and historic preservation, and cited the present work at the museum as symbolizing the commitment of government agencies, research establishments, and citizens to protect the Chesapeake Bay and all it represents.

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CHANGE IN ADMISSION POLICY

Since the opening of the Calvert Marine Museum in 1970, the exhibit areas have been open to the public without charge. Beginning July 1, 1984, with the opening of the J. C. Lore Oyster House exhibit, the policy on admissions will change. A fee of $1.00 for adults and 50 cents for children 5 to 12 will be charged for a combined admission to the Oyster House exhibit and to the Drum Point Lighthouse. Members of the Calvert Marine Society will be admitted to both facilities without charge, but they must present their membership cards. There will be no charge to visit the main exhibit building, the small craft shed, the marsh walk, or the museum grounds.
Stephanie Cutshaw cuts the ribbon for the official opening of the boat basin as Alton S. Kersey looks on.  
— Photo by Jim Hogan

**BOAT BASIN COMPLETED** (Continued from Page 1)

The dedication ceremony, enlivened by a color guard from the Leonard Hall Junior Naval Academy and by selections by the Calvert High School Concert Band, was climaxed by the entry of the museum’s historic oyster buyboat, the *Wm. B. Tennison*, into the basin, heralded by three shots from a small cannon and with a ribbon cutting to mark the opening officially. With the end of the dedication ceremony, Mayfest activities at the museum proceeded with tours of the Drum Point Lighthouse, demonstrations by the CMM-sponsored Patuxent Small Craft Guild and Solomons Island Model Boat Club, as well as demonstrations by the museum staff of oyster tonging and crab pot baiting. Regular cruises on the *Tennison* were also available.

The museum provided the focal point for many of the other Mayfest activities in Solomons during the weekend, including a self-guided walking tour of 21 notable locations, a gospel sing at the Solomons Methodist Church, and a crafts fair with artisans’ displays, entertainment, and food concessions. Although the weather on Sunday was not as favorable as on Saturday, the 1984 Mayfest was successful in attracting many visitors to the museum, Solomons, and Calvert County.

**THE J.C. LORE & SONS COMPANY: A Brief History**

Upon the opening of the Calvert Marine Museum’s most extensive, permanent exhibit at the J. C. Lore & Sons Oyster House on June 30, the museum wishes to highlight the history of the company which operated there for nearly a century. As yet, this information is not presented at the oyster house facility, but it will be incorporated into exhibits there in the coming months.

The history of the J. C. Lore & Sons Company begins in 1888, when at the age of 23, Joseph C. Lore, Sr., moved to Solomons from Cumberland County, New Jersey. He came to represent his uncle, Robert T. Lore, who was an oyster dealer in Philadelphia. Lore moved to Solomons to buy local oysters, grade them, and send them by steamboat to Philadelphia.

During these early years, Lore was involved in buying and selling a wide variety of local seafood, including fresh fish, hard crabs, soft crabs, and caviar. Each spring he went to the Coan River area of Virginia to buy sturgeon. He kept there his packing equipment and formula for preserving the sturgeon roe and after packing the caviar, he sent it directly to a buyer in Germany.

In a *Washington Times - Herald* article from 1939, Lore reminisced:

“We used to catch sturgeon around here and we’d get several water buckets full of roe from each one. All I did for eleven weeks a year was pack caviar, but it doesn’t do me any good, because the sturgeon are all gone. Haven’t seen one in years.”

In the 1920’s, Joseph C. Lore, Jr., began assisting his father in managing the company. Also during this decade the Lores began processing and packing oysters. At first they sent the oysters by parcel post to individuals in Washington, D.C. and Pennsylvania. As the company expanded, oysters were sold to seafood markets in Baltimore and Washington. In the late 1920’s, the Lores started delivering oysters to chain stores such as ACME Markets, with whom they conducted business for about forty years. They trucked oysters to Kroger stores in Cincinnati, Chicago, Little Rock, and Madison, Wisconsin.

An article in the *Calvert Journal* from 1927 describes the extent of the company’s enterprise:

“They own their building, which is a large and well-equipped structure. They operate in connection with it a lunch room, confectionery and cigar store, where soft drinks and other commodities may be obtained. Also, they provide boats and bait for fishing parties, and deal generally in a well rounded seafood business which is growing rapidly on the strength of their high character of service and the high quality of the products they are putting on the market.”

The Lore family began packing crab meat in addition to their fish and oyster business in the mid-1920’s. They

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employed about sixty crab-pickers, mostly men and women from the New Town and Dowell communities. The Lores cooked thirty 100-pound barrels of crabs at a time in a huge steam boiler at the end of their pier. When the crabs were cooked and cooled, the Lores blew a steam whistle to summon their employees to work. On an average day, the workers picked from fifty to seventy-five barrels of crabs, although on one memorable day, they picked an amazing one hundred and forty barrels.

It was during crab-meat-packing season that the great storm of 1933 hit Chesapeake Bay. Joe Lore, Jr., recalled:

"When the storm came on August 23 of 1933, it just played havoc with our oyster house. We had cans floating all over the place, barrels floating all over the place. That storm, of course, reached all over the Chesapeake Bay area and everybody was in the same position that we were. And everybody made a special effort to get back packing crab meat again, and I'll tell you, we were about the first ones that got back packing. And I'd go to town with those crabs, the crab meat and all, and I didn't have any trouble at all selling all I could get because so little was being shipped in at that time."

With their original building demolished, the Lores constructed in the spring of 1934 the building which still stands at the site. The new structure provided more working space for the crab-picking and oyster-shucking operations that kept the company open year-round. So active was the company in marketing the varieties of Chesapeake Bay seafood, the Lores found little time to do anything else. Joe Lore, Jr., described the pace of business:

"From the oyster season, we'd go into shad season. It would just interlock. Shad would come in the spring of the year while we were still in oysters. Then while we're still in shad, the soft crabs would be in. While we're still in soft crabs and crab meat, then the oyster business would come back in again. So we had very little time for even a day off as far as that goes. We were working all the time."

The Lore Company underwent considerable change in the 1940's. During World War II, many local people went to work for government installations in the area. The Lores continued to shuck and pack oysters during the war, but they were forced to abandon the crab meat operation because of the labor shortage. The other significant event in this decade was the death of J. C. Lore, Sr., on July 19, 1945. At that time the firm became a partnership between brothers J. C. Lore, Jr., and G. I. Rupert Lore (known as "Dick").

Under the leadership of the Lore brothers the company prospered. A writer for the national magazine Southern Fisherman, described the company in 1951:

"The plant of the J. C. Lore & Sons operation is modern in every respect. It reflects the up-to-date study and planning that the two partner-brothers have put into the business. Straight line production methods apply and there is no unnecessary handling or wasted motion. Refrigeration and ice is supplied by their own plant and large quantities of ice are

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stored in their cold room. All oysters are canned fresh and sold fresh in gallon tins and consumer pint cans.”

The Lores owned several hundred acres of oyster ground in the Patuxent River, which they planted each year with young seed oysters purchased from the James River in Virginia. These privately-owned oyster beds became the backbone of their oyster business. Both partners maintained an active study of oyster samples and specimens as they continually tried to improve production. When these oysters reached market size, they were dredged off the private beds by another Lore brother, Preston, who captained the company-owned buyboat, the Sidney R. Riggin. The other company buyboat, the Wm. B. Tennison, was also used for dredging oysters off the Lores’ oyster grounds.

Throughout its history, the Lore Company employed hundreds of people in the area. For several years there were so many oysters for processing, they hired shuckers from the Eastern Shore, who lived in a special dormitory during the week and went home on weekends. During these peak years there were nearly one hundred oyster shuckers working for the Lores. Normally, however, they employed between forty and fifty local people to shuck oysters each season.

In 1961 the partnership between the two brothers was dissolved. The following year, Alton S. Kersey, Joe Lore Jr.’s son-in-law, became active in the management of the company. They continued to pack, ship, and plant oysters. By 1975, however, the cost of seed oysters was so high and the quality so low, they discontinued planting their private grounds in the Patuxent. Finally in 1978 the company fell victim to the Chesapeake Bay’s troubled oyster industry and closed, after flourishing for nearly a century.

The story since then is by now familiar to members of the Calvert Marine Society. The Lore Company building was purchased by the museum through a grant from the Maritime Division of the National Trust for Historic Preservation. The museum planned to use the site for interpretive exhibits on the history of the Patuxent River’s seafood industries, and in 1981, undertook a major research project funded by the National Endowment for the Humanities. In April 1984, the building was named to the National Register of Historic Places. With support from the Maryland Humanities Council, the exhibit, “Seasons of Abundance, Seasons of Want: Making a Living from the Waters of the Patuxent,” opened to the public on June 30, 1984.

Fossil Facts

Dermal Denticles of Raja dux Cope

By Sandy Roberts

Often overlooked among the pebbly beachwash of the Chesapeake Bay are these interesting and attractive dermal denticles of the Miocene skate Raja dux Cope. The skins of cartilaginous fish are protected by an armor of placoid scales. Sometimes called ossicles, dermal denticles, or “skin teeth,” these platelike scales are unique to sharks, rays, and skates. Toothlike in construction, they consist of layers of enamel and dentine protecting a central pulpy canal. The denticles are not part of the skin, but are embedded in it much as a collar stud is embedded in a shirt. They have a wide base, a narrow “neck” and a bony scutelike outer surface comprised of one or more pointed spikes, ridges, cusps, or furrows. As a general rule the tips of the thorny protrusions point toward the tail. The variety and shapes of these denticles are almost endless. They are blunt, scalloped, spade shaped, thornlike, geometric, and even heart shaped. They can be microscopic or, through a process called hypertrophy which causes certain denticles to change in shape and size, grow comparatively gigantic. The teeth on the rostrum of the sawfish and the venomous barb on the tail of the stingray are examples of hypertrophic action.

At Calvert Cliffs, unless one is fortunate enough to find them still buried in matrix, the wave-washed fossilized denticles of Raja dux are abraded and worn, casualties of time and tide. They lack most of their enamel covering and their spines are broken and lost. Nevertheless, they are still interesting finds. Asymmetrical in shape and ranging from a fraction to over two inches in length, they reflect the colors and shades of the sediments with which they were buried. The bottom of the platelike scute is flat or faintly concave. The top rises from a thin edge to a ridge, often keyhole shaped, that may have at one time held a small thornlike spine. These ridges usually retain some of the denticles’ original enamel and help make these small bits of Raja dux’s dermal armor an attractive addition to one’s fossil collection.

VOLUNTEERS RECOGNIZED

On May 2, during volunteer week, the museum held a recognition dinner for its dedicated volunteers. Special acknowledgment was given to Margaret Waters, Linda McGilvery, and Pepper Langley, all of whom received 1,000-hour certificates for their service. Their names will be placed on a volunteer 1,000-hour plaque displayed in the museum’s programs room. Certificates were also presented to those who had worked 100 hours or more in the past year. Volunteer services, exceeding 6,000 hours, ranged from office and library assistance, to docenting, dark room, and carpentry work.

Special recognition is due Robert Siemon who has contributed many hours to the Oyster House exhibit. His special work during the preparation of that exhibit saved the museum the considerable expense of a private contractor.

With the growing membership in the Calvert Marine Society, volunteer assistance with the many record-keeping activities is especially valuable. Mrs. Amelia Orlando has recently begun to assist the membership secretary with this important work.

A sincere “thank you” to all volunteers!
Further Development Challenges Museum Supporters

Visitors to the Calvert Marine Museum this summer cannot help but be impressed by the changes they see. The new boat basin will enhance the effectiveness of the exhibition of the museum's boats and will support the activities of the museum-sponsored Patuxent Small Craft Guild and Solomons Island Model Boat Club, both of which will use the basin. In addition, visitors will find a new exhibit facility in the J. C. Lore Oyster House, described elsewhere in this issue. Visitors to the museum, as well as the museum's many supporters, have every right to pride in the improvements of the past few years.

The new boat basin, of course, is but the first of three phases of the master development plan for the Calvert Marine Museum, a plan that foresees a new museum building, including a 200-seat auditorium, for exhibit and educational purposes, followed later by the renovation of the existing building to house administrative, conservation, and library facilities. This development plan, however, will require further support from many sources — governments, businesses, and individuals. The past two issues of the Bugeye Times have reported the challenge grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities and the responses from local businesses and museum members. A challenge grant is just that — a "challenge" to all supporters to meet a goal that can be matched by the challenger. To this end the museum is now seeking pledges from individual supporters that can be used to help meet the challenges — not only the specific challenge of the NEH grant, but the larger challenge of achieving the objectives of the master development plan. Louis L. Goldstein, Calvert County resident and the State of Maryland Comptroller, has agreed to serve as the honorary chairman of the drive for pledges, assisted by a committee consisting of Mrs. Ellen Zahniser, chairman, Douglas S. Ewalt, treasurer, Paul L. Berry, secretary, the CMM Board of Governors, as well as Howard L. Aiken, Melvin A. Conant, Mrs. Audrey Davenport, Garner T. Grover, Mrs. Faye Lore, and Mrs. Patricia Runco. The initial effort of this drive for pledges was a special preview showing of the Lore Oyster House exhibit on June 29, but the effort to win more supporters is much broader and will be pursued by the campaign in the months ahead.

This year, both individual and corporate interest in the museum has increased significantly. Since January, 115 new members of the Calvert Marine Society have been recruited. In addition to individuals, the business community continues to show its support of the museum. During the recent Mayfest activities, Bellaire Nursery and the Calvert Marina sponsored the shuttle bus for the museum. Joining the Corporate Partners Program since the previous issue of the Bugeye Times are:

- Calvert Bank and Trust Co.
- Direct Mail Lithographers
- Direct Mail Management
- O'Brien Realty, Inc.
- Law Offices of Handen and Singerman
- Bob Hall, Inc.
- G. I. Rupert Lore & Sons, Inc.
- Patuxent Inn
- Solomons Exxon

Enclosed with this issue of the Bugeye Times is a pledge form for the Master Key campaign. Some members will have already received and submitted a pledge form, and to them a sincere "thank you." Take advantage of the enclosed form to help the museum by soliciting a pledge from a friend, employer, or business associate. Be sure to put your name in the "Reported By" space so that we may thank you for your continued help in the campaign.

For those who have not taken the opportunity to make a pledge — do so now! We are making great progress toward the NEH challenge. With your continued participation and support we will forge the Master Key to unlock the future of the Calvert Marine Museum.


Once again the Calvert Marine Museum is sponsoring a trip to Baja California to study the ecology of this unique area and the behavior of the California gray whales as the young whales begin their first migration from the San Ignacio Lagoon northward toward the Arctic Circle. This expedition, organized by Pacific Sea Fari® Tours, will depart from and return to San Diego, California. The estimated costs will be:

- Expedition $1,120
- Air Fare 450
- Gratuities 100
- Taxi from Airport 10
- Miscellaneous 100

TOTAL $1,780

For additional information, please call Scott Rawlins at the museum (326-3719).
CMM CLUB CORNER

The Solomons Island Model Boat Club, sponsored by CMM, triumphed over the St. Michaels Model Boat Club, sponsored by the Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum. Held at St. Michaels on May 20, this was the second annual radio-controlled model skipjack races between the two clubs. In the principal event, the first three winners of each club competed, with SIMBC skippers Gordon Bupp, Bob Ray, and Jimmy Langley finishing first, second, and third. In fourth place was Ray Stewart of St. Michaels. Trophies prepared by the St. Michaels club were awarded to the winners.

Following the main event, a competition open to all skipjack owners was held. Of the twelve boats entered, seven completed the race, with SIMBC taking the first six places. This second straight victory by SIMBC skippers reflects the greater number of years of their experience in competitive racing. Next year’s race may produce different results.

The museum’s Patuxent Small Craft Guild has been active this spring in building a utility skiff for all-purpose work in the new boat basin, with launching expected early this summer. To help raise funds for the guild’s restoration and building projects, a 14-foot cypress skiff will be raffled off at PRAD in October. This skiff was built during the American Folklife Festival on the Mall in Washington, D.C. Tickets are $1.00 each and are available at the museum gift shop or from members of the guild.

A pamphlet, entitled Early Chesapeake Single-Log Canoes and written by guild members Al Lavish and George Surgent, has been published by the museum and is now available for $2.25 in the museum gift shop.

Pepper Langley reports that the Southern Maryland Shipcarvers Guild has had a very successful season, with twelve regular members carving signs, skipjacks, ducks, eagles, and flowers. The guild will not meet during July and August, but all those interested are invited to join the guild after Labor Day on the first and third Saturdays of each month, from 9 a.m. to noon.

Selected Acquisitions

Thanks to the cooperation of William Holland, CMM has been able to acquire the contents of the Holland Box Company’s barrel cooper shop, including hand and power winches, cooperage tools, staves, hoops, and partially-completed barrels. This acquisition will form the basis for a future exhibit in our new maritime history gallery.

The museum’s archives of material on Solomons has been greatly enriched by one of the finest additions in some time. Through the generosity of Mr. and Mrs. Clarence E. Davis, Jr. and Mr. and Mrs. J. D. Hank, III, and with the assistance of Geoffrey Footner, the museum now has several early ledger books of the Solomon and Davis shipyards, as well as early ledgers and notebooks of Dr. William H. Marsh, including notes on lectures at the Maryland University medical school. Items recorded in these archives include the date of the birth of Joseph C. Lore, Jr., one of the founders of CMM; formulas for several of Dr. Marsh’s prescriptions; the costs of supplies for the shipyard ($6.25 for a keg of nails, for example); and balance sheets for the Isaac Solomon shipyard. These are fascinating and important additions to our growing archives.