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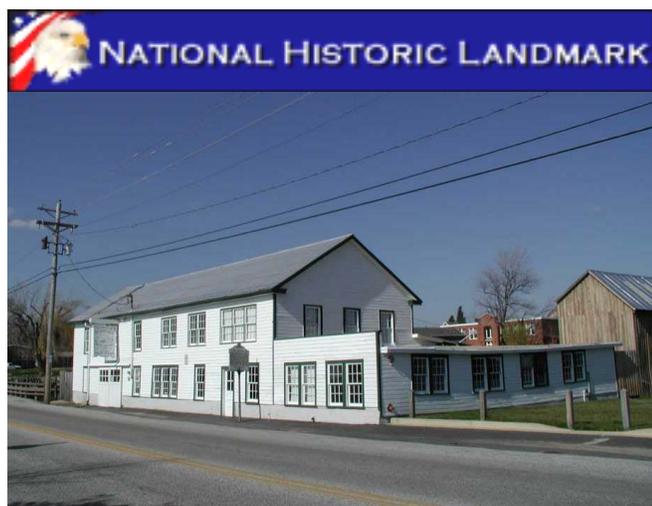


Photo credit: Robert I. Hall, Calvert Marine Museum, 03/2001

J.C. Lore Oyster House

Inventory No.: **CT-788**

Date Listed: **3/22/1984**

Location: **14430 S. Solomons Island Road (MD 2), Solomons, Calvert County**

Category: **Building**

Period/Date of Construction: **1934**

Architect/Builder: **Builder: J. B. Lusby**

NHL Date: **8/7/2001**

Description: The J. C. Lore Oyster House is a large rectangular frame industrial building that faces west at the north end of Solomon's Island in Calvert County, Maryland. A seafood packing plant constructed in 1934 to replace a c. 1920 structure destroyed in a hurricane, the building is two stories high, six bays wide by three bays deep, sheathed in German siding, and covered by a metal-clad gable roof. A one-story shed-roofed wing, apparently contemporaneous with the main block, extends from the south gable end a distance of two bays. A cinder block addition of 1965 spans two-thirds of the rear elevation. Fenestration of the main block is irregular, and reflects the functional divisions of the interior into areas for oyster shucking, packing, storage and loading, and office space. The interior retains most of its original processing equipment.

Significance: The J. C. Lore Oyster House is significant for its historical association with the commercial fisheries of Maryland's Patuxent River region, and architecturally as a substantially unaltered example of an early-20th century seafood packing plant. The commercial seafood industry has been vital to the economy of the Chesapeake Bay region and the state of Maryland since the mid 19th century. From its establishment in 1920 until it ceased operations in 1978, the J. C. Lore Company was an important element in this industry in the Patuxent River region. J. C. Lore, Sr., moved to Solomons in 1888 to buy and ship locally caught oysters for his uncle's packing house in Philadelphia. He established his own oyster packing plant in Solomons in 1920; the present building was constructed in 1934 to replace the original facility which had been destroyed in a hurricane. As one of the most extensive and successful seafood packing operations in the area, and the longest continually operating plant on the Patuxent River, it provided local watermen with a market for their catch and employed numerous workers in the processing plant. The company's oyster-processing operation was among the most modern and efficient in the Chesapeake region, and was featured repeatedly in seafood industry journals. To augment the supply purchased from local watermen working natural oyster bars, the company maintained extensive private

bars in the Patuxent River and in Virginia waters where seed oysters were planted and grown to maturity. The company's careful records of water conditions and oyster growth on its private bars were often used by researchers from academic and scientific institutions. In addition to oysters, the company packed and marketed large quantities of crabs and fish. The J. C. Lore Oyster House is also significant as one of the oldest oyster packing houses in the Chesapeake region which has remained substantially unaltered. Most other successful oyster houses were subjected to a series of expansions over time or completely rebuilt; the Lore Oyster House reflects its original construction, with alteration limited to a recent cinder-block addition at the rear of the building. The plant also retains most of its original processing equipment. The building has been adapted by the Calvert Marine Museum to house exhibits on the commercial fisheries of the Patuxent River region. Adaptation as a museum facility has not compromised the building's architectural integrity, and many of its original spaces, artifacts, and records have been incorporated into the exhibits.

