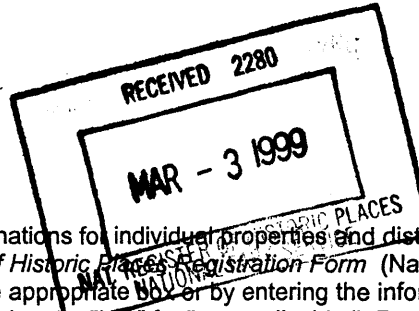


(January 1992)

United States Department of Interior  
National Park Service

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### National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900A). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

#### 1. Name of Property

historic name Bedrud-Olson Farmstead

other names/site number N/A

#### 2. Location

street & number 996 East Church Road N/A not for publication

city or town Town of Christiana N/A vicinity

state Wisconsin code WI county Dane code 025 zip code 53523

#### 3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this x nomination      request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property X meets      does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant      nationally      statewide X locally. (     See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Alicia D. Coe 1/29/99  
Signature of certifying official/Title Date  
Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer-WI

State or Federal agency and bureau

**Bedrud-Olson Farm stead**  
Name of Property

**Dane / Wisconsin**  
County and State

In my opinion, the property \_\_\_meets \_\_\_does not meet the National Register criteria.  
( \_\_\_See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

**4. National Park Service Certification**

I hereby certify that the property is:  
 entered in the National Register.

\_\_\_ determined eligible for the  
National Register.

\_\_\_ determined not eligible for the  
National Register.

\_\_\_ removed from the National  
Register.

\_\_\_ other, (explain:)

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

*[Handwritten Signature]*  
See continuation sheet.  
*[Handwritten Signature]* *[Handwritten Signature]*  
*[Handwritten Signature]* *[Handwritten Signature]*  
See continuation sheet. *4-1-99*

\_\_\_ See continuation sheet.

\_\_\_ See continuation sheet.

Bedrud-Olson Farm stead  
Name of Property

Dane / Wisconsin  
County and State

### 5. Classification

#### Ownership of Property

(check as many boxes as apply)  
count)

private  
 public-local  
 public-state  
 public-federal

#### Category of Property

#### Number of Resources within Property

(Check only one box)

(Do not include listed resources within the

building(s)  
 district  
 site  
 structure  
 object

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>8</u>	<u>0</u>	buildings
	<u>0</u>	sites
	<u>0</u>	structures
	<u>0</u>	objects
<u>8</u>	<u>0</u>	Total

#### Name of related multiple property listing

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

n/a

#### Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

### 6. Function or Use

#### Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

AGRICULTURE/SUBSISTENCE:processing  
AGRICULTURE/SUBSISTENCE:storage  
AGRICULTURE/SUBSISTENCE:agricultural outbuilding  
DOMESTIC: Single Dwelling

#### Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

AGRICULTURE/SUBSISTENCE:processing  
AGRICULTURE/SUBSISTENCE:storage  
AGRICULTURE/SUBSISTENCE:agricultural outbuilding  
COMMERCE/TRADE: business

### 7. Description

#### Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

LATE VICTORIAN: Italianate

#### Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation STONE  
walls BRICK  
WOOD  
roof METAL  
other WOOD

#### Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

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National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section 7 Page 1

Bedrud- Olson Farmstead, Town of Christiana, Dane County, WI.

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**Introduction:**

The Bedrud-Olson Farmstead is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under National Register Criterion C as a fine example of a historic combination tobacco and dairy farm, a type found only in small geographic pockets in Wisconsin, but which is the most common historic farmstead type in southeastern Dane and northern Rock counties. The farmstead consists of a large dairy barn with two interior wood silos; three frame tobacco curing sheds with horizontally hinged siding, a frame tobacco stripping shed, a small milkhouse, a small garage, and a residence. The property's buildings may be dated to their present appearances between 1856 and 1915; the property's historic significance, as discussed in Section 8, derives from this period of operation. The farmstead buildings maintain very good integrity, with few alterations evident on any of the buildings with the exception of the house, which has undergone some minor alterations and retains sufficient integrity to constitute a contributing resource to the property's historic significance. Unlike many of the other combination dairy / tobacco farms in the area, this property retains the full complement of historic-era farm buildings, and has no non-historic buildings added to the site. The farmstead outbuildings have undergone some deterioration due to weathering and decay; the nomination is prepared in compliance with an investment tax credit application allowing for the correction of the most serious of these deteriorations. The integrity and present appearance of each of the property's resources are discussed in detail below; the property's resources are listed in approximate order of their importance to the property's significance as a fine example of a historic combination tobacco and dairy farm.

**Physical context**

The Bedrud-Olson Farmstead is located in the southeast Dane County Town of Christiana, a rural area in which combination tobacco and dairy farms predominate. The terrain in this area is dominated by slightly rolling hills, and is occupied by farms of varying vintage that appear to range in size from small plots of a few acres to commercial operations of more than one hundred acres. As will be discussed in the context portion of Section 8, most of the farms in the Bedrud-Olson Farmstead's vicinity appear to continue to produce both tobacco and dairy products; no farmstead was discovered, however, that maintains the level of integrity to the period of significance identified above that is apparent at the Bedrud-Olson Farmstead.

The Bedrud-Olson farmstead is located approximately six miles northwest of Lake Koshkonong in southeastern Dane County; the farm lies nearly in the center of the historically Norwegian tobacco country in this region. The farm lies in a shallow valley, and is divided by East Church Road, which passes east-west to the immediate south of the farmhouse and milkhouse and immediately north of the dairy barn. The remainder of the built resources associated with the property are located to the north of the house. The farmstead buildings are separated from adjoining farms to the north and south by agricultural fields, and from the farms to the east and west by woods and brush adjoined by fields.

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Continuation Sheet

Section 7 Page 2

Bedrud- Olson Farmstead, Town of Christiana, Dane County, WI.

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The farmstead consists of eight built resources, which are as follows:

- A massive gabled dairy barn, of timber frame with a full stone basement, built in 1883;
- Three tobacco curing sheds, timber-framed with horizontally-hinged ventilating siding, one being original to the site and dating from ca. 1890, and two dating from prior to 1906 and having been located on their current sites since 1908;
- A frame stripping house with drop-lap siding on a walk-out stone foundation, built in 1910.
- The brick-veneered upright-and-wing farmhouse, the oldest portion of which was built in 1856 and which has received at least two historic additions;
- A small frame building historically used as a milkhouse, which stands next to the driveway leading north from East Church Road; and
- A frame garage with drop-lap siding, built in 1915.

Each resource is discussed in greater detail below.

**Dairy Barn General Features:**

The dairy barn stands across East Church Road from the balance of the property's built resources. Unlike many of the other buildings, the barn is relatively unobscured from the public right-of-way and is the most readily visible building on the property. This visibility is also augmented by the building's size, which is far beyond that of the remainder of the farm's buildings and is comparable to barns of more recent vintage in the vicinity. Constructed in 1883,<sup>1</sup> the dairy barn stands three and one-half stories in height above the basement level, which is partially exposed at the north-facing facade and is entirely exposed at the south-facing facade. The building has a relatively wide gabled shape, the roof being surmounted by two gabled wood-frame ventilators. The ventilators, placed at equal distances from the ridge's ends, both have wood louvers, which are deteriorated and missing in some places. The roof surface is of asphalt shingles cut in an interlocking pattern and appearing to date from the early twentieth century; much of the shingled area is severely deteriorated, especially along the slopes below the wood ventilators. There is a hole in the roof below the westernmost ventilator on the north slope of the roof, at the juncture of the roof with the north facade wall. The barn's siding is board-and-batten and constructed of cedar. The foundation is of limestone laid in a rough ashlar pattern with generous mortar; stones are soldiered into slight arches over some of the basement level openings. Each facade of the barn will be described in greater detail below. With the possible exception of the roof, the general features of the building described above are entirely original.

**Dairy Barn North-Facing (Primary) Facade:**

The north-facing facade of the barn has two above-grade doorways, three basement-level windows, and a single window between the two entries. All four windows are in plain surrounds and are six-over-six, double-hung sash; all are original to the building except for the westernmost basement level window,

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<sup>1</sup> date on ventilator louver.

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Continuation Sheet

Section 7 Page 3

Bedrud- Olson Farmstead, Town of Christiana, Dane County, WI.

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which is reputed to have been replaced in the 1960s.<sup>2</sup> All of the windows are in generally poor repair, but intact. The facade's two entries consist of a main threshing door at the center of the facade and a smaller entry at the east corner of the facade. The threshing door is approximately one-and-one-half stories tall, while the east door is of a normal pedestrian height. Both have sliding board-and-batten doors and are accessed at present by boards leading across a chasm between them and a set of earthen mounds directly north of the doors, which are framed with vestigial limestone retaining walls; these mounds and walls constitute the remnants of the banks leading historically to the entries. The single window mentioned previously is located between these two doors; the balance of the facade has no openings due to the interior silos, discussed below. A sign for "Green Mountain Silo / Creamery Package Mfg. Co." is appended to the west corner of the facade immediately under the eaves, and may be original to the building. With the exception of the deterioration of the banks leading to the doors and the damage to the roof above this facade, cited previously, the barn's primary facade is highly intact.

**Dairy Barn East-Facing Facade:**

The east-facing facade retains an acceptable level of integrity despite suffering some deterioration, having lost four boards in the gable and having lost the sash from its three equally-spaced first-floor windows. A six-over-six double-hung window in the gable is more intact but is missing one pane, and, although identical to the barn's extant historic sash, is believed to date from the 1960s.<sup>3</sup> At the basement level, the facade has one irregularly-placed six-over-six double-hung window near the northern corner of the facade, as well as a pedestrian doorway to the stable area at the south corner of the facade. There is also a low double door set into the lowest exposed portion of the basement level near the center of the facade; this leads to a sub-basement and was used for disposing of manure collected in this lower level. Two dry-laid stone retaining walls extend from the facade immediately south of this entry. Although this facade, which is the second most visible on the building, has had some deterioration, the result is of a relatively minor nature and does not significantly impact the building's overall integrity.

**Dairy Barn West-Facing Facade:**

The west-facing facade is relatively less visible from the public right-of way than the east-facing facade, since it faces away from the main nearby thoroughfare and is somewhat screened by nearby brush. This facade has only one opening above the basement: a six-over-six double-hung window in the gable. One board immediately below this gable is missing, as is the board at the south corner of the facade. The basement level has three openings, the northernmost consisting of a single plain plank door and the remaining two consisting of small windows. Both windows are six-over-six, double-hung sash, the southernmost was installed horizontally. Both windows have four-light storm windows and are in fair condition. Remnants of a dry-laid stone wall extends from the facade between the two windows.

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<sup>2</sup> Interview with Jim Notstad, owner, August 26, 1997.

<sup>3</sup> *ibid.*

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Bedrud-Olson Farmstead, Town of Christiana, Dane County, WI.

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**Dairy Barn, South-Facing Facade:**

The south-facing facade of the barn faces a field and is not visible from the public right-of-way. This facade has no openings above the basement level, although a rectangular area of three boards are missing from the upper portion of the facade. It is not clear whether this alteration indicates an active alteration or damage to the building. The basement level of this facade consists of regularly-spaced alternating stable doors, pedestrian doors and windows. The pedestrian doors and stable doors are of wood boards in a timber frame surround; the stable doors are doubled and each is divided horizontally. The windows each have two sash arranged horizontally, with six lights in each; all but one have four-light storm sash.

**Dairy Barn, Interior:**

The interior of the barn is highly intact and consists of several general and specialized spaces. The bulk of the volume above the basement level is open to the rafters, which are supported by a frame of sawn timbers with pegged mortise and tenon joints. A loft extends across the east end of the space at approximately ten feet above the threshing floor level, with slightly higher adjoining lofts extending toward the threshing doors from either side. The loft is also predominately of sawn timbers with board planking, although some peeled and hewn logs do serve as joists supporting the loft's floor. The northwest corner of the primary space is dominated by two identical cylindrical, wood stave silos, which are original to the building and are highly intact. Both silos begin at the stable floor below, rise through the threshing floor level and extend approximately fifteen feet above the floor. They consist of vertical staves or planks bound by metal hoops; the interior of the silos being accessed at this level by a series of roughly square wood plank doors between the hoops. The stable area in the basement is dominated by cow stanchions and specialized stable areas, including horse stables and calving pens. The stables are of wood plank and appear to be original; the stanchions are also original and include iron neck braces.

**Dairy Barn, Conclusion:**

The Bedrud-Olson Farmstead's dairy barn, as a result, may be seen to evidence a relatively high level of integrity commensurate with the property's eligibility for the National Register of Historic Places. The building's original siding, ventilators, fenestration pattern, and interior features are highly intact, to a degree relatively unusual on agricultural buildings of this vintage and a degree not found on any other barn of this vintage noted in the Town of Christiana. Most of the alterations discussed above are of a visually minor nature, most having resulted from weathering and deterioration over the life of the building. This very large and visually prominent building has a high level of integrity.

**Tobacco sheds:**

The farm's three tobacco sheds are the northernmost buildings on the farmstead; two stand roughly parallel to each other and to East Church Road at the end of the driveway extending from East Church Road past the house, while the third is perpendicular to these two and has a gable end facing East Church Road. Although their dates of construction cannot be conclusively determined, the former two

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Bedrud- Olson Farmstead, Town of Christiana, Dane County, WI

are known to have been moved to the site from another location on the farm property in 1906 and 1908,<sup>4</sup> and the third was built on site in 1890.<sup>5</sup> Based on the pattern of the tobacco industry's development in the area, it is likely that they were built in the 1880s, when tobacco acreage in the vicinity doubled due to accelerating demand and prices. All of the sheds are long gabled structures of horizontal board siding on sawn timber and tamarack pole frames; every third board of the siding is hinged at the upper corners with iron strap hinges in order to provide ventilation during the curing process. The two older sheds also have hinged horizontal board siding on their gable ends; the newer shed, which is also slightly taller, has vertical hinged siding on its gable ends. Each sheds has two drive-through openings, one in each gable end. The southernmost of the two older sheds has double doors of wood plank that swing open to either side, while the northernmost of the older sheds has no doors and the newer shed has double wood plank doors that slide to either side on an overhead metal track. The newer shed and the northernmost of the older sheds have corrugated metal roofs, while the southernmost shed's roof is of corrugated metal on the west half and asphalt shingles on the east half. Each shed has seven cylindrical metal ridge vents with flat crowns. As is typical of tobacco sheds, none have any windows. The interiors of the sheds are also similar; each consists of a long passageway framed to either side by bents, or wooden sectional divisions approximately twelve feet in width and having two horizontal extensions, one near the eave and one at shoulder height, extending from a vertical post adjoining the passageway to the exterior wall. These bents support the tobacco as it is hung during the curing process. The bents in all three sheds consist primarily of dimension lumber, although some peeled poles are used in the two older sheds. Although it is possible that some of the individual bents or siding boards have been rebuilt or repaired over time, the buildings are otherwise highly intact to the the date of their original construction or to the period of their moving to their current sites.

#### **Stripping Shed:**

The frame stripping shed, built in 1910,<sup>6</sup> is a two-story, gabled building, the first floor constructed of stone and slightly below grade at the east-facing gable and completely exposed at the west-facing gable. The building is oriented roughly parallel to the older curing sheds, and stands directly west of them across the driveway. The building has drop lap siding at the second floor, an asphalt shingle roof, and a small cream brick chimney rising from the east end of the gable. The stripping shed has a drive-through entry with double wood doors into the east gable; this entry is surmounted by a small, shed roof, wood awning, which is somewhat deteriorated. A single fixed six-light window marks the second story at this gable; three fixed six-light windows are arrayed at both the north and south facades of the first floor level. Two small, fixed six-light windows are set into the second story at both north and south facades; evenly spaced, these are flanked to the east by a single, pedestrian door constructed of drop-lap siding.

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<sup>4</sup> Martin and Henry Olson interviews, August 21, 1975 [tape recording].

<sup>5</sup> Martin brothers interviews, *op cit*.

<sup>6</sup> Date inscribed on interior basement wall.



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Bedrud- Olson Farmstead, Town of Christiana, Dane County, WI.

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Any staircase used to access this door is long since vanished; there is not sign of a possible staircase with the exception of a missing piece of siding immediately below the door. The cream brick chimney at the east facade is also flanked to either side by fixed six-light windows at the second story and two-over-two double-hung windows at the first floor. This building represents a significant part of the tobacco farm operation during the period of historic significance, and is highly intact.

**House:**

As previously cited, the house associated with the Bedrud-Olson Farmstead has undergone additions and alterations. The original portion of the house appears to have been the ell to the east of the front-gabled portion; this building is reputed to have been constructed in 1856. The upright portion of the house is reputed to have been built in 1883.<sup>7</sup> Another undetermined addition is reputed to have been added in 1903,<sup>8</sup> and a non-historic kitchen addition extends from the rear of the ell. The historic portions of the building are of unbroken cream brick veneer with plain stone sills and plain stone lintels on the upright portion of the building. The ell has six windows in the south-facing facade, while the upright has four windows at each of the north and south facades and three windows at the first floor of the west-facing facade. All of the windows were replaced with double-hung, one-over-one sash within the past ten years, following several years of the building's abandonment; most of the windows have hinged louvered shutters. A low porch in front of the ell has turned columns and a fretted frieze and a sunburst pattern in the gablet over the single door, which is slightly offset between the westernmost two bays of the ell. The interior of the house retains original woodwork in most of the rooms of the first floor of the historic portions of the building. Although somewhat more altered than most of the property's agricultural buildings, the house demonstrates an acceptable level of integrity and is a contributing element of the property's overall integrity.

**Milkhouse:**

The milkhouse sits near the apron of the driveway leading south from East Church Road along the west side of the house. A one story, frame, gabled building with a ridge extending perpendicular to the driveway, the building has drop-lap siding and a six-over-six, double-hung widow in the gable end facing the driveway. The rear portion of the building has board-and-batten siding, board doors and windows similar to those on the other elevation. As this building is primarily surrounded by brush, details of other facades are not readily visible to the observer. The building's date of construction has not been conclusively determined, although it is clearly of the same period as the property's other buildings. Unused and showing some signs of structural decay, the milkhouse nevertheless retains acceptable integrity. The milkhouse may date to ca. 1910.

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<sup>7</sup> Olson Brothers interview, *op cit.*

<sup>8</sup> *ibid.*

NPS Form 10-900-a  
(Rev. 8-86)  
Wisconsin Word Processing Format  
(Approved 1/92)

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Bedrud- Olson Farmstead, Town of Christiana, Dane County, WI.

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**Garage:**

The final notable feature of the farmstead site is a one stall, wood frame garage with drop-lap siding located along the east side of the driveway between the house and the tobacco processing buildings. The garage has a pair of sliding doors at the gable end facing the driveway, and a single fixed four-light window at either long facade. The garage is dated to 1915 on the basis of the owners' purchase of a Model T in May 1915.<sup>9</sup> This building is in good repair and appears substantially unaltered.

**Conclusion:**

The Bedrud-Olson Farmstead buildings demonstrate a high level of integrity, particularly in terms of the farmstead's character-defining agricultural buildings. The dairy barn, which is a highly visible and historically significant component of the property, is notably intact with regard to its original exterior and interior features, including its siding, ventilators, fenestration pattern, interior structure and silos. The tobacco buildings and stripping shed are also highly intact to the date of their placement on the site, and show few significant alterations since that time. Finally, the house and other supporting buildings retain acceptable levels of integrity and contribute to the overall integrity of the site. The Farmstead, therefore, is determined to have a high level of integrity, sufficient for eligibility for the National Register of Historic Places under National Register Criterion C, as discussed in Section 8 below.

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<sup>9</sup> *ibid.*

**Bedrud-Olson Farmstead**

**Dane / Wisconsin**

Name of Property

County and State

**8. Statement of Significance**

**Applicable National Register Criteria**

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for the National Register listing.)

- A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

**Criteria Considerations**

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

- A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B** removed from its original location.
- C** a birthplace or grave.
- D** a cemetery.
- E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F** a commemorative property.
- G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions)

Architecture  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Period of Significance**

1856 to 1915  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Significant Dates**

NA  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Significant Person**

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Cultural Affiliation**

N/A  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Architect/Builder**

Unknown  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Narrative Statement of Significance**

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

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Bedrud- Olson Farmstead, Town of Christiana, Dane County, WI.

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**Introduction:**

The Bedrud-Olson Farmstead is located in the Town of Christiana, near the village of Cambridge, in southeastern Dane County. Containing built resources that date in their present forms from between 1856 and 1915, the Bedrud-Olson Farmstead is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under National Register Criterion C as a fine and highly intact early example of a combination tobacco and dairy farm, a type common to a small portion of southeast Dane and northern Rock counties in Wisconsin. Combination tobacco and dairy farms resulted from the continuance of predominately Norwegian-American agricultural traditions dating from the mid-nineteenth century and from the increasing prevalence of commercial dairy farming during the late nineteenth century; such farms, as a result, include specialized buildings pertaining to both dairy and tobacco agriculture. The Bedrud-Olson Farmstead contains a full complement of such buildings dating from the era of the introduction of dairying, and the buildings, as well as their siting and setting, are highly intact to the period specified above. Although combination tobacco and dairy farms predominate in the Town of Christiana, most such farmsteads are dominated by buildings, particularly dairy barns and silos, that are of a much later date than those of the Bedrud-Olson Farmstead, or have buildings that have undergone significant non-historic alterations. As a result, the Bedrud-Olson Farmstead may be considered eligible for the National Register of Historic Places as a fine and highly intact example of an early combination tobacco and dairy farm.

**Historical Background: Bedrud-Olson Farmstead.**

The Bedrud-Olson Farmstead is located in a predominately rural portion of southeastern Dane County. This region is dominated by combination tobacco and dairy farms which range in size from a few acres to over 100 acres. The Bedrud-Olson Farmstead is also located near the center of a historically Norwegian agricultural settlement that covers several square miles of farms and small settlements and was historically centered on the prairie and till plains west of Lake Koshkonong, approximately six miles southwest of the farm. The Bedrud-Olson farmstead was initially settled by Tosten Lieberon Bedrud and Christie Gunderson Vossolt,<sup>10</sup> members of the first wave of Norwegian immigrants to this locality in 1844.<sup>11</sup> Like most of their compatriots in the Koshkonong area, the couple were apparently drawn to the region by glowing descriptions of the vicinity's relatively mild climate and fertile soil. Although the initial purchase may have included as many as 120 acres, the property's improvements initially consisted only of a dugout house, located at approximately the location of the present house.

Several subsequent years of subsistence and later wheat farming, and the addition of seven children to

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<sup>10</sup> Martin brothers interview [tape recording], *op cit*. Use of the patronymic in lieu of a family name was a common practice among the first generation of Norwegian settlers to this vicinity. Use of a former patronymic as a family name appears to have become common practice by the second generation, although several instances of individuals changing their stated surname over time have been noted.

<sup>11</sup> History of Dane County, Biographical and Genealogical ( Madison: Western Historical Association, 1906), p. 674.

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Bedrud-Olson Farmstead, Town of Christiana, Dane County, WI.

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the family, resulted in the replacement of the initial dugout house with a house of log or timber frame construction. This portion, now the ell extending to the east, was originally constructed in 1856, immediately before the birth of the youngest child, Anna.<sup>12</sup> Following the death of the family patriarch in 1857, the farm was administered by the widow and her brother, Hellick Gunderson, who had purchased an adjoining farm to the east. By 1861, an east-west road was constructed between two of the farm's 40-acre quarter-sections, passing immediately south of the house site.<sup>13</sup> In 1874 the property was purchased by one of Tosten Lieberson Bedrud's and Christie Gunderson Vossolt's sons, known as Hellick, who used the surname Tostenon. By 1877 the Hellick Tostenon farm had 198 acres.<sup>14</sup>

During the two decades immediately following the Civil War, the farm's production of wheat declined and an increased reliance on dairy production and raising of dairy stock developed, an evolution in keeping with the decline of the wheat production industry in southeast Wisconsin and the growing demand for cheese in the region. Early facilities on the farm, however, were initially minimal; according to one of Tostenon's grandsons the property had "not much of a barn for cows and hay just a log stable and hay shed."<sup>15</sup> Due to the expansion of the herd and the availability of new technologies, as discussed below, a new barn was constructed in 1883. This barn included several highly up-to-date features, such as the interior wood stave silos, which were an integral part of the building's design and function. Silos were still considered somewhat unproven at the time of these features' construction, since silos had not been recommended by the University of Wisconsin College of Agriculture as a basis for winter feeding until that year, and the Farmers' Institutes, which would carry the cause of silage to Wisconsin farmers, was not instituted until two years later.<sup>16</sup> The barn also included basement stable areas for horses and cattle, calving pens, gravity-driven water and manure disposal systems, and ventilators, all of which were relatively new to the dairy industry and reflected the intensive technological developments being promulgated in this period in order to allow the industry to expand to meet demand. This barn continued to operate in virtually the manner of its construction into the 1960s.

In the same year as the barn's construction, an unrelated family was hired to work the farm, which prior to this development was being operated by Hellick and two of his unmarried siblings, as well as by the matriarch and the daughter of a son who had died earlier. The house was expanded and veneered in

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<sup>12</sup> Martin brothers interview, *op cit.*

<sup>13</sup> A. Ligowsky, Map of Dane County, Wisconsin (Madison: A. Ligowsky, 1861).

<sup>14</sup> Madison, Dane County and Surrounding Towns... (Madison: William J. Park & Co., 1877), p. 1181.

<sup>15</sup> Olson Brothers interview, *op cit.*

<sup>16</sup> Eric E. Lampard, The Rise of the Dairy Industry in Wisconsin: a Study in Agricultural Change 1820-1920 (Madison: State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1963), p. 158.

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1883 in order to accommodate the employee family on the site, with the front-gabled portion of the present building apparently having been constructed at this time.<sup>17</sup> The date of the extant milkhouse's construction may also fall within this period, although it cannot be conclusively determined.

In 1886, Hellick Tostenson's youngest sister Anna married Anton Olson, a 27-year old Norwegian immigrant whose family lived in the Town of Christiana. After spending three years on a farm in Rock County, the Olsons acquired the Tostenson family farm from Hellick in 1889.<sup>18</sup> By 1906 the Olson family farm included 156 acres, 100 of which were under cultivation.<sup>19</sup> During the period of Anton and Anna's ownership of the farm, few significant alterations to farming practices appear to have been pursued. In a pattern common to farms of the vicinity, as discussed below, the family continued to pursue both dairying and tobacco cultivation, with a small portion of probably fifteen acres or fewer devoted to tobacco and the balance to corn, hay and other crops used for dairy feeding and silage. As was common to farmers raising tobacco, which requires highly fertile soil, the primary tobacco plot was located prior to approximately 1890 on the best available cleared land, a plot south of the present dairy farm. As additional fields were gradually cleared during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, a new tobacco plot was apparently developed in a newly-cleared area to the north of the house; a new tobacco curing shed was constructed near this field in 1890.<sup>20</sup> By the end of the 1900s, the earlier tobacco fields had apparently been converted to dairy crops, and two older sheds that had stood near that plot were moved to the field north of the house in 1906 and 1908.<sup>21</sup> A stripping shed was added in 1910.

Anton Olson died in 1910; Anna Olson continued to live on the farm until her death in 1938. The Olsons had five children; two of the Olson sons, Henry and Martin, bought the property from their mother in 1918.<sup>22</sup> The Olson brothers continued to farm the property into the 1970s. Following Henry's death,

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<sup>17</sup> Martin brothers interview, *op cit.*

<sup>18</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>19</sup> History of Dane County, Biographical and Genealogical (Madison: Western Historical Association, 1906), p. 674.

<sup>20</sup> Martin brothers interview, *op cit.*

<sup>21</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>22</sup> *ibid.*

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Martin executed a land contract conveying the property to a neighboring farmer in 1976.<sup>23</sup> The farm has continued to produce tobacco to the present date, although dairying has been discontinued.

**Historical Background: Tobacco and Dairy Farming in Dane and Rock Counties:**

Tobacco Cultivation: History in Vicinity:

Tobacco has been grown in Wisconsin since the mid-nineteenth century, but its cultivation has occurred only in small, isolated portions of southern and western Wisconsin. These areas produce almost exclusively a single type of tobacco, a broad-leaf variety used for cigar wrappers; such tobaccos have been virtually the only type produced in Wisconsin since the first introduction of the crop to the Stoughton-Madison-Lake Koshkonong area of southeastern Wisconsin. The earliest unsuccessful efforts to raise tobacco commercially in this region date from 1838.<sup>24</sup> The first commercially successful tobacco was raised by Ralph and Orrin Pomeroy of Stoughton in 1853. The Pomeroy's had emigrated from the Miami Valley of southwestern Ohio, an area in which cigar wrapper tobaccos had been produced commercially for several decades previous.<sup>25</sup>

Initial commercial tobacco cultivation in this region was conducted by members of the initial wave of settlers to the region, many of whom had come from the northeastern and southeastern United States; by the post-Civil War era the majority of tobacco production in the Koskonong region was being conducted by Norwegian immigrants. Norwegian immigrants began to settle in the Koskonong area during the early 1840s; most bought federal land with the intention of pursuing farming, although a few appear to have been able to buy improved properties. This first wave of immigration from Norway to the United States had been precipitated by population growth among the farming classes coupled with a severe scarcity of arable land in Norway. According to one account, over half of the population of Norway in the 1840s made its living by farming, although the amount of land available for farms was completely inadequate to supporting such numbers.<sup>26</sup>

As one of the earliest European immigrant groups to arrive in Wisconsin, the Norwegian settlers were able to seek out largely unoccupied areas where they could settle as a group, and were able to choose areas dominated by prairies and oak openings, rather than the heavily timbered or otherwise less than

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<sup>23</sup> Land contract, document number 1477575. Estate of Henry M. Olson and Martin Olson to Orlon R. Notstad, July 6, 1976.

<sup>24</sup> Benjamin Horace Hibbard, History of Agriculture in Dane County, Bulletin of the University of Wisconsin No. 101, Economics and Political Science Series (Madison: University of Wisconsin, 1904), p. 155.

<sup>25</sup> Karl B. Raitz, The Location of Tobacco Production in Wisconsin, Ph.D Thesis, University of Minnesota, 1970, p. 80.

<sup>26</sup> Raitz, *op cit.*, p. 84.

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desirable lands occupied by later immigrant groups. A large rural settlement of Norwegian immigrants developed in what became known as the Koshkonong settlement, which was loosely defined as extending from Lake Koshkonong and the Dane-Jefferson counties border through several of the towns of eastern Dane County.<sup>27</sup> Christiana, the town in which the Bedrud-Olson farmstead is located, was among the earliest areas settled by the Norwegian immigrants; the town is the only one named for a Norwegian place, having been named after the capital of Norway in 1847. By the close of the nineteenth century, the Koshkonong settlement area had come to be identified simultaneously with Norwegians and with tobacco, and later Norwegian and tobacco-producing areas in western and southwestern Wisconsin were settled predominately by Norwegian immigrants who had previously lived in or had strong ties to the settlers of the Koskonong settlement.

Although tobacco cultivation came to be strongly identified with Norwegian-Americans by the close of the nineteenth century, Norwegian involvement with tobacco production was a result of the location in which initial settlement took place and the initial economic and social conditions of the immigrant group, rather than any specialized experience developed in Norway. Although, as discussed previously, most Norwegian immigrants had engaged in agriculture in Norway, such farming was almost exclusively on an extremely small scale and was geared toward subsistence crops. As a result, although most immigrants to the Koshkonong settlement had a general knowledge of agriculture and animal husbandry, few were prepared for the large tracts of land and the large-scale farming required to pay for the purchases and provide for their families. In a rural area with few opportunities for non-agricultural employment, the following scenario became the norm:

The alternative in many instances...was for the immigrant to hire out as a day laborer and work for... an American or Yankee farmer, or an established Norwegian farmer.... Wages, while considered high by the naive immigrants, were slow to accumulate into enough money to make a down payment on a small farm.<sup>28</sup>

This resulting paucity of remunerative opportunities did eventually lead most of the Norwegian immigrants into the production of the two initial crops, timber and tobacco, that had the potential to provide more cash income than possible through day labor wages. In an era when the price of grain crops varied drastically over time and transportation difficulties for bulk commodities might make a grain crop unsalable, a relatively small amount of tobacco could provide a substantial cash infusion. As one researcher summarized the attraction:

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<sup>27</sup> *ibid*, p. 88.

<sup>28</sup> *ibid*, p. 91.



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By the early 1860s, tobacco was being raised by many of the American farmers in the southeastern towns of Dane County....one could expect to earn fifty to 175 dollars per acre. The poor Norwegian immigrant who had no money, no land, and a large family to feed saw tobacco culture as a rare opportunity to not only earn a living, but to buy land and build a home of his own.<sup>29</sup>

As discussed below, tobacco cultivation requires a great deal of highly skilled labor; a farmer undertaking tobacco cultivation can easily lose his investment through slight mistakes or misdiagnoses that would not substantially affect other common agricultural crops. As a result, the Norwegian immigrant who wished to undertake tobacco farming could not hope, and if attempted did not succeed, in teaching him or herself to raise a commercially successful tobacco crop. In order to gain this knowledge, Norwegian immigrants would hire out to American tobacco growers, either as day laborers or as sharemen, agreeing to take a percentage of the crop in return for their labor. Thus, in order to safeguard one's investment, most tobacco farmers would find it in their best interests to teach the details of tobacco cultivation to their Norwegian employees. In this manner, Norwegian farmers gained extensive expertise in tobacco cultivation; as American farmers discontinued tobacco production for reasons discussed below, Norwegians continued to produce the crop.

Between the Civil War and the close of the century, tobacco production in Dane County shifted from a crop produced almost entirely by Americans to a virtually exclusive Norwegian production domain. As late as 1876, the majority of tobacco producers selling their crop in Edgerton, a center of the tobacco trade located in Rock County, were native-born Americans; by 1896 almost all of the producers selling in the Edgerton market were Norwegian.<sup>30</sup> This shift has been attributed to a series of cultural and economic considerations at work during this era that both compelled Americans to quit raising the crop and encouraged Norwegians to expand production. Throughout the late nineteenth century, tobacco proved a highly unstable crop in terms of price commanded, a factor which appears to have encouraged American farmers to shift their interests elsewhere. Successive cycles of high demand and high prices led to massive overproduction, and often crops of lesser quality, which then caused prices to drop. Price drops frequently led to a decline in overall production as farmers transferred their efforts to other interests until higher prices brought on by scarcity caused the cycle to repeat. American farmers in the vicinity also appear to have been among the earliest to pursue commercial dairying via new technologies, such as silage; as will be discussed below, tobacco and dairy production cannot be pursued concurrently without considerable conflict. According to one researcher, however, tobacco's extremely high hand labor demands are likely to have accelerated the removal of native-born Americans from the crop's production: "The most important factor... in the early displacement of the American tobacco grower may have been that he perceived his labor as being worth more than a few cents hour."<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> *ibid*, p. 93-94.

<sup>30</sup> *ibid*, p. 95.

<sup>31</sup> *ibid.*, p. 96.

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For Norwegian farmers, however, the benefits of tobacco production, as well as a differing world view, appears to have encouraged the continuation and expansion of tobacco production. Despite the violent price fluctuations, tobacco continued to hold out the promise of a high return per acre on a relatively low monetary investment. Like most immigrant groups, Norwegian farmers tended to be relatively labor rich, due to their large families and close community ties encouraging labor sharing, and cash poor, having spent most or all of previous savings on immigration, land purchases, and other concerns. From an early date, such immigrant groups tended to develop an expectation of the need to rely on their own labor to meet their needs, rather than purchasing goods. Members of the Norwegian immigrant group in Dane County also appear to have belonged predominately to Protestant Christian sects which placed a strong moral emphasis on self-reliance and a strong work ethic, values which appear to have encouraged the continuance of tobacco production as a means of fostering economic independence and as a crop demanding an enormous amount of personal dedication and perseverance. Moreover, intensive hand labor farming was hardly unfamiliar to the Norwegian immigrant, as most farms in Norway had been too small and too poor to warrant the limited mechanization available at that time. As summarized by the researcher cited previously:

The Norwegians had brought with them from Scandinavia a cultural heritage of intensive agriculture. For generations they had worked on their small fields with hand tools. Field work was a family affair, with women and children joining the men in the fields. The tradition of high labor and low return agriculture...was perceived as an extension of old country agricultural techniques. [The Norwegian farmer's] allegiance to a strong religious work ethic made his efforts a virtue. Thus tobacco culture came to be identified with the qualities of hard work, clever farming techniques, economic independence, and with Norwegians. <sup>32</sup>

As late as 1969, over seventy-five percent of tobacco growers in the Town of Christiana identified themselves as of Norwegian descent.<sup>33</sup>

The amount of acreage dedicated to tobacco in Dane County during the late nineteenth century reflects both the crop's growing popularity and the expansion of the Norwegian Koskonong settlement. From a total of 86 acres produced in 1866, tobacco cultivation expanded to over six thousand acres in 1880, with almost all of that growth having occurred in the late 1870s.<sup>34</sup> As cited previously, tobacco's extremely high labor demands limited most production plots to under 20 acres; expansion of tobacco production was as much or more dictated by limits on available labor as it was on available cleared land. As tobacco production shifted from the native-born

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<sup>32</sup> *ibid*, p. 147-148.

<sup>33</sup> *ibid.*, p. 34.

<sup>34</sup> Hibbard, *op cit.*, p. 175.

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Americans to the Norwegian populations, tobacco production also became concentrated in the southeast corner of the county, within that portion of the well-established Norwegian Koshkonong settlement; by 1898, one-quarter of the county's tobacco was produced in the four southeastern townships, including the Town of Christiana.<sup>35</sup> By 1900 near the peak of tobacco production in Dane County, over 15,000 acres had been planted.<sup>36</sup>

Until the early 1930s, tobacco production in southeastern Dane County continued in much the same manner, undergoing relatively steady growth while periodically being undermined by slumps in price and production. As demand for luxury goods of all sorts plummeted in the early Depression, the price of Dane County tobacco dropped to an all-time low of three cents per pound, forcing most tobacco growers to suspend production.<sup>37</sup> In 1933, the federal Farm Act established an allotment system designed to control the amount of land dedicated to tobacco production, a plan designed to moderate the cyclical price fluctuations by preventing overproduction. Since tobacco allotments were limited, could be discontinued but not created new, and could only be moved from one site to another under extremely limited circumstances, the allotment system substantially changed the economics of tobacco production, although, as discussed below, the actual work of tobacco cultivation had changed little since the late nineteenth century. By the mid-twentieth century, the system had created such demand for allotments that the value of farmland having allotments had increased as much as fifty per cent.<sup>38</sup> The allotment system continues to govern tobacco production as of this writing; the value of such allotments appears to have also contributed to the continuing rural character of the Town of Christiana and its vicinity, despite their relative proximity to the city of Madison, and to the crop's continued cultivation.

#### Tobacco Production: Cultivation and Processing Requirements, Methods and Buildings

As cited previously, tobacco has one of the highest hand labor requirements, and among the most complex cultivation and farmstead processing requirements, of any crop raised in Wisconsin. Although most common Wisconsin crops are cultivated and processed in manners significantly different from earlier eras as a result of new technologies introduced during the crop's cultivation in the state, tobacco cultivation is carried on at present in a manner fundamentally identical to that pursued during the late nineteenth century. Tobacco also

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<sup>35</sup> *ibid.*, p. 160.

<sup>36</sup> Raitz, *op cit.*, p. 100

<sup>37</sup> *ibid.*, p. 159.

<sup>38</sup> *ibid.*, p. 181.

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requires highly specialized buildings for curing and stripping the leaves; these buildings are unique to tobacco production and visually identify a tobacco farm in the same manner as a silo often identifies a dairy farm. The following brief account of tobacco cultivation and processing is given in order to illustrate the essential roles such buildings play in the functioning of a tobacco farm; as will be demonstrated, most historic tobacco sheds on active farms are used in virtually the same manner as when they were constructed.

A tobacco crop is started in a seedling bed, due to the plant's tiny seeds and delicate seedlings, which are unable to withstand less than ideal weather conditions, such as are common to southern Wisconsin in early spring. Such seedbeds are located out of doors, but are placed in a sheltered area and provided with partial protection from the elements. One early twentieth century account recommended that farmers place their seedling beds near the house "as the grower is then able to employ spare hours in weeding and caring for them."<sup>39</sup> By late June, the seedlings have generally developed sufficient hardiness to be transplanted to the field; however, since small plants rather than seeds are being planted, this transferring must be done by hand by laborers who ride on a low trailer behind the tractor. The tractor plows a shallow furrow into which the seedlings must be set, partially covered with soil, and watered upon planting. According to one account, a team of three experienced people, with two planting and one driving, are generally able to plant five acres of tobacco in two full days.<sup>40</sup> The crop must then be cultivated regularly in order to foster the maintenance of soil moisture and to limit the growth of weeds. After the development of the plant's flower, which appears at the top of the plant, the flower must be removed by hand from every plant in the field in order to funnel the plant's nutrients into the leaves, rather than into the seeds which it is attempting to form. After the plant is "topped," the plant grows suckers from the sides of the primary stalk, which if allowed to mature will also produce seeds and lessen the quality of the leaves; every sucker must also be removed from every plant by hand. Harvesting is commenced in approximately late October, shortly after the suckers are removed; each plant must be cut at the base during the midday and laid out to wilt. The plant must be wilted before transporting in order to avoid breaking the leaves, but it cannot be allowed to wilt so much as to make it susceptible to diseases.

When the plants are properly wilted, they are strung on wood laths by their stalks, hung on a specially-designed trailer, and hauled to the curing shed. The curing shed is an essential part of the tobacco operation; much of the final crop's value is affected by proper or improper curing. Tobacco sheds are generally long, narrow buildings, usually over fifty feet long and approximately twenty-five to thirty feet wide, and are of pole or dimension lumber frame with board siding. The siding may be horizontal or vertical; it appears possible, although it is not definitively known, that sheds with horizontal siding may be generally older than those with vertical siding. Regardless of the orientation of the siding, every third board is hinged and can usually be

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<sup>39</sup> J. Johnson, "Tobacco Culture in Wisconsin." Bulletin No. 206, The University of Wisconsin Agricultural Experiment Station (Madison: University of Wisconsin, 1911), p. 18.

<sup>40</sup> *ibid.*, p. 128.

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opened through a series of pulleys and push-bars. Unlike cigarette and other types of tobacco, the Wisconsin-grown cigar wrapper tobaccos are air-cured rather than heat-cured; as a result, the farmer must control and monitor the curing, and ensure that it takes place at the proper speed, strictly by using the hinged siding to allow greater or lesser interaction between the drying and curing tobacco and the outside environment based on prevailing weather conditions:

The farmer regulates the rate that this process takes place [sic] by controlling tobacco shed temperatures and humidity. He manipulates a series of ventilation doors which are opened or closed, depending on atmospheric conditions and the stage of the cure. ... By the end of November, the curing process has usually been completed and the crop is ready to be taken out of the shed and "stripped."<sup>41</sup>

The laths strung with tobacco are hung with leaves pointing down across a series of framework bents arranged on either side of the shed's longitudinal drive. These bents, and as a result the building in which they are hung, are constructed to the dimensions necessary to hang the greatest number of laths possible without the plants being placed too close to each other for the air to circulate properly. Depending on weather conditions, the curing process may last two to three months.

When the leaves are properly cured, the leaves must be stripped from the stalks by hand and carefully packed into crates for sale. There is some evidence that stripping initially took place in the curing shed, however, since stripping generally occurs during the depth of winter, such work in an uninsulated and purposely drafty building was highly uncomfortable. As a result, during the early twentieth century many Wisconsin tobacco farms began to build specialized stripping sheds, which were generally placed as close to the curing sheds as possible and which were substantially constructed and equipped with heating facilities and a drive-in entrance through which the laths could be brought into the work area in the same manner in which they had been moved from field to curing shed. From the stripping shed, packaged tobacco leaves would be transported to the wholesaler.

As is evident, commercial tobacco cultivation is highly labor intensive and requires highly specialized skills and buildings. The curing and stripping sheds, as a result, are essential elements within the tobacco cultivation and processing system, necessary to produce a commercially successful crop. The use and function of curing and stripping sheds are also little changed since the growth period of commercial tobacco production in Wisconsin in the late nineteenth century; the techniques and processes requiring these buildings' uses are almost entirely unaltered. Moreover, the tobacco buildings serve visually as unique and unmistakable identifiers of a tobacco farmstead:

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<sup>41</sup> Raitz, p. 134.

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The tobacco shed provides the basis for recognition of the location of individual tobacco producers....Hart and Mather have pointed out that the form and function of the tobacco shed is very distinctive from that of other buildings.... the tobacco shed lends a distinguishing character to the tobacco farm.<sup>42</sup>

Combination tobacco and dairy farms:

Because of tobacco's labor intensity, Dane County tobacco farmers never raised tobacco exclusively. During the pre-and post-Civil War eras, wheat and subsistence crops dominated the balance of available cleared farmland; the decline of wheat's profitable cultivation in the area, beginning in the decade before the Civil War and becoming an undeniable fact in the decade following the war, led Dane County farmers to experiment with a variety of other potential cash crops, with little overall success. As in much of the southern portion of the state, a period of agricultural turmoil intervened before dairy production became the most prevalent commercial agriculture pursued in Wisconsin. Although still in transition from grain production, many farmers in Dane County had significantly increased their dairy herds by the 1880s. By the 1890s farming in the county centered around dairying. Critical to the increase in dairy production in the area was the growth of markets in butter and cheese, and the availability of rapid transportation of these perishable products to markets. The increase in milk production was closely related to changes in dairy farming. Prior to the late nineteenth century, the majority of cows were allowed to "dry off" during the winter, in part due to the perception that it would reduce feed consumption. In order to feed cows all winter long, a method of safely storing silage was needed. Initially stored in pits covered with earth, the storing of silage gained popularity beginning in the 1870s, based on studies and the subsequent bulletins published by the Wisconsin Agricultural Experiment Station. Pit silos gave way to square, above ground silos, which in turn evolved into the round forms used today. The first above-ground silo to be built in Wisconsin was erected in 1880 by Dr. L.W. Weeks of Oconomowac.<sup>43</sup> Thus, the large barn on the Bedrud-Olson Farmstead contains one of the earliest instances of above ground silos in Wisconsin and the barn itself dates from a period when the region was making a transition to dairy farming.

Beginning with the popularization of the silo during the 1880s, a period which also saw the beginnings of efforts to disseminate information about scientific dairy farming methods and buildings, the raising of dairy cows and the sale of milk to creameries and cheese factories gradually became the state's dominant agricultural industry. Commercial dairying was generally first embraced by native-born American farmers and members of the earliest established ethnic groups, who tended to have more available capital to invest in the specialized structures, stock and equipment necessary for commercial dairy production. Although some individual Norwegians of the Koshkonong settlement appear to have converted their primary production to dairy at an early date, dairying did not become the primary agricultural industry in the vicinity as early as in many other

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<sup>42</sup> Raitz, p. 10

<sup>43</sup>N.S. Fish, "The History of the Silo in Wisconsin," Wisconsin Magazine of History 18(December 1924): 162.

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portions of Dane County; as late as 1894 the heavily Norwegian Town of Christiana was not considered a notable center of either dairy or mixed farming.<sup>44</sup>

By the early 1900s, however, Norwegian farmers were generally regarded as pursuing dairy farming. As with tobacco, the generally large size of Norwegian families provided a significant advantage, eliminating much of the potential need for hired farm help. Dairying also offered a much more stable income base, as milk was seldom subject to the violent fluctuations in price common to tobacco. A contemporary surveyor in 1904 echoed the considerable value placed on dairying's consistency in contrast to tobacco's volatility:

(D)airying is self-sustaining; there is no constant nightmare of over-production, or fear that the addition of a new island to the flag, or the change in the political complexion of Congress will pauperize those depending on its prosperity. To the anxiety of tobacco growers over tariff and frost, and hail, and drought, the dairyman is almost a stranger....Dairying is here to stay. If it does not offer as many possibilities for sudden wealth as does tobacco, it is less of a lottery, and has fewer failures charged to its account.<sup>45</sup>

However, as discussed previously, the majority of farmers of the Koshkonong settlement continued to produce tobacco as a small but personally valued and potentially lucrative crop during and following the transition of their farmland to dairy production. This combination was inherently problematic; the demand of the two crops for the farm family's time and resources are frequently in direct conflict. Both types of agriculture demand attention at nearly the same time of year; for example, several crops for cattle feed and silage must be harvested at approximately the same time as tobacco, and the sowing of cattle feed crops and the starting and tending of the tobacco seedling beds also must occur at approximately the same time. Additionally, tobacco has much higher nutrient requirements than many crops, with the result that, "[i]n an effort to keep fertility high and to secure as high value per acres for his crops as possible, the tobacco farmer would have to use all available animal manure on the land to be planted to tobacco, while the rest of the farm crops went unfertilized."<sup>46</sup> Another source estimated that each acre of tobacco required between twenty-five and one hundred loads of manure per year, an amount that, given the relatively small size of dairy herds of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, would have left virtually nothing to fertilize the crops grown for the cows' consumption.<sup>47</sup> The resulting preferential treatment of tobacco crops over those related to dairy production has plagued farmers of the two crops to this date; the continuance of this crop in the face of this conflict is likely to result from both cultural values and from the effects of the tobacco allotment system on the crop's level of demand.

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<sup>44</sup> Hibbard, *op cit.*, p. 179

<sup>45</sup> *ibid.*, 180.

<sup>46</sup> Raitz, *op cit.*, p. 124.

<sup>47</sup> Hibbard, *op cit.*, 163.

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The Bedrud-Olson Farmstead contains the building types necessary and related to the production of dairy and tobacco. The close dates of construction of the agricultural buildings further indicate that both forms of farming were practiced simultaneously during the history of the farm. For dairy production the farm needed a dairy barn to house the cows and a milkhouse to store the milk. The large barn, built in 1883, is notable because of its extant interior silos. The silos may be some of the earliest above ground silos in the state, indicating an interest in modern and scientific dairying practices. For the curing and processing of tobacco, the farm had tobacco sheds (those extant dating from the 1880s and 1890) and a stripping shed (1910). The long tobacco sheds were used for the curing of the tobacco, while in the stripping shed the dried leaves were removed from their stalks.

Summary of Bedrud-Olson Farmstead Significance:

As cited previously, and as indicated by the preceding discussion, the Bedrud-Olson farmstead may be considered a highly intact and unusually early example of a unique type of farmstead common to the Koshkonong settlement area of Dane, Jefferson and Rock counties. Such farms played a pivotal role in the cultural and economic life of the area; the historic production of both tobacco and dairy is closely tied to several significant elements of the community's social, cultural and economic development during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The cultivation of tobacco and the construction of building types specific to tobacco production represents the continuance of a substantial body of knowledge acquired by Norwegian immigrants from earlier settlers; such knowledge led to the cultivation of a crop that frequently provided a significant portion of an immigrant family's cash income in an era when such income generally proved difficult to access. Tobacco's continuance through the Bedrud-Olson Farmstead's period of significance also indicates the crop's continuing economic benefits following the period of settlement, as well as a set of cultural values attached to the cultivation of tobacco as a result of the expertise and diligent labor required. The Bedrud-Olson Farmstead's dairy buildings represent a locally early effort to engage in an industry that became the predominant agricultural pursuit in Wisconsin during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and includes, in light of the local context, relatively early applications of dairying technology, such as the silos and the gravity drainage systems. Finally, the combination of tobacco and dairy cultivation embodied by the Bedrud-Olson Farmstead represents a unique farm type found in a relatively small portion of Dane County, and in few other places in the state. As a result, the Bedrud-Olson Farmstead is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places as a fine example of a unique and historically significant property type.

**Context:**

As stated previously, combination tobacco and dairy farms, readily identifiable by the presence of dairy barns and silos, as well as curing and stripping sheds, appear to constitute the most prevalent property type in the Town of Christiana. A windshield survey of the town, however, discovered no farmsteads which may be considered to provide a direct context for the Bedrud-Olson Farmstead. Although many farms had tobacco sheds which may date from approximately the period of those on the Bedrud-Olson Farmstead, all of the farms noted included either newer dairy barns, as evidenced by the buildings' proportions and roof form, and/or external Harvestore,



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Section 8 Page 14  
Bedrud-Olson Farmstead, Town of Christiana, Dane County, WI.

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poured concrete or other later external silos. Additionally, few farmsteads were noted of any historic vintage which had not undergone significant non-historic alterations to the farm house and/or the agricultural outbuildings. Such alterations to houses included non-historic additions, non-historic siding, and wholesale window replacement; alterations to farm outbuildings generally consisted of non-historic additions and the addition of non-historic buildings; several dairy barns and a few tobacco sheds had also been covered with non-historic siding. Accordingly, the Bedrud-Olson farmstead may be considered to be the only known farmstead in the Town of Christiana which retains a full complement of buildings dating from the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and retains a high level of integrity in terms of individual buildings and the farmstead as a whole.

**Conclusion:**

The Bedrud-Olson Farmstead is eligible for the National Register of Historic Place under Criterion C as an excellent example of an early combination tobacco and dairy farm, a type which historically predominated in small portions of Wisconsin and which was the most common historic farm type in the Town of Christiana, Dane County. The Bedrud-Olson Farmstead retains a full complement of agricultural outbuildings dating from the early period of the introduction of dairying to the farms of this vicinity; both the individual buildings and the farmstead as a whole retain a high level of integrity, as there have been few alterations and no additions of buildings or structures post-dating the period of significance. As a result, the Bedrud-Olson Farmstead is considered eligible for the National Register of Historic Places as an excellent example of its property type.

**Archeological Potential:**

There is no known evidence of pre-historic or historic Native American occupation or use of the site. The nominated property has functioned as a farmstead for over one hundred and fifty years; it is possible, although not known, that archeological resources pertaining to the property's farm heritage may be extant on the site.

Bedrud-Olson Farm stead  
Name of Property

Dane / Wisconsin  
County and State

**9. Major Bibliographic References**

**Bibliography**

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

**Previous Documentation on File (NPS):**

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_

**Primary location of additional data:**

- State Historic Preservation Office
  - Other State Agency
  - Federal Agency
  - Local government
  - University
  - Other
- Name of repository:  
Notstad family

**10. Geographical Data**

**Acreage of Property** three acres

**UTM References** (Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

- |   |                            |
|---|----------------------------|
| 1. <u>11/6/ 13/2/9/7/3/0/</u> <u>14/7/5/7/ 5/2/0/</u> | 3.                         |
| Zone Easting      Northing                            | Zone Easting      Northing |
| 2.  | 4.                         |
| Zone Easting      Northing                            | Zone Easting      Northing |
| <u>see continuation sheet</u>                         |                            |

**Verbal Boundary Description** (Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet)

**Boundary Justification** (Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet)

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title Della G. Rucker  
Organization Rucker Historical Research Date April 10, 1998  
street & number P.O. Box 204 Telephone 920/432-7044  
city or town Green Bay State WI Zip Code 54305-0204

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National Park Service

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Continuation Sheet

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Bedrud-Olson Farmstead, Town of Christiana, Dane County, WI.

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Major Bibliographical References:

- Hibbard, Benjamin Horace. History of Agriculture in Dane County. Bulletin of the University of Wisconsin No. 101, Economics and Political Science Series. University of Wisconsin, Madison, 1904.
- History of Dane County, Biographical and Genealogical. Madison: Western Historical Association, 1906.
- Ibarra, Robert Antonio. Ethnicity Genuine and Spurious: A Study of A Norwegian Community in Rural Wisconsin. Ph.D. Thesis, University of Wisconsin-Madison, 1976.
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- Lampard, Eric E. The Rise of the Dairy Industry in Wisconsin: A Study in Agricultural Change 1820-1920. State Historical Society of Wisconsin, Madison, 1963.
- Land contract, document number 1477575, Estate of Henry M. Olson and Martin Olson to Orlon R. Notstad, July 6, 1976.
- Ligowsky, A. Map of Dane County, Wisconsin. Madison: A. Ligowsky, 1861.
- Madison, Dane County and Surrounding Towns. Madison: William J. Park & Co., 1877.
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- Wyatt, Barbara, ed. Cultural Resource Management in Wisconsin. Volume 2. Madison: State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1986.

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Section 10 Page 1 Bedrud-Olson Farmstead, Town of Christiana, Dane County, WI

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Boundary Description:

The nominated property is defined as follows:

That portion of the northwestern quarter of the southwestern quarter of Section 28 and that portion of the southwestern quarter of the southwestern quarter of Section 28, Town 6 North of Range 12 East, Town of Christiana, Dane County, falling within the boundaries described as follows:

All those buildings, lands and other resources falling within a rectangular parcel bounded as follows: to the east by the border between east and west half of the Southwest Quarter of Section 28; to the west by a straight line extending due north-south and intersecting a point located fifteen feet due west of the southwest corner of the Stripping Shed located on said property; to the south by a straight line extending due east-west and intersecting a point lying fifty feet due south of the southwestern corner of the Dairy Barn located on said property; and to the north by a line extending due east-west and intersecting a point located twenty feet due north of the northernmost corner of the northernmost Curing shed associated with said property.

Boundary Justification:

The above boundaries incorporate all of the built resources historically associated with the farmstead's buildings, occupation and non-field activities. The boundaries are drawn as such to exclude unimproved agricultural fields belonging to the farm and located to the west, north and south of the area incorporated into the boundaries described above; the boundaries are drawn as such to exclude property belonging to another body of ownership and having no direct historic association with the nominated property to the east.

**Bedrud-Olson Farmstead**

Name of Property

**Dane / Wisconsin**

County and State

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**Additional Documentation**

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Submit the following items with the completed form:

**Continuation Sheets**

**Maps**

A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A **sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

**Photographs** Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

**Additional Items** (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

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**Property Owner**

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name James Notstad

street & number 5217 Tonyawatha Trl.

telephone (608) 221-8116

city or town Madison state WI zip code 53716

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form.

Direct

comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget,

Paperwork

Reductions Projects, (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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Continuation Sheet

Section Photos Page 1 Bedrud- Olson Farmstead, Town of Christiana, Dane County, WI.

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**Photo #1 of 17**

BEDRUD -OLSON FARMSTEAD  
Town of Christiana, Dane County, WI  
Photo by D.G. Rucker, August 26, 1997  
Negative at State Historical Society of Wisconsin  
Barn, view looking south.

**Photo #2 of 17**

BEDRUD -OLSON FARMSTEAD  
Town of Christiana, Dane County, WI  
Photo by D.G. Rucker, August 26, 1997  
Negative at State Historical Society of Wisconsin  
Barn, view looking south, eastern portion.

**Photo #3 of 17**

BEDRUD -OLSON FARMSTEAD  
Town of Christiana, Dane County, WI  
Photo by D.G. Rucker, August 26, 1997  
Negative at State Historical Society of Wisconsin  
Barn, view looking south, center portion.

**Photo #4 of 17**

BEDRUD -OLSON FARMSTEAD  
Town of Christiana, Dane County, WI  
Photo by D.G. Rucker, August 26, 1997  
Negative at State Historical Society of Wisconsin  
Barn, view looking southeast, westerly portion.

**Photo #5 of 17**

BEDRUD -OLSON FARMSTEAD  
Town of Christiana, Dane County, WI  
Photo by D.G. Rucker, August 26, 1997  
Negative at State Historical Society of Wisconsin  
Barn, west facade, view looking southeast.

**Photo #6 of 17**

BEDRUD -OLSON FARMSTEAD  
Town of Christiana, Dane County, WI  
Photo by D.G. Rucker, August 26, 1997  
Negative at State Historical Society of Wisconsin  
Barn, east facade, view looking southwest.

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Section Photos Page 2 Bedrud- Olson Farmstead, Town of Christiana, Dane County, WI.

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**Photo #7 of 17**

BEDRUD -OLSON FARMSTEAD  
Town of Christiana, Dane County, WI  
Photo by D.G. Rucker, August 26, 1997  
Negative at State Historical Society of Wisconsin  
Barn, south facade, view looking northwest.

**Photo #8 of 17**

BEDRUD- OLSON FARMSTEAD  
Town of Christiana, Dane County, WI  
Photo by D.G. Rucker, August 26, 1997  
Negative at State Historical Society of Wisconsin  
Barn, interior, view looking east.

**Photo #9 of 17**

BEDRUD-OLSON FARMSTEAD  
Town of Christiana, Dane County, WI  
Photo by D.G. Rucker, August 26, 1997  
Negative at State Historical Society of Wisconsin  
Barn, interior, view of west silo.

**Photo #10 of 17**

BEDRUD-OLSON FARMSTEAD  
Town of Christiana, Dane County, WI  
Photo by D.G. Rucker, August 26, 1997  
Negative at State Historical Society of Wisconsin  
Southernmost curing shed, looking east.

**Photo #11 of 17**

BEDRUD-OLSON FARMSTEAD  
Town of Christiana, Dane County, WI  
Photo by D.G. Rucker, August 26, 1997  
Negative at State Historical Society of Wisconsin  
Center curing shed, view looking southeast.

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Section Photos Page 3 Bedrud- Olson Farmstead, Town of Christiana, Dane County, WI.

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**Photo #12 of 17**

BEDRUD- OLSON FARMSTEAD  
Town of Christiana, Dane County, WI  
Photo by D.G. Rucker, August 26, 1997  
Negative at State Historical Society of Wisconsin  
Northernmost curing shed, view looking north.

**Photo #13 of 17**

BEDRUD-OLSON FARMSTEAD  
Town of Christiana, Dane County  
Photo by D.G. Rucker, August 26, 1997  
Negative at State Historical Society of Wisconsin  
Interior center curing shed, view looking east.

**Photo #14 of 17**

BEDRUD-OLSON FARMSTEAD  
Town of Christiana, Dane County  
Photo by D.G. Rucker, August 26, 1997  
Negative at State Historical Society of Wisconsin  
Stripping shed, view looking northwest.

**Photo #13 of 17**

BEDRUD-OLSON FARMSTEAD  
Town of Christiana, Dane County  
Photo by D.G. Rucker, August 26, 1997  
Negative at State Historical Society of Wisconsin  
House, view looking north.

**Photo #16 of 17**

BEDRUD-OLSON FARMSTEAD  
Town of Christiana, Dane County  
Photo by D.G. Rucker, August 26, 1997  
Negative at State Historical Society of Wisconsin  
Garage, looking northwest.

**Photo #17 of 17**

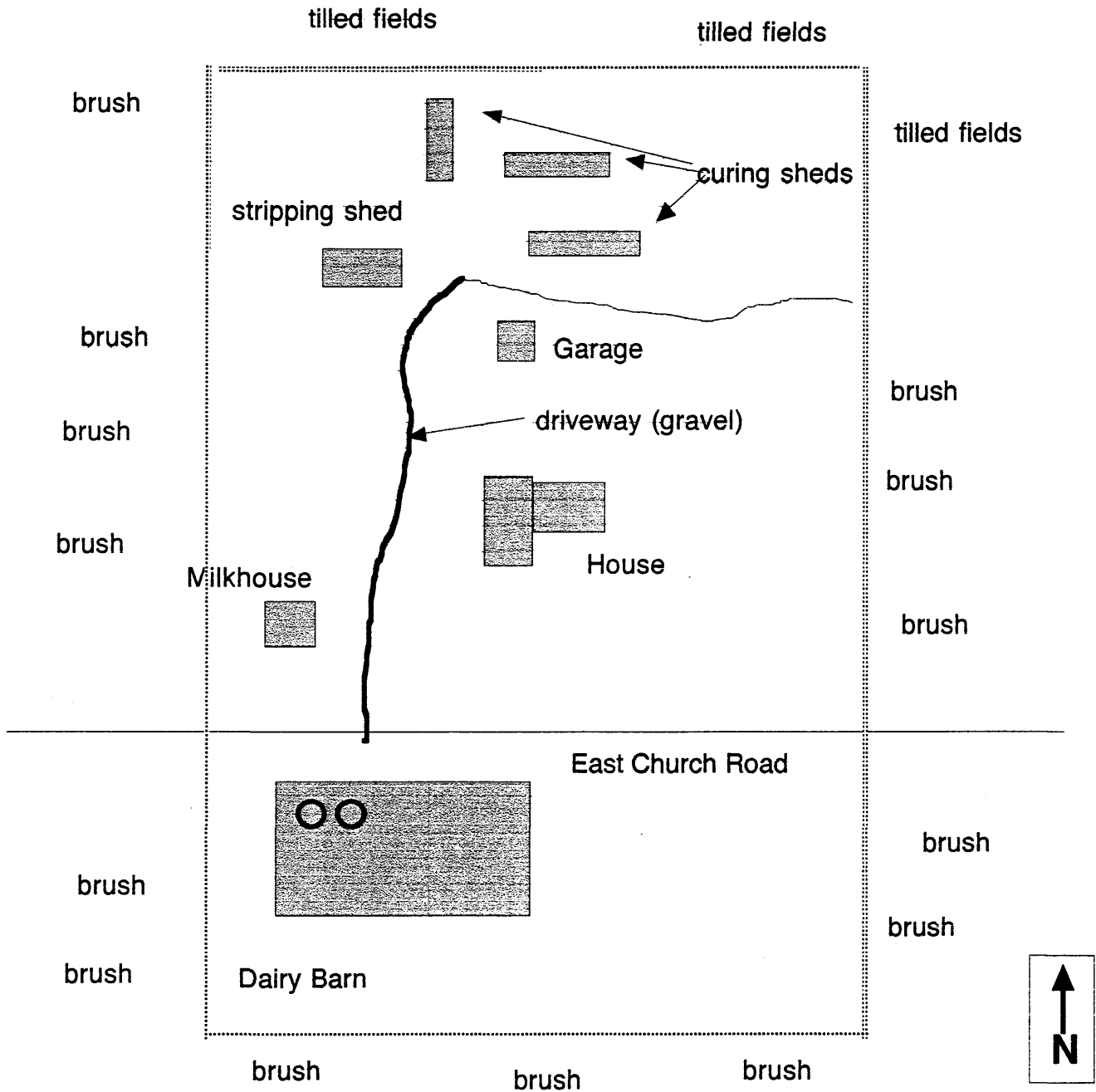
BEDRUD-OLSON FARMSTEAD  
Town of Christiana, Dane County  
Photo by D.G. Rucker, August 26, 1997  
Negative at State Historical Society of Wisconsin  
Milkhouse, looking west.



National Register of Historic Places  
 Site Map  
**BEDRUD-OLSON FARMSTEAD**  
 Not to scale

996 E. Church Road  
 Town of Christiana, Dane County , WI  
 Owner: James Notstad

All buildings are contributing



Site is bounded to east, west and south by brush and to north by tilled fields.

Dotted line represents approximate boundaries of nominated property; see verbal boundary description for measurements