FHR-8-300 (11-78)

United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service

National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

For HCRS use only
received AUG 5 1985
date entered SEP 18 1985

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

1. Name

historic Chesapeake Bay Sailing Log Canoe Fleet TR (Thematic Group)

and/or common

2. Location

street & number see individual inventory forms n/a not for publication

city, town ___ vicinity of congressional district

state code county code

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
___ district	___ public	X occupied	___ agriculture	___ museum
___ building(s)	X private	___ unoccupied	___ commercial	___ park
___ structure	___ both	___ work in progress	___ educational	___ private residence
___ site	**Public Acquisition**	**Accessible**	___ entertainment	___ religious
X object	___ in process	X yes: restricted	___ government	___ scientific
	___ being considered	___ yes: unrestricted	___ industrial	X transportation
	X not applicable	___ no	___ military	___ other:

4. Owner of Property

name see individual inventory forms

street & number

city, town ___ vicinity of state

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. n/a

street & number

city, town state

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Maryland Historical Trust Historic Sites Inventory has this property been determined elegible? ___ yes X no

date 1984 ___ federal X state ___ county ___ local

depository for survey records Maryland Historical Trust, 21 State Circle

city, town Annapolis state Maryland 21401

7. Description

Thematic Group

Condition		Check one	Check one
X excellent	___ deteriorated	___ unaltered	n/a original site
___ good	___ ruins	X altered	___ moved date n/a
___ fair	___ unexposed		

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

Number of Resources Contributing	Noncontributing	
0	0	buildings
0	0	sites
0	0	structures
18	0	objects
18	0	Total

Number of previously listed National Register properties included in this nomination: 0

Original and historic functions and uses: transportation

DESCRIPTION SUMMARY:

This thematic group nomination considers 18 sailing log canoes, the sole active survivors of a traditional vessel type indigenous to the Chesapeake Bay region. The sailing log canoe was developed in the early 17th century as a working vessel by European settlers, who adapted its design from the aboriginal dugout canoe. It was originally used for transportation, fishing, and oyster tonging; by the 1880s, the peak of the Chesapeake Bay oyster industry, some 6300 sailing canoes existed. The advent of the gasoline engine in the early 20th century rendered the sailing canoe obsolete as a working vessel. The small group which remains owes its survival to the longstanding tradition of racing for sport, which was established in the 1840s. Of the 18 canoes in the group, 11 were built before 1903, 5 were constructed in the early 1930s, and 2 were launched since 1940. The surviving canoes are known as "Tilghman-style" canoes, their design having originated in the vicinity of Tilghman Island on Maryland's Eastern Shore. The basic form and construction of these vessels is typical of log canoes throughout the Chesapeake Bay region, with hulls constructed of from 3 to 5 hollowed-out logs fastened together with iron bolts. The logs are left thickest around the centerboard and keel area and then thinned towards the sides, usually to a finish thickness of about one inch. The depth of the hull is built up by attaching carvel-fitted rising planks to a series of interior frames, often made of natural crook knees. In shape, the log canoes have long, narrow hulls, a raking stem with longhead bow, and a sharp stern. All but one member of the group are double-ended. The canoes range in length from 27'4" to 35'6" and all are quite narrow in proportion to their length, the average ratio being about 4.5 to 1. The vessels vary in deck construction. The working log canoe had a completely open deck to allow for maximum stowage of fish or oysters. The racing canoes have another need - protection from the water - and many are half-decked, with decking fore and aft with an open area between protected only by narrow washboards. Other members of the fleet retain the open-decked design, with only narrow washboards along the sides. The sailing canoes all carry a sailing rig consisting of two unstayed masts with sharp-headed fore and main sails with clubs and sprits, and a large jib. The boats are sailed with crews of 7 to 11. For complete list of resources included in this nomination, see Continuation Sheet No. 10.

For General Description, see Continuation Sheet No. 2

GENERAL DESCRIPTION

This thematic nomination seeks to place on the National Register the surviving group of 18 historic sailing log canoes in Maryland. These vessels are of great national and regional significance because they are the sole active survivors of a vessel type indigenous to the Chesapeake region from the earliest days of its settlement - the working log canoe developed in the early 17th century by European settlers from the aboriginal dugout canoe. Originally used for transportation, fishing, and tonging for oysters, the log canoes began to be raced for sport by local watermen in the 1840s, beginning a tradition that today is their sole reason for survival. Although some 6300 sailing canoes existed in Bay waters in the 1880s, the advent of the gasoline engine in the early years of this century rendered them obsolete as oystering vessels. Many of the sailing canoes were converted to power boats and many were simply abandoned. Because of the long-standing tradition of racing, however, a small group of canoes were kept in more or less continuous use and new vessels were added to the fleet, as others were abandoned. Of the 21 surviving canoes in the current racing fleet, 11 were built before 1903, 5 were built in the early 1930s, 2 in the 1940s, and 3 in the 1970s. (The three most recently built canoes were constructed according to traditional design and of traditional materials and workmanship, but are not included in this nomination because they are less than 50 years old.)

An important feature of this group nomination is the Chesapeake Bay itself, because it was the physical environment of the Bay region which created this uniquely local vessel type. The ease and convenience of transportation by water, the need for vessels for fishing, and the abundant forests led the native Indians to fashion dugout canoes using the technology available to them - stone tools and fire. Having the same needs for transportation and fishing, the early Chesapeake settlers soon adapted the native Indian canoe to their own uses, gradually enlarging them, with their superior technology, and adding sails. The early canoes were small, 20' to 30' in length and were built of a single large log. As large timbers became scarce, local boatbuilders learned to fit two or three narrower logs together side by side, fastening them with iron bolts. Once the technology of a multiple log hull had been achieved, canoes began to be built to greater lengths and by the mid-19th century canoes of 38' to 50' in length were being built with standing rigging. This large canoe form led to the brogan, a 40' to 60' vessel with a log bottom and framed and planked sides, and to the even larger bugeye, a 50' to 80' vessel with log bottom especially developed as an oyster dredge boat after the Civil War.

Log canoes were important transportation and fishing vessels in the 18th century but it was the beginning of the oyster industry in Maryland in the early 19th century that caused their widespread proliferation. The sailing log canoe proved the perfect vessel for tonging for oysters in shallow waters because it was cheap and easy to build and held up well as a working vessel - the thick log hull being little affected by the constant wear and tear of loads of oyster shells. Although the larger dredge boats were the most prominent

See Continuation Sheet No. 2

GENERAL DESCRIPTION (continued)

vessels in the Maryland oyster fleet, their numbers never approached those of the log canoes and they probably were not responsible for as large a proportion of the annual oyster harvest as were the independent watermen outfitted with only a log canoe and a pair of tongs.

Log canoes first began to be raced by the watermen in 1840 in the St. Michaels area and by the 1870s local boatbuilders were building canoes specifically for racing, with lighter, thinner hulls and sharper lines. A whole new racing rig developed as owners outfitted their vessels with taller masts to carry more sail area and added extra, light air sails. Soon the canoes had become so unstable that they had to be outfitted with an outrigger for balance and had to carry springboards, or hiking boards, for human ballast. The annual log canoe races became an important local event for Maryland watermen, with the peak years of popularity coinciding with the boom years of the oyster fisheries in Maryland - the 1880s and 1890s.

With the invention of the gasoline engine many log canoes were converted to power for oystering and interest in racing the canoes waned in the first two decades of the 20th century. The revival of Chesapeake Bay log canoe racing was spearheaded by the Miles River Yacht Club, formed in 1924, which organized a series of races to be held in the St. Michaels area. The older canoes that had survived intact began to race again and were joined by a group of new canoes built in response to the enthusiasm the revival of racing was generating. A number of the old canoes that had been converted to power were converted back to sail again so they could join the racing fleet. In 1933 the Chesapeake Bay Log Canoe Association was organized to foster and develop the sport and proceeded to adopt a formal code of racing rules and restrictions that would help preserve the craft in its traditional form. The success of their efforts has been manifested in recent years, as three new canoes were added to the racing fleet - all built on traditional lines and according to traditional building practices. There is little doubt that the survival of the old log canoes is only due to the revival of interest in racing generated by the Miles River Yacht Club, and that the future existence of this traditional Chesapeake Bay vessel is entirely dependent on its continuing popularity as a racing craft.

There were three distinctly regional types of log canoes developed in the Chesapeake area in the 18th and 19th centuries - the Poquoson, Pocomoke, and Tilghman Island style canoes. While examples of all three types survive in local museum collections, as converted-to-power workboats, or as derelicts in the backwaters of the Bay in both Maryland and Virginia, only the Tilghman Island type has survived under sail. Of the 21 canoes in the nominated group, all but one were originally built as Tilghman-style canoes and the exception, originally built as a Pocomoke canoe, has since been converted to a Tilghman-style rig.

See Continuation Sheet No. 3

GENERAL DESCRIPTION (continued)

The Poquoson canoe type was developed on the western shore of Virginia in an area around the village of Poquoson on the York River. The double-ended hull usually had a straight, moderately raking stem and stern post. Although traditionally two-masted, the Poquoson canoes began to be rigged with only one sharply-raked mast in the second half of the 19th century. The canoes had a shoal draft and were fitted with centerboards.

On the lower Eastern Shore of Maryland and into Virginia a different style of canoe was built, known as a Pocomoke, or Naticoke, canoe, after the rivers around which the building was centered. These canoes were low-sided and usually narrow double-enders, with curved, raking stems. The hull was made distinctive by the use of a lap-straked sheer strake, or rising strake, which formed most of the topsides above the water line, and by the use of high and prominent coamings, running nearly the length of the boat. The rig was an unusual and striking one - with two masts that raked sharply aft and a third, short mast set in the bow which raked sharply forward. This sail paln was called the "stick-up rig" and seems to have derived from the periagua of earlier times.

The third style of canoe, and the one that survives under sail in the present-day Maryland racing fleet, is known as a Tilghman-style canoe. It was built on the Eastern Shore of Maryland in an area extending north from the Choptank River to Kent Island, with building centered around Tilghman Island. These canoes have a two-masted rig with a bowsprit and jib. In canoes built prior to 1885 there is usually a straight, almost vertical stem and a stern post with a marked rake. After that date most of the Tilghman canoes adopted the longhead, or clipper, bow popularized by the much larger bugeyes and in most cases the bows are decorated with trailboards. The Tilghman style canoes were initially fitted with false keels - a deep plank set on edge running the full length of the bottom, but the centerboard was introduced to this type of canoe in 1872 and was in fairly common use by the 1880s.

All of the vessels in this nomination are traditional Chesapeake Bay log canoes, built of wood according to the established type and following very similar lines. They all show traditional Bay-area log construction, with hulls constructed of from 3 to 5 hollowed-out logs, usually of native loblolly pine, fastened together with iron bolts. The logs are left thickest around the centerboard and the keel area and then thinned towards the sides, usually to a finish thickness of about 1". The depth of the hull is built up by attaching carvel-fitted rising planks to a series of interior frames, often made of natural crook knees. In shape, the log canoes have long, narrow hulls, a raking stem with longhead bow, and a sharp stern. All but one member of the group is double-ended, the traditional design. The exception is an experimental vessel built by an important local boatbuilder (John B. Harrison) in the 1930s. The canoes range in length from 27'4" to 35'6" and all are quite narrow in proportion to

See Continuation Sheet No. 4

GENERAL DESCRIPTION (continued)

their length, the average ratio being about 4.5 to 1. The vessels vary in deck construction. The working log canoe had a completely open deck to allow for maximum stowage of fish or oysters. The racing canoes have another need - protection from the water - and many are half-decked, with decking fore and aft with an open area between protected only by narrow washboards. Other members of the fleet retain the open-decked design, with only narrow washboards along the sides. The surviving Chesapeake Bay sailing canoes all carry a Tilghman-style sailing rig, consisting of two unstayed masts (the foremast is occasionally stayed) with sharp-headed fore and main sails with clubs and sprits and a large jib. The boats are sailed with large crews (7 to 11) and balanced with heavy centerboards as well as moveable springboards which help counter-balance the force of the wind against the considerable sail area, keeping the boat from overturning.

Although the builders of the thousands of log canoes that worked the Bay waters at the turn of the century were generally anonymous watermen, once canoes began to be built with racing in mind, the individual builder gained in importance and visibility. Men like Robert Lambdin of St. Michaels, who put the first centerboard in a Tilghman Island canoe in 1872 and was famous for his DASHAWAY of 1877; James Lowry, who built the MARY RIDER in 1877; Charles Tarr: and William Sidney Covington all gained local fame for their swift canoes that won race after race. The popularity of the races fostered competition among the builders, as each tried to build a canoe that would beat those of his rivals, or would be faster than the previous canoe he had built. Remarkably, some of the products of the most prominent builders of this golden era of log canoe racing have survived to the present day and are included in this nomination. The are: the ISLAND BIRD and ISLAND BLOSSOM, built by W. S. Covington in 1882, and 1892, respectively; the MAGIC and BILLIE P. HALL, built by Charles Tarr in 1894 and 1903, respectively; and the S. C. DOBSON, built by James Lowry in 1895.

These early canoes have continued to play an important role in the history of the racing fleet, for they served as models for the newer canoes that began to be built with the revival of interest in log canoe racing that took place in the late 1920s and early 1930s. The two most prominent builders of this era - John B. Harrison and Oliver Duke - who are represented by 7 of the surviving canoes, very self-consciously sought to emulate, or improve upon design features of the best-known of the early boats. Harrison's experimental FLYING CLOUD and JAY DEE of 1931-1932 have proved to be among the fastest of the racing fleet. Harrison, a traditional workboat builder who was best known for his bugeyes and skipjacks, was inspired by the quest for speed to design and build two highly successful, experimental log canoes, the JAY DEE of 1931 and the FLYING CLOUD of 1932. The vessels were experimental in that they had square sterns instead of the traditional sharp stern, but because the strict rules of the Racing Association disallowed anything but the traditional sharp-sterned boats from competing in the more important races, the FLYING CLOUD was converted

See Continuation Sheet No. 5

GENERAL DESCRIPTION (continued)

to a sharp-sterned design not long after her building. Oliver Duke, a naval architect who built log canoes in his spare time, followed extremely traditional designs and methods in the 4 canoes of his that have survived - the NODDY (1930), EDMEE S. (1930s), PATRICIA (1942), and OLIVER'S GIFT (1947); the latter two vessels are less than 50 years old, but are included in this nomination because of their exceptional significance in representing the later phase of the work of Oliver Duke, recognized as a master designer and craftsman of racing log canoes.

Thus a revival of interest in racing was followed by a revival of interest in building racing canoes in the manner of the well-known builders of the past. When interest in racing revived again in the late 1960s, a second building revival followed - with each of the new builders clearly inspired by designs of the past and self-consciously attempting to create canoes according to traditional methods and making use of design elements of the best of the old canoes. It is not a coincidence that all three of the new canoes were built by men who had previously restored an old canoe - the SPIRIT OF WYE TOWN (1972) by Sidney Dickson who had restored PERSISTENCE (1890s); TENACEOUS (1976-1979) by John Chamberlain who had restored ISLAND LARK (1901); and FAITH P. HANLON (1976) by William Hanlon who had restored SANDY (c.1880).

This thematic nomination is based on a survey of surviving traditional Chesapeake Bay craft conducted by the Radcliffe Maritime Museum of the Maryland Historical Society, under a grant from the Maryland Historical Trust in 1983 and 1984. Dr. Mary Ellen Hayward, Curator of the Maritime Museum and an architectural and local historian, served as Project Director. Anne Witty, a small craft specialist and recent graduate of the Winterthur Program in Early American Culture, who has served an apprenticeship in Mystic Seaport's small craft program, actually surveyed the vessels and provided written descriptions and historical data. Photographs of the canoes were taken by Michael Wootton, a noted local photographer who has specialized in maritime subjects and whose work has appeared in Wooden Boat, Chesapeake Bay Magazine, and Soundings. The photographs and survey data were gathered in the summer and fall of 1983, and the spring and summer of 1984. Dr. Hayward then coordinated the survey material with historical data available at the Maritime Museum, and working with Anne Witty, prepared the survey forms attached.

Because only 21 sailing log canoes survive out of a fleet that once numbered in the thousands, and because these canoes are the only active representatives of a vessel type that dates to the earliest days of Maryland's history, it was decided to include all of the sailing log canoes identified in the Chesapeake region in the survey. Despite the fact that several of the canoes were built in recent years, they were included in the survey because of the overall importance and rarity of the vessel type, and because they represent the continuation of important regional traditions in form, construction and use.

8. Significance

Thematic Group

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

Specific dates 1882-1947 **Builder/Architect** various

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

SIGNIFICANCE SUMMARY:

The sailing log canoes of the Chesapeake Bay are significant as a group because they are the last active representatives of the oldest indigenous vessel type on the bay - the working log canoe - which was developed in the 17th century by early European settlers from the aboriginal dugout canoe. They are also significant as a group because they carry on a tradition of racing on the Eastern Shore of Maryland that has existed since the 1840s and which has, in itself, ensured the survival of this rare and distinctive vessel type. Although no longer used for oystering, the surviving log canoes are important as the only sailing representatives of the vessel type that was once the mainstay of the Chesapeake oyster fishery at a time when that industry was the largest of its kind in the country. In the peak years of the Bay oyster fisheries (the 1880s) some 6300 log canoes were used in the region to tong for oysters. Later, with the invention of the gasoline engine, the log canoe became the first commercial power boat on the Bay, with an engine installed in the old log hulls and the sails removed. In terms of marine architecture, the sailing log canoes are of great significance as the only active examples of a type of vessel that shows a unique method of construction indigenous to the Bay region, and which has basically changed little over the past 350 years. Culturally, the Chesapeake Bay log canoes are significant for the central role they have played in the lives of Maryland's watermen, enabling generations of watermen who could not afford a larger vessel to earn a living with a log canoe and a pair of hand tongs. And as members of today's racing fleet, they carry on an important local tradition that began with the working watermen in the 1840s and has continued as a self-conscious appreciation and perpetuation of Eastern Shore traditions.

For History and Supporting documentation, see Continuation Sheet No. 6

9. Major Bibliographical References

See Continuation Sheets No. 11, 12, 13 and 14.

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property See individual inventory forms

Quadrangle name _____ **Quadrangle scale** _____

UMT References For all Geographical Data, see individual forms

		Zone	Easting	Northing
A				
B				
C				
D				
E				
F				
G				
H				

Verbal boundary description and justification

See individual inventory forms.

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

state	n/a	**code**	**county**	See Continuation Sheet No. 10	**code**
state		**code**	**county**		**code**

11. Form Prepared By

name/title	Mary Ellen Hayward, Curator		
organization	Radcliffe Maritime Museum Maryland Historical Society	**date**	December 1984
street & number	201 West Monument Street	**telephone**	(301) 685-3750
city or town	Baltimore	**state**	Maryland 21201

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

_X_ 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 [signature] 8-1-85

title STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER **date**

For HCRS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

[signature] **date** 9/18/85

Keeper of the National Register

Attest: See Continuation Sheet for Nomination **date**

Chief of Registration

GPO 938 835

HISTORY AND SUPPORT:

The Chesapeake Bay log canoe is the oldest indigenous vessel type on the Bay, having been adapted by the first European settlers from the aboriginal dugout canoe. Used throughout the 17th and 18th centuries for transportation and harvesting the rich bounty of the Bay, the log canoe really came into its own as a vessel type with the growth of the Chesapeake oyster industry in the 19th century. The Chesapeake oyster fishery dates to the early 1800s when vessels from Delaware, New Jersey, New York, and New England came to the area to dredge for oysters. Depletion of the Bay's oyster supplies appeared inevitable and in 1820 the first conservation laws were passed prohibiting dredging in Maryland waters. These laws restricted the harvesting of oysters to hand tongers operating from small vessels like log canoes. Cheap and easy to construct, and able to be operated by one or two men, the log canoe became the most common vessel used in the oyster fisheries.

The 1820 conservation laws proved unenforceable, especially after the establishment of Thomas Kensett's first oyster cannery in Baltimore in 1828. Kensett had been awarded the first American patent for his process to "preserve animal, vegetable, and other perishable goods." Because oysters were an extremely perishable product for which there was already a wide demand, they proved the ideal first product to be experimentally mass-marketed through the use of the canning process. Kensett's canning process allowed for national distribution of Maryland's oysters and markedly increased the demand for the product. In 1865 the earlier conservation laws were amended to allow dredging under sail in specific deep water areas by licensed Maryland vessels only. It was in this era that the Chesapeake Bay bugeye was developed from its ancestor the log canoe, as a vessel specifically designed as an oyster dredge boat. The log construction of the canoes proved ideal for an oyster work boat as the thick log bottoms held up well under the constant wear and tear of the sharp oyster shells. Additionally, the log construction method, developed in the log canoes, was much cheaper and quicker than building by traditional framing methods, because the entire hull could be constructed by merely hollowing out and fastening together 5 to 9 logs, instead of attaching many sets of frames to a keel and then planking the entire exterior of the vessel. Thus, when a boat was needed that was large enough to pull a dredge over the oyster beds and to stow large quantities of oysters, it seemed natural to local boatbuilders to simply enlarge the log canoe type, frame up its sides, and deck it over, thereby creating the bugeye. Other, traditionally framed vessels - sloops, schooners, pungies - also entered the dredging fleet and by the peak years of the 1880s there over 700 licensed Maryland vessels engaged in dredging for oysters. In 1884-1885 a record number of 15 million bushels of oysters were marketed from the Bay.

See Continuation Sheet No. 7

HISTORY AND SUPPORT (continued)

The fact that dredging became legal in 1865 did not dim the popularity of the log canoe as an oystering vessel and by the 1880s some 6300 were working in Bay waters with another 175 being added to the fleet annually. Whereas the large vessels used in the dredging fleet were subject to the vicissitudes of the annual fluctuations in oyster prices and the size of the catch, the log canoes could survive hard times because they required little investment and up-keep. More importantly, because they did not involve a large capital investment, the log canoes enabled the poorer residents of the Bay region to share in the bounty of the growing oyster industry. It is probably not a coincidence that many period illustrations and photographs from the late 19th century show black watermen tonging from log canoes.

The advent of the gasoline engine actually helped save the log canoe as a vessel type, because it kept them economically viable. In fact, the log canoes became the first power boats on the Bay because the log hulls were easily converted to power by filling in the centerboard slot and drilling a hole through the stern for the propellor shaft. Equipped with engines, the old log canoes continued to be used for tonging for oysters long after the large sailing dredgeboats - the bugeyes, sloops, schooners, pungies - had disappeared.

The working watermen first began to race their canoes in the 1840s, with organized races held annually at St. Michaels. The competition became so fierce that soon builders were designing canoes especially for racing, with lighter, thinner, narrower hulls and larger sail areas. The inherent instability of the canoes became more pronounced with these changes, but some local builder devised an ingenious method of keeping the tender craft upright - 12' to 15'-long planks called "spring boards" or "hiking boards" which extended out over the weather gunwale with the inner end placed under the lee washboard. Several men sitting on the outer ends of these boards acted as counterbalances to the weight and force of the sail area aloft.

After a brief hiatus during the Civil War years, log canoe racing began in earnest again in the 1870s, with competition being organized by the Chesapeake Bay Yacht Club after 1885. This was the era of some of the most famous canoes ever built - by men like Charles Tarr, James Lowery, Robert Lambdin, and William Sidney Covington - canoes that created standards of excellence for the sport. With the advent of the gasoline engine and power boating, interest in racing log canoes waned in the early years of the 20th century and though attempts were made to revive interest in 1910 and again in 1921, they were unsuccessful. Finally, in 1924 log canoe racing began again in earnest under the sponsorship of the newly formed Miles River Yacht Club and in 1933 the Chesapeake Bay Log Canoe Association was organized to foster and develop the sport. The Association adopted a formal code of racing rules and restrictions intended to both preserve

See Continuation Sheet No. 8

HISTORY AND SUPPORT (continued)

the traditions of the sport and the ancient form of the canoes. The revival of interest in racing the canoes in the late 1920s and early 1930s led to a revival of interest in building canoes according to traditional methods and several were added to the fleet in these years, most of which survive today. The canoes compete in a series of annual races held under the auspices of the chief Eastern Shore yacht clubs, with major events being the race for the Governor's Cup (established in 1927), and races for the "Covington Prize" for canoes built prior to 1917 and established in memory of the important canoe builder, William S. Covington, and the "John B. Harrison Trophy" - for canoes built since 1917, in honor of the best known of the more recent canoe builders. Racing has continued uninterrupted to the present day, with the number of vessels in the fleet fluctuating from the teens to the twenties as old vessels are "retired" and newly-built or restored vessels take their place.

The Chesapeake Bay log canoe only continues to exist as a sailing vessel because of the activities of the Chesapeake Bay Log Canoe Association and the continuing tradition of racing on the Eastern Shore of Maryland. It is not too strong a statement to suggest that if the Miles River Yacht Club had not been founded in 1924 and revived the popular log canoe races, the only canoes that would survive today are those in derelict condition in the several Bay-area museum collections. And yet, instead, the tradition of racing has perpetuated a vessel type that has its roots deep in Chesapeake history, even though that vessel type is no longer economically viable. If, however, the small group of racing aficionados who support and maintain the current fleet of sailing log canoes dwindle or lose interest in the sport, the traditional Chesapeake Bay sailing log canoe will cease to exist.

The group of Chesapeake Bay log canoes is significant in terms of the following areas:

Commerce - Since the 17th century the log canoe has played an important role in the Chesapeake fisheries, serving as a general fishing and crabbing vessel, but more importantly, as the major vessel used by oyster tongers in the 19th and early 20th centuries. Additionally, outfitted with gasoline engines, the log canoes became the first power boats to be used commercially on the Bay.

Economics - As a cheap and easy-to-construct vessel, the log canoe has always played an important role in the Chesapeake economy by providing a means of earning a living for the ordinary watermen who could not afford a larger vessel, but yet wanted to retain an independent lifestyle. Because so many log canoes were a part of the Chesapeake oyster fisheries in the latter part of the 19th century, the contribution they made to the large

See Continuation Sheet No. 9

HISTORY AND SUPPORT (continued)

harvests of those years is considerable. Historically, the oyster industry has been important to the economy of the state and particularly the Bay region for well over a century. Related industries such as canning and can-making, label-making, and the fertilizer industry are a direct result of the prominence of the oyster fisheries in Maryland. Because of the prominence of Maryland's oyster fishery, canning became the 2nd largest industry in Baltimore during the second half of the 19th century, providing employment for large numbers of newly arrived immigrants and blacks.

Engineering/technology - As examples of a local, regional innovation in marine architecture, originally derived from the aboriginal dugout canoe and adapted by local watermen to their needs for a fishing and oyster tonging vessel, the Chesapeake Bay log canoes are particularly important as survivors of a unique, indigenous vessel type that is over 300 years old.

Exploration/settlement - The earliest log canoes were used by the first European settlers for exploration in the Bay area.

Social - As the last surviving sailing log canoes in the Bay region, the vessels serve as a link to the past era of the oyster fisheries and to the watermen's lives. The tradition of racing carried on today is a self-conscious application and perpetuation of long-established traditions and life-styles of Maryland's watermen.

Transportation - Because of the geography of the Chesapeake Bay, with its thousands of miles of shoreline, all local craft have always played an important role in local transportation. Because it was so easily and cheaply constructed, the log canoe served as one of the major local transportation methods during the 17th through 19th centuries.

Two of the vessels included in the nominated group are less than 50 years old: PATRICIA (1942) and OLIVER'S GIFT (1947). These canoes are included in the nomination however because of their exceptional significance in representing the later phase of the work of Oliver Duke, a recognized master designer and craftsman of log canoes. The two later vessels are similar in design and construction to two other surviving Duke canoes which were constructed in the early 1930s, the NODDY and EDMEE S., also included in the nominated group.

Three new canoes were added to the racing fleet in the 1970s, heralding what may be a second revival of interest in log canoe racing; however, as insufficient time has passed to determine their significance, these most-recent canoes are excluded from the nominated group.

7. SUMMARY DESCRIPTION (continued)

The following resources are included in this thematic group nomination:

T-498 Billie P. Hall (1903
T-499 Edmee S. (ex-Cecelia Mae) (early 1930s)
T-501 Flying Cloud (1932)
T-502 Island Bird (1882)
T-503 Island Blossom (1892)
T-504 Island Lark (1901)
T-505 Jay Dee (1931)
T-506 Magic (1894)
T-507 Noddy (1930)
T-508 Persistence (1890s)
T-509 Rover (1886)
T-510 Sandy (late 19th century)
T-511 S. C. Dobson (1895)
K- Silver Heel (1902)
K- Island Image (1885)
QA-422 Mystery (1932)
D-648 Patricia (1942)
AA-375 Oliver's Gift (1947)

10. COUNTIES CODE:

Talbot	041
Dorchester	019
Kent	029
Anne Arundel	003
Queen Anne's	035

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United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

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received
date entered

Continuation sheet | Item number | Page 1

Multiple Resource Area
Thematic Group

dnr-11

Name Chesapeake Bay Sailing Log Canoe Fleet TR
State MARYLAND

COVER accept 9/18/85

Nomination/Type of Review		Date/Signature
1. PATRICIA Substantive Review	Keeper	9/18/85
	Attest	
2. OLIVER'S GIFT	Keeper	9/18/85
	Attest	
3. ISLAND IMAGE — Entered in the National Register	for Keeper	Delores Byrd 9/18/85
	Attest	
4. SILVER HILL — Entered in the National Register	for Keeper	Delores Byrd 9/18/85
	Attest	
5. MYSTERY — Entered in the National Register	for Keeper	Delores Byrd 9/18/85
	Attest	
6. BILLIE P. HALL — Entered in the National Register	for Keeper	Delores Byrd 9/18/85
	Attest	
7. S. C. DOBSON — Entered in the National Register	for Keeper	Delores Byrd 9/18/85
	Attest	
8. SANDY — Entered in the National Register	for Keeper	Delores Byrd 9/18/85
	Attest	
9. ISLAND BIRD — Entered in the National Register	for Keeper	Delores Byrd 9/18/85
	Attest	
10. ISLAND BLOSSOM — Entered in the National Register	for Keeper	Delores Byrd 9/18/85
	Attest	

NPS Form 10-900-a
(3-82)

OMB No. 1024-0018
Exp. 10-31-84

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

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date entered

Continuation sheet | Item number | Page 2

Multiple Resource Area
Thematic Group

Name Chesapeake Bay Sailing Log Canoe Fleet TR
State MARYLAND

Nomination/Type of Review			Date/Signature
11. JAY DEE	Entered in the National Register	for Keeper	Helen Byers 9/18/85
		Attest	
12. NODDY	Entered in the National Register	for Keeper	Helen Byers 9/18/85
		Attest	
13. EDMEE S.	Entered in the National Register	for Keeper	Helen Byers 9/18/85
		Attest	
14. ISLAND LARK	Entered in the National Register	for Keeper	Helen Byers 9/18/85
		Attest	
15. MAGIC	Entered in the National Register	for Keeper	Helen Byers 9/18/85
		Attest	
16. PERSISTENCE	Entered in the National Register	for Keeper	Helen Byers 9/18/85
		Attest	
17. ROVER	Entered in the National Register	for Keeper	Helen Byers 9/18/85
		Attest	
18. FLYING CLOUD	Entered in the National Register	for Keeper	Helen Byers 9/18/85
		Attest	
19.		Keeper	
		Attest	
20.		Keeper	
		Attest	