

HARRIS PACKING HOUSE
Still Pond, Maryland
(early 20th century)

K-378

By the middle of the 19th century, the steam boat service from Baltimore and the Western Shore to Kent County was well-established. This rapid and dependable transportation system made it possible to raise fruit, berries, asparagus, and tomatoes on Eastern Shore farms and ship them to Baltimore for sale. In response, orchards were planted on the shores of the rivers and Bay and steamboats made regular stops at the private wharfs maintained by many farmers. Harris Wharf was one of the larger and better known stops and this building may be the last packing house remaining in the county. The structure is frame. Two and one half stories tall and 50' by 60' in plan, it is covered by a generous gambrel roof which spans the long dimension.

By the end of the century, the fruit orchards were disappearing. Disease, the decline of the steam boat as a dependable transportation system, improper farming techniques, and labor problems lead to the destruction of most of Kent's orchards.

INVENTORY FORM FOR STATE HISTORIC SITES SURVEY

1 NAME

HISTORIC

AND/OR COMMON

Harris Packing House

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

Bloomingneck Farm

FLK 2/7/94

CITY, TOWN

Blooming Neck Road
(Coleman)

1st

STATE

Still Pond

XX VICINITY OF

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

Kent

COUNTY

Maryland

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY

___DISTRICT

BUILDING(S)

___STRUCTURE

___SITE

___OBJECT

OWNERSHIP

___PUBLIC

PRIVATE

___BOTH

PUBLIC ACQUISITION

___IN PROCESS

___BEING CONSIDERED

STATUS

OCCUPIED

___UNOCCUPIED

___WORK IN PROGRESS

ACCESSIBLE

___YES: RESTRICTED

___YES: UNRESTRICTED

NO

PRESENT USE

AGRICULTURE

___COMMERCIAL

___EDUCATIONAL

___ENTERTAINMENT

___GOVERNMENT

___INDUSTRIAL

___MILITARY

___MUSEUM

___PARK

___PRIVATE RESIDENCE

___RELIGIOUS

___SCIENTIFIC

___TRANSPORTATION

___OTHER

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

Mr. & Mrs. Walter Harris, Jr.

Telephone #: 301-778-4449

STREET & NUMBER

Bloomingneck Farm

CITY, TOWN

Still Pond

___ VICINITY OF

STATE, zip code

Maryland 21667

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Kent County Court House

Liber #: EE 1

Folio #: 526

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

Chestertown, Maryland

STATE

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

DATE

___FEDERAL ___STATE ___COUNTY ___LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE

7 DESCRIPTION

K-378

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

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Standing just south of the main house on the Harris Farm is what may be the last remaining fruit packing house in Kent County. Although moved, its original equipment is still inside. The building is frame and measures about 50' by 60'. The 2½ story building is rectangular in shape and is covered with a generous gambrel roof which spans the wide dimension.

The exterior walls of the building are enclosed in vertical boarding, painted dark red, and the roof is covered with corrugated metal roofing. The foundation is cast-in-place concrete.

There are wide wooden entry doors in the center of both gambrel ends and in the sides. These open by sliding on metal tracks nailed to the exterior walls. Concrete driveways lead to these vehicular entries.

Six over six sash windows are used throughout the building. On the gambrel ends the wide entries are flanked by groups of three windows. Above each group of three is a pair of two windows on the second floor. The attic is lit by another, centered, group of three windows. The sides of the packing house have two bands of five 6 over 6 sash windows. All are set in plain frames.

Part of the structural timbers in this building are re-used from earlier barns that stood on this property. Before being demolished these barns rested on granite foundations. The granite was supposedly so slippery that rats could not climb it and destroy grain that was stored inside the barns.

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

8 SIGNIFICANCE

K-378

| 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 checked="" 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 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 | | | | |

SPECIFIC DATES early 20th

BUILDER/ARCHITECT Walter B. Harris

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

By the middle of the 19th century, the steam boat service from Baltimore and the Western Shore to Kent County was well-established. This rapid and dependable transportation system made it possible to raise fruit, berries, asparagus, and tomatoes on Eastern Shore farms and ship them to Baltimore for sale. In response, orchards were planted on the shores of the rivers and Bay and steamboats made regular stops at the private wharfs maintained by many farmers. Harris Wharf was one of the larger and better known stops and the Harris Farm had 200 acres of cherry, apple, peach, and pear orchards.

When the fruit was ripe, it was picked by local laborers, including students at agricultural colleges, and packed into wooden crates (cherries) half-bushel baskets (peaches,) or baskets or barrels (apples.) The packed fruit was stored in a warehouse at the end of the wharf; a red lantern hung on the wharf was the signal for the steam boat to stop for produce.

By the end of the nineteenth century, the fruit orchards were **disappearing**. **Disease** the decline of the steam boat as a dependable transportation system, improper farming techniques, and labor problems lead to the destruction of most of Kent's orchards. The Harris family continued to raise apples and peaches until the 1930's.

Today few physical reminders of this phase of Kent County agriculture survive and the few private wharfs and public landings still in existence are used for pleasure boating. Much of Bloomingneck Farm was owned by William Paca of Annapolis, a signer of the Declaration of Independence.

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

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9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

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

Marsha L. Fritz, Survey Consultant

ORGANIZATION

Kent County Planning Commission

DATE

778-4600, ext.67

STREET & NUMBER

Court House

TELEPHONE

CITY OR TOWN

Chestertown, Maryland

STATE

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



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Harris Packing House

View to West

Still Pond

Kent County

M.L. Fritz

8/1980