

Rock Point Shucker's Houses

Circa 1940

CH-738

Rock Point

Private

Consisting of two abandoned and unassuming one-story, massed frame structures built before World War II, the Rock Point Shucker's Houses served an important role to the sizeable seafood industry that once dominated the Rock Point area. Several similar structures once stood along the lane and were occupied by laborers working in the oyster packing houses of Rock Point. The Rock Point Shucker's Houses are the only documented structures directly associated with the commercial seafood packing industry in Charles County.

Maryland Historical Trust

Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties Form

Inventory No. CH-738

1. Name of Property (indicate preferred name)

historic Rock Point Shuckers Houses
 other The Lane

2. Location

street and number South side of Cedar Lane ___ not for publication
 city, town Rock Point ___ vicinity
 county Charles

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

name Frank Lancaster et al
 street and number 13580 Persimmon Point Road telephone Unknown
 city, town Rock Point state MD zip code 20682

4. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Charles County Courthouse House tax map and parcel: 89 p.89
 city, town La Plata liber 2229 folio 129

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
- Other

6. Classification

Category		Ownership		Current Function		Resource Count			
						Contributing	Noncontributing		
<input type="checkbox"/>	district	<input type="checkbox"/>	public	<input type="checkbox"/>	agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/>	landscape		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	private	<input type="checkbox"/>	commerce/trade	<input type="checkbox"/>	recreation/culture	<input type="checkbox"/>	2
<input type="checkbox"/>	structure	<input type="checkbox"/>	both	<input type="checkbox"/>	defense	<input type="checkbox"/>	religion	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	site			<input type="checkbox"/>	domestic	<input type="checkbox"/>	social	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	object			<input type="checkbox"/>	education	<input type="checkbox"/>	transportation	<input type="checkbox"/>	
				<input type="checkbox"/>	funerary	<input type="checkbox"/>	work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/>	2
				<input type="checkbox"/>	government	<input type="checkbox"/>	unknown	<input type="checkbox"/>	
				<input type="checkbox"/>	health care	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	vacant/not in use	<input type="checkbox"/>	
				<input type="checkbox"/>	industry	<input type="checkbox"/>	other:	<input type="checkbox"/>	
						Number of Contributing Resources previously listed in the Inventory			
						0			

7. Description

Inventory No. CH-738

Condition

- | | |
|------------------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> excellent | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> deteriorated |
| <input type="checkbox"/> good | <input type="checkbox"/> ruins |
| <input type="checkbox"/> fair | <input type="checkbox"/> altered |

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

The Rock Point Shucker's Houses consist of two simple one-story frame structures facing northeast onto Cedar Lane. Constructed during the second quarter of the 20th century, these simple four-room dwellings were used for laborers who once worked in the nearby oyster shucking houses. The dwelling is sheathed in weatherboard siding. Tongue and groove paneling forms the interior walls and floors. Poured concrete piers support the frame. The roof, pierced by a single interior chimney, is sheathed in metal and has exposed rafters.

8. Significance

Inventory No. CH-738

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

Specific dates 1925-1950

Architect/Builder Unknown

Construction dates 1925-1950

Evaluation for:

National Register

Maryland Register

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 reports, complete evaluation on a DOE Form - see manual.)

Although in poor condition, the Rock Point Shucker's Houses are the only documented structures associated with the commercial seafood packing industry in Charles County. Commercial seafood was important industry that began to appear in Southern Maryland during the 1870s and 1880s. Oysters in particular, along with shad and herring, were important exports in Southern Maryland during the late 19th century. At least three large oyster bottoms were located off of Charles County's shoreline. These included Cobb Island Bar, Swan Point Bar, Kettle Bottom Shoals and Old Farm Bar, the largest in the area between Popes Creek and the Kettle Bottom Channel.

After the Civil War, the oyster grounds and fisheries to the north were largely depleted and many waterman from the North turned their efforts to the Chesapeake Bay. Between 1872-1892, Maryland on average produced over 10 million bushels per year. The harvest of 1884-85 brought in 15 million bushels, the highest yield before and since, and represented 1/3 of the worldwide oyster harvest during that year. The agricultural depression of the post-war years encouraged many to abandon or supplement farming with seafood. By 1880, 120 people in Charles County claimed to be either a fisherman, sailor or oysterman. Roughly half were oystermen.

The enormous fortunes at stake in the oyster industry, combined with over harvesting and declining yields, led to the infamous Oyster Wars of the late 19th century. Competition between oystermen was fierce and at times led to violence. Oystermen from the Northern Neck of Virginia, and the Maryland and Virginia Eastern Shore began dredging local oyster grounds, stiffening yields of local watermen. Labor was also a problem and many accounts exist of immigrants being "shanghaied" during the times of peak harvests. Some were brutally treated. Other accounts tell of workers not being compensated, abandoned or thrown overboard. Maryland's conservation commissioner, Swepson Earle stated in the early 20th century that "the toughest of tough places on the Chesapeake in the 1890's was Rock Point on the Potomac River at the mouth of the Wicomico... Three killings a week created no civic resentment, while many weeks during the oyster season marked the departure from this life of as many as five or six men." Although it is difficult to judge just how overstated this may have been, in 1905 several highly publicized shoot-outs are known to have occurred off of the Cobb Neck Bar.

As a result of the railroad, Maryland became the leading state for packing oysters as well as a variety of farm produce including tomatoes. In Baltimore, canning was second only to garment-making. In 1880 Baltimore contributed 1/3 of all canning done in the United States. Along the Patuxent River, Benedict rivaled Solomon's Island in the number of oyster packing houses. Between 1900 and 1920 there were four companies in operation. Rock Point is known to have had at least four packing houses.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Inventory No. CH-738

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of surveyed property 189

Acreage of historical setting 189

Quadrangle name Rock Point

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

Verbal boundary description and justification

The Rock Point Shuckers Houses are part of a much larger parcel containing 137 acres identified as parcel 89 in the Charles County Property Tax Map.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Cathy C. Hardy

organization Charles County Planning

date 3/25/2002

street and number 200 Baltimore Street

telephone 301-396-5815

city or town La Plata

state MD zip code 20646

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.

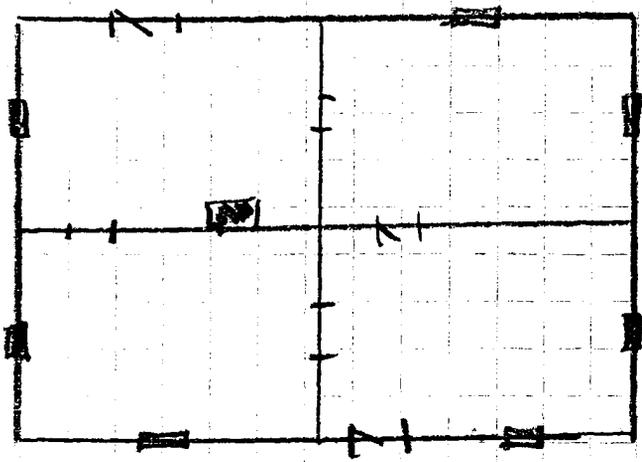
return to: Maryland Historical Trust
DHCD/DHCP
100 Community Place
Crownsville MD 21032
410-514-7600

CH- 738 Charles County, MD

Name: ROCK PT. SHUCKERS HS

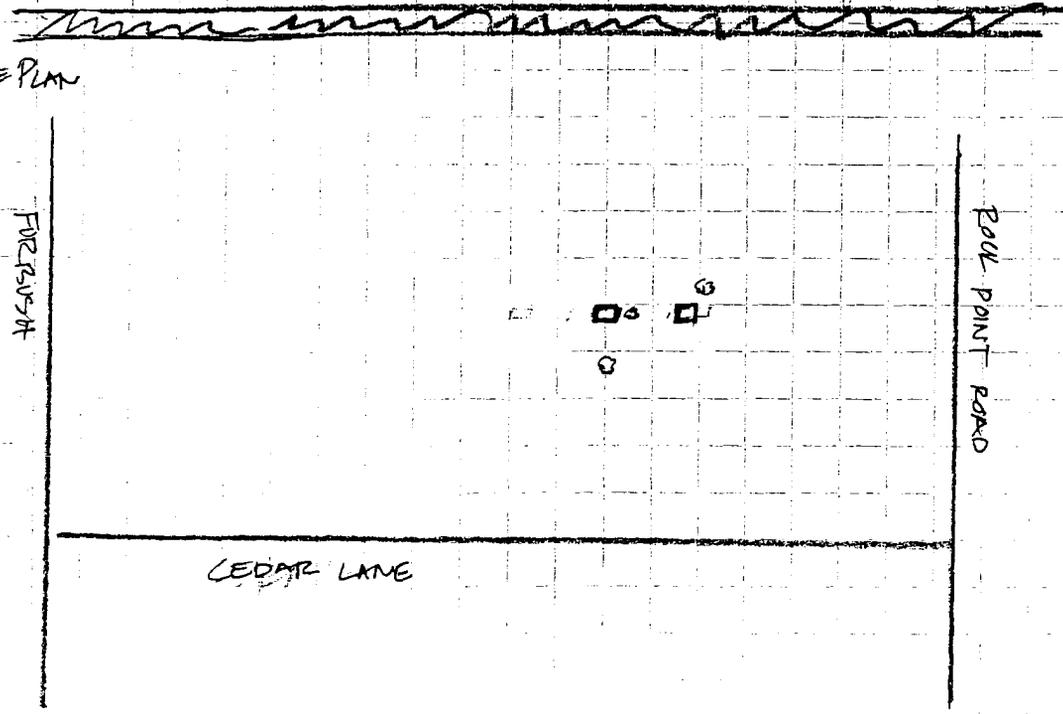
Location: ROCK POINT

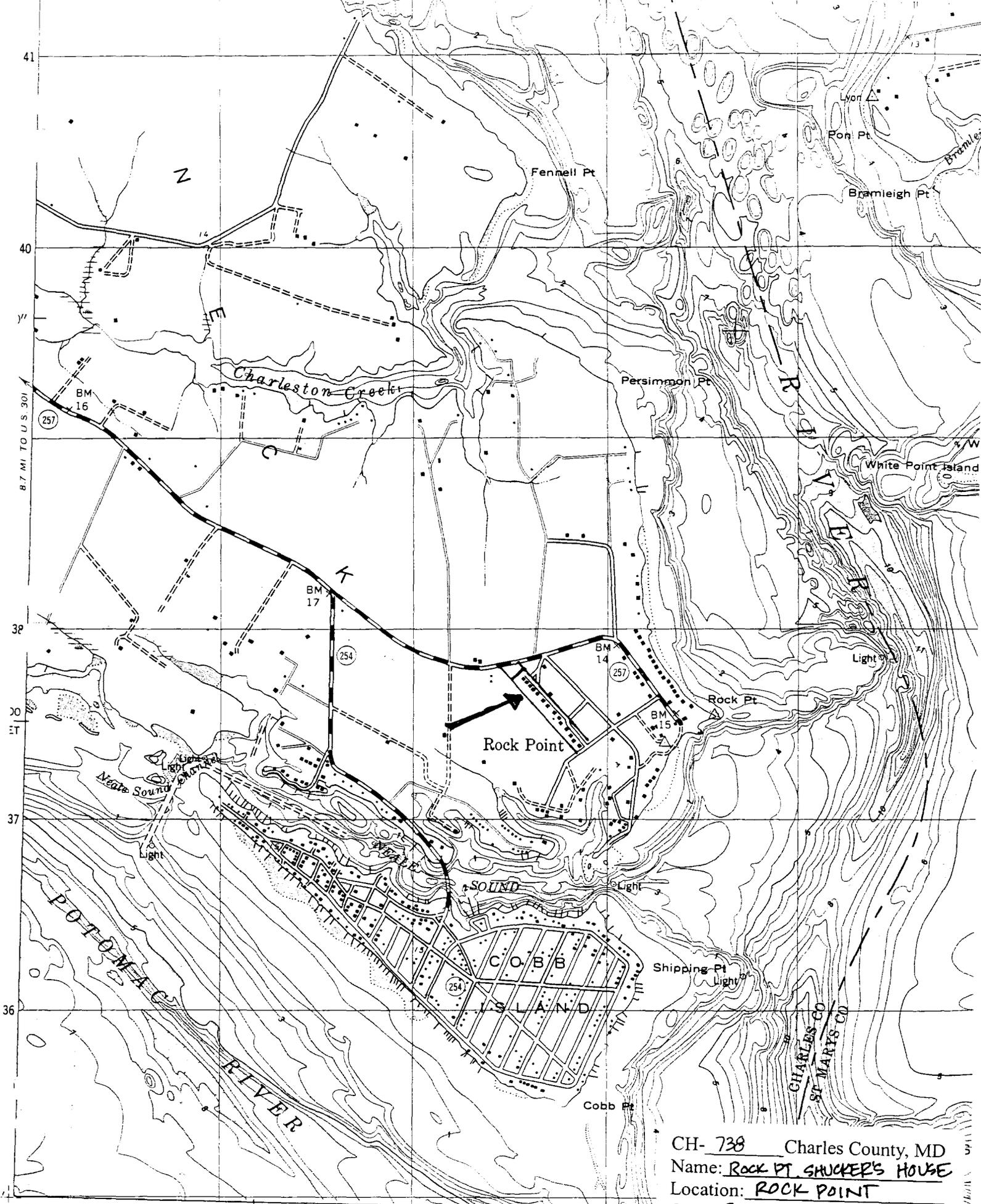
Quad: ROCK POINT



NOT DRAWN TO SCALE

SITE PLAN





CH- 738 Charles County, MD
 Name: ROCK PT. SHUCKER'S HOUSE
 Location: ROCK POINT
 Quad: ROCK POINT



CH-738

ROCK POINT SHUCKING HOUSES

CHARLES CO, MD

WINTER 2001

C. HARDY

MD

SHPO

LOOKING W

1 of 2



CH-738
ROCK POINT SHUCKING
CHARLES CO MD
WINTER 2001
C. HARDY
MD SHPO
LOOKING W

20F2