

Survey No. S-238

Magi No.

DOE  yes  no

# Maryland Historical Trust State Historic Sites Inventory Form

CHESAPEAKE BAY SKIPJACK FLEET THEMATIC GROUP

## 1. Name (indicate preferred name)

historic IDA MAY

and/or common

## 2. Location

street & number UPPER THOROFARE n/a not for publication

city, town Chance n/a vicinity of congressional district First

state Maryland 024 county Somerset 039

## 3. Classification

<b>Category</b>	<b>Ownership</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>Present Use</b>	
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational	<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> transportation
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> not applicable	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other:

## 4. Owner of Property (give names and mailing addresses of all owners)

name Captain Elbert Gladden

street & number telephone no.: 784-2180

city, town Chance state and zip code Maryland 21816

## 5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. n/a liber

street & number folio

city, town state

## 6. Representation in Existing Historical Surveys

title Survey of Surviving Traditional Chesapeake Bay Craft

date 1983-1984  federal  state  county  local

depository for survey records Maryland Historical Trust, 21 State Circle

city, town Annapolis state MD 21401

## 7. Description

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<b>Condition</b>		<b>Check one</b>	<b>Check one</b>		
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved	date of move	<input type="checkbox"/> n/a
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed				

Prepare both a summary paragraph and a general description of the resource and its various elements as it exists today.

This vessel is a 42.2' long two-sail bateau, or V-bottom deadrise type of centerboard sloop, commonly referred to as a skipjack. She was built in 1906 in Urbanna or Deep Creek, Virginia, using typical Bay cross-planked construction methods, and is a member of the working fleet of sailing oyster dredgeboats. She has a beam of 14.4', a depth of 3.3', and a net register tonnage of 7. She carries a typical skipjack rig of jib-headed mainsail and large jib, and has a longhead or clipper bow and a square stern. The wooden hull is painted the traditional white.

IDA MAY has a sharp, slightly raking stem with a longhead mounted beneath the bowsprit. At her stern, the chine meets the transom below the waterline in an unusually low "tuck." The transom is steeply raked with a rudder carried on pintles and mounted on an outboard skeg. There is a chock or jig for the pushboat mounted to starboard of the rudder. Guards are mounted on the sides of the hull to protect it from the bumping of the oyster dredges.

The single mast is raked somewhat aft, set up with double shrouds, forestay, and jibstay. A topping lift leads to the end of the boom, which is jawed to the mast. Lazyjacks are used for furling both mainsail and jib. The mainsail, laced to the boom, is jib-headed; the large jib has a club on its foot. The bowsprit, braced with headrails (flying wooden braces) is rigged with double chain bobstays and chain bowsprit shrouds. In addition to the sail rig, typical of the skipjack, the vessel carries a motorized pushboat suspended over the stern on davits; this can be "chocked" into the stern in order to push the larger boat.

The skipjack is flush-decked. There is a tall trunk cabin aft with a "doghouse" addition with large windows at its forward end, and a companionway slide in the after end. There is also a slant-topped, low cuddy hatch forward, with a slide providing access to the forepeak. The deck is surrounded by a high pinrail around the stern quarters, and a low pinrail atop a lograil at the bows. The vessel carries dredging gear including oyster dredges, rollers mounted on the rails amidships, winders, and a winder engine.

The vessel is painted white and the name, in applied letters on the transom and on the bow, has been painted over in white. The name is also carried on nameboards near the stern. Trailboards mounted on the longhead have the name IDA MAY in gold letters on a lozenge with three flag shields in red, white, and blue, and an eagle/shield/arrows motif on a dark ground. There is a red stripe carried from the longhead back onto the hull below the sheer.

# 8. Significance

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Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/ humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> phillosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other (specify)
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		

Specific dates	1906	Builder/Architect	Unknown
check: Applicable Criteria:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> A	<input type="checkbox"/> B	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> C <input type="checkbox"/> D
and/or			
Applicable Exception:	<input type="checkbox"/> A	<input type="checkbox"/> B	<input type="checkbox"/> C <input type="checkbox"/> D <input type="checkbox"/> E <input type="checkbox"/> F <input type="checkbox"/> G <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> none
Level of Significance:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> national	<input type="checkbox"/> state	<input type="checkbox"/> local

Prepare both a summary paragraph of significance and a general statement of history and support.

This vessel is significant as being one of the 36 surviving traditional Chesapeake Bay skipjacks and a member of the last commercial sailing fleet in the United States. Out of a fleet of hundreds of skipjacks that worked Bay waters in the early years of this century, today only this small number remain to carry on the tradition of working sail.

The skipjack evolved as a distinct type of Bay vessel in the 1890's as a cheaper-to-construct alternative to the earlier bugeyes and other traditional framed craft, in a period when shipbuilding costs were rising and the oyster catch was diminishing. The type was devised by enlarging (to 25 to 60 feet) the hull of the ordinary, unframed, square-sterned Bay crabbing skiff, and giving it a deadrise bottom, a-deck, a cabin, and a sloop rig. The result--with its unframed, hard chine, cross-planked, V-bottom--proved inexpensive to build, easy to repair, and could be constructed by a competent house carpenter. Skipjacks were specifically designed as oyster dredge boats, with wide beams and low freeboard lending stability and providing a large working space on deck. The single masted rig, with sharp-headed mainsail and large jib, was easy to handle, powerful in light winds, and handy in coming about quickly for another pass over the oyster beds.

The Maryland oyster season begins November 1 and ends March 15. Skipjacks must dredge under sail on all days except Mondays and Tuesdays, when they are allowed to use their motorized pushboat for dredging. The pushboat, normally carried on davits at the stern, is lowered into the water and literally "pushes" the skipjack along from behind, the nose of the pushboat resting against a "jig" on the stern of the skipjack. The pushboat can also legally be used to get the skipjack to and from the oyster beds each day. Each skipjack's crew is made up of the captain, who is often also the owner, and five crew members.

IDA MAY is of interest as being one of the older skipjacks still dredging in the Chesapeake fleet. She was built in 1906 in Deep Creek, Virginia following traditional Bay-area design and construction methods. She has worked in the oyster-dredging fleet since her building and is presently based at Deal Island. The vessel is one of the 21 surviving working skipjacks to have been built previous to 1912, although, like other members of the fleet, she has been much repaired over the years. She has some modern additions, including a "doghouse" built onto her cabin trunk for the comfort of the helmsman.

# 9. Major Bibliographical References

Survey No.

See Thematic Group nomination cover form, Continuation Sheets No. 8-13.

# 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property less than one acre  
Quadrangle name Deal Island, MD Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UTM References do NOT complete UTM references

A 18 417040 4224840  
Zone Easting Northing

B                    
Zone Easting Northing

C                  

D                  

E                  

F                  

G                  

H                  

### Verbal boundary description and justification

This working vessel is usually docked at the location indicated in Item 2. Historic boundaries are coterminous with the hull.

### List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	n/a	code	county	code
state		code	county	code

# 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Anne Witty/ M. E. Hayward  
Radcliffe Maritime Museum  
organization Maryland Historical Society date May, 1984  
street & number 201 West Monument Street telephone (301) 685-3750  
city or town Baltimore state Maryland 21201

The Maryland Historic Sites Inventory was officially created by an Act of the Maryland Legislature to be found in the Annotated Code of Maryland, Article 41, Section 181 KA, 1974 supplement.

The survey and inventory are being prepared for information and record purposes only and do not constitute any infringement of individual property rights.

return to: Maryland Historical Trust  
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