

HISTORIC ARCHITECTURAL RESOURCES  
SURVEY REPORT  
FOR THE REPLACEMENT OF BRIDGE NO. 32  
ON US 264 OVER ROSE BAY CANAL  
HYDE COUNTY, NORTH CAROLINA  
TIP NO. B-3349  
FA NO. BRSTP-264(11)  
WO NO. 8.1080701  
ER 99-7921

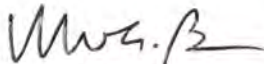
Prepared For:

Project Development and Environmental Analysis Branch  
North Carolina Department of Transportation

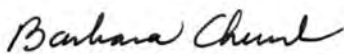
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December 1999

  
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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

I.	Introduction and Summary of Findings .....	1
II.	Methodology .....	4
III.	Inventory and Evaluation -- Rose Bay Oyster Company .....	5
IV.	Bibliography .....	11

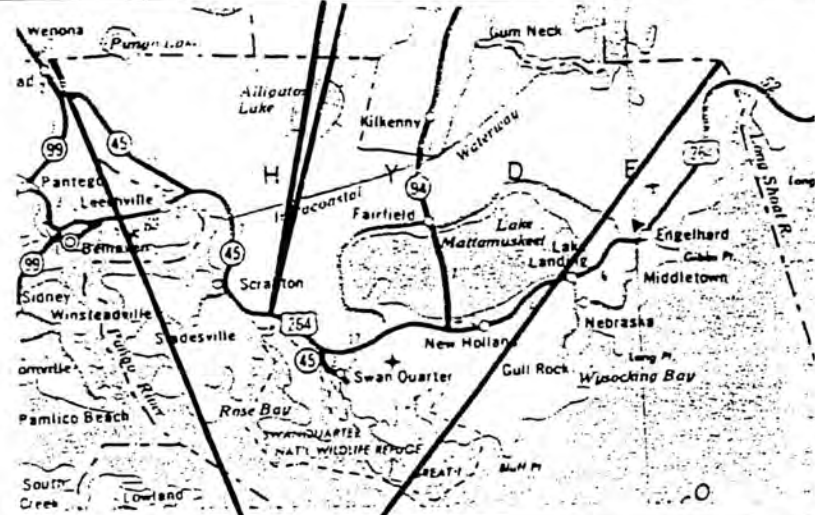
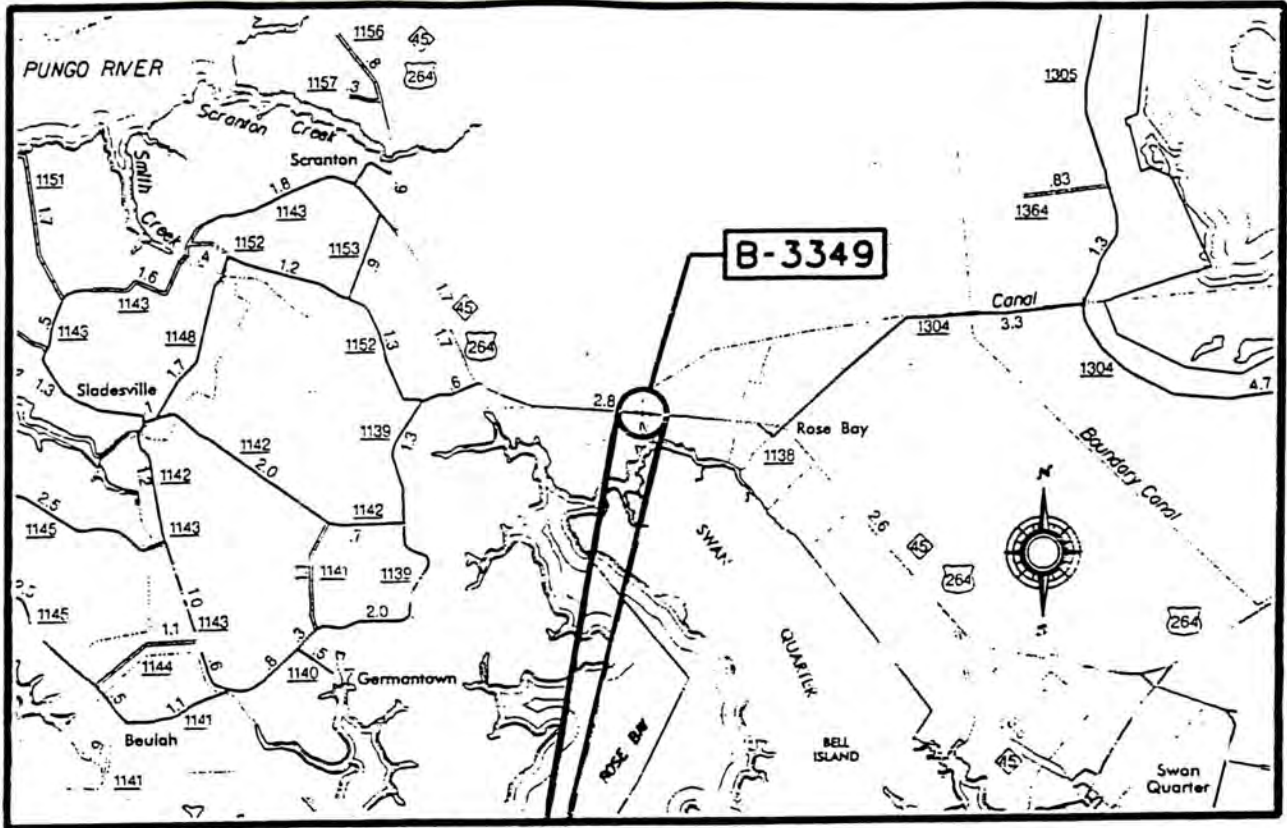
## I. INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

This historic architectural resources survey report was prepared by URS Greiner Woodward Clyde (URSGWC) in support of a project to replace Bridge No. 32 on US 264 over Rose Bay Canal in Hyde County (TIP No. B-3349, FA No. BRSTP-264(11), WO No. 8.1080701, ER No. 99-7921) (Figures 1 and 2). The scope of work for this report was devised after consultation with Ms. Barbara Church and Ms. Mary Pope Furr of the Project Development and Environmental Analysis Branch of the North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT). The fieldwork and research was conducted by Senior Architectural Historian Marvin A. Brown of URSGWC on December 1 and 2, 1999. Mr. Brown also drafted this report, with graphics assistance from Mr. James R. Snodgrass.

This evaluation was conducted in accordance with the basic requirements of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended; the Department of Transportation Act of 1966, as amended; the Department of Transportation regulations and procedures (23 CFR 771 and Technical Advisory T 6640.8A); the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation regulations on the "Protection of Historic Properties" (36 CFR 800); and NCDOT's "Historic Architectural Resources, Survey Procedures and Report Guidelines."

### Summary of Findings

As a result of the fieldwork and evaluation conducted for this report, URS Greiner recommends that the Rose Bay Oyster Company building is not eligible for National Register listing. It is less than 50 years old and--although oyster harvesting and processing has played a role in Hyde's County history--the building is not exceptionally significant as required by National Register Criteria Consideration/Exception G.



**NORTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION  
 DIVISION OF HIGHWAYS  
 PLANNING AND ENVIRONMENTAL BRANCH**



**HYDE COUNTY  
 BRIDGE NUMBER 32  
 ON US 264  
 OVER ROSE BAY CANAL  
 B-3349**

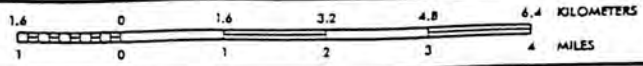


Figure 1 Project Locator Map

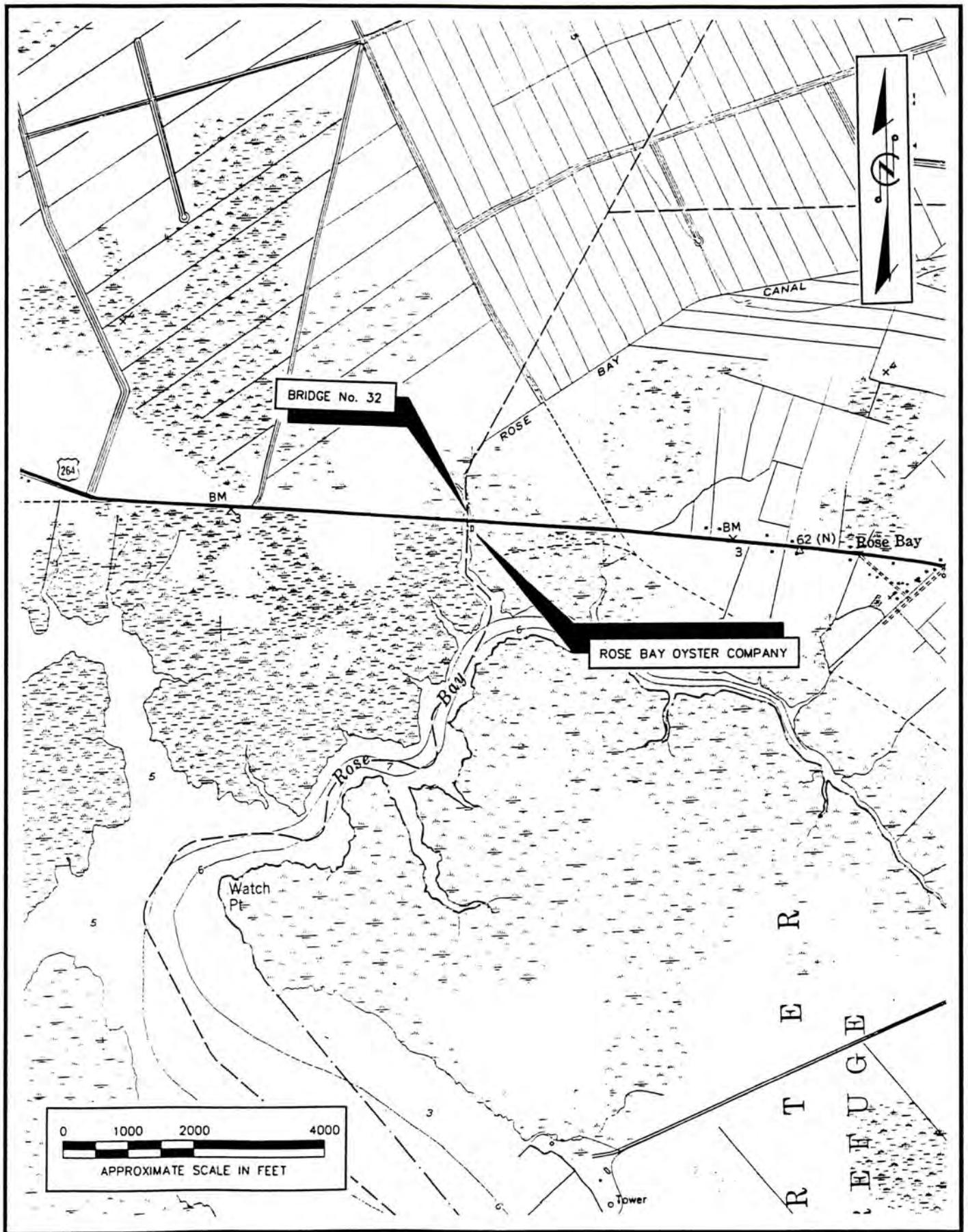


Figure 2 Resource Location Map  
 (Source: Scranton, N.C. USGS Quad Map, Rev'd. 1974)

## II. METHODOLOGY

After consultation with NCDOT, it was determined that this project should consist of an inventory of the Rose Bay Oyster Company building, the only building within the Area of Potential Effect. The bridge is a common concrete type built by the state of North Carolina in 1955 and was determined to not be potentially National Register eligible or worthy of further evaluation.

URSGWC conducted fieldwork and research in Hyde County on December 1 and 2, 1999. Fieldwork consisted of the inventory of the Rose Bay Oyster Company building and the viewing of similar buildings in Swan Quarter. Research in Hyde County was limited to interviewing employees of the Rose Bay Oyster Company and conducting deed and plat map research in Swan Quarter. No further documentary research could be conducted in the county, for the public library in Swan Quarter was seriously damaged by Hurricane Floyd in 1999 and has been indefinitely closed. Fruitful research was conducted, however, at the North Carolina State Archives and Library in Raleigh.

### III. INVENTORY AND EVALUATION

*Rose Bay Oyster Company*  
*(Southeast corner of intersection of US 264 and Rose Bay Canal,*  
*just east of Bridge No. 32, Hyde County)*

#### A. History

The principal component of North Carolina's small shellfish industry in the late nineteenth century was the oyster. Hyde, Dare, Pamlico, and Carteret counties historically had the largest expanses of oyster beds in the state. In the late nineteenth century, as shellfish beds were depleted farther north along the Atlantic seaboard, North Carolina moved to promote and protect the industry in its coastal counties. The state attempted to limit the access of non-residents to oyster beds and began to issue grants, with perpetual franchises for raising and cultivating oysters, to its citizens (State Board of Agriculture 1896:151-155). Hyde County retains an oyster grant volume in its Register of Deeds office that records, on standardized forms, hundreds of such late nineteenth-century grants.

Hyde County's oyster harvests have historically been among the largest in the state, but have never played a major role in the county's economy, which has always been founded on land-based agriculture (State Board of Agriculture 1896:352-353; Sharpe 1958:887-907). By the 1950s the industry was in decline, but Hyde County still retained a number of facilities that processed oysters, shrimp, crabs, and fin fish. These were primarily located in the towns of Swan Quarter and Engelhard (Sharpe 1958:887, 892; Hobbs 1958:37-41).

Oyster harvesting in and around the site of the Rose Bay Oyster Company, and elsewhere in the state, was legally sanctioned and regulated in the 1890s. Between 1892 and 1897, the state gave perpetual oyster grants of 10 acres each in the Rose Bay area to the Berry, Swindell, Harris, Credle, Lovitt, Green, Brimmage, Topping, Donnell, and Tooley families (Hyde County Deed Book 58, Page 168 (1940); Hyde County Oyster Grant Book). These grants were subsequently acquired by Metrah Makely, Sr., and his wife, Mary McBurney Makely.

Metrah Makely, Sr., came to Hyde County about 1871. He was quickly successful and by 1874 owned a sawmill, employees' houses, a hotel, a store, several warehouses, and a pier in the eponymous town of Makelyville. (The town, located in the northwestern part of the county, far from the project area, no longer exists.) The Makelys left the county in 1889, but apparently continued to have an interest at least in its oyster beds, for prior to 1940 they acquired 190 acres, including 150 acres of oyster beds in Judith's Narrows in Rose Bay (Hyde County Historical Society 1990:5-14; Hyde County Deed Book 58, Page 168 (1940)).

In 1940 the children of Metrah and Mary Makely—George, Metrah, Jr., Kate, Louella, Alice, and Agnes—and their spouses sold a perpetual franchise for raising and cultivating oysters on the 190 acres in and around Rose Bay to Clarence B. and Willie L. Wade Jennette. The deed noted that the Makely children had inherited the property from their mother (Hyde County Deed Book 58, Page

168 (1940)). A county history indicates that an oyster business already existed on the site of the current facility by this date, although one not run by the Makelys.<sup>1</sup> It reports (Hyde County Bicentennial Committee 1976:91):

The original Rose Bay Oyster House was established by Robert Atkinson in the early 1930's. It was located on Rose Bay Creek on the south side of Highway 264. Walter Brickhouse was the chief carpenter. Mr. Atkinson's grandsons, John Harold and Russell A. Swindell, were carpenter helpers. The well was driven by A.D. Swindell of Lake Landing. Oysters were bought from local waterman and were resold either in the shell or opened. Local people were employed to open the oysters and tables and platforms were built especially for the shuckers. Oysters sold for 75¢ a gallon.

C.B. Jennette and his wife Willie bought the oyster house in 1935 and operated it until they retired in 1972.

The Jennettes are the individuals most closely associated with the business, which is sometimes referred to as the old Jennette oyster house (Harris 1995:148; Brickhouse 1999). In 1955 they replaced the original wooden oyster house, which is no longer extant, with the back part of the current concrete block building. The front part was later added. Like the Atkinsons before them, the Jennettes purchased oysters, shrimp, crabs, and fish. They bought their products from local waterman and employed local workers in the oyster house. At the facility, "Oysters were shucked and canned, shrimp were beheaded and packed in ice, fish and crabs were also packed in ice and all products were transported by truck to Wilmington and other places for resale" (Hyde County Bicentennial Committee 1976:91).

In 1972 the Jennettes reportedly sold the business to W. Lee Miles (Hyde County Bicentennial Committee 1976:91). Deeds indicate, however, that while Miles operated the operation, he did not own it. In 1969 Troy W. and Thomsa E. Mayo purchased 190 acres, including 140 acres in Judith's Narrows and the property upon which the facility is located, from the Jennettes (Hyde County Deed Book 88, Page 268). In 1998 Carolina Seafood Ventures, the current owners, acquired the property (Hyde County Deed Book 167, Page 740). At or just prior to that time, the business was being operated by Gary Mayo (Harris 1995:148).

The business currently operates as the Rose Bay Oyster Company. It handles oysters, crabs, shrimp, and fish. In December, 1999, it was actively processing oysters. Boats were pulling up to the facility's dock along Rose Bay and unloading oysters. Workers inside were shucking oysters and

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<sup>1</sup> The tiny crossroads community of Rose Bay, located just east of the project area, has existed since the eighteenth, or at latest the early nineteenth, century. However, secondary sources do not identify any oyster house, or any other building, within the project area prior to the 1930s (Hyde County Historical Society 1986:5; Hyde County Bicentennial Committee 1976:90).



pushing the empty shells through gaps in the rear wall of the facility. The click of shells onto growing piles beneath each opening echoed along the bay.

## **B. Description**

The Rose Bay Oyster Company building consists of two perpendicular blocks and a wooden dock (Plates 1 through 6). Parallel to the inlet of Rose Bay and the Rose Bay Canal is the wooden dock up to which the oyster, and other, boats pull. Perpendicular to the water and the dock is a long two-story building. Its concrete block walls are stuccoed at the first story. Above, the walls are sided with sheets of vertical-board siding. A c.1955 photograph suggests that the vertical-board-sided upper level was a later addition reports (Hyde County Bicentennial Committee 1976:91). This block is topped by a gable end roof, almost all of the sheet metal of which had to be replaced in 1999 following Hurricane Floyd. (The hurricane also brought a couple of feet of water into the building.) The front (north) elevation of the block is marked by a door, a window, a large cooler door, and the front wing of the facility. At the rear are the slots through which workers dispose of freshly de-oystered shells.

Parallel to the dock and water, and perpendicular to the original block, is a front (north) wing that gives the building an L-shape. Built on the site of the original wooden oyster house after 1955, it is a one-story building of concrete block and plywood topped by a sheet metal gabled roof that also was partially replaced following the hurricane. The wing has a wide opening onto the dock, through which the oysters, and presumably crabs, shrimp, and fish, pass into the facility. The part of the interior that could be viewed was plain and functional, designed for the rapid processing of oysters and other marine products.

To the rear of the building some fingers of water have been cut in from the bay into which boats can pull. Along them are numerous tall stacks of crab pots. The ground is covered with a layer of oyster shells, which have also been pushed into one tall midden just beyond the gravel and shell parking lot. The lot opens to US 264 along most of its length, allowing for the easy ingress and egress of trucks.

## **C. Evaluation**

The Rose Bay Oyster Company building is less than 50 years old. To be eligible for National Register listing it would have to be of exceptional importance (Criteria Consideration/Exception G). The building does not meet this standard. It is the last functioning oyster processing facility in Hyde County and one of the few left in the state (Tryon 1999). It is not the last such building, however, in Hyde County. The tiny harbor of Swan Quarter, for example, about five miles distant, is lined with functional, concrete block, fish and oyster houses that in form and function are almost identical to the Rose Bay Oyster Company building. Some of these buildings appear to still be in use, at least for the handling of fin fish. The Rose Bay Oyster Company building is not architecturally singular and is not a one- (or even a few-) of-a-kind link to Hyde County's oyster trade. It is therefore not believed to meet the very high standards required by the National Register to meet Criteria Consideration/Exception G and is recommended as not eligible for National Register listing.

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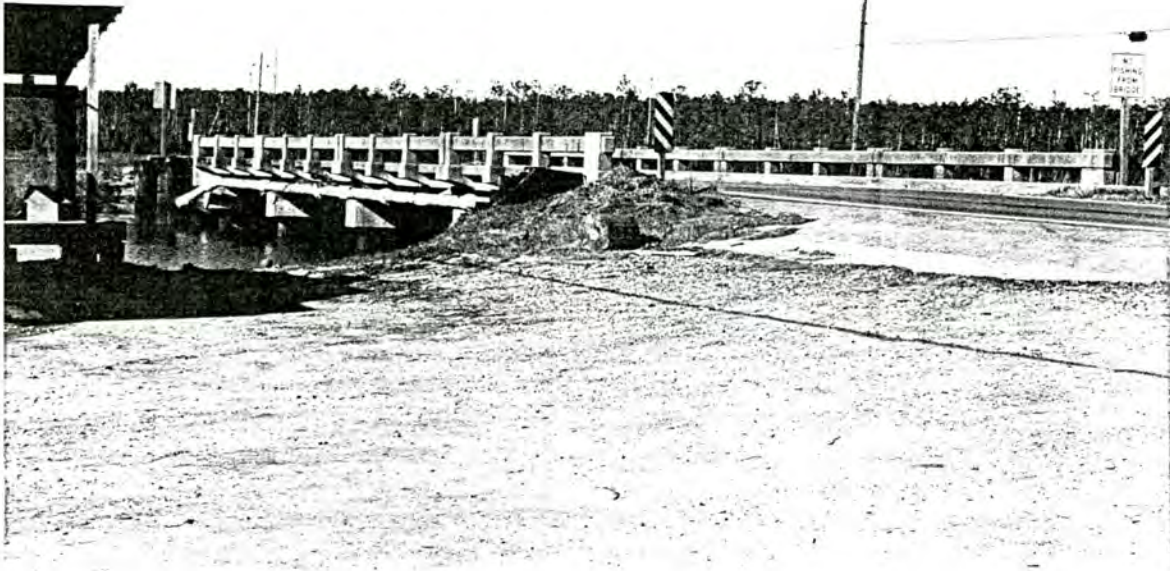


Plate 1:  
North front of  
Rose Bay  
Oyster  
Company and  
Hyde County  
Bridge No. 32



Plate 2: West  
side elevation  
of Rose Bay  
Oyster  
Company  
from Hyde  
County Bridge  
No. 32

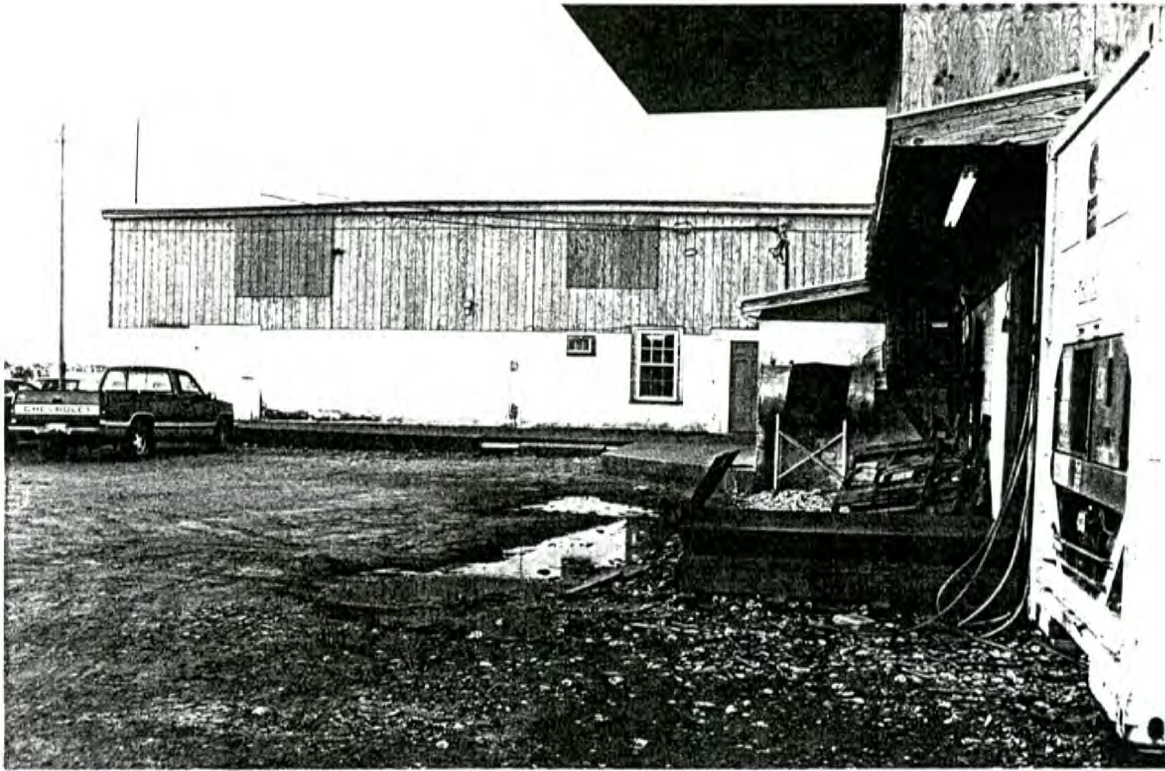


Plate 3:  
North front  
elevation of  
Rose Bay  
Oyster  
Company



Plate 4: East  
side elevation  
of Rose Bay  
Oyster  
Company

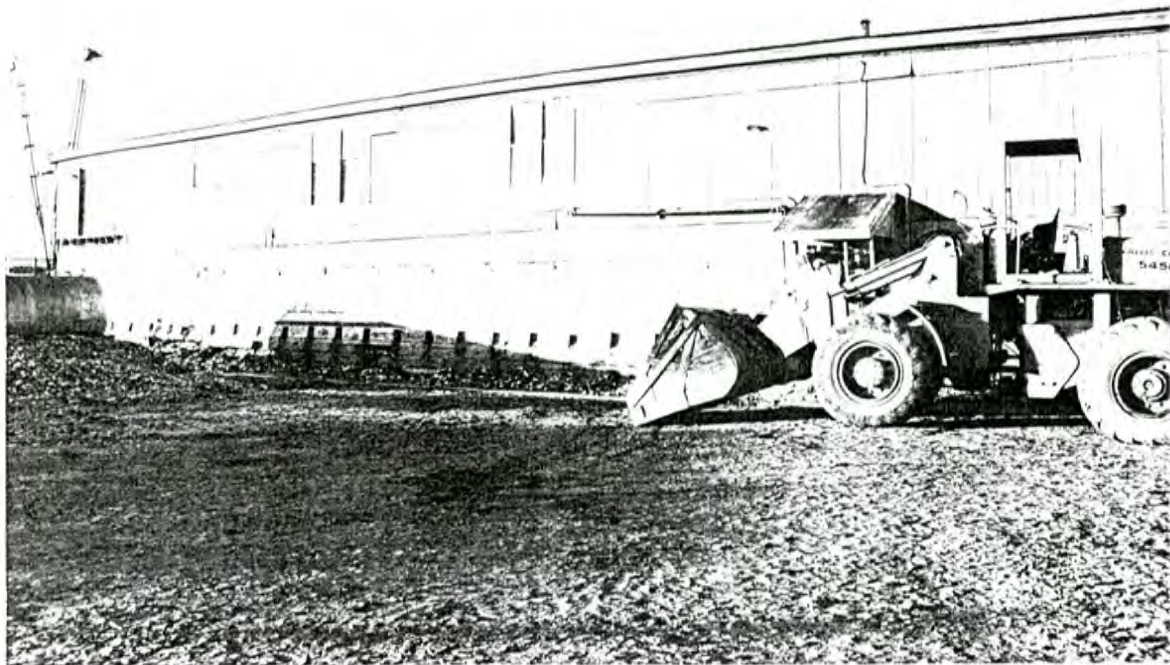


Plate 5: South rear elevation of Rose Bay Oyster Company with slots for discarding shells

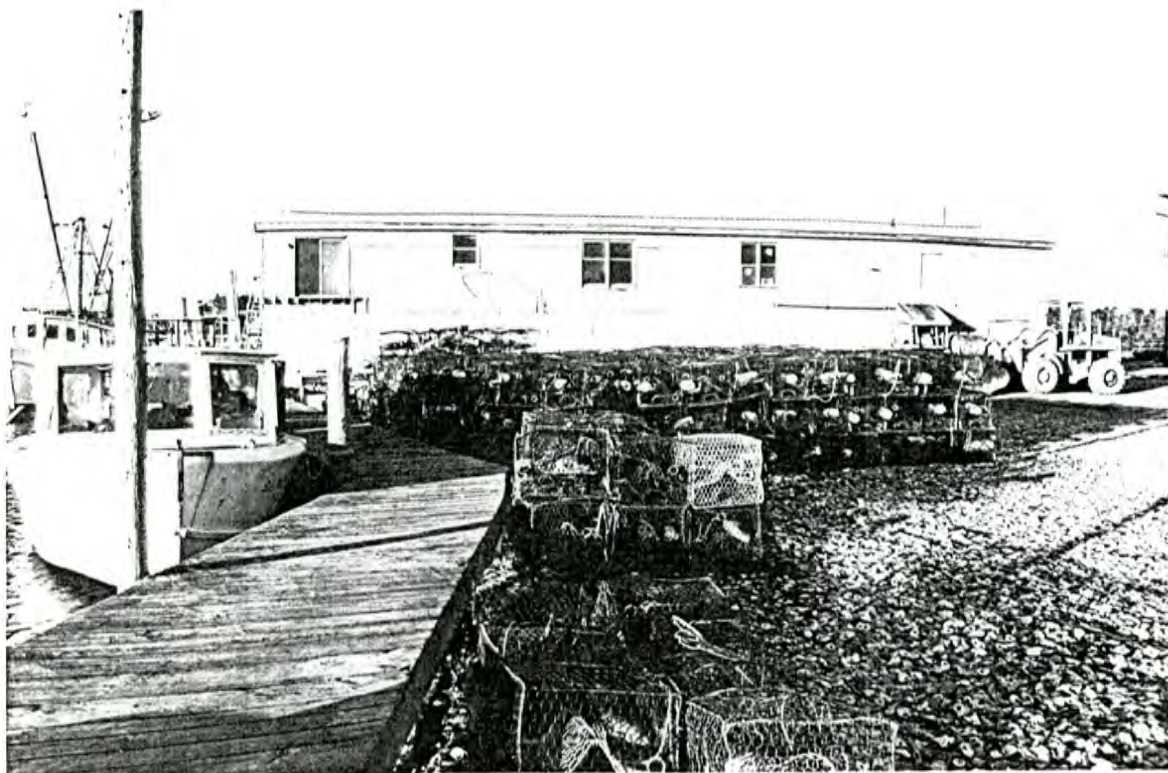


Plate 6: South rear of Rose Bay Oyster Company with crab pots and discarded oyster shells