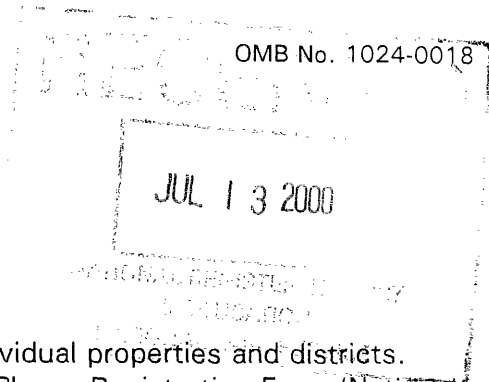


United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

924



**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 any 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 Helvig-Olson Farm Historic District

other names/site number Olson, Joel, Farm

2. Location

street & number 2008 260th St. not for publication N/A
city or town Grand Mound vicinity N/A
state Iowa code IA county Clinton code 045 zip code 52751

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, 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 Sherk DSITPO 7-11-00
Signature of certifying official 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 commenting or other official Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby certify that this 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): _____

Sandra McWilliam

8/15/20

Signature of Keeper

Date of Action

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

| | | |
|--------------|-----------------|------------|
| Contributing | Noncontributing | |
| <u>7</u> | <u>1</u> | buildings |
| <u>1</u> | _____ | sites |
| _____ | _____ | structures |
| _____ | _____ | objects |
| <u>8</u> | <u>1</u> | Total |

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

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

The Norwegian Related Resources of Olive Township, Clinton County, Iowa

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: AGRICULTURE/ Sub: Agricultural Field,
SUBSISTENCE Agricultural Outbuildings

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: AGRICULTURE/ Sub: Agricultural Field,
SUBSISTENCE Agricultural Outbuildings

7. Description

Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: No Style Sub: _____

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Concrete

roof Wood

walls Wood

other _____

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

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.)

- A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B removed from its original location.
- C a birthplace or a 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)

Ethnic Heritage/European

Social History

Period of Significance

ca. 1864-1950

Significant Dates

ca. 1864

1930

1937

Significant Person (Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Ehlers, Will

Huetter, L. P.

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

9. Major Bibliographical References

(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: Central Community Historical Society, DeWitt

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 4.3

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

| Zone | Easting | Northing | Zone | Easting | Northing |
|-------------|---------------|----------------|---------|---------|----------|
| 1 <u>15</u> | <u>690960</u> | <u>4630360</u> | 3 _____ | _____ | _____ |
| 2 _____ | _____ | _____ | 4 _____ | _____ | _____ |

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 David C. Anderson
organization _____ date _____
street & number 169 Lundy Bridge Dr. telephone 319-382-3079
city or town Waukon state Iowa zip code 52172

Additional Documentation

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)

Property Owner

(This item must be completed.)

name Joel Olson
street & number 2008 260th St. telephone 319-246-2667
city or town Grand Mound state Iowa zip code 52751

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 the 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 Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 7 Page 1

Helvig-Olson Farm
Clinton County, Iowa

DESCRIPTION

Materials

Foundation: BRICK
Roof: ASPHALT
STEEL
Walls: STEEL

The Helvig-Olson Farm Historic District is a 4.3-acre parcel in the west ½ of the southwest ¼ of Section 23 in Olive Township, which is the original 80 acres purchased by John Helvig in 1864. Located about three miles southwest of Grand Mound, it is situated about 1,300 feet north of 260th St., and the Kvindherred Church is clearly visible one mile to the west. Today this is part of a 237-acre tract owned by Joel and Katherine Olson.

This is relatively flat land with few trees, but with rich soils and some marshland, although most of this has been drained over the years. The Helvig-Olson farm includes a spring in the NE corner of the original 80 acres which, after going through two ponds, is an important source of Barber Creek which becomes a tributary of the Wapsipinicon River on the south border of Clinton County. Drainage tiles and ditches were installed on this farm in 1912, and the ponds were constructed in 1933 and 1937. The site of the spring has gained visual prominence by a small grove of trees that have grown up nearby.

The farmstead with eight buildings is at the center of the original 80-acre farm. It is accessed today by a long lane in from 260th St. Nearly one-third of the farmstead area is devoted to a windbreak of pine trees all along the west side with a shorter section on the north edge. The oldest trees in the windbreak date from 1910, and more trees were added in 1960.

The farmhouse is located in the center of a large yard which includes shade trees and other plantings. This spot was earlier occupied by the first farmhouse on the place, which was moved eastward close to the outbuildings and converted into a garage. On the north edge of the farmstead there are two machine sheds east of the windbreak, and the largest of these, clad in steel throughout and built in 1978, is the single non-contributing resource on the property. This occupies the site where a chicken house was formerly located. The smaller machine shed (28' x 50') was built in 1932 of wood frame construction. The remainder of the outbuildings are placed in a row running north/south on the east side of the farmstead next to the farm lane.

The current farmhouse dates from 1930, and it is a Four-Square type with Craftsman influences on the front porch and a Prairie Style low pitch roof with wide overhangs. The main body of the house is square with low profile attic dormers on the south and west, with front and side porches and a small projecting bay east off the dining room. The front porch has wood tapered columns and balustrade and the house is clad throughout with wood lap siding. There is a frieze below the boxed eaves, corner boards, and wood frames around double-hung windows that occur both singly and in pairs.

Except for the large three-part dining room window under the porch, these windows (originals) all conform to a 3/1 configuration, with one large center light flanked by narrow lights. The house is currently all white, but originally it was painted cream yellow with white trim.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 7 Page 2

Helvig-Olson Farm
Clinton County, Iowa

The house is over a full basement with limestone walls faced with brick on the exterior. In addition to the front and side entrances, there is a service entry on the back (north) side with stairs to the basement. On the interior there is a kitchen, living room, dining room, and bedroom on the first floor with four bedrooms and bath upstairs. The woodwork is oak with oak floors downstairs except for the kitchen which has hard maple flooring.

Blueprint plans of the house are in the owner's possession, and they were provided by the contractor Will Ehlers, who built other houses of the same kind in the area.¹ The house is in essentially original condition and it has been well maintained.

The original farmhouse, which has served as a garage since about 1940, dates from the 1860s and, despite the removal of all interior partitions on the ground floor and the provision of two large openings on the south side, it retains enough integrity to be recognized as a Norwegian-American *Akerhusisk* plan house.² This most likely had at least three rooms on the main floor with a principal entrance on one long side and a second entry into the kitchen on one end. This secondary entrance is still in place, and historic photos show that the building's main entrance was off center and close to one of the two windows on that side, which is also typical for this house form. The building retains several of the original 6/6 double-hung sash and its original lap siding and trim, all fastened with cut nails. Now painted white, the original color scheme was light gray siding, dark red trim, and dark green shutters, according to Mr. Olson. The second floor is largely intact, and there are two large bedrooms on the south side and two smaller rooms on either end of a hall and stairs on the north side.

The four other buildings on the farmstead were all built between 1928 and 1943. These are positioned north to south along the east side of the farmstead land and, except for the corn crib, they include holding pens, pasture, and exercise areas, since they were built to house cattle and hogs.

The 28' x 48' hog house was built in 1928, and it has a gambrel roof with two rows of eight metal frame skylights on both long sides. There are two ventilators on the roof peak and a large sliding door on the west end. There is a concrete slab to the south and a pasture behind the facility to the east.

Standing 74 feet south of the hog house is a 38' x 60' barn built in 1937 by Will Ehlers, who also built the house. It has a gambrel roof with two dormers on the south side and a single ventilator in the roof peak. The foundation is of concrete, the exterior walls are sided with vertically applied 1" x 5" tongue-and-groove fir.

On the interior, the lower level is of post-and-beam construction (complete with wooden pegs) while the upper level is of lighter dimension lumber frame construction. The ground floor plan shows a central passage with horse stalls and calf pen along the north side and dairy cow stalls along the south. The upper level had two 10' x 18' grain bins on one end, but it is now an undivided loft used for hay storage.

Next in line but further east than the other structures is a 24' x 60' cattle "loafing" shed with four open bays facing south. Built in 1943, this has an off-center gable roof and a sliding door on the west side. Of wood frame construction, this has a cedar shingle roof and three lightning rods along the peak.

In 1941 the last of the major buildings on the farm, the double corn crib, was built by the Calamus contractor L. P. Huetter, who also provided the plans for the facility which was in fact a common type widely distributed across the Midwest at the time of its construction.³ These were custom-designed in that the size was matched to the particular farmer's storage needs. They were built principally for storing ear corn, and in most cases provision was also made in the center above the central passage for grain (oats, barley, etc.) storage.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 7, 8 Page 3

Helvig-Olson Farm
Clinton County, Iowa

With overall measurements on the ground of 30' x 50', this is a double crib rectangular "elevators" corn crib of wood construction which has a 5,000-bushel grain bin between two 4,000-bushel capacity cribs. The main roof is a gambrel type and there is also a gambrel roof cupola containing elevator machinery so that ear corn and grain can be lifted and directed into the cribs or bin from ground level. This building has a concrete floor with walls up to the rafter plates of 1" x 6" beveled pine boards (cribbing) spaced apart to allow for ventilation. The roof surfaces on this building are also clad with the original cedar shingles.

At present all the outbuildings are painted white, but until about 1940 they were red with white trim.

¹According to Joel Olson. Interviewed by David C. Anderson on 9-25-99.

²Henning, Darrell D. "Norwegians" (in) Upton, Dell (ed.), *America's Architectural Roots*, Washington, DC, 1986, pp. 149-150.

³Roe, Keith E. *Corncribs*. Ames, 1988, pp. 50-63.

SIGNIFICANCE

Significant Dates

1941

This farm is significant for its long-time association with the Norwegian settlement in Olive Township, Clinton County, and is a well-maintained example of a progressive farmstead from the second quarter of the 20th century. The current owner, Joel Olson, is a great-grand-nephew of John J. Helvig, who purchased the 80 acres in 1864 and established the farm. By 1894, Helvig had enlarged the farm to a total of 380 acres. In 1901, Helvig's two sons sold the farm to Nils Olai Olson, the only son of John Olson, the half-brother of Helvig, who had obtained a farm nearby in 1862 (NE $\frac{1}{4}$ of NE $\frac{1}{4}$, Section 22). This sale consolidated the two farms under the ownership of Nils Olai Olson and this made him one of the largest landowners in Olive Township, who was recognized at the time as a highly successful farmer.¹

Nils Olai's son Waltin, Joel's father, moved onto the Helvig farmstead in 1930. John Olson, the half-brother of John Helvig, was also known as John Olson Helvig, since they were born on the same farm in Norway (*Helvik, Kvinnherad* Parish).²

The Helvig-Olson immigration story illustrates the pattern for most other Norwegians in Olive Township. They came from Kvinnherad Parish to Kendall County, Illinois and then on to Iowa in the late 1850s and early 1860s. John Olson was one of the founding members of the Kvindherred congregation, and the Helvig-Olsons did well here. Some letters sent beginning in 1870 from John Olson back to his brother in Norway tell about this and urge him to

start exploring coming over to America. Your children can now earn their own living by feeding and clothing themselves over here and also be of help to you parents.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 8 Page 4

Helvig-Olson Farm
Clinton County, Iowa

He goes on to state unequivocally that it is easier to make a living in America and that having the family together would be beneficial to all.³

The farmstead on the Helvig-Olson farm is located about 1,300 feet from the southwest corner of the 80-acre parcel. Six of the eight buildings date from between 1928 and 1943. With the exception of the original house (garage), these structures possess good historic integrity and represent a wide variety of types and period of construction. The lack of a large number of intrusive, newer structures and the relatively high level of integrity of the individual buildings set this farmstead apart from most of the farmsteads surveyed in 1993.

The windbreak, shade trees in the yard, and the 1920-1940 era represented by most of the buildings give this property an historic character now rare on farms that are still being inhabited and worked. Moreover, it is the only farm surveyed where the exact date of construction and names of builders are readily available.

The spring in the northeast corner of the farm was originally an important source of water for several farms in the vicinity in the years before drilled wells became the norm.⁴ Identified as "Big Spring" on the 1865 atlas, this site has gained visual prominence by the trees that have grown up in the area and by the two ponds constructed to the south in 1933 and 1937.

Of the eight farms identified in the 1993 survey, the Helvig-Olson property perhaps best represents the multifaceted history of Norwegian settlement in Olive Township. The correspondence with relatives in Norway, oral histories gathered and made available by the multiple generations of Helvig-Olsons who established and continue to live on the farm, and the buildings themselves illustrate the early settlement adaptation to American language and farming practice and the communal life and persistence of family ties that characterize this particular European-American experience in the heart of the American Midwest.

It is evident from the material presented in this nomination that the Helvig-Olson Farm represents significant events and activities of the Norwegians who settled in Olive Township, and that it conforms to the registration requirements outlined in the MPDF (Section F, p. 18).

With few exceptions, these Norwegian immigrants were farm folk whose main concerns were to obtain land of their own, raise families, and secure their offspring on the land. The history of the several generations of Helvig-Olsons who lived on this farm illustrates this pattern. After the first immigrant generation, the Norwegians willingly adopted the farming methods, crops, machines, and building types and styles that characterized mainstream agriculture in the Midwest. The buildings on the Helvig-Olson farm are good examples of their type and periods of construction, and they are exceptional for their high level of historic integrity.

¹Wolfe, P. B. (ed.). *Wolfe's History of Clinton County, Iowa*, 1911, p. 495. Allen, Lucius P. (ed.). *The History of Clinton County, Iowa*, 1879, pp. 810-811.

²In rural Norway the custom was to give each child three names at birth: a first or Christian name, a surname which included the father's first name – e.g. Oleson or Olesdatter – and third, the name of the farm where the family lived whether or not they owned it. When they arrived in America, the *-datter* was replaced by *-son* or *-sen* for single women, and all were encouraged by immigration officials to use either the patronymic or place name, not both. These distinctions were not consistently maintained by the first-generation immigrants, however, so John

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National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section 8, 9, 10 Page 5

Helvig-Olson Farm
Clinton County, Iowa

Olson, the half-brother of John Helvig, was also known as John O. Helvig since they both were born on the same farm in Norway.

³McCulloh, Cleone and Donna Olson, *Olson Family Letters 1866-1937* (1994), pp. 11-12.

⁴According to Joel Olson (interview on 9/25/99), the first settlers in the area took their washing to the site and dried it on the rocks nearby.

⁵Joel's brother Waltin, Jr. and sister Cleone have both provided documentation which relates to the Helvig-Olson farm and community life among the Norwegian-Americans. See MPDF Bibliography.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

See MPDF.

GEOGRAPHIC DATA

Verbal Boundary Description

The Helvig-Olson Farm District is a 400 x 500 foot rectangle in the center of the west ½ of the southwest ¼ of Section 23, Olive Township, Clinton County.

Boundary Justification

The farm district is within the 80-acre parcel that was first purchased in 1864 by John J. Helvig and it has remained in the Helvig-Olson family since that time.

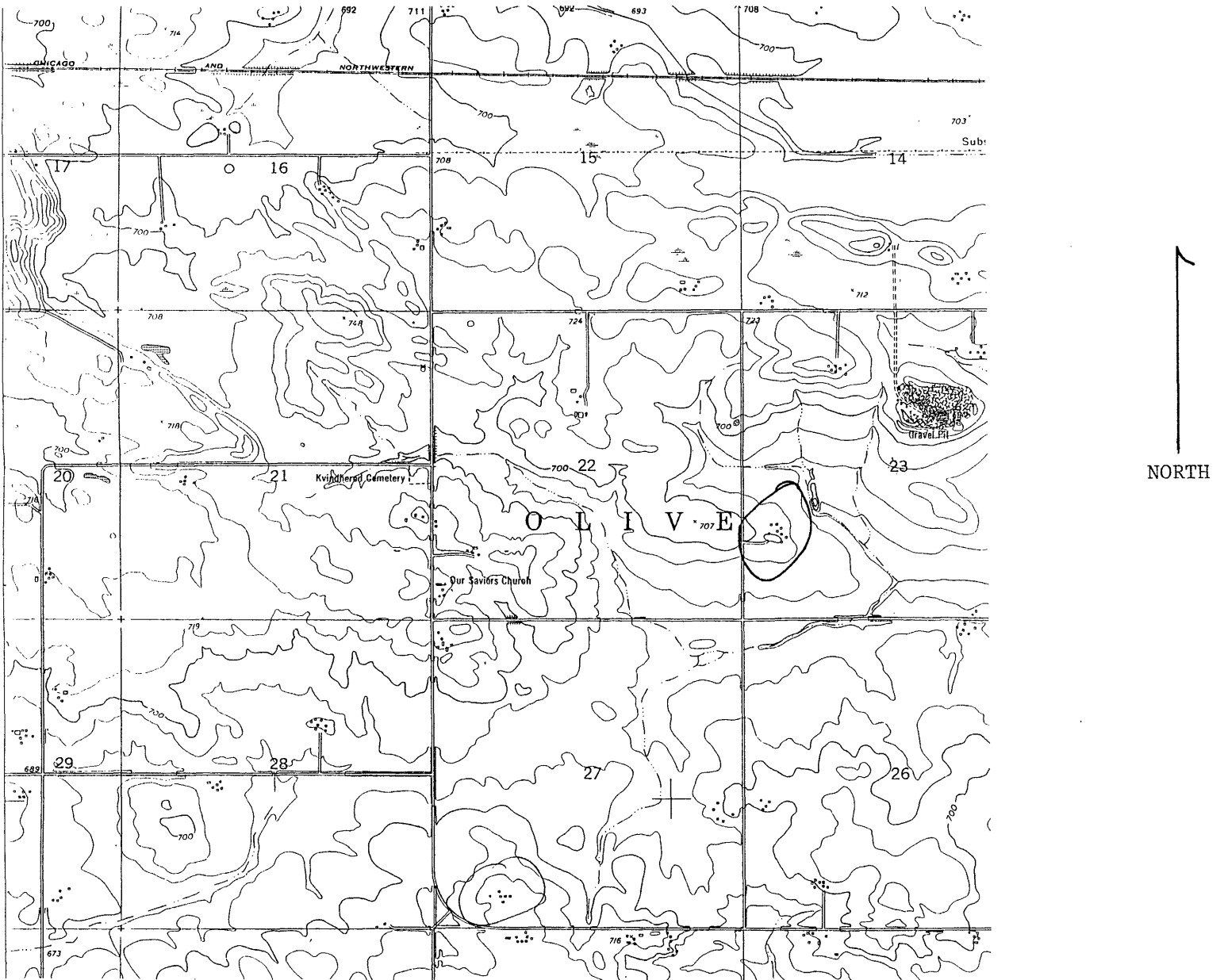
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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section ADD'L Page 6

Helvig-Olson Farm
Clinton County, Iowa

Location Map - Helvig-Olson Farm Historic District
Source: USGS Grand Mound Quadrangle (reduced 23%), 1953



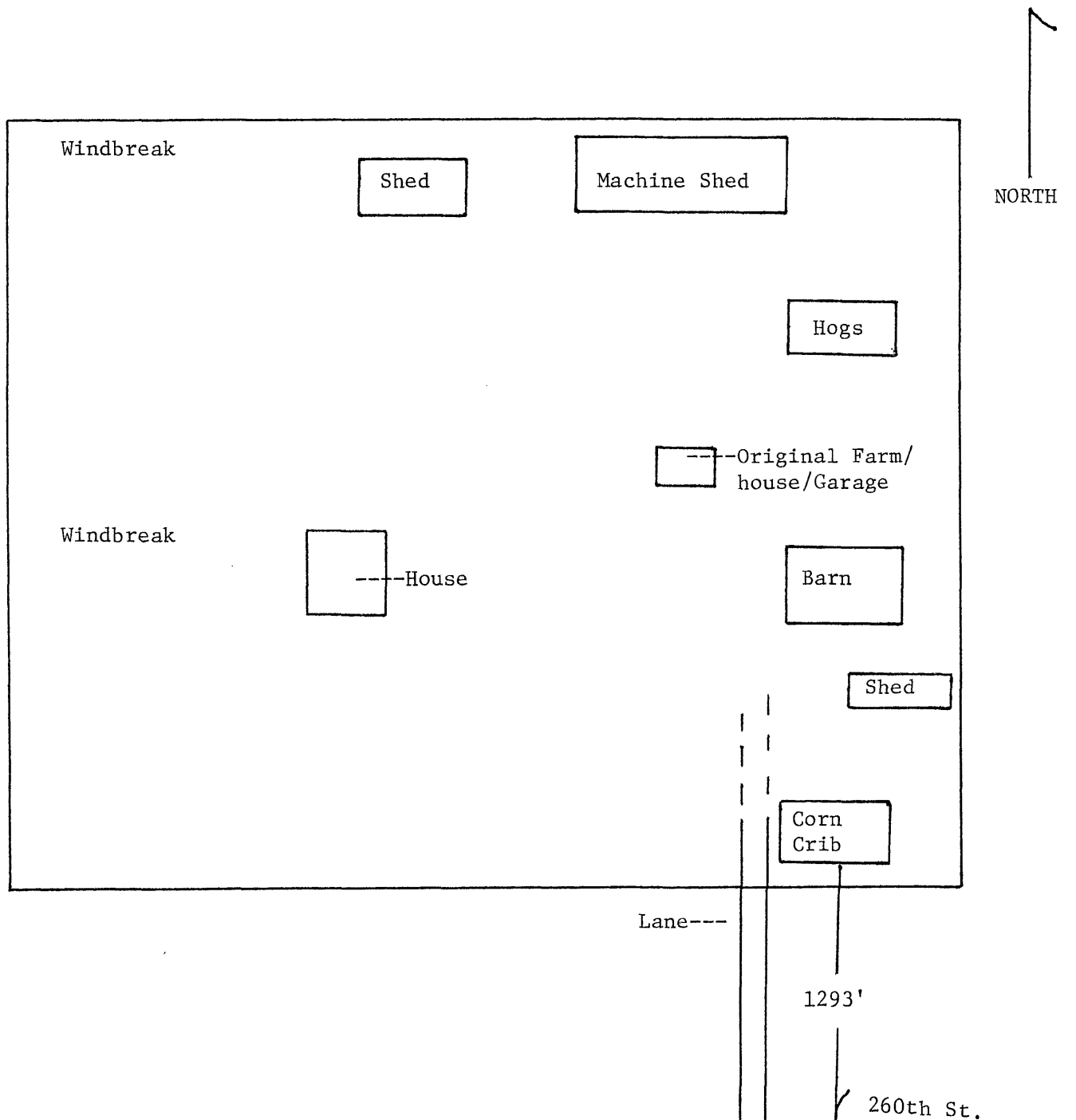
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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section ADD'L Page 7

Helvig-Olson Farm
Clinton County, Iowa

Farmstead Site Plan - Helvig-Olson Farm Historic District
Drawn by D.C. Anderson from measurements by Floyd Soenksen - 10/15/99
Approximate Scale: 1" = 80'



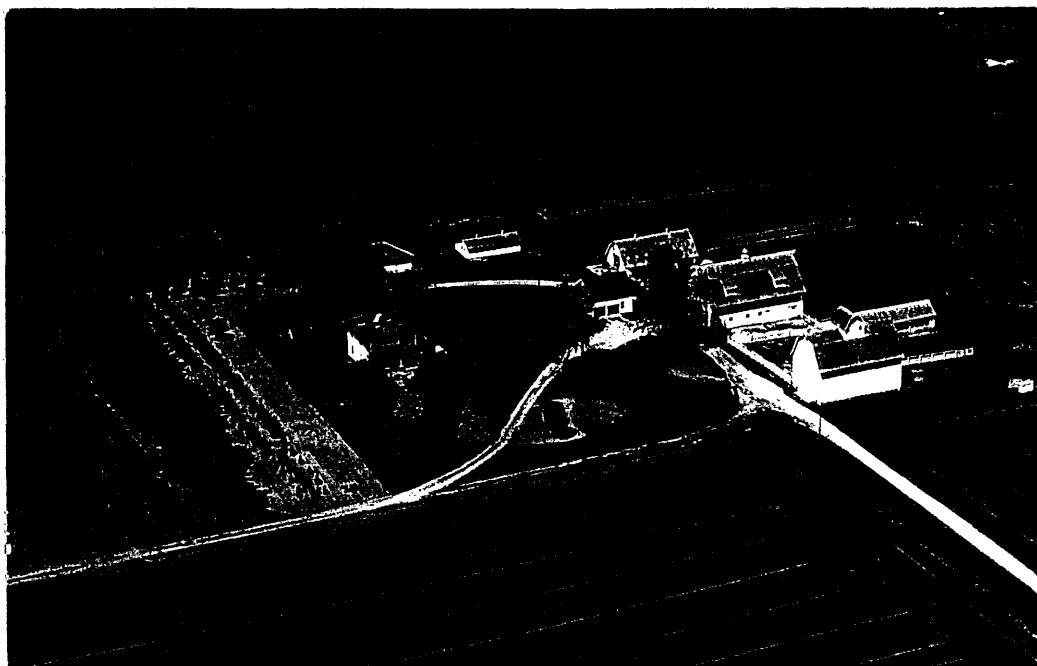
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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section ADD'L Page 8

Helvig-Olson Farm
Clinton County, Iowa

Helvig-Olson Farmstead in 1965
Aerial Photograph, Joel Olson Collection
View facing Northeast



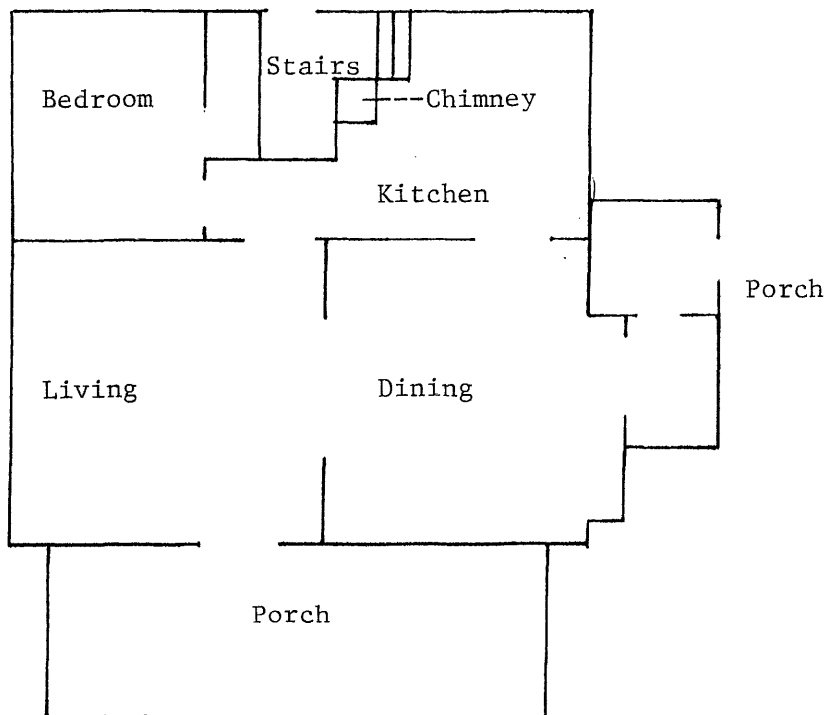
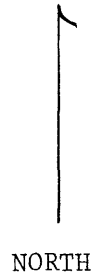
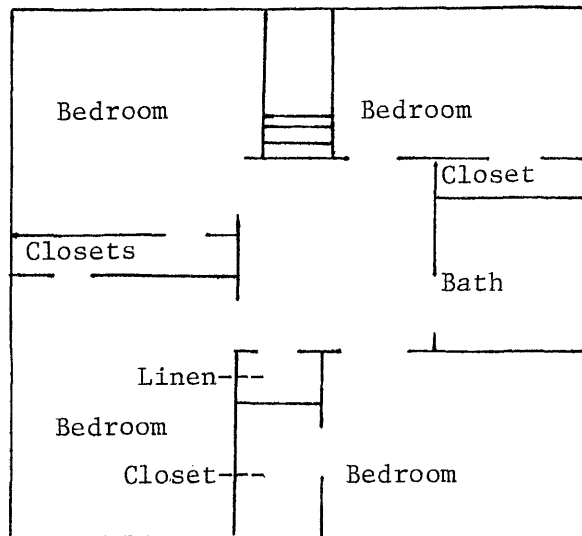
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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section ADD'L Page 9

Helvig-Olson Farm
Clinton County, Iowa

Olson Farmhouse - Floor Plans by D.C. Anderson- 9/25/99
Scale: 1" = ca. 12'



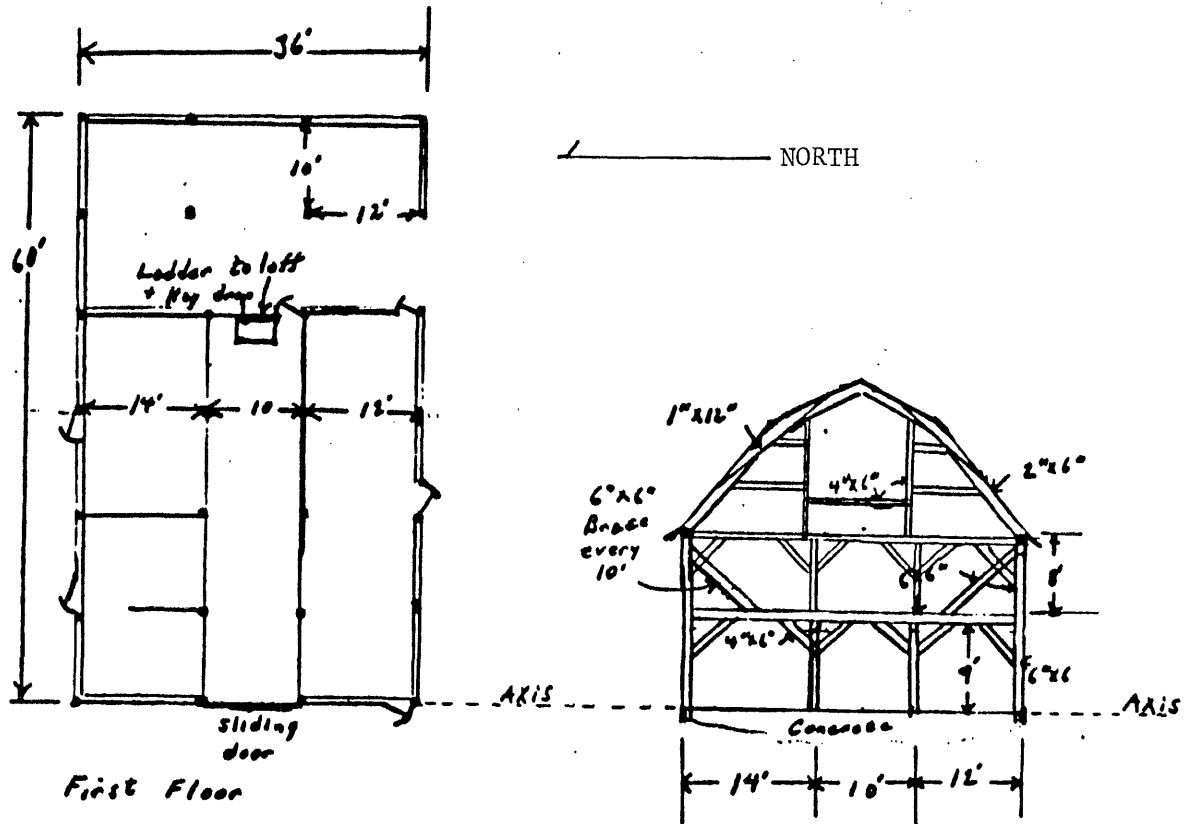
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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section ADD'L Page 10

Helvig-Olson Farm
Clinton County, Iowa

Olson Barn
Floor Plan and Structural Details - Measured and Drawn by Floyd Soenksen, 1994
Scale: 1" = ca. 20'



Sketch View of interior barn features. A.

First Floor

B.

Cross Section. First Floor
and upper level

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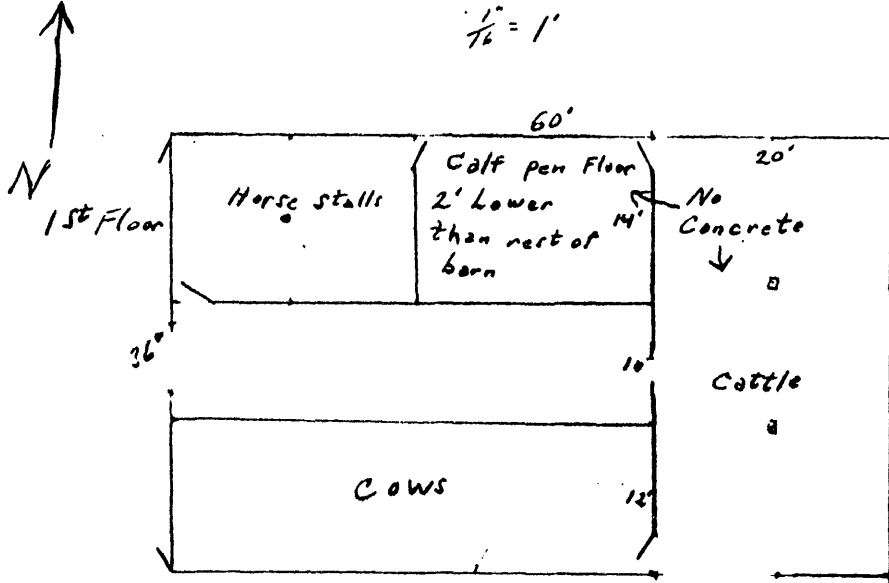
NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section ADD'L Page 11

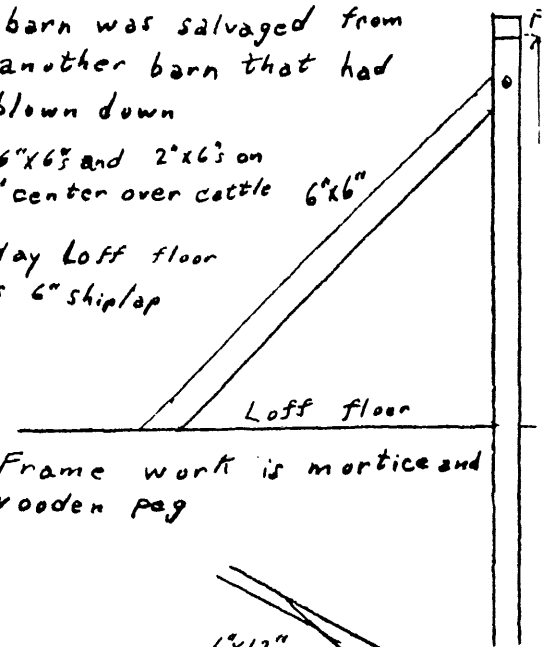
Helvig-Olson Farm
Clinton County, Iowa

Olson Barn
Floor Plans and Structural Details - Measured and Drawn by Floyd Soenksen, 1994

$\frac{1}{16}'' = 1'$

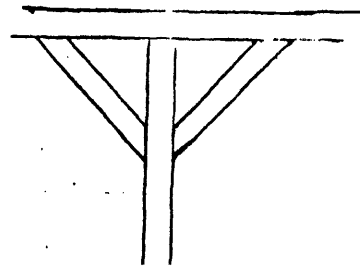
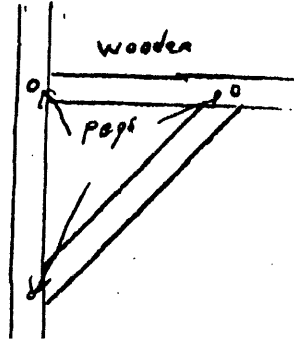
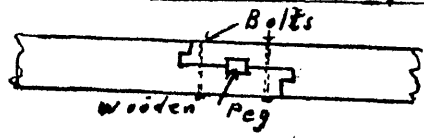
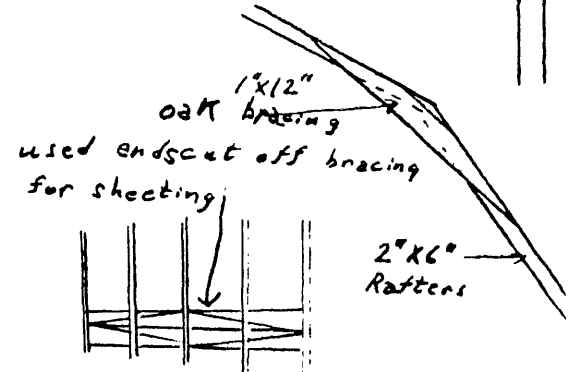
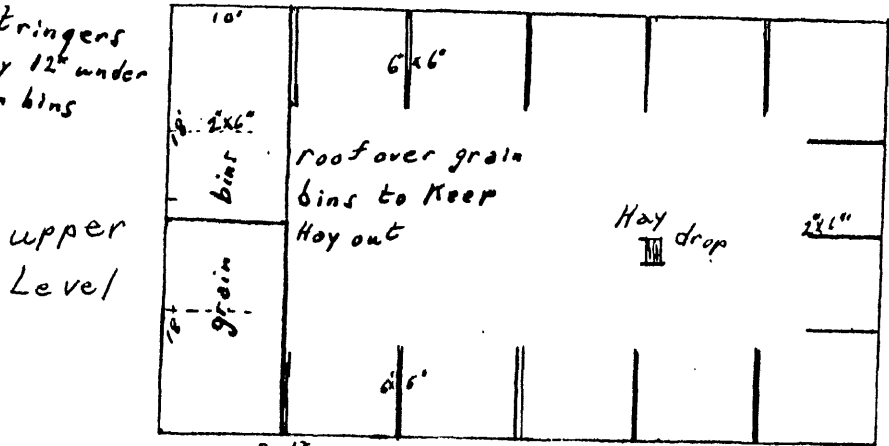


A Lot of Lumber used in this barn was salvaged from another barn that had blown down
 6"x6's and 2"x6's on 2' center over cattle 6"x6"
 Hay Loff floor is 6" shiplap



Frame work is mortice and wooden peg

Stringers every 12" under grain bins



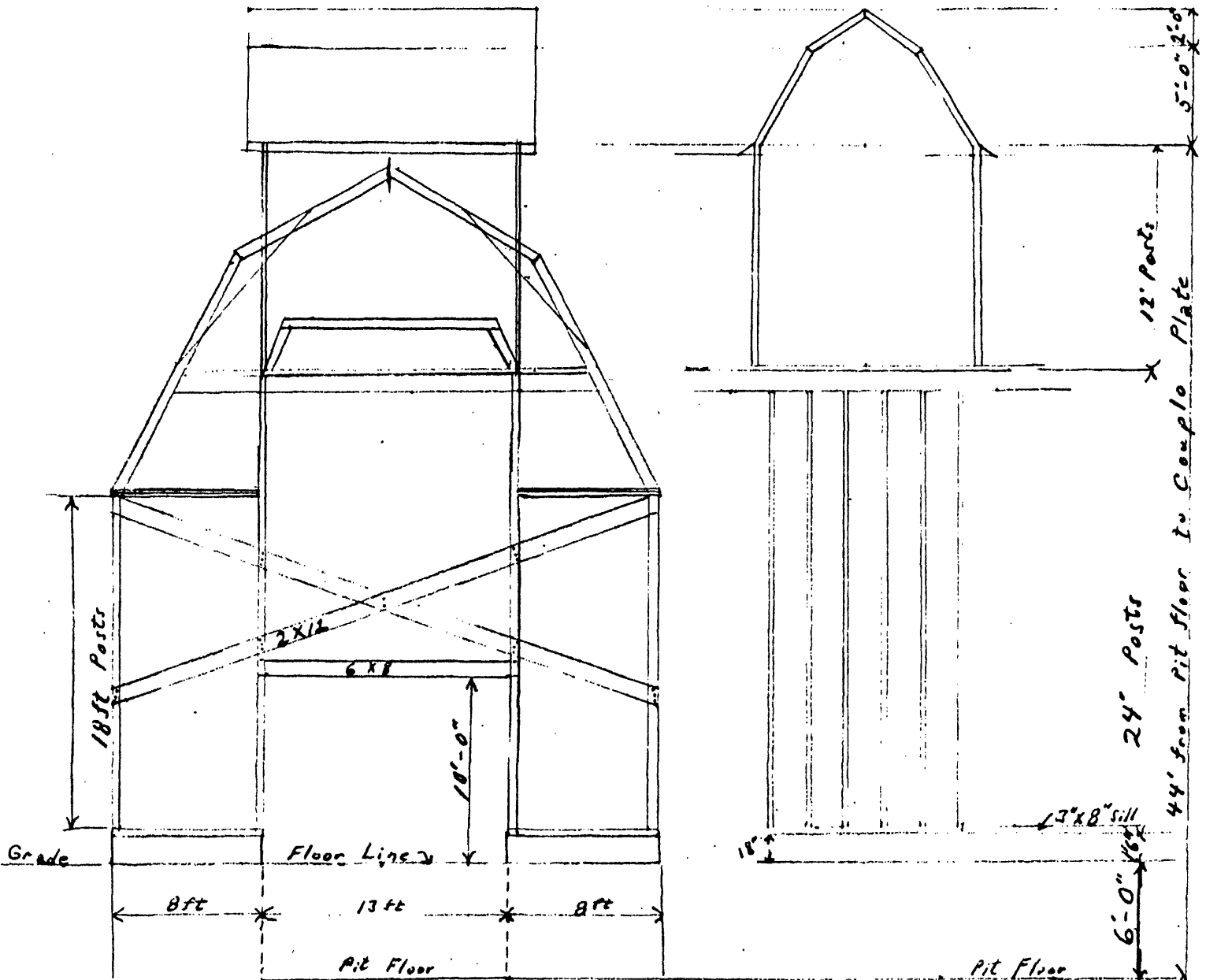
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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section ADD'L Page 12

Helvig-Olson Farm
Clinton County, Iowa

Olson Corn Crib - Structural Details - Drawn by Floyd Soenksen based on the originals
by L.P. Huetter Scale: 1" = 8'



Plans By Contractor
L.P. Huetter
Celamus, Iowa

original Plans reduced one half by Floyd Soenksen

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National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section ADD'L Page 13

Helvig-Olson Farm
Clinton County, Iowa

Original Helvig-Olson Farmhouse
Historic Photograph (ca. 1917), Joel Olson Collection



United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section ADD'L Page 14

Helvig-Olson Farm
Clinton County, Iowa

PHOTOGRAPHS

Photographer: D.C. Anderson

DATE: September 25, 1999

All are "Camera Facing"

- No. 1 General View of Farmstead--E
- 2 Farmhouse--NE
- 3 Farmhouse--NW
- 4 Old Farmhouse/Garage--SE
- 5 Old Farmhouse/Garage--NW
- 6 Hog House--SE
- 7 Barn--SE
- 8 Cattle Shed--SE
- 9 Corn Crib--SE