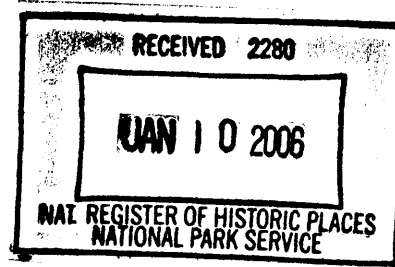


**United States Department of Interior
National Park Service**



**National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form**

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

1. Name of Property

historic name Saxonia House
other names/site number Klessig, Ernst and Liberta, House

2. Location

street & number 421 County Highway H N/A not for publication
city or town Town of Farmington N/A vicinity
state Wisconsin code WI county Washington code 131 zip code 53021

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] Date January 6, 2006
Signature of certifying official/Title
State Historic Preservation Officer-WI

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 official/Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

Saxonia House
Name of Property

Washington County
County and State

Wisconsin

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.
 See continuation sheet.
 removed from the National Register.
 other, (explain):

Edson H. Beall

2/22/06

Jan
Signature of the 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
 structure
 site
 object

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

| contributing | noncontributing |
|--------------|-----------------|
| 1 | 3 buildings |
| 2 | 1 sites |
| 1 | 1 structures |
| | objects |
| 4 | 5 total |

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

N/A

Number of contributing resources is previously listed in the National Register

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC/single dwelling
AGRICULTURE/SUBSISTANCE/ANIMAL FACILITY
INDUSTRY/ manufacturing facility

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

VACANT/NOT IN USE

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

MID-19TH CENTURY/Greek Revival

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

Foundation Stone

walls Brick

Stucco

roof Asphalt

other Wood

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 the National Register listing.)

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

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

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

Areas of Significance
(Enter categories from instructions)

ETHNIC HERITAGE: European
ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance

1855-1865

Significant Dates

1855

Significant Person
(Complete if Criterion B is marked)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

N/A

Narrative Statement of Significance

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

Saxonia House
Name of Property

Washington County
County and State

Wisconsin

9. Major Bibliographic References

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

Previous Documentation on File (National Park Service):

- 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:

- X State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State Agency
- Federal Agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository:

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 7.78 acres

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

1 16 414585 4816612
Zone Easting Northing

3 _____
Zone Easting Northing

2 _____
Zone Easting Northing

4 _____
Zone Easting Northing

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 Carol Lohry Cartwright, Consultant
Organization For Isthmus Architects
street & number W7646 Hackett Rd.
city or town Whitewater

state WI

date August 8, 2005
telephone 262-473-6820
zip code 53190

Saxonia House
Name of Property

Washington County
County and State

Wisconsin

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/title | | | | | |
| organization | Friends of the Saxonia House, Inc. | date | August 8, 2005 | | |
| street&number | 2426 N. Lexington Dr. | telephone | | | |
| city or town | Janesville | state | WI | zip code | 53545 |

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

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects, (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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Section 7 Page 1

Saxonia House
Washington County, Wisconsin

Start description on line below

GENERAL DESCRIPTION

The Saxonia House is a mid-nineteenth century, ethnic German, half-timber building that is part of a complex that includes three outbuildings, three sites, and two structures. The original Saxonia House was built by German immigrants Ernst and Liberta Klessig in the mid-nineteenth century and functioned as an inn and tavern. The Klessigs built a brewery (site) with a nearby brewery cave and a smokehouse/summer kitchen (site). The barn, silo, and other outbuildings were later additions built by the Klessig family and later owners when the property expanded its agricultural focus. The current Saxonia House complex sits on a large, almost eight acre site that provides an appropriate historic context for the contributing buildings, sites and structure.

The Saxonia House complex is located in the town of Farmington on the far eastern outskirts of the tiny unincorporated village of Fillmore. Fillmore and the town of Farmington are located in the far northeastern corner of Washington County, an urban-rural county in southeastern Wisconsin. This area of the county has remained primarily rural, although suburban pressures are moving up from the southeastern part of the county, a dense suburban area located near the northwestern edge of the City of Milwaukee.

The standing resources of the complex include the large half-timber constructed and stucco-covered Saxonia House (C), a large basement barn (NC) with a poured concrete silo (NC) and small concrete block milk house (NC), a shed/garage outbuilding (NC), and a large, brick-constructed brewery cave (C). It also includes the sites of a brick smokehouse (C), of an agricultural outbuilding (NC), and of a brewery (C). The complex is surrounded by large open spaces bordered on the north by County Highway H and on the east and south by agricultural and open land. Southwest of the house is a rise in an agricultural field that is covered with volunteer shrubs and trees. This is the location of the brewery cave. To the west of the complex is a modern residence with a large, landscaped lot.

A large lawn surrounds the Saxonia House on three sides. It is almost flat with a gentle rise toward the back of the house toward the barn. The land then gently sweeps down before rising again. In front of the house, the lawn is narrow due to the relatively shallow setback of the house from the highway. There are few formal landscape features of the property. A few large conifers sit in front of the house near the county highway and there are a few woody shrubs near the side elevations of the house. There are some volunteer shrubs near the vacant barn and silo. A well-worn gravel driveway runs from the highway along the west elevation of the house to the garage/shed, then back toward the barn.

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Saxonia House
Washington County, Wisconsin

RESOURCES OF THE SAXONIA HOUSE

House, 1855 (Contributing)

Exterior

The Saxonia House is a two-story building with a rectangular side-gable plan and architectural details that suggest the Greek Revival style and some details that suggest European classicism. The building has a moderately-pitched gable roof covered with asphalt shingles. A historic photograph shows that the roof was originally covered with wood shingles and there were two large brick corbelled chimneys that projected above the roof peak that are not extant. The walls of the building are of German "fachwerkbau" or half-timber construction with large horizontal, vertical, and diagonal beams providing the wall structure. The half-timber infill consists of kiln-fired red bricks. The entire building is covered with stucco, which was its original covering.

The building has symmetrical fenestration filled with a combination of six-over-six, nine-over-six, or one-over-one light, double-hung sashes. Historic photographs indicate that original windows were six-over-six or nine-over-six light sashes, but during the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries, some of these windows were replaced with single-light sashes or other modern openings. The windows are surrounded by wood frames and topped with rough timber lintels. The upper windows are decorated with cornice moldings.

The main architectural elements of the building, aside from the symmetrical multi-light openings, appear on the main or north elevation. At the center of this elevation is a tall frontispiece topped with a pedimented gable that projects from the roof. This frontispiece suggests a Georgian style entry pavilion. The pediment gable has a lunette that is covered by a wood panel. "Supporting" the pediment were two very tall pilasters that are now cut off about half way down the wall. Over the entrance within the frontispiece is a tripartite opening or modified Palladian window. It is filled with a six-over-six-light central sash flanked by divided light sidelights encased in a wooden surround with a cornice molding. Under this opening is the main entrance that originally consisted of a single wooden entry door topped with a transom and flanked with wide multi-light sidelights. The sidelights are extant, but the door and transom have been enclosed with a mid-twentieth century door and wood paneling.

The outline of a small front porch can be seen above the entrance. A historic photograph shows that this porch was added prior to 1900, but was probably not original to the house. It is unclear if the house had an original porch. The nineteenth century porch had a hip roof supported by thin square

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Saxonia House

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Washington County, Wisconsin

posts decorated with scroll brackets and a cutout frieze. Although the porch probably had a wooden deck, it was replaced in the twentieth century with a concrete slab that is still extant, but in poor condition.

On the main, or north, elevation, the symmetrical multi-light fenestration is largely intact. An exception is just west of the main entrance on the first story. There, two openings were removed in the 1980s for a "picture" style window with a large single pane flanked by two narrow sashes. An opening to the west of the picture window is filled with a single-light sash.

On the east elevation, only one of the four openings retains some of its original multi-light sash; the other openings are filled with single-light sashes. A double attic opening is boarded up with plywood. The west elevation's symmetrical fenestration is different from the east elevation. On this elevation, both the first and second story window openings are filled with paired multi-light sashes. On the first story, the sashes have nine-over-six lights. On the second story, the sashes have six-over-six light glazing. This original glazing is largely intact, but the double attic windows are boarded up with plywood.

The rear or south elevation has seen the most changes. Originally the eastern third of this elevation was covered by a one and one-half story gable-roofed ell with the same construction details and similar fenestration as the main block. It is unclear when this part of the building was demolished, but it was prior to 1912. Today, this portion of the south elevation is plain with only an entrance on the first story that was once the access between the main block and the rear ell. It is enclosed with a modern door. To the west of this door there is a small modern opening that replaced a nine-over-six-light sash.

The remainder of the south elevation retains most of the symmetrical fenestration of the original main block. However, the multi-light original sashes have been replaced with single-light sashes and, in the 1980s, both an entrance and historic opening on the first story were removed for a modern "patio" style door that sits approximately in the center of where these two openings were once located. Originally, a decorative porch covered the aforementioned entrance, but today, there is a very roughly constructed overhang that covers the patio door and extends to the other entrance on this elevation. This overhang has a flat roof supported by plain posts. A photograph from around 1870 shows the original appearance of this part of the building and is an excellent reference for future restoration.

Interior

The interior of the house is complex, due to its size and floor plan, but, overall, both floors have a general division of living space equally divided on each side of a central staircase (on the first floor)

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Saxonia House
Washington County, Wisconsin

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and hall (on the second floor). A plan of both floors is included in this nomination and will be useful in understanding room placement on both floors. In general, the living spaces were (and still are on the second floor) interconnected and flowed off of the central hall and staircase. On the first floor there is a kitchen behind the staircase and on the second floor, there is a hall and bedroom.

First Floor Details

Upon entering the house through the main entrance on the north elevation, one steps into a rectangular foyer that is lighted by the extant sidelights. The foyer has been remodeled with some wood paneling, moldings, a composite tile floor, and wallboard, all from the mid-twentieth century. Originally, the foyer was larger and the now-enclosed staircase was open. In the mid-twentieth century, part of the foyer was enclosed for a bathroom, which also resulted in the enclosure of the staircase.

To the left of the now-enclosed staircase is an entrance into the east half of the first floor. This side of the house includes four rooms and a large rear hall. The first room just east of the foyer may have originally been a parlor or public room. It has plaster walls partially covered with vintage wallpaper and a plaster ceiling. The floor is covered with the same mid-twentieth century tile flooring seen in the foyer. Simple raised moldings decorate the doors and windows of the room, and there are similar molded baseboards.

Similar decoration was used in the room that sits to the east of the first parlor, reached through a four-paneled wooden door with period hardware. Possibly another original parlor in the mid-twentieth century, this room was part of a three-room suite and apartment that included the two small rooms behind it. This larger "parlor" also has plaster walls with some extant vintage wallpaper and the door trim around its windows is identical to that of the previous parlor. Wide baseboards trim a wide-board wooden floor. Some trim has been removed from the doors to the first parlor and to the rooms in back.

The two rooms in back of the second parlor were once a single room. A twentieth century partition divided the space. Both of these rooms are in poor condition. Some walls and ceilings are unfinished, while others have a coat of deteriorating plaster. Both rooms have extant wide board floors, wide baseboards and the same raised moldings around the windows as seen in the "parlors."

The back hall includes a door leading into the first parlor that is east of the foyer, a door leading into the kitchen west of the back hall, and a door that leads outside, but once led into the rear ell. The partial wall in the back hall was once a full wall, making the original hall much narrower and other elements of this rear space have been altered, including the entrance into the kitchen. Some old plaster is still extant, but other wall spaces are not covered and most of the original architectural features of the

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Saxonia House
Washington County, Wisconsin

space have been lost.

The kitchen lies mostly behind the central staircase in the floor plan. The kitchen had its most recent and significant remodeling in the 1980s when walls were removed, new sheetrock wall coverings were applied, and modern cabinets and plumbing were installed. The kitchen floor was also carpeted and this carpeting was extended into the dining and living rooms on the west side of the house.

The west half of the first floor of the house has had some floor plan alterations, and the most remodeling, primarily done during the 1980s when the kitchen was remodeled. The large dining area no longer has a wall separating it from the kitchen. The other walls and ceiling of the dining area have been covered with modern sheetrock. The modern ceiling extends into the large living room, which is also open to the dining room. At one time, there was a wall between the living and dining rooms and arched double entry doors covered the opening between the two rooms. Unlike the dining room, the walls of the living room are covered with modern wood paneling. Throughout the living-dining room area, all doors and moldings are modern.

Along the west wall of the living-dining rooms, there are two bedrooms that were modernized in the 1980s. In between is an enclosed staircase that dates from an earlier remodeling effort. The staircase took space from the southern bedroom and leads to an upstairs bedroom. The two downstairs bedrooms have modern wall surfaces, flooring, and trim around doors and windows. Across from these bedrooms is a bathroom that sits along the east wall of the living room and its entrance is open to this part of the house. It was apparently added in the late 1930s and was remodeled in the 1980s. Its modern fixtures date from that era.

Second Floor Details

The second floor interior plan has had very few alterations. Its floor plan includes a hallway and central staircase at the center of the floor with a separate hallway and bedroom located behind it. There are four bedrooms on the west half of the floor and two bedrooms and a large attic on the east half of the floor. Most of the bedrooms can only be reached by passing through a preceding bedroom. Only one bedroom (B-3) was given a private entrance by way of the enclosed staircase that was installed from the first floor. Originally the bedrooms had no closets. Two bedrooms (B-2 and B-3) have later-added closets.

Bedrooms B-1, B-5, and B-6 can all be reached from the central hall. Bedrooms B-2, B-4, and B-7 can only be reached by going through the previous three bedrooms. Bedroom B-3 was originally only reached by going through both B-1 and B-2, but the new staircase provided a private option. On the

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Saxonia House
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north side of the hall is another small room that may have been a bedroom, but none of the living family members who lived in the house in the twentieth century can remember it being used as such. It is possible that it was a small sitting or workroom and has been marked as such. One person who lived in the house prior to World War II remembers it as a storage room.

All of the second floor rooms, except for the large southeast room (B-8), have similar details. They have old, probably original, plaster walls and ceilings. Floors are made up of irregular-sized wide boards. Trim around doors and windows is simple, composed of flat boards. Medium-sized flat boards make up the baseboards. All of the trim is painted white except in bedroom B-1, which also has a painted floor. Closets were added to bedrooms B-2 and B-3 and one side of the doors was given a wood-grain decoration. Most bedroom entrances have four-panel wood doors with period hardware. The entry door to B-6 is an old barn-like door built of vertical wood board held together with horizontal wood straps. It has John Klessig's (son of the original owners) initials and the date 1893 scratched into its surface. Finally, bedroom B-3 has the unusual opening and a railing for the staircase. The railing is in the Craftsman style, as are the doors in these two rooms, with five horizontal panels instead of four.

What is most interesting about the second floor plan is its symmetry on the north and south halves of the floorplan. Bedrooms B-4 and B-5, and B-6 and B-7, are mirror copies of each other in size and placement. These bedrooms and the central hall and sitting room give the north half of the second floor a symmetrical plan. The south half of the second floor does not appear to be as symmetrical because the three bedrooms B-1, B-2, and B-3 are different sizes, as is the attic. But, the attic is the same size as bedrooms B-2 and B-3 together, and the hallway and bedroom B-1 take up the same central space as the staircase, hall, and sitting room on the north side, giving the south half of the second floor a symmetry of its own.

The southeast room, B-8, is a mostly unfinished space where the half-timber construction of the house can clearly be seen. The large vertical, horizontal, and diagonal timbers of the structure are visible and the kiln-fired red brick infill can be seen because only a small part of the walls are covered with rough stucco. The floor is made up of wide boards and there is no ceiling, so the large rafters and timber-frame construction of the upper part of the building are exposed.

Above the second floor is a full attic. It is reached by an enclosed staircase off of an interior hallway of the second floor. The staircase is covered with a simple four-panel wood door with a small strap hinge. A small step up is required to access the staircase door.

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Saxonia House
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Basement

The basement is not typical of average basements or root cellars. It has stone walls and a poured concrete floor, but two rooms have an unusual detail, a large brick-constructed arched ceiling. The openings are also arched and immensely thick due to the massive brick ceilings. There are two other houses in the area that feature this unusual construction technique.

Other Buildings/Structures/Sites

Basement Barn, c.1880 (NC)

The large basement barn sits well behind the house. It has an artificially banked ramp on the north elevation that leads to the upper level storage area. The barn foundation, constructed of fieldstones, has a number of window and door openings. These openings are largely irregular in size and filled with a combination of historic multi-light glazing, modern single-light glazing, or are enclosed with wood. Doors are primarily made up of vertical wood boards and are either swinging or sliding.

The upper level of the barn has a long low-pitched gable roof. The walls are clad with large vertical boards and vertical boards make up the large sliding doors on both the north and south elevations. A few other small openings provide ventilation for this area of the barn.

A fieldstone retaining wall sits several feet back from the south elevation. It supported a banked earthen ramp that gave access from the ground to the large openings of the second story on the barn's south elevation.

Milk House, c. 1920 (NC)

Attached to the northwest corner of the barn is the milk house. This addition, probably from the early twentieth century, is a one-story structure made of concrete blocks. It has a gable roof and a west side entrance with flanking six-light openings.

Silo, c. 1920 (NC)

The silo is attached to the east elevation of the barn by a narrow fieldstone ell. The poured concrete structure has an extant pent roof with projecting ventilation dormers.

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Saxonia House
Washington County, Wisconsin

Shed/Garage, c. 1910 (NC)

This one-story rectangular building was probably constructed as a shed with a portion used for poultry raising. The building has a gable roof and its walls are covered with vertical boards. Vertical boards make up the large sliding door on the east elevation. Small openings sit in both the gable peaks and there are two large openings flanking a door in the south elevation. The large openings are filled with a combination of multi-light and single-light sashes, as well as single horizontal panes. These large windows may have provided the "solar" heat and light for raising poultry in this portion of the shed. The separate south elevation door and another door in the south end of the east elevation, along with two small windows on both the east and west elevations suggest that this was a separate part of the building that needed extra light.

Brewery Cave, c. 1860 (C)

The Saxonia House operated a brewery that was built in 1860. The extant brewery cave was probably constructed around that time. The cave currently sits at the southwest corner of the property, several hundred yards from the house and near where the original brewery stood. The cave was hand-excavated and was built with a fieldstone front entry wall and an arched brick interior ceiling. Dirt was placed over the entire structure, except for the front wall, to provide temperature control. Over the years, grass and brush have grown to cover this structure that now resembles an overgrown mound.

On close inspection, the front wall with the cave entrance is visible and is covered by an arched, fieldstone-constructed, overhang. Limestones decorate the exterior of the arch. The entrance to the cave is covered with modern plywood doors that seal it from damage. According to local sources, the interior cave floor was originally clad with flagstones that have mostly been removed, and ventilation ducts are still extant.

Summer Kitchen/Smokehouse ruin, c.1855 (C)

The smokehouse was an integral part of German immigrant living and the Saxonia House smokehouse was probably built at or near the time the house was constructed. It was a small rectangular building with a gable roof and early kiln-fired red brick walls. In 2004, a windstorm toppled the building, which was in fragile condition. The Friends of the Saxonia House, Inc., the current owners, plan to accurately reconstruct the smokehouse.

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Saxonia House
Washington County, Wisconsin

Brewery Site, 1860 (C)

Ernst Klessig founded the Farmington Brewery in 1860. It was located in the area between the smokehouse and the barn. The Farmington Brewery operated on this site until about 1890, but the building was removed in 1994 creating the brewery site. The brewery was a barn like building with a masonry first floor and wood framed and sided second and third floors. Long range plans include the reconstruction of the building.

Existing is a small part of the foundation that shows an outline of where the brewery was located. Because of its importance to the ethnic heritage of the property, it is a contributing site.

Outbuilding Site, date unknown (NC)

Just west of the barn is a small fieldstone foundation. The foundation is raised in a manner typical of granary construction, although the original purpose of the building is unknown. Because little information about the age or use of the building is unknown, the foundation is a non-contributing resource of the property. The outbuilding site is outside the period of significance but included in the count as it is a known resource which adds to the agricultural history of this property.

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Continuation Sheet**

Section 8 Page 1

Saxonia House
Washington County, Wisconsin

___ Insert Statement of Significance

SIGNIFICANCE¹

The Saxonia House complex is being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places under criteria A and C. It is being nominated under criterion A for its local historical significance as a property that represents the significant German ethnic heritage in this area of northeastern Washington County. Germans were the largest foreign group to come to Wisconsin and by 1850, about half of the population of Washington County was German. Ernst and Liberta Klessig were part of the mid-nineteenth century wave of German immigration to Washington County and brought their German traditions to their new home. They built a distinctly German fachwerkbau, or half-timber, house and used it as a meeting place for activities related to the local German ethnic community. They were commercial entrepreneurs, operating an inn and tavern, and built and operated a distinctly German enterprise, a brewery. Germans were significant in the development of southeastern Wisconsin and the Saxonia House is an important resource related to German ethnic heritage in the area.

The Saxonia House complex is also being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places at the state level under criterion C. The house is one of the finest and largest examples in Wisconsin of an important German ethnic method of construction, fachwerkbau or half-timber construction. Many Germans brought their building tradition of half-timber construction to Wisconsin. These buildings are distinctive in their timber framing and infill of primarily bricks or masonry or mud and straw. Over the years, many of these German fachwerkbau buildings were lost. The Saxonia House, due to its size and high level of construction methods and materials, and its good integrity, is significant as one of the best examples of half-timber construction in the state.

An important resource of the Saxonia House complex is the brewery cave, which is architecturally significant for its type of construction, an underground storage structure for the lagging and storage of beer. The Saxonia House's brewery cave is largely intact and its brick and stone construction is distinctive. It is an important example of an industrial structure related to the ethnic German tradition of brewing.

¹ This footnote corresponds to the Dates of Construction of the Saxonia House. The best source for the Saxonia House history is Lisa Lickel, "Saxonia House—Cradle of Fillmore," unpublished manuscript on file with the Friends of the Saxonia House and the author. This article is a meticulously researched history of the property from written accounts and oral history from people who lived on the property during the twentieth century.

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Continuation Sheet**

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The period of significance begins in 1855 with the construction of the Saxonia House and ends in 1865, the year Liberta Klessig remarried and her second husband converted the property from an inn to a single family home which took in boarders.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF THE SAXONIA HOUSE

The Saxonia House is in Washington County, a location of large German settlement in the nineteenth century. The Town of Farmington, in the far northwest corner of the county was originally a part of a much larger town known as West Bend. In 1847, the town (originally named Clarence) was set off from the larger town and since 1848 was known as Farmington. Like most of southeastern Wisconsin, Yankees were the earliest settlers, but during the 1850s, a considerable number of German immigrants settled in the town. There were enough German immigrants in the town by 1860 to have established German Lutheran and German Methodist churches, a literary society, the Farmington Humanitaets Verein, and an early Turnverein, a physical wellness and social organization. By 1877, there was even a German fraternal organization in this largely rural town, the Sons of Hermann.²

Settlers in the Town of Farmington developed only two small communities, the tiny village of Fillmore and the slightly larger Boltonville. It was very close to Fillmore that German immigrants Ernst and Liberta Klessig built the Saxonia House, perhaps expecting their inn and brewery to be part of an important community of the future. However, Fillmore never grew beyond a small village. By 1880, it only had two stores, two blacksmiths, a wagon shop, a town hall, a school, and two cheese factories. It was clearly a rural crossroads village serving the needs of local farmers and little more. But, the town developed a dairy industry at an early stage, an industry that made local farmers prosperous, if not Fillmore itself. By 1880, there were at least six cheese factories in the town of Farmington, suggesting that the local farmers had made a transition to cash dairying, the agriculture of the future.³

When Ernst and Liberta Klessig came to Fillmore, it was a tiny settlement where they would soon make their mark. Ernst Klessig was the thirteenth of 22 children born to Johann and Johanna Klessig. Born in 1827, Ernst came to the United States in 1845, entering the country at New Orleans and migrating to Wisconsin by 1846. By this time, several German immigrant families had settled near Fillmore and following the German tradition of settling near other Germans, Ernst decided to acquire land close to the village. He returned to Germany to bring four of his brothers and a sister to the United States and they settled further north in southeastern Manitowoc County.⁴

² *History of Washington and Ozaukee Counties, Wisconsin*, Chicago: Western Historical Company, 1881, pp. 428-435.

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 431-432.

⁴ Lickel, p. 1.

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Official church records of St. Martin's Lutheran Church, where the Klessigs were members, indicates that Ernst permanently settled in Fillmore in 1848. He built a log cabin that he eventually made the size of three cabins. Since the Klessigs operated a store, inn, and post office in the Saxonia House after it was built in 1854-55, it is likely that Ernst also ran a similar business in his old log cabin. (It was rumored that Klessig tried a larger hotel in Fredonia between 1850 and 1853, but this has not been substantiated.) Like many immigrants, Klessig pursued business interests along with farming in the new world.⁵

In 1848, (Christine) Liberta Poetzsch came to the area with her family, and in 1850, when she was 17, she married Ernst Klessig. After four years, the Klessigs decided to build a new home instead of adding on to the log cabin once again. The Klessigs built their new house in the German half-timber building tradition known as *fachwerkbau*. Completed around 1855, the 17-room Saxonia House included room to operate an inn or rooming house, a tavern, and a meeting hall.⁶

Fortunately, a personal letter written by a family friend of the Klessigs was saved and it provides the exact date of construction for the Saxonia House. On February 8, 1855, Gottlieb Gruhle wrote to his father back in Germany that "Ernst Klessig is building a house this year." Gruhle added that the cost was \$3,000 and that it had been started the previous year. Although Gruhle wrote that he did not think the home would be completed in 1855 at the rate Klessig was building, in November of that year, there was a celebration of the home's completion. At the celebration, a song written about the new building was presented to the group. The lyrics suggested that the old log cabin was too small and that instead of adding on to it, Klessig decided to build a new house. The framing, infilling with bricks, carpentry, and plastering were all referred to in the song, a fitting tribute to an impressive new home.⁷

And impressive it was, with a two-story main block of 72 by 35 feet and a long one and one-half story ell projecting off of the rear wall. The post and beam timber frame structure had an infill of soft, locally produced, reddish brick and the entire exterior was stucco-covered, including the timbers. A classical frontispiece with projecting pediment accented the front entrance, and along with the stucco covering, gave the house an almost European "manor house" appearance. The size and style of the new house must have been striking to people in the area, where Germans were building in the *fachwerkbau* tradition, but rarely on such a large scale and with such fine details.

⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 1-3.

⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 2-3.

⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 1-3.

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In 1860, Ernst Klessig built a brewery near the Saxonia House known as the Farmington Brewery. The building measured 18 by 30 feet and stood until 1994. To the south, Klessig had a brewery cave constructed, which is still extant. The cave consisted of two separate sections, each with a vaulted brick ceiling. Only the arched opening is visible behind overgrown brush and trees. The cave was a necessity of the brewery operation for lagering and for storage of beer.⁸

According to the 1860 manuscript census for the Town of Farmington, Klessig had a substantial brewing operation going in 1860. According to the industry schedule, the "Ernst Klessig Brewery" had a capital of \$2,000 and produced 500 barrels of beer that year using 1,000 bushels of malt and 400 pounds of hops. There were three employees recorded in the schedule. The brewery operation could not be found in the 1870 manuscript census. At that time, the brewery would probably have been run by Liberta Klessig's second husband, Ernst Jaehnig, who Liberta married after Ernst Klessig died in 1864. It is known that the brewery was operating in 1879, as tax records indicate a production of 741 barrels, and the brewery is noted in the 1881 county history. It is not known how long the brewery ran after that. Jaehnig died in 1874, but Liberta's son, John Klessig, took over the farm and, probably, the brewery until it closed, most likely prior to 1890.⁹

The brewery was possibly the Klessigs' most notable commercial achievement, but at the same time, the couple was operating a fairly large and successful farm, and not just producing grain for their beer. In 1860, the agriculture schedule of the census reported that the 80-acre Klessig farm was a diversified operation. Production included a mix of wheat, rye, corn, oats, barley, and hay. The animals included five milk cows, seven other cattle, and seven pigs. In 1870, the farm output was similar, except Ernst Jaehnig had replaced Ernst Klessig as head of the household. By 1880, Jaehnig had also died and Liberta Klessig was running the farm with her children. The farm was still a diversified operation, but the family was participating in the emerging dairy industry and contributed 1,800 gallons of milk that year to one of the many cheese factories located in the town.¹⁰

Along with the brewery and farm, the Klessigs made the Saxonia House a center of German ethnic life in the Fillmore area during the late 1850s and early 1860s. The local German Lutheran Church, St. Martin's, was organized at the Saxonia House in 1860, and the earliest meetings for the Farmington

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 3.

⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 3-4; *History of Washington and Ozaukee Counties*, p. 432; Manuscript Census for the Town of Farmington, Washington County, WI, 1860, 1870, and 1880, Industry Schedules, on file in the Library of the Wisconsin Historical Society, Madison, Wisconsin.

¹⁰ Manuscript census for the Town of Farmington, Washington County, WI, 1860, 1870, 1880, agriculture schedules, on file in the Library of the Wisconsin Historical Society, Madison, Wisconsin.

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Turnverein were held there in 1857. The Klessigs ran a tavern along with their inn and the building was reportedly used for local meetings and activities.¹¹

When Ernst Klessig died in March of 1864 at only age 37, Liberta, age 31, was left with the thriving Saxonia House and Farmington Brewery, but also with several small children. She contacted Ernst Jaehnig, a local man who was then living in California, and informed him of her situation. Jaehnig moved back to Wisconsin and in 1865, the two were married. Jaehnig concentrated on the farm operation, closing the tavern and using the many bedrooms for occasional boarders. He and Liberta's son, John Klessig, kept the brewery running as an additional means of income. The large house was convenient for the family, which included the five Klessig children, plus two more from the union of Liberta and Ernst Jaehnig.¹²

When Jaehnig died in 1874, Liberta's son John Klessig was old enough to help his mother run the farm and brewery. The farm continued to prosper and John Klessig apparently became more interested in the cash potential of dairying and at some point after 1880, closed the brewery. The 1880 agricultural schedules for the farm, as previously noted, suggested that the Klessig family was entering the cash dairy industry. Apparently, John Klessig also had a hand in a cheese factory, himself. John Klessig and his family, including Liberta Klessig Jaehnig, lived on the farm until 1911, when it was sold to Arthur Crass. The Klessig family moved to nearby Kewaskum, where Liberta died in 1922 at the advanced age of 89. The death of Liberta ended the first generation immigrant experience of the Klessig family in America.¹³

The Crass family owned the Saxonia House and farm for over 30 years and during their tenure, a few changes were made to the house. During the early twentieth century, the family added the staircase on the west end and dug a basement under this portion of the house. One member of the family, Carol Crass Schultz, remembers what the property was like in the late 1930s and the 1940s. She remembers that there was a separate suite of rooms on the east side of the first floor for an elderly relative and that the main staircase was still open at that time. She also remembers the family put in a few new windows and a new roof on the house, as well as a bathroom that was attached to the old kitchen.¹⁴

In 1947, Wilmer and Veronica Landvatter acquired the farm and used the three-room suite on the east end of the first floor as a rental apartment. The Landvatters retained the upstairs bedrooms as is, and

¹¹ Lickel, p. 3.

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 4.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 4.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 4-6.

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except for the rental apartment, the downstairs remained the same until the early 1980s, when much of the first floor was modernized. The old kitchen was gutted and new cabinets and fixtures put in. The nearby bathroom was modernized, modern paneling was added to living and dining rooms walls, and a wall and set of large arched doors was removed between the living and dining rooms. Modern patio doors replaced a rear entrance, and a large picture-style window replaced two old windows on the north elevation. The open main staircase was enclosed for space for a second bathroom. At that time, the Landvatters still rented out the three-room apartment.¹⁵

Veronica and Wilmer Landvatter died in 1986 and 1994, respectively, and the Saxonia House entered a downward spiral. The house changed hands several times and was used briefly as a duplex. In 1997, the house, now vacant, was open for a Klessig/Jaehnig family reunion, and a few members of the family decided to create the Friends of the Saxonia House. In 1999, this non-profit group purchased the 7.78 acres that encompasses the farmstead. Since that time, studies have been undertaken to assess the condition of the property, particularly the house, and to determine how to maintain and use the property. Currently, the Friends are looking at creating a museum-like property that would interpret the mid-nineteenth century life of German immigrants in the area, as well as recreating the brewery.¹⁶

SIGNIFICANCE: ETHNIC HERITAGE

The Saxonia House complex is historically significant for local history because the house, smokehouse and brewery sites, and brewery cave are resources specifically related to the important German ethnic heritage of this part of Wisconsin, one of the most intensely German-settled areas of the state. The Saxonia House, itself, a building constructed in the German ethnic tradition, was a center of activity of the German community in the Fillmore area. Because it was an inn and tavern, it was the location for many social activities for the German community. The brewery that was founded by the Klessigs was also a distinctly German business that created a product important to the German ethnic community. Even the smokehouse site, with its soon to be reconstructed brick building, is important because these types of buildings were typical of German ethnic farmsteads in southeastern Wisconsin. The Saxonia House and its related resources is the best historic ethnic German property in the area.

The first large wave of German settlement to the United States occurred during Wisconsin's pioneer era, when land was readily available and land policies were generous. Between 1845 and 1855, almost 1,000,000 German immigrants came to the United States, mostly from the southwestern German states. Between 1865 and 1874, German immigrants poured into the United States from primarily

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 5-7.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p.7.

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northwestern Germany. A third significant wave of German immigrants came to the United States between 1880 and 1893, primarily from northwestern Germany. German immigrants continued to come to the United States between 1893 and 1914, but the numbers declined each year.¹⁷

Many German immigrants who came to Wisconsin settled in thinly-populated areas where they established cohesive communities, often based on their place of origin in Germany or on their religious beliefs. In areas of concentrated German settlement, immigrants established their own social groups, churches, and support organizations including mutual aid associations, literary clubs, fraternal organizations, and physical wellness clubs. In many German communities in Wisconsin, both rural and urban, immigrants formed a Turnverein or Turner Society that stressed physical and social well-being. German Catholic or Lutheran churches were common in heavily settled German areas. In larger communities, there was often a German language newspaper and a variety of other organizations, such as a Musikvereine, or musical society. German beer halls were important social centers and the German breweries that provided them with beer were important industries in much of Wisconsin.¹⁸

Washington County was one of five counties in southeastern Wisconsin with a high concentration of German settlement in 1870. The Town of Farmington, in the northeastern corner of the county, began as most towns did in southeastern Wisconsin, with Yankee settlers. The earliest settlers, named Curtis, Westover, and Smith, claimed land in the town in 1845, and when the town was formally established in 1847, all officials were Yankees. By 1881, all town officials were Germans, and the bulk of institutions in this rural town were related to Germans, as well. A German Methodist Church, a German Catholic Church, and a German Lutheran Church were all established around 1860. Of the four social and fraternal societies in the town in 1881, three were related to Germans: the Sons of Hermann, the Farmington Humanitaets Verein (a literary society), and the Farmington Turnverein, or Turner Society.¹⁹

Apparently, the era between 1845 and 1860 was one of heavy German settlement in the Town of Farmington and Ernst Klessig was in the forefront. Settling permanently in 1848, Klessig set out to become more than a successful farmer. He took advantage of his location near the tiny crossroads village of Fillmore to establish a commercial business: an inn, tavern, and store, including a post office. His commercial enterprise in his expanded log cabin was a natural gathering place for local German immigrants. Seeing the potential of an expanded space for his business, Ernst, with his new

¹⁷ Barbara Wyatt, ed., *Cultural Resource Management in Wisconsin, Vol. 1*, Madison: State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1986, Settlement, pp. 2-1, 2-4.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 2-6—2-9.

¹⁹ *History of Washington and Ozaukee Counties*, pp. 428-435.

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wife Liberta, built a home and inn of considerable size for the still-pioneer era of 1854-55. By the time the first wave of German immigration ended in the late 1850s, Ernst and Liberta Klessig had established a home, farm, and business that was the center of their ethnic German community in the Fillmore area.

The Saxonia House, being an inn and tavern, was a natural location for social activities. Germans traditionally congregated in beer halls, and the size of the Saxonia House was appropriate for meetings and gatherings. The Farmington Turnverein was originally organized at the Saxonia House in 1857 and, in 1860, the local German Lutheran Church, St. Martin's, was organized there, as well. The brewery operation, also started in 1860, was a traditional German industry, a necessity for a heavily German community.

After Ernst Klessig's death in 1864, Liberta Klessig married Ernst Jaehnig, who closed the tavern. But Jaehnig continued the brewery operation which Klessig's son, John, ran into the late nineteenth century. Also, Jaehnig and John Klessig continued farming in the diversified manner that the Germans were known to practice in Wisconsin. In 1892, John Klessig was engaged in stock raising, breeding cattle and draft horses. And, until Liberta Jaehnig and John Klessig and his family left the farm in 1911, the layout and appearance of the Saxonia House and its related buildings and structures remained the same. There was no effort by the family to change their traditional German half-timber house into an "American" home.

The Saxonia House complex features three resources specifically related to German ethnic heritage, the house, itself, the brewery cave, the smokehouse site, and the brewery site. Of these, of course, the house is the most significant. It is the largest expression of Ernst and Liberta Klessig's German heritage, a house constructed as it might have been in Germany. The smokehouse, a necessity on almost all German farmsteads was constructed behind the house and its site is still extant (with the building to be reconstructed in the near future). The brewery cave is an extant resource that relates to the family brewery, an industry closely tied to German immigrants and very important in the history of southeastern Wisconsin. Together, these resources reflect the nineteenth century ethnic German experience of an immigrant family of farmers/entrepreneurs and how this family established and maintained their ethnic roots in this part of Wisconsin.

Because the resources of the Saxonia House represent important German ethnic traditions brought over from the old world, it is historically significant. The house, itself, features the traditional German half-timber construction of the old country, a method of construction that would resonate with other German immigrants in the area who Ernst Klessig wanted to attract to his commercial business

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ventures. Because of its size and commercial activities, the house was a center for traditional German activities and a meeting place that established at least two important German ethnic institutions. The smokehouse site, brewery site and brewery cave are related to other important German ethnic life ways and add to the historical significance of the property. The complex is an ethnic landmark in the area, representing traditions of the most important group of settlers in Wisconsin, a group that dominated this region.

AREA OF SIGNIFICANCE: ARCHITECTURE

The Saxonia House complex is architecturally significant at the statewide level because the house, itself, is an excellent example of a German ethnic construction technique known as fachwerkbau or fancywork. In English it is known as half-timber construction and it is related to German immigrants to Wisconsin who settled here in the nineteenth century. The half-timber construction of the Saxonia House uses the traditional horizontal, vertical and diagonal timbers, with an infill of kiln-fired red bricks, another typical material used in half-timber houses. Adding to the significance of the house is its classical form and massing with a two-story classical frontispiece that suggests an entry pavilion of an eighteenth century Georgian house, but is most likely a detail related to European classicism that would have been familiar to the Klessig family in Germany. Although half-timber buildings were sometimes given a stucco covering and often given a wood clapboard covering, the use of stucco on this house gives it a more formal appearance. These details may be a manifestation of the Klessigs' desire for a house that resembled a "manor house" in their native country.

Adding to the architectural significance of the complex is the extant brewery cave, with its fine brick construction and details reflecting an important structure necessary for the brewing industry prior to the era of refrigeration.

The most architecturally significant building of the complex is the half-timber Saxonia House. According to Wisconsin's *Cultural Resource Management Plan*, this method of construction was a medieval building technique used in Great Britain, France, and Germany and brought over to the United States primarily by German immigrants who settled in Ohio, Missouri, Texas, and Wisconsin. Heavy German immigration to southeastern Wisconsin meant that most half-timber buildings are found in this part of the state.²⁰

²⁰ Wyatt, *Vol. II, Architecture*, p.4-3.

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Wisconsin's most important scholar of pioneer architecture was Richard W. E. Perrin. In his important work, *Historic Wisconsin Buildings*, he discusses the half-timber method of construction and its relationship with German immigrants. Perrin indicates that German immigrants used the half-timber construction method for houses that replaced rudimentary log structures since the method required a carpenter or builder with some degree of skill. He indicates that in European half-timber construction, heavy timbers were mortised, tanned, and pegged together and the resulting spaces in between the timbers were filled with a noggin of brick, rubble masonry, or a clay and straw mixture. The clay and straw mixture was sometimes replaced with more sturdy materials at a later date.²¹

Perrin describes the features of many half-timber houses in southeastern Wisconsin that he investigated for his book. He indicates that most timbers were oak and the half-timber framing was started with a heavy timber sill laid on a low fieldstone foundation. Floor beams were then mortised to the sill. At the corners and near the center of the walls, posts that extended the full height of the wall were erected and end panels were braced diagonally. One-story high posts were used to frame openings. A "girt" supporting the second floor beams was notched into the two-story posts to build a second floor structure that was framed like the first floor. All joints were mortised and tanned and secured with pegs. The examples Perrin studied had infill of kiln-fired or dried bricks, rubble masonry, or a straw and mud mixture.²²

Perrin's survey of German-built half-timber houses in Wisconsin resulted in some other general conclusions. He indicated that half-timber buildings generally had no fireplaces, but that most houses featured twin chimneys projecting from the roofs connected to interior stoves. In one half-timber house, Perrin found a "black kitchen," a vaulted brick, walk-in room used for smoking and curing meat and possibly for baking. In another half-timber house, Perrin found an unusual cellar. In this cellar there was a brick vaulted ceiling supported by masonry walls and featuring segmental arched openings. He noted that this type of cellar provided a cool environment for keeping perishables in the summer and vegetables in the winter. Another half-timber house was built as both a house and barn. A central stairway separated the living space from the animal space.²³

The half-timber construction method was used not only for houses, but for barns, as well. And, Perrin found evidence that the technique was used for some German churches. When Perrin published his book in 1962, he noted that extant half-timber buildings were rare. But, he also noted that some of the

²¹ Richard W. E. Perrin, *Historic Wisconsin Buildings: A Survey of Pioneer Architecture 1835-1870*, Milwaukee, WI: Milwaukee Public Museum, 1962, p. 16.

²² *Ibid.*, pp. 16-20.

²³ *Ibid.*

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half-timber buildings had been given a covering of wood clapboards. Since Perrin's book was published, other half-timber buildings have been discovered, usually under some type of siding materials and there may be other examples that are still covered and remain undiscovered. A 1990 survey of the City of Mequon in Ozaukee County, an area of heavy German settlement, concluded that the form and massing of many mid-nineteenth century farmhouses suggested that a log or half-timber structure might be a part of the building. Some building owners self-reported log or half-timber structures, but they were not verified. However, any area of intensive German settlement could have hidden half-timber buildings yet to be discovered, but the known examples are, as Perrin indicated in 1962, still rare.²⁴

The half-timber method of construction described by Perrin is illustrated in the construction details of the Saxonia House, including the heavy timber sill, full length posts, diagonal bracing, and shorter timbers that encase openings. In the case of this house, additional horizontal and half-story timbers were used, creating the look of "squares" on the exterior. This technique gives the walls more stability and a few of the examples cited by Perrin have this feature. The infill of kiln-fired brick is typical of examples found by Perrin. In all respects, comparing this house with those uncovered by Perrin, one can see that it is an outstanding example of the half-timber method of construction. The size of the house and the high level of construction materials and methods makes it stand out among both those described in Perrin's book and among the known examples of this method of construction.

For example, none of the houses surveyed in Perrin's book are of the size and grandeur of this building. Even the half-timber barns noted in the book, along with a large church, do not come close to the overall size and high quality of this building. It is much larger than the examples given and is larger and more elaborately detailed than the several fine examples of half-timber construction found at Wisconsin's premier museum of ethnic pioneer life, Old World Wisconsin. The size of the Saxonia House, and its high quality of construction materials and methods, is a large part of what makes it architecturally significant. But its unusual architectural details add to its distinctiveness.

The symmetry of the Saxonia House and its symmetrical fenestration of six-over-six and nine-over-six light sashes are details that relate to the Greek Revival style, popular when this building was constructed in 1854-55. But, this is not a typical Greek Revival house. Most Greek Revival houses in Wisconsin are small, with a low form and massing and few details beyond symmetrical fenestration of six-over-six light sashes and returned eaves or pediments. Even large Greek Revival inns, such as the

²⁴ *Ibid.*; Carol Lohry Cartwright, *City of Mequon Intensive Survey Report*, Mequon: City of Mequon, 1990, pp. 43-45.

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Wade House museum in Greenbush or the Four Mile Inn at Old World Wisconsin have a different form and massing than this building.

The distinctiveness of the Saxonia House, as compared to other mid-nineteenth century inns, is in its long, rectangular form, wide side walls, and its classical frontispiece on the main elevation. The frontispiece, accented with a projecting pediment gable, and featuring pilasters, and a Palladian-like second story window suggests the entry pavilions of Georgian style houses built in the east during the eighteenth century. Although Ernst Klessig came into the United States via New Orleans, it is doubtful that he or Liberta would have been influenced by the Georgian style. Rather, it is likely that the form and massing of the house and its style elements were related to similarly styled houses they knew in Germany. The classical elements of the frontispiece, along with the stucco covering, gives this large house a very formal appearance, unlike the typical half-timber house of southeastern Wisconsin. The Klessigs may have used these details to create their own interpretation of a German "manor house," a house that would give the community the impression that the Klessigs were successful enough in the new world to have a house like upper class families in the old country. In any event, these details give the Saxonia House a distinctiveness beyond its important half-timber method of construction.

The interior details of the Saxonia House are typical of houses built during this time period, with floors made of wide boards, simple moldings, and plaster walls where they are extant. One distinctive feature of the house is its second floor plan where there have been few alterations. It is not unusual for mid-nineteenth century houses to have bedrooms that can only be accessed from another bedroom. But, the use of this type of plan for almost all the bedrooms is distinctive.

Another distinctive feature of the second floor is the symmetrical arrangement of rooms and space that is described in the building description. The remodeling of the first floor has changed the floorplan so that a similar symmetrical arrangement of space cannot be readily seen. However, it is possible that the first floor once had this interesting balance of interior space.

The vaulted brick ceilings and arched brick openings of the basement of the house adds another distinctive interior feature. It is of interest that Richard W. E. Perrin found a similar basement in a German half-timber house he surveyed, suggesting that this unusual basement structure may be an ethnic German variation. The size of the basement in the Saxonia House is indicative of its use as a tavern and inn, where a large number of perishables needed to be stored.

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Like the Saxonia House basement, the brick and stone constructed brewery cave is a distinctive resource of the complex. This intact cave, in and of itself, is architecturally significant as an important example of a structure related to nineteenth century brewing. Extant brewery caves are not typical, but where they exist, they are significant because they can provide important information about the type of structures used for the production and storage of beer at a small Wisconsin brewery of the nineteenth century. Small breweries were common prior to Prohibition, but only a few have extant resources that have retained the level of integrity of this structure. This example of a largely-vanished resource is second only to the Saxonia House in its architectural importance to the complex.

The old smokehouse site is also an important feature of the complex. Prior to its recent storm-related demolition, it was a fine example of a German style smokehouse, built of red bricks and having the typical features of this type of structure. Using as much of the original materials as possible, this building will be reconstructed on the same site.

Adding to the overall architectural interest of the complex are the large basement barn, milk house, and silo. The large barn is a good example of a late nineteenth century barn with a fine fieldstone basement and large upper storage area for hay and/or equipment. The small milk house on the northwest corner and the poured concrete silo on the east elevation are remnants of the early twentieth century dairy expansion era. Milk houses were required when standards for milk were established and silos were needed for long-term fodder storage to maintain milk production in cows over the winter months. Both the milk house and silo are good examples of their types of construction.

The shed/garage is also a typical farm outbuilding from the early twentieth century that could be used for two purposes. The large window openings on the south elevation and separate entrance on the east elevation suggest that part of the building was used for poultry production, a popular and important part of a farm operation.

The extant buildings and structures of the Saxonia House complex have a good level of integrity in regard to their retention of historic features. The Saxonia House has suffered from some inappropriate twentieth century alterations, such as changes in windows and doors, and some interior remodeling. But, overall, it has a good level of integrity with much of its historic features intact, including the half-timber structure. The house is in need of restoration, but original features are intact and there are sufficient historic photographs so that historic details can be restored or replicated.

The outbuildings and structures of the rest of the complex are also relatively intact and only in need of some restoration and maintenance. The integrity of the barn, silo, milk house, and brewery cave is

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very good overall. The shed/garage has had some alterations to its openings, but they could also be easily restored. Unfortunately, the brewery and at least one agricultural outbuilding (near the barn where there is a foundation) are not extant, preventing the complex from being completely intact. But, overall, the complex has much of its nineteenth and early twentieth century appearance and with the addition of a planned reconstructed brewery and expert restoration, it could be brought back to much of its appearance in the early twentieth century.

The Saxonia House and its beer cave are architecturally significant both for type and method of construction. The Saxonia House, with its high-quality and significant half-timber method of construction and European-like form, massing, and details, is the most architecturally significant element. The brewery cave is also architecturally significant in its own right, as a fine example of an important type of structure related to the nineteenth century brewing industry in Wisconsin. The sites of the soon to be reconstructed smokehouse and of the brewery contribute to the overall significance of the property as the location of an important German ethnic outbuildings and relate to the historic significance of the property.

ARCHEOLOGICAL STATEMENT

The Saxonia House complex sits on almost eight acres. Much of the site has been disturbed by building construction and agricultural uses, but there are large open spaces still extant around the buildings and structures. Because of the large site of this property, there is the potential for underground archeological resources. Several sites are visible, including the brewery and agricultural outbuilding sites (which are included in the nomination). An archeological investigation was not undertaken as part of this nomination, but future investigations may uncover either prehistoric and/or other historic archeological resources on this property.

HISTORIC PRESERVATION STATEMENT

The Saxonia House property is currently owned by a non-profit corporation, Friends of the Saxonia House, Inc. This group has been considering various ways to restore and preserve the house and its buildings and structures for museum and/or commercial uses. The group has had a feasibility study completed and is currently looking at fund-raising strategies to begin restoration of the property. The Friends of the Saxonia House have intervened at a crucial point in the property's history to preserve this important resource before it could have suffered irreparable harm.

____ End of Statement of Significance

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section 9 Page 1

Saxonia House
Washington County, Wisconsin

___ Insert References

MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

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History of Washington and Ozaukee Counties, Wisconsin, Chicago: Western Historical Company, 1881.

Lickel, Lisa. "Saxonia House—Cradle of Fillmore." Unpublished manuscript on file with the Friends of the Saxonia House and the author.

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Manuscript Census for the Town of Farmington, Washington County, WI, 1860, 1870, and 1880, Industry Schedules. On file in the Library of the Wisconsin Historical Society, Madison, Wisconsin.

Perrin, Richard W. E. *Historic Wisconsin Buildings A Survey of Pioneer Architecture 1835-1870*. Milwaukee, WI: Milwaukee Public Museum, 1962.

Wyatt, Barbara, ed. *Cultural Resource Management in Wisconsin, Vol. I and II*. Madison: State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1986, Architecture, Settlement.

___ End of References

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section 10 Page 1

Saxonia House
Washington County, Wisconsin

___ Insert Boundary Descriptions

BOUNDARY

The boundary of the Saxonia House complex is irregular. It is a 7.78 acre parcel known as Lot 3 in Certified Survey CSM5096 with the dimensions as follows.

Beginning at the edge of pavement of County Highway H and the lot line of Lot 2 and Lot 3 of CSM5096 (west lot line of Lot 3), then south 416.55' along the lot line to the rear lot line of Lot 2, then west 283.09' along this line to a diagonal lot line with Lot 1 of CSM5096, then southwest 233.08' along this line to the south lot line of Lot 3, then east 826.86' along this line to the east lot line of Lot 3, then north 649.07' along this line to the edge of pavement of County Highway H, then west 426.57' to the point of beginning.

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

The justification for this boundary is that it is the same as the current parcel. The size of the parcel is sufficient to provide the appropriate historic context for the Saxonia House complex and includes all of the related resources. It stretches behind Lot 2 of CSM5096 to include the old brewery cave and its context. The edge of pavement of County Highway H was specifically chosen rather than the right-of-way because of the proximity of the Saxonia House to the highway. This leaves a sufficient set-back for the house that the right-of-way might not include. Furthermore, the relationship of the road to the building is related to its historic use and setting.

___ End of Boundary Descriptions

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section photos Page 1

Saxonia House
Washington County, Wisconsin

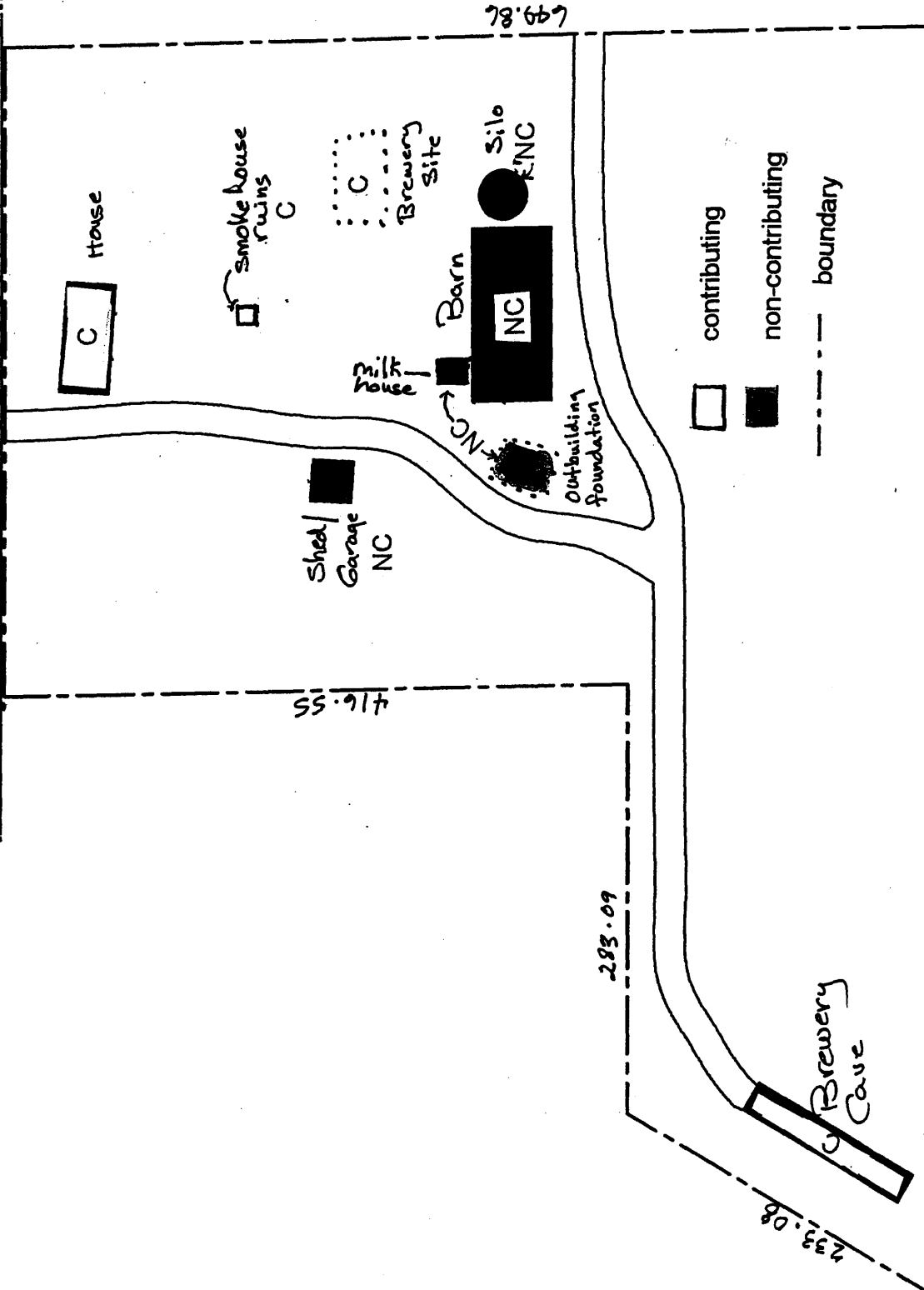
SAXONIA HOUSE, Town of Farmington, Washington County, Wisconsin. Photos by Carol Cartwright, 2005. Negatives on file in the Historic Preservation Division of the Wisconsin Historical Society, Madison, Wisconsin.

- 1 of 18: Site view, from the southwest near the brewery cave looking northeast.
- 2 of 18: Saxonia House, north and west elevations, view from the northwest.
- 3 of 18: Saxonia House, east elevation, view from the northeast.
- 4 of 18: Saxonia House, south elevation, view from the southwest.
- 5 of 18: Interior, Saxonia House, first floor, view from northeast corner parlor, looking west into parlor, foyer and living room.
- 6 of 18: Interior, Saxonia House, first floor, 1980's kitchen
- 7 of 18: Interior, Saxonia House, first floor, view from kitchen into dining area and southwest corner bedroom.
- 8 of 18: Interior, Saxonia House, first floor, view of living room and northwest bedroom door.
- 9 of 18: Interior, Saxonia House, second floor, view from bedroom B-2 looking into bedroom B-3.
- 10 of 18: Interior, Saxonia House, second floor, view from hall into bedrooms B-6 and B-7
- 11 of 18: Interior, Saxonia House, second floor, view from bedroom B-3 looking into B-2 and B-1.
- 12 of 18: Interior, Saxonia House, second floor, view from bedroom B-5 looking into B-5
- 13 of 18: Interior, Saxonia House, second floor, view looking into B-8 showing half-timber structure.
- 14 of 18: Interior, Saxonia House, second floor, view looking into B-8 showing half-timber structure.
- 15 of 18: Interior, Saxonia House, basement, looking at vaulted brick ceiling and arched opening
- 16 of 18: Basement barn and silo, south elevation, view from the south.
- 17 of 18: Shed/garage, view from the southeast
- 18 of 18: Brewery Cave, north elevation entrance, view from the northeast.



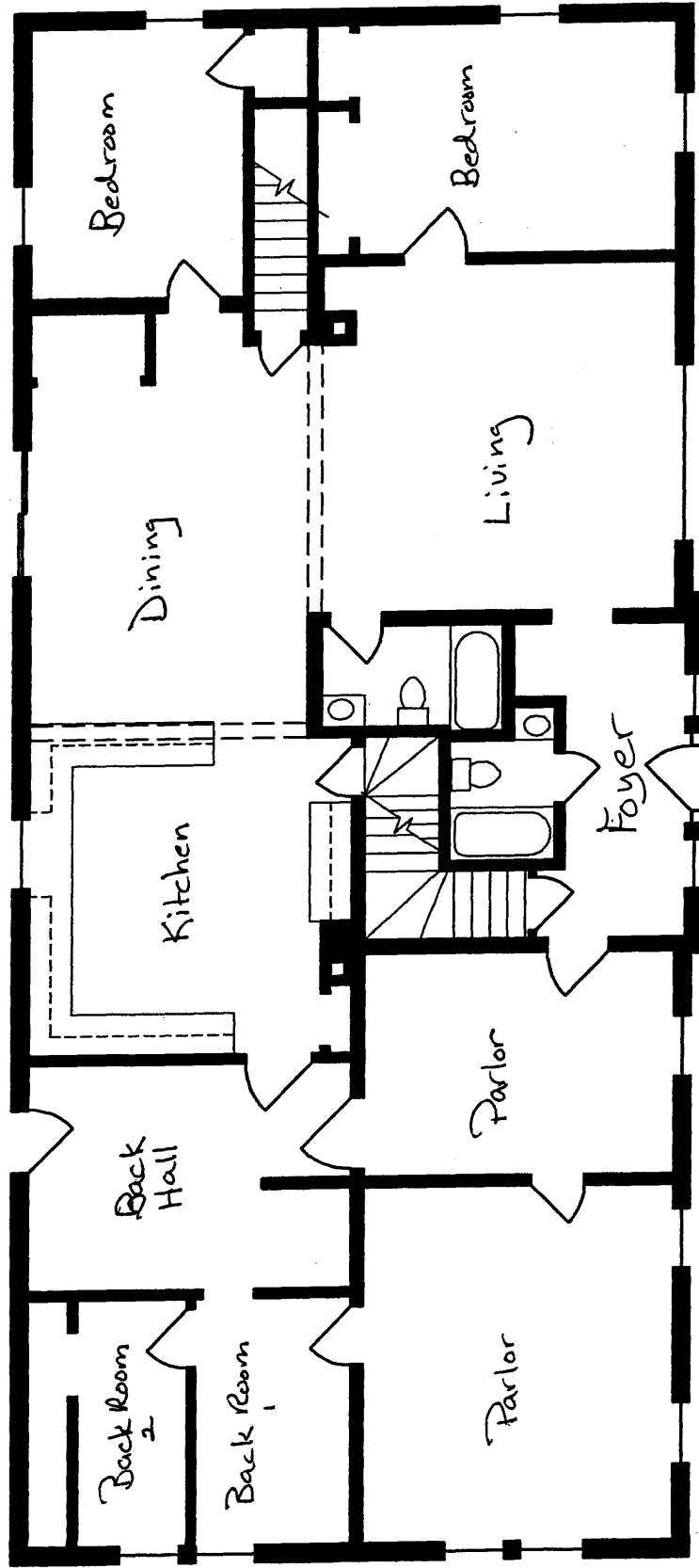
SITE MAP
SAXONIA HOUSE
Town of Farmington, Washington County, Wisconsin

COUNTY TRUNK H
426.57



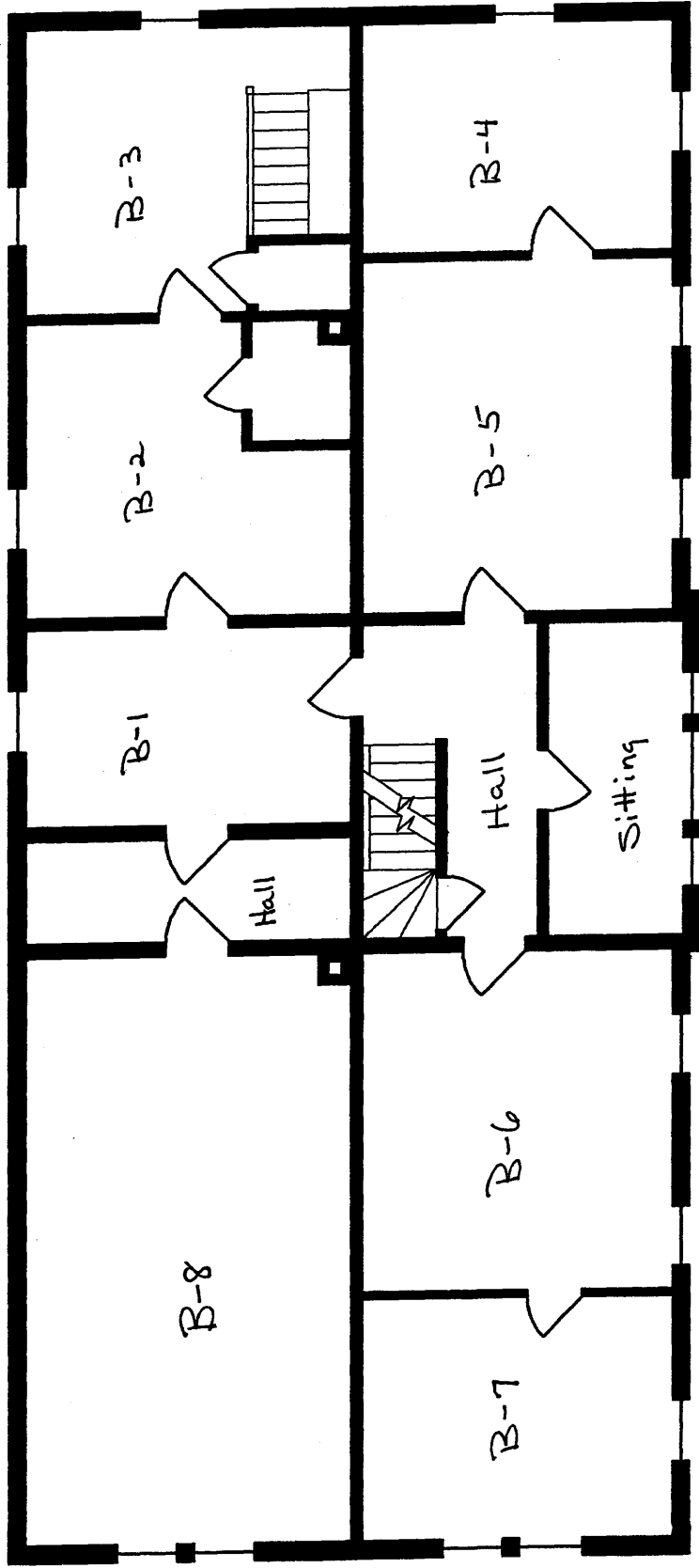
NOT TO SCALE

826.84



SAXONIA HOUSE
 TOWN OF FARMINGTON, WASHINGTON COUNTY
 WISCONSIN

FIRST FLOOR PLAN |  |  | **SCALE: 1/8" = 1'-0"**

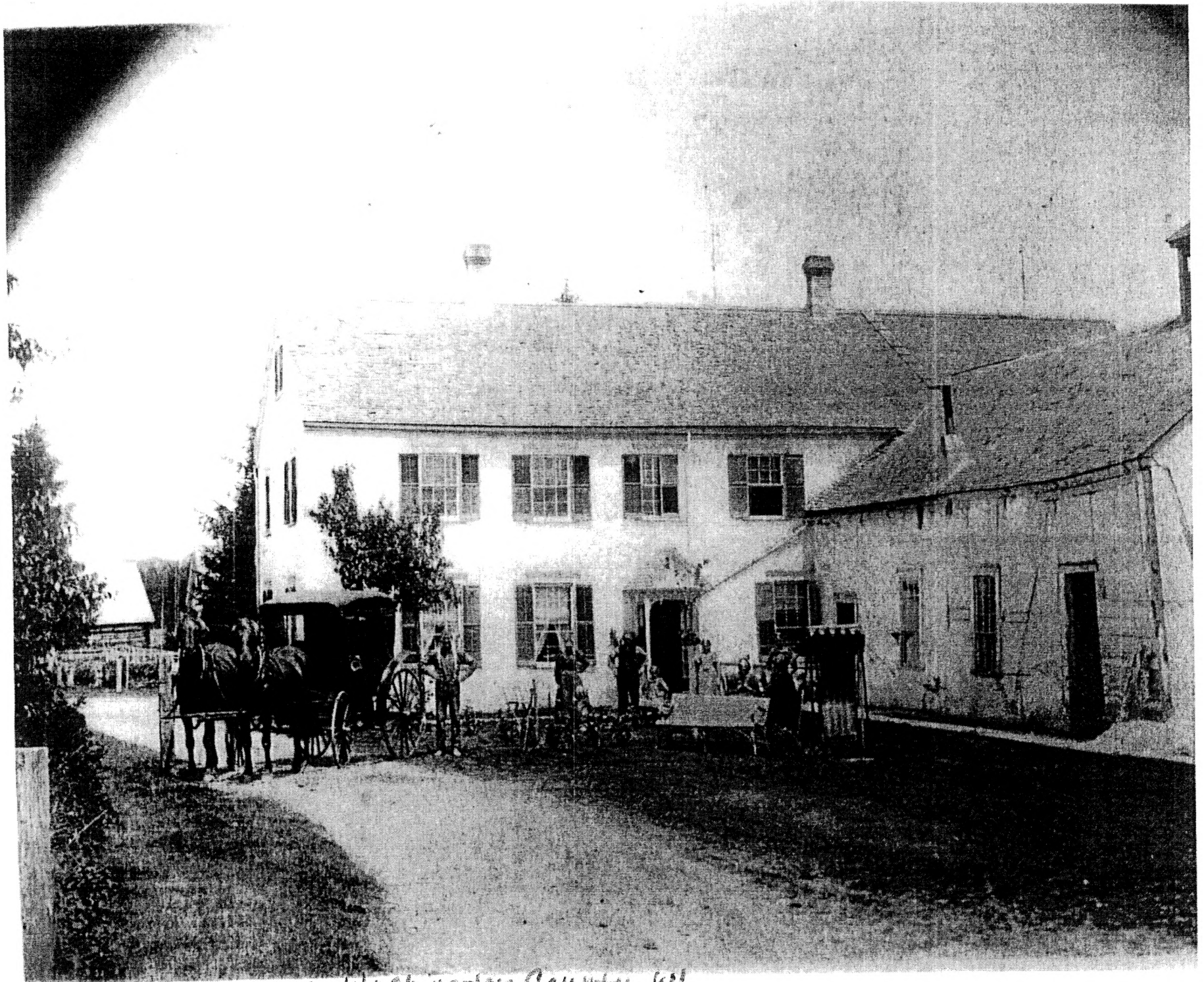


SAXONIA HOUSE
 TOWN OF FARMINGTON, WASHINGTON COUNTY
 WISCONSIN

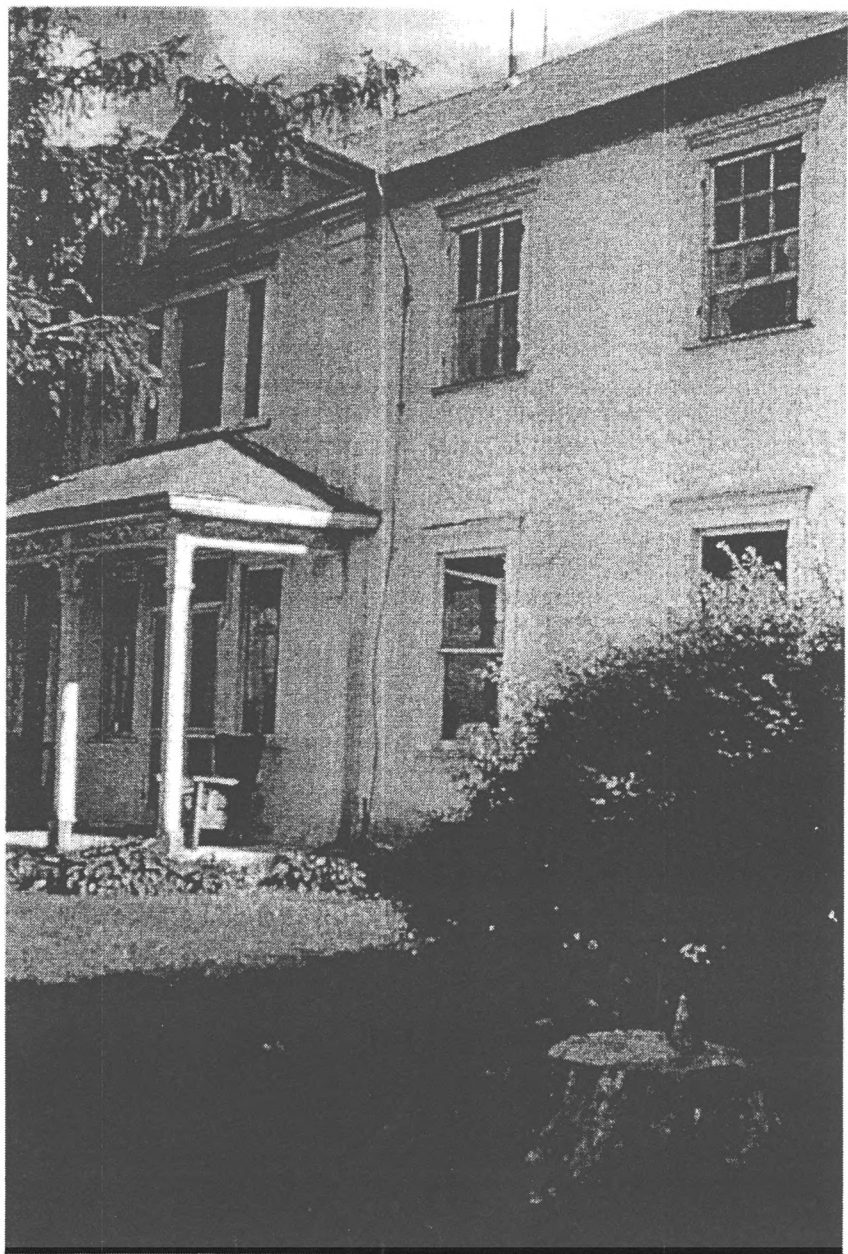
SECOND FLOOR PLAN | **SCALE: 1/8" = 1'-0"**



Saxonia House, Town of Farmington, Washington Co., WI
Saxonia House, circa 1900 © FOSH Mrs. Alberta Jaehnia left



Town of Farmington, Washington County, WI
Saxonia House circa 1870 © FOSH Ernst Jaehni, center, Mrs Liberta Jaehni, seated, right



Saxon House, Town of Farmington
Washington Co., WI
Saxon House - front view
1957 (MCHS (permission to copy))