The Bohannon name is one long associated with steamboating on the Chesapeake Bay. Originating in Mathews County, Virginia, where there seems to be more water than land, members of the Bohannon family went into steamboating quite naturally. Among the earlier names remembered are Captain Wycliffe J. Bohannon and Captain Columbus Bohannon.

Herbert A. Bohannon followed the family tradition and in his turn became the master of steamers of the Weems Steamboat Line which made the Baltimore-Patuxent run and of the Baltimore-Virginia Steamship Company which plied the Baltimore-Potomac route. He served as quartermaster on board the side-wheeler St. Mary's between Baltimore and Nottingham, and then as master of the Calvert, Talbot, Anne Arundel, and Dorchester among others. It was he who captained the Anne Arundel on her last run from Washington to Baltimore, March 1932.

The two sons of Capt. H. A. Bohannon likewise took to the water but followed it individually. In the tradition of watermen, both sons accompanied their father on his Bay travel and became knowledgeable about boating and seamanship; but when the time came to choose their own careers, Victor stayed ashore becoming a valued employee of the

(Continued on Page 2)

DECOY DONATION: New Redheads and Goldeneyes at CMM

In November, the Calvert Marine Museum’s collection of wooden duck decoys nearly doubled, thanks to a donation from Osbourn Owings of Trappe, Maryland. Owings, a longtime waterfowler and game fisherman, donated 23 decoys from his own collection. Owings’ donation includes carved decoys by Madison Mitchell of Havre de Grace, Maryland, and by Jessie Urie of Rock Hall, as well as decoys carved near the Susquehanna River, in Virginia, and one from Solomon’s Island. Also included are commercial decoys made by the L. L. Bean and Wildfowler Companies. This diverse collection represents the variety of

(Continued on Page 4)
Joseph Saunders Bohannon

Merchant and Miners Transportation Company whose boats traveled from Baltimore to Providence. Joseph S. (or Saunders as his father called him) became a steamboat man, rising from oiler to chief engineer.

Born in 1894, Joseph started his career as the lowly oiler at age 18 on the Northumberland, formerly a Weems Line steamer but now of the M.D. & V. (Maryland, Delaware and Virginia Line).

One of the boats that he had ridden as a youngster was the side-wheeler St. Mary's of which his father was quartermaster. He thoroughly enjoyed the experience and in later reflections upon this period between 1903 and 1907 mused:

The St. Mary's used to sail from Baltimore at 6:30 a.m. on Wednesdays and Saturdays. She "made" five stops on the Bay shore before finally entering the Patuxent River, usually arriving at Solomons about 2:30 or 3:00 p.m. The Wednesday trip was a short trip — she went up the river only as far as "Benedict," but on Saturday she went all the way to Nottingham which is about as far as the river is navigable. Hence she made the return trip to Baltimore on Tuesdays and Thursdays. In those days the only time people got fresh meat (at Solomons) was when the boat brought it; and on "boat" days the women were "lined up" at the "store" waiting to get steaks or roasts, especially on Saturday afternoon, when my grandmother (Mrs. J. J. Saunders) used "to lay" in a supply of roasts and steaks and sometimes smoked sausage which would carry through until the next Wednesday. Ice was brought down in 200-lb. cakes and most of it went to stores and ice cream parlors, but it was possible to get a small piece for iced tea if you wanted it. Later in the 1900's, they finally built an ice plant at Solomons, so now it has all the modern improvements and it is no longer an "island" but a peninsula as the state road goes right over the inlet that was formerly crossed via a wooden bridge." (From letter of J. S. Bohannon to Mary C. Black, Director Abby Aldrich Rockefeller Folk Art Museum, Williamsburg, Va., January 22, 1963.)

Such recollections were not the only things being collected and noted at this time. Somewhere, sometime he became interested in the steamboat itself as an art object and began painting them, and over the years turned out dozens (maybe hundreds) of pictures of steamboats of the Chesapeake. There was no lack of subject matter. On any given day he could walk Baltimore's Light and Pratt Streets...
waterfront and have ten to twenty or more boats to select from.

Whether or not Bohannon’s paintings can be called folk art is debatable. The Abby Aldrich Rockefeller Folk Art Museum has two of his paintings, one bought directly from him in 1963. Bohannon protested that the price paid was “too much” but accepted the check just the same. Whether or not the purchase was a confirmation of the folk art quality of the painting is a conjecture not to be resolved perhaps in this century. Robert H. Burgess of the Mariners Museum prefers to call them primitives:

“Joe’s paintings were somewhat meticulous in detail and accurate in detail and proportions. His vessel colors are good with the weirdest combination of art sources you could imagine. He would usually outline the vessel in pencil and go over that carefully with thin India ink lines. The colors of his water and sky got a little wild but acceptable. All on the one painting he would use pencil shading, water color, show-card color gilt around the paddle box decorations, charcoal and even tobacco juice smear in the coal smoke issuing from the stacks. Hairs from dime store brushes, paint dripping onto other parts of the works from a brush, and even fragments from his ever present cigar might be found on the painting.” (From letter to Ralph E. Eshelman from Robert H. Burgess, March 5, 1983.)

Bohannon himself in a letter to Mrs. Black of the Rockefeller Museum (1963) described his difficulty in drawing the Priscilla, a Fall River Line boat —

“that took a lot of drawing — for she was so big — I couldn’t get it on the paper in the right proportion. But on the second try — I finally managed it. It was quite a tedious job to draw her; but after I got it finished to my satisfaction, I made a tracing of the completed work, and if I have to do her again, I can do it without too much trouble. All I have to do is use carbon paper and I can trace the outline — windows and all and make two at one time.”

Perhaps we do Bohannon a disservice to expose his techniques, but the man who would use his finger to smear penciling for smoke might be willing for us to share the simplicity of his work with him.

Whether Bohannon’s paintings are classes as primitive or folk art, there was never any reticence on the part of recipients to accept them. There is no record of the numbers graciously given to friends all along the Bay or those sold for the nominal price of five dollars to would-be collectors. One New Jersey steamboat buff bought all that he could thinking that someday they would be collector’s items. Many Calvert Countians are proud possessors having inherited their paintings from their steamboating grandparents, associates of Joe Bohannon.

In addition to the Abby Aldrich Rockefeller Folk Art Museum, other institutions known to own Bohannon’s works are the Mariners Museum, the Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum and our own Calvert Marine Museum. We believe that we have the largest museum collection of any — and maybe rightly so. His Solomons’ grandfather was Capt. J. J. Saunders, one of the most highly respected citizens of Solomons and an exceptionally fine shipwright of the M. M. Davis Yard.

Joseph Saunders Bohannon probably did most of his paintings during the 1950’s. All are signed “J. S. Bohannon” with a date; the date is not necessarily the painting date. Since many pictures were copied from photographs, the date is that point in the steamer’s history when the photograph was made.

If you have a J. S. Bohannon, will you let the director of the Calvert Marine Museum know about it?

Another facet of this artist-engineer was his keen interest in music. Sometime, probably shortly after the end of his steamboating career, Bohannon went to Panama to operate a ferry boat taking his piano with him. He did not stay in Panama very long as the extremely high humidity kept his piano out of tune. Back in Baltimore as an employee of the main post office, Bohannon enjoyed frequent trips to New York for the sole purpose of attending operas — and was a regular listener to the Metropolitan Opera’s Saturday afternoon broadcasts.

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<tr>
<th>Joseph Saunders Bohannon Painting Collection</th>
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<td>Name of Steamboat</td>
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*Both vessels shown on same painting.*
March Whale-Watching Trip to Baja, California

From late November through May, the California Gray whales migrate down the west coast of our continent. Moving south from the cold waters of the Bering Sea on their 3,000 mile journey to the great, warm lagoons of Baja, California to mate and calve, the whales are often visible from shore.

H & M Landing, a San Diego-based ocean excursion group, has scheduled a series of natural history Pacific Sea Fan® Tours during the 1983-1984 season which will join the migratory route of the forty-ton giants at San Diego and follow them to destinations in Baja, California.

The Calvert Marine Museum is sponsoring an eight-day Sea Fan® expedition to the San Ignacio Lagoon from March 1-9, 1984. We hope to offer another trip of this kind next spring. San Ignacio Lagoon is a shallow, twenty-one by four-mile breeding ground used by the Gray whales. In this location, surrounded by an uninhabited wilderness, the great whales gather in the thousands to court and bear their young. They can be observed within a few yards of the large H & M vessel or, as safely, from smaller skiffs. The highlight of the San Ignacio trip is the possibility that one may actually come in physical contact with one of these gentle leviathans! This phenomenon was first experienced in 1975, and “friendly encounters of the closest kind” have occurred ever since!

In addition to whale watching, there are unmatched opportunities to study and photograph different species of seals, birds and plants from only a few feet away while exploring the coastal beaches, crystal clear tide-pools, seal rookeries and bird habitats on the islands of San Martin, San Benito, Cedros and Todas Santos.

Our expedition will be led by Chris Peterson, a naturalist from the San Diego Zoo, who will offer informal presentations in the evenings to complement the daily activities. Naturalist-led nature walks and shore expeditions will provide participants with a personal introduction to the marine environment and its wildlife.

Expenses, including current round-trip air fare to San Diego, are estimated to average $1,500.00. If you, or anyone you know (who is willing to become a museum member), is interested in participating in this experience, please call Scott Rawlins at CMM (301-326-3719) for further information. A deposit of 60% ($672.00) is required soon after the first of the year! Join us for an unforgettable week in an estuarine environment totally different from the Chesapeake Bay!

DECOY DONATION:
(Continued from Page 1)

decoys likely to be used by a Maryland waterfowler.

Although Owings lives on the Eastern Shore, he has special ties to the Patuxent River and the Calvert Marine Museum. For close to 60 years, he hunted railbirds on the upper Patuxent marshes, from Pig Point to Lower Marlboro. He began railbirding there in the 1920's, at the height of that sport's popularity. Owings has given up railbirding for health reasons, but in an interview two years ago with Calvert Marine Museum folklorist Paula Johnson, he recalled the pleasures of time spent on the Patuxent:

"... to get out on those marshes is, is just a delight. You see a lot of waterfowl, ducks, blue heron, many kinds of birds, but it is just a real pleasure to be out there ... it's quiet and peaceful."

The Calvert Marine Museum is grateful to Osbourn Owings and to Gerald E. Parsons, Jr., who assisted with this donation.

Osbourn Owings, 1981. — Photo by Paula Johnson, CMM
Balanus Concavus
Bronn

by Sandy Roberts

_Balanus concavus_ Broon (Miocene to Recent) is an unusually large acorn barnacle. Its name, in reference to its shape, is a combination of Greek and Latin words meaning a “hollowed out or concave acorn.” It belongs to a distinct and remarkable group of Crustacea known as cirripedes or “fringed footed” animals.

Free swimming at birth, the barnacle undergoes several developmental changes before eventually turning itself upside down and anchoring itself to a rock or shell by means of cement secreted from a gland in its head. A series of six hollow plates are fused to make a calcified protective outer mantle or shell. The central opening to this igloo-like structure is covered by a divided trapdoor composed of two pairs of plates which can be opened to collect food, or tightly closed to give protection against desiccation to those barnacles living in intertidal zones. Inside its turret, the shrimp-like creature, its head fastened permanently to the base of its shell, rotates its body so that its mouth and limbs point upward. Opening its trapdoor it extends fringed, feather-like legs to sweep rhythmically to and fro in the water capturing food which it then rakes off with comb-like organs located near its mouth.

At Calvert Cliffs, the largest individuals and the most abundant deposits of fossilized _Balanus concavus_ are found in the Choptank formation. The specimens found in the Calvert formation tend to be smaller with rough, corrugated mantles. Like their present day descendants, Miocene barnacles were gregarious creatures and those in the Choptank and St. Mary’s formations are often found heavily clustered on the shells of large mollusks, particularly those of the fossil scallop, _Chesapecten nefrens_.

**National Endowment for the Humanities Challenge Grant Awarded CMM**

CMM has been awarded a major three-year challenge grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH). We must raise $150,000 each year for the next three years in order to receive $50,000 from NEH as their one to three match. That will bring a total of $600,000. The Challenge Grant will be used toward Phase III of the museum’s Master Development Plan (conversion and renovation of the present main museum building), to establish a permanent development office, and to initiate an endowment for the museum.

Increased contributions and memberships over last year are eligible for the Challenge Grant; that means that every $3.00 above last year’s contributions will mean another $1.00 from the NEH. You will be hearing more about the grant and the museum’s Master Development Plan over the coming months. In the meantime, please let us know if you have any questions about either.

**Thank You**

We would like to express our gratitude to all those who helped to ensure the success of the CMS Yule Party — the cookie-bakers, wreath-makers, and greens-collectors, as well as the following:

Mr. and Mrs. Bedford Glascock, Mr. Bill Glascock, Mrs. Albert Zahniser, III, Mrs. Anna E. Ewalt, Mr. Michael Smolek, Mr. and Mrs. Tim O’Brien, Mr. and Mrs. Philip Limes, Mr. James Tallant, Mr. Steve Gateau, and Mrs. Frances Hutchins and the choirs of the St. John’s United Methodist Church.

**OLD FILMS PRESERVED**

The Calvert Marine Museum has just completed a project to duplicate several reels of 16mm film footage for purposes of preservation and future presentation in museum programs. The original footage was made by the Chesapeake Biological Laboratory and dates from the late 1930's to the late 1960's. The films depict such commercial activities as pound net fishing, oystering in the Patuxent, local oyster buy-boats at work, seining for crabs, soft-shell clamming, and the daily round of work at the J. C. Lore and Sons Seafood Company in Solomons. For years the reels were in storage without benefit of conservation methods. Now duplicate films have been made, and we anticipate incorporating portions of this historic footage in future educational programs.

This project was made possible by a grant from the Maryland State Arts Council’s Conservation and Acquisition program. Matching funds were provided by proceeds from the balloon launch held last August for the 100th birthday of Drum Point Lighthouse and by a $50 donation from CMS member, John Darr.

CMM is pleased to announce its first Corporate Patron: Baltimore Gas & Electric Co. Corporate Patrons contribute $1,000 or more toward the general operations of the museum. We are very grateful to BG & E, a long-time supporter of CMM, for this generous contribution.

(left to right) John Smith, BG & E representative, Leonard Mason, past chairman of CMM Board, and Ralph Eshelman, director CMM.
Selected Acquisitions

Mr. and Mrs. Hamilton Trossbach of Ridge recently donated two half models of boats. The half models were made by Trossbach, a boatbuilder, who used one of them in building 40-foot sportsfishing boats in 1979 and 1981. This half model is currently on display at the museum in the new exhibition, *Built to Work: Building Deadrise Workboats in Southern Maryland.*

Another recently-acquired item on display in the new boat-building exhibit is a working model of a skipjack, built by Francis Goddard of Piney Point. Unlike most boat models which are built after the actual boat is completed, this model was built by Goddard *before* he began construction of a full-sized skipjack in 1982. Building this model enabled Goddard to test various changes he wished to make in his skipjack design, and served as a blueprint for construction of the actual workboat. The scale of this working model is 1 inch = 1 foot. It is on loan to the Calvert Marine Museum from the Goddard family.

**TOUR BROCHURES AVAILABLE**

Two historical tour brochures by CMM personnel, *Solomons by Foot, Bicycle or Boat* by Ralph Eshelman and Clara M. Dixon, and *Broome’s Island* by Paula Johnson, are available in limited numbers at the Calvert Marine Museum. These brochures were produced recently by the Southern Maryland Today project and contain photographs of and information about historical sites in these two waterfront communities in Calvert County. If you are interested in obtaining copies of these brochures, stop by the museum or send us a request by mail.

Local, state, and federal officials were on hand at CMM September 20, at the groundbreaking ceremony for our new boat basin, Phase I of CMM’s Master Development Plan. (left to right): Calvert County Commissioner John Gott, Southern Maryland Resources Conservation and Development Chairman Walter Bender, State Senator Bernie Fowler, State Comptroller Louis Goldstein, and Delegate Ernie Bell.

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**Volunteers!**

The volunteer coordinator is in the process of tallying volunteers’ work hours for a year-end report. If your sign-in sheet is not up-to-date, please call the museum and give us your most current figures!