

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
REGISTRATION FORM

15

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

1. Name of Property

historic name Mulcahy Barn

other names/site number site number 85-03179

2. Location

street & number 25623-710th Ave not for publication N/A
city or town Colo vicinity N/A
state IA code IA county Story code 169 zip code 50056

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this X nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property X meets does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide X locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Ronell J. Sirke
Signature of certifying official

December 12, 2003
Date

STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF IOWA
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of commenting or other official

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

=====
4. National Park Service Certification
=====

I, hereby certify that this property is:

Elson H. Ball 1/29/04

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): _____

Elson H. Ball

Signature of Keeper

Date
of Action

=====
5. Classification
=====

Ownership of Property (Check as many boxes as apply)

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

Category of Property (Check only one box)

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

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing	Noncontributing
<input type="text" value="1"/>	<input type="text" value="0"/> buildings
<input type="text" value=""/>	<input type="text" value="0"/> sites
<input type="text" value=""/>	<input type="text" value="0"/> structures
<input type="text" value=""/>	<input type="text" value="0"/> objects
<input type="text" value="1"/>	<input type="text" value="0"/> Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

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

N/A

=====
6. Function or Use
=====

Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: agriculture/subsistence Sub: animal facility

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: agriculture/subsistence Sub: animal facility

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

=====
7. Description
=====

Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)

OTHER-- basement barn

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)

foundation concrete
roof wood/shingles
walls wood/weatherboard
other _____

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

=====
8. Statement of Significance
=====

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

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

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

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

Areas of Significance (Enter categories from instructions)

architecture

Period of Significance ca. 1885

Significant Dates ca. 1885

Significant Person (Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation _____

Architect/Builder unknown

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

=====
9. Major Bibliographical References
=====

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

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

- Primary Location of Additional Data
X State Historic Preservation Office
Other State agency
Federal agency
Local government
University
Other

Name of repository: _____

=====
10. Geographical Data
=====

Acreage of Property less than one acre _____

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

Table with 4 columns: Zone, Easting, Northing, Zone, Easting, Northing. Row 1: 1, 15, 475915, 4647844, 3, blank, blank, blank. Row 2: 2, blank, blank, blank, 4, blank, blank, blank. Row 3: blank, See continuation sheet., blank, blank, blank, blank, blank, blank.

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 Wende Elliott, owner e-mail address welliott@wholeosmeharvest.com

organization _____ date 4/11/03
street & number 25623-710 Ave telephone 641 377 2313

city or town Colo state IA zip code 50056
=====

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 the SHPO or FPO.)

name Wende Elliott and Joseph Rude

street & number 25623-710 AVE telephone 641 377 2313

city or town Colo state IA zip code 50056
=====

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

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

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7. NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION

The Mulcahy Barn constructed ca. 1885 is situated south of the town of Colo in the eastern portion of Story County, Iowa in the NE ¼ of the SE ¼ of Section 21, New Albany Township 83, Range 21. It is one mile east of U.S. Highway 65 and one and one half miles south of U.S. Highway 30. The barn is situated on a quiet country lane with a panoramic view of a valley and creek and the surrounding gently rolling fields. This banked/basement barn is a prominent landmark and is visible from both Highways 65 and 30. The Mulcahy Barn is located in central Iowa, which is becoming a place of rapid development and suburban sprawl because of commuting proximity to Ames and Des Moines. Farmland is being annexed for ever-growing housing developments, and farmers with remaining farmland are tearing down old homesteads and barns to gain a few more acres to farm in today's tight farm economy.

The Mulcahy Barn is 40 feet by 50 feet. It is banked into an southeast facing slope with the basement level exposed on the east and the ramp on the north and west sides. This type of orientation was typical of banked barns, with the south east section of the barn allowing more protection for the livestock in the winter months from the prevailing winter winds which come from the northwest in this area. The barn is oriented with the walk out basement level facing the road, or east.

The Mulcahy Barn had two layers of cedar shingles on the roof when it was purchased by the current owners in 1999. The roof had not been maintained for several decades and a new cedar roof was installed in 2001. At the same time, functional antique lightening rods and balls and weathervane with a cow and directionals were installed on the roof.

The interior construction shows heavy timber framing using hand-hewn posts and beams with sawn bracing and flooring. The beams measure eight inches square and include native woods. The joinery is pegged mortise-and-tenon. Some of the floor joists are entire tree trunks. An Amish carpentry team and a house mover were contracted in 2001 to stabilize a spread and tilt to the barn and pull it together with cabling. The work was successful and the barn now stands straight and solid.

The barn is sided with vertical board-and batten siding fastened primarily with wire nails indicating later repairs and re-siding after 1895. Slightly different sized and shaped battens and boards would suggest the possibility of later repairs. There are no windows on the north and east of the barn. Instead there is one flap on each side.

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Architectural Historian Marlin Ingalls believes the hinged ventilation flaps made of wood were propped open and used to create a draft to blow the chaff away when threshing. The fact that the barn does not have a full second story loft also supports the purpose of the barn as a threshing barn (Ingalls interview June 11, 2000). Mr. Ingalls dates this barn style from 1850s to 1880s based on the methods of agriculture practiced at the time requiring this construction. Mr. Ingalls believes the mechanical hay fork system still installed in the barn that utilizes a north door supports the date of ca.1885.

There are four wooden four-paned windows along the west side of the barn on the main floor that is the location of horse stalls. Three "Dutch" doors in the stall area of the main floor are on the north, south and west sides of the barn. A partial loft was built over the horse stalls and feed rooms. The amount of main floor covered by loft is approximately one-third. Two windows (small four paned) high in the gable on the south side of the barn bring light into the barn. The wood planks of the flooring measure 10 to 16 inches wide. Original trap doors and chutes exist in the main floor that allow a farmer to drop feed down to animals in the basement.

The foundation of the barn was replaced with concrete to replace a failed round fieldstone foundation in the mid 20th century by previous owners. This 60 or so year old foundation had also failed and was replaced in 2000 with another concrete foundation. Heavy timbers were located to serve as vertical posts in the basement and as the center main horizontal support to maintain the historical nature of the building. As the basement sits underground and is still used for livestock (not open to public) and the open side faces the road, the historical integrity of the building is intact when the main floor is viewed by the public on a tour or from the road.

Historically the barn was designed to be a multi-purpose barn housing work horses, animal feed, hay, livestock, and family dairy animals. Draft horse shoes were found in the barn and are on display inside the barn along with horse drawn plows, harnesses and other family agricultural antiques of the current owners. The barn is still used to house hay, feed, animals and small agricultural equipment so it appears much as it was a century ago.

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8. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Mulcahy Barn is locally significant under criterion C as an excellent example of the basement barn. It clearly illustrates the architecture of a diversified livestock farm built by immigrants who fused two various European traditions of barns into a new Midwest amalgamation. A historical contemporary would recognize the actual functions meant for the architecture continuing in service as they were a hundred years ago. The barn is a local landmark, is still used for agriculture, and receives media coverage and visitors for the annual open houses from over five states. The period of significance and the significant date for this barn is the suspected construction date ca. 1885.

The Mulcahy Barn is an interesting hybrid of German and English immigrant barns. The three bay embankment style allowed livestock to live sheltered under the barn (German influence). The above ground design appears very British/colonial in its simple lines. This may represent the English/Irish barn tradition that the immigrants who built the barn were familiar with, so they were trying to use their experience from the old country but use the embankment technique that they learned upon arriving in Iowa, an area that would have already had a considerable German and Scandinavian population by the time the Irish Mulcahy family arrived.

The physical features characterize the type, period and method of construction very well. The fact that the barn survived over 40 years of neglect without any repairs or care is a testament in itself to the outstanding craftsmanship used to build the building. The vast majority of barns dating to this period in the state are not in this good of condition or existing in such an unadulterated continuity. The retention of the design, excellent workmanship and impressive materials exist at this site. Careful attention was paid to hire experienced historic building renovators so that integrity was not lost.

The setting has not changed in the past 150 years, so visitors can truly imagine what it was like for pioneers. The design and layout of the farmstead, including location of other original outbuildings, stockyards and pastures give important context for the use and importance of the barn.

As evidenced from the historic photograph attached, the barn's adjoining paddocks, nearby pastures and fields have not changed significantly. The fact that the barn will be operating as organic certified (relying on diverse livestock for manure nutrients) is an added benefit to the visitor as well as a 7 year crop rotation with plentiful "meadow" rotations, a native prairie buffer zone, and hay and oat fields. This is all historically accurate (animals and hay ground) and representative of agricultural setting the barn would have been surrounded by 120 years ago. The original timber surrounding the barn is gone, for unknown reasons, so the owners have planted several hundred native species in the location in 2002. It is also the owners' intent to add an operational windmill to the farmstead.

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The barn was built by one of the leading pioneer families of the area, the Mulcahy family. The Mulcahy's patriarch Patrick David Mulcahy was born in 1800 in Ardaugh, Ireland, and died May 18, 1878 in Story County Iowa. He married Bridget Corbett in Ireland. Bridget was born 1816 in Shanangolden Parish, County Limerick, and died June 26, 1894, in Story County Iowa. They had six children, all born in Ireland, all surviving into adulthood and all relocating to Story County Iowa to farm in New Albany Township, ultimately. His father was Patrick Mulcahy, born the 1700s in Ardaugh Parish County Limerick, who married Mary Carrol born sometime in the 1700s. No birth, marriage, death dates are noted in family records or in Ireland. A descendant of the family doing genealogical research visited Ardaugh church and could find no written records. The only known information is that they are parents of Patrick David Mulcahy. The patriarch Patrick David Mulcahy died in 1878 at the age of 78 and was buried in Nevada Iowa in the Catholic portion of the cemetery.

Patrick David and Bridgett's six children's genealogical information is listed below:
Margaret, born October 17, 1841 died January 15, 1908, married Thomas Coyle, born 1820, died April 14, 1919. They had one daughter.

Patrick, born June 26, 1844, died August 15, 1931, married Julia Doyle, born March 10, 1850 Lima, Ohio died October 30, 1911. They had eleven children.

Mary, born June 10, 1850, died January 23, 1942. Married John Croker, born April 22, 1851, died October 15, 1919. They had nine children.

David, born 1857, died 1947. Married Alice Smith, born March 19, 1870 in Cover, County Dunmore, Ireland, died January 26, 1952. They had five children, the two daughters died in infancy.

John, born 1859, died 1944. Married Rose Smith, born December 25, 1863 in Cover, County Dunmore, Ireland, died January 15, 1929. They had six children.

It is son David and his wife Alice who built this barn and lived on the Mulcahy farmstead. The exact date of the construction of the house and outbuildings is unknown, as the county courthouse recently disposed of its earliest tax records, but attached court records show that the land was purchased in 1872 by David. The Italianate style of home was popular then and the barn style dates from this period as well, so the anecdotal, marriage and property records concur with the architectural clues of the barn's age.

David and Alice married February 13, 1895. Their children were James, Joseph, Marcus, Josephine, and Mary. Mary and Josephine died in infancy. James and Joseph were impaired and never married. Marcus is the only one who married and had children. He left the farm for city work as a young man after World War I and rented the house and cropland when he inherited it. He was the sole inheritor of the farm.

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Marcus married Lenore (maiden name unknown) and had three children, Mary Jo, Maureen, and Michele. Marcus' daughters sold the farm when Lenore died. Joe Rude and Wende Elliott bought it in 1999, after it had remained in the Mulcahy family for 127 years.

Sadly, in a country based on principles of equality, the United States has a long history of discrimination against ethnic groups. The original settlers of the Mulcahy farmstead and neighboring farmers have an important story to remember. The Mulcahy family came from County Limerick Ardaugh Parish at the time of the potato famine. Representative of many Irish families, the parents (Patrick David and Bridget Corbett) first sent the two oldest children, Patrick and Mary, to Boston. Their experience there was harsh, as many told them and posted "No work for the Irish." Second son David came over to America and the two boys joined the railroad, earning \$10 a month for dangerous and difficult work. Room and board were included, but "room" was a box car and "board" was all the beans you wanted (according to Mulcahy family historian Mary Fitzgerald in interview May 23, 2000). The young men worked in order to save money for establishing a farm and bringing the rest of the family over.

Sometime in the 1870s, all six children and parents were living in Story County on land they managed to acquire from railroad salaries. The choice of New Albany township in itself adds to the story of the Irish pioneers: while a beautiful place to live today, it was not prime land for a pioneer. A homesteader sought a spot that was near timber and a water source, neither of which exist in New Albany township. Additionally, land in New Albany township is on the terminal morain of a glacial retreat, meaning the land is rocky. Certainly Iowa's version of rocky, hilly land is more fertile than the overworked soil they left in Ireland, but it must have been the cheapest, picked over land at the time. For the Irish, the newest and perhaps poorest of the emigrants to arrive in Iowa at the time, New Albany township became a default Irish Catholic community. Colo town records in 1887 indicate that the Methodist church had a membership of 30 while the Catholic church had a membership of 300. However, the Irish did not run the town. In a 1886 directory of civic organization leaders, store owners and elected officials, not one Irish name appears. Evidently some of the ethnic divisions in society that were operative in Boston plagued Colo as well, unfortunately.

Mary Fitzgerald, born 1915, is a first cousin of the descendants of the builders of the Mulcahy farmstead and is an amateur genealogist and the family keeper of history. She remembers being related to practically everyone in the township and how she and 27 first cousins would gather at this farm on Sundays to build snow forts in the winter and play games in the summer. She remembers her Aunt Alice and Uncle David living in the gracious home and how no one was allowed to walk in the kitchen when Aunt Alice made her famous angel food cake for fear of shaking the floor and causing her 12 egg white cake to collapse in the cob fueled cook stove. Her Aunt Alice was very proficient at raising, and proud of, her poultry operation. The farm once again is a direct marketer of free range chicken one hundred years later.

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Both the barn and the house are larger and more substantial than others in the area. Mary Fitzgerald remembers hearing how when the barn was built, "people came from far away to marvel at it" (May 23, 2000 interview). The exact date of the barn construction is lost, but oral family history indicates that the barn is one of the earliest built in the region and is certainly the oldest still standing and in excellent condition.

This Irish Catholic clan was very active in their faith. Sister Christine of the current Colo Catholic Church St. Mary's reports that in the church records several Mulcahy descendants became priests and nuns (interview February 22, 2000). David Mulcahy's son James attended seminary but died before he could become ordained, and cousins Donald Mulcahy became a priest and Mary Mulcahy a nun.

The new owners had been searching for an intact Victorian farm to renovate and use for conversion to small-scale organic agriculture. Their search took 1½ years and covered over 40,000 miles on Iowa's gravel roads. Their patient vigilance paid off when they found this homestead in near original condition. Farm outbuildings are in repairable condition and many historic details remain, from the enormous horse shoes, original stalls and hayfork in the barn, to the intact granary chutes and corn cribs still used by the old style farmer who worked the land.

The farm, named Harmony Hill by Joe and Wende, is close to several metropolitan and academic centers for ideal exposure to the public for educational purposes (Des Moines, 37 miles, Ames, 17 miles, Marshalltown, 20 miles, ISU, 20 miles, to be exact). The restored farmstead will be a sort of "living history farm" with modern scientific agricultural interest as well as it will be operating within the small scale and sustainable agricultural practices for which the farmstead was designed in the first place. The public will find it an interesting trip back in time to witness how organic farmers in the 19th century used to make a living on only 120 acres with a handful of animals free-ranging in paddocks, horses, a sleigh and carriage in the barn, a large vegetable garden and orchard to provide enough food for the year, organic crops perhaps shorter and weedier than seen elsewhere, and a fertilization plan using only what the farm can produce itself.

Central Iowa is a place of rapid development and expansion. The farmers that do make it in today's economy are "mega farmers" not interested in the small scale of old farm outbuildings and barns. Their equipment and herds are too large to fit in the buildings, so they are burnt down. Likewise the homes, with wood exterior, high ceilings and no insulation are deemed impractical and burnt down as well. Thus, very few "agricultural districts" over 100 years old are maintained, standing or still operated by farmers.

It is important that the renovated Mulcahy Barn, a beautiful tribute to the pioneers' monumental task of settling of the prairie, be saved and recognized by placement on the National Register of Historic Places.

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9. BIBLIOGRAPHY

Adams, A., *Adams History of Story County, 1887.*

Kathleen Parrott, Dennis Schulte, Ann Dellenbarger, " *Historic Farmsteads.* "

Jon Vara, " *Giving Old Barns New Life* "

Dexter Johnson with National Trust for Historic Preservation, " *Using Old Farm Buildings.* "

Auer, M.J., " *20 Preservation Briefs on the Preservation of Historic Barns.* "

Mulcahy Trust, 1999 correspondence

Norwest Farm Management 1999 correspondence

St. Mary's 50 Years: 1938—1988, self published 1988 by St Mary's Church, Colo

Interview 5/23/00 by Wende Elliott with Mary Fitzgerald, niece of David and Alice Mulcahy aged 85 at time of interview.

Interview 5/22/00 by Wende Elliott with Mary Jo Mulcahy, daughter of Marcus and Lenore Mulcahy.

Interview 5/22/00 by Wende Elliott with Sister Christine, nun with Colo Catholic Church.

Story County, Story County Recorder and Treasurer property documents from 19th century

National Register Bulletin 39, " *Researching a Historic Property* "

National Trust for Historic preservation, " *New Spaces for Old Spaces* " Barn Aid Series #2., 1996.

National Trust for Historic preservation, " *Barn Exteriors and Painting* " Barn Aid Series #3, 1996.

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10. VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The nominated boundary for the Mulcahy Barn is shown as the thick lined box around the barn on the attached map entitled "Plan Map of Mulcahy Barn showing Nominated Boundaries" The legal description of the location of the farmstead is NE ¼ of SE ¼, Section 21, Township 83, Range 21. The area assigned to the barn boundary is a rectangular parcel measuring 110 X 50 feet, and the northwest corner is located directly on the northwest corner of the foundation of the barn.

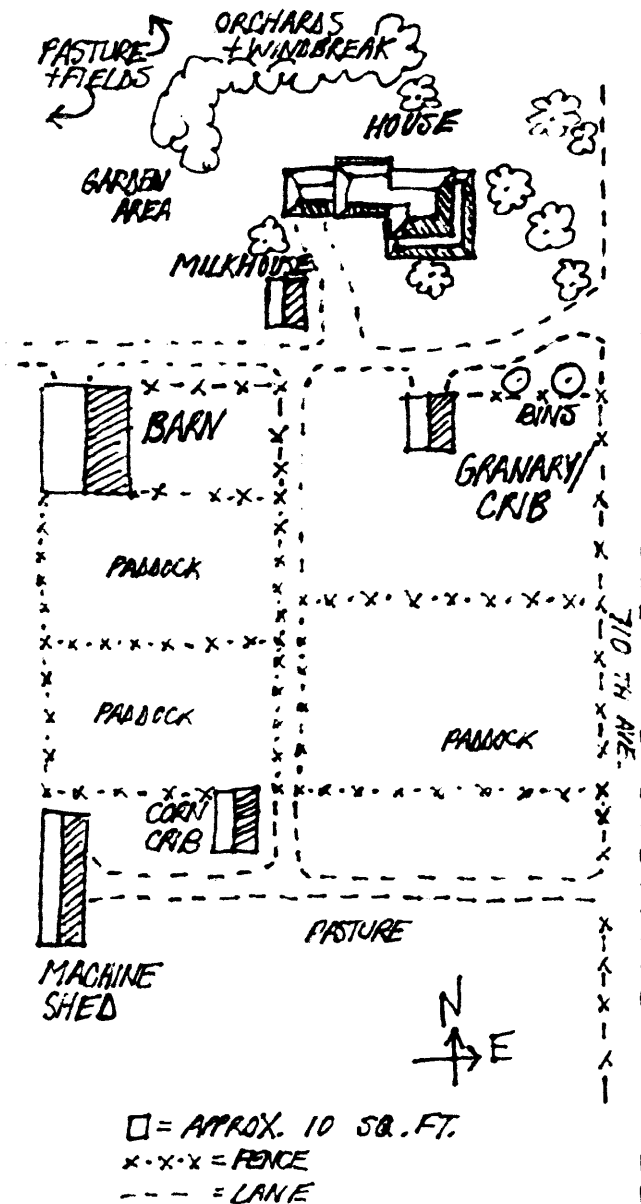
Boundary Justification. This boundary is the portion of the farmstead that encompasses the barn and its surrounding landscape and fence lines. This portion maintains the historic integrity.

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11. PLAN MAP OF BARN SHOWING NOMINATED BOUNDARIES



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11. GENERAL PHOTOGRAPHS AND MAP



Historic photograph estimated date 1920



View of Mulcahy Pioneer Farmstead 2001

United States Department of Interior
 National Park Service
National Register of Historic Places
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Mulcahy Barn
 Story County, Iowa

Section Number add'l

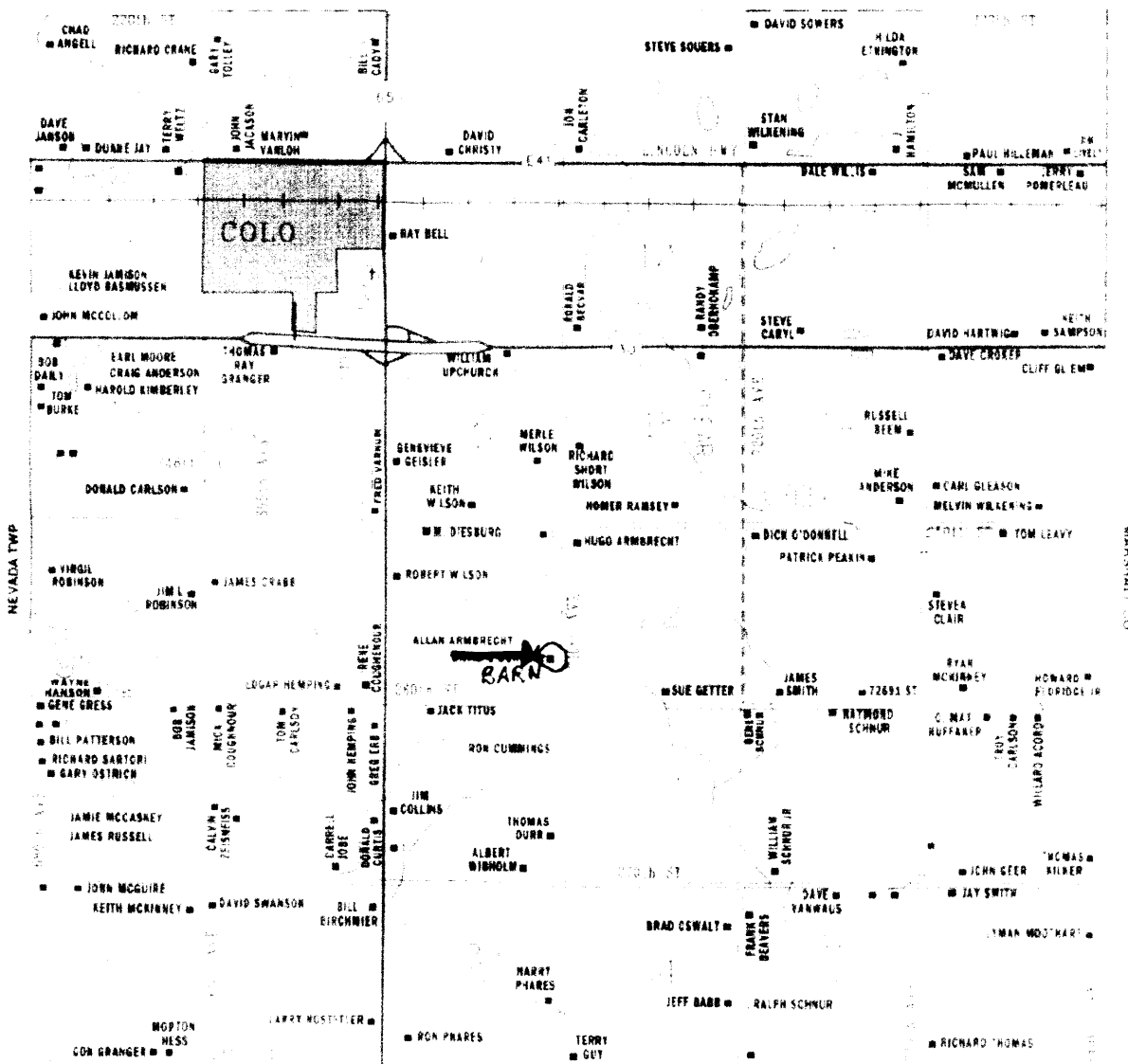
Page 11

11. GENERAL PHOTOGRAPHS AND MAP Continued

T-83-N NEW ALBANY DIRECTORY R-21-W

(Residents - Owners or Renters)

SHERMAN TWP



Source: Platt map for Story County, date: 1/2001



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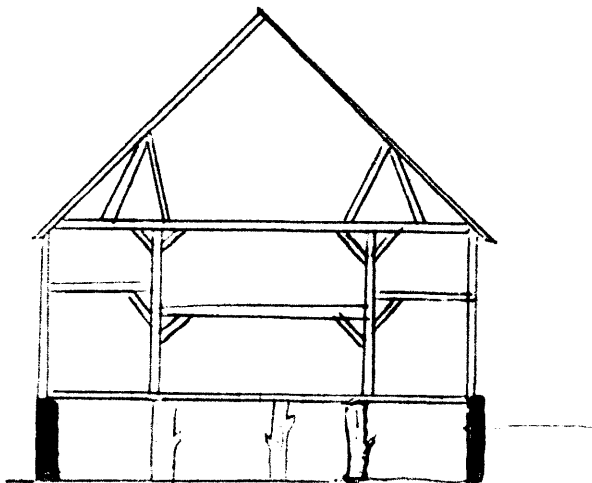
12

14. SKETCH OF FRAME/TRUSS CONFIGURATION

by Wende Elliott March 2002

View from north looking south at a east-west cross section.

MULCAHY BARN



SKETCH OF FRAME/TRUSS
CONFIGURATION

E ↔ W

□ = 2 SQ. FT.

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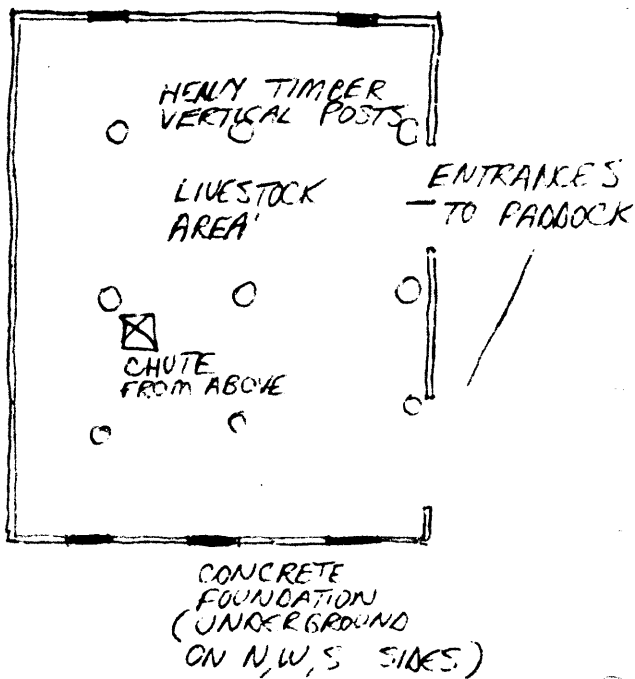
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15. BARN LOWER LEVEL FLOORPLAN

source: Wende Elliott March 2002

LOWER/BASEMENT LEVEL
BARN FLOORPLAN

□ = 2 SQ. FT. N
 W → E
 S



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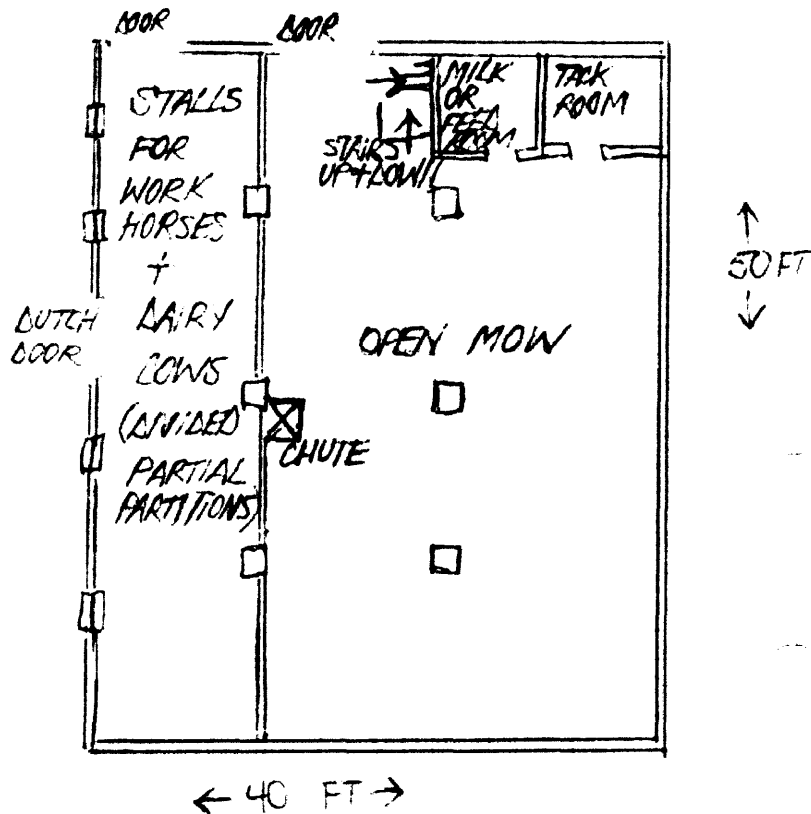
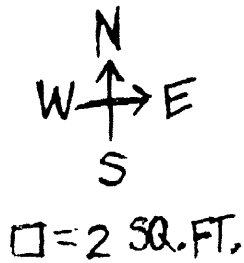
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15. BARN MAIN LEVEL FLOORPLAN

source: Wende Elliott February 2000

MAIN FLOOR
BARN FLOORPLAN



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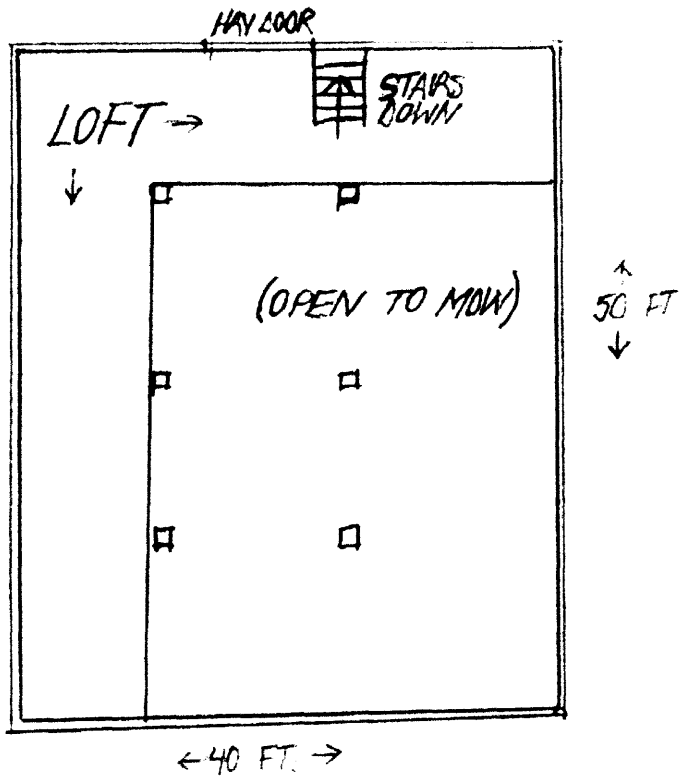
15. BARN UPPER LEVEL FLOORPLAN

source: Wende Elliott February 2000

SECOND FLOOR
BARN FLOORPLAN



□ = 2 SQ. FT.



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Photographs

The following photographs were taken by Wende Elliott in April 2002

All the negatives are in her possession at the farm in Colo Iowa

Two copies of black and white photos were submitted to Des Moines office in April 2003

1. View of the east side of Mulcahy Barn
2. View of the north side of the Mulcahy Barn.
3. View of the west side of the Mulcahy Barn.
4. View of barn from south.
5. View of the interior basement. Antique heavy timbers were found for renovation and used for posts in basement.
6. Interior detail view of heavy timber construction and pegged joinery. View shows how most of the barn does not have a loft.