1. NAME OF PROPERTY

Historic Name: J.C. Lore Oyster House

Other Name/Site Number: J.C. Lore and Sons, Inc., Seafood Packing Plant

2. LOCATION

Street & Number: 14430 Solomons Island Road (part of Calvert Marine Museum) Not for publication: N/A

City/Town: Solomons Vicinity: N/A

State: MD County: Calvert Code: 009 Zip Code: 20688

3. CLASSIFICATION

Ownership of Property
- Private:___
- Public-Local: X
- Public-State:___
- Public-Federal:___

Category of Property
- Building(s): X
- District:___
- Site:___
- Structure:___
- Object:___

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	1	buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
1	1	Total

Number of Contributing Resources Previously Listed in the National Register: 1

Name of Related Multiple Property Listing: N/A

4. STATE/FEDERAL AGENCY CERTIFICATION

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this ____ nomination ____ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property ____ meets ____ does not meet the National Register Criteria.

Signature of Certifying Official Date

State or Federal Agency and Bureau

In my opinion, the property ____ meets ____ does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of Commenting or Other Official Date

State or Federal Agency and Bureau

5. NATIONAL PARK SERVICE CERTIFICATION

I hereby certify that this property is:

___ Entered in the National Register
___ Determined eligible for the National Register
___ Determined not eligible for the National Register
___ Removed from the National Register
___ Other (explain):

Signature of Keeper Date of Action

6. FUNCTION OR USE

Historic:	Industry	Sub:	Processing Site
Current:	Recreation & Culture	Sub:	Musuem

7. DESCRIPTION

ARCHITECTURAL CLASSIFICATION: Other: Early 20th-century marine commercial

MATERIALS:

Foundation:	Concrete
Walls:	Wood
Roof:	Metal
Other:	Brick Chimney

Describe Present and Historic Physical Appearance.[1]

J.C. Lore Oyster House is a large rectangular frame marine industrial building overlooking the Patuxent River at the north end of Solomons Island, Maryland. The processing house backs on "the narrows" off Solomons Harbor, where vessels unloaded their catch at pierside. The present structure constructed in 1934 replaces a 1922 structure built on the same site and destroyed in a 1933 hurricane. The interior retains much of its original processing equipment. The facility is part of the Calvert Marine Museum's interpretation of the commercial fisheries of the adjacent Patuxent River.

General Description

The J.C. Lore Oyster House is located on an island in the Patuxent River less than two miles from the Chesapeake Bay. The only road to the island, Solomons Island Road, passes directly in front of the site. Most of the land north from the 1870 Solomons Methodist Church to the end of the island, including the Lore property, is built upon oyster shells discarded from the 1918 Woodburn and the original 1922 Lore oyster houses.[2] In fact the State of Maryland issued a land patent of 2,308 square feet in 1922 to the owners of the J.C. Lore Oyster House for "new" land created from oyster shell fill.

The current structure, dating from 1934, is a two-story building, six irregular bays wide and three 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 1965 cinderblock addition spans two-thirds of the rear elevation. Fenestration of the main block is irregular, and reflects the functional divisions of the interior. Below the window sills, the walls are constructed of concrete to reduce the possibility of flood damage caused by storms. Interior walls are framed with horizontal planks, and the low ceilings are finished with beaded tongue-and-groove boards. The interior is divided into four major work areas: receiving, shucking, processing, and packing. A floor plan is attached.

The floor throughout the building is poured concrete. Floors that required frequent cleaning by water hose such as the processing and shucking rooms have sloping surfaces for self-draining. For example, the west half of the north shucking room slopes down to the east while the east half slopes to the north and south thereby forming a crest running down the middle of this portion of the room. Any water will drain to the sides of room and outside toward "the narrows."

The irregular fenestration consists of windows which are six-over-six 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 partially into the building for loading. Above, on the second story, is another pair of doors with an extended overhead wooden crane to

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[1]Much of this nomination is based on the National Register nomination by Peter E. Kurtze, Maryland Historical Trust, November 1983.

[2]Ralph E. Eshelman and Clara M. Dixon, "Historical Tours through Southern Maryland: Solomons by Foot, Bicycle or Boat" (Solomons, Marland, Calvert Marine Museum, Southern Maryland Today Project, 1983), p. 11-12.

accommodate hoisting of supplies such as shipping cans and boxes to the upper storage area. A single door in the southernmost bay on the ground floor opens into the oyster shucking area. The gutter on the front side is made from sections of semicircular hollowed pieces of wood.

On the Back Creek side of the facility is a bulkhead and quay where the buy-boats and oystermen offloaded and sold their catch.[3] Along the bulkhead are two pipe cranes with pipe boom pulley rigs used to offload the company's two buy-boats and the non-company oyster boats which came directly to the plant to sell their catch. At the north end of the bulkhead is a small hoist house, 4 feet, 6 inches by 7 feet, 8 inches, which protected the hoist equipment and enabled the operator to get out of the weather. This also served as an oyster buying station.

Between 1945 and 1965, boats could tie up very close to a one-story shed attached to the rear of the original building. A pulley hoist system rigged on the roof of the shed allowed unloading directly from the boat to a hole in the ceiling of the former receiving room.

At the rear eastern end of the processing room is the oyster receiving room, a 1965 cinderblock addition covering part of a former open quay. Here the oysters were stored after unloading at the bulkhead via an overhead fixed, enclosed conveyor from the dock area. From here oysters could be carried by wheelbarrow to the shucking rooms as needed. A portable conveyor belt was also available for moving empty shucked shells to the outside shell storage piles.

At the southern end are two oyster shucking rooms which parallel each other and run the full depth of the building. The long side walls of these narrow rectangular rooms are lined with concrete tables for shucking oysters, accommodating about 50 workers. Concrete tables held up well to the punishment of the sharp oyster shells and were easy to clean and maintain to sanitary conditions. The shucking area retains a collection of original shucking stands (others have been added from the Benning Oyster House), shucker's blocks, and shucker's buckets.

The shucking stands are tall narrow three-sided wooden boxes, open on the side where the shucker stood. Shuckers grabbed whole oysters from piles on the concrete tables and opened the shells with special knives. A deft twist of the wrist freed the oyster meat from the shell and placed it in metal buckets. As shells were discarded they fell to the outside of the stand, which protected the workers legs from the sharp edged shells and provided a free space to work even when piles of shell accumulated to several feet in height. The plank bottom of the stand raised the feet of the shucker a few inches above the hard, cold, wet concrete floor. A riser or false bottom could also be added to accommodate the proper height of the shucker to the unadjustable shucking table height.

At the northwest corner of the shucking room, an interior window opens into the adjacent processing room. Shuckers passed their gallon buckets of shucked oyster meats through this window for rinsing, weighing, and tallying. A tally board with each shuckers name on it recorded each bucket shucked. By the mid 1960s the tally board was abandoned and shucked meat was weighed and recorded on work sheets. Payment was later made in cash depending on

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[3]According to a personal communication mailed February 6, 2001, from Richard Dodds, Calvert Marine Museum curator, a new bulkhead was completed in 1998, which extends approximately ten feet beyond the old one. The concrete-slab walkway behind the oyster house has been removed and replaced with a wooden walkway.

the number of buckets or pounds of meat shucked. While not practiced at the Lore operation, many companies gave a token for each bucket of oysters shucked. In the processing room, oyster meats were washed on a skimmer (a large table with a perforated bottom for draining) to free them of mud, worms, and shell grit sometimes caused by the shucking knife on the oyster. The shucking bucket was then rinsed by the shucker and he or she returned to their shucking stand.

This form of work is called "piece work." Skilled workers who could shuck quickly made more money than slow inexperienced shuckers. If payment was in the form of tokens or script, it could be converted to cash, groceries, or other goods in the company store. While many workers at the Lore packing house bought items at the company store, the relationship was more informal than with companies which issued tokens or script. Because of the usual high markup at such stores, Lore workers preferred this informal arrangement.

The skimmed or rinsed meats were further cleaned in a blow tank which pumped air in at the bottom to agitate the oysters, ensuring that all mud and shell grit had separated from the meat. Oyster meat from the blow tanks was drained on a second skimmer table before being packed by hand in various size metal cans. The process of sealing the cans was completed by foot-operated canning machines, later replaced by electric canners.

The processing room retains the original processing equipment that was present when the plant closed as well as any earlier equipment that had been kept as spares. Equipment includes two blow tanks, two skimmers, a scale, tally board, a collection of oyster cans and shipping containers, a foot-operated canning machine, and an electric double-seamer canning machine from Independent Can Corp., Baltimore, Maryland (which is identical to the original machine leased at this plant by the Continental Canning Company) and miscellaneous shucker's measures, dippers, paddles, etc.

Steam was necessary for sterilizing processing equipment to meet state hygiene regulations and for processing seafood such as crabs. The heating unit was located in the east end of the southernmost shucking room. A steam sterilizer is located on the north wall of the cloak room in this south shucking room.

Next to the processing room is the shipping area where double sliding doors allowed trucks to back in. A small window from the processing room to the shipping room contains a chute where the canned oysters were passed to a packer. On the north side of this room are two walk-in cold boxes which provided storage for seafood products prior to shipment and ice for packing. The plant had its own refrigeration and ice-making equipment. Much of the refrigeration machinery was located in the north end of the upper level storage room.

A narrow set of stairs rises from the receiving area to the second story where the offices; a bathroom for management; and a large, open storage area are located. The offices are finished in knotty pine paneling, while the framing remains exposed in the storage areas.

Changes in Physical Appearance

The building fabric has undergone little internal or external physical change except for the 1965 cinderblock addition on the back or east side and installation of a water sprinkler fire suppression system. The front or west side and south sides are essentially identical. The building had a new oil-heated hot water heating system installed in 1945.[4] One of the system's blower fan units has been preserved in the processing room. Radiators were used in the upper floor offices and are still extant. In the same year the oyster bins were resurfaced with cement and a new cloak room for employees built.[5] This is believed to be the room located in the southwest corner of the south shucking room.

When the 1965 addition was added, the lower half of the north wall was rebuilt with cinderblock. A new wooden bulkhead was built eastward from the original bulkhead to provide more space for the building addition and open dock area. It took 10,000 bushels of oyster shell to fill this area.[6] An electric clock on the front external side, visible in early photographs, is no longer in place.

When the plant was sold to the Calvert Marine Museum in 1979, the original plat was subdivided into two parcels. At that time the museum acquired the larger northern parcel containing the processing house and later, in 1997, acquired the second parcel which, by that time, was an empty lot.

On the interior, the 1934 sections of the oyster house have not been altered and are preserved to interpret their original function. One of the cold rooms is fitted as a theater where an introductory film on the fisheries of the river is shown. The southernmost shucking room is used as a classroom for education programs with the shucking tables and other accoutrements of the room maintained. A pot-bellied stove has been reintroduced into the north shucking room where shucking stands, shucking blocks, oyster shells, aprons, etc., have been left just as if the room were still being used for shucking.

Interpretive exhibits, such as a recreated crab-picking house and clam-shucking house, have been built in the 1965 cinderblock portion of the structure. These interpretive exhibits are freestanding and do not intrude on the historic fabric. A small frame shed, considered a non-contributing structure, was built by the museum at the southeast rear of the plant to house a Victorian diesel-powered oyster shell crushing mill which crushed oyster shells for use as fertilizer, chicken feed, and road metal. This mill was acquired from the F.& H. Benning Oyster & Lime Company, Galesville, Maryland, where it was used from 1914 to 1960.

Previously Existing Structure

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[4] *Southern Fisherman*, "Samples Show Oysters Fat and of Good Quality in Maryland," (September, 1945).

[5] Ibid.

[6] *Calvert Journal*, "J.C. Lore and Sons One of the Largest Sea Food Concerns In This Part of the State," (undated newspaper article believed to be from 1927 based on associated article, J.C. Lore Oyster House History file, Calvert Marine Museum).

J.C. Lore and Sons owned a two-story company store located adjacent to the oyster house. This store later served as a multi-purpose lunch room, confectionery, cigar store, and a U.S. Post Office.[7] This structure was demolished in 1995 and the parcel of land on which it once stood was acquired by the Calvert Marine Museum in 1997. This parcel is not included within the boundary of this nomination.

[7] Alton Kersey, phone interview with Ralph Eshelman, 24 August 1993.

8. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:
Nationally: X Statewide:___ Locally:___

Applicable National Register Criteria: A X B___ C___ D___

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions): A___ B___ C___ D___ E___ F___ G___

NHL Criteria: 1

NHL Theme(s): V. Developing the American Economy
1. Extraction and Production
4. Workers and Work Culture

Areas of Significance: Commerce
Industry
Maritime History

Period(s) of Significance: 1934-1951

Significant Dates: 1934

Significant Person(s): N/A

Cultural Affiliation: N/A

Architect/Builder:

Historic Context: XII. Business
B. Manufacturing Organizations
1. Food, Beverages, and Tobacco

State Significance of Property, and Justify Criteria, Criteria Considerations, and Areas and Periods of Significance Noted Above.

The J.C. Lore Oyster House is a substantially unaltered marine industrial building overlooking the Patuxent River at the north end of Solomons Island. While most successful seafood processing plants underwent a series of alterations and additions throughout their operation, the Lore structure is a rare surviving example of a relatively unaltered early-20th-century seafood packing plant. The Lore Company was among the first to ship oysters by parcel post. A major supplier of oysters to ACME and Kroger food store chains, the Lore Company helped to make "Patuxent" brand oysters famous throughout much of the Midwest. The intact original processing equipment significantly adds to the importance of this nomination. The facility is part of the Calvert Marine Museum's interpretation of the commercial fisheries of the adjacent Patuxent River. The property is eligible for listing under NHL criteria 1 and is part of an overall theme study on the "Oyster Fisheries of the United States."[1]

While researching properties associated with the oystering industry, five nationally significant oyster-processing structures have been identified: J.C. Lore Oyster House (1934-1978); Rudolph Oyster House (1908-1947, moved from its original location but still in West Sayville, New York); Thomas Oyster House (1874-1956, originally located in New Haven, Connecticut, moved to Mystic in 1970); Oyster Barge (ca. 1890s-1920s, originally used for culling, shucking, and selling of oysters in New York City area and moved to New Haven, Connecticut and used as saloon and cafe between 1926 and 1928); and Platt & Co. Cannery[2] (1865-1960s, Baltimore, Maryland). These five oyster processing structures nicely complement each other in covering the height of the industry from the 1820s to 1920s as well as representing the major processing stages: culling, shucking, packing, and canning.

Oystering in the Chesapeake Bay

Since prehistoric times, the seafood resources of the Chesapeake Bay have contributed to the subsistence of its inhabitants. By the mid-19th century these resources had acquired great commercial importance, as improvements in refrigeration and transportation made their export to distant markets possible. In particular, the rich oyster beds of the Chesapeake Bay and its estuaries increasingly attracted seafood processors from New England and Delaware Bay, whose local oyster sources were becoming depleted. Since the mid-19th century the commercial seafood industry has been vital to the economy of the Chesapeake Bay region.

As documented by the Chesapeake Bay Foundation, the ecological role of the oyster may be as important to the environment as its commercial role.[3]

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[1]See Associated Historic Contexts section of the National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Documentation Form for "Oyster Fisheries of the United States" (National Register History and Education, National Park Service, 2001) for more information on the oyster fisheries and its associated property types.

[2]The nomination of Platt & Company as a National Historic Landmark was not pursued after the NHL staff determined that integrity issues had compromised its eligibility.

[3] *Oysters: Food, Filters, Fish Habitat,* Chesapeake Bay Foundation Fact Sheet at www.cbf.org/resources/facts/oysters.htm

What most people know about oysters is how they like them prepared. For over a century, Chesapeake Bay watermen have made their living harvesting oysters for just this purpose. Oystering was the most valuable commercial fishery in the Bay until the mid-1980s, when it was overtaken by crabbing. Oysters also have tremendous ecological value, which may be the most important benefit they provide.

Like lots of filters in a giant fish tank, oysters purify the Chesapeake Bay as they filter the water for their food. Dirt, nutrients, and algae can cause problems in Bay waters. Oysters filter these things, and either eat them or shape them into small packets, which are deposited on the bottom
where they are not harmful. The oysters in the Bay could once filter the entire body of water in three to six days. The job would take the remaining Bay oysters almost one full year.

Anyone who fishes the Bay knows that oyster bars (reefs) are among the best places to fish. IN fact, they are teeming with life. The hard surfaces of oyster shells and the nooks between the shells provide places where a host of small animals can live. And the packets that oysters deposit on the bottom provide food. Hundreds of animals use oyster bars: grass shrimp, amphipods, bryozoans, anemones, barnacles, oyster drills, hooked mussels, mud crabs, and red beard sponge to name a few. Many of these serve as food for larger animals including striped bass, weakfish, black drum, Croakers, and blue crabs.

During this century, oysters have been the most harvested animal in the Bay. Between heavy harvest, loss of reef habitat, pollution, and disease, they may be fading away. The Chesapeake's oyster population today is thought to be only one percent of what it was just over a century ago Bay oysters used to grow in tall reefs that were even better for the Bay than today's flat oyster beds. They elevated oysters from the silty bottom into food-rich currents above. Reefs provided far more nooks and crannies for creatures to hide in than flatter beds so.In the 19th century, oyster reefs were so large that they were considered navigational hazards. After 120 years of intense harvest, very few reefs remain in the Bay.

History of the Lore Oyster Company

Joseph Cobb Lore, Sr., (1863-1945) came to Solomons in 1888 at the age of 23 from Newport, Cumberland County, New Jersey (then a center of the Delaware Bay oyster industry), to buy and ship local oysters for relatives and business associates in Philadelphia including William Brown, J. D. Neal, and his uncle, Robert T. Lore.[4] Lore, Sr., also dabbled in the packing of caviar taken during the 1890s spring sturgeon runs in the Coan River area of Virginia. The caviar was shipped directly to a buyer in Germany.[5] In 1922, he established his own oyster packing plant in

[4] Joseph C. Lore, Jr., interview by Ralph E. Eshelman, 18 May 1979 (notes in Lore Oyster House History File, Calvert Marine Museum).

[5] Johnson, p. 72-73.

Solomons. The 1922 structure was destroyed by a hurricane on 23 August 1933, and in 1934 the present J.C. Lore Oyster House replaced it at the same site. J.C. Lore, Jr., managed the company in partnership with his brother G.I. Rupert Lore after Lore, Sr.'s death on 19 July 1945. In 1961 Rupert Lore broke away from the company and started his own oyster business in St. Mary's County.

From its establishment in 1922 until it ceased operation in 1978 (oysters were last packed in 1977 and last bought in 1978), the J.C. Lore Company was an important element in the oyster industry. Among at least 26 oyster-packing companies which operated along the Patuxent River (one of the major tributaries to the Chesapeake) between 1867 and 1984, the Lore Company was the second largest after the 1867 Isaac Solomons Plant (abandoned in 1879 with no vestige of its existence remaining) and the longest continually-operating plant.[6] All of these plants are defunct today except the Warren Denton Seafood plant at Broome's Island, Calvert County.

Patuxent oysters were among Maryland's finest, and described in 1894 as "unusually large and fat."[7] Patuxent River oysters were sold as far west as Chicago under the "Patuxent Brand" name. Many of the packing houses on the river took advantage of the popularity of Patuxent oysters by including "Patuxent" on their shipping cans. Examples include "Patuxent Brand Oysters, Warren Denton & Co."; "Clements-Copsey's Patuxent River Oysters"; "Patuxtent [sic] River Salt Water Oysters, H.M. Woodburn & Son"; and "J.C. Lore & Sons, The Famous Patuxent River Oysters, Solomons, Md."

From 1956 to 1978 the Lore Company sold Patuxent brand oysters to the U.S. Government through the Defense Subsistence Supply System, Bellwood, Virginia. Under the ever watchful eyes of inspectors from the government veterinary corps, fresh oysters were shipped to Baltimore where they were flash frozen in blast freezers and sent to military units all over the world. At least one shipment made it to a research station in Antarctica. Government regulations stipulated oysters were to be shipped in gallon cans, six pounds of meat to the can. The Lore Company was given an award for its suggestion of packing seven pounds of oyster meat per gallon can. This still allowed sufficient room for expansion upon freezing, yet saved in packing and shipping costs.[8]

Straight Line Production and Market Development

The Lore Company oyster processing operation was among the most modern and efficient in the Chesapeake region and was featured repeatedly in seafood industry journals. The Lores used the straight-line production method which was efficient, requiring no unnecessary handling or

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[6] Paula J. Johnson, editor, *Working the Water: The Commercial Fisheries of Maryland's Patuxent River* (Charlottesville, Virginia, Calvert Marine Museum and The University Press of Virginia, 1988), p. 35.

[7] Charles H. Stevenson, "The Oyster Industry of Maryland," *Bulletin of The United States Fish Commission*, vol. 12 for 1892 (Washington, D.C. Government Printing Office, 1894), p. 223.

[8] Alton Kersey phone interview by Ralph Eshelman, 21 September 1993.

wasted motion.[9] The Lore Company sent oysters by parcel post to individuals in Washington, D.C., and Pennsylvania. They obtained contracts to supply chain food stores such as ACME for whom they supplied oysters for nearly 40 years. ACME gave free oyster recipe brochures to its customers proclaiming on the cover "Packed for ACME Markets by J.C. Lore & Sons, Oyster Planters and Packers, Solomons, MD." By 1927 the Lore Company operated three trucks to meet its demands. During the 1950s through the 1970s, the Lore Company ceased its truck fleet and instead used more economical means such as Railway Express out of Baltimore and Dagistine Transfer out of Port Norris, New Jersey to ship its oysters to Kroger stores in Cincinnati, Ohio; Chicago, Illinois; Little Rock, Arkansas; and Madison, Wisconsin.[10]

Private Beds, Planting Oysters, and Experiments

To augment the supply of oysters purchased from local oystermen working the nearby natural oyster beds, the company maintained several hundred acres of private beds in the Patuxent River where they planted seed oysters, which when grown to maturity were harvested. They bought their seed from Virginia, usually taken from the James River, because the state of Maryland used all its seed oysters to plant public oyster grounds. The Lore Company stopped buying seed oysters in 1975 because of cost and poor quality.

In an attempt to become as independent as possible, the Lore Company ran its own experiments on oyster propagation. The company's careful records of water conditions and oyster specimens collected and labelled during these experiments were often used by researchers from academic and scientific institutions. [11] J.C. Lore, Jr., became affiliated with the Maryland Department of Geology, Mines, and Water Resources because of his familiarity with water quality on the Chesapeake through the company's experiments and water quality records.

The company maintained a fleet of three boats for use in its oyster buying and planting operations. Two of these boats and parts of the third survive in the collections of the Calvert Marine Museum. *Wm. B. Tennison* (60 feet) and *Sidney R. Riggin* (55 feet) are both "chunk" bugeyes converted to powered buy-boats. *Tennison*, a National Historic Landmark (1994), is an operational museum vessel whereas *Riggin* was abandoned prior to the establishment of the museum. Part of *Riggin*'s deck has been salvaged for interpretation purposes. Both of these vessels were used to buy oysters on the oyster grounds, plant seed oysters, and dredge mature oysters from the company's private beds. *Penguin*, a 47-foot "speedy" Hooper Island draketail deadrise Chesapeake workboat, was used as an inspection boat to monitor water quality and oyster production on the company's private grounds.

Business Diversity

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[9] George Le Vecque, "Planned Production Provides Adequate Supplies of Oysters for These Maryland Planters," *Southern Fisherman* (December 1951), p. 96.

[10] Joseph C. Lore, Jr. interview by Paula J. Johnson, 20 October 1981 (Patuxent River Project, tape number PRP81-PJR3, Calvert Marine Museum).

[11] These specimens are in the collections of the Calvert Marine Museum.

In addition to oysters, the company packed and marketed large quantities of locally-caught crabs (1925-1945) and fish which kept the company in operation year round. J.C. Lore, Jr., recalls, "From the oyster season, we'd go into shad season, it would just interlock. Shad would come in the spring of the year while we were still in oysters. Then while we're still in shad, the soft crabs would be in. While we're still in soft crabs and crab meat, then the oyster business would come back again. So we had little time for even a day off as far as that goes."[12]

In addition to seafood the company rented boats, sold bait, ran fishing charters, operated the company store discussed above, and operated the local school boat (because of the numerous coves and limited roads it was more economical and faster to take some children to and from school by boat than by school bus).

The Work Force

Holding several large military and food store chain contracts, the Lore plant provided a ready market for the catch of local watermen and employed a workforce drawn from nearby communities. Among the workforce was a clear division of labor. In addition to the owners and management, who were members of the Lore family, the workforce consisted of floor men, boat crewmen, and shuckers.[13]

The floor men were young and strong and performed relatively unskilled, manual labor tasks including unloading oysters from boats, carting oysters to the shucking rooms, and removing empty shells. Both blacks and whites were employed as floor men. Boat crewmen were young watermen employed on the company's workboats harvesting oysters or seeding the Lores' leased oyster beds. Floor men and boat crewmen received weekly salaries.[14]

Although competent oyster shuckers require a high level of technical expertise and knowledge, shucking has historically been considered a dirty, menial job and the people who engaged in the activity were considered to be of relatively low social standing. In Maryland blacks, immigrants, children, and women have traditionally dominated the job. During the time frame encompassed by the Lore Company, the shuckers were composed almost exclusively of black women and men. They worked on a seasonal basis and earned a wage based on piecework. As a consequence, fast and efficient shuckers earned the highest wages. A sampling of the Lore Company financial records indicate the piecework wage as follows: $0.25 per gallon in 1924; $0.35 in 1941; $1.00 in 1952; and $2.50 in 1974.[15]

At times when demand was high, the Lore Company employed nearly 100 shuckers although the workforce was normally around 50. Most of company's workforce was drawn from nearby communities and the Lores operated a bus to help transport the workers to and from work. In

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[12] Ibid., and *Calvert Journal* article cited above.

[13] Johnson, pp. 37-38.

[14] Ibid.

[15] Ibid., pp. 38-44.

times of local labor shortages, the company brought in additional black shuckers from the Eastern Shore of Maryland. These workers stayed in the company dormitory during the week and returned home for the weekend.[16]

From 1981 to 1984, the Calvert Marine Museum, as part of the Patuxent River Folklife Project, interviewed ten individuals formerly associated with the Lore Company. These interviews form part of the museum's reference library.

Declining Harvests and Labor Shortages: The End

Declining seafood harvests and labor shortages in recent decades have taken their toll on packing plants throughout the nation. Closing its doors in 1978, the Lore operation was among the longest operating oyster houses on the western shore of Maryland's Chesapeake Bay and an important focal point of the commercial seafood industry in the mid-Chesapeake Bay area. It stands today largely unchanged from its original appearance of 1934, and still houses much of its original processing equipment as well as all of the processing equipment used by the plant upon closing. Few, if any, oyster houses of this age survive today essentially unaltered and fully equipped.

The Lore Oyster House reflects its original appearance, with alteration limited to a 1965 cinderblock addition at the rear of the structure. It is one of the oldest standing oyster packing houses in the Chesapeake region remaining substantially unaltered. Most other successful oyster houses were subjected to series of expansions over time or completely rebuilt. Furthermore, the plant retains its records covering most of the period of the company's operation from 1934 to 1978 as well as records of the family seafood operation dating from 1892 prior to formation of the company.

The Calvert Marine Museum, Solomons, Maryland, was able to purchase the J.C. Lore & Sons Oyster House along with the buy-boat *Wm. B. Tennison* in 1979 through a Heritage, Conservation, and Recreation Service grant of the U.S. Department of Interior. Under the museum's ownership, both the oyster house and *Tennison* are used to interpret an industry which was vital to the region and the overall nation. The adaptation of the facility to a museum has not compromised the building's architectural integrity.

[16] Ibid., pp. 41, 42.

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

"J.C. Lore and Sons One of the Largest Sea Food Concerns in This Part of the State". *Calvert Journal*, undated newspaper article believed to be from 1927 based on associated article, J.C. Lore Oyster House History vertical file, Calvert Marine Museum, Solomons, Maryland.

Johnson, Paula J., editor. *Working the Water: The Commercial Fisheries of Maryland's Patuxent River.* Charlottesville, Virginia: The Calvert Marine Museum and The University Press of Virginia, 1988.

Kersey, Alton. Phone interview by Ralph Eshelman, 24 August 1993.

Kurtze, Peter E. National Register nomination for J.C. Lore Oyster House. Maryland Historical Trust. November 1983.

Le Vecque, George. "Planned Production Provides Adequate Supplies of Oysters for These Maryland Planters." *Southern Fisherman*, December 1951.

Lore, Joseph C., Jr. Taped interview by Paula J. Johnson, 20 January 1981, Patuxent River Project, tape number PRP81-PJR3, Calvert Marine Museum, Solomons, Maryland.

Lore, Joseph C., Jr. Interview by Ralph Eshelman, 18 May 1979, notes in Lore Oyster House History File, Calvert Marine Museum, Solomons, Maryland.

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

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

"Samples Show Oysters Fat and of Good Quality in Maryland". *Southern Fisherman*, September, 1945.

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

___ Preliminary Determination of Individual Listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.
X Previously Listed in the National Register.
___ Previously Determined Eligible by the National Register.
___ Designated a National Historic Landmark.
___ Recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey: #
___ Recorded by Historic American Engineering Record: #

Primary Location of Additional Data:

___ State Historic Preservation Office
___ Other State Agency
___ Federal Agency
___ Local Government

___ University
_X_ Other (Specify Repository): Calvert Marine Museum, Solomons, Maryland

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

Acreage of Property: 0.266 acre

UTM References:	Zone	Easting	Northing
	A 18	372280	4242590

Verbal Boundary Description:

The nominated property includes the single town lot upon which the resource stands. Boundaries are depicted on the attached plat.

Boundary Justification:

Boundaries fully encompass the historic structure, hoist house, wharf, and hoisting gin poles that maintain integrity to the period of significance.

11. FORM PREPARED BY

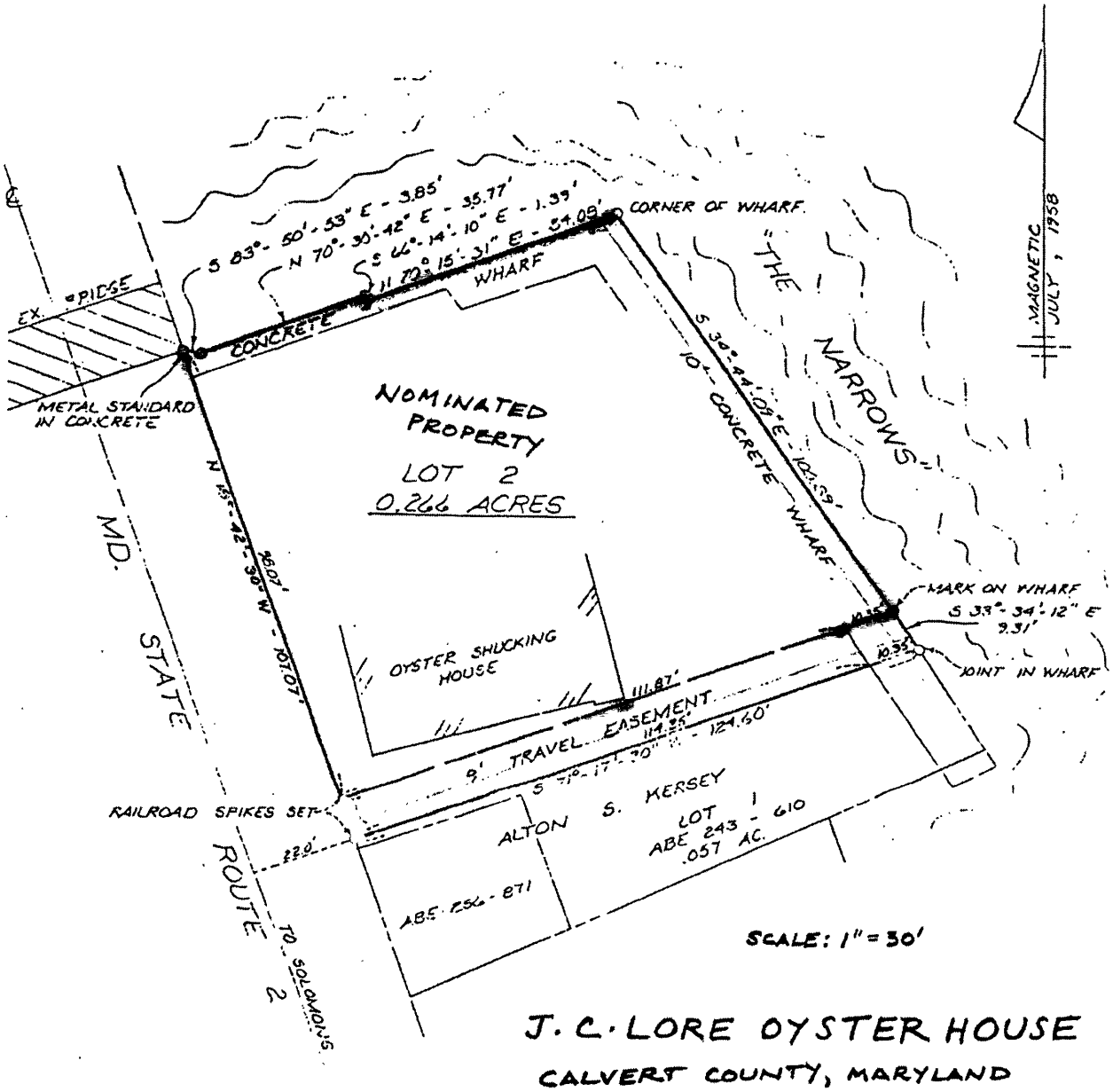
Name/Title: Ralph Eshelman, Maritime Historian
12178 Preston Drive
Lusby, MD 20657

Prepared under a cooperative agreement with the Academy of Natural Sciences, Estuarine Research Center, St. Leonard, Maryland

Telephone: (410) 326-4877

Date: August 26, 1993

DESIGNATED A NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK ON
AUGUST 7, 2001


S 83°-50'-53" E - 3.85'
N 70°-30'-42" E - 35.77'
S 66°-14'-10" E - 1.39'
S 11°-23'-15"-31" E - 54.09'
CORNER OF WHARF
CONCRETE WHARF
EX. RIDGE
METAL STANDARD IN CONCRETE
NOMINATED PROPERTY
LOT 2
0.266 ACRES
N 15°-42'-30" W - 101.07'
96.07'
MD. STATE ROUTE 2
TO SOLOMONS
S 30°-44'-08" E - 104.58'
10'± CONCRETE WHARF
"THE NARROWS"
MAGNETIC JULY, 1958
MARK ON WHARF
S 33°-34'-12" E 9.31'
JOINT IN WHARF
10.55'
OYSTER SHUCKING HOUSE
111.87'
9' TRAVEL EASEMENT
S 71°-17'-30" E - 124.60'
RAILROAD SPIKES SET
22.9'
ALTON S. MERSEY
LOT 1
ABE 243 - 610
.057 AC.
ABE ESL - 871
SCALE: 1" = 30'
J. C. LORE OYSTER HOUSE
CALVERT COUNTY, MARYLAND
NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK BOUNDARY

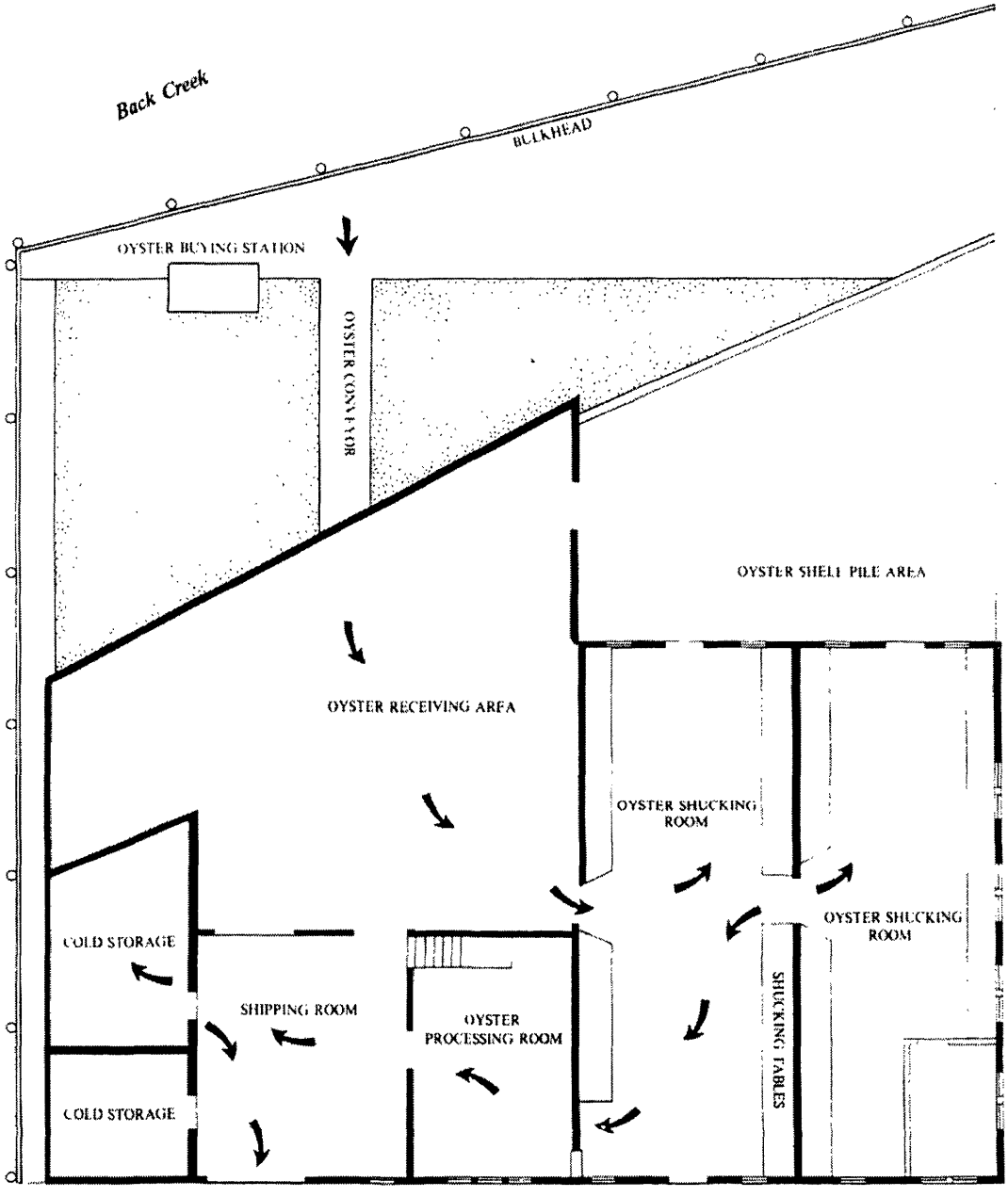


Fig. 50.
Floor plan of the J. C. Lore & Sons oyster house. Arrows trace the route of an oyster from the buying station on Back Creek to the front door of the shipping room from which oysters were loaded onto trucks for shipment. Note the truck backed into the shipping room entrance in fig. 49.

Floor plan of J.C. Lore Oyster House, Solomons (Calvert County), Maryland, taken from Paula J. Johnson, editor, *Working the Water: The Commercial Fisheries of Maryland's Patuxent River* (Charlottesville, Virginia: The Calvert Marine Museum and The University Press of Virginia, 1988).

16. PANNED OYSTERS

1 pt. oysters
½ cup cream
Cayenne pepper
2 tbsp. butter
Salt

Heat the butter in a saucepan and add the oysters. When the edges of the oysters begin to curl, add the cream, salt, and cayenne.

17. SCALLOPED OYSTERS

1 qt. oysters and their liquor
Dry bread or cracker crumbs
Milk
Salt
Pepper
Butter

Take 1 quart of oysters, put in layers in baking dish, alternating with dry bread or cracker crumbs, and season to taste. When dish is filled, add strained oyster liquor and sufficient milk to moisten. Cover top with crumbs and tablespoonful butter in bits. Bake ½ hour in hot oven.

18. OYSTER STUFFING FOR TURKEY OR GOOSE

1 pt. oysters
¼ cup butter
1½ cup cracker crumbs
2 tsp. lemon juice
1 tbsp. chopped parsley
Salt
Pepper

Mix the crumbs, butter, parsley, lemon juice and seasoning, and roll the oysters in the mixture so that each is well covered. Stuff all into the turkey or goose. If desired, the oysters may be chopped coarsely. For a large fowl, it will be necessary to increase this recipe, using the same proportions, in order to obtain sufficient stuffing.

19. OYSTERS IN CREAM

1 pt. oysters
2 tbsp. butter
1 cup cream
Sliced bread, ¼-inch thick
4 tbsp. fine bread crumbs
1 tsp. salt
¼ tsp. pepper

Fry bread to a golden brown, in butter. Drain and pick over oysters. Melt butter, add cream, and bring to the scald. Add oysters, salt, pepper, and heat until edges of oysters curl. Just before removing from stove, scatter in the crumbs. Place fried bread in bottom of hot dish and pour oyster mixture over it. Serve at once.

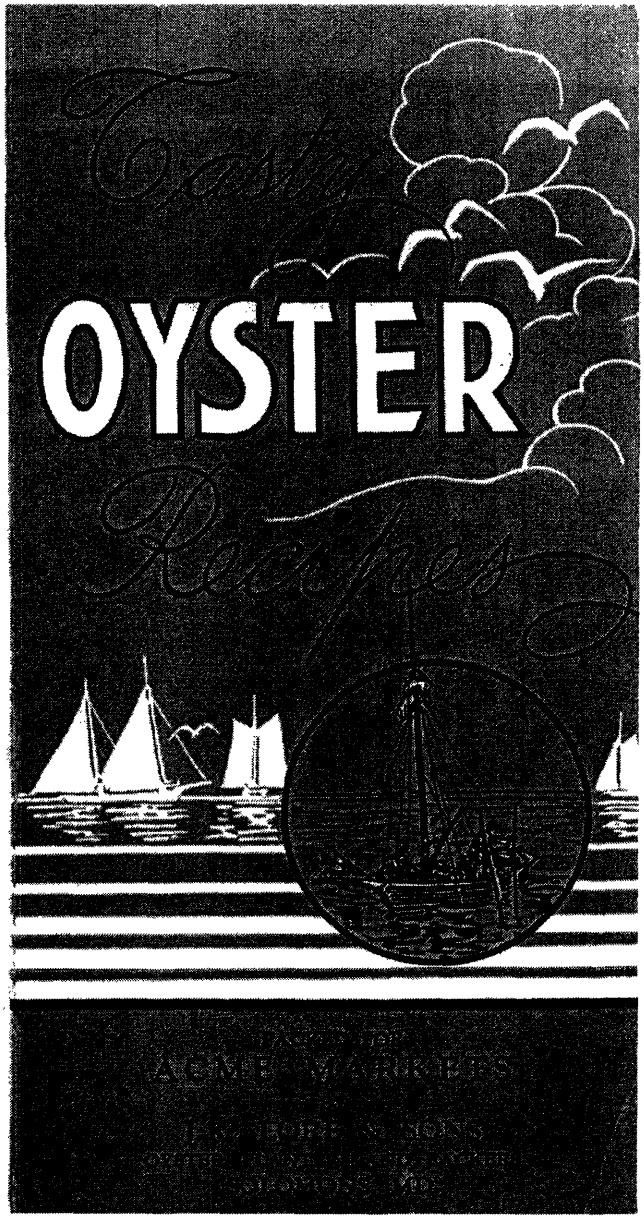


Photo 17. A promotional brochure of oyster recipes printed in 1938 for J.C. Lore & Sons. Courtesy of Ralph Eshelman.