

**United States Department of the Interior  
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*  
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

## 1. Name

historic J. C. Lore and Sons, Inc. seafood packing plant

and/or common J. C. Lore Oyster House (preferred)

## 2. Location

street & number Solomon's Island Road (MD Route 2) n/a not for publication

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

state Maryland code 24 county Calvert code 009

## 3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input 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	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input 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 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

name Board of County Commissioners, Calvert County

street & number Calvert County Courthouse

city, town Prince Frederick n/a vicinity of state Maryland 20678

## 5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Calvert County Courthouse

street & number

city, town Prince Frederick state Maryland 20678

## 6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Maryland Historical Trust  
Historic Sites Inventory

has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no

date 1979  federal  state  county  local

depository for survey records 21 State Circle

city, town Annapolis state Maryland 21401

# 7. Description

CT-788

**Condition**  
 excellent     deteriorated    **Check one**  
 good     ruins     unaltered    **Check one**  
 fair     unexposed     altered     original site  
 moved    date \_\_\_\_\_ n/a

## Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

Number of Resources		Number of previously listed
Contributing	Noncontributing	National Register properties
		included in this nomination: <u>0</u>
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u> Buildings	Original and historic functions and uses: commercial/industrial
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u> Sites	
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u> Structures	
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u> Objects	
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u> Total	

### DESCRIPTION SUMMARY:

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 circa 1920 structure destroyed in a hurricane, the building is two stories high, six bays wide by three bays deep, sheathed in novelty 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 cinderblock 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. The facility is currently being adapted for reuse as a museum to house exhibits on the commercial fisheries of Maryland's Patuxent River region.

For General Description, see Continuation Sheet #1

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date entered

Continuation sheet J. C. Lore Oyster House Item number 7 Page 1  
Calvert County, Maryland

GENERAL DESCRIPTION:

The J. C. Lore Oyster House is a large rectangular frame building located at the north end of Solomons Island in Calvert County, Maryland. The principal facade fronts directly on Solomons Island Road, the main street through the village of Solomons, and faces west to the Patuxent River beyond the road. The rear (east) elevation faces The Narrows, a tributary of Back Creek.

The building stands two stories high, six irregular bays wide by three deep, and is sheathed in novelty siding. Below the window sills, the walls are constructed of concrete (to reduce the possibility of flood damage). The low-pitched gable roof is metal clad. A one-story, shed-roofed extension, apparently contemporaneous with the main block, projects from the south gable end. A one-story cinderblock addition, constructed in 1965, spans approximately two-thirds of the rear elevation. Behind the building, at the edge of Back Creek, is a wharf formerly used to off-load seafood from boats.

The fenestration of the west front is irregular and reflects the functional divisions of the building's interior. Windows are 6/6 sash, often grouped in pairs or triples, framed by flat boards. Reading from the left (north) end, the second bay has a pair of large sliding doors which allowed trucks to back into the building for loading; above them, double doors afford access to the second-story storage area. A single door in the southernmost bay on the ground floor opens into the oyster shucking area.

The interior is divided into four major areas (see plan). At the southern end, the oyster shucking room runs the full depth of the building. The long side walls of this narrow rectangular room are lined with concrete tables for shucking oysters, accommodating about fifty workers. The one-story south extension doubles the space for shucking. The floor throughout the building is of poured concrete; interior walls are framed with horizontal planks, and the low ceilings are finished with beaded tongue-and-groove boards. The shucking area retains a collection of original shucker's stands: tall narrow wooden boxes, open on one side, in which oyster shuckers stood while working. The plank bottom of the box raised the shucker's feet a few inches above the concrete floor, and a false bottom could be added to increase the height for shorter workers. As shuckers worked, piles of oyster shells would accumulate on the floor around them; the boxes held the shells away from the shucker's legs.

At the northwest corner of the shucking room, an interior window opens into the adjacent processing room. Shuckers would pass their buckets of shucked oyster meats through this window for weighing and tallying. In the processing room, oysters were washed and canned. This room retains two original blow tanks (large circular stainless-steel vats for washing oysters by mechanical aeration), a skimmer (table for draining and packing oysters), and a

General Description continues on Continuation Sheet #2

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GENERAL DESCRIPTION (continued)

collection of large metal bulk containers in which oysters are packed. A canning machine for putting up oysters in consumer-size containers is also located in this room, as well as a stainless-steel-topped work table.

Next to the processing room is the loading area, a broad space with sliding doors which allowed trucks to back in. North of this area, two large walk-in cold boxes provided for storage of seafood products before shipment. At the rear of the building, across the shipping and processing rooms, a cinderblock addition was constructed in 1965 as a receiving room to store oysters before shucking.

A narrow stair rises from the loading area to the second story; here are located the offices and bathroom for management, and a large, open storage area. The offices are finished in knotty pine paneling, while the framing remains exposed in the storage area.

The building is currently being adapted by the Calvert Marine Museum to house exhibits on the commercial fisheries of the Patuxent River region. The exterior has been repainted in its original color scheme. A frame shed has been built at the rear of the building to house a Victorian steam-powered oyster shell crushing mill (oyster shells were crushed for fertilizer, chicken feed, and road material until conservation measures outlawed this practice in the 20th century), and a board walkway has been constructed connecting the oyster house with the shed. On the interior, the original spaces of the oyster house have not been altered, but rather have been preserved in order to interpret their original functions. Original equipment and artifacts have been retained in place. In the 1965 cinderblock addition, several small frame structures have been built to provide the setting for interpretive text and exhibits describing aspects of the local seafood industries; these structures are freestanding and do not intrude on historic building fabric.

# 8. Significance

CT-788

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 checked="" 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"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		

**Specific dates** 1934 **Builder/Architect** J. B. Lusby

### Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

Applicable Criteria: A, C

Criteria Exceptions: n/a

Level of Significance for evaluation: local

### SIGNIFICANCE SUMMARY:

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 and records covering the entire period of the company's operation from 1922 to 1978. The building is being 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.

For History and Supporting Documentation, see Continuation Sheet No. 3

# 9. Major Bibliographical References

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See Continuation Sheet #4.

# 10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property 0.266 acre

Quadrangle name Solomons Island, MD

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

### UMT References

A	1 8	3 7 2 2 8 0	4 2 4 2 5 7 0
	Zone	Easting	Northing

B			
	Zone	Easting	Northing

C			
---	--	--	--

D			
---	--	--	--

E			
---	--	--	--

F			
---	--	--	--

G			
---	--	--	--

H			
---	--	--	--

### Verbal boundary description and justification

The nominated property includes the single town lot upon which the resource stands; boundaries utilize existing property lines. Boundaries are depicted on the attached plat.

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

state	code	county	code
n/a			

state	code	county	code

# 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Peter E. Kurtze, Assistant National Register Administrator

organization Maryland Historical Trust date November 1983

street & number 21 State Circle telephone (301) 269-2438

city or town Annapolis state Maryland 21401

# 12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national  state  local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature *Alvin A. ...* 2-15-84

title STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER date

For HCRS use only	
I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register	
<u><i>Alvin A. Byers</i></u>	Entered in the National Register
Keeper of the National Register	date <u>3/22/84</u>
Attest:	date
Chief of Registration	

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HISTORY AND SUPPORT:

Since prehistoric times, the seafood resources of the Chesapeake Bay have contributed to the subsistence of the inhabitants of both shores. By the mid-nineteenth century these resources had acquired great commercial importance, as improvements in refrigeration and transportation made possible their export to distant markets. In particular, the rich oyster bars of the Chesapeake Bay and its estuaries increasingly attracted seafood processors from New England and the Delaware Bay, whose local sources were becoming depleted.

J. C. Lore, Sr. (1863-1945) came to Solomons in 1888 from Newport, Cumberland County, New Jersey (then a center of the Delaware Bay oyster industry) to buy and ship local oysters for the Philadelphia packing firm of his uncle, R. T. Lore. In 1920, he established his own oyster packing plant in Solomons; the original structure was destroyed by a hurricane in 1933, and the present J. C. Lore Oyster House was constructed in 1934 to replace it.

From its establishment until declining seafood harvests forced it to cease operations in 1978, the company was an important focal point of the commercial seafood industry in the Patuxent River region. Holding several large commercial and military contracts, it provided a ready market for the catch of local watermen, and employed numerous workers from the local community in its processing plant. Its oyster-processing operation was featured repeatedly by seafood industry journals as among the most modern and efficient in the Chesapeake Bay region (see item 9). (The efficient design of the plant enabled it to accommodate increasing production over time, without the necessity of repeated alterations or rebuilding that characterize the architecture of other successful packing houses in the region, so that the building retains a remarkable degree of architectural integrity.) To augment the supply of oysters purchased from local watermen working natural bars in the Patuxent River and the Chesapeake Bay, the company maintained extensive private grounds in the Patuxent and in Virginia waters where immature oysters were "planted" and allowed to grow to maturity. The company maintained a fleet of three boats for use in its oyster planting operations. Two of these boats survive in the collection of the Calvert Marine Museum and thus retain their association with the oyster house, which is being adapted by CMM to house exhibits on the commercial fisheries of the Patuxent River region: The William B. Tennison, a 60' sailing bugeye constructed in 1899 and converted for powered use for dredging oysters on the company's private beds, is the oldest vessel licensed to carry passengers on the Chesapeake Bay and is listed in the National Register. The Penguin, a 47' Hooper Island draketail, was used by the Lore company in its inspections of water quality and oyster production on its private grounds. The information recorded in these inspections was often used by researchers from academic and scientific institutions, and J. C. Lore, Jr., who managed the company in partnership with his brother G.I. Rupert Lore from 1945 to 1978, was associated with the Department of Geology, Mines, and Water Resources for the state of Maryland. To reduce

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HISTORY AND SUPPORT (continued)

its dependency on outside sources for increasingly scarce seed oysters, the company ran its own experimental propagation program. In addition to oysters, the company packed and marketed large quantities of locally-caught crabs and fish.

Declining seafood harvests in recent decades have taken their toll on packing plants throughout the Chesapeake Bay Region. The Lore operation was among the longest-lived oyster houses on the Western Shore of Maryland's Chesapeake Bay. Of eight shucking houses on the Patuxent River operating in 1961, only one, the Warren Denton Company of Broomes Island, outlasted J. C. Lore and Sons; the Denton company closed after the 1982 oyster season. The Lore company was the longest continually-operating packing house on the Patuxent River.

After the company ceased operations in 1978, the J. C. Lore Oyster House was acquired by the Calvert Marine Museum for adaptive reuse as an exhibit facility to interpret the commercial fisheries of the Patuxent River region. Exhibits will incorporate and be informed by the extensive collection of original equipment and company records which were intact in the building upon its acquisition.

Adaptation will not significantly affect the original fabric and spaces of the building; rather, these will be carefully incorporated into the interpretive scheme.

MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES:

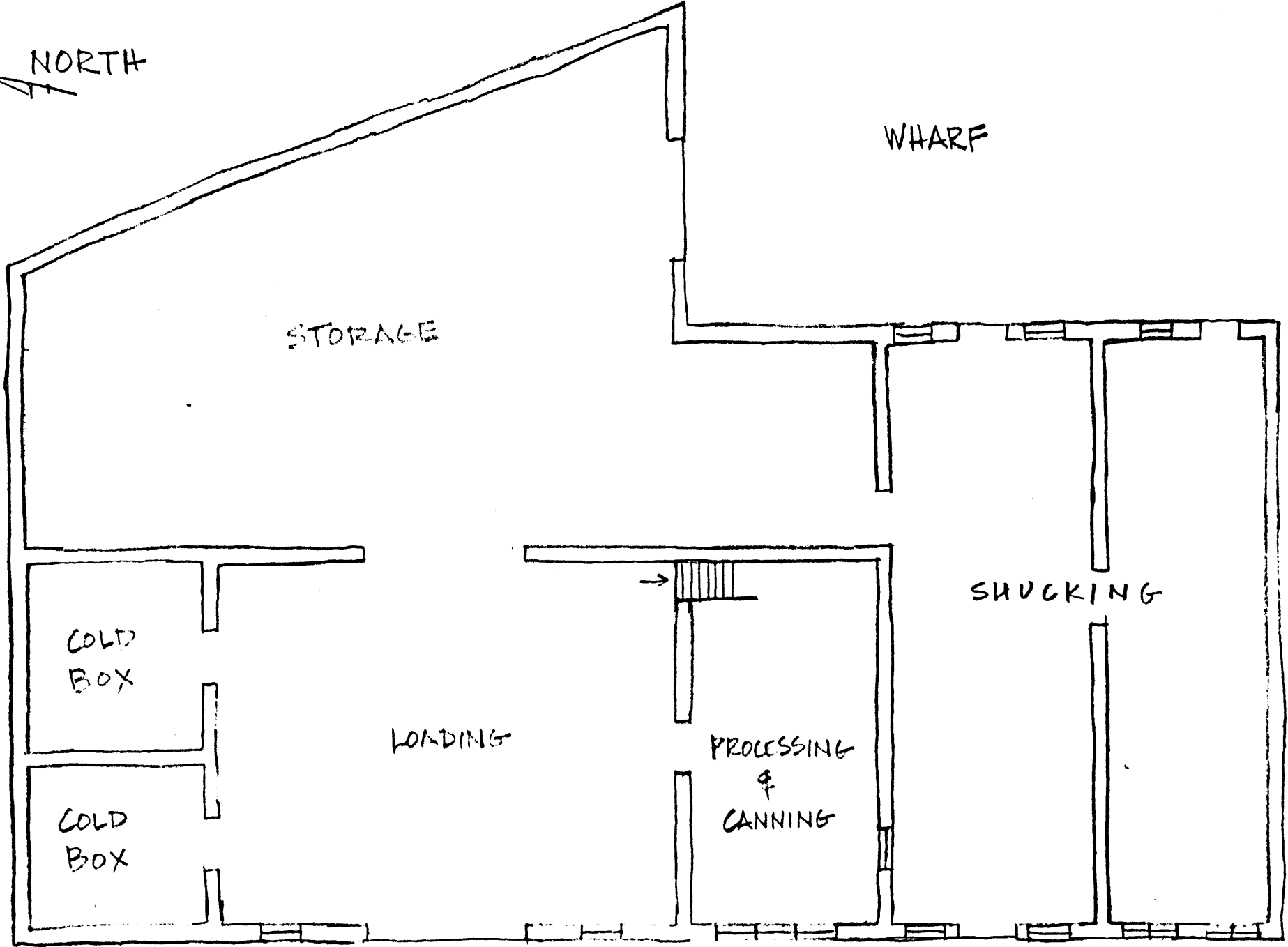
LeVecque, George, "Planned Production Provides Adequate Supplies of Oysters for These Maryland Planters." Southern Fisherman, December, 1951, p. 32.

"76 Years of Oyster Lore," Southern Fisherman, October, 1964.

Obituary of J. C. Lore, Sr., Southern Fisherman, October 1945.



NORTH  
A



J. C. LORE OYSTER HOUSE, CALVERT COUNTY, MARYLAND  
SKETCH PLAN - NOT TO SCALE 11/83



MAGNETIC  
JULY, 1958

SCALE: 1" = 30'

**J. C. LORE OYSTER HOUSE**  
**CALVERT COUNTY, MARYLAND**  
**NATIONAL REGISTER BOUNDARY**  
**NOVEMBER, 1983**