SOLOMONS AND CALVERT COUNTY'S 350TH ANNIVERSARY

By Paul L. Berry

During 2004, Calvert County is celebrating its founding in 1654 with a number of 350th anniversary events. There have been lectures sponsored by the celebration committee; a commemorative publication by the Calvert Recorder entitled Calvert County, Maryland, Then and Now; a parade in Prince Frederick on April 17; a pageant at Northern High School in Chantilly on May 21 through 23; events planned at the Jefferson Patterson Park and Museum on July 3, the actual date of the action of the Council of Maryland establishing the county; "Seahorses by the Bay," and many other events. While these activities properly have covered the entire county, the lower end of the county was perhaps the earliest area of the Patuxent peninsula to be settled in the seventeenth century. A special look at the area that now includes Solomons seems appropriate during the anniversary year.

Although St. Mary's City, off of the Potomac River, was the first settlement in the Maryland palatinate of the Calvert family, the Patuxent River and its general relationship to the rest of Maryland is represented on early maps, including John Smith's map of 1612— with the name of the Patuxent River and several native villages — and the Lord Baltimore map of 1635 that appeared in A Relation of Maryland, published to promote the new colony in America. Neither map had much detail of the Patuxent peninsula except for a strange depiction of Calvert Cliffs, named on the Smith map as "Rickards Cliffs." A more accurate map of Maryland was not produced until the 1670s by Augustine Herman, and that map actually identified Calvert County and a few points at the mouth of the Patuxent River. By 1673, maps were identifying Cove Point (sometimes called "The Coave") and Point Patience, but it was not until the late eighteenth century that maps and charts depicted an island near the mouth of the river.

The English settlers of Lord Baltimore's lands found natives when they arrived in 1634, and within a few years these settlers began to expand beyond St. Mary's City into other parts of the peninsula between the Potomac and Patuxent Rivers. Natives along the southern shore of the Patuxent agreed during the 1630s to sell land to the Jesuit missionaries who settled at Mattapany, in the area now occupied by the Naval Air Station. This same area was later (1640s) taken over by the Calverts and fortified, and even later (1668) became the home of Charles Calvert, the son of the then Lord Baltimore (still in England) and nephew of the first local governor, Leonard Calvert. Within a few years, other settlers — many of whom were Puritans — obtained land from Lord Baltimore on the southern part of the peninsula between the Patuxent and the Chesapeake Bay and along the bay side of this peninsula. Land along the Patuxent was just too inviting for settlers, so it was not long before the natives were pushed farther up the river.

Lord Baltimore's original plans offered tracts of land to settlers bringing with them a certain number of family and servants; larger land holdings (a thousand acres or more) were offered in the form of manors where the land owner would be entitled to hold minor courts for the settlers on his tract. One such tract was Greater Eltonhead Manor between Cove and Drum Points consisting of some 5,000 acres, and a similar

MUSEUM FEES INCREASE: After seven years, it has been necessary to increase fees for admission to $7.00 for adults, $6.00 for seniors, and $2.00 for children 5 to 12. Museum members, of course, are free. The one-hour cruise on the Wm. B. Tennison will increase to $7.00 for adults and $4.00 for children 5-12. Children under 5 have free admission to the museum and on the Tennison.
Bonnie Raitt Gave Solomons Something to Talk About!

The crowd roared as Bonnie Raitt hit the Washington Gas Pavilion's stage Sunday, June 6, and began playing some of her biggest hits. Songs like Something to Talk About, Thing Called Love, and I Can't Make You Love Me brought the crowd to its feet.

Ms. Raitt raved about the museum, the crowd, and the crab cakes provided by sponsor Mom's In the Kitchen. She was heard saying she "didn't want to leave this lovely little town" and that this was the first time she ever arrived at a performance by boat!

Ralph's Dodge/Jeep and Cumberland and Erly, LLC, hosted the blues performer's sold-out show and noted that Solomons was one of only four U.S. performances she had this year. Over 150 volunteers came together for two days to prepare for this event, pitching in on everything from chair set-up to selling soda. Their support and long-time dedication is the key to our success.

The concerts at the museum help to raise nearly 40 percent of the museum's budget and have proven to be a wonderful way to increase public recognition of the museum. Membership has grown from 2,250 to over 2,800 in the past two years. Over 75 percent of the tickets to the performances are sold to members, many of which have been quoted as saying "we always meant to join the museum, this just forced the issue." Tickets have been purchased for the concerts from all over the United States and as far away as Canada.

The next scheduled performance will be country music legend Merle Haggard on Sunday, July 18. Tickets are $45 for assigned seats and $35 for standing room only tickets — which means bring your blanket and leave your chair at home. We're looking forward to an exciting and lively performance!

The museum is grateful to the public, volunteers, members, county commissioners, and especially the sponsors who bring these concerts to us. These events could not happen without the support of: Ralph's Dodge/Jeep, Cumberland & Erly, LLC, Booz/Allen/Hamilton, Radio Shack, Bay Weekly, G&H Jewelers, Holiday Inn, 98 Star, SMECO, Comcast, Quick Connections Answering Service, Solomons Landing, Coors, Coors Light & Killians Red, The Calvert Recorder, The Enterprise, and The Maryland Independent.

Calvert Marine Museum Ball

Ten things you will enjoy at the Ball this year!

1. Live music from 25th Hour Band
2. Seafood bar from Captain Smith's Seafood
3. Martini bar with featured chocolate martinis
4. Live auction to include a week's stay in Ocean City, a rare flight in a historic B-25 Panchito Bomber, and an autographed Cal Ripkin ball
5. Silent auction featuring some of G&H Jewelers most beautiful pieces
6. Delicious morsels served by Mom's In the Kitchen Catering
7. Intimate seating throughout the museum
8. Beautiful flowers provided by Garner & Duff of Prince-Frederick
9. Moonlight strolls along the water
10. Food, fun, and friends!

Please join us for a wonderful evening hosted in the halls of the museum on Saturday September 25. Enjoy delicious food, wonderful music, and great auction items while also showing your support for the museum. The funds from this year's ball will go to support the creation of our next exhibit, which will focus on the rise and decline of the seafood packing houses in Southern Maryland. Your invitation is in this issue of the Buggeye Times — thank you for your support.

MUSEUM STAFF CHANGES

There have been a few changes for the summer. Rachel Reese has joined the staff as exhibits graphic technician; Walter Logan, as admissions clerk; Melinda Quinn, as an exhibits interpreter; and Rowan Harris, as a seasonal Estuarine Biology intern.
YEAR-END APPEAL 2003 DONORS
Thanks to your support, we received over $13,900 for the Skates & Rays Exhibit!

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Win a Complete Home Entertainment System!

The museum is raffling off a complete home entertainment system to include: a 42" Sony Plasma HDTV, Sony 700w 5.1 Ch. home theater system with DVD/CD/MP3 player, XBOX, four year extended warranty, top quality cables, and complete home installation. Tickets are $100 each and only 250 tickets will be sold. (A minimum of 100 tickets must be sold in order for the raffle to be held.) The winning ticket will be drawn the night of the Calvert Marine Museum Ball, September 25, and you do not need to be present to win. Please fill out and return the form that is part of the invitation to the Museum Ball included in this issue of the Bugeye Times. There is no limit to the number of entries you may purchase for your chance to win an amazing high quality entertainment system! Good Luck

CRADLE OF INVASION 2004 – August 6 to 8.
See calendar for details.
Visitors admiring some of the antique boats and marine engines at the fourth Chesapeake Antique Boat and Marine Engine Show, May 1 and 2. Exhibitors came from as far north as Vermont and as far south as Louisiana.

CMM photos by Bob Hall

In March, CMM completed a fourteen-foot rowing and sailing skiff for the Chesapeake Bay Field Lab of Piney Point. The handsome skiff is designed as a “maritime puzzle boat” to enable young students to learn how to rig a boat and understand how the different parts are used. Pictured are Bill Lake, Bob Fleming, George Sargent, and Al Lavish.

CMM photo by Richard Dodds

The Volunteer Council’s successful yard sale on May 1.

CMM photo by Bob Hall
Enjoying the Springtime at Calvert Marine Museum

Launching of the twelve-foot rowing skiff on May 1, built by four students from the Calvert Middle School's M.E.A. (Math, English, and Science Achievement) program. The boat was built under the guidance of CMM boatwright George Surgent and Patuxent Small Craft Guild volunteers. Left to right: Allen Brooks, Kevin Chew, Celine Chow, and Georgina Cochran. Photo by Bob Bess

The museum’s new floating dock provides a much-needed improvement to the waterfront. The cost of materials was paid for by donations from the Solomons Island Model Boat Club and from the U. S. Vintage Model Yacht Club. It was assembled by George Surgent and PSCG volunteers, and was launched courtesy of Washburn’s Boat Yard of Solomons. Standing left to right are: George Surgent, Bill Poflenbarger, Bill Lake, Al Lavish, Paul Darby, and Bob Fleming. CMM photo by Richard Dodds

The art project of the county schools, "Seahorses by the Bay," was opened with an official unveiling ceremony at CMM on May 1. The twenty-six decorated seahorses will be located throughout the county. CMM photo by Bob Hall

At the invitation of the education department, museum volunteers on March 25 followed the activities of CHESPAX here at CMM as experienced by the fourth-graders for whom this environmental education program is intended. CHESPAX director Tom Harten also talked to the group about CHESPAX programs at other sites in the county. In this photo, Pam Platt (center) explains the recently acquired whale skull. CMM photo by Leslie King
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Lesser Eltonhead tract was patented across the Patuxent at the present-day Cedar Point. Other large and small tracts were patented by Lord Baltimore along both shores of the river. It should be remembered that at the time of the establishment of Calvert County in 1654, the western boundary of the county extended into present-day St. Mary's County as far as Three Notch Road, now State Route 235.

Greater Eltonhead Manor, although the area retained the name on maps, was soon divided between Samuel Groome and John Rousy, with Groome selling his share to the Bourne family who remained for many generations. (Lesser Eltonhead on the St. Mary's side remained in the original family for much longer.) The Bourne share may have also included the nearby island since it was known in the eighteenth century as “Bourne’s Island.”

Another local tract of 300 acres around Point Patience was patented by Lord Baltimore to John Ashcom in 1649 and held until the mid-eighteenth century when it passed by marriage into the Parran family. By the nineteenth century, it was owned by the Somervell family whose name was sometimes attached to the nearby island. There were known settlers (and perhaps a native village) just north of Point Patience, as evidenced by archaeological work there in the 1990s. Other parcels were patented in the areas near to what is now Solomons. All of these tracts were devoted to agriculture, but there were relatively few settlers.

The records of early land transactions on the lower Calvert County peninsula are very difficult to relate precisely to present-day areas, even though many of these records still exist in the Maryland Hall of Records and include surveyors’ descriptions of the properties. The names of landmarks have changed and the surveying instruments were not as accurate as today’s. Considerable information about the properties in the lower end of the county is included in Charles Stein’s History of Calvert County (Calvert County Historical Society, 1976), but a more thorough study was done in 1997 by Dr. J. Court Stevenson and Karen Sundberg entitled Historical Shoreline Configurations at Cove Point from Original Patents and Later Shoreline Surveys (Cove Point Natural Heritage Trust).

The early history of the island near the mouth of the Patuxent is not described precisely in the existing records. As mentioned above, it may have been part of the original Greater Eltonhead Manor, but it may have been part of the land patented to the Ashcom family in the area of Point Patience. Presumably it was cleared of trees and farmed at an early date. Early names include “Bourne’s Island” and “Somervell’s Island,” both family names in the eighteenth century land tracts. By the time of the Revolutionary War there was great activity at the mouth of the Patuxent River, but the island is not specified. During the War of 1812, however, there were references to the island, but most naval activity in that war took place farther up the river and has been well documented in several books. Perhaps not as well known, however, is the reaction of the federal government in the decade following the sack of Washington in 1814: the Engineer Department of the army commissioned its Major J. J. Abert to survey the lower part of the Patuxent and to identify locations for two forts as defense against access by the river. Although never constructed, one of the forts was sited on Point Patience, the other across the river at Thomas Point. At that time, Major Abert also included an excellent map of the island.

There were no local newspapers to report on any activity in Calvert County to mark the 200th anniversary in 1854 of its estab-
 establishment. Even during the Civil War there is no record of activity in the Solomons area, but immediately after that war the island suddenly developed. Isaac Solomon, an oyster canner in Baltimore, took advantage of an offer by the wife of the then owner Richard Fitzgerald to sell the island, paying $6,000 for some eighty acres on which he soon established an oyster canning factory nearer the source of oysters than Baltimore. A post-war boom in oysters from the Chesapeake Bay enabled Solomon in a short time to develop his cannery, attracting watermen from the Eastern Shore for the necessary work of catching oysters, building and repairing boats, operating the factory, and transporting oysters to Baltimore. By 1870 he had the island platted for building lots. Unfortunately, Isaac Solomon was not a successful manager, and he was forced to sell his business by 1875. But the business and island still bearing his name thrived, aided no doubt in the 1880s by the largest oyster catches in the history of the bay's oyster fisheries. Development spread in the 1890s into the adjacent mainland area we now know as Avondale, and another development was planned across the harbor at Ships Point (but never built).

A century ago the greater Solomons area was one of the most populous in Calvert County, reporting nearly 500 residents to the 1900 census (of a total county population of about 10,225) — certainly rivaling the county seat of Prince Frederick and the developing Chesapeake Beach. County papers, however, did not report any local or countywide anniversary celebrations in 1904 for the 250th anniversary of the county's founding. The next fifty years, however, marked great changes in the Solomons area, due to tourism in the 1920s and 1930s and, more notably, the wartime installations of the 1940s. While the entire county grew larger, the Solomons area also retained its larger population.

When Calvert County celebrated its 300th anniversary in 1954, Solomons was well represented in the planning and events. The local newspaper, Calvert Independent, issued in September 1954 a large supplement that provided a great deal of information about the history and present condition of the county, with Solomons history and activities covered in considerable detail. For two hundred of the county's three hundred years (1654 to 1854), the southern tip of the county had a quiet, agricultural existence, but the third century (1854 to 1954) saw growth and a type of commercial development not seen elsewhere in the county. The subsequent fifty years, moreover, brought a burgeoning economy resulting in today's Solomons that could not have been foreseen in 1954. Greater Solomons, therefore, can be justly proud of its status as Calvert County celebrates its 350th anniversary. 

**Note:** The Calvert Marine Museum continues to collect materials and information about the Solomons area and to make this available through publications and exhibits. Publications offered by the Museum Store may be found on the museum's site on the Internet: www.calvertmarinemuseum.com.
VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT—

The 2003 Volunteer Recognition Reception, May 18, 2004
By Leslie King, Volunteer Coordinator

Life at CMM is moving at an almost frightening pace. There are education events, concerts, planning meetings, exhibit building, and outreach events. Each staff person is engrossed in his or her aspect of a very busy season. And yet, the one concept that is never forgotten is how thankful we are for our volunteer support that allows us more opportunities, experience, and the quality programs for which we are known. In the midst of a crazy time, on the evening of May 18, the staff paused to make sure the CMM volunteers were thanked at our annual recognition event. Amongst heavenly food catered by Capt. Smith's, our lobby was packed with the faces that make the museum so special.

With the backdrop of a slide presentation featuring recent volunteer moments, museum director Doug Alves presented the awards. The first awards went to volunteers who worked a hundred or more hours during the 2003 calendar year. These included: Paul Adams, 390; Dave Aldridge, 218; Vivian Aldridge, 130.5; Charlene Barrett, 104; Paul Berry, 874.5; Robert Bohn, 116.25; Bill Boxwell, 160; Bob Boxwell, 113; Debbie Carlson, 144.75; Jon Dann, 103; Peg Dann, 149; Linda Denismore, 116.5; Bobbe Dyke, 211.5; Doris Federline, 176.5; Doris Fisk, 120.5; Bob Fleming, 545; Bob Hall, 355.25; George Halvosa, 151; Liz Halvosa, 182.5; Mary Hansen, 104.5; Dan Hefelebower, 133; Philis Hurley, 171.5; Rose Hurley, 132.5; Frank King, 141; Mary Konrad, 105.5; Bill Lake, 656; Al Lavish, 469.5; Buck McClellan, 112; Annie Michnowicz, 644; Shirley Mihursky, 250; Paul Murdoch, 324.5; Gale Parks, 201.5; Dave Peterson, 230.5; Jean Phelps, 105; Bob Platt, 332; Pam Platt, 453.5; Bill Poffenbarger, 215.75; Sandy Roberts, 226.5; Richard Rogers, 697; Marilyn Ruark, 123.5; Bette Scher, 147; Joe Showalter, 360; Ruth Showalter, 473; Ned Sprague, 132.5; Margaret Stamper, 132.5; John Aubrey Stone, 128.5; Wes Stone, 115.5; Joan Sweeney, 148; Doris Sweet, 162; Don Sweeten, 107; Bev Walker, 198.5; Jim Wilson, 346; Sandy Younger, 100; and Tom Younger, 611.

The thousand hours awards were next. These awards go to volunteers who reach a thousand-hour mark during their overall service. Volunteers for 2003 who reached such marks were Paul Berry, 18,273; Philis Hurley, 1,092; Bill Poffenbarger, 1,050.75; Jim Wilson, 2,003.5; and Tom Younger, 1,324.5. Two volunteers reached over 2,500 hours during the year: Bob Hall, 2,617; Doris Sweet, 2,623.

The Group Achievement Award went to the Patuxent Small Craft Guild for their outstanding service, as well as for all their work with completing the new Small Craft Center and their help during Hurricane Isabel.

The volunteer of the year award went to Tom Younger for his many hours of service and help in the model shop, exhibit department, Solomons Model Boat Club, and being readily available to help with any museum project when needed. He was also extremely dedicated to helping the staff prepare for the hurricane.

Members of the Patuxent Small Craft Guild received the Group Achievement Award. Left to right: Richard Rogers, Annie Michnowicz, Dave Peterson, Al Rondena, John Cook, Bill Cloyes, Ann Lake, Bill Lake (holding plaque), Paul Adams, Al Lavish, and George Sargent.

CMM photo by Bob Hall

Museum director Doug Alves (left) presented the Volunteer Achievement Award to Tom Younger.

CMM photo by Bob Hall

CALVERT MARINE MUSEUM
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