

1987

S-241
SUSAN MAY (skipjack)
Wenona, Maryland

SUSAN MAY is a 46' long fore-and-aft planked sloop with a skipjack rig. She has a beam of 15.9', a depth of 1.6', and a gross registered tonnage of 10. She carries a typical skipjack rig of jib-headed mainsail and a single large jib with a club on its foot. Built in 1901 in Pocomoke City, Maryland SUSAN MAY is significant as being one of the 35 surviving traditional Chesapeake Bay skipjacks and a member of the last commercial sailing fleet in the United States. SUSAN MAY is of special interest as being one of the oldest skipjacks and for being among the few members of the skipjack fleet not built with typical Bay-area cross-planked construction methods.

Survey No. S-241

Magi No.

DOE yes no

Maryland Historical Trust State Historic Sites Inventory Form

CHESAPEAKE BAY SKIPJACK FLEET THEMATIC GROUP

1. Name (indicate preferred name)

historic SUSAN MAY

and/or common

2. Location

street & number LOWER THOROFARE N/A not for publication

city, town Wenona n/a vicinity of congressional district

state Maryland 024 county Somerset 039

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational	<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial	<input checked="" 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 Captain Clifton Benton

street & number telephone no.:

city, town Wenona state and zip code Maryland 21870

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. n/a liber

street & number folio

city, town state

6. Representation in Existing Historical Surveys

title Survey of Surviving Traditional Chesapeake Bay Craft

date 1983-1984 federal state county local

depository for survey records Maryland Historical Trust, 21 State Circle

city, town Annapolis, state Maryland 21401

7. Description

Survey No. S-241

Condition		Check one	Check one		
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> n/a original site		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved	date of move	<input type="checkbox"/> n/a
<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 vessel is a fore-and-aft-planked sloop with a typical two-sail skipjack rig. She works in the Maryland oyster dredging fleet. Built in 1901 in Pocomoke City, Maryland, she measures 46 feet long, with a beam of 15.9 feet and a depth of 1.6 feet; her gross tonnage is 10 register tons. The wooden hull is painted white, with dark tan trim on the taffrail, cabin door, and hatch covers.

In shape the vessel has a longhead bow, with a sharply raking stem and hollow, clipper-like lines. She has a shallow, steeply raked transom stern with a modified platform similar to a patent stern built over the transom. The rudder is carried inboard, well below the waterline. There is a jig for the pushboat on the middle of the transom.

The deck is flush, with several deck structures. From the stern forward these include: a box over the steering gear, located well forward of the after rail; a tall trunk cabin with a slide and a central, full-length door; a main hatch; a box over the winders; and a hatch laid across the deck just aft of the mast. The boat carried dredging gear, rollers for the dredges, and davits for a pushboat suspended over the stern.

The single mast is well raked aft, and bows a bit aft as well. It is set up with shrouds, forestay, jibstay, and a topping lift. The boom is jawed to the mast. The jib-headed mainsail is laced to the boom and carried on wooden mast hoops. There is a club-footed jib. The bowsprit is squared off on top, and rigged with bobstays and bowsprit shrouds.

Decorations include trailboards with the name SUSAN MAY in gold/yellow on a blue ground, in addition to the tan paint trim on the rails, hatch covers, and cabin door.

8. Significance

Survey No. S-241

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 type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/ humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> transportation
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		

Specific dates	1901	Builder/Architect	Unknown
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check: Applicable Criteria: A B C D
and/or

Applicable Exception: A B C D E F G none

Level of Significance: national state local

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

This vessel is significant as being one of the 35 surviving traditional Chesapeake Bay skipjacks and a member of the last commercial sailing fleet in the United States. Out of a fleet of hundreds of skipjacks that worked Bay waters in the early years of this century, today only this small number remain to carry on the tradition of working sail.

The skipjack evolved as a distinct type of Bay vessel in the 1890's as a cheaper-to-construct alternative to the earlier bugeyes and other traditional framed craft, in a period when shipbuilding costs were rising and the oyster catch was diminishing. The type was devised by enlarging (to 25 to 60 feet) the hull of the ordinary, unframed, square-sterned Bay crabbing skiff, and giving it a deadrise bottom, a-deck, a cabin, and a sloop rig. The result—with its unframed, hard chine, cross-planked, V-bottom—proved inexpensive to build, easy to repair, and could be constructed by a competent house carpenter. Skipjacks were specifically designed as oyster dredge boats, with wide beams and low freeboard lending stability and providing a large working space on deck. The single masted rig, with sharp-headed mainsail and large jib, was easy to handle, powerful in light winds, and handy in coming about quickly for another pass over the oyster beds.

The Maryland oyster season begins November 1 and ends March 15. Skipjacks must dredge under sail on all days except Mondays and Tuesdays, when they are allowed to use their motorized pushboat for dredging. The pushboat, normally carried on davits at the stern, is lowered into the water and literally "pushes" the skipjack along from behind, the nose of the pushboat resting against a "jig" on the stern of the skipjack. The pushboat can also legally be used to get the skipjack to and from the oyster beds each day. Each skipjack's crew is made up of the captain, who is often also the owner, and five crew members.

SUSAN MAY is of interest as being one of the older skipjacks still dredging in the Chesapeake fleet. She was built in 1901 in Pocomoke City, Md. and is among the few members of the skipjack fleet not built with typical Bay-area cross-planked construction. Her hull is that of a sloop, fore-and-aft-planked, with the typical skipjack sailing rig. The vessels KATHRYN (1901) and REBECCA RUARK (1896) are the only others in the fleet to be fore-and-aft planked. SUSAN MAY is one of the 24 surviving working skipjacks to have been built previous to 1912. She has worked in the oyster dredging fleet since her building and is presently based at Deal Island.

See Thematic Group nomination cover form, Continuation Sheets No. 8-13.

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property less than one acre
 Quadrangle name Deal Island, MD Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UTM References do NOT complete UTM references

A	18	416870	4220240	B					
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing		
C				D					
E				F					
G				H					

Verbal boundary description and justification

This working vessel is usually docked at the location indicated in Item 2. Historic boundaries are coterminous with the hull.

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

state	n/a	code	county	code
state		code	county	code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Anne Witty/ M. E. Hayward
Radcliffe Maritime Museum
 organization Maryland Historical Society date May, 1984
 street & number 201 West Monument Street telephone (301) 685-3750
 city or town Baltimore state Maryland 21201

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

Maryland Historical Trust State Historic Sites Inventory Form

1. Name (indicate preferred name)

historic SUSAN MAY

and/or common

2. Location

street & number _____ not for publication

city, town Wenona _____ vicinity of _____ congressional district

state Maryland _____ county Somerset

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> museum
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	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> transportation
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street & number _____ telephone no.:

city, town Wenona _____ state and zip code Maryland 21870

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

pository for survey records _____

city, town _____ state

7. Description

Survey No. S-241

Condition		Check one	Check one
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input type="checkbox"/> original site
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input 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.

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Decorations include trailboards with the name SUSAN MAY in gold/yellow on a blue ground, in addition to the tan paint trim on the rails, hatch covers, and cabin door.

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
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<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 type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/ humanitarian
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		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		

Specific dates	1901	Builder/Architect	Unknown
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 is significant as being one of the 36 surviving traditional Chesapeake Bay skipjacks and a member of the last commercial sailing fleet in the United States. Out of a fleet of hundreds of skipjacks that worked Bay waters in the early years of this century, today only this small number remain to carry on the tradition of working sail.

The skipjack evolved as a distinct type of Bay vessel in the 1890's as a cheaper-to-construct alternative to the earlier bugeyes and other traditional framed craft, in a period when shipbuilding costs were rising and the oyster catch was diminishing. The type was devised by enlarging (to 25 to 60 feet) the hull of the ordinary, unframed, square-sterned Bay crabbing skiff, and giving it a deadrise bottom, a-deck, a cabin, and a sloop rig. The result—with its unframed, hard chine, cross-planked, V-bottom—proved inexpensive to build, easy to repair, and could be constructed by a competent house carpenter. Skipjacks were specifically designed as oyster dredge boats, with wide beams and low freeboard lending stability and providing a large working space on deck. The single masted rig, with sharp-headed mainsail and large jib, was easy to handle, powerful in light winds, and handy in coming about quickly for another pass over the oyster beds.

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9. Major Bibliographical References

Survey No. S-241
S-241

Howard I. Chapelle, American Small Sailing Craft (New York: W.W. Norton, 1951)

H.I. Chapelle, Chesapeake Bay Skipjacks (St. Michaels, CBMM, n.d.)

10. Geographical Data

Acreege of nominated property _____

Quadrangle name _____

Quadrangle scale _____

UTM References do NOT complete UTM references

A	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
	Zone	Easting	Northing

B	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
	Zone	Easting	Northing

C	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
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D	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
---	----------------------	----------------------	----------------------

E	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
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F	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
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G	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
---	----------------------	----------------------	----------------------

H	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
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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
-------	------	--------	------

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

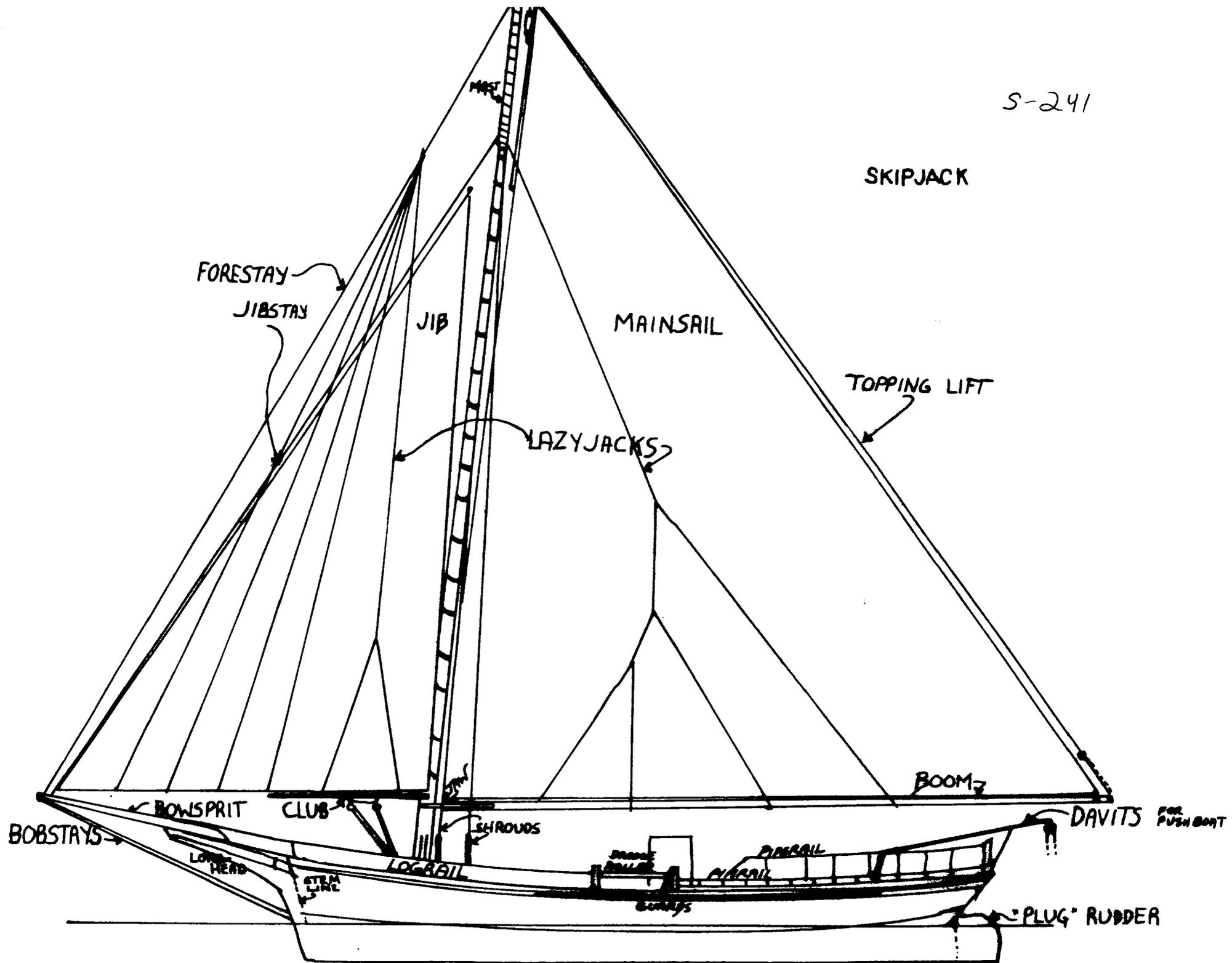
city or town Baltimore state Maryland 21201

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S-241



SKIPJACK

FORESTAY

JIBSTAY

JIB

MAINSAIL

TOPPING LIFT

LAZY JACKS

BOOM

BOWSPRIT

CLUB

SHROUDS

DAVITS

FOR PUSH BOAT

BOBSTAYS

LOW HEAD

STEM LINE

LOG RAIL

SCUMPS

SKIPJACK

SCUMPS

PLUG RUDDER



303-30

copy NTE

S-241

SUSAN MAY
Wenona, Md

port side sail
M. C. Wootton 11/83



405-34

S-241

SUSAN MAY
Wenona, Md.

Port bow
M.C. Wootton 7/84



405-39

S-241

SUSAN MAY
Wenona, Md.

Stern
M.C. Wootton 7/84



405-~~8~~4

S-241

SUSAN MAY
Wenona, Md.

Bow (vessel at dock)
M.C. Wootton 7/84



S-241

SUSAN MAY
Wenona, Md

port bow sail
M. C. Wootton 11/83