

KVISVIK-MARTINDALE FARM, CHICKEN HOUSE
11802 Southwest 156th Street
Vashon
King County
Washington

HABS WA-271
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WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA
REDUCED COPIES OF MEASURED DRAWINGS
FIELD RECORDS

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY
National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior
1849 C Street NW
Washington, DC 20240-0001

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KVISVIK-MARTINDALE FARM, CHICKEN HOUSE

HABS No. WA-271

Location: 11802 SW 156th Street, Vashon Island, King County, Washington.

Coordinates: 47.465497, -122.485456

Present Owner: Terry Martindale.

Present Use: Vacant.

Significance: The Kvisvik-Martindale Farm, located on the west side of Vashon Island, is an intact farmstead and historic chicken ranch dating from the early twentieth century. The property has been proposed for nomination as a King County Landmark for its association with the Island's poultry industry. This research demonstrates that the Kvisvik-Martindale Farm is an outstanding example of an early twentieth-century, small-scale poultry farm, and one of the few remaining intact farmsteads associated with the 'chicken craze' of the early twentieth century.

Commercial chicken ranching began in the Pacific Northwest in the late 1800s, when it became possible to transport western agricultural products quickly via transcontinental railroads to eastern urban markets. The 'chicken craze' was an early twentieth-century farming fad which has been called a secondary homesteading era (Cole, 1926; White, 1980). This farming fad transformed Vashon's agricultural landscape a century ago as Donation Land Claims dating from the mid-nineteenth century were subdivided and sold as ranches. As a precursor to the 'back to the land' movements of the 1960s and 1970s, many migrants from urban areas who were seeking independent economic opportunities were inspired to pursue chicken ranching, with encouragement from promotional pamphlets from a variety of sources and agricultural college extension programs.

The structure stands testament to this movement in history and is a reminder of the agrarian lifestyle of the past. The shiplap joinery in the siding, the unique roof ties, and its alternating foundation structure provide a glimpse at Vashon's quirky vernacular architecture. The structure tacitly tells a story of its construction through the natural growth of the poultry business and the expansion of its elongated volumes.

The Poultry Structure poses no threat to its surrounding agrarian environment. The structure is not connected to electrical, gaseous, or consumer-based sources and thus does not present any risk or inconvenience to its environment. On the contrary, its decaying wood construction most likely provides a habitat for fauna and flora located on the island to thrive. The building in its essence is a ruin and this point in time, its aesthetic seems to embody a past relic and has an almost quixotic and sublime presence amongst the landscape and in the tall grass fields that engulf it.

Historian: Holly Taylor.

Project

Information: The initial inquiry was commenced in cohorts with the University of Washington's Storefront Studio taught and guided by Jim Nicholls. The studio was funded by King County's Historic Preservation Program led by Julie Koler and Todd Scott. Under the Storefront Studio, the majority of the field work, measurements, photographic documentation, aerial photography and initial drawings were done. After the studio ended, all the drawings were reworked, film photography was shot, and interpretative drawings were constructed based off extensive research and photographic evidence. Much of the research was aided by previous research done by Holly Taylor and with her help I was able to find much of the historical data and historical photographs about its history.