

1987

S-239

SEA GULL (skipjack)

Deal Island, Maryland

SEA GULL is a 46.6' long two-sail bateau, or V-bottomed deadrise type of centerboard sloop, commonly referred to as a skipjack. She has a beam of 15.9', a depth of 4.3', and a net 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 1924 in Crisfield, Maryland following traditional Bay design and construction methods, SEA GULL 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. SEA GULL is of special interest as being one of the two surviving skipjacks built in the years between the two World Wars.

Survey No. S-239

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 SEA GULL

and/or common

## 2. Location

street & number Lower Thorofare n/a not for publication

city, town Deal Island n/a vicinity of congressional district First

state Maryland 024 county Somerset 039

## 3. Classification

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

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

name Captain Jesse Thomas

street & number telephone no.: 784-2181

city, town Deal Island state and zip code Maryland 21821

## 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 MD 21401

## 7. Description

Survey No. S-239

<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 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 46.6' long two-sail bateau, or V-bottomed deadrise type of centerboard sloop, commonly referred to as a skipjack. She was built in 1924 in Crisfield, Maryland, using typical Bay area cross-planked construction methods. She has a beam of 15.9', a depth of 4.3', and a net register tonnage of 10. She carries a typical skipjack rig consisting of jib-headed mainsail and large jib. She has a longhead bow and a square, or transom, stern. The wooden hull is painted the traditional white.

SEA GULL has an almost plumb, straight stem with a longhead beneath the bowsprit. She has a flat transom stern, slightly raked. There are guards along the sides of the hull to protect it from the bumping of the dredges.

The single mast is set up with double shrouds and deadeyes, as well as a forestay and jibstay. A topping lift leads to the end of the boom, which is jawed to the mast. The mainsail is laced to the boom and carried on wooden hoops at the mast. The large jib, with a club along its foot, is rigged out to the bowsprit, which is painted white. The bowsprit is set up with double chain-and-cable bobstays and chain-and-cable bowsprit shrouds. In addition to her sail rig the vessel carries a motorized pushboat suspended on davits over the stern. The pushboat is painted white and decorated with red stripes.

The skipjack is flush-decked with several deck structures including a wheelbox, cabin trunk, and winders. The decks are surrounded by a lograil forward and a short pinrail aft, with dredge rollers amidships. Dredging gear is carried in season.

SEA GULL is painted white with tan trim on the top of the lograil and pinrail and a red stripe on the hull beneath the guards, extending onto the longhead. Trailboards, painted dark green with the name SEA GULL in gold, are decorated with vines and leaves along with an American flag motif, and are mounted on the longhead. In addition the vessel carries nameboards at her bows, with her name in gold on a dark green ground.

# 8. Significance

Survey No. S-239

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/
<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**    1924                      **Builder/Architect**                      Unknown

---

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 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.

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.

SEASGULL is of interest as being the one surviving skipjack built in the years between the two World Wars. She was built in 1924 in Crisfield, Maryland following traditional Bay-area design and construction methods. She has worked in the oyster-dredging fleet since her building and is presently based at Deal Island. Her captain for many years has been Jesse Thomas who skippered her during a famous Chesapeake Appreciation Days' workboat race in 1969 when the SEA GULL was involved in a three-way collision with the AMY MISTER and SIGSBEE. The story of the race was told in an article in Sports Illustrated.

# 9. Major Bibliographical References

Survey No. 5-239

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 

1	8
---	---

 Zone Easting 

4	1	6	8	7	0
---	---	---	---	---	---

 Northing 

4	2	2	0	2	4	0
---	---	---	---	---	---	---

B 

--	--

 Zone Easting 

--	--	--	--	--	--

 Northing 

--	--	--	--	--	--

C 

--	--

 Zone Easting 

--	--	--	--	--	--

 Northing 

--	--	--	--	--	--

D 

--	--

 Zone Easting 

--	--	--	--	--	--

 Northing 

--	--	--	--	--	--

E 

--	--

 Zone Easting 

--	--	--	--	--	--

 Northing 

--	--	--	--	--	--

F 

--	--

 Zone Easting 

--	--	--	--	--	--

 Northing 

--	--	--	--	--	--

G 

--	--

 Zone Easting 

--	--	--	--	--	--

 Northing 

--	--	--	--	--	--

H 

--	--

 Zone Easting 

--	--	--	--	--	--

 Northing 

--	--	--	--	--	--

## 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

organization Radcliffe Maritime Museum  
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

Survey No. S-239

Magi No. 2002395733

DOE  yes  no

## 1. Name (indicate preferred name)

historic SEA GULL

and/or common

## 2. Location

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

city, town Deal Island \_\_\_\_\_ vicinity of \_\_\_\_\_ congressional district \_\_\_\_\_

state Maryland \_\_\_\_\_ county Somerset

## 3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" 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	<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 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 Jesse Thomas

street &amp; number \_\_\_\_\_ telephone no.: 784-2181

city, town Deal Island \_\_\_\_\_ state and zip code Maryland 21821

## 5. Location of Legal Description

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

street &amp; 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-239

<b>Condition</b>		<b>Check one</b>	<b>Check one</b>	
<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.

This vessel is a 46.6' long two-sail bateau, or V-bottomed deadrise type of centerboard sloop, commonly referred to as a skipjack. She was built in 1924 in Crisfield, Maryland, using typical Bay area cross-planked construction methods. She has a beam of 15.9', a depth of 4.3', and a net register tonnage of 10. She carries a typical skipjack rig consisting of jib-headed mainsail and large jib. She has a longhead bow and a square, or transom, stern. The wooden hull is painted the traditional white.

SEA GULL has an almost plumb, straight stem with a longhead beneath the bowsprit. She has a flat transom stern, slightly raked. There are guards along the sides of the hull to protect it from the bumping of the dredges.

The single mast is set up with double shrouds and deadeyes, as well as a forestay and jibstay. A topping lift leads to the end of the boom, which is jawed to the mast. The mainsail is laced to the boom and carried on wooden hoops at the mast. The large jib, with a club along its foot, is rigged out to the bowsprit, which is painted white. The bowsprit is set up with double chain-and-cable bobstays and chain-and-cable bowsprit shrouds. In addition to her sail rig the vessel carries a motorized pushboat suspended on davits over the stern. The pushboat is painted white and decorated with red stripes.

The skipjack is flush-decked with several deck structures including a wheelbox, cabin trunk, and winders. The decks are surrounded by a lograil forward and a short pinrail aft, with dredge rollers amidships. Dredging gear is carried in season.

SEA GULL is painted white with tan trim on the top of the lograil and pinrail and a red stripe on the hull beneath the guards, extending onto the longhead. Trailboards, painted dark green with the name SEA GULL in gold, are decorated with vines and leaves along with an American flag motif, and are mounted on the longhead. In addition the vessel carries nameboards at her bows, with her name in gold on a dark green ground.

# 8. Significance

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	1924	Builder/Architect	Unknown
----------------	------	-------------------	---------

check: Applicable Criteria:  A  B  C  D  
and/or  
Applicable Exception:  A  B  C  D  E  F  G  
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 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.

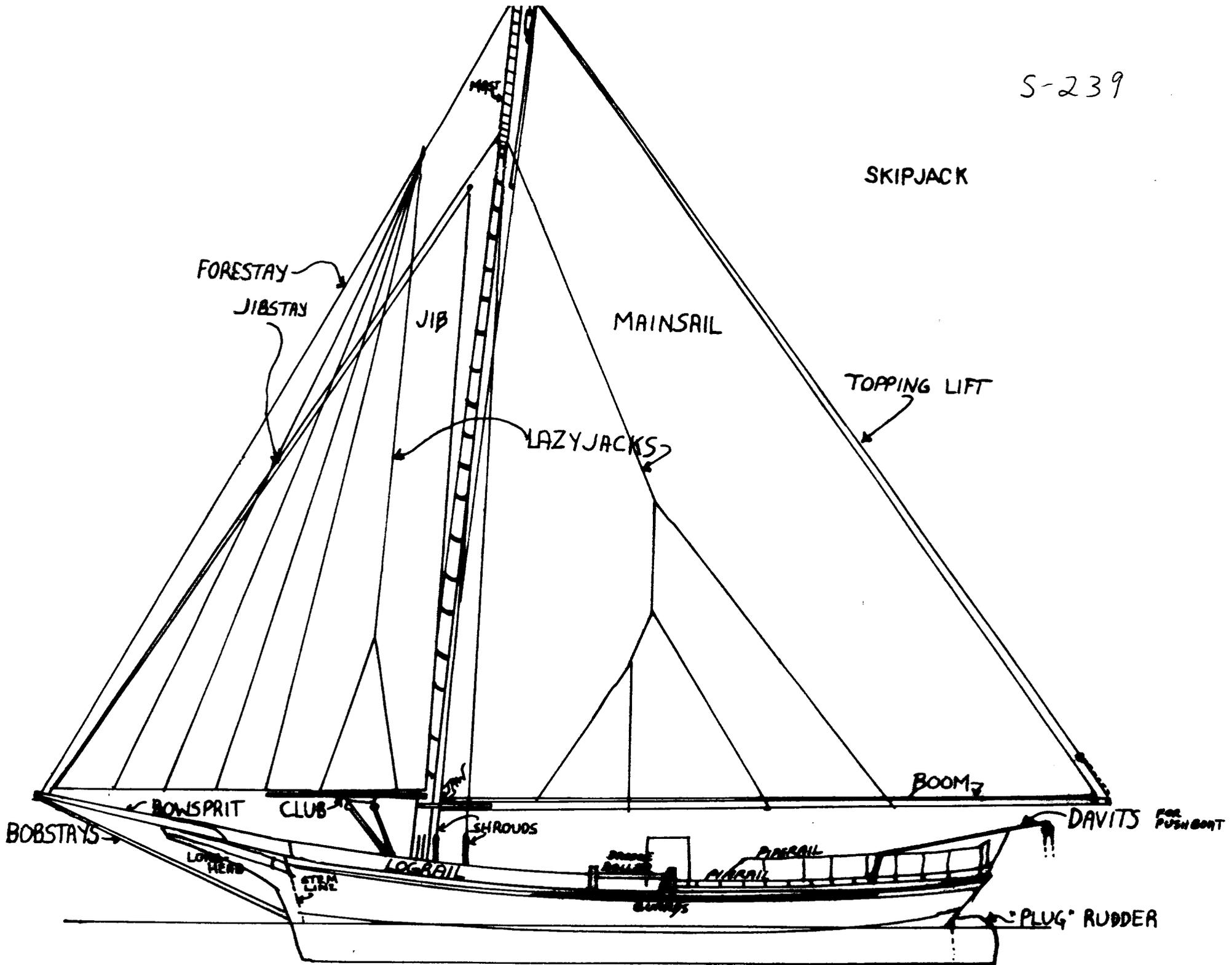
The skipjack evolved as a distinct type of Bay vessel in the 1890's as a cheaper-to-construct alternative to the earlier bugeyes and other traditional framed craft, in a period when shipbuilding costs were rising and the oyster catch was diminishing. The type was devised by enlarging (to 25 to 60 feet) 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.

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.

SEA GULL is of interest as being the one surviving skipjack built in the years between the two World Wars. She was built in 1924 in Crisfield, Maryland following traditional Bay-area design and construction methods. She has worked in the oyster-dredging fleet since her building and is presently based at Deal Island. Her captain for many years has been Jesse Thomas who skippered her during a famous Chesapeake Appreciation Days' workboat race in 1969 when the SEA GULL was involved in a three-way collision with the AMY MISTER and SIGSBEE. The story of the race was told in an article in Sports Illustrated.



S-239





S-239

SEAGULL

Wenona, Md

port side sail

M.C. Wootton

11/83



S-239

SEAGULL

Wenona, Md

port bow sail

M.C. Wootton

11/83



S-239

SEAGULL  
Wenona, Md

port stern  
M. C. Wootton

11/83



NR 2 11/11/83

306-8

S-239

SEAGULL

Wenona, Md.

Port side - under sail

M.C. Wootton 11/83



405-5

S-239

SEAGULL  
Wenona, Md.

Port side - bow (left vessel)  
M.C. Wootton 7/84