

S-113  
Excelsior Brass Gun Club  
Deal Island vicinity  
private

c. 1920

Built on the southern edge of the sprawling Dames Quarter Marsh is the Excelsior Brass Gun Club, also known as the Dunwurken Gun Club, erected during the early years of the twentieth century when the lure of superior wildfowl hunting reached its peak. The single-story weatherboard frame structure is largely covered by a hip roof which is marked by an eyebrow-shaped vent and exposed rafter feet. Projecting slightly from each front corner is a gabled bay pierced by a tripartite window. Inside the west door is a large communal room with an oversized fireplace, and surrounding the common room are several smaller, auxillary chambers.

MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST

DNR 1,2,3

Mag # 2001133707

INVENTORY FORM FOR STATE HISTORIC SITES SURVEY

1 NAME

HISTORIC

Excelsior Brass Gun Club

AND/OR COMMON

Dunwurken Gun Club

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

Deal Island Wildlife Management Area of Deal Island, Kent County

CITY, TOWN

of Princess Anne

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

Route 363, 10 miles west VICINITY OF

STATE

COUNTY

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL <input checked="" 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	<b>PUBLIC ACQUISITION</b>	<b>ACCESSIBLE</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT <input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
<input 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 type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

Maryland Department of Natural Resources Telephone #:

STREET & NUMBER

Taylor Avenue

CITY, TOWN

Annapolis, VICINITY OF

STATE, zip code

Maryland 21401

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Somerset County Courthouse

Liber #:

Folio #:

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

Princess Anne,

STATE

Maryland

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

DATE

FEDERAL  STATE  COUNTY  LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE

**7 DESCRIPTION**

<b>CONDITION</b>		<b>CHECK ONE</b>	<b>CHECK ONE</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED      DATE _____
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Dunwurken Gun Club is a sprawling one-story frame structure on a cement block foundation, divisible into five bays on its entrance facade. The whole is sheathed in clapboarding, painted white, and trimmed in dark green. These five bays consist of a central three-bay block flanked by two projecting window bays possessing gable roofs which intersect with the structure's hip roof.

The treatment of the windows and doors provides a decorative element to the building's enlarged shore cottage type of appearance. The northwest end bay contains a tripartite window with the following components: two narrow casement sized windows, two rows of five panes each, flanking an oversized 6/1 window of slightly less height. This whole composition is bordered with a squarish wooden frame which extends three clapboard widths below the long windows' sills. In the center section of the building (above the door and two flanking window sets), the rafter ends project just below the eaves creating another decorative emphasis.

The southwest end bay contains the following fenestration: three equal-sized 6/6 windows, positioned side by side and unified by this same 4-5" wide wooden frame which surrounds all three windows. Similar, but a bit narrower, are the sets of triple windows which flank the central doorway. The central door itself is flanked by sidelights (each strip divided approximately in half with one long pane atop two identical smaller ones) and approached by a flight of four wooden steps and a landing bounded by the same cement block as the foundation. Placed under the windows at foundation level are four gratings consisting of vertical wooden slats nailed to horizontals which mask openings to a crawl space.

A single eyebrow window, outlined in white and containing louvers to ventilate a small attic storage area, is located directly above the doorway about two thirds the way up the slope of the roof from which it projects dramatically as the surrounding roof material is a contrasting dark gray asphalt.

The central brick chimney with cement cap rises from the apex of the roof.

One enters the principal interior space via the west doorway into an ample, squarish, communal room dominated by an oversized fireplace on the east wall and clearly intended for the display of trophies garnered by gun club members. (The ranger in residence has continued this tradition, but with an emphasis on conservation: by enlivening the room with stuffed species of birds and ducks, various victims of road kills, which he uses for education as well as decorative purposes. The massive fireplace, probably a rustic stone one at first, has been re-executed rather unsensitively in brick. Surrounding this space

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

# 8 SIGNIFICANCE

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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 checked="" 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 type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input 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		

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SPECIFIC DATES

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

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STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

This structure is, according to local historian Craig Webster of Deal Island, one of several hunting clubs which sprang up on the Eastern Shore of Maryland in the 1920s and 1930s especially because of the lure of superior duck hunting which characterized the area. This surviving example is now notable for its still virgin location and the opportunities it still affords interested people to observe wildlife in an authentic marsh environment.

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

**9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES**

Oral interviews with Steve Dawson, District Manager,  
Somerset County (Deal Island WMA) and resident  
ranger. (April 1979)

Oral interview with Craig Webster, Deal Island resident and  
local historian. (April 1970)

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

**10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA**

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY \_\_\_\_\_

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE COUNTY

STATE COUNTY

**11 FORM PREPARED BY**

NAME / TITLE

Ellen Coxe, Historic Sites Surveyor

ORGANIZATION

Maryland Historical Trust

DATE

August 1979

STREET & NUMBER

21 State Circle

TELEPHONE

269-2438

CITY OR TOWN

Annapolis

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  
The Shaw House, 21 State Circle  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401  
(301) 267-1438

are several smaller, auxiliary chambers used for sleeping, still put to use as quarters for visiting groups from the Smithsonian and other naturalists. At the southeastern corner of the house is a kitchen still used as such by the resident ranger, who also lives in the structure.



JANE'S ISLAND STATE PARK:

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Jane's Island State Park near Crisfield, in addition to its choice location along lower coastal Somerset County where fishing and birding are popular activities, possesses another important attribute--the skipjack Robert L. Webster which the Department of Natural Resources acquired and moved to this site in 1975.

As the accompanying Maryland Historical Trust inventory form notes, the Webster is the largest skipjack in existence, built in Oriole in 1915 and first used commercially as an oystering craft; subsequently it was victor in both annual skipjack races at Deal Island and Sandy Point.

The mechanism for the essential preservation of this important vessel, a rare survival of an indigenous Chesapeake Bay invention and representative of the last of the working fleet under sail, exists in the "Maritime Preservation Grants Program". The Webster must be nominated to the National Register of Historic Places to be eligible for these monies. (See attached information on the Maritime Preservation Grants program as distributed by MHT.)

With a major restoration effort funded by such a grant, the vessel could be stabilized (an immediate priority as water is leaking into the hold and rotting out the interior despite the installation of pumps designed to alleviate the situation but proving inadequate to the task). After that initial phase, the Webster could undergo restoration procedures, the end result of which would be a museum object, like the skipjack Rosie Parks, permanently exhibited at the Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum in St. Michael's, Maryland. It would, however, remain on land, the centerpiece of the park and accessible to its visitors.

DNR might consider, as a solution to the water damage problem, setting the Webster in a treated concrete shell especially designed and fitted for this purpose, rather than the present faulty, salt-lined sand pit. Precedence for this procedure in the display of historic vessels exists at Mystic Seaport in Connecticut, and the survey team suggests contacting Mystic's museum conservators for technical information.

Another potential source of information and expertise is Captain Allendorfer with the National Trust for Historic Preservation in Washington, D.C.



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Excelsior Brass (Dunwurken) Gun Club;  
now park headquarters

Deal Island W.M.A.

4/79 E. Coxe

Detail: front doorway