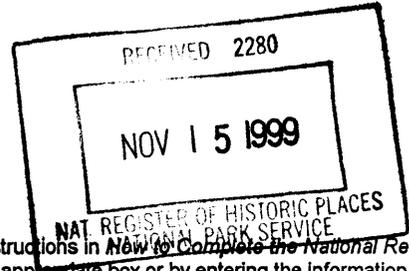


United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form



1570

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *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 Feller, Robert William Andrew, Farmstead

other names/site number _____

2. Location

street & number 2965 340th Trail N/A not for publication

city or town Van Meter vicinity

state Iowa code IA county Dallas code 049 zip code 50261

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this 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 meets does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide locally. (see continuation sheet for additional comments).

Patricia Skelton DSHPO 11-3-99
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF IOWA

State or Federal agency and bureau

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. See continuation sheet.
- determined eligible for the National Register. See continuation sheet.
- determined not eligible for the National Register.
- removed from the National Register.
- other, (explain:)

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

Linda McClelland

12/17/99

Feller Farmstead
Name of Property

Dallas County, Iowa
County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

Category of Property
(Check only one box)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>3</u>	<u>0</u>	buildings
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	sites
		structures
		objects
<u>4</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

N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC/single dwelling

AGRICULTURE/SUBSISTENCE/animal facility/barn

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC/single dwelling

AGRICULTURE/SUBSISTENCE/animal facility/barn

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

LATE 19TH and EARLY 20TH CENTURY REVIVALS/

Tudor Revival

OTHER: Heavy Timber Frame

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation CONCRETE

walls BRICK

roof ASBESTOS

other _____

Narrative Description

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

Feller Farmstead
Name of Property

Dallas County, Iowa
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 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.)

Property is:

- 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.

Narrative Statement of Significance

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

9. Major Bibliographical 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 # _____

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

ARCHITECTURE

ENTERTAINMENT/RECREATION

Period of Significance

1918-1949

Significant Dates

1918

1940

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

Feller, Robert William Andrew

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder

Normile, John

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository:

Feller Farmstead
Name of Property

Dallas County, Iowa
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 1.2 acres

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	[1]5	[4]2[4]1[8]0	[4]5[9]9[5]8[0]	2	[1]5	[4]2[4]2[9]0	[4]5[9]9[5]8[0]
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
3	[1]5	[4]2[4]1[8]0	[4]5[9]9[5]3[0]	4	[1]5	[4]2[4]2[9]0	[4]5[9]9[5]3[0]
							<input type="checkbox"/> See continuation sheet

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 Leah D. Rogers/Consultant

organization _____ date October 30, 1999

street & number 217 NW 5th Street telephone 319-895-8330

city or town Mt. Vernon state IA zip code 52314

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the complete 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)

Property Owner

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

name Jose and Jeanie Angel

street & number 2965 340th Trail telephone 515-987-2285

city or town Adel state IA zip code 50003

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.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service****National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**Section number 7 Page 1**Feller Farmstead
Dallas County, Iowa****Narrative Description**

The Robert William Andrew Feller Farmstead is located 2.5 miles east-northeast of the town of Van Meter in Dallas County, Iowa, on an interfluvial summit overlooking a small creek that drains into the Raccoon River one mile south of the property. The farmstead buildings are on the south side of what is now known as 340th Trail, with both the house and barn facing the roadway. The barn is the older of the two primary buildings on this farmstead having been built in 1886 by Robert Feller's grandfather. The house was begun in 1939 and completed in 1940 as a home for Robert Feller's parents and sister. Both the house and barn are contributing to the farmstead district as are the site where Robert Feller learned to pitch under the tutelage of his father and a livestock loafing shed built by the Feller family in the early twentieth century. The pitching site is the southwest corner of the barn yard. The only other extant building on the farmstead is a small veterinary clinic built after 1949 by a subsequent owner of the property after the Feller family. The clinic is located outside of the National Register nomination boundaries for the farmstead district.

The barn was built in 1886 by Andrew Feller, grandfather of Hall-of-Fame baseball legend, Robert William Andrew Feller, or Bob Feller as he is better known. The barn is situated at the east edge of the farmstead and is banked into the slope. It is a basement barn with a front-gabled orientation. A limestone and earthen ramp, now covered with earth and gravel, provides access to the south gable end door, while the north gable end door is at ground level and abuts the east-west roadway. The gabled roof is covered with wood shingles, with the walls clad with vertical board-and-batten siding, much of which was replaced or repaired during a recent refurbishment of the building. The foundation walls are of rough-cut local stone laid in irregular courses. A metal aerator is on the roof ridge having replaced a cupola in the 1980s after the cupola had deteriorated and fallen off the roof. The present owners reconstructed the original cupola in the summer of 1999. The windows in each gable end are 4/4 double-hungs. The doors at each gable end are wooden sliding doors.

The interior of the barn shows a heavy timber frame construction using sawn posts and beams of native timber milled locally. The bent configuration is a simple bent with a single, spliced horizontal beam supported by four vertical posts that also support three loft levels, the center loft level being higher than the two flanking loft floors. The rafters are supported by a single set of purlins that are supported by vertical struts that are, in turn, braced with angle braces to the horizontal beam. The joinery is pegged, mortise-and-tenon. The interior plan of both the upper level and the basement level are largely original to its construction and include horse stalls on the basement level, with the upper level having bins for oats and corn on the west side and storage space for lumber and machinery along the east side. A work bench area is in the southwest corner, with the central aisle spanning the building and used for movement of hay into and out of the building.

The house was built in 1939-1940 by Robert Feller for his parents, William A. and Lena Feller, and his sister, Marguerite. Bob Feller hired Des Moines architect, John Normile, to design a comfortable but stylish home for the family. Bob Feller's success as a major league baseball pitcher for the Cleveland Indians funded the project. The house is designed in an eclectic style, specifically a design influenced by the Tudor Revival style of architecture then popular in the United States (McAlester and McAlester 1998:355). While lacking in some of the common traits of the Tudor Revival, such as the faux half-timbering and stucco wall cladding, the Feller house does have the steeply pitched gabled roof, polychrome brick wall cladding, casement windows, and round-arched doorways typical of this style. The front entry vestibule is the only area where the use of timbers and brick infill evokes the fachwerk look of the high-style Tudor Revival. The steeply pitched roof is covered with asbestos shingles and curves slightly at the eaves. Hipped dormers grace the roof slope, while some are shed-roofed wall dormers that pierce the roof eaves. Other details of note include the copper gutters and downspouts, the sunroom on the east end, and the decorative metal fence that encloses the rear courtyard off the southeast corner of the house. An attached garage was part of the original house design. The exterior has been little modified since first built in 1940. The only modification of note is the construction of a breakfast nook off the rear (south side) of the kitchen on the first floor. This addition has a shed roof that echoes design elements of the original house and is considered a sympathetic addition to the house.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 7 Page 2

**Feller Farmstead
Dallas County, IA**

The interior of the house has also remained largely unchanged except for the kitchen, which was enlarged and completely remodeled in recent years. Otherwise, the first floor retains the original living room, sun porch, dining room, study and entry hall. Details of note include the woodwork, the paneled wall and fireplace at the east end of the living room, most of the original doors and light fixtures, and the walnut staircase leading to the second floor. The second floor features three bedrooms, two bathrooms, and a recreation room.

The livestock loafing shed is a long, rectangular side-gabled pole building that has a sheet metal roof, vertical board siding and a concrete foundation. It is open on the south side and is situated downslope but next to the barn. It was built in the early twentieth century by the Feller family and bears the inscribed initials of Bob Feller on the interior. Because it was built within the period of significance by the Fellers, this building is considered contributing to the property.

The contributing site to this property is the location where Bob Feller practiced pitching with his father. This location is off the southwest corner of the barn and was originally demarcated with a pitching rubber, with Bob standing up near the barn and throwing downslope slightly to his father at the south edge of the barn yard by a fence. While the pitching rubber is no longer there, the space is still maintained and has not been impacted by construction or other activities. As such, this location is considered a contributing site to the property because of the significance of Bob Feller's early home training to his later major league career. The barn itself was also used for pitching practice during the winter months (Cleveland Indians Baseball Company 1956).

The only other extant building on the present farmstead is a small veterinary clinic built by a former owner, Dr. Dale E. Briley, for his practice in the 1970s-1980s. The clinic is situated downslope to the southwest of the house outside of the district boundaries. It is a small, one-story gabled building, with a wood-shingled roof, horizontal board siding, and a concrete foundation. Because this building is situated outside of the district boundaries it is not counted as a building in this nomination. Furthermore, it has no association with the Feller family and would not contribute to the farmstead district.

Other buildings, now non-extant on the farm property included a garage, the original house, and a number of agricultural outbuildings including a hired hand's house, smokehouse, icehouse, chicken house, hog house, granary, machine shed, corncrib, and a cattle barn. Most of these buildings were located south and southwest of the house and barn yard area and were outside of the nominated farmstead boundaries. The older house was the boyhood home of Bob Feller and had been the home of first his grandparents and then his parents. Part of this house had been built in the 1870s and was later added onto. It was moved and later demolished when the new house, the extant house on this property, was completed in 1940. The old house stood in the east side yard between the extant house and barn. The garage once stood along the west edge of the barnyard. Both the old house and the garage locations were within the boundaries of the nominated property.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service****National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**Section number 8 Page 3**Feller Farmstead
Dallas County, IA****Statement of Significance**

The Robert William Andrew Feller Farmstead in Dallas County, Iowa, is significant at the local and statewide levels under Criterion B as the boyhood home and training ground for Baseball Hall of Fame pitcher, Bob Feller. While Mr. Feller is still living, his achievements in the field of baseball are of exceptional significance and his induction in the Hall of Fame insures that his importance will withstand the test of time. The Feller farmstead is the place where Bob Feller grew up and where he learned to pitch under his father's tutelage. The farmstead is also significant for its reflection of Bob Feller's phenomenal success as a young baseball player in the major leagues when he was among a handful of star players that earned previously unheard of salaries for their play. Because of his success, Bob Feller was able to commission and build a fine new home for his parents, a comfortable place where they could live out their lives. This was particularly meaningful for Bob's father who was dying of brain cancer and would live in the house for only three years before his passing in 1943. His mother continued to live in the house until her death in 1954. The house, completed in 1940, was designed by Des Moines architect, John Normile, who was then building editor for *Better Homes and Gardens* magazine. It was built in the popular eclectic Tudor Revival style of the day and is considered significant under Criterion C for its reflection of Bob Feller's career success and for its representation of a notable residential design by a respected architect of the day. Bob Feller lived in this house during the off-season of 1940 and 1941 until the war years of 1941-44. He visited often after he returned from the war. In addition to the house, the farmstead includes a barn built by Bob Feller's grandfather in 1886 and used for foul-weather pitching practice by Bob and his father; the site in the barnyard where Bob practiced long hours pitching with his father; and a loafing shed next to the barn built by the Fellers in the early twentieth century. The barn, house, pitching site, and loafing shed are all considered contributing components to the farmstead district. The period of significance for the farmstead is from 1918, when Bob Feller was born, until 1949, the 50-year cut-off date for inclusion in the National Register. Bob Feller did not sell the farmstead until 1955; however, it had been leased out for a time after his mother had passed away in 1954.

Robert (Bob) William Andrew Feller was born on November 3, 1918, to William A. and Lena C. Feller at the family's farmstead near Van Meter, Iowa. The farmstead had been owned by the Feller family since 1866 when Bob Feller's grandparents, Andrew and Elizabeth Feller, purchased the NE1/4, NW1/4 of Section 24, T78N-R27W, in Dallas County, Iowa, on January 5, 1866. The previous owner had been F.M. and Nettie Lefler. Andrew and Elizabeth had three children: Emma (Miller), Ida, and William A. Feller. Andrew Feller died in 1897, with Elizabeth deeding the property to son, William A. in 1927. William and his wife, Lena, had two children: Robert William Andrew, the subject of this nomination, and Marguerite E. (Goodson).

Early in his youth, Bob Feller showed a talent for the game of baseball, an interest and a skill that was encouraged and nurtured by his father, who went so far as to build a ball field on part of the Feller property for his son and town teams to play on—perhaps the original "Field of Dreams"—and to switch his crops from corn to wheat because the earlier harvest for wheat allowed Bob more time to play ball. In his own words, Bob Feller has described his attraction to baseball:

It has always seemed such a natural marriage—baseball and me. I've been pitching at every age, as a major league rookie who broke in when Joe DiMaggio did, 1936, when I was 17, to today as a 71-year-old still pitching in Old Timers Games. From the day Dad gave me a real baseball uniform from a mail order house in Chicago back in 1928, I've never wanted to do anything else, whether I was seven or 70 or in between (Feller and Gilbert 1990:15).

The ball field that his father built was complete with diamond, bleachers, scoreboard, refreshment stand and restrooms. His father bought all the equipment and uniforms and named the park and the team Oakview "because of the oak timber between our ballpark on top of the hill and the Raccoon River a mile away" (Feller and Gilbert 1990:35). Teams were formed and games were played every Sunday all summer long. Crowds of 200-300 or more people came to watch the games. Unfortunately, the location of the baseball field to the east of the barn is no longer part of the farm property and has been plowed under and overgrown for years. However, the location where Bob and his dad practiced long hours of pitching is still

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 4

**Feller Farmstead
Dallas County, IA**

part of the farm property and is situated in the southwest corner of the barn yard. While the pitching rubber is no longer there, the space and the terrain has not changed.

The family first noticed Bob's enthusiasm for throwing a ball when he was five years old and his father would roll a rubber ball to Bob, and he would "fire it back to him—or into the wall" (Feller and Gilbert 1990:32). He must have come by his skills naturally because his grandfather on his mother's side "was known as one of the best pitchers in the area" (ibid.:33). His parents enjoyed his love of the game and encouraged him to pursue it, "and they never got after [him] for things like painting a batter's box on the sidewalk in front of the house so [he] could practice different batting stances and grow up to hit .400 like [his] idol, Rogers Hornsby" (ibid.:32). As he grew, Bob's love of baseball grew as well.

Winter or summer, baseball was always high on my list of things to do. I played every chance I got, on teams, with Dad and by myself. If I didn't have a game, I'd play catch with Dad and practice my pitching, fielding and hitting. If Dad wasn't around, I'd do simulations as if I were really pitching so I could keep my arm muscles in shape and sharpen my reflexes at the same time. If it was winter, Dad and I would put jackets on and head for the barn to play catch (Feller and Gilbert 1990:34-35).

Feller started out as a shortstop when he was 12 years old and playing for the sixth grade team. But his father saw in him a pitcher and encouraged Bob in that direction. Bob resisted at first but eventually was won over and began pitching for the Oakview team as well as for the American Legion team in Adel. "So in the spring of 1934, when I was 15, I became a pitcher and the world lost a player who I thought was a promising shortstop and hitter" (Feller and Gilbert 1990:36). However, he was fast becoming an impressive pitcher racking up wins and statistics that made him a local celebrity. His fame grew to the point that one day, while he and his dad were working in the wheat field, Cy Slapnicka, a scout for the Cleveland Indians came visiting. Slapnicka was able to sign Feller to a contract making it legal with his father's signature as legal guardian. However, because Bob wanted to continue to play high school baseball and basketball the contract was for \$1.00 and kept "top secret" (ibid.:38).

That turned out to be a stroke of genius. A year later, a bit of trouble flared up, caused by some people who saw me continue to progress and wanted to break my connection with the Indians. It became a big news story, even involving the Commissioner of Baseball, Kenesaw Mountain Landis, but we knew that we held all the cards, thanks to that \$1.00 contract (Feller and Gilbert 1990:38).

It nearly cost him his amateur status with the Van Meter school teams; however, a hearing held in Des Moines ruled in Feller's favor.

Feller's big break came in the summer of 1936 when, on summer vacation following his junior year in high school, Bob pitched his first games for the Cleveland Indians without having to first pitch in the minor leagues.

When I came home to that welcome from the mayor and the governor after winning five games for the Indians and breaking the American League record for strikeouts in a single game, the dream went on, but not for long (Feller and Gilbert 1990:41).

Once again, his contract status with the Indians was challenged as invalid because they had signed and played him directly off the sandlots bypassing the minor leagues, which then had territorial rights to all amateurs. However, technically he was signed to play for the minor league Fargo-Moorhead team and then the New Orleans Pelicans, but through a contract transfer Slapnicka was able to bring him right up to the major leagues. Commissioner Landis eventually ruled in Feller's and the Indian's favor, and thus truly began Bob Feller's long and illustrious career with the Cleveland Indians.

Bob became known as "Rapid Robert" for his skill in setting down hitters in successive strikeouts. He became the winningest pitcher in the game achieving 24, 27, and 25 victories in the years leading up to World War II. In 1938 he was the

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service****National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**Section number 8 Page 5**Feller Farmstead
Dallas County, IA**

first modern pitcher to strike out 18 men in a nine-inning game. In 1940 he performed the yet unsurpassed feat of pitching a no-hitter on opening day of the baseball season. Then at the height of his career, Bob answered the call to serve his country in World War II, carving nearly four vital years out of his baseball career (Davis 1959, 1970).

Feller was on his way from Van Meter to Chicago to negotiate his 1942 season contract with the Indians on Sunday, December 7, 1941, when news of the attack on Pearl Harbor prompted Bob to enlist immediately in the Navy. "So I left my family and my six-figure income and became a chief petty officer at \$80 a month and all the 'chow' I could eat" (Feller and Gilbert 1990:116). He served on the U.S.S. Alabama first in the North Atlantic and then in the South Pacific.

Bob survived the war, but his father did not. William Feller died in January 1943 having fought brain cancer for six years.

While I was home on emergency leave for the funeral, I took a walk alone out to the wheat field. I looked at Oakview Park and saw it all again—Dad and me building it with our own hands and hearts 11 years before. It seemed so much longer than that. It wasn't really Oakview Park any more. It was becoming a cow pasture again (Feller and Gilbert 1990:118).

Feller was discharged from the Navy in August 1945 and he was "rarin' to go" play baseball once again (ibid.:120). People expressed doubt that he could come back after so long an absence and so hard a combat experience. However, once again Feller prevailed and virtually picked up his career with the Indians where he left off.

When he retired from the game in 1956 at the age of 37, Bob Feller had amassed career statistics that ensured his induction into the Baseball Hall of Fame the first year of his eligibility in 1961. During his career he pitched three no-hit games, 12 one-hitters, won a total of 266 games, reached the 20-victory mark six times, played on five All-Star teams, and pitched in one World Series. He was also the only right-handed pitcher to strike out 348 batters in one season and was the first baseball player to be paid as much as \$80,000 a year (Davis 1959, 1970).

His early success in the major leagues allowed Feller to give his parents a great gift of gratitude for all their love and support through the years. In 1939 Bob contracted with Des Moines architect, John Normile, to design a stylish, comfortable new home for his parents and sister to live in on the farm. The house was also a showplace with copper guttering and downspouts, fine interior woodwork, many built-in details, and all executed in the Tudor Revival style of architecture, then popular in the United States. The expense of this house was particularly notable at a time when the Great Depression still had the nation in its grip. The house was built to the northwest of the old house, with the older house moved several miles away once the new house was finished. Unfortunately, William Feller got to enjoy the new home for only three years before dying of brain cancer. Bob Feller lived in this house during the off-seasons of 1940 and 1941 and stayed here often as a visitor after the war until his mother, Lena Feller, passed away from lung cancer in 1954 (Feller 1999). By 1955, the property was sold to Ernest and Thelma Canine, who in turn sold the property in 1960 to Lyle and Janiece Kellar. Subsequent owners have included Ione S. Houston from 1963-1965, A. David and Mary Ann Ostren from 1965-1976, Dale E. and Phyllis Briley from 1976-1994, and finally the present owners, Dr. Jose and Jeanie Angel, who purchased the property in 1994 (Bob Feller, personal communication 1998; Property Abstract for Feller Farmstead).

The architect for the Feller house, John Normile, was born in 1896 in Bloomington, Illinois, and attended St. Thomas College in St. Paul, Minnesota, from 1913-1915. He served in the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers from 1917-1919 and was able to study at the École Des Beaux-Arts in Paris for several months during his service. From 1920-1924 Normile worked for Boyd and Moore in Des Moines "first as field superintendent and then as chief draftsman" (Shank 1999:122). He joined the Iowa Chapter of the American Institute of Architects in 1925 and registered to practice architecture in Iowa in 1927. Between 1924-1927, Normile had a solo practice in Des Moines before entering into a partnership with Amos B. Emery, as the firm of Normile and Emery through 1930. "Afterward he practiced alone again" (ibid.).

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 8 Page 6

**Feller Farmstead
Dallas County, IA**

In 1931 he began writing monthly articles for *Better Homes and Gardens* and became building editor for the magazine, a position he held for thirty years. By the 1950s he was registered in Washington, D.C., and in every contiguous state except California. In 1979 he was still registered in Iowa. He died of pneumonia in his home in Des Moines [in 1985] (*ibid.*).

Normile was noted “for the fine houses and institutional structures that he designed” (Shank 1999:122), with some of his noted buildings in Iowa being the Bell Telephone Building in Cedar Rapids; the Christ the King Church in Des Moines; the Great Western Insurance Company Building in Des Moines; the D.S. Kruidener House in Des Moines; and the Church of the Sacred Heart in Newton, Iowa (*ibid.*). The construction of the Feller house began in 1939 and was completed in 1940 taking about nine months in the process. A Jefferson, Iowa, firm did the landscaping, while the Sherwin-Williams Company did the painting for free (Bob Feller, personal communication 1998).

The house that Bob Feller occupied in Gates Mills, Ohio, during the productive years of his baseball career is a house that he and his first wife, Virginia, purchased already built and is still standing (Feller 1999). After his divorce, Bob remarried in 1974, and he and his wife, Anne, built a new house in Gates Mills where they reside to the present day (Feller and Gilbert 1990:217-218). It is felt that the Feller Farmstead in Van Meter, Iowa, best exemplifies the accomplishments and significance of Bob Feller’s life and career because it is the place where he learned how to play baseball and how to pitch. It is the place where those skills were honed and nurtured by his parents. It is also the place where after the initial success of his career, he returned to give his parents the gift of a comfortable and stylish home in which they could live out their lives.

This nomination is being set forth to further recognize Bob Feller’s great baseball career and his many contributions to his hometown and ties to his homeplace. The current owners wish to help preserve this historic property and help ensure that the Feller legacy will live on for many more years in the Van Meter community and the State of Iowa.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

**Feller Farmstead
Dallas County, IA**

Section number 9 **Page** 7

Major Bibliographic References

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1994 *American House Styles: A Concise Guide*. W.W. Norton and Company, New York and London.

Cleveland Indians Baseball Company

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Davis, Mac

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Informal interview with Bob Feller conducted by Leah Rogers on October 26, 1998, in Van Meter, Iowa, and at the Feller Farmstead. Notes on file with Jose and Jeanie Angel, Adel, Iowa.

Other Sources:

Property Abstract for Feller Farmstead in possession of Dr. Jose and Jeanie Angel, Adel, Iowa.

Architects File, Community Programs Bureau, State Historical Society of Iowa, Des Moines.

Scrapbooks of newspaper clippings about Bob Feller's career, on file at the Bob Feller Hometown Exhibit Museum in Van Meter, Iowa.

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**Feller Farmstead
Dallas County, IA**

Verbal Boundary Description

The boundary of the Feller Farmstead District is shown as the dashed line on the accompanying map entitled "Sketch Map of Farmstead Nomination Boundaries."

Boundary Justification

This boundary encompasses those areas of the historic farmstead associated with both houses, non-extant and extant, the barn, the loafing shed, and the site where Bob Feller practiced pitching with his father. This is the portion of the farmstead directly associated with the significance of this property as the boyhood home and training ground for Baseball Hall of Fame pitcher, Bob Feller.

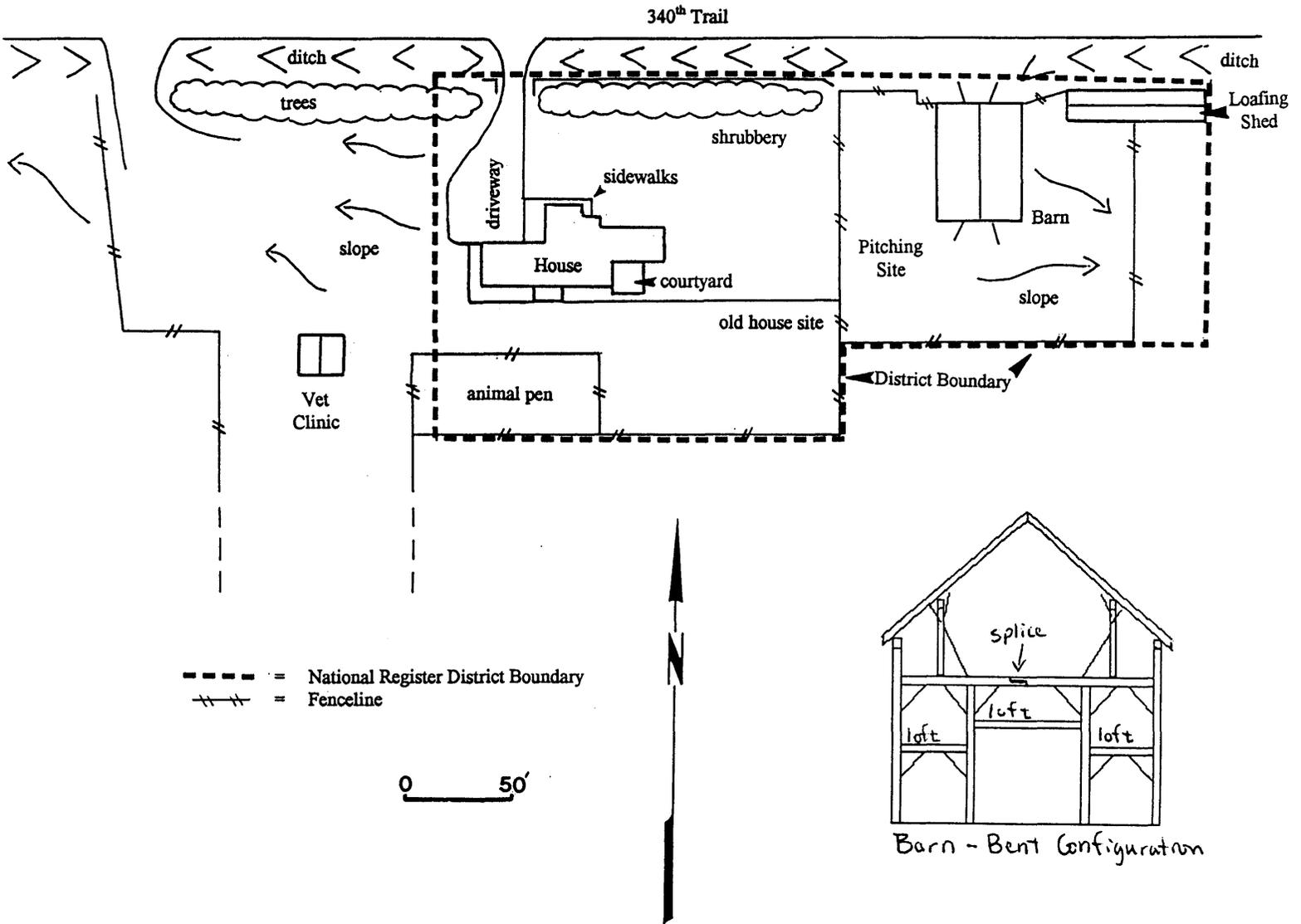
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Feller Farmstead
Dallas County, IA

Sketch Map of Farmstead Nomination Boundaries

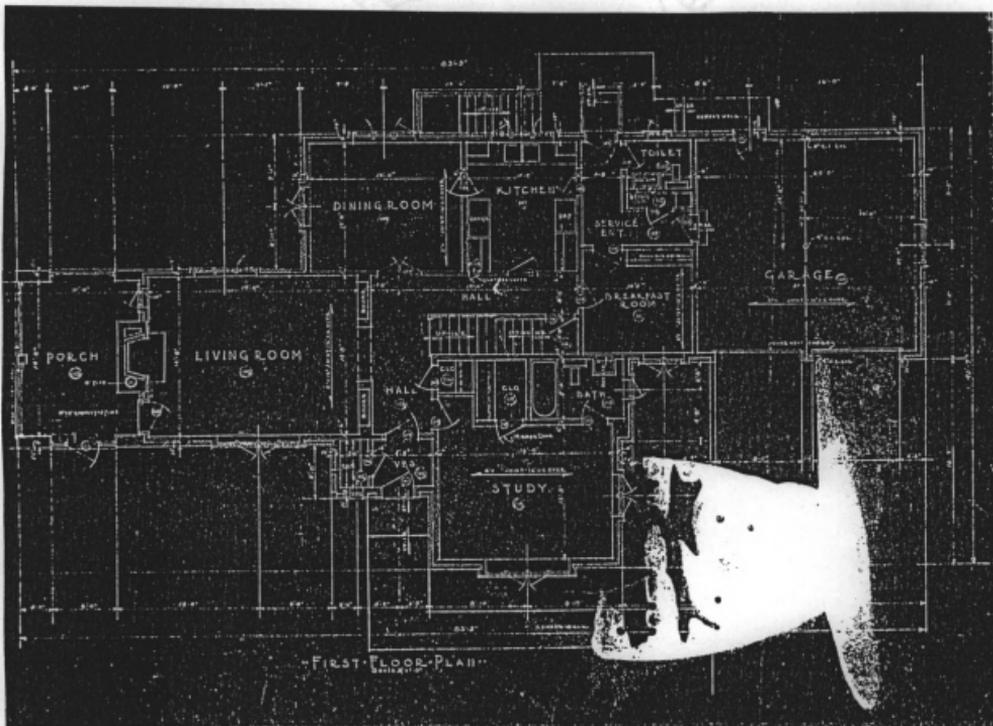


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Dallas County, IA

Original First Floor Plan Blueprint of House

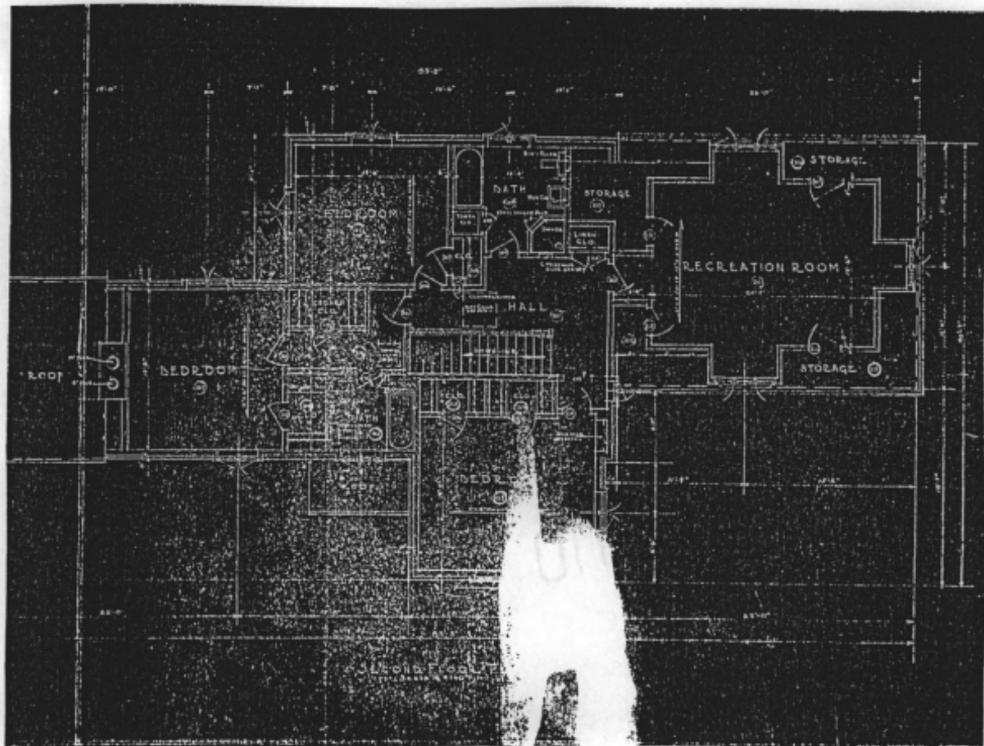


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Dallas County, IA

Original Second Floor Plan Blueprint of House



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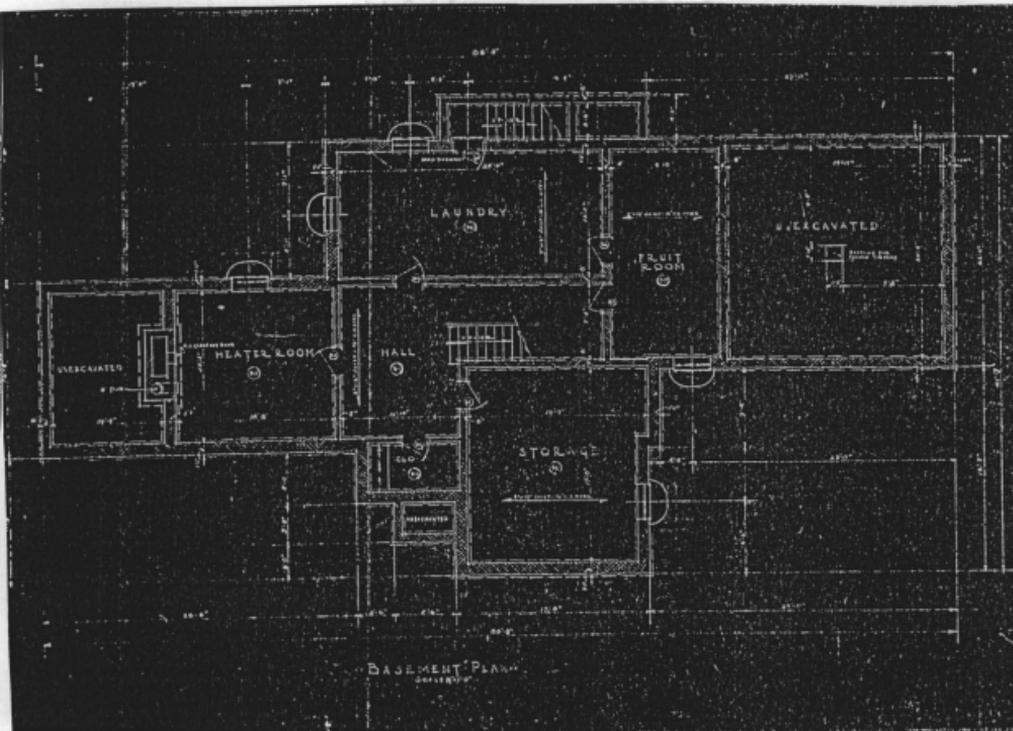
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Feller Farmstead
Dallas County, IA

Original Basement Floor Plan Blueprint of House



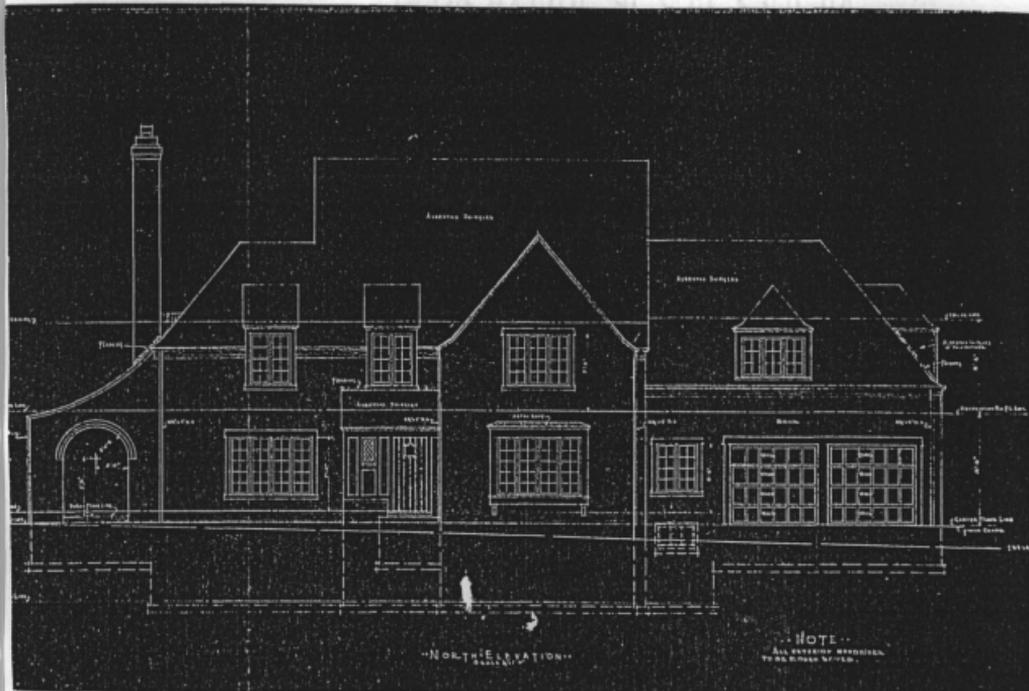
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Feller Farmstead
Dallas County, IA

Original Blueprint Drawing of Front Elevation of House



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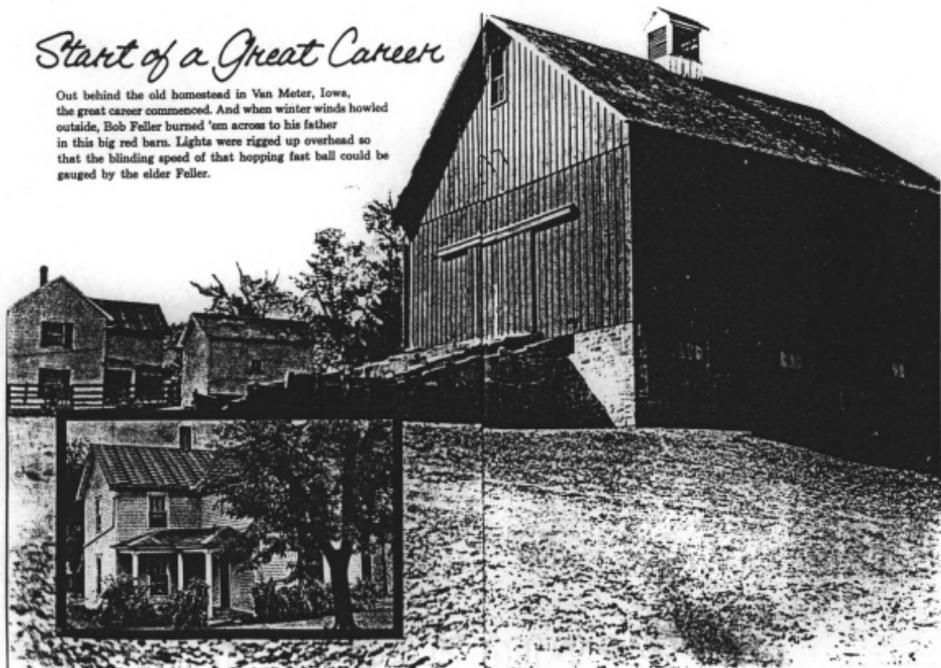
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Feller Farmstead
Dallas County, IA

Early Twentieth Century Photograph of Feller Farmstead Showing Old House, Garage, and Barn
(Source: Cleveland Indians Baseball Company 1956)

Start of a Great Career

Out behind the old homestead in Van Meter, Iowa, the great career commenced. And when winter winds howled outside, Bob Feller burned 'em across to his father in this big red barn. Lights were rigged up overhead so that the blinding speed of that hopping fast ball could be gauged by the elder Feller.



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**Feller Farmstead
Dallas County, IA**

Photographs

Name of Photographer: Leah D. Rogers

Date of Photographs: October 1998 and February 1999

Location of Original Negative: in possession of Dr. Jose and Jeanie Angel, property owners

- #1 General View of Farmstead
View to the West
- #2 Barn and South Barn Yard
View to the West
- #3 Barn
View to the Northwest
- #4 North side of barn
View to the Southeast
- #5 Pitching Site in Barn Yard Where Bob Feller Trained with his Dad
View to the South
- #6 North Side of House
View to the West-Southwest
- #7 Detail of Front Entryway
View to the Southwest
- #8 East side of House
View to the West-Northwest
- #9 West Side of House Showing Attached Garage
View to the East-Southeast
- #10 Front of House
View to the Southeast
- #11 Loafing Shed
View to the North-Northeast
- #12 Veterinary Clinic
View to the South-Southwest
- #13 Barn - Interior Bent Configuration
View to the SSE
- #14 House - Detail of Front Door Hardware
View to the East
- #15 House - Interior Front Hall and Staircase
View to the West from Living Room
- #16 House - Interior Dining Room
View to the South from Front Hall

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Feller Farmstead
Dallas County, IA

Map Showing Direction of Photographs

