

**MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST
DETERMINATION OF ELIGIBILITY FORM**

NR Eligible: yes
no

Property Name: Ocean Downs Raceway Inventory Number: WO-577
 Address: 10218 Racetrack Road Historic district: yes no
 City: Berlin Zip Code: 21811 County: Worcester
 USGS Quadrangle(s): Selbyville
 Property Owner: Ocean Downs LLC Tax Account ID Number: 03-011887
 Tax Map Parcel Number(s): 99 Tax Map Number: 21
 Project: MD 589: US 113 to US 50 Agency: Maryland State Highway Administration
 Agency Prepared By: A&HC, Inc.
 Preparer's Name: Wendy Zug-Gilbert Date Prepared: 2/25/2008

Documentation is presented in: _____

Preparer's Eligibility Recommendation: Eligibility recommended Eligibility not recommended

Criteria: A B C D Considerations: A B C D E F G

Complete if the property is a contributing or non-contributing resource to a NR district/property:

Name of the District/Property: _____
 Inventory Number: _____ Eligible: yes Listed: yes

Site visit by MHT Staf yes no Name: _____ Date: _____

Description of Property and Justification: *(Please attach map and photo)*

Physical Description: Ocean Downs Raceway is a 166.45-acre property along the east side of Racetrack Road (MD 589) just north of US 50 near the village of Grays Corner. The racetrack was constructed between 1947 and 1949 and opened with its first meet on July 25, 1949. The property includes an intact collection of buildings and structures associated with harness-racing, the majority of which date to the original construction of the facility. The property has two tracks, a grandstand, a clubhouse, an administration building, a horseman's lounge, 20 horse stables (11 for year-round use and 9 for use during the summer race season only), a maintenance garage, a two blacksmith shops, a carpenter shop, a security gatehouse, a water tower and pumphouse, and multiple storage sheds. Known modern buildings include the clubhouse, two mobile homes for use by the judges and on-site employees, and two brick residences along Turville Creek. The covered grandstand is of concrete construction and seats 4,650 spectators. The stables and support buildings are of frame construction and have wood siding and corrugated metal roofs. Landscape features include fenced paddocks for resting horses, separate paddocks for upcoming race horses, and grassed parking areas.

Brief History: Ocean Downs Raceway was built on the former "orchard farm" belonging to George A. Harrison. Between 1926 and 1947, the property underwent a series of sales transactions to associated out-of-state owners, including several holding

MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST REVIEW

Eligibility recommended Eligibility not recommended

Criteria: A B C D Considerations: A B C D E F G

MHT Comments:

Jim Talen ✓
 Reviewer, Office of Preservation Services
[Signature]
 Reviewer, National Register Program

6/25/08
 Date
7/2/08
 Date

companies, that indicated an intention of development of some sort. Yet, during this time it seemed that nothing was actually done with the property. The farm was adjacent to Sam Riddle's Glen Riddle Farm, the horse farm that trained and raced such 1920s and 1930s thoroughbred champions as Man O'War and War Admiral. In 1947, the Ocean Downs Racing Association purchased the "orchard farm" for \$10 from Edward R. and Nannie Bounds (CWN 20:352). Ocean Downs was one of three out of ten racetracks that applied for licensing by the Maryland Racing Commission in 1947 following the General Assembly's legalization of not more than 100 days of harness racing annually. The other two harness-racing tracks were Laurel Racetrack (between Baltimore and Washington D.C. in Howard County) and Rosecroft at Oxon Hill (just outside Washington D.C. in Prince George's County). Ocean Downs was the only Maryland racetrack on the Eastern Shore and at just 3 1/2 miles from Ocean City was expected to draw large crowds of vacationing gamblers. Construction delays at Ocean Downs, as well as Rosecroft, resulted in an opening date that was a year later than anticipated. Ocean Downs held its first race on July 25, 1949.

Despite a declining overall interest in harness racing over the past couple decades that has resulted in the closure of Laurel Racetrack, as well as heavy competition from Dover Downs Racetrack just 65 miles to the north, Ocean Downs has continued to draw vacationing spectators and remains one of the Eastern Shore's most popular racetracks.

National Register Evaluation: Ocean Downs Raceway is eligible for inclusion in the National Register under Criteria A and C. Maryland's long association with the horse breeding and racing industries has had a significance economic and environmental impact on the state. Ocean Downs is representative of these important historical associations in Maryland's history. It is one of only two harness-racing tracks in all of Maryland and the only one on Maryland's Eastern Shore. For its relative scarcity as a resource and its important association with a historic industry in Maryland, Ocean Downs is significant under Criterion A. The racetrack includes a compact collection of racing-associated buildings and support facilities that remains surprisingly intact given the resource's age, constant use, and need for maintenance. The buildings on the property are simple, service-oriented structures of similar design and materials. Little modern construction has changed the complex's original layout. Improvements have been made to a few of the buildings to make them more serviceable for spectators and horses. Although each building lacks distinction individually, together they represent a significant and distinguishable entity that clearly reflects its purpose through spatial layout and specific service-oriented building types. Therefore, Ocean Downs is significant under Criterion C. Ocean Downs retains integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association.

The property is not known to be associated with any person of particular importance on a local, state, or national level, and so it is not eligible under Criterion B. The archaeological potential of the property has not been evaluated, so the property cannot be determined eligible under Criterion D.

MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST REVIEW	
Eligibility recommended _____	Eligibility not recommended _____
Criteria: ___ A ___ B ___ C ___ D	Considerations: ___ A ___ B ___ C ___ D ___ E ___ F ___ G
MHT Comments:	
_____ Reviewer, Office of Preservation Services	_____ Date
_____ Reviewer, National Register Program	_____ Date

WORCESTER COUNTY

HISTORIC SITE SUMMARY SHEET

SURVEY NO.: WO-577
NAME: Ocean Downs Raceway
LOCATION: 10218 Racetrack Road (MD 589)
DATE: 1947-1949
ACCESS: Private

DESCRIPTION:

Ocean Downs Raceway is a 166.45-acre property along the east side of Racetrack Road (MD 589) just north of US 50 near the village of Grays Corner. The racetrack was constructed between 1947 and 1949 and opened with its first meet on July 25, 1949. The property includes an intact collection of buildings and structures associated with harness-racing, the majority of which date to the original construction of the facility. The property has two tracks, a grandstand, a clubhouse, an administration building, a horseman's lounge, 20 horse stables (11 for year-round use and 9 for use during the summer race season only), a maintenance garage, a two blacksmith shops, a carpenter shop, a security gatehouse, a water tower and pumphouse, and multiple storage sheds. The covered grandstand is of concrete construction and seats 4,650 spectators. The stables and support buildings are of frame construction and have wood siding and corrugated metal roofs. Landscape features include fenced paddocks for resting horses, separate paddocks for upcoming race horses, and grassed parking areas.

SIGNIFICANCE:

Ocean Downs Raceway is eligible for inclusion in the National Register under Criteria A and C. Maryland's long association with the horse breeding and racing industries has had a significant economic and environmental impact on the state. Ocean Downs is representative of these important historical associations in Maryland's history. It is one of only two harness-racing tracks in all of Maryland and the only one on Maryland's Eastern Shore. For its relative scarcity as a resource and its important association with a historic industry in Maryland, Ocean Downs is significant under Criterion A. The racetrack includes a compact collection of racing-associated buildings and support facilities that remains surprisingly intact given the resource's age, constant use, and need for maintenance. The buildings on the property are simple, service-oriented structures of similar design and materials. Little modern construction has changed the complex's original layout. Improvements have been made to a few of the buildings to make them more serviceable for spectators and horses. Although each building lacks distinction individually, together they represent a significant and distinguishable entity that clearly reflects its purpose through spatial layout and specific service-oriented building types. Therefore, Ocean Downs is significant under Criterion C. Ocean Downs retains integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. The property is not known to be associated with any person of particular importance on a local, state, or national level, and so it is not eligible under Criterion B. The archaeological potential of the property has not been evaluated, so the property cannot be determined eligible under Criterion D.

Maryland Historical Trust Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties Form

Inventory No. WO-577

1. Name of Property (indicate preferred name)

historic Ocean Downs Raceway

other

2. Location

street and number 10218 Racetrack Road not for publication

city, town Berlin X vicinity

county Worcester

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

name Ocean Downs LLC (c/o William M. Rickman)

street and number 15215 Shady Grove Road telephone

city, town Rockville state MD zip code 20850-3235

4. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Register of Deeds liber SVH 2942 folio 515

city, town Snow Hill tax map 21 tax parcel 99 tax ID number 03-011887

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	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape	Contributing	Noncontributing
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce/trade	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> recreation/culture	37	4 buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> defense	<input type="checkbox"/> religion	0	0 sites
<input type="checkbox"/> site		<input type="checkbox"/> domestic	<input type="checkbox"/> social	4	4 structures
<input type="checkbox"/> object		<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation	0	0 objects
		<input type="checkbox"/> funerary	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	41	8 Total
		<input type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> unknown		
		<input type="checkbox"/> health care	<input type="checkbox"/> vacant/not in use		
		<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> other:		
				Number of Contributing Resources previously listed in the Inventory	
				0	

7. Description

Inventory No.

WO-577

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.

Ocean Downs Raceway is a 166.45-acre property along the east side of Racetrack Road (MD 589) just north of US 50 near the village of Grays Corner. The racetrack was constructed 1948-49 and opened with its first meet on July 25, 1949. The property includes an intact collection of buildings and structures associated with harness-racing, the majority of which date to the original construction of the facility. The property has two tracks, a grandstand, a clubhouse, an administration building, a horseman's lounge, a drivers' waiting area, telecast booth, 23 horse stables, a maintenance building, two blacksmith shops, a carpenter shop, a security gate, a water tower and pumphouse, and numerous storage sheds. Landscape features include fenced paddocks for resting horses, separate paddocks for upcoming race horses, and grassed parking areas.

The raceway property extends to Turville Creek on its north and east sides and to Muddy Creek on its south side. The portion of the property bordering Muddy Creek is wooded with several crop fields at the southwest corner. The portion of the property bordering Turville Creek is cleared with an open view of the creek. An internal network of roads provides access to the facility. There are three entrances to the property from MD 589 spaced out along a third of a mile. The central entrance is the main spectator entrance. The southern entrance, which is fenced with a security gate, is for the horses and drivers. The northern entrance is for support staff. The northern and southern entrances are connected by a large arcing road that essentially provides the perimeter of the racetrack complex. Additional roads divide the complex into three areas: the northwest and southwest quadrants and the east half. The northwest quadrant contains a half-mile sand practice track and grassed parking area. The southwest quadrant contains only a large grassed parking area. These two quadrants are separated by the property's central spectator entrance from MD 589. The eastern half contains the main track, grandstand, horse stables, and all the support buildings associated with the harness-racing industry. This part of the complex is separated from the western quadrants by a north-south road.

Within the eastern half of the complex, the racetrack is centrally located. The half-mile oval track has a gravel surface with eight racing lanes. The grandstand sits along the west side of the track facing Turville Creek. Both the track and the grandstand were part of the raceway's original construction between 1947 and 1949. The concrete grandstand is three stories high with open seating for 4,650 spectators sheltered under a gabled metal roof (Photograph 1). The roof is supported by evenly spaced metal supports along the front of the grandstand. A glass-paneled wall along the southern side of the grandstand provides weather protection. Underneath the grandstand seating are concession facilities. Limited box seating and an enclosed announcer's booth are located on the southern end of the roof. Wagering occurs behind the seating in the mezzanine level, which was enclosed since the grandstand's construction (Photograph 2). Restrooms were also added to the grandstand at that time. The area immediately surrounding the grandstand is paved for parking. The area between the grandstand and the track is covered with brick pavers and supports open-air seating on metal benches (Photograph 3).

To the south of the grandstand is the Clubhouse, the location of the track's restaurants, bar, and live simulcast transmissions of off-site horse races (Photograph 3). The building was constructed in 1981 of concrete to match the grandstand. It has forward- and rear-sloping, metal-covered, shed roofs of different elevations. The half of the building facing the racetrack has the higher roof and a glassed facade wall to watch the races. An enclosed passage connects the Clubhouse to the grandstand.

To the south of the Clubhouse is a small frame gable-roofed building used as a waiting area for the drivers prior to their upcoming race (Photograph 4). Adjacent to this building is the telecast booth, which consists of a small enclosed hut on top of a two-story platform.

The administration building is a long narrow one-story frame building that sits at an angle off the south side of the racetrack (Photograph 5). Within this building are the offices of the general manager, operations director, programs director, publicity, and track superintendent. The building's façade faces southeast toward the summer barns. This low building has the appearance of a mid-twentieth-century block motel unit with doors and windows spaced along its length. Windows have six-over-six double-hung wooden sashes. Wooden siding covers the exterior. The hipped-roof is covered with metal and has two gabled ventilation cupolas spaced evenly along its length. Attached perpendicularly off the rear corners of the building are open holding stables for horses of upcoming races. The placement of the holding stables gives the building a "U"-shape (Photograph 6). A third free-standing holding stable is

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Ocean Downs Raceway Continuation Sheet

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located in the open area of the "U." The administration building and rear stables date to the opening of the raceway in 1949. A modern mobile home, which is used to house the judges, is located off the southwest side of the administration building.

To the west of the administration building is the horseman's lounge, where the drivers relax between races. Dating to the 1949 opening of the raceway and originally used as the facility's kitchen, this one-story frame building has an "H"-shape with its façade facing northwest toward the Clubhouse and grandstand (Photograph 7). The building is clad in wooden siding and has a metal-covered gabled roof. Windows appear singularly and in pairs and have six-over-six, double-hung wooden sashes. Small gabled hoods are located over the doorways on the facade. To the rear of the building is a paved parking lot (Photograph 8).

Twenty horse stables are lined up along the north side of the complex's southern access road. Eleven of these stables, labeled A-F and L-Q, are used for year-round boarding of racehorses in training. The remaining nine stables, including G-J and five unlabeled buildings at the east end, are referred to as the summer barns and are used only during race months (June-August) by visiting racehorses. Stables K and N are no longer extant having been destroyed by fire. The barns sit perpendicular to the road and follow its arc around the eastern side of the racetrack. All of the stables were built during the original construction of the racetrack and all are of the same dimensions, form, and materials. Each stable has thirty total stalls, fifteen each per side arranged back to back. The buildings are long narrow frame structures with gabled roofs. Wooden siding covers the walls and corrugated-metal covers the roof. The roofs extend beyond the front wall of each side of the stable creating an exterior gallery into which each stall opens (Photograph 9). Metal poles support the roof overhang. Each box stall has a Dutch door, but no windows. The year-round stables are identical to the summer stables, except the exterior alleys have been enclosed to provide some protection from the weather (Photograph 10).

Support buildings for the racetrack are located throughout the complex. However, the majority of these are located along the south side of the southern access road across from the stables. These buildings are typically of similar construction and materials, having frame construction, wood siding, and corrugated metal-covered gabled roofs. Some of the buildings sit on concrete-block piers. Doors consist of the wooden sliding-bay variety or wooden utility doors. Many of these buildings have few windows, but when present typically have one-over-one wooden sashes. A few of the service buildings are worthy of the individual description, including the carpenter shop, the blacksmith shop, and the maintenance garage.

The carpenter shop, which was one of the property's original structures and was formerly used for feed storage, sits opposite the year-round stables near the security gatehouse (Photograph 11). It is a simple gable-roof frame building on concrete-block piers. A shallow shed-roof extension is located on the rear. The building has wooden siding, a corrugated metal roof, and three doors (two wooden and one modern metal) on the façade. The security gatehouse, which is a small frame building with a gabled roof and a small porch overhang to shelter the door on the eastern side, is the check-in location for horse trailers once they arrive on-site. To the northwest of the gatehouse is a large above-ground metal water tower for the watering the horses (Photograph 12). A small frame pumphouse sits adjacent to the water tower. The tower and pumphouse were original structures at the raceway.

Two blacksmith shops are located in a small cluster of service buildings to the east of the carpenter shop and separated from it by fenced horse paddocks (Photograph 13). The frame shops are identical having exteriors covered with wooden siding and side-gable roofs covered with corrugated metal. The roofs slightly overhang the front elevations where a sliding wooden door provides access to the interior. Each roof has a single brick chimney. Multi-pane windows are located on the gable end elevations. These buildings, which date to the opening of the track in 1949, still function as the farriers' workshops.

The maintenance garage is also located in a small cluster of buildings to the east of the blacksmith shop cluster and separated from it by more fenced horse paddocks. The garage has four vehicular bays with overhead garage doors and one office bay with a man-door and window (Photograph 14). The building, which probably does not date to the track's original construction, is covered with metal

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siding and has a side-gable roof covered with corrugated metal. Adjacent to the garage are gas tanks for filling maintenance vehicles. The above-ground tanks are sheltered by a frame gable-roof canopy (Photograph 15).

The majority of the buildings located at the Ocean Downs Raceway date to the initial construction of the facility between 1947 and 1949. The known exceptions to this are the Clubhouse (built 1981), two modern mobile homes used as the judges' headquarters and former housing of the security staff (Photograph 16), and two modern brick houses along Turville Creek at the east edge of the property (built circa 2003; Photograph 17). The maintenance garage appears to date later than the other support buildings; however, there is no evidence to support this other than the use of metal siding instead of wood siding, like the other buildings on the property. Modern improvements have been made to some of the original buildings. The grandstand has been improved through the enclosure of the wagering area behind the grandstand seating and the addition of restrooms. The bricked open-air seating in front of the grandstand is also recent. The enclosure of the exterior galleries along the year-round stables is also a modern improvement.

8. Significance

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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 checked="" 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> entertainment/ recreation	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 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 type="checkbox"/> maritime history	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation		<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other: _____

Specific dates 1949 (racetrack opening)

Architect/Builder Unknown

Construction dates 1947-1949

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.)

Ocean Downs Raceway is eligible for inclusion in the National Register under Criteria A and C. Maryland's long association with the horse breeding and racing industries has had a significance economic and environmental impact on the state. Ocean Downs is representative of these important historical associations in Maryland's history. It is one of only two harness-racing tracks in all of Maryland and the only one on Maryland's Eastern Shore. For its relative scarcity as a resource and its important association with a historic industry in Maryland, Ocean Downs is significant under Criterion A. The racetrack includes a compact collection of racing-associated buildings and support facilities that remains surprisingly intact given the resource's age, constant use, and need for maintenance. The buildings on the property are simple, service-oriented structures of similar design and materials. Little modern construction has changed the complex's original layout. Improvements have been made to a few of the buildings to make them more serviceable for spectators and horses. Although each building lacks distinction individually, together they represent a significant and distinguishable entity that clearly reflects its purpose through spatial layout and specific service-oriented building types. Therefore, Ocean Downs is significant under Criterion C. Ocean Downs retains integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association.

The History of Harness-Racing

Unlike Thoroughbred racing, which began in England and has long been known as the "sport of kings," Standardbred racing is considered the "sport of the people" and saw its beginnings in America in the late eighteenth century. Both the Thoroughbred and the Standardbred are distinct breeds of horse. The Standardbred is a true American breed and can be traced back to the stallion Hambeltonian, who was foaled in 1849 in New York. Hambeltonian was the great-grandson of Messenger, an English Thoroughbred brought to America 1788, who is considered to be the founding-father of the Standardbred breed. The Standardbred is shorter, longer, and more muscled than their Thoroughbred ancestors. They were bred for steady distance trotting and became the main source of transportation as Americans moved west during the nineteenth century. Harness-racing grew out of this distance trotting as cart- or wagon-pulling horses were first pitted against each other in fields and along village streets. By the nineteenth century, harness-racing was a common attraction at county fairs.

The term "Standardbred" was introduced in 1879 to distinguish trotting horses who met a certain "standard" for the mile according to the National Association of the Trotting Horse Breeders (SPHO 2005). Trotters ran with a diagonal gait that was difficult to maintain at high speeds. Over the years, the sport grew to include a second type of gait, called pacing. Pacers, which currently account for 80% of harness races, moved the legs on one side in tandem. In both types of racing the driver sat behind the horse in a light-weight two-wheeled cart called a sulky.

One of the first harness-racing tracks in America was the Harlem Lane Racecourse in New York where the first speed record for trotting was set in 1806 (Horse Show Central 2006). This course became popular with the New York City elite, including Cornelius Vanderbilt, who ran trotting races involving carriages and large sums of money. Other racetracks opened as the sport gained popularity in the nineteenth and early twentieth century. Harness-racing's current era began as early as the 1930s when pari-mutuel

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betting on horse races was legalized in numerous states (*Time* 1933). In this form of betting, a wager is placed against other wagerers, unlike casino betting in which a wager is placed against the house. Saratoga Raceway in Saratoga Springs, New York opened in 1941 as the third track in the nation to have pari-mutuel wagering. Following the initial introduction of night racing in 1940 at Roosevelt Raceway, in Westbury, New York, harness-racing grew in popularity around the nation (Funk & Wagnall 2006). Track attendance grew large, particularly at lighted night races. During this period, the motorized starting gate was introduced to racetracks preventing the mis-starts at the gate that had plagued the sport since its beginning. These improvements ushered in a new era of harness-racing and resulted in the construction of numerous new "modern" racetracks, of which Ocean Downs Raceway (opened in 1949) was one.

Major stake races include the Triple Crown of Harness Racing for Trotters and the Triple Crown of Harness Racing for Pacers. The Triple Crown for Trotters began in 1955 and consists of three individual races, including the Hambletonian (run at Meadowlands Racetrack, New Jersey), the Kentucky Futurity (run at The Red Mile in Lexington, Kentucky), and the Yonkers Trot (run at Yonkers Raceway, New York). The Triple Crown for Paces began in 1956 and likewise consists of three races, including the Cane Pace (run at Freehold Raceway, New Jersey), the Little Brown Jug (run at the Delaware County Fairgrounds, Ohio), and the Messenger Stakes (run at Yonkers Raceway, New York).

According to the U.S. Trotting Association there are currently 46 commercial harness-racing tracks in the United States (USTA 2008). The majority of these racetracks are located in the East-Coast and Mid-West states. Approximately half of these facilities have half-mile tracks, like Ocean Downs, another quarter are full-mile tracks, and the remaining are odd fractions of a mile (Funk & Wagnall 2006). In the 1980s and 1990s, live simulcast wagering was introduced to harness-racing world. The ability to bet on a race that was off-site has resulted in the closure of several tracks around the country.

Ocean Downs Raceway

Ocean Downs Raceway was established on farmland that belonged to Thomas N. Quillen in the late nineteenth century (Lake, Griffing & Stevenson 1877). This 163-acres farm was known as *Eagles Point* or *Fishing Point* and was located along the south side of Turville Creek near the mill town of Taylorville. After Thomas Quillen's death the farm passed to his son Samuel H. Quillen, who was already residing on it. In 1915, Samuel Quillen sold the property to George A. Harrison and Lee W. Warren, as tenants in common, for \$6000 (ODC 21:1). By 1919, Warren, who was living in Florida, sold his half of the farm to Harrison (ODC 34:205). The 1920 Federal Population Census lists Harrison's occupation as the proprietor of a nursery. Deed records from the 1920s up to the purchase of the property by the racetrack association in 1947, refer to the property as an "orchard farm" with a main dwelling, a barn, numerous outbuildings, a small office building near the house (presumably associated with the nursery business), and 2 tenant houses located along the county road (MD 589) at the southwest and northwest corners of the farm. Harrison did not reside on the property, but was censused in Berlin Town.

Between 1926 and 1947, this 163-acre farm underwent a number of curious sales transactions to out-of-state owners, including several holding companies, indicating that property development of some sort was in the works for as much as 20 years prior to the actual establishment of Ocean Downs. Whether this development involved the construction of a harness-racing track or another money-making venue is unknown. It is a fact that across Muddy Creek from Harrison's "orchard farm" was Sam Riddle's acclaimed *Glen Riddle Farm*, where Thoroughbreds were raised and trained for racing from 1917 to 1951 (Bradford 1967). Riddle's farm bred several prestigious Thoroughbreds, including Man O'War, War Admiral, American Flag, and Crusader, all of whom dominated the Thoroughbred racing scene during the 1920s and 1930s. The success and prestige of *Glen Riddle Farm* and its equine champions during this time attracted much attention to Worcester County and the Berlin area. It may have been that when Harrison's "orchard farm" came up for sale in 1926, there was an interest in developing a similar horse-raising business. However, there is no evidence that *Glen Riddle Farm* or Sam Riddle was in any way associated with Ocean Downs or its construction.

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In 1926, the trustees of George Harrison's estate sold the "orchard farm" to Sale A. Pickens, of Corpus Christi, Texas, for \$14,025 (SMC 55:89). Pickens, who was listed as the manufacturer of automobile fabric in the 1920 Federal Population Census, never occupied the property and only retained ownership for two years before selling the farm to Julia Grey Dorland for \$10 (BB 5:270). The 1920 census indicates that unmarried Pickens and divorced Dorland occupied the same New York City household that of Dorland's parents. From this sale on, the property was passed numerous times between New York City owners for the nominal cost of \$10, indicating an obvious relationship between buyers and sellers. In each deed, the property is continually referred to as an "orchard farm" and all the buildings previously mentioned remained in existence. None of the buyers ever occupied the property, yet nothing appears to have ever been done with the land during this time. Perhaps plans for the development of the property never came to fruition due to the stock market crash in October 1929 and the subsequent financial slump of the Great Depression. The following is a list of owners of the farm prior to its purchase by the Ocean Downs Racing Association in 1947: Madeleine Housel (who's husband William was an investment banker), of Long Island (BB 6:414) in November 1928; Jay Leo Rothschild of Manhattan (BB 7:9) in January 1929; Kaplan Holding Corporation of Manhattan (BB 32:132) in July 1930; Blue Diamond Trading Corporation of Manhattan (BB 32:134) in September 1934; and Regano Corporation of Manhattan (BB 35:259) in January 1938. In February 1938, Regano Corporation sold the farm to Edward and Nannie Bounds for \$3,000 (BB 35:261). It is unknown if the Bounds, who resided in Ocean City, had a connection to the previous owners.

Ocean Downs Racing Association, Inc. was formed in 1947 by a group of Eastern Shore and Delaware residents. The corporate organization included Berlin residents, several of whom were already employed in the area. The president was Theodore S. Fletcher, a Preston cannery executive; the vice president was Franklin S. Hastings; the secretary was Edgar T. Bennett, executive of Red Star Motor Coaches, Inc.; and the treasurer was O. Sheldon Chandler (*The News* 1947a:8).

The formation of Ocean Downs Racing Association was in response to the legalization of not more than 100 days of harness racing (through pari-mutuel wagering) annually in 1947 by the Maryland General Assembly. The General Assembly left it up to the Maryland Racing Commission to grant licenses and dates for the racing facilities. A racetrack was granted a license if it could prove that it would attract a large audience and could demonstrate its financial stability. In August 1947, Ocean Downs Racing Association applied for a license to operate 20 days, including the last ten days in July and the first ten days in August (*The News* 1947a:8). Ocean Downs proposed to offer average purses of \$500 or a total of \$4000 for eight races (*The News* 1947a:8). The racetrack was planned for construction on Harrison's "orchard farm," at that time owned by Edward and Nannie Bounds, just three miles inland from Ocean City near the main highway to Salisbury. It was visualized that it would draw patrons from an estimated 60,000 vacationers to the Eastern Shore resorts each year.

On November 10, 1947, the Maryland Racing Commission issued notice of its intention to grant a license for 20 days of harness racing to Ocean Downs. Ocean Downs was one of three applicants out of ten that was issued notice, the other two being Rosecroft Trotting and Pacing Association, at Oxon Hill on the outskirts of Washington, D.C. in Prince George's County and Laurel Harness Racing Association, at Laurel between Baltimore and Washington, D.C. in Howard County (*The News* 1947c:8). Between the three racetracks, 60 days of racing were granted with Ocean Downs getting the 20 days they originally requested. Five days after Ocean Downs was promised a license for racing, the Bounds sold the "orchard farm" to the Ocean Downs Racing Association on November 15, 1947 for \$10 (CWN 20:352). In that deed, the Bounds retained a 4.7-acre parcel at the southwest corner of the property.

On November 12, 1947, prior to purchasing the property from the Bounds, Ocean Downs Racing Association officially announced that construction of their proposed \$500,000 Ocean Downs racetrack near Taylorsville would begin on Monday, November 17, 1947. Plans for the track included a \$150,000 concrete grandstand, \$75,000 worth of horse barns and stables, \$40,000 worth of lighting equipment for nighttime races, and an \$11,500 building to house the drivers (*The News* 1947b:8). Completion of the racetrack was expected by summer of 1948 for the July-August racing season. However, by March 1948, Ocean Downs had not even applied for

Maryland Historical Trust

Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties Form

Inventory No. WO-577

Ocean Downs Raceway Continuation Sheet

Number 8 Page 3

Federal authorization to purchase materials and subsequently had to delay the opening of the facility by a year (*The Frederick Post* 1948:6).

Of Maryland's three modern tracks that were built following the legalization of pari-mutuel betting, Laurel Racetrack was the only one to meet its construction deadline and opened for the 1948 season. Laurel was Maryland's first harness-racing track with legalized betting. Rosecroft, like Ocean Downs, experienced construction delays and did not have its opening night until May 1949. Ocean Downs, which was the only track on Maryland's Eastern Shore, followed in July 1949 as the state's third harness-racing track. When Ocean Downs opened on Monday, July 25, 1949, the racetrack boasted a modern grandstand with deluxe boxes and seats, betting facilities conveniently located under the grandstand and on the mezzanine floor, parking for 6,000 cars, and accommodations for 18,000 (*The Denton Journal* 1949:9). The three racetracks co-existed for many years, each attracting full grandstands of spectators. Although initially Ocean Downs attracted the passing vacationer on their way to Maryland's coastal beaches, it soon gained a reputation as a premier racetrack and became a destination location. Laurel Racetrack (renamed Freestate Raceway) closed in 1990 and was demolished for redevelopment, leaving Rosecroft and Ocean Downs as the two remaining Maryland harness-racing tracks.

The importance of Ocean Downs to the livelihood and economy of the area was evident when the existing road to Taylorville, which the racetrack property fronted on, was replaced by MD 589 to straighten the route of the former road by bypassing some of its more crooked parts. Built simultaneously with the racetrack, the new state road was originally called Ocean Downs Road, a testament to the most important property along its length. Currently, MD 589 is called Racetrack Road. In 1950, MD 50 (Ocean Gateway Highway) was built. This multi-lane thruway funneled vacationing traffic across the Eastern Shore from the newly built Chesapeake Bay Bridge directly into Ocean City. The speed and ease of the Ocean Gateway Highway attracted more spectators to the racetrack, which sat just north of the new thruway. Modern development in the form of new residences and commercial businesses along MD 589 and US 50 accompanied the racetrack. Because of its proximity to Ocean City, hotel construction was not a part of the modern development near Ocean Downs; however, numerous small rental cabin clusters appeared on properties in the vicinity of the racetrack.

In 1979, Ocean Downs Racing Association, Inc. changed its corporate name to Colt/Delmarva Downs, Inc. (RHO 1798:571). The Clubhouse was built in 1981 to house the racetrack's restaurants and bar. Although Ocean Downs has live racing only three months of the year, off-site betting and the live simulcasts of these races has resulted in year-round public occupation of the facility.

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Ocean Downs Raceway
Continuation Sheet

Number 8 Page 4

Big Time Harness Racing At Its Best !!!

TWENTY NIGHTS OF RACING
WITH PARI-MUTUEL BETTING

Opening Monday Night
JULY 25th

Ocean Downs Raceway

(Three miles from Ocean City)

67 miles from Denton

Just off U. S. Highway No. 50

See one of the greatest harness racing tracks in the country . . . the beauty spot by the sea . . . with such crack performers as Tompkins Hanover, Buckshot B., Mr. Peter Mite, Rena Grattan, Sultan Hanover, Morgan Hanover, Prince James, Edgar Hanover, Leo Hanover, Reynolds Dall, Guam, Dynamite, Belina Hanover, Uptown, Breeze Up, Supreme Zimri, and the one and only HANOVER EXPRESS, 20-year-old wonder horse and record holder.

POST TIME 8:15
DAILY DOUBLE CLOSES 8:00

Parking Facilities for 6000 Cars
ACCOMMODATIONS FOR 18,000
PERSONS

Modern grandstand with deluxe
boxes and seats

Betting facilities conveniently located under grandstand and on mezzanine floor.

GET THE THRILL OF YOUR LIFE
WATCHING TROTTERS AND PACERS AT THIS . . . ONE OF THE MOST BEAUTIFUL TRACKS IN THE NATION

Admission	\$1.00
Tax	.30
Total	\$1.30

Theodore E. Fletcher, President
Franklin S. Hastings, Vice President
Earl E. Conley, Vice President
Edgar T. Bennett, Secretary
O. Sheldon Chandler, Treasurer
Richard H. Hutchison, Jr., General Manager
Edwin T. Keller, Racing Secretary



Harness-racing vignette from the Ocean Downs Racing Association stock certificate, 1953
(from scripophily.com)

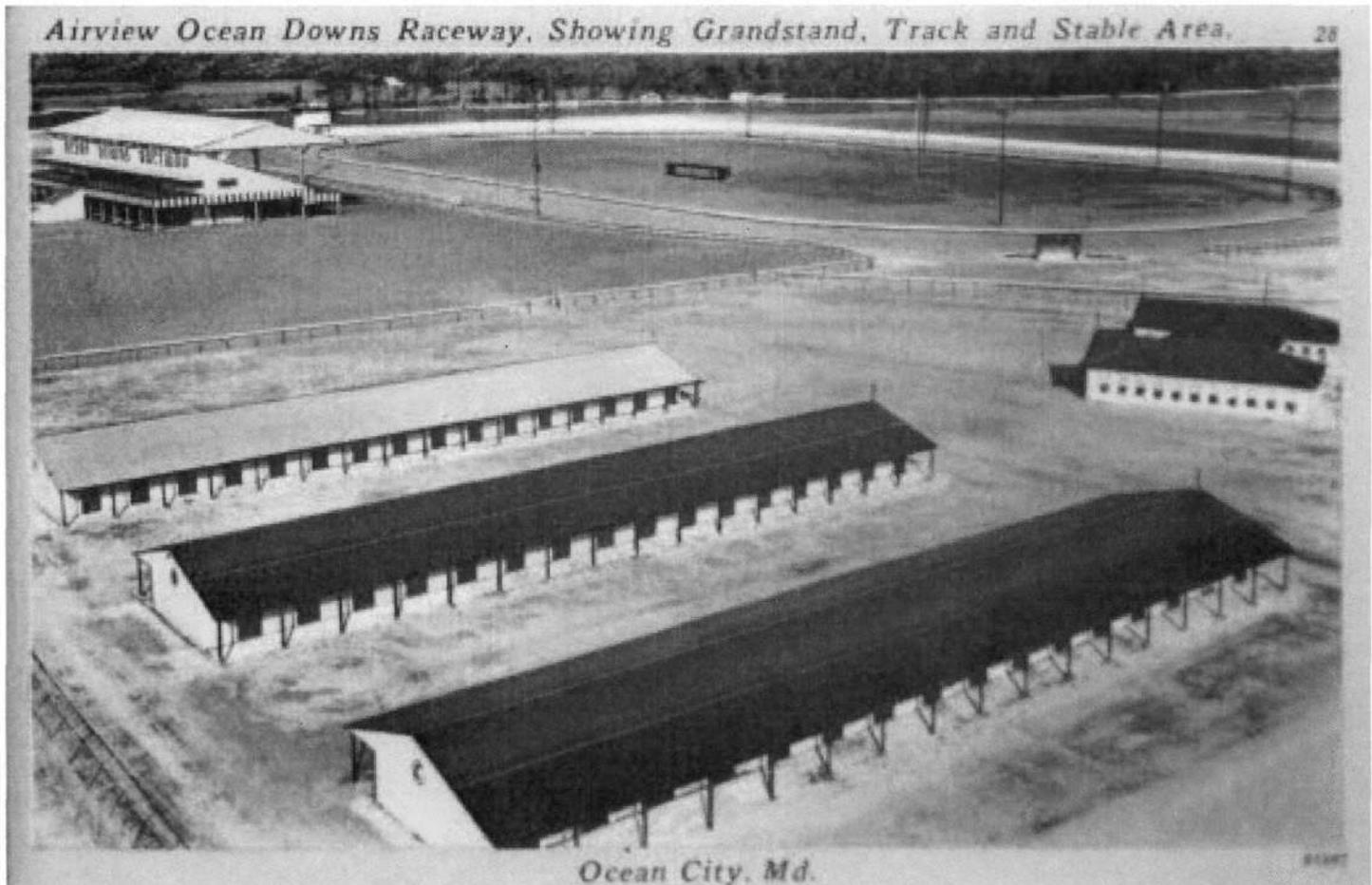
left: Advertisement for Ocean Downs' opening night
(from *The Denton Journal*, Friday, July 22, 1949:9)

Maryland Historical Trust Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties Form

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Ocean Downs Raceway
Continuation Sheet

Number 8 Page 5



Aerial view of Ocean Downs Raceway, showing the track, the grandstand (prior to the enclosure of its mezzanine and the addition of the adjacent Clubhouse), the stables, and the horsemen's lounge, circa 1949 (from ancestry.com).

9. Major Bibliographical References

Inventory No.

WO-577

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10. Geographical Data

Acreage of surveyed property 166.45 acres
Acreage of historical setting 165 acres
Quadrangle name Berlin Quadrangle scale: 1:24,000

Verbal boundary description and justification

Ocean Downs Raceway includes the 166.45-acre property, referred to in Worcester County Tax Records as Map 21, Parcel 99, located along the east side of Racetrack Road (MD 589), just north of its intersection with US 50 (see site plan). The property extends to Turville Creek on its north and east sides and Mud Creek (a tributary of Turville Creek) on its south side, with the exception of a 7½-acre parcel at the northwest corner of the property along MD 589 having the address 10324 Racetrack Road (Map 21, Parcel 117). This boundary includes all the property historically associated with Ocean Downs, including the racetrack, grandstand, horse stables, service buildings, paddock areas, parking areas, and grazing fields.

11. Form Prepared by

name/title	Wendy Zug-Gilbert, Principal Investigator		
organization	A&HC, Inc.	date	January 10, 2008
street & number	101 North Pennsylvania Avenue	telephone	(814) 364-2135
city or town	Centre Hall	state	Pennsylvania

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

Maryland Historical Trust

Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties Form

Inventory No. WO-577

Ocean Downs Raceway Bibliography Continuation Sheet

Number 9 Page 1

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Worcester County Deeds

Worcester County Deeds accessed at <http://www.mdlandrec.net/>. Referenced in text by clerk's initials, liber, and folio (i.e. RWH 14:242).

Worcester County Tax Records

Worcester County Tax Records accessed at <http://www.mdlandrec.net/>.

Maryland Historical Trust
Maryland Inventory of
Historic Properties Form

Inventory No. WO-577

Ocean Downs Raceway
Bibliography Continuation Sheet

Number 9 Page 2

Other Agencies, Institutions, and Individuals Contacted

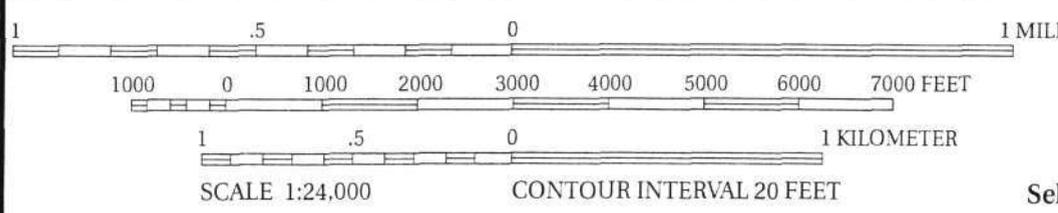
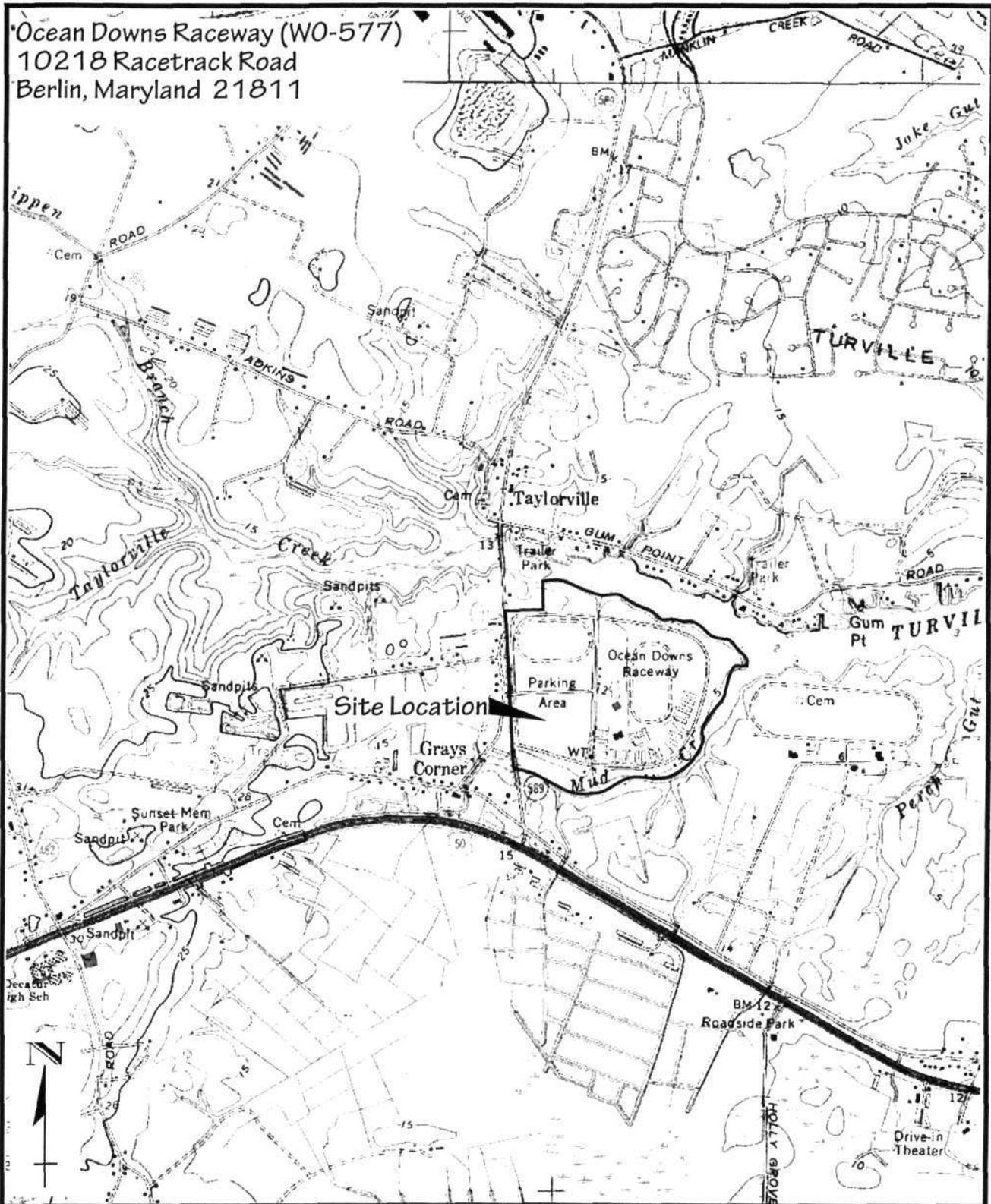
Mr. Peter Syzmanski, General Manager of Ocean Downs

Personal interview on January 24, 2008 (by phone) and February 11, 2008 (in person).

Mr. Vic Hall, Operations Director of Ocean Downs

Personal interview on January 24, 2008 (by phone) and February 11, 2008 (in person).

Ocean Downs Raceway (W0-577)
 10218 Racetrack Road
 Berlin, Maryland 21811

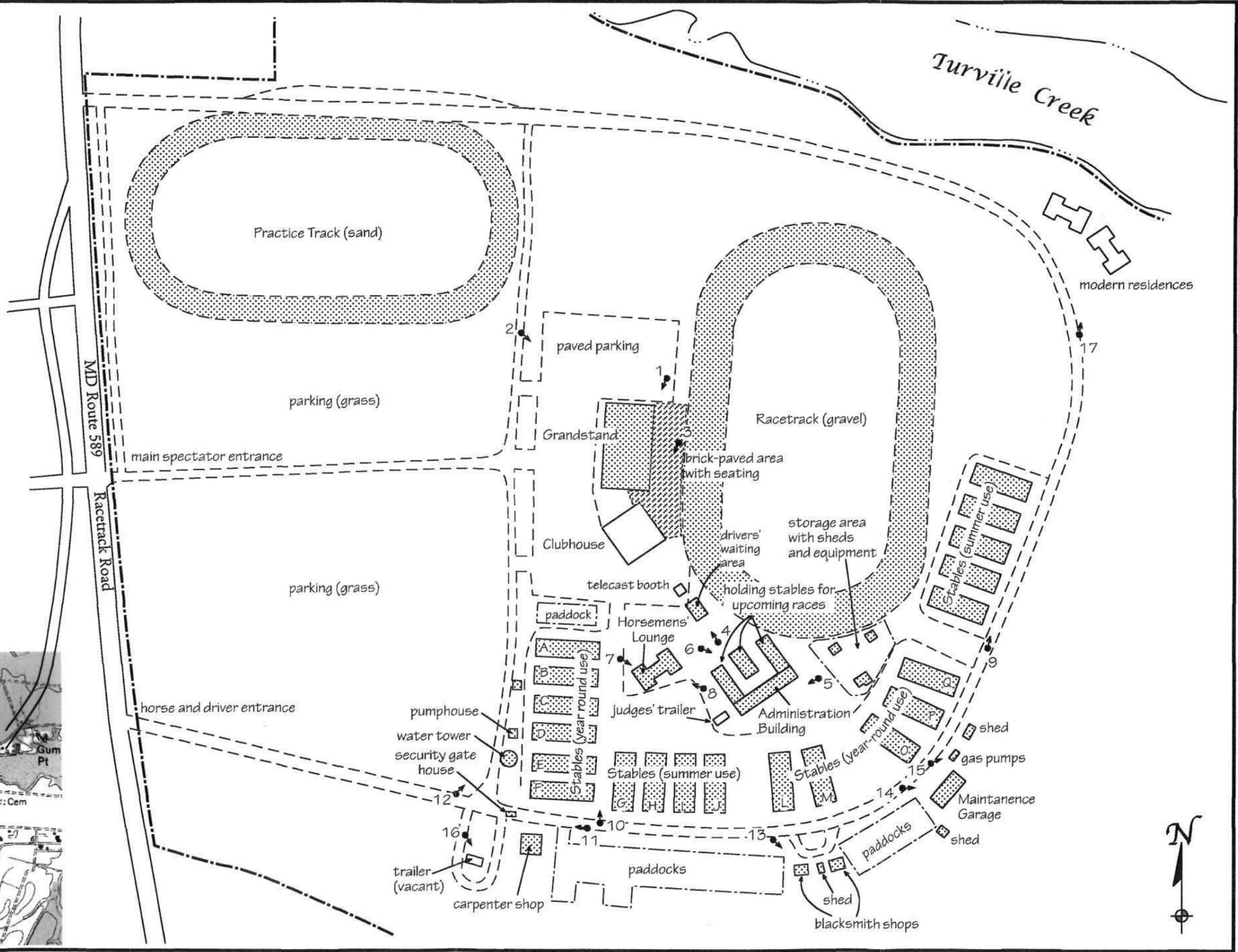
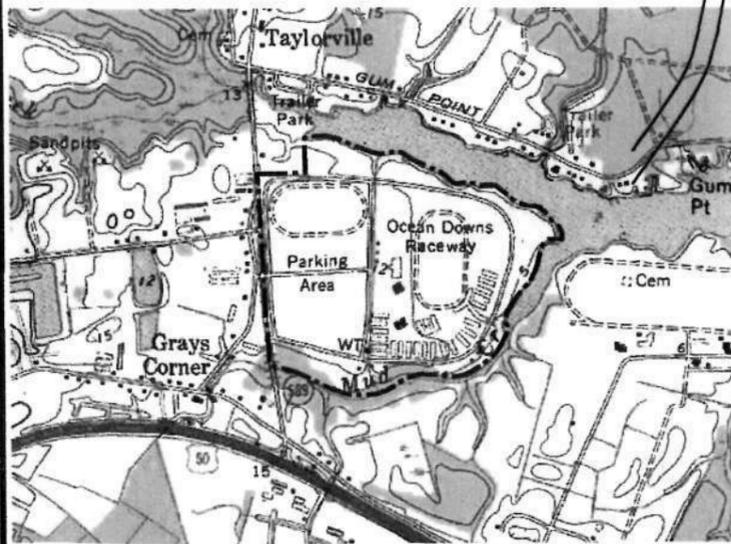


Selbyville, Berlin, MD

Ocean Downs Raceway (W0-577)
 10218 Racetrack Road
 Berlin, Maryland 21811

● = Photo Viewpoint
 [Stippled Area] = Recommended Eligible
 [White Area] = Modern or Adjacent Structure
 [Dashed Line] = Recommended NR Boundary

0 400 feet
 0 100 meters





WO - 577

Ocean Downs Raceway

Worcester County, MD

M. Padamonsky

2.4.08

MD SHPO

Grandstand and Clubhouse, facing southwest.



OCEAN DOWNS

WO-577

2

Ocean Downs Raceway
Worcester County, MD

M. Padamonsky

2-4-08

MD SHPO

Grandstand showing enclosed mezzanine on
rear, facing southeast.



WO - 577

3

Ocean Downs Raceway

Worcester County, MD

M. Padamonsky

2-4-08

MD SHPO

Grandstand, clubhouse, and open-air seating
facing south/southwest



WD-577

4

Ocean Downs Raceway
Worcester County, MD

M. Padamensky

2-4-08

MD SHPO

Driver's waiting area and telecast booth,
facing northwest.



W0 - 577

5

Ocean Downs Raceway

Worcester County, MD

M. Padamonsky

2-4-08

MD SHPO

Facade of Administration Building, facing
Southwest.



W0-577

6

Ocean Downs Raceway
Worcester County, MD

M. Poddansky

2-4-08

MD SHPO

Rear of Administration Building with holding
stables (for upcoming races), facing south-east.



WO-577

7

Ocean Downs Raceway
Worcester County, MD

M. Pridamonsky

2-4-08

MD SHPO

Facade of Horsemen's Lounge, facing southeast



W0-577

8

Ocean Downs Raceway
Worcester County, MD

M. Padamonsky

2-4-08

MD SHPO

Rear of Horsemen's lounge, facing northwest.



W0-577

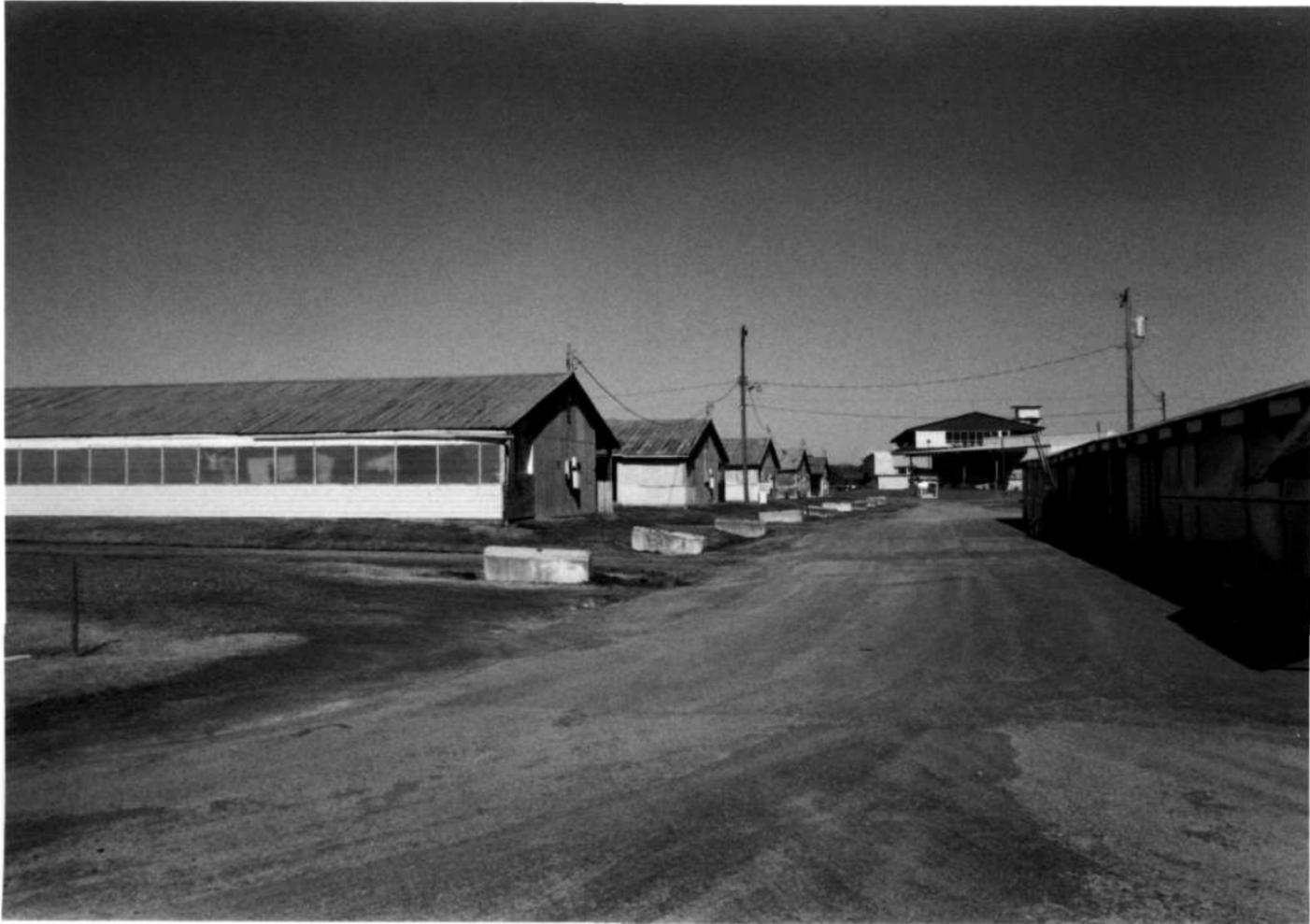
Ocean Downs Raceway
Worcester County, MD

M. Padamonsky

2-4-08

MD SHPO

Summer-use horse stables for visiting
race horses, facing northeast.



W0-577

10

Ocean Downs Raceway

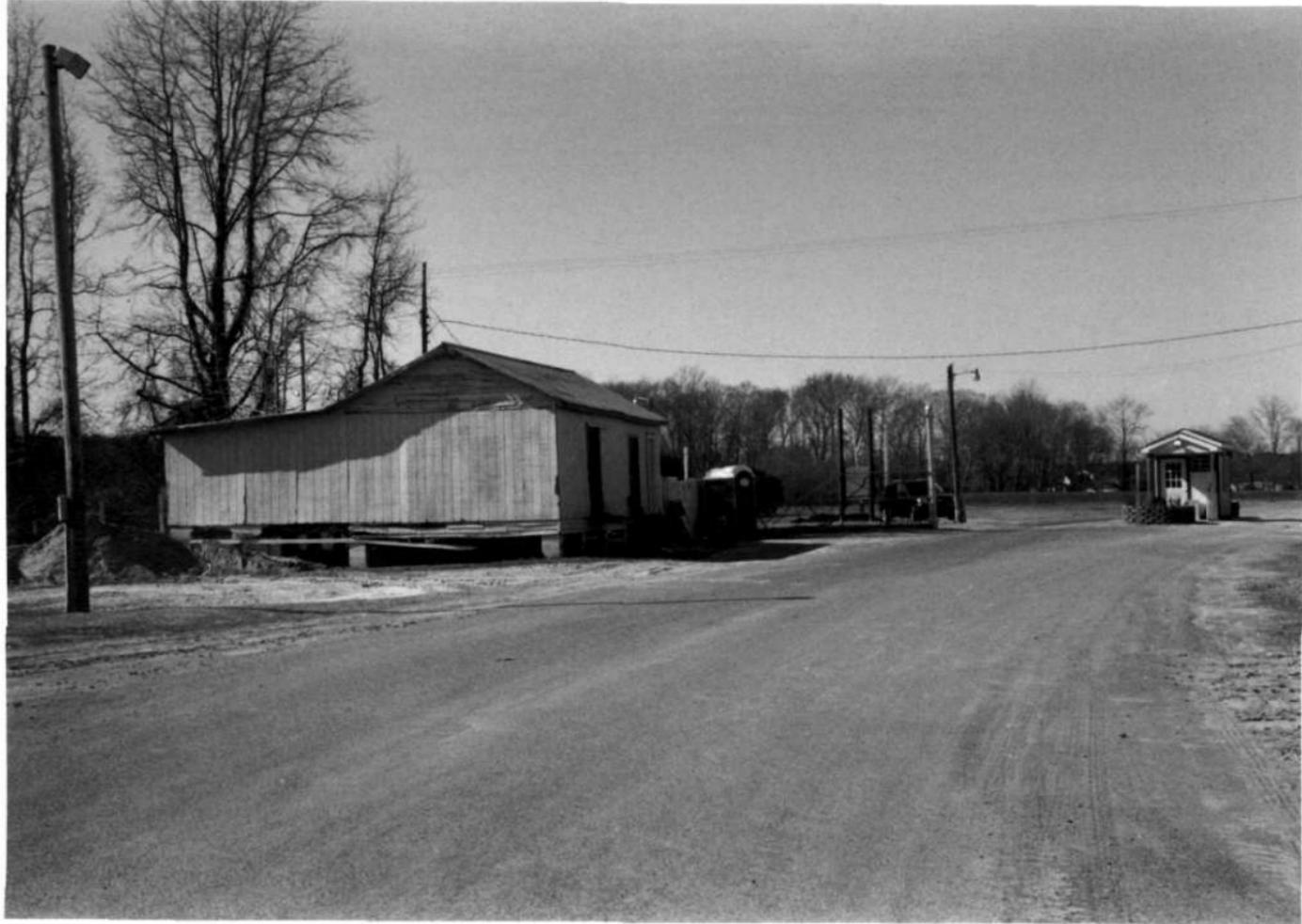
Worcester County, MD

M. Padamonsky

2-4-08

MD SHPO

Enclosed stables for year-round use, facing
north toward Grandstand,



WO-577

11

Ocean Downs Raceway

Worcester County, MD

M. Padamonsky

2-4-08

MD SHPO

Carpenter Shop (formerly feed storage) and
security gatehouse, facing west.



WO-577

12

Ocean Downs Raceway
Worcester County, MD

M. Padamonsky

2-4-08

MD SHPO

Overview of racetrack complex with water tower,
facing northeast



W0-577

13

Ocean Downs Raceway

Worcester County, MD

M. Padamonsky

2-4-08

MD SHPO

Blacksmith Shops (on ends) and sheds, facing
Southeast.



WO-577

Ocean Downs Raceway

Worcester County, MD

M. Pudamonsky

2-4-08

MD SHPO

Maintenance Garage, facing east.



WO-597

Ocean Downs Raceway

Worcester County, MD

M. Padamonsky

2-4-08

MD SHPO

Service area with gas pumps and shed, facing
east.



W0-577

16

Ocean Downs Raceway
Worcester County, MD

M. Padamonsky

2-4-08

MD SHPO

Vacant modern trailer (formerly security staff housing), facing southeast.



WO-577

Ocean Downs Raceway

Worcester County, MD

M. Padamovsky

2-4-08

MD SHPO

Modern residences along Turnille Creek at northeast corner of property, facing northeast.