

Maryland Historical Trust State Historic Sites Inventory Form

Survey No. T-511
Magi No. 2105115633
DOE yes no

CHESAPEAKE BAY SAILING LOG CANOE FLEET THEMATIC GROUP

AUG 5 1985
SEP 18 1985

1. Name (indicate preferred name)

historic S.C. DOBSON

and/or common log canoe

2. Location

street & number Peach Blossom Road, RFD 1, Box 11 n/a not for publication

city, town Oxford vicinity of congressional district First

state Maryland 024 county Talbot 041

3. Classification

| Category | Ownership | Status | Present Use |
|--|--|---|--|
| <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 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 | Public Acquisition | Accessible | <input checked="" 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 Walter H. Dobson

street & number RFD 1, Box 11 telephone no.: 226-5779

city, town Oxford state and zip code Maryland 21654

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 Maryland Historical Trust Historic Sites Inventory

date 1984 federal state county local

depository for survey records 21 State Circle

city, town Annapolis state Maryland 21401

7. Description

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| | | | |
|---|---------------------------------------|---|--|
| Condition | | Check one | Check one |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> excellent | <input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated | <input type="checkbox"/> unaltered | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site |
| <input type="checkbox"/> good | <input type="checkbox"/> ruins | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered | <input type="checkbox"/> moved date of move _____ |
| <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.

S.C. DOBSON is a 33' 1-3/4" Tilghman-style sailing log canoe, built by James Lowery at Tilghman, Maryland in 1895. She has a beam of 6' 6 1/2". She has a longhead bow, a sharp stern, and a narrow, straight-sided hull. With a Tilghman racing rig she races under No. 6. She is privately owned and her hull is painted the traditional white.

The canoe is log-built in typical Tilghman fashion with carvel-fitted rising strakes and an applied sheer rail. Half-frames tie together the logs and the strakes, and sawn hanging knees support the washboards. There are three heavy horizontal frames on the log bottom which brace the mast-partners. Masts are stepped to the bottom of the hull rather than through thwarts.

The boat has a straight raking stem with a longhead, which is fitted with flying braces of wood and set up with a cable bobstay and two bowsprit shrouds. The stern is sharp with the rudder hung outboard on the straight, raking stern post. Overall, the hull is narrow and straight-sided. An outrigger, or bumpkin, overhangs the stern. There is a centerboard cased in a trunk.

The boat is partially decked, with washboards forming a peapod-shaped cockpit lined with a coaming. There are two masts with adjustable rake. The foremast, 38' long, is stepped in square mast partners on the foredeck. The mainmast, 34' long, is stepped in mast partners carried in a wide midships thwart. The rig is a racing one, with a foresail and mainsail with clubs at the clew and sprits, and a large jib. The foremast is set up with a forestay and two shrouds. The jib is carried on the forestay, clubbed along its foot, and led out on the bowsprit.

The hull is painted the traditional white, as are the washboards. There is brightwork trim on the cockpit coaming. Trailboards have the name S.C. DOBSON, Oxford, carved in script letters and surrounded with a vine motif on a dark green ground, decorated with a red-and-white shield with six red wheat sheaves against a white ground with a wide red horizontal band. The trailboards are carried back onto the hull.

The original 3-log canoe was extensively restored in 1970-71 by the present owner, at which time a piece of the Wye Oak was added to her construction. The original log hull remains unfiberglassed.

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/ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799 | <input type="checkbox"/> art | <input type="checkbox"/> engineering | <input type="checkbox"/> music | <input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899 | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commerce | <input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement | <input type="checkbox"/> philosophy | <input type="checkbox"/> theater |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1900- | <input type="checkbox"/> communications | <input type="checkbox"/> industry | <input type="checkbox"/> politics/government | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> transportation |
| | | <input type="checkbox"/> invention | | <input type="checkbox"/> other (specify) |

Specific dates 1895 Builder/Architect James Lowery

check: Applicable Criteria: A B C D
and/or

Applicable Exception: A B C D E F G none

Level of Significance: national state 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 last surviving traditional Chesapeake Bay racing log canoes that carry on a tradition of racing on the Eastern Shore of Maryland that has existed since the 1840's. In addition, it is a surviving representative of the oldest indigenous type of boat on the Bay--the working log canoe--which was developed in the 17th century by early European settlers from the aboriginal dugout canoe.

Used for transportation and for harvesting the rich bounty of the Bay, log canoes changed little over the centuries. Constructed of from two to seven logs and ranging in length from 20 to 35 feet, they were rigged with one or two sharp-headed spritsails with or without a jib set on raking, unstayed pole masts. Easily and cheaply constructed, some 6300 existed in Bay waters in the 1880's. The working canoes first began to be raced in 1840 and by the 1870's area boatbuilders were building canoes specifically for racing, with lighter, thinner hulls and sharper lines. As mast heights increased to increase sail area the canoes became inherently unstable, necessitating the use of springboards and human ballast. Also part of the racing rig is the outrigger added for balance and to enable the sail tender to sit beyond the overlarge mainsail.

With the invention of the gasoline engine many log canoes were converted to power for oystering, but were then converted back to sail as interest in racing waxed and waned over the years. After peak years of popularity in the 1880's and 1890's, interest in log canoe racing waned in the first two decades of the 20th century only to revived again in the 1920's. The popularity of racing, spearheaded by the Miles River Yacht Club, continued unabated until the present day, although the number of vessels active in the fleet has varied considerably.

S.C. DOBSON is significant as being one of the older canoes in the racing fleet and for retaining her original log hull without a fiberglass coating. She was built in 1895 by James Lowery of Tilghman for Tom Burke and her original name was HATTIE B. Burke owned the canoe until about 1930, after which time she had a succession of owners until being acquired by Walter Dobson, the present owner, who restored her in 1971. At that time she was re-named after his parents, both of whom had the initials "S.C." Dobson's father had had a long association with the sailing canoes, having skippered the JAY DEE, MYSTERY, ISLAND BIRD, and ISLAND BLOSSOM. When the canoe was rebuilt in 1970-71 a piece of the Wye Oak was added to her construction. S.C. DOBSON is of further interest as being one of the few 3-log canoes in the racing fleet.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Brewington, Marion V., Chesapeake Bay Log Canoes and Bugeyes (Cambridge, Md.: Cornell Maritime Press, 1963)

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property less than one acre

Quadrangle name Oxford, MD

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UMT References

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Verbal boundary description and justification

The historic boundary of this movable vessel is co-terminous with the hull. The vessel is usually stored at the location indicated in Item 2.

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 and Dr. Mary Ellen Hayward

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**
Shaw House
21 State Circle
Annapolis, Maryland 21401
(301) 269-2438