T-1152 1954
Ray J. Jones Seafood Company
Wittman
Private

For nearly fifty years the Ray J. Jones Seafood company packinghouse has been a fixture at the community wharf in the village of Wittman. The single-story, gable-roofed concrete block and frame building is situated at the water's edge of Cummings Creek and actually extends over the shoreline in order to provide dockside mooring for crab and oyster laden boats to tie up and discharge their catch. The facility was designed in a rough, linear plan with the receiving rooms at the water's edge in shed sections of the gable roofed packinghouse. The picking room occupies the largest space, which is adjacent to the receiving room. Deeper into the building is the packing room and adjacent cooler for the packaged seafood. While the building is currently used as a storage facility, it remains largely unaltered from its use as a seafood processing plant. It is one of a small collection of three early to mid twentieth-century packinghouses to remain in Talbot County.

Maryland Historical Trust
Maryland Inventory of
Historic Properties Form

Inventory No. T-1152

1. Name of Property (indicate preferred name)

historic Ray J. Jones Seafood Company

other

2. Location

street and number End of Howeth Road __ not for publication

city, town Wittman vicinity

county Talbot

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

name Richard & Kathleen Hargrove

street and number 24000 St. Michaels Road telephone 410-745-9698

city, town St. Michaels state Maryland zip code 21663

4. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Talbot County Clerk of Court liber 974 folio 31

city, town Easton tax map 22 tax parcel 19 tax ID number 5-181313

5. Primary Location of Additional Data

_____ Contributing Resource in National Register District
_____ Contributing Resource in Local Historic District
_____ Determined Eligible for the National Register/Maryland Register
_____ Determined Ineligible for the National Register/Maryland Register
_____ Recorded by HABS/HAER
_____ Historic Structure Report or Research Report at MHT
_____ Other:_____

6. Classification

Category
__ district
_x_ building(s)
__ structure
__ site
__ object

Ownership
__ public
_x_ private
____ both

Current Function
__ agriculture
__ commerce/trade
__ defense
____ domestic
__ education
____ funerary
____ government
__ health care
__ industry
____ landscape
____ recreation/culture
____ religion
____ social
__ transportation
__ work in progress
__ unknown
__ vacant/not in use
x other:Storage

Resource Count

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	____	buildings
____	____	sites
_____	_____	structures
_____	_____	objects
1	____	Total

Number of Contributing Resources previously listed in the Inventory

_____

7. Description

Inventory No. T-1152

Condition

___ excellent ___ deteriorated
x__ good ___ ruins
___ fair ___ altered

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

The Ray J. Jones Seafood Company packinghouse is located at the end of Howeth Road at the community wharf in Wittman, Talbot County, Maryland. The concrete block and frame structure stands at the edge of the harbor on Cummings Creek, a tributary of Harris Creek. The main block is oriented with its gable roof on a north/south axis.

Initially erected in 1954 and enlarged several times, the single-story gable roofed concrete block packinghouse is a long rectangular structure covered by a medium sloped gable roof sheathed in tin. The main building is surrounded on the south, east, and west sides by shed roofed additions built in a combination of concrete block and frame walls covered with either corrugated tin or tar. Attached to the north side is a large single-story addition covered by a flat roof. Now used as a storage facility, the building is secured and many of the window openings are boarded over.

The south elevation of the packinghouse is a gable front façade with a shed roofed section stretching across the entire wall surface. The shed roofed section, which housed the receiving room for crabs and/or oysters, is built over the shoreline's edge and extends over the creek. The shed roofed section is supported on pilings driven into the creek bed, and the underside of the wharf is enclosed with vertical boards. The walls are covered with sheets of corrugated tin, and the window and door openings are boarded over. The gable end of the main block above the shed roof is a frame wall pierced by a metal clad window. The edge of the roof is finished flush.

The east side of the main block is defined by a concrete block wall pierced by a series of boarded over window openings that have exposed brick sills. An entrance in the southeast corner is filled with a pair of double doors. The edge of the roof is finished with a plain boxed cornice. A side entrance in the northeast corner provides access to the company office as well as the main picking room, now used for storage.

Attached to the north gable end of the main block is a slightly shorter single-story concrete block wing erected like the main block with gable ends framed and covered with board sheeting. A pair of louvered vents pierce the north gable end of the wing, and the edge of the roof is finished flush with a plain bargeboard.

The west side of the main block is extended by a shed roof section that constitutes a long narrow space that was used for shucking oysters. Built atop a framework associated with pilings, the shed roofed section is covered with corrugated tin. Piercing the northwest end of the shed roofed section is a single flue concrete block furnace flue.

Attached to the north and west sides of the main block is a series of single-story concrete walled sections, which house coolers as well as several rooms of undetermined use. Metal clad two-pane windows typical of the mid twentieth century light the various rooms, and each opening is fitted with a brick sill. The edge of the flat roof has an extended eave with a boxed cornice.

8. Significance

Inventory No. T-1152

Period	Areas of Significance	Check and justify below		
__ 1600-1699	__ agriculture	__ economics	__ health/medicine	__ performing arts
__ 1700-1799	__ archeology	__ education	__ industry	__ philosophy
__ 1800-1899	architecture	__ engineering	__ invention	__ politics/government
x 1900-1999	__ art	entertainment/	__ landscape architecture	religion
__ 2000-	__ commerce	recreation	__ law	__ science
	__ communications	__ ethnic heritage	__ literature	__ social history
	__ community planning	__ exploration/	__ maritime history	__ transportation
	__ conservation	settlement	__ military	__ other:

Specific dates **Architect/Builder**

Construction dates 1954

Evaluation for:

_____ National Register _____Maryland Register ___x___not evaluated

Prepare a one-paragraph summary statement of significance addressing applicable criteria, followed by a narrative discussion of the history of the resource and its context. (For compliance projects, complete evaluation on a DOE Form – see manual.)

For nearly fifty years the Ray J. Jones packinghouse has been a fixture at the community wharf in the village of Wittman. The single-story, gable-roofed concrete block and frame building is situated at the water's edge of Cummings Creek and actually extends over the shoreline in order to provide dockside mooring for crab and oyster laden boats to tie up and discharge their catch. The facility was designed in a rough linear plan with the receiving rooms at the water's edge in shed roofed sections of the gable roofed packinghouse. The picking room occupies the largest space, which is adjacent to the receiving room. Deeper into the building is the packing room and adjacent cooler for the packaged crabmeat or soft-shells. While the building is currently used as a storage facility, it remains largely unaltered from its use as a seafood processing plant. It is one of a small collection of three early to mid twentieth-century packinghouses to remain in Talbot County.

HISTORY AND SUPPORT

Ray J. Jones purchased a lot on Wittman Wharf,[1] on the south edge of the village, in 1954 where he built the the Ray J. Seafood Company in a multi-sectioned concrete block building. He packed oysters, clams, soft shell crabs, and crabmeat.

> Maryland's 60 or more seafood processing plants are under three weeks' notice to file plans for compliance with the federal Environmental Protection Agency water quality standards or risk closure. Packers beyond reach of the central systems have reacted vigorously, protesting the edict issued by the Maryland Department of Water Resources with a July 6 deadline gives no assurance that any system they propose and build will be acceptable....Ray J. Jones, Jr., whose family-owned crab, clam and oyster processing plant is located at Wittman in Talbot County, is fighting mad about the "abrupt notice" and "premature" imposition of standards. "We don't know what to do and the department is unable to tell us." Jones said, declaring he and others will seek a court-ordered reprieve if necessary.
>
> Ironically, the Department of Water Resources has had a pilot model of a mechanical system operating in a 32-foot truck at the Ray Jones plant and it hasn't worked. It was first tested on oysters beginning March

[1] Talbot County Land Record, 316/408, September 28, 1954.

13, and then shut down for installation of new discharge pumps. "They are experimenting with clam waste now and have said they're going to try it for another week or so and then move on," Jones said.[2]

In 1977 and 1983 the company employed 50 people (ten men and forty women) processing oysters, soft-shell clams, crabs, and crabmeat.[3] The property was sold in 1991 as part of the bankruptcy estate of Ray J. Jones.[4]

[2] Norman Harrington, "Seafood Plants Under Edict," *News American*, Baltimore, June 17, 1972, p. 2.
[3] *Directory of Maryland Manufacturers 1977-1978*, Maryland Department of Economic and Community Development, p. 229; *Directory of Maryland Manufacturers 1983-1984*, Maryland Department of Economic and Community Development, p. 295.
[4] Talbot County Land Record, 712/321, 26 July 1991.

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Name Ray J. Jones Seafood
Continuation Sheet

Number 8 Page 2

Ray J. Jones Seafood Company
Wittman, Talbot County, Maryland
Chain of title

Map 22, Parcel 232

974/31	Martin Braum III
	to
8/25/2000	Richard Hargrove Kathleen Hargrove Parcel 1 "to be the contents what they may" Parcel 2 8.61 acres
712/321	Ray James Jones-Bankruptcy Estate Joyce Irene Jones
	to
7/26/1991	Martin Braum III
316/408	William F. Howeth, Jr. Mary K. Howeth
	to
9/28/1954	Ray J. Jones Joyce Irene Jones

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Name Ray J. Jones Seafood
Continuation Sheet

Number 8 Page 3

286/443	William F. Howeth Olive O. Howeth
	to
5/20/1950	William F. Howeth, Jr. Mary K.. Howeth
CBL 179/472	Herman M. Pfaff Mary C. Pfaff
	to
12/29/1917	William F. Howeth 5 acres

9. Major Bibliographical References

Inventory No. T-1152

Talbot County Land Records, various volumes, Talbot County Courthouse

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of surveyed property	1 acre		
Acreage of historical setting	5 acres		
Quadrangle name	Tilghman, Maryland	Quadrangle scale:	1:24,000

Verbal boundary description and justification

The metes and bounds of this property are coincidental with the current boundary of the lot.

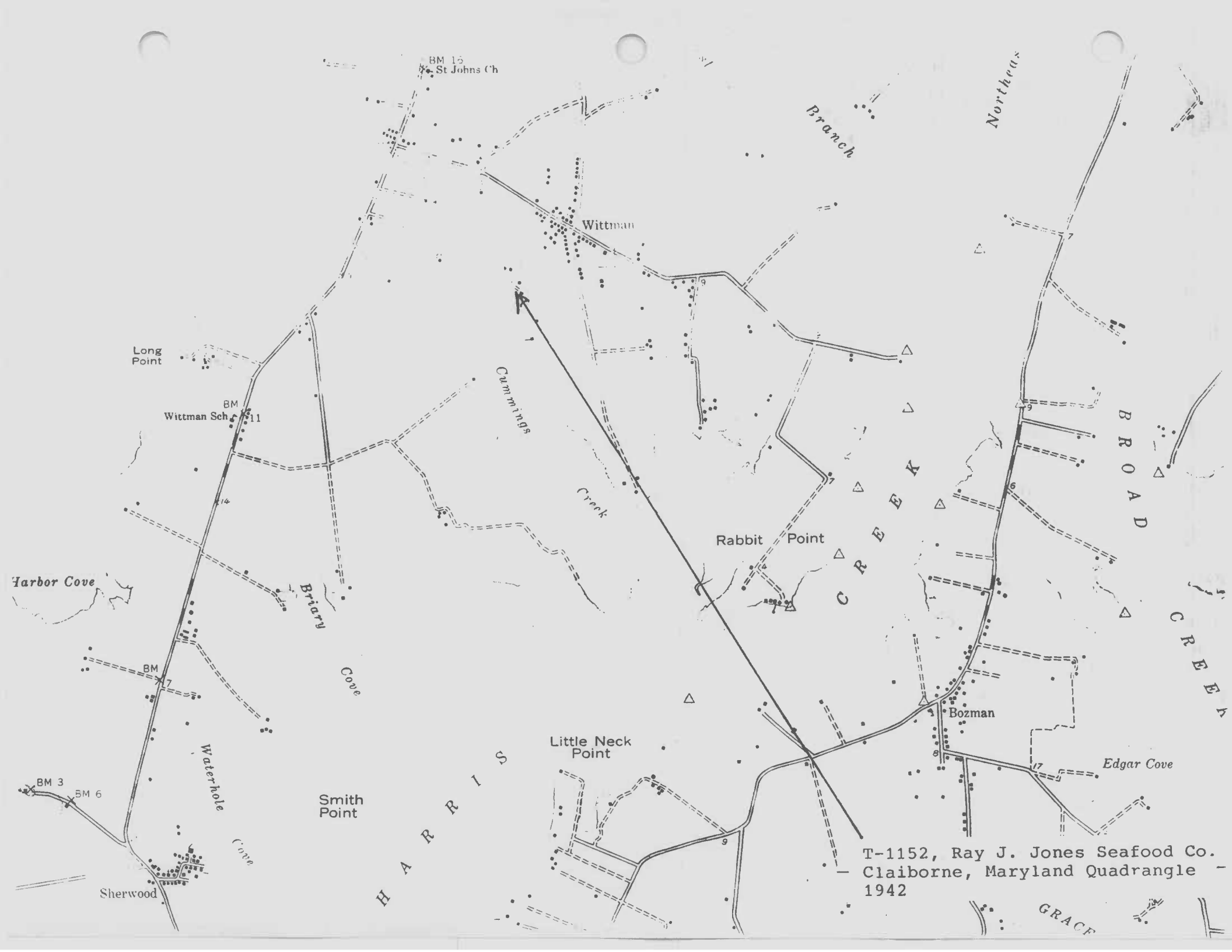
11. Form Prepared by

name/title	Paul B. Touart, Architectural Historian; Virginia Jenkins, Business Historian		
organization	Private Consultants	date	6/15/2001
street & number	P. O. Box 5	telephone	410-651-1094
city or town	Westover	state	Maryland 21871

The Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties 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
DHCD/DHCP
100 Community Place
Crownsville, MD 21032-2023
410-514-7600



T-1152, Ray J. Jones Seafood Co.
Claiborne, Maryland Quadrangle
1942

CHEVROLET

T-1152

Ray J. Jones Seaboard Co.

Wiseman, Talbot Co., MD

Southeast Elevation

6/2001, Paul Tolbert, Photographer

Neg/MD. Historical Trust

1 of 2

T-1152

Ray J Jones Jeffords & Wittman, Talbot Co., Md.

Southwest Elevation

6/2001, Paul Touart, Photography

Neg/Md Historical Trust

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