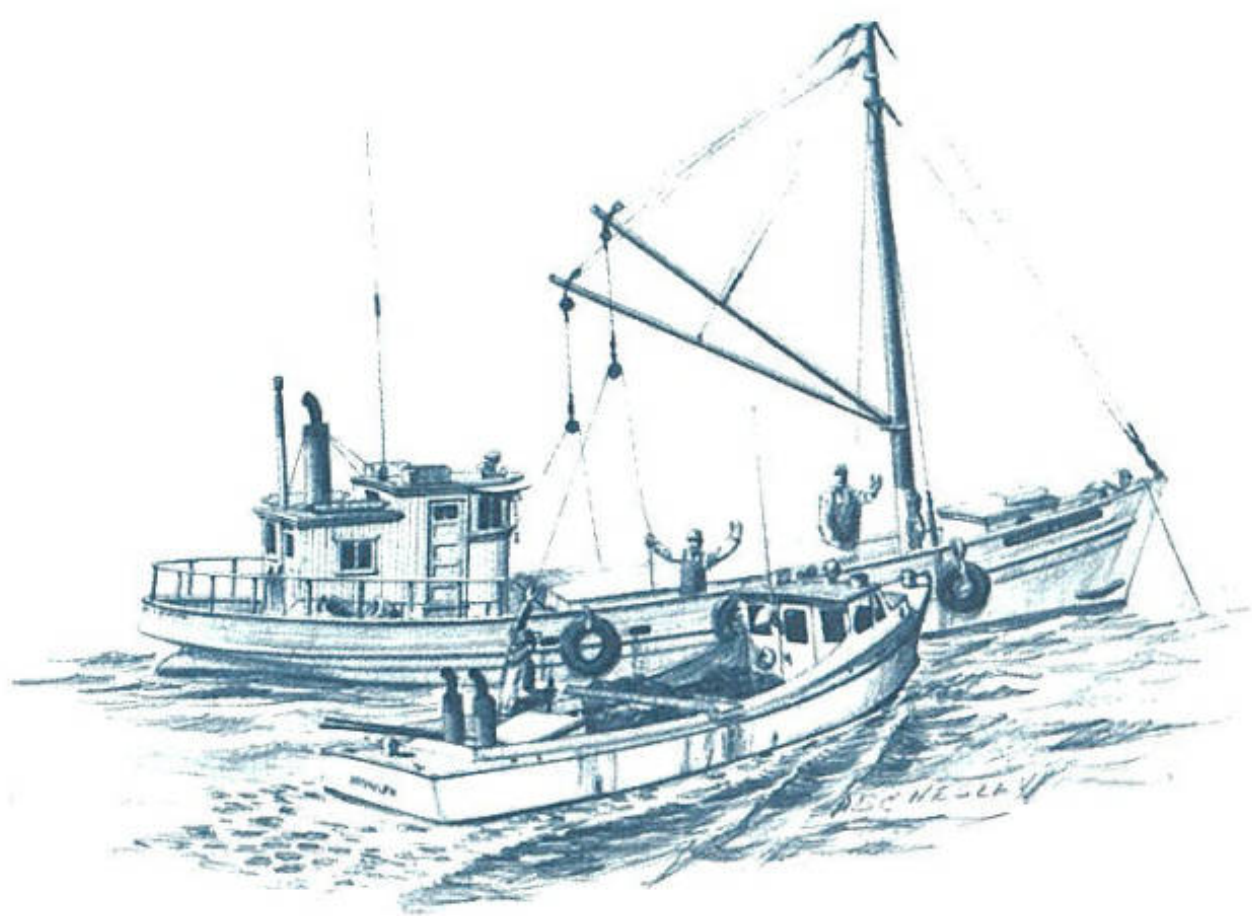


WATERCRAFT COLLECTION



"Wm. B. Tennison" buying oysters

*Calvert Marine Museum
Solomons, Maryland*



Since colonial times, softshell clams have been gathered, as in New England, by people digging them out one at a time by hand. The chief drawback to digging softshell clams was that the tidal range in the Bay was not enough to uncover the sand bars where they were found.

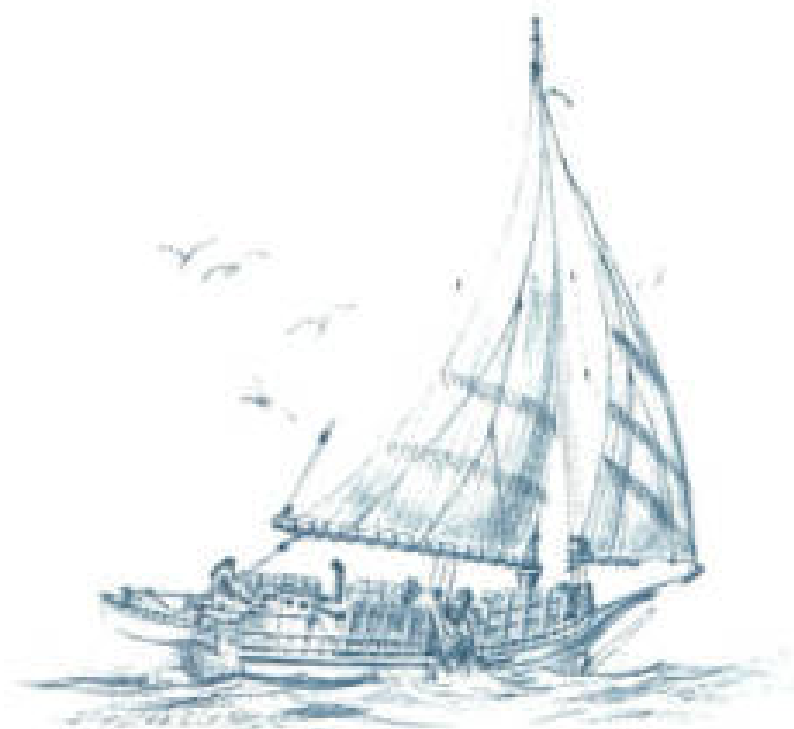
All this was changed about thirty years ago when a hydraulic clam dredge was invented by Fletcher Hanks of Oxford, Maryland. A clam dredge is a Rube Goldberg-sort of contraption involving pipes, motors, a pump, and a conveyer belt. When the boat is underway, the lower end of the dredge is dropped to the clam bed and water is forced through high pressure jets to dig a trench along the bottom. As clams are washed loose, they fall onto the belt which constantly rotates and brings them up to deck level where they are sorted; clams two inches or more in length go to market, while the smaller ones go back into the clam bed.

The use of clam dredgers is strictly controlled. They can not operate in water more than 15 feet deep. A limit on daily catch is set by the Department of Natural Resources, and may vary from 15 up to 40 bushels a day. These clams have been commercially exploited since 1951; sales average about \$5,000,000 a year.

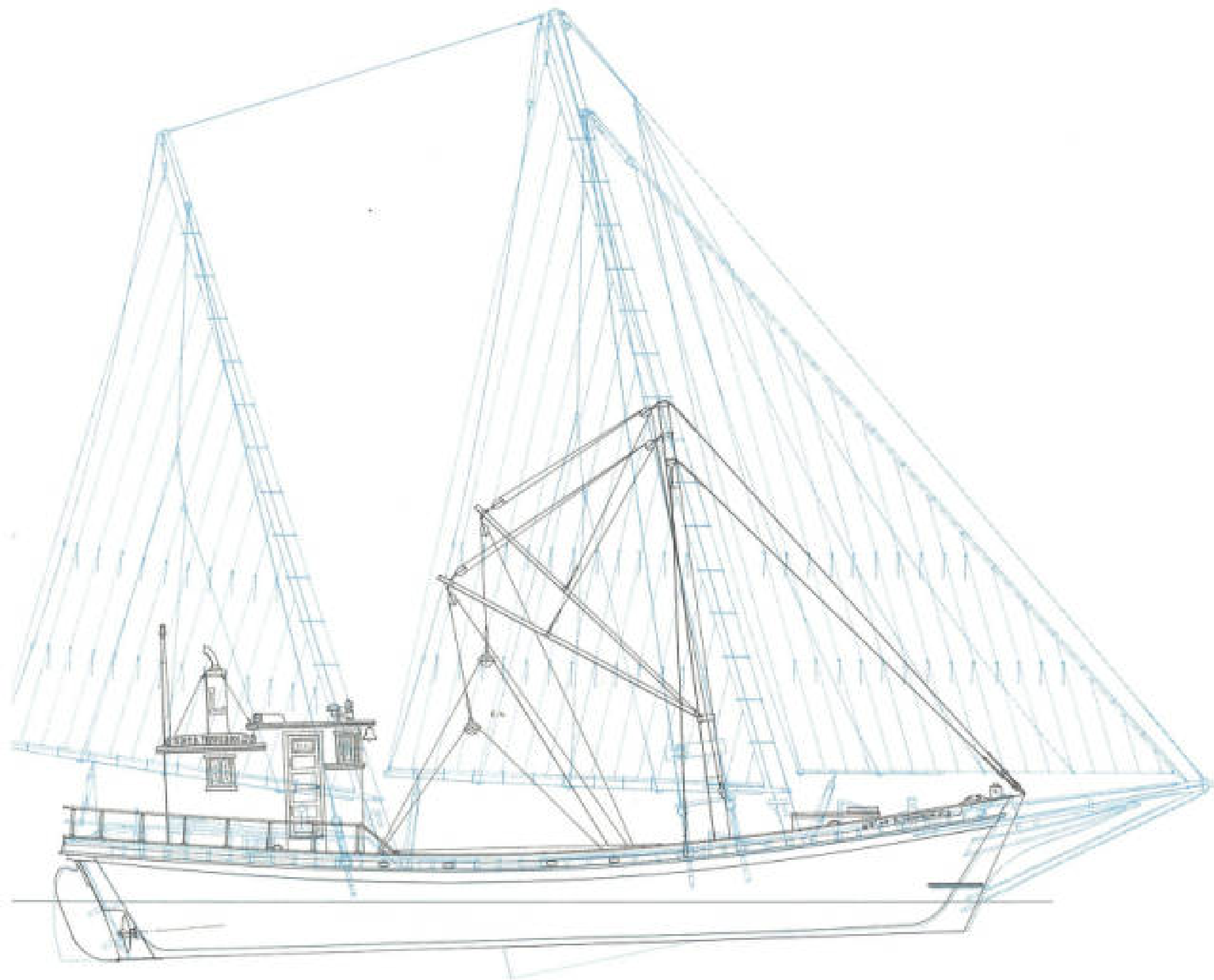
Any individual in Maryland may lease up to 200 acres of oyster bottom for 20 years at a time, by paying the State \$2 per acre per year. By following good management practice, the leased grounds produces more oysters than do natural oyster bars.

Oysters tongs are basically long-handled rakes, with baskets rigged just above the tines of the rakes. Two rakes are joined together, like scissors, and the tonger works them along the bottom until he feels oysters in the tines, then he closes the tongs which pushes the oysters up into the baskets, after which he lifts the tongs out of the water to dump the oysters into his boat. This required strong muscles. The tongs are used mostly in fairly shallow water, although some men have used tongs 40 feet long. A tonger might collect as many as 20 bushels of oysters a day.

About a hundred years ago a new "deep water" or "patent" tong was developed in 1887 by Charles Marsh of Solomons. The oyster tongs and baskets were attached to a hoist line which can be lowered from a boat. The tongs were dropped to the bottom, opened and were then closed by a man on the boat hauling on the line. With such tongs, a man could take four or five times as many oysters as with hand tongs.



Skipjack



Overlay showing "Wm. B. Tennison" as original sailing bugeye 1899 (blue) and conversion to power oyster buyboat 1911 (black).

Chesapeake Bay is a vast fisherman's paradise. Each summer weekend over 100,000 fishermen go after the bay's population of rock, bluefish, bass, perch and other fish, and throughout the year take home more than 10,000,000 pounds of "finfish" worth about \$3,000,000. But the most valuable seafood crop in the Bay consists of oysters, blue crabs, and clams, all of which are harvested in large quantities, and have an annual retail value of more than \$75,000,000.

Each year 20,000 watermen, working some 12,000 boats, bring in about 3,000,000 bushels of oysters, 23,000,000 pounds of crabs, and 700,000 bushels of clams. (The best year for oysters was in 1875, when the catch amounted to 14,000,000 bushels.) These figures cover only licensed fishermen. Any industrious person with a taste for crabs can take a bushel a day. He can not sell them unless licensed. The same applies to clams, dig and eat all you want, but do not sell them without a license.



Crabber checking pots

Crabs may be caught in pots, where the use of pots is legal, or with trotlines. Dipping crabs with a hand net in shallow water is popular with the general public. Crabbing is primarily done from May until October. As the oyster season runs from September until April, a commercial fisherman can keep busy all year with either oysters or crabs.

Crabbing skiff

These light, stable craft could easily be propelled with a single twist of the wrist on the oars. When used in crabbing, the skiffs worked trotlines or dragged crab scrapes (dredges). During winter months the skiffs were usually employed in hand tonging for oysters.

This particular skiff has a length of 16 feet 3 inches, beam of 5 feet 3 inches, and a draft of 1 foot 8 inches. It was originally sail rigged, but in 1920 Captain Harry Benning of Galesville, Maryland, installed a single-cylinder Clinton gas engine. He also added the special steering arrangement of ropes and pulleys, so the boat could be handled from amidships.

Jenkins Creek crab scrape *Geda*

A miniature version of the Smith Island skiff, *Geda* was built by Leon Marsh of Smith Island, Maryland. She is 17 feet 6 inches long, has a beam of 6 feet, and draft depth of 2 feet 2 inches. Her original cost was \$220. *Geda* scraped crabs in Tangier Sound for several years before being sold to a Patuxent River fisherman.

Hooper Island drake-tail fishing launch, *Penquin*

Penquin was built by William C. Dean of Wingate, Maryland, in 1935. She is 45 feet long overall, with a beam of 9 feet 8 inches and draft of 4 feet 2 inches. In her day she was reputedly the fastest Solomons work-boat. The drake-tail design was favored by watermen because it reduced spray over the stern.

The hydraulic oyster tongs used with this boat were invented by W. Edward Barrett of Lusby, Maryland, and were a mechanical adaptation of the older patent tongs. A crew of three men were needed to handle the patent tongs, but one man could work the hydraulic tongs with much less physical labor. The first hydraulic tongs were fabricated by T. Raynerd Wilson, a local blacksmith.

Clam dredge *John A. Ryder, ex-Donna*

Bronza Parks, one of the best known Chesapeake boatbuilders, built the vessel in 1944 at his yard in Wingate, Maryland. Built for Winnie Adams, of Fishing Creek, she was originally named *Donna*. In 1955 she was purchased by Chesapeake Biological Laboratory, Solomons, Maryland, and was renamed *John A. Ryder*, after an early clam biologist. The clam dredge was installed by the Laboratory in 1956. The boat was presented to Calvert Marine Museum in 1975. The boat is 40 feet 6 inches long, has a beam of 12 feet, and draft of 2 feet 6 inches.



"John A. Ryder" clam dredging

Potomac River dory boat *Let's See*

Dory boats developed in the 1880s for use at the mouth of the Potomac River and were soon used on the Patuxent River. This boat, 26 feet long with a beam of 8 feet 8 inches and depth of 2 feet 8 inches, was built by Thomas Gibson of River Springs, Maryland in 1934. Very few such boats still survive. Originally sail rigged, they were easily modified to power, and were used both for oystering and crabbing.

Most oysters now are taken by dredges, or "dredges." Dredges were developed in New England, and made their first appearance on the Chesapeake about two hundred years ago. The first dredge was a crude rake-like affair of iron spikes which could be dragged across the bottom, digging out oysters which were collected in a net bag towed behind the rake. This system collected about a hundred pounds of oysters in a single pass, but killed or destroyed many others, and in 1820 was outlawed. About a hundred years ago dredges were again allowed, but their use is strictly controlled by the State.

All oyster dredgers on the Chesapeake Bay are the type of boats known as skipjacks. These picturesque craft, which are unique to the Chesapeake Bay, are survivors of the great sailing fleets that were once found here. Skipjacks are handmade, built of wood, and as oyster dredgers comprise the last all-sail fleet of commercial craft in North America.

Skipjacks are strictly sail boats. They do not have engines, although they might use a "winder engine" to haul in the heavy dredges. They may dredge for oysters only during daylight hours, from 1 November to 1 March, and must keep on assigned dredging grounds. They can not work in areas reserved for tonging. Skipjacks may also carry a power-driven yawl to help push them to the dredging grounds, but they have to hoist the yawl before they commence dredging. Now days power dredging is allowed Mondays and Tuesdays.

Dredges are large versions of oyster tongs. One dredge is towed on each side of the boat, with the iron teeth digging up oysters and a rope net catching them as they are dislodged. When the dredges are loaded, the winder engine is used to haul them up on deck where they are emptied, and the catch is sorted. Oyster dredgers usually do not sell their catch at dockside but sell to "buy boats" which sail out to the dredging grounds. A dredger is limited to no more than 150 bushels of oysters a day, which go to the buy boat for about ten dollars a bushel. But by the time they reach a seafood menu, a dozen oysters will cost \$6.

Three-log canoe *Carla Sue*

Constructed at Poquoson, Virginia, 1901, *Carla Sue* had a length of 28 feet 3 inches and a 6 foot 3 inch beam.



Hand tonging for oysters

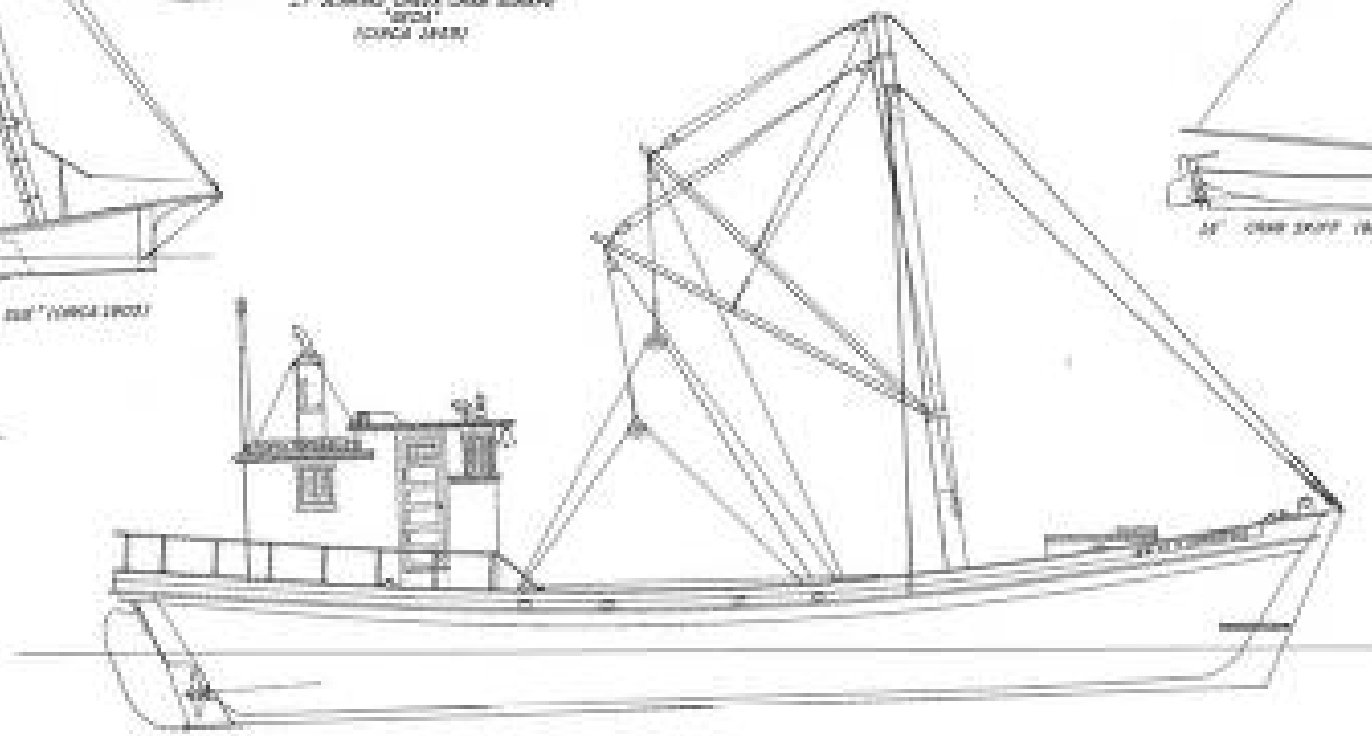
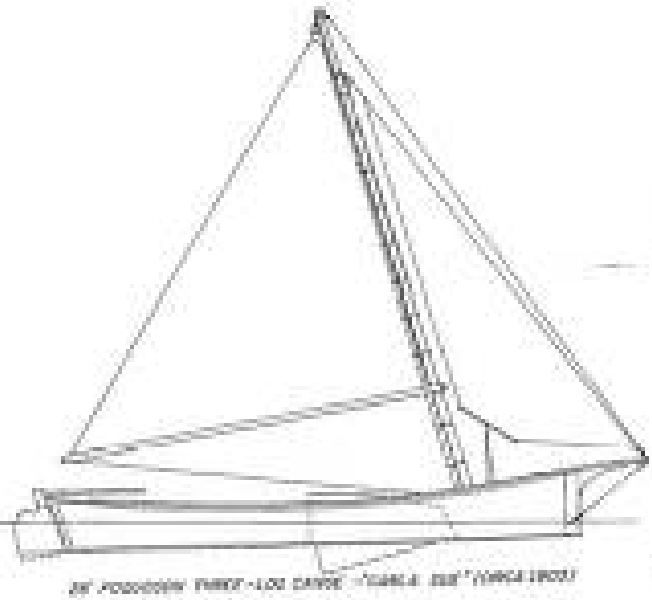
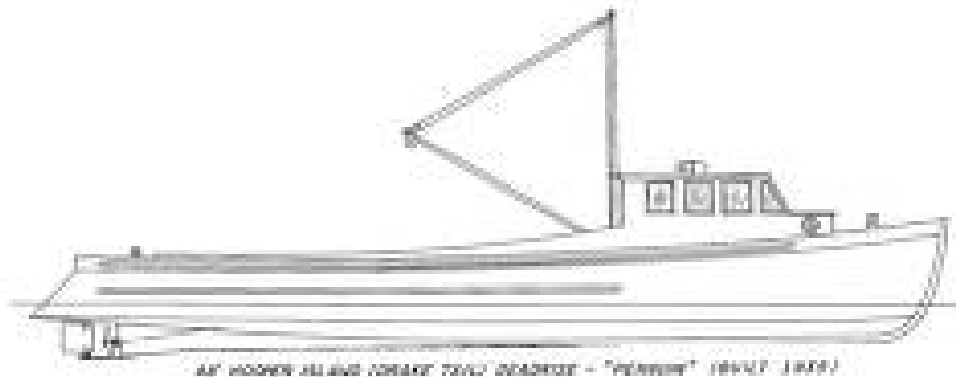
60-foot parent stern bug-eye—*Wm. B. Tenreiro*

This boat was built in 1899 by B.P. and R.L. Miles, at their yard in Crabb Island, Maryland. The hull is made of nine logs, which were trimmed and joined together, in contrast to the frame and plank construction technique of other boats. Originally, she was a sail boat in the coasting trade, and oyster industry. In 1911 she was converted to power; her sail rig was removed and a new, larger cabin was built aft. She then became a "buy boat," going to meet the oyster fleet, purchase their catch and haul it to market.

For many years the boat was maintained by Mr. Alton Kersey of Solomons. In 1979, after a thorough inspection by the U.S. Coast Guard, she was licensed to carry 45 passengers, which she does on short cruises out of Calvert Marine Museum. She is the oldest licensed passenger vessel on the Chesapeake Bay.

BOATS IN THE WATERCRAFT COLLECTION OF CALVERT MARINE MUSEUM

DRAWN BY ALAN B. CHESLEY, 1980



Marine Artist's Evolution— Lions, Leopards to Bugeyes and Pungies



Painting of Long Dock, Pratt street, showing Chesapeake sailing craft with watermelons. Below, Louis J. Feuchter sketches in 1953.

By ROBERT BURGESS

HE preferred lions and leopards as subjects but painted log canoes. Tigers impressed him but Bay schooners occupied more of his time. Louis J. Feuchter had an abiding love for African animals but developed into the Bay region's outstanding marine artist of the first half of this century.

Born here and a resident all his life, it seems ironic that not a single Baltimore museum holds an example of his work, although museums outside his hometown and private collectors in Maryland and

Continued on Page 14





Brogan

Marine Artist's First Love was Animals

Continued from Page 12

Virginia prize his paintings. But other examples of his art are represented in Baltimore and have been unknowingly seen by thousands of Baltimoreans each day.

Feuchter was born in the eastern section of Baltimore on December 10, 1885, and attended Public Schools 25 and 2, in the South Broadway area. His teacher recognized his artistic talent at the age of 7. When a school commissioner visited the school Feuchter was called upon to draw a scene on the blackboard. His subject was a blacksmith shop and from memory he depicted the scene with colored chalk. The next year, 1893, some of his drawings were sent to the Columbian Exposition in Chicago as examples of the work of a Baltimore public school student.

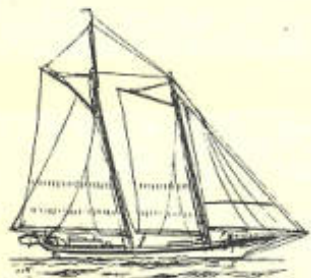
When he was 12, he was awarded a four-year scholarship at the Maryland Institute. When he was 15 he became an apprentice with Samuel Kirk and Sons, learning the trades of silver chaser and draftsman, eventually becoming a designer for the firm. One of his accomplishments was his part in designing and making models for a service of 48 silver pieces, bearing nearly 200 scenes of Maryland history in high relief. Each of the 23 Maryland counties was represented, as was Baltimore city. The silverware was presented by the people of Maryland to the new armored cruiser Maryland on May 31, 1906. Feuchter, with representatives from Kirk's and the Maryland Cruiser Fund Commission, boarded the steamer F. C. Latrobe in Baltimore for a trip to Annapolis Roads where the Maryland was anchored. It was Feuchter's responsibility to display the service on the ship's wardroom table before the presentation cere-

monies. When the cruiser was renamed in 1921, the silver service was transferred to the battleship Maryland. After the latter ship was decommissioned in 1946 the service was placed on indefinite loan at the Maryland Historical Society and later sent to the Maryland State House, Annapolis, where it is today.

As a young man Feuchter's chief interest was in wild animals. He learned their anatomy as a boy by studying illustrations. Later, visits to the Washington National Zoo and circuses enhanced his knowledge. Early drawings of his animal studies were acquired by Mrs. Harry Payne Whitney of the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York city.

In his early 20's he was introduced to Maryland's Eastern Shore through visits to Kemp's Boarding House at Wades Point, overlooking the Eastern Bay near Claiborne. Wades Point was reached by the steamboat Cambridge and on the trip Feuchter saw for the first time the Chesapeake sailing craft which were to influence the latter part of his career. Kemp's Boarding House still exists and in its sitting room are small oil paintings of the building and the owner's collie done by Feuchter for room and board. He became acquainted with sailing and log canoes at this resort and visits to nearby Wittman and Neavitt provided material for his early marine paintings. He spent weekends and vacations at Kemp's until 1927.

Feuchter left Kirk's in 1920 and the next year joined the plasterer's union. He was employed by the Baltimore interior decorating firm of T. Milton Oler and Son as an architectural sculptor. With that firm he designed the ornamental bronze panel, mounted over the main entrance of

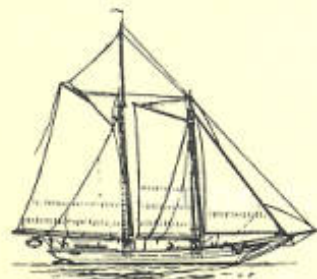


Pungy

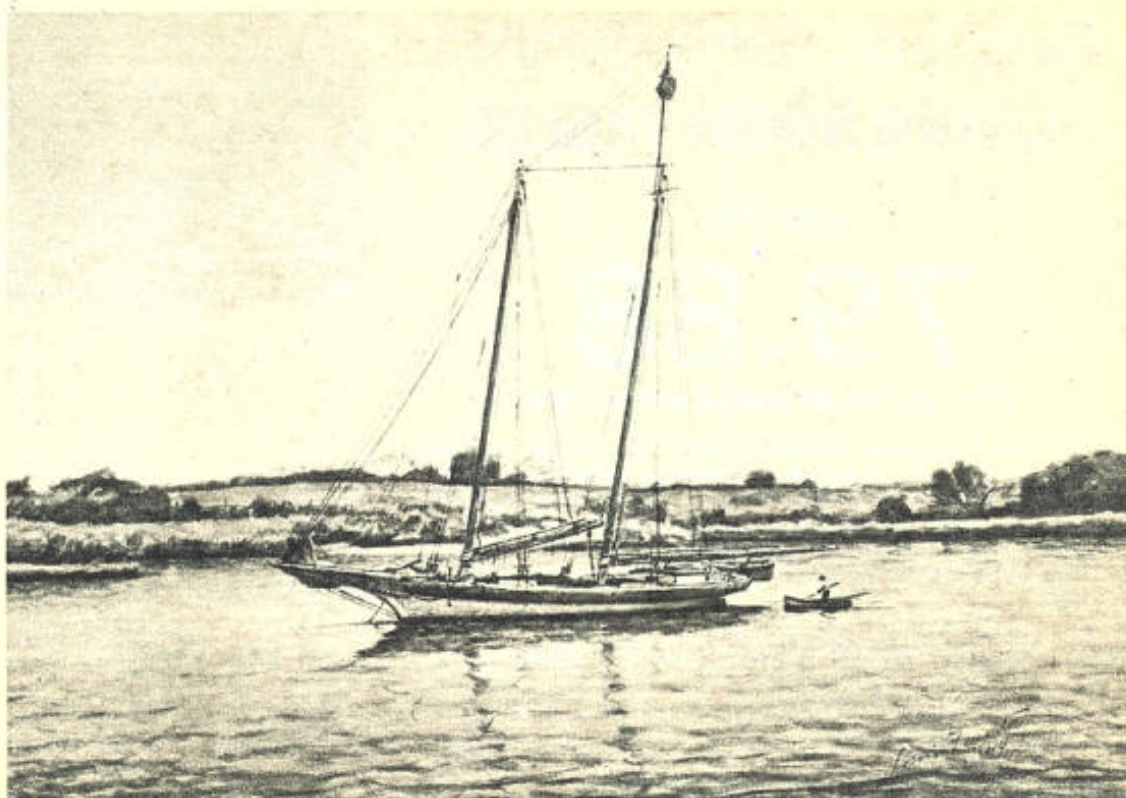
Line drawings of Bay craft at left and on facing page are also the work of artist Louis J. Feuchter.



Log Canoe



Schooner



Above, watercolor of a pungy. The painting was executed in 1944. At right, one of a series of murals by Louis J. Feuchter in a Roland Park home, depicting Mt. Vernon. In far left of picture, note bug-eye sailing down Potomac River, evidence of artist's determination to include a Chesapeake Bay craft.

the then new Baltimore Life Insurance building on Charles street near Saratoga, of the Baltimore skyline as seen from the harbor. The building is now home of the Commercial Credit Company and the decorative piece is still in place and visible from Charles street.

Another major assignment for Feuchter while at Oler's was the design and painting of a series of murals on the walls of the first and second floor stairs hall of a private residence in Roland Park, in 1927. These featured views of Williamsburg's Bruton Parish Church and Powder Magazine, Mount Vernon, and Monticello.

In 1928 Feuchter had a 28-foot sloop built at Wittman and the next year it was towed to Baltimore so that the artist could rig it. His plans were to sail to the Eastern Shore, anchor in a sheltered cove and paint the locale and picturesque sailing craft. But the Depression came, he lost his job, and his project never developed. He did sail annually, until the late 1940's, to Rock Creek and anchor behind Fairview Park or in Wall Cove nearby before that area became a mass of marinas, boat yards, residences, and home of the Maryland Yacht Club. His early sketches of that region in the 1930's were worked into his oil paintings and water-colors.

As a result of his unemployment he roamed Baltimore's waterfront, especially the Montford Yard overlooking Canton Hollow, Webster's Wharf on Boston street, and Pratt street's Long Dock where the Chesapeake's sailing craft gathered. He sketched the vessels and their details on the spot and developed paintings from that information in his home studio. Trips on excursion steamers to Cambridge, Annapolis, Oxford, and St. Michaels enabled him to add sketches of those ports to his files.

In 1947 The Mariners Museum, in Newport News, Va., asked him to do a series of

At right, India ink sketches of animals, showing same attention to detail seen in the artist's marine paintings.

paintings of Chesapeake Bay commercial sailing craft, the log canoe, bugeye, pungy, sloop, schooner, ram, skipjack, and crabbing skiff. A general view of the watermelon craft at Long Dock completed the series which is on display in that museum's Chesapeake Bay Room. Even though he focused his attention primarily on Bay sailing craft in the latter part of his career, he never gave up his love for wild animals. Among his last sketches are portraits of lions, leopards, and tigers done as skillfully as his marine work.

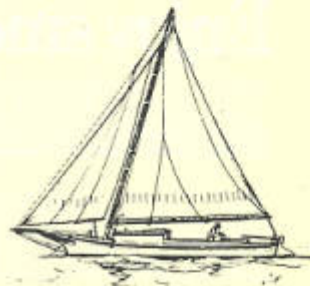


Louis Feuchter died on January 11, 1957, and was buried in Mount Carmel Cemetery. Following his death some of his paintings were sold to private collectors and distributed among his family. The Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum, in St. Michaels, secured a group of water-colors; they are on display there. The Mariners

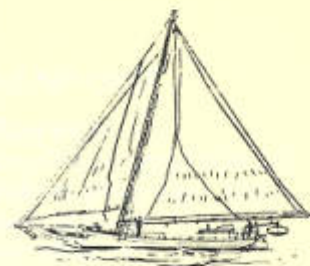
Museum obtained some and is now preparing a monograph on the artist illustrated with photos and examples of his paintings, due for publication in 1976. □



Sloop



Sharpie



Skipjack



Lumber Schooner

