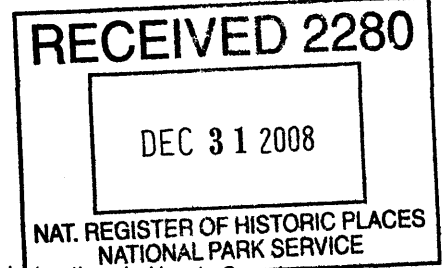


United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form



011

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 Duncan, Beecher H., Farm
other names/site number Brookvale Farm

2. Location

street & number 26 Shorey Road N/A not for publication
city or town Westfield N/A vicinity
state Maine code ME county Aroostook code 003 zip code 04787

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.)

[Signature] 12/22/08
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

Maine Historic Preservation Commission
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 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): _____

[Signature] 2-11-09
Signature of the Keeper Date of Action
Edson H. Beall

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
_____ 3 _____ 1 _____ buildings
_____ 1 _____ _____ sites
_____ _____ _____ structures
_____ _____ _____ objects
_____ 4 _____ 1 _____ Total

3
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
None

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)
DOMESTIC / Single Dwelling
AGRICULTURE / Outbuilding
AGRICULTURE / Agricultural Field

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)
DOMESTIC / Single Dwelling
AGRICULTURE / Outbuilding
AGRICULTURE / Agricultural Field

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)
LATE VICTORIAN / Queen Anne
OTHER / Gambrel-roof barn

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)
foundation CONCRETE
walls ASBESTOS
SYNTHETICS / Vinyl
WOOD / Shingle
roof ASPHALT
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.)

Property is:

- 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)

AGRICULTURE

Period of Significance

1904 -1950

Significant Dates

1910

1912

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder

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 # _____

Primary location of additional data:

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

Name of repository:

DUNCAN, BEECHER H., FARM
Name of Property

AROOSTOOK COUNTY, MAINE
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 129

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	<table border="1"><tr><td>1</td><td>9</td></tr></table> Zone	1	9	<table border="1"><tr><td>5</td><td>7</td><td>8</td><td>2</td><td>5</td><td>5</td></tr></table> Easting	5	7	8	2	5	5	<table border="1"><tr><td>5</td><td>1</td><td>6</td><td>0</td><td>5</td><td>2</td><td>5</td></tr></table> Northing	5	1	6	0	5	2	5	3	<table border="1"><tr><td>1</td><td>9</td></tr></table> Zone	1	9	<table border="1"><tr><td>5</td><td>7</td><td>8</td><td>0</td><td>6</td><td>0</td></tr></table> Easting	5	7	8	0	6	0	<table border="1"><tr><td>5</td><td>1</td><td>5</td><td>9</td><td>9</td><td>8</td><td>7</td></tr></table> Northing	5	1	5	9	9	8	7
1	9																																				
5	7	8	2	5	5																																
5	1	6	0	5	2	5																															
1	9																																				
5	7	8	0	6	0																																
5	1	5	9	9	8	7																															
2	<table border="1"><tr><td>1</td><td>9</td></tr></table> Zone	1	9	<table border="1"><tr><td>5</td><td>7</td><td>8</td><td>1</td><td>9</td><td>7</td></tr></table> Easting	5	7	8	1	9	7	<table border="1"><tr><td>5</td><td>1</td><td>6</td><td>0</td><td>2</td><td>4</td><td>5</td></tr></table> Northing	5	1	6	0	2	4	5	4	<table border="1"><tr><td>1</td><td>9</td></tr></table> Zone	1	9	<table border="1"><tr><td>5</td><td>7</td><td>7</td><td>1</td><td>5</td><td>6</td></tr></table> Easting	5	7	7	1	5	6	<table border="1"><tr><td>5</td><td>1</td><td>5</td><td>9</td><td>9</td><td>7</td><td>5</td></tr></table> Northing	5	1	5	9	9	7	5
1	9																																				
5	7	8	1	9	7																																
5	1	6	0	2	4	5																															
1	9																																				
5	7	7	1	5	6																																
5	1	5	9	9	7	5																															

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 CHRISTI A. MITCHELL, ARCHITECTURAL HISTORIAN
organization MAINE HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION date 15 October 2008
street & number 55 CAPITOL STREET, STATION 65 telephone (207) 287-2132
city or town AUGUSTA state ME zip code 04333 -0065

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

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

name _____
street & number _____ telephone _____
city or town _____ state _____ zip code _____

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

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

DUNCAN, BEECHER H., FARM

AROOSTOOK COUNTY, MAINE

Section number 7 Page 2

DESCRIPTION

The Beecher H. Duncan Farm is a small historic district composed of agricultural and residential structures set on 129 acres in the Aroostook County town of Westfield. Shorey Road (also known as Tompkins Road) runs north to southeast through the property. Approximately 105 acres in agricultural production and a small, vacant dilapidated house are located on the west side of the road. The Duncan family home (1912), large gambrel-roof barn (1910) and a modern garage are set near the road and surrounded by 24 acres of fields on the east side of the road. A grassy lawn surrounds the house and barn, and a small, overgrown orchard containing Transparent, Duchess and Wealthy apple varieties is located less than fifty yards northwest of the house. The terrain of the farm slopes almost imperceptibly towards a low ridge of hills one mile to the west. Westfield is an overwhelmingly rural farm community just south of the small city of Presque Isle. The small town center lies three miles southeast of the farm, but the farms northern boundary is the municipal boundary between Presque Island and Westfield.

House, 1912. (Contributing building)

The Duncan house was built in 1912 by Henry Duncan, grandfather of the present owner. The balloon-frame structure faces south towards a gravel driveway. The vernacular building is composed of a two-story rectangular mass, under an east-to-west oriented gable roof, with a short one-and-one half story wing projecting from the south side wall. A longer one-and-one half story ell extends off the east gable end of the main mass. In the southwest corner of the facade is a hip roof open porch and in the southeast corner of the facade is a hip roof enclosed porch. The house sits on a concrete foundation over a full basement, and has an asphalt roof. There are two brick chimneys: one near the center of the house on the south plane of the main roof, and one positioned on the ell's ridge. Five iron lightning rods with amethyst glass balls are strung along the ridge. Most of the exterior walls are clad with asbestos clapboards, however vinyl clapboards have been applied on and in the porches, and wood shingles clad the east gable end of the ell.

The south side of the house has an irregular fenestration pattern. A four panel and glass door is positioned towards the west end of the front porch, and the enclosed porch has a glass and screen storm door, four four-light storm windows and one six-light storm window, all of varying widths. The cross gable projection has a wide one-over-one window on the first floor, and a narrower one-over-one on the second floor. Above the enclosed porch is a pedimented dormer with a full cornice return. At the west east end of the ell is a small, built out automobile bay under a shed roof fitted with an overhead garage door. The two porches feature Queen-Anne style turned supports with scroll saw cut angled brackets. (The porch supports for the enclosed porch are obscured by exterior storm windows but are visible from inside the porch.) The eaves are trimmed with a narrow fascia and rake but feature prominent cornice returns. The west side of the projection contains a two-over-one wood window on the first floor and a one-over-one window on the second floor. Each window on the house is set in a trim of flat-stock but features a narrow hood above the frames.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

DUNCAN, BEECHER H., FARM

AROOSTOOK COUNTY, MAINE

Section number 7 Page 3

The west facade of the house contains two windows on each floor. Each of the windows have a one-over-one configuration, but the example in the northwest corner of the first floor is wider than the other three. There also a small window with a single vertical muntin positioned under the gable peak. The north elevation contains four two-over-one sash, (one in the ell) and a four panel door near the center of the ell. Two additional windows are positioned on the second floor of the main house and a shed roof dormer is located over the window in the ell. The east wall of the ell has neither windows nor doors, but narrow boards mark these two corners of the building.

Although the main entrance is on the long wall of the main house the interior is arranged on a side-hall plan. An entry hall and staircase occupy the south section of the main house, and a long living room is positioned in the northwest corner. The southward projection contains a dining room that opens off the hall and the living room, and a narrow pantry is positioned east of the living room. The western third of the ell contains a kitchen and an enclosed back staircase; the remainder of the ell functions as storage and a garage. There are three bedrooms and a small bathroom on the second floor, and a storage loft over the garage. Interior features of note include maple floors, door and windows trimmed with wide mouldings and corner blocks, moulded baseboard, and four paneled doors. The dining room exhibits varnished beadboard wainscot and the pine staircase has stained turned banisters and newel posts. The kitchen has an enameled sink unite from the 1940s, beadboard wainscot, and a linoleum floor. Ceilings are a mixture of plaster and acoustic tile; walls are generally of gypsum board or plaster. In the cellar is a large concrete cistern and a mammoth wood furnace stamped "Bangor MFG".

Barn, 1910. (Contributing building)

The Beecher H. Duncan Farm barn was erected two years earlier than the house. It is a massive, gambrel-roof structure that faces west towards the driveway and door yard. The footprint of the structure measures approximately 45 by 60 feet, and it has an exterior height of two-and-one half stories (forty five feet). The upper roof plane is just over half the length of the lower plane and is positioned at approximately a thirty degree angle. The lower section of the roof is sloped at approximately a forty-five degree angle. The building sits on a low fieldstone foundation which has been recently reinforced with a concrete foundation on the east elevation. The west elevation has vinyl clapboard siding, the south elevation is clad with asbestos clapboards and the east and north elevations feature wood shingle siding. The gambrel roof is covered with asphalt shingles and three lightning rods are positioned along the ridge line.

At the center of the west elevation are a pair of large, exterior sliding wood batten doors topped by a long glass transom. To the south of this door is a shorter, wide batten door inset with a four-light sash that is mounted on an exterior rail. A small rectangular window opening, missing its sash, is positioned north of the center doors. There are two one-over-one windows positioned high on the facade (just under the roof curb) and a third centered under roof peak. The south elevation of the barn contains two fixed six-light sash, while the north elevation has only one opening, a small window filled with a fixed sash divided into three vertical panes. The east end of the barn has three windows in the upper stories (as with the west elevation). While it is clear on the interior that the barn was framed

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

DUNCAN, BEECHER H., FARM

AROOSTOOK COUNTY, MAINE

Section number 7 Page 4

to provide for a large equipment door at the center of the east wall, the extant shingles give no indication that this door was ever installed. However, two additional window units are framed on the interior of this elevation, suggesting that the original configuration of this wall has been obscured by the wood shingles that cover the east elevation.

The interior of the barn is four bays long (five structural bents) and features a wide, dirt floored center aisle and two side aisles. The south aisle has a cement floor (partially removed in the last bay) and a hay mow above. Large log sleepers under the cement floor are positioned directly on grade. The north aisle is divided between a wood floored grain room in the northwest corner and a dirt-floored open mow along the rest of the length. The room in the northwest corner has boarded walls separating it from the adjacent mow and the center aisle.

There are five principal bents, each featuring two posts along the exterior walls and aisles, each braced to a dropped transverse girt (or tie beam) with angled braces. A continuous plate (in two lengths joined with a keyed, lightning bolt scarf joint and reinforced with iron bands) is positioned atop the exterior wall posts. The girts are braced to the posts, and the posts are also braced up to the plate and down to the nailers which support the vertical sheathing on the walls. At present cables and tie-rods extend from plate to plate to prevent the side walls from bulging outward. The plates, posts and girts are hewn eight by eight inch beams and the braces are sawn. Mortise and tenon joinery is used to attach the principal structural members.

The roof system contains two ranks of sawn, four by six inch common rafters; five rafters per bent. The lower rank are shouldered onto the plate and the upper rank rest on two four by six inch planks which act as the curb plate. At each of the bent a long, almost vertical post rises from either side of the girts (exterior of the joint with the aisle posts) and supports the curb plate; a secondary brace is the positioned at a steep angle from this post back down to the girts. There is no ridge pole and the rafters appear to be face nailed together.

The framing scheme is repeated at the end walls, and light nailers have been installed in the center portion of the wall to provide support for the exterior sheathing. On both ends long wind braces intersect the girt and post joint and extend inward along the wall to a hefty nailer positioned about three feet above the sills. Another set of wind braces are positioned against the side walls and stretch from the sills to the joint between the posts exterior posts and the plates. Additional "X" configured wind bracing is installed in each side aisle in the second bay from the west.

Alterations.

As originally built, the south aisle contained the oxen and cow stalls, but they were removed by the end of World War II. During this same period, the barn had a shed addition on the south wall which was used to house pigs and chickens. This was removed in the 1940s.

Small house, pre 1910. (Contributing building)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

DUNCAN, BEECHER H., FARM

AROOSTOOK COUNTY, MAINE

Section number 7 Page 5

This building is located at the southeast corner of the property adjacent to the road. It is a one-and-one half story frame building with wood shingle siding and a deteriorated wood shingle roof. The remains of a brick chimney are just visible on the ridge at the center of the house. Two upper story windows are visible on the north gable end elevation, and the eaves have narrow rake trim and cornice returns. The house has not been occupied in decades and is almost fully engulfed by shrubs and sumac. The interior was not accessible.

Garage. Modern. (Non-contributing)

This wood frame, gable roof building faces south towards the driveway and is positioned immediately east of the end of the ell. Constructed in the late 1990s, it is covered with vinyl siding, has an asphalt roof and concrete foundation. A pedestrian door is located on the west elevation, and the south elevation contains two overhead garage doors. This building replaced an earlier outbuilding.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

DUNCAN, BEECHER H., FARM

AROOSTOOK COUNTY, MAINE

Section number 8 Page 2

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Located on a broad rolling plain at the northern edge of the town of Westfield, the Beecher H. Duncan Farm is a good example of a type of family farm that was established in Aroostook County in the early 20th century. The small collection of agricultural and residential buildings and fields were established by the Beecher family at a time when agricultural enterprises, especially the cultivation of potatoes, was rapidly developing, and large amounts land was available for sale. This small historic district includes a large gambrel roof hay barn (1910), a vernacular style house with Queen Anne stylistic elements, an earlier cottage used periodically to house workers on the farm and a broad expanse of agricultural fields.

National Register Criteria and Area of Significance

The Beecher H. Duncan Farm is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A in the area of agriculture as a property that reflects broad agricultural trends between 1904 and 1950 in Aroostook County. The property is a relatively intact example of a family farm that focused on growing potatoes and a few other crops during the heyday of potato farming in the county. The property also reflects the wholesale change from horse-powered farming to mechanized farming in the years before World War II. The property retains a high degree of integrity of setting, location, association, feeling, and design, and to a somewhat lesser degree, of materials and workmanship. Most of the interior changes made to the design of the barn occurred during the period of significance, and in the overall context of the district, the application of replacement siding on select elevations of the house and barn does not diminish the ability of these resources to convey their significance.

Period of Significance

The period of significance commences in 1904 and continues until c. 1950. The beginning date represents the purchase of the property by Henry C. Duncan. The end point of the period of significance reflects the approximate date by which alterations to the barn has been completed. The Duncan Farm continued to be actively farmed until 1970, but other than the loss of the potato house to fire in 1968, any changes to the resources within the district since 1950 have been minor.

Contributing Resources

The Beecher H. Duncan Farm contains three contributing buildings, all erected during or before the period of significance, and all of which contain enough integrity to contribute to the significance of the district. The contributing buildings are the pre-1906 cottage, the 1910 barn and the 1912 house. One contributing site, containing approximately 125 acres of agricultural fields and the remnants of an orchard, is also included within the district. The sole non-contributing resource is a two-car garage constructed in the late 20th century.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

DUNCAN, BEECHER H., FARM

AROOSTOOK COUNTY, MAINE

Section number 8 Page 3

History and Context

In 1904 Henry C. Beecher and his wife and children emigrated from Beasonsfield, New Brunswick to the Aroostook County town of Westfield. Westfield is located immediately south of Presque Isle, and was settled in the 1870s, with the earliest lots being established along the Prestile Stream in the northeastern part of the district. The town was organized out of Deerfield and Westfield Academy Grants, for election purposes, in 1861, and the population of the district was recorded as having 76 inhabitants in 1870. As late as 1877, as depicted in the Atlas of Aroostook County neither the northwestern portion of the town, labeled as the "Burleigh and White Wild Lands" or the "Powers, Madigan and Wellington Wild Lands" in the southeastern and southwestern quadrants had been surveyed or lotted. The population of the town grew slowly, from 74 residents in 1870 to 259 in 1900, and in 1893 the Plantation of Westfield was legalized. However, between 1900 and 1910 the number of residents increased by 250 percent, to 689 residents, and the Town was incorporated in 1905. This population growth occurred in part as the remaining sections of town were divided into lots and taken up by new farming families.

The property that Beecher purchased had first been sold by the large landowner Parker P. Burleigh to Henry and Stephen Tripp in 1895. According to Duncan family tradition, when Henry Duncan purchased the property it contained a small house, the cottage on the south side of the road and a potato barn built into a low mound located north of the house. The 1904 deed from Henry S. Tripp to Henry Duncan described the property as a 'piece or parcel of land with the building thereon situate in the North Division of the Plantation of Westfield...Lot number one (1), Range Eight (8)' and contained approximately 102 acres.¹ Sometime in the next 14 years Duncan also purchased the adjacent lot to the west, (Lot 1, Range 9) which contained an additional 100 acres, and a farm over the Presque Isle municipal boundary to the north.

The site for the Duncan homestead, located on the road near the center of the first parcel had been established by the Tripps, and a small portion of the adjoining fields had been cleared. That the land had already been planted to potatoes is supported by the presence of a potato house in 1904 and a small barn had been erected where the current garage is located. While the extant house was initially adequate for the family, the existing barn was insufficiently small. In 1910 Duncan built the large, west facing hay barn, and two years later he built a new home for the family. Tragically, Henry Duncan died in an accident in 1915 and his youngest son, Beecher (1897 - 1972) purchased the home farm from his mother and siblings.²

When Henry Duncan was establishing his farm he was aware of and extolling two important trends

¹Southern Aroostook County Registry of Deeds, Book 205, page 205.

²At some point Henry Duncan's son Milton lived on the farm in Presque Isle. According to family members, he lost that farm during the Depression, and then worked on the Beecher Duncan farm, and lived in the cottage on the south side of the road.

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

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

DUNCAN, BEECHER H., FARM

AROOSTOOK COUNTY, MAINE

Section number 8 Page 4

that characterized agriculture in central Aroostook County at the turn of the 20th century: mono-cultivation of potatoes, and the utilization of heavy work horses for power. The interrelationship of these trends is evident in the Duncan farm: in order to work extensive tracks of potato fields a farm needed several sets of strong work animals (horses were preferred to oxen in Aroostook County); in order to feed this livestock through the long winters the farm also needed to cultivate a significant acreage of hay. The large, gambrel roofed barn that Duncan built functioned both to shelter the horses and to store the farm's supply of hay and grain. In the decades before motorized farm equipment became economically feasible, a large hay barn was required to support any commercially oriented farm in the County.

The soils of eastern Aroostook County are especially well suited to the cultivation of potatoes as well as buckwheat, wheat and oats. By 1870 the county produced a greater quantity of these grains and grasses than any other county in the state. Although potato crops were large, the growth of this crop was limited by long access over bad road to larger markets. In the 1870s rail lines from Canada first entered the county, and immediately thereafter potatoes were shipped out to larger markets. The Bangor and Aroostook railroad finally opened through Houlton to Caribou and Fort Fairfield in 1894, with branches extending through the remainder of the county in the following years. As summarized by Clarence Day, in his history Farming in Maine 1860-1940, the effect of the rail road was immediate.

Nearly a thousand new farms were occupied between 1890 and 1900, and the value of land and buildings jumped from 7.5 to 11 million dollars. Potato acreage leaped from 16, 641 to 41,953 acres, and production increased two and one half times. Aroostook was growing more than half the potatoes in the state. The grain and hay crops shared in the increase...During the next ten years the area planted to potatoes increased to 75,738 acres and the yield to 17,514,491 bushels. (Page 131-2.)

There were three aspects to the potato industry in Aroostook County: market potatoes, seed potatoes and potatoes to be manufactured into starch. All three segments of the industry grew steadily through the first decades of the 20th century, as did potato merchants, farm suppliers, and starch factories.

The boom in the potato industry had a marked effect on the economy of Aroostook County. Men who had planted three or four acres of potatoes annually increased their acreage to 15 or 20; men who had been planting 15 or 20 increased to 50 or more. Most farmers adopted a definite system of crop rotation of potatoes followed by grain and hay, with a large proportion of clover in the hay. Thus the acreage of grain and hay also increased and more land was brought under cultivation, all subordinated to the potato dynasty. In 1910 more oats were grown in Aroostook than in all the rest of the state. It was during this period that farmers began buying the heavy work horses from the West for which the county became famous. (Day, p. 133-4)

This is the context in which the Duncan family established their farm and built their hay barn. According to Gerald Duncan, each year his father and grandfather generally sowed 50 acres of potatoes and 50

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

DUNCAN, BEECHER H., FARM

AROOSTOOK COUNTY, MAINE

Section number 8 Page 5

acres to hay and or oats, and allowed the remainder to lay fallow for a year. The family kept three cows and a few chickens for family use, and two teams of horses to work the fields. In addition to the family members who worked the farm, Duncan employed a hired man in spring and summer to work plant potatoes, and spray and fertilize the crops. During harvest they hired migrant workers, often including Native American, who would be put up in the cottage.

When Duncan erected his barn he chose to erect a structure in what had become the preferred form for hay barns and dairy barns in the growing portions of the state. Although a handful of gambrel roof barns have dotted the Maine landscape since the early nineteenth century, it was not until the last decades of the century that a change over to this form of agricultural outbuilding occurred on a large scale. As summarized by historian Thomas Visser:

By the late nineteenth century some New England farmers were building their bank barns [barns with high cellars] with gambrel roofs. Also known as a curb roof, the double slopes of the gambrel offer more volume in the hayloft, without increasing the height of the side walls. As *The Cultivator and County Gentleman* observed in 1871: *Many farmers prefer the curb roof to their barns, as being more compact in shape, or possessing more capacity for the exterior covering employed. The greater height above the plates forms no objection where the pitching is done by the horse-fork...In order that the horse-fork may be used freely, the cross-timbers above the cross-beams are entirely omitted, except at the ends or outside.* (Page 82-83)

In general, gambrel roof barns were erected by those agriculturalists in Maine who had made a shift from diversified family farming to commercial farming, or for whom putting by a large store of fodder and bedding was otherwise a necessity. The efficiency of gambrel roof barns was touted in the agricultural press and designs for examples large and small were offered in builders' guides such as William A. Radford's Radford's Practical Barn Plans. Nationwide, building and contracting companies, including the Gordan-Van Tine Co., of Davenport Iowa, perfected a gambrel roof system comprised of sawn trusses without any interior posts in the loft areas. (Both gambrel roofs and 'Gothic' style, pointed curve roofs were designed using this sort of truss.) Sears & Roebuck Catalog sold barn kits, which were shipped by rail, included all the necessary materials, and could be customized for size. Neither Henry nor Beecher Duncan kept more than a few dairy cows - their need for a large capacity of hay was instead related both to the length of Maine's winters and to the voracious appetites of their work horses. While the low-lying potato sheds or potato barns that were found on most of the potato producing farms in the county (including the Duncan farm until it burned) may be the most common symbol of the region's agricultural history, the hay barn was an integral feature of these farms in the years before mechanization. After tractors became almost universally utilized these large barns became obsolete, and many of them were taken down or allowed to fall into neglect.

By 1929 Maine not only grew more potatoes than any other state, Aroostook County grew more potatoes than any state but Maine. Different portions of the county had different approaches to the crop: central Aroostook County, including Westfield focused almost exclusively on potatoes, while the

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

DUNCAN, BEECHER H., FARM

AROOSTOOK COUNTY, MAINE

Section number 8 Page 6

farmers in the northern and southern sections of the county were more diversified, often supplementing their potato fields with sheep or dairy. Although the depression years were hard on Maine potato farmers, by the late 1930s the market price for potatoes had become stable, and once the second World War started the acres of potatoes vastly outnumbered the amount of labor needed to harvest them.

A few years before the start of World War II Beecher H. Duncan purchased his first gasoline powered tractor; a second (Massey Harris) followed in 1944. By the end of the war Duncan had sold his work horses and removed the stalls in the barn. (He also removed the poultry shed that was attached to the south side of the barn at this same time.) From this point until he stopped farming in 1970 the barn was utilized to store the farm's mechanized equipment. While some of the fields were still sown to hay this was sold as a cash crop rather than utilized for livestock. Just before Duncan died in 1972 he sold 70 acres at the west end of the farm to his son Jack, and the remainder, including the buildings and the fields, to his son Gerald. Since that time the fields have remained in cultivation, albeit leased to surrounding farmers, and the house has been used only seasonally. Within the last few years a local farmer has been using the barn again for the storage of hay and straw, and some of the fields are now used as pasture for a herd of cattle.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

DUNCAN, BEECHER H., FARM

AROOSTOOK COUNTY, MAINE

Section number 9 Page 2

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Roe, F. B. and N. George Colby. Atlas of Aroostook County, Maine. (Philadelphia: Roe & Colby), 1877.

Day, Clarence A. Farming in Maine, 1860 - 1940. University of Maine Studies, Second Series, No. 78. (Orono, Maine: University of Maine Press), 1963.

Deeds, various years. Southern Aroostook County Registry of Deeds. Aroostook County Courthouse, Houlton, Maine.

Maine Register, State Year-Book and Legislative Manual. (Portland, Maine: Greenville M. Donham), various years, 1900 - 1950.

Radford, William A., ed. Radford's Practical Barn Plans Being a Complete Collection of Practical, Economical and Common Sense Plans of Barns, Out Buildings and Stock Sheds. (Chicago: The Radford Architectural Co.), 1909.

Varney, George. J. A Gazetteer of the State of Maine. (Boston: B.B. Russell), 1882.

Visser, Thomas Durant. Field Guide to New England Barns and Farm Buildings. (Hanover, NH: University Press of New England), 1997.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

DUNCAN, BEECHER H., FARM

AROOSTOOK COUNTY, MAINE

Section number 10 Page 2

UTM's, continued

5. 19/ 577150 / 5160473

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The nominated property includes 129 as defined by the Town of Westfield tax map 8, lots 17 and 19.

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

The above described parcels represent all the property currently associated with the Beecher H. Duncan Farm. A 70 acre parcel of wood lot that was part of the original bounds of the farm was sold to the brother of the current owner in 1970 and is not included within the current nomination.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places

Continuation Sheet

DUNCAN, BEECHER H., FARM

AROOSTOOK COUNTY, MAINE

Section number _____ Page _____

PHOTOGRAPHS

ME_AROOSTOOK COUNTY_DUNCAN, BEECHER H, FARM_001.TIF

Photograph 1 of 4

Christi A. Mitchell

Maine Historic Preservation Commission

13 June 2008

West and south elevations, house and barn; facing east.

ME_AROOSTOOK COUNTY_DUNCAN, BEECHER H, FARM_002.TIF

Photograph 2 of 4

Christi A. Mitchell

Maine Historic Preservation Commission

13 June 2008

Duncan barn, west and south elevations; facing northeast.

ME_AROOSTOOK COUNTY_DUNCAN, BEECHER H, FARM_003.TIF

Photograph 3 of 4

Christi A. Mitchell

Maine Historic Preservation Commission

13 June 2008

Duncan farm and fields; facing northwest.

ME_AROOSTOOK COUNTY_DUNCAN, BEECHER H, FARM_004.TIF

Photograph 4 of 4

Christi A. Mitchell

Maine Historic Preservation Commission


13 June 2008


Interior of barn showing framing; facing west.

Duncan, Beecher H., Farm; Aroostook County, Maine

Sketch Map

Key to Photographs

 Approximate boundary of district

 Photograph number and direction

1" = 550 feet (approx.)

19 December 2008

