

QA-554

Harvey Ruth Oyster Packing House Shanties
Grasonville vicinity, Queen Anne's County

Constructed ca. 1945-1950

Privately owned

SUMMARY DESCRIPTION

The Harvey Ruth Oyster Packing House Shanties are located along the eastern shore of Kent Island Narrows in Queen Anne's County, Maryland. The shanties stand back from the waterfront along Wells Cove Road south of Main Street (Route 18). The shanties are surrounded by a boat repair yard to the north, recent hotel and condominium development to the east, a parking lot to the south, and the Harvey Ruth Oyster Packing House to the west. There are two shanties, both constructed ca. 1945-1950: a small 2-unit, wood-frame shanty in deteriorated condition and a larger 8-unit, concrete block shanty in fair condition.

SUMMARY STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Harvey Ruth Oyster Packing House Shanties were constructed ca. 1945-1950 adjacent to the Harvey Ruth Oyster Packing House in order to provide temporary housing to seasonal workers in the oyster packing industry. Although oyster harvesting in the Chesapeake peaked in 1885, the packing industry remained strong through the first half of the 20th century.

Maryland Historical Trust

Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties Form

Inventory No. QA-554

1. Name of Property (indicate preferred name)

historic Harvey Ruth Oyster Packing House Shanties (preferred)
 other B & S Fisheries Shanties

2. Location

street and number 200 Wells Cove Road ___ not for publication
 city, town Grasonville X vicinity
 county Queen Anne's

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

name Schulz Associates, LLLP
 street and number P.O. Box 118 telephone (410) 827-8807
 city, town Grasonville state MD zip code 21638

4. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Queen Anne's County Circuit Court liber SM 1148 folio 22
 city, town Centreville tax map 57 tax parcel 337 tax ID number 05-015952

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

7. Description

Inventory No. QA-554

Condition

excellent deteriorated
 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.

SUMMARY DESCRIPTION

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ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

The Harvey Ruth Oyster Packing House Shanties are located along the eastern shore of Kent Island Narrows in Queen Anne's County, Maryland. The shanties stand back from the waterfront along Wells Cove Road south of Main Street (Route 18). The shanties are surrounded by a boat repair yard to the north, recent hotel and condominium development to the east, a parking lot to the south, and the Harvey Ruth Oyster Packing House to the west. There are two shanties, both constructed ca. 1945-1950: a small 2-unit, wood-frame shanty in deteriorated condition and a larger 8-unit, concrete block shanty in fair condition.

The wood-frame shanty is 1-story tall, 4-bays wide, and 2-rooms deep. It has a wood pier foundation, rolled asphalt siding over vertical board, and a shed roof covered in rolled asphalt. Each of the two side-by-side units has a single door opening on the front (south) elevation; the doors are missing. Beside each door opening is a single window opening. Each unit also has a window opening on the rear (north) elevation. One 1/1 wood sash remains. A small, 1-room, shed-roof addition extends from the east elevation. The interior of the shanty consists of two units, each with two small rooms, and is finished in plywood and wood-composite paneling. The wood-frame shanty is in deteriorated condition. Much of the floor and walls have collapsed, and the roof on the addition has caved in.

The concrete block shanty is 1-story tall, 16-bays wide, and 2-rooms deep. It has a standing-seam metal gable roof with wood weatherboard over the gables. Each of the eight units has a single door opening on the front (south) elevation. One batten wood door with a small pane of glass remains; the other door openings have been boarded over. Beside each door opening is a single window opening. One 1/1 wood sash remains; the other window openings have been boarded over. Each unit also has a small window opening on the rear (north) elevation. A few 6-light wood awning windows remain. The interior of the shanty was not accessible, but one unit could be viewed through a window. Each unit consists of two rooms finished in plywood and wood-composite paneling. The concrete block shanty is in fair condition. The interior appears to suffer from general deterioration, but the building appears to be sound.

8. Significance

Inventory No. QA-554

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 checked="" 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
2000-	<input 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 history	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation		<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other: <u>worker housing</u>

Specific dates ca. 1945-1950 (construction), 2003 (closing)**Architect/Builder** unknown**Construction dates** ca. 1945-1950

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 projects, complete evaluation on a DOE Form – see manual.)

SUMMARY STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Harvey Ruth Oyster Packing House Shanties were constructed ca. 1945-1950 adjacent to the Harvey Ruth Oyster Packing House in order to provide temporary housing to seasonal workers in the oyster packing industry. Although oyster harvesting in the Chesapeake peaked in 1885, the packing industry remained strong through the first half of the 20th century.

RESOURCE HISTORY AND SIGNIFICANCE

Harvey Ruth constructed an oyster packing house in Kent Narrows ca. 1937. He acquired additional land adjacent to the packing house in 1945, 1949, and 1951, presumably for construction of the shanties. Ruth sold his oyster packing house and shanties in 1963 to Jean Stelmach. Stelmach operated the packing house as B&S Fisheries Inc. until 2003. The shanties were still occupied at the time the packing house closed. Betty Shulz, niece of Harvey Ruth and owner of the neighboring Fisherman's Inn, bought the entire B&S Fisheries property in 2003. The shanties are currently vacant and have suffered damage from hurricanes and high tides.

Shanties housed seasonal workers in the oyster packing industry during the fall and winter. Workers came from as far away as Baltimore for oyster season. Most shanties lacked plumbing; workers used common kitchens and bathrooms elsewhere on the site.¹

Oyster harvesting and packing emerged as an industry during the 19th century. Oyster production in the Chesapeake region peaked in 1885 and dropped dramatically during the 1890s. A substantial packing industry remained in Kent Narrows, though, and shanties housed as many as 1300 workers during the early 20th century. Oyster packing declined during the late 20th century due to depletion of oyster beds.²

¹ Pat Emory, 25 shanty dwellers evicted. *Bay Times*.

² Janet Freedman, *Kent Island: The Land that Once Was Eden*, 54-57.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Inventory No. QA-554

- Emory, Pat. 25 shanty dwellers evicted. *Bay Times*. January 27, 1987.
Freedman, Janet. *Kent Island: The Land that Once Was Eden*. Baltimore: Maryland Historical Society, 2002.
Queen Anne's County Land Records: Liber SM 1148, folio 22; Liber CWC 3, folio 436.
Shaum, Jack. Kent Narrows oyster shucking house closes. *The Star*. March 9, 2003.

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of surveyed property 0.77 acres
Acreage of historical setting unknown
Quadrangle name Queenstown Quadrangle scale: 1:24,000

Verbal boundary description and justification

Parcel 337 on Queen Anne's County Tax Map 57 has two separate parts. The Harvey Ruth Oyster Packing House Shanties occupy the eastern part of this parcel. The parcel is bounded on the north by the boat yard of Harris Yacht, on the east and south by Wells Cove Road, and on the west by the Harvey Ruth Oyster Packing House. This constitutes all land still associated with the property.

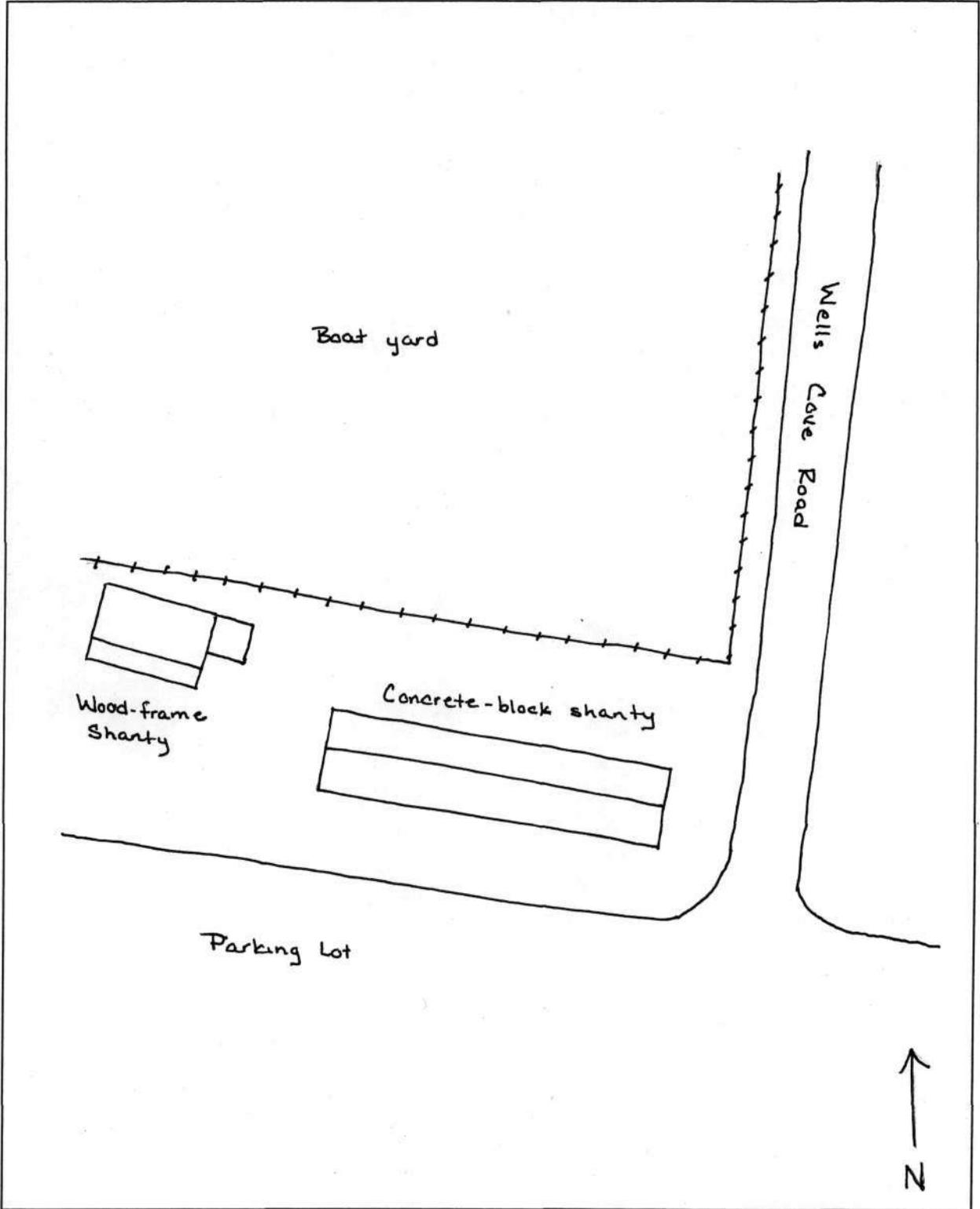
11. Form Prepared by

name/title	Julie Darsie		
organization	Betty Bird & Associates LLC	date	June 2005
street & number	2607 24 th St., NW, Suite 3	telephone	(202) 588-9033
city or town	Washington, D.C.	state	N/A

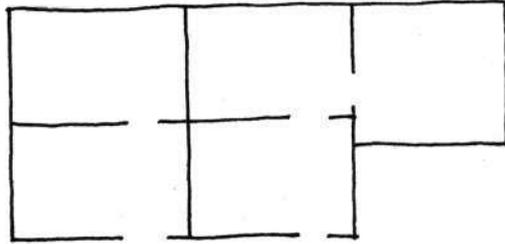
The Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties was officially created by an Act of the Maryland Legislature to be found in the Annotated Code of Maryland, Article 41, Section 181 KA, 1974 supplement.

The survey and inventory are being prepared for information and record purposes only and do not constitute any infringement of individual property rights.

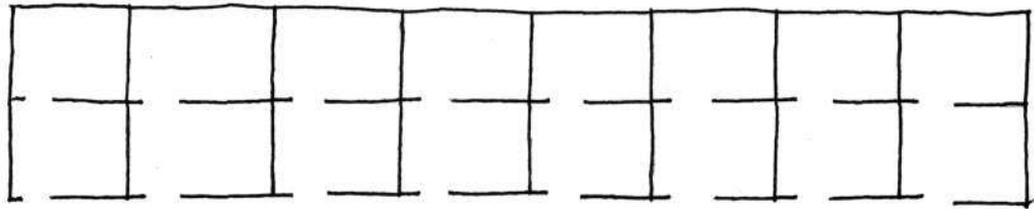
return to: Maryland Historical Trust
DHCD/DHCP
100 Community Place
Crownsville, MD 21032-2023
410-514-7600



Site Plan
QA-554
Harvey Ruth Oyster Packing House Shanties
Grasonville Vicinity, Queen Anne's County, Maryland



Wood-frame shanty



Concrete - block Shanty

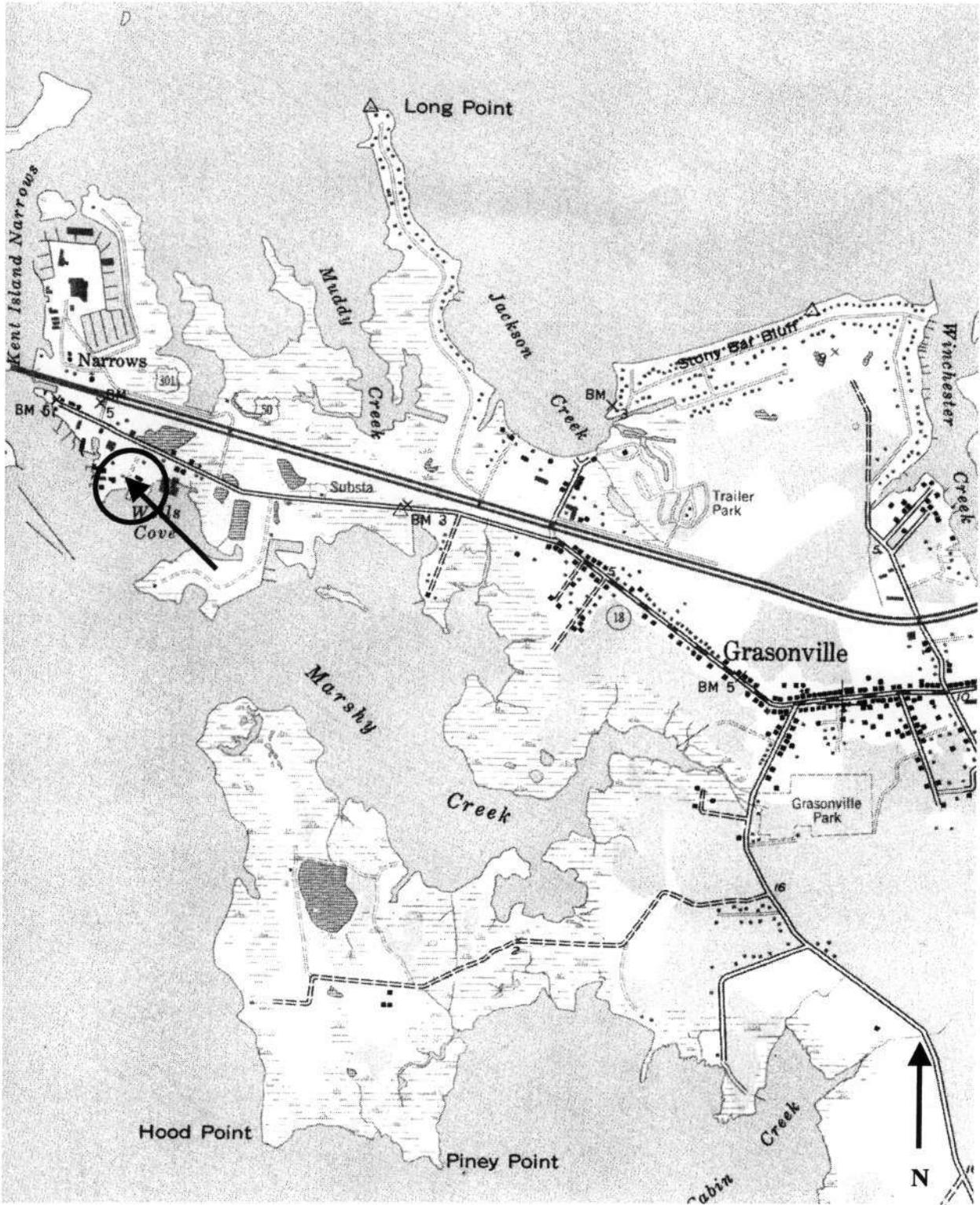
(Not to scale.)

Floor Plans

QA-554

Harvey Ruth Oyster Packing House Shanties

Grasonville Vicinity, Queen Anne's County, Maryland



QA-554
 Harvey Ruth Oyster Packing House Shanties
 Grasonville vicinity, Queen Anne's County, Maryland
 Queenstown, MD Quadrangle (1:24,000)



QA-554

Harvey Ruth Oyster Baking House Shanties

Queen Annes County, Maryland

Julie Darsie for Betty Bird & Associates

May 2005

MD SHPO

View from SE showing south (front) and east elevations
of wood-frame shanty

1 of 5



QA-554

Harvey Ruth Oyster Packing House Shanties

Queen Anne's County, Maryland

Julie Darsie for Betty Bird & Associates

May 2005

7819 31 106 IIIIIII - 5638

MD 5460

View from SW showing south (front) and west elevations
of wood-frame shanty

2 of 5



QA - 554

Harvey Ruth Oyster Packing House Shanties

Queen Anne's County, Maryland

Julie Darsie for Betty Bird & Associates

May 2005

2017 31 189 HHHHH - 5638

WLD SHVO

View to north from front door of wood-frame shanty
showing interior of one unit.

3 of 5



QA-554

Harvey Ruth Oyster Packing House Shanties

Queen Annet's County, Maryland

Julie Darsie for Betty Bird & Associates

May 2005

1886 31 107 11111111-5638

MO SHPO

View from SW showing south (front) and west elevations
of concrete block shanty

4 of 5



QA-554

Harvey Ruth Oyster Packing House Shanties
Queen Annes County, Maryland

Julie Dargie for Betty Bird & Associates

May 2005

MD SHPO

View from NE showing north (rear) and east elevations
of concrete block shanty

5 of 5

5636 - MINIM 404 11 2106 >