

CT-792

JOHN A. RYDER (ex-DONNA) (clam dredge)  
Solomons, Maryland

JOHN A. RYDER is a 40'6" long V-bottomed, deadrise power workboat, built in 1944 by Bronza M. Parks of Wingate, Maryland. Used as a clam dredge boat and as a research vessel by the Chesapeake Biological Laboratory in Solomons, the boat was built for power and carried a marine gasoline engine. With a beam of 12' and a depth of 2-1/2', the boat is of heavy construction, with a curved stem, flared bows, and a square transom stern with a very slight reverse rake. It is on display at the Calvert Marine Museum. JOHN A. RYDER gains its significance for having been built by one of the better-known workboat and skipjack builders of recent decades, Bronza Parks, and for having spent most of its working life as a research vessel for the Chesapeake Biological Laboratory. It is also a well-preserved example of a prototypical Chesapeake Bay deadrise workboat, a type first built in the 1930s and still being constructed today.

# Maryland Historical Trust State Historic Sites Inventory Form

## 1. Name (indicate preferred name)

historic JOHN A. RYDER (ex-DONNA)

and/or common clam dredge CMM 74-114

## 2. Location

street & number \_\_\_\_\_ not for publication

city, town Solomons \_\_\_\_\_ vicinity of \_\_\_\_\_ congressional district \_\_\_\_\_

state Maryland \_\_\_\_\_ county Calvert \_\_\_\_\_

## 3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public	<input type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> educational	<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> not applicable	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other:

## 4. Owner of Property (give names and mailing addresses of all owners)

name Calvert Marine Museum

street & number \_\_\_\_\_ telephone no.: 326-3719

city, town Solomons \_\_\_\_\_ state and zip code Maryland 20688

## 5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. \_\_\_\_\_ liber \_\_\_\_\_

street & number \_\_\_\_\_ folio \_\_\_\_\_

city, town \_\_\_\_\_ state \_\_\_\_\_

## 6. Representation in Existing Historical Surveys

title \_\_\_\_\_

date \_\_\_\_\_  federal  state  county  local

depository for survey records \_\_\_\_\_

city, town \_\_\_\_\_ state \_\_\_\_\_

## 7. Description

Survey No. CT-792

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

Prepare both a summary paragraph and a general description of the resource and its various elements as it exists today.

This is a V-bottomed or deadrise power workboat, built in 1944 by Bronza M. Parks at Wingate, Maryland. Used as a clam dredge boat and as a research vessel, the boat was built for power and carried a marine gasoline engine. The vessel is 40'6" long, with a beam of 12' and a depth of 2 1/2'. The boat is of heavy construction, with a curved stem, flared bows, and a square transom stern with a very slight reverse rake. It is on display at the Calvert Marine Museum, Solomons.

The dredgeboat is Bay-built using heavy cross-planked construction and planking of 1 1/4" white cedar. Bottom planking is fastened diagonally to the bilge stringers and keel, which measures 8" deep by 9 3/4" wide. The deadrise is shallow; the boat is straight-sided amidships, with flared bows and some tumblehome at the transom. The rudder is carried well beneath the stern, with a 3-blade propellor between the rudder post and the skeg iron on the bottom of the keel.

The boat is partially decked, fore and aft, with washboards along the sides. There are several deck structures, including: a hatch in the foredeck; a deckhouse cabin; with an adjoining work table on its afterend, and a full door; an engine box, aft of amidships; and a box for the steering gear. The wheel is set on the starboard side of the cockpit coaming just aft of the engine box. Other fittings include sampson posts, measuring 4 1/2" by 4 1/2", at bow and stern.

With its inboard engine the boat was used for clamming from the mid-1950s by the Chesapeake Biological Laboratory in Solomons. It is displayed along with a clam rig of two heavy pipe frames set up with blocks and pulleys for lowering and hoisting the clam dredge over the starboard side. The dredge itself was built by Fletcher Hanks of Oxford. In addition, there is a fyke net lowered over the port side. The boat is set up as it was used by the Laboratory. After it was donated to the Museum the clam elevator was replaced, as were the rail, stancollar, and some of the port-side planking. Otherwise the vessel is largely unaltered.

The boat is painted white on the hull and deckhouse. The washboards, decks, floorboards, worktable, and deckhouse roof are gray. There is tan trim on the sheer and rubrail. The name JOHN A. RYDER/ Solomons, MD. is on the stern in black screw-on letters mounted on boards.

# 8. Significance

Survey No. CT-792

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

Specific dates	1944	Builder/Architect	Bronza Parks
check:	Applicable Criteria: <input type="checkbox"/> A <input type="checkbox"/> B <input type="checkbox"/> C <input type="checkbox"/> D		
	and/or		
	Applicable Exception: <input type="checkbox"/> A <input type="checkbox"/> B <input type="checkbox"/> C <input type="checkbox"/> D <input type="checkbox"/> E <input type="checkbox"/> F <input type="checkbox"/> G		
	Level of Significance: <input type="checkbox"/> national <input type="checkbox"/> state <input type="checkbox"/> local		

Prepare both a summary paragraph of significance and a general statement of history and support.

This vessel gains its significance for having been built by one of the better-known workboat and skipjack builders of recent decades, Bronza Parks of Wingate, Maryland. It is also of interest for having been used by the Chesapeake Biological Laboratories in Solomons, Md. as a clam dredge and research vessel from 1955 until its donation to the Calvert Marine Museum in 1974. The vessel is displayed in the Museum as it was used by the Biological Laboratories.

Built by Bronza Parks at Wingate, Maryland in 1944 the DONNA was originally owned by Winnie Adams of Fishing Creek, Maryland and used for tonging for oysters. In 1955 she was sold to the Chesapeake Biological Laboratory in Solomons, Maryland and outfitted with a clam rig for research purposes. At this time the vessel's name was changed to JOHN A. RYDER, after the clam biologist who had done an early hydrographic survey of the Bay. The vessel's clam dredge was built by Fletcher Hanks of Oxford, Maryland, who invented the first clam dredge to be used in the Bay area (about 1952) and continued to build dredges for local vessels.

V-bottom, deadrise power workboats, of the type represented by the JOHN A. RYDER, first began to be built in the Bay area in the 1930s. The type evolved from the earlier, narrow Hooper Island boats, which first appeared about 1915. These vessels, with their narrow hull and reverse-rake stern, were thought to have been designed as an imitation of the pre-World War I steam-powered torpedo boat destroyers that plied the Bay. With the advent of using old automobile engines to power workboats, however, boatbuilders had to come up with a more stable design to accommodate the heavier, more powerful engines that caused a pronounced drag astern. Making use of the old V-bottom bateau form common to the small Bay crabbing skiffs and the larger skipjacks, local boatbuilders came up with a "box-stern" design for power workboats which helped eliminate the problem of drag astern. The new "deadrise" workboats were also much easier and cheaper to build than the Hooper Island boats and quickly replaced them in popularity during the hard-money era of the 1930s. Used for tonging, crabbing, clamming, and fishing, these deadrise workboats have become the major commercial craft on the Bay. Over the years they have steadily increased in width from about 8 to 14 feet, so that today a typical 40-foot workboat carries 3 times the amount of oysters as a boat built in the 1930s.

The son and grandson of watermen, Bronza Parks of Wingate began his career as an oyster dredger but switched to boatbuilding in his late twenties. Specializing in skiffs and power boats for both pleasure and commercial use, Parks prided himself on building no two boats alike—he tried something new and different on each. He is widely known for his high quality workboats and for his legendary skipjack ROSIE PARKS. He was fatally shot in 1958 at his boatyard during an argument with a client.

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

Survey No. CT-792

Registrar's files, Calvert Marine Museum, Solomons, Maryland

See also plans of vessel drawn by W. Hall at the Calvert Marine Museum

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property \_\_\_\_\_

Quadrangle name \_\_\_\_\_

Quadrangle scale \_\_\_\_\_

UTM References do NOT complete UTM references

A 

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Zone Easting Northing

B 

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Zone Easting Northing

C 

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D 

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E 

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F 

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G 

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H 

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Verbal boundary description and justification

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

state	code	county	code
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state	code	county	code
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## 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Anne Witty/ M.E. Hayward

organization Maryland Historical Society

date 5/84

street & number 201 W. Monument St.

telephone 685-3750

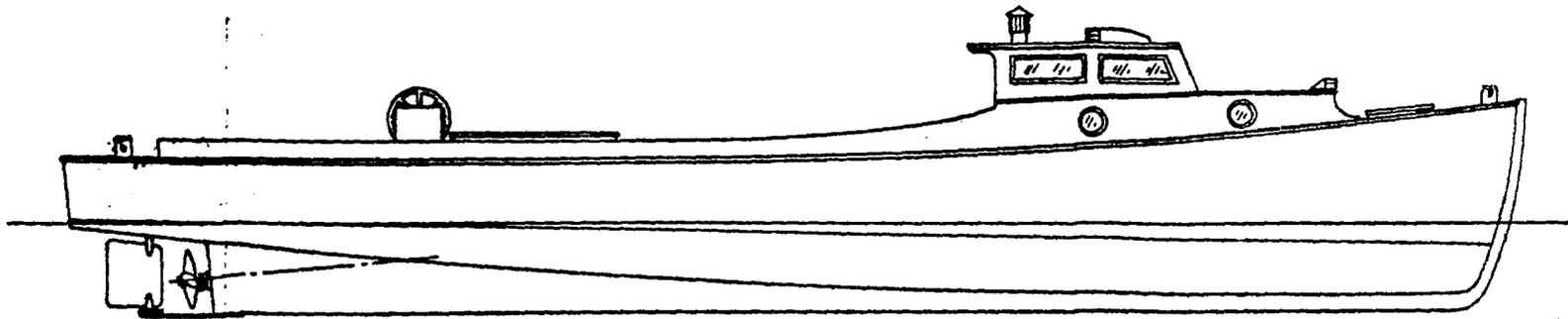
city or town Baltimore

state Maryland

The Maryland Historic Sites Inventory was officially created by an Act of the Maryland Legislature to be found in the Annotated Code of Maryland, Article 41, Section 181 KA, 1974 supplement.

The survey and inventory are being prepared for information and record purposes only and do not constitute any infringement of individual property rights.

return to: Maryland Historical Trust  
Shaw House  
21 State Circle  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401  
(301) 269-2438



40' CHESAPEAKE BAY DEADRISE - "JOHN A. RYDER" (BUILT 1944)

ALAN CHESLEY  
1980

CT-792

JOHN A RYDER  
SOLOMONS MD.

**DESCRIPTION**

This boat was built by John A. Ryder in 1910. It was used for fishing and transport. The boat is made of white pine and has a dark trim. It is a simple, functional design.

**NAME**  
JOHN A. RYDER

**DATE**  
1910

**LOCATION**  
SOLOMONS ISLAND

**STATUS**  
ON DISPLAY

**REMARKS**  
This boat was used for fishing and transport.

CT-792

CT-792

JOHN A RYDER  
Solomons, Md

Stern  
M. C. Wootton

4/84



CT-792

CT-792

JOHN A. RYDER  
Solomons, Md

starboard side  
M.C. Wootton

4/84



JOHN A RYDER

CT-792

CT-792

JOHN A. RYDER  
Solomons, Md

bow

M. C. Wootton      4/84