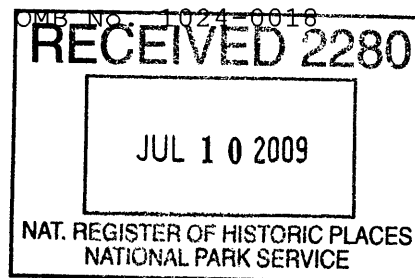


JUN 26 2009

NPS Form 10-900  
(Rev. 10-90)

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
REGISTRATION FORM



601

1. Name of Property

historic name Seerley, William and Mary (Messersmith) Barn and Milk House/Smokehouse

other names/site number \_\_\_\_\_

2. Location

street & number 1840 137<sup>th</sup> Lane not for publication N/A

city or town Earlham vicinity x

state Iowa code IA county Madison code 121 zip code 50072

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.)

Barbara A. Mitchell  
Signature of certifying official

July 2, 2009  
Date

**STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF IOWA**  
State or Federal agency and bureau

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

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of commenting or other official

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency and bureau

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

I, hereby certify that this property is

- entered in the National Register  
See continuation sheet.  
determined eligible for the  
National Register  
See continuation sheet.  
determined not eligible for the  
National Register  
removed from the National Register

John H. Beall 8-20-09

other (explain): \_\_\_\_\_

for \_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Keeper Date  
of Action

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

Ownership of Property (Check as many boxes as apply)

- private  
 public-local  
 public-State  
 public-Federal

Category of Property (Check only one box)

- building(s)  
 district  
 site  
 structure  
 object

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing	Noncontributing
<u>2</u>	<u>2</u> buildings
	<u>      </u> sites
<u>1</u>	<u>      </u> structures
	<u>      </u> objects
<u>3</u>	<u>2</u> Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

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

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

Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: <u>Agricultural/Subsistence</u>	Sub: <u>Animal Facility</u>
<u>Agricultural/Subsistence</u>	<u>Processing</u>
_____	_____
_____	_____

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: <u>Agricultural/Subsistence</u>	Sub: <u>Animal Facility</u>
<u>Vacant/Not in use</u>	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

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

Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)

Other: Sweitzer Pennsylvania Barn  
Other: Madison County Limestone Agricultural Building  
\_\_\_\_\_

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)

foundation	<u>Stone/Limestone</u>
roof	<u>Metal</u>
walls	<u>Wood/Weatherboard</u>
other	<u>N/A</u>

Narrative Description

=====  
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)

Exploration/Settlement  
Architecture  
Agriculture

Period of Significance Ca. 1860-1876

Significant Dates Ca. 1876

Ca. 1860

Significant Person (Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation \_\_\_\_\_

Architect/Builder Unknown

=====

9. Major Bibliographical References

=====

(see continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS)

preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.

previously listed in the National Register

previously determined eligible by the National Register

designated a National Historic Landmark

recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_

recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_

Primary Location of Additional Data

State Historic Preservation Office

Other State agency

Federal agency

Local government

University

Other

Name of repository: \_\_\_\_\_

=====

10. Geographical Data

=====

Acreage of Property 2.5

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

	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
1	<u>15</u>	<u>409,420</u>	<u>4,588,520</u>	3	___	_____	_____
2	___	_____	_____	4	___	_____	_____

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

Boundary Justification

=====  
11. Form Prepared By  
=====

1.) name/title: Sara Tessmer e-mail address montessmer@hotmail.com

organization \_\_\_\_\_ date February 7, 2008

street & number 1840 137 Lane telephone 515-758-2545

city or town Earlham state IA zip code 50072

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

=====  
Property Owner  
=====

name Carl and Sara Tessmer

street & number 1840 137 Lane telephone 515.758.2545

city or town Earlham state Iowa zip code 50072

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 7 Page 1 Seerley, William and Mary (Messersmith),  
Barn and Milk house/Smokehouse  
Madison County, Iowa

7. Description

Materials continued  
Roof asphalt  
Walls stone/limestone

**No. 7 Narrative Description**

**Summary**

In 1856 William and Mary Seerley settled on a 200 acre farm in central Iowa in Madison Township in the northwest part of Madison County. They built a log cabin in 1856 and a permanent farmhouse in 1861. The William and Mary Seerley Barn and Milk House/Smokehouse are early examples of well preserved agricultural animal facilities and food production facilities. The barn (Ca. 1876) is a Sweitzer Pennsylvania barn of an earlier type usually built before 1850, which has an asymmetrical gable roof over a forebay. Materials and Building techniques suggest that the stone Milk house/Smokehouse (Ca. 1860) described by Roslea Johnson in the NRHP thematic nomination *Legacy in Stone: The Settlement of Madison County Iowa, 1987*, was built about the same time as the farmhouse.

- The Sweitzer barn has a native limestone stable on the lower level. Above it is a heavy timber haymow with forebay. The barn has well preserved details of an animal facility including the haymow with ladders and hay retainers as integral parts of the bent system; a granary; the foundation of the attached machine shed and corncrib which forms a storage cellar for pumpkins and root crops used for livestock feed; tool boxes, hitching rings, pegs and hooks for working with horses; and windows with latches to hold them open or closed.
- The stone milk house/smokehouse, preserves the details of an agricultural food production facility, including a stone lined well, water troughs for cooling and storing dairy products, a smokehouse, and a roofed outdoor work space for processing foods and doing laundry.
- Stone walks connect the buildings, useful in an operation where mud is ever present.

The farmstead is in a rural area with pasture surrounding the barn. There has been very little alteration of the buildings since their construction, but they are now being threatened by deterioration.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 7 Page 2 Seerley, William and Mary (Messersmith),  
Barn and Milk house/Smokehouse  
Madison County, Iowa

---

**The Barn: Ca.1876-contributing**

This 48 feet by 68 feet 4 inches Sweitzer Pennsylvania style barn evidences the characteristics described in *The Pennsylvania Barn* by Robert F. Ensminger on pages 60-65. This Pennsylvania bank barn, built into the side of a south facing slope has a cantilevered forebay, extending 8 feet on the south side. On the north side of the barn is a low ramped entrance to the two center bays of the haymow. The ridge beam of the end gabled roof is centered over the main barn. Because the roof slope continues unbroken from the ridge over the forebay, the gable end of the barn has an asymmetrical silhouette. The lower story of the barn is built of locally quarried roughly squared limestone. Most of the stone is laid in courses, but some have two against one bonding. Grapevine joints are used. The upper level of the barn has five heavy bents constructed of hand hewn oak, with pegged mortise and tenon joints. The exterior of the upper level is random width vertical board siding (11 feet-12 feet wide) with space between the planks for air circulation. Square nails are used to hold the siding in place.

The east end of the barn had a drive through machine shed. The east wall of the machine shed was a corncrib with a door in the south end to shovel corn to the feedlot below. A shed roof sloping from the barn to the east covered the machine shed and corncrib. The crib has a foundation of locally quarried limestone which is built into the south facing slope. The south end of the foundation is open, forming a cellar for storing root crops and pumpkins used as animal feed. The corncrib and roof have fallen in, but the foundation and cellar remain in good condition.

The first floor stable, made of locally quarried limestone, has an 18 inch thick limestone wall dividing the stable into two parts both measuring 33 feet 7 inches by 34 feet 8 inches. A doorway in the middle of the wall allows access between the two parts. Each end of the stable has three openings under the forebay: a central opening to the feeding alley, a door near the central dividing wall, and a door near the exterior end wall. There are three evenly spaced windows in each end and two windows on the north side, one under each of the exterior bays. The windows are single sash, six pane windows hinged to swing upward. A wooden swing latch keeps the windows closed. A wood piece with a hole and peg hangs from the floor joist so that the window can be swung upward and the peg slid under the window to hold it open. There is a hay drop into the north end of each feeding alley. The west end of the stable has eight horse stalls, one of which retains its manger. There is a halter hook attached to the west sill plate at the end of each stall. There is also an iron ring hanging from the floor joist above each stall. Tool compartments are recessed into the stone wall at the west end under the south and north windows. The wood lined tool compartments are 14 inches high and 10 inches deep with a board flush with the wall to hold tools in place. There are two forked tree branches on the exterior of the stone wall under the forebay just outside the west door, one of which has broken off. The branches may have been used to hang tack. One complete original Dutch style door and surround remains in the second opening from the west under the forebay. There are other partial doorways and door surrounds. The east half of the stable has similar size and configuration of doors and windows.



United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 7

Page 3

Seerley, William and Mary (Messersmith),

Barn and Milk house/Smokehouse

Madison County, Iowa

---

The upper level of the barn is designed to process and store feed grains, hay and straw. From east to west, the barn is divided into four bays and there is a forebay along the south side. There is an 8 feet by 17 feet granary in the southeast corner of the barn/forebay. The granary has a gravity slant floor that allows grain to flow to the feedlot below.

The forebay was also used as a mow for hay and straw storage. Doors on the south wall provide access for feeding and bedding livestock below. The forebay allowed feeding livestock outside where there could be easier management of manure. It also prevents the lower level stable doors from being blocked with hay thrown down to the lots below and provides protection underneath from snow and rain. The forebay, although it is cantilevered eight feet beyond the barn foundation, is an integral part of the upper barn form, maintaining the "classic" asymmetrical silhouette of this Sweitzer barn. There are 5 bents which divide the barn into 4 bays. Mow ladders reaching from the floor to the top beam are incorporated into the south sides of the bents enabling access to the top of the hay/straw stacks. Four foot high hay retainer railings are built into the bottom of each bent. The floor joists are machine sawn 1 foot by 2 inch boards. On the north side of the barn is a low ramped entrance to the 2 center bays. Native limestone is exposed at the sides of the ramp. The entrance has a 12 inch by 12 inch hand hewn sill which rests on the stone foundation. Each of the 2 outer bays has a hay door near the north wall which covers the drop to the feeding alleys below.

The main barn is deteriorating, but is currently in "good" condition. The machine shed/corncrib has fallen down. Immediate rehabilitation is needed to prevent further deterioration of the barn. Sills, some siding on the north side, and the roof need replacing. The stone wall on the north side under the ramp needs stabilizing.

After an interview with a fellow (Seerley) classmate, Mildred Price Robertson from Earlham, wrote this in 1925 about the building of the Seerley barn: *"In 1876 they built a barn, the largest and finest in the neighborhood. The framework was all native hewn timbers. The father being an astronomer, located the barn due north by the aid of the North Star. He set the stakes at night which determined the location. This barn still stands today to testify to the strong and valuable material used."*

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 7 Page 4 Seerley, William and Mary (Messersmith),  
Barn and Milk house/Smokehouse  
Madison County, Iowa

---

**The Milk House/Smokehouse: c.a. 1860's-contributing building**

The Seerley Milk House/Smokehouse is an early example of a vernacular limestone building. Two single cell rooms are set at right angles with the corners of the buildings joining, but without joining the interior spaces. Although another smokehouse and milk house are included in *Legacy in Stone: The Settlement of Madison County, IA, 1987* research, no similarly joined buildings were discovered.

The building consists of two 11 foot 8 inch by 13 foot rooms which sit at right angles to each other so that the corners touch. There is a flag-stone exterior covered workspace in the 11 foot 8 inch by 11 foot 8 inch square formed by the two building fronts. Under the roof is a hand dug limestone lined well with its hand pump. The two gabled roofs extend to cover the exterior covered workspace, creating a hipped roof effect at the corner. Each main façade has a center gable entrance. Each building wing has a window centered in each under-eave wall. There are no other openings.

The two main entrance facades are constructed of almost finished cut rubble. There is broken bond, some of which is three against one. Other facades are constructed of rubble with some two against one and some three against one broken bond. Most joints have been re-pointed; but those which have not, have grapevine tooling. Quoins have exaggerated quarry face. All lintels have draft lines, margin lines, and a face pointed in rows with a small round ended tool. There are protruding sills. The lintels and sills are commercially produced dimension stone. Splayed windows have a single six pane sash hinged at the top to swing inward. The doors are recessed with plain wood panel reveals. There are no transoms or sidelights. The doors are flush with the ground. Eaves are extended and closed verges are flush at the back of the buildings. At the front they extend to form a covered exterior covered workspace.

The west wing /milk house interior is sunken three steps down. There are plastered brick troughs on the floor along the north and west walls where the milk and other dairy products were cooled.

Water was pumped from the well through a pipe in the east wall to the cooling troughs. The troughs, walls, ceiling and window reveals are plastered and appear to have been whitewashed. The south wing/smokehouse interior has exposed stone walls which are heavily smoked, particularly in the south end. The underside of the roof has exposed rafters. There are four log poles resting on the stone walls about one/two feet from the south end and east wall of the smoke house. There are meat hooks hanging from the logs. The dirt floor of the smoke house is flush with the exterior covered workspace. The milk house/smoke house is in good condition. The roof needs replacing.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 7 Page 5 Seerley, William and Mary (Messersmith),  
Barn and Milk house/Smokehouse  
Madison County, Iowa

---

**Stone Walkways ca. 1876-contributing structure**

There were walkways of closely spaced limestone along the west side of the barn, north to the east side of the smokehouse, then along the east side of the farm house, around to the north front door and out to the street. The walkway along the side of the smokehouse and at the side of the barn still remains.

**Building Materials and Workmanship**

The milk house/smokehouse, barn, and walkway are at least partially built of locally quarried limestone. The construction of the buildings also required lime for mortar and for plaster. There were numerous local sources that may have been used for the building materials. In the early 1860's, a quarry was opened 2 miles east of the present town of Earlham and 3 miles north of the Seerley farm. In 1867 the route of the first transcontinental railroad, the Chicago, Rock Island and Pacific Railroad was diverted south into Madison County through the quarries in order to obtain rock for the construction of the railroad further west. The quarries also were a major resource for building materials for the Iowa State Capitol and other buildings and streets in Des Moines since rock could easily be shipped "down hill" by rail to Des Moines.

S. A. Robertson operated the Earlham Stone and Limeworks and M. Tuttle had a lime kiln and quarry both of which are 3 miles north of the Seerley farm. A spur line of the railroad ran 2 miles further north to the second largest quarry in the area, the Earlham Land Company, operated by James Laird and P.G. Regan. These quarries were exporting 3 to 6 carloads of stone and lime daily in 1879. J. G. Parkin's Eureka Quarry, one and one half miles south of the current town of Earlham, (4 ½ miles northwest of the Seerley farm) was exporting one carload daily when the rail line opened in 1868. William McKibben also had a commercial quarry one mile north and one mile west of the Earlham Stone and Limeworks. There was also a quarry at Worthington 1 ½ miles southwest of the farmstead. Mildred Price reported that in 1858 there was a quarry one half mile west of the farmstead and a lime kiln 2 miles east; however, there is no information to indicate that these were commercial operations. Any of these quarries were close enough to have provided building materials for the farmstead. The rubble used in the construction of the milk house/smokehouse may have come from the quarry one half mile west. The lintels were purchased from a commercial quarry. The building materials used for the barn were roughly squared and some almost ashlar limestone. There is very little use of limestone rubble in the barn, even though rubble was the most commonly used material in construction of stone buildings, including expensive ones. The size and quality of the limestone blocks suggest that they probably came from one of the big commercial quarries. Since the Parkins quarry was selling much more expensive dimensional stone, it probably was not the source of the materials. It seems most likely that the materials came from the Earlham Stone and Limeworks or from the Tuttle quarry three miles to the north or the Worthington quarry 1 ½ mile south. The farmstead is along the main road south from Earlham Stone and Limeworks to Worthington and on to Winterset.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 7 Page 6 Seerley, William and Mary (Messersmith),  
Barn and Milk house/Smokehouse  
Madison County, Iowa

---

In the early 1860s before the town of Earlham was established in 1870, there was a small community with a boarding house north of the Seerley's farm, just south of the quarries. The unnamed community is shown on the map in the 1875 Atlas of Madison County, Iowa. The boarding house and the large numbers of men who worked at the quarries and on the railroad would have provided an inexhaustible market for all the dairy and meat products the Seerleys could supply. One wonders if William Seerley might have bartered for building materials.

Examination of the workmanship suggests that a number of different masons worked on the barn foundation, perhaps over a period of time. Several different techniques are used including laying stone in courses; coursed stone work with some 2 against 1 bonding; and occasionally using 3 against 1 broken bonding, a technique which requires a much higher level of masonry skills.

The upper level of the Pennsylvania Sweitzer barn is of timber frame construction. There are five heavy bents constructed of hand hewn oak, with pegged mortise and tenon joints. Before the barn was built in 1876, William Seerley had bought a 40 acre plot and a 50 acre plot in a heavily timbered area one and a half miles east of the farmstead along North River. The oak for the hand hewn timbers may have been cut from these properties. The forebay is cantilevered eight feet beyond the foundation and has no supporting timbers. It has two south facing hay doors to the barnyard below. The forebay frame, although it extends beyond the barn foundation, is an integral part of the upper barn frame, maintaining the classic asymmetrical silhouette of this Sweitzer barn. An existing separate granary room, walled off the east end of the forebay, has a slanted shaft section built within the floor used for pouring grain into wagons and bunks below the forebay. Placing the granary in the forebay with fresh air circulation below as well as the stable doors and barnyard on the warmest and driest side of the barn is advantageous during adverse weather.

The exterior of the upper level is random width, vertical weather board siding, 11-12 inches wide, with space between the planks for air circulation. The siding was commercially sawn. Square nails were used to hold the siding in place.

### **Integrity**

The Seerley Farm was isolated because few people lived in the area during the early settlement years. As of today the farm continues to be isolated because it is at the end of a long dead end road, a quarter mile or more from any other farmsteads. The barn looks out over pastures in the Tom Creek River bottom much as it did 150 years ago. A small new garage to the south of the Milk House can not be seen from it. A new home under construction will have a similar foot print and relationship to the Milk House/Smokehouse as the Seerley's farmhouse had. The materials and workmanship of the Milk House/Smokehouse are very well preserved.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 7 Page 7 Seerley, William and Mary (Messersmith),  
Barn and Milk house/Smokehouse  
Madison County, Iowa

---

Most of the materials and workmanship in the Milk House/Smokehouse are unchanged from their original construction except for being re-pointed. The barn is unique in its level of preservation of many of the details of this animal facility. Although 2 openings in the stone foundation of the barn have been modified, the materials and workmanship are unchanged. Because of the pastoral setting, the preservation of materials and workmanship, and the preservation of small details of the workplaces, the buildings convey the feeling of early settlement, agricultural spaces and activities.

**No. 8 Statement of Significance**

**Summary**

The Seerley Barn and Milk House/Smokehouse Ca. 1860-1876 are well preserved examples of agricultural buildings for animal facilities and food production built by one of the first families to settle and farm in the southwest part of Madison County, Iowa. The buildings are significant under Criteria A for providing insights about the lives and business of a very successful early and long term farming family. The buildings are also significant under Criteria C as an excellent example of a Sweitzer Pennsylvania Barn and for the information they provide about the Madison County, Iowa limestone building traditions. Further research may reveal potential archeological significance for this property. However this is not being claimed at this time.

• *Criteria A; Early Settlement*

When William and Mary (Messersmith) Seerley emigrated from Indiana in 1856, they were among the first settlers in the northwest part of Madison County, Iowa. The farmstead provided evidence of the self sufficient lives of the early settlers. The buildings retain well preserved details of the workplaces which enable the family to be efficient in their agricultural enterprises.

• *Criteria C; Engineering-Sweitzer Pennsylvania Barn*

The Seerley barn, built in 1876, is a Sweitzer Pennsylvania barn of an earlier type usually built before 1850, which has a nonsymmetrical gable which includes the forebay within it.

• *Criteria C; Engineering-The Stone Building Traditions of Madison County, Iowa*

The Seerley Milk House/Smokehouse is described by Roslea Johnson in the NRHP thematic nomination *Legacy in Stone, The Settlement of Madison County Iowa*. The barn and limestone walkways provide further evidence and insights about local Madison County stone building techniques and materials.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 8 Page 8

Seerley, William and Mary (Messersmith),  
Barn and Milk house/Smokehouse  
Madison County, Iowa

**History of Early Settlers: The Seerley Family**

The Record of Iowa states that William Seerley was a "well-known and much respected farmer". His father had served in the War of 1812 and his maternal grandfather had served in the Revolutionary War. William and Mary Seerley were a successful farm family who raised crops and livestock. William Seerley held several local public offices including Clerk and Assessor of Madison Township. In 1893, he was the Democratic candidate for State Senator from his district. (Record of Iowa, 1103-4)

Mary & William



William and Mary Seerley were among the earliest settlers in the northwestern part of Madison County, Iowa. The success of the agricultural adventures made Seerley a leader in the community.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 8

Page 9

Seerley, William and Mary (Messersmith),

Barn and Milk house/Smokehouse

Madison County, Iowa

---

When William and Mary E. Seerley emigrated from Indiana into Northwestern Madison County, Iowa in 1856, they were accompanied by William's mother, Elizabeth Brown Seerley and 3 children, Marcellus, Bayard P., and Horace A. Later, they had several more children including 8 who lived well into the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Most of the children never married, but continued to live and work on the farm in much the same way as their parents did. Below is a list of the names and information about each of the family members.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 8 Page 10

Seerley, William and Mary (Messersmith),

Barn and Milk house/Smokehouse

Madison County, Iowa

Name	Birth Date and Place	Death Date and Age	Married
William Seerley 1 Head of Household	May 5, 1823 Frederick Co. MD	April 4, 1908 Age 85	1852 to Mary Ellen Messersmith
Mary Ellen 1 Messersmith Seerley Wife	Nov. 15, 1831 Centerville, IN	October 17, 1911 Age 80	1852 to William Seerley
Elizabeth Brown Seerley 1 Mother of William	Nov. 14, 1789 Frederick Co. , VA	August 20, 1869 Age 79	Joseph Seerley-from France Died 1841, Marion Co. IN
Marcellus 1 Seerley	1853 IA	Grand Island, Nebraska	January 24, 1875 To Harriet V. McLaughlin
Bayard P. Seerley 1	1854 IN		February 9, 1882 To Mary Fogelsong
Horace A. Seerley 1	1855 IN	1895 Age 40	January 3, 1883 To Bell Klingensmith
Francis Hilery 2 Seerley aka Frank	December 21, 1857 Madison Co., IA	February 4, 1945 Age 88	
Elwood D. Seerley 2 aka Edward D.	November 21, 1859 Madison Co., IA	December 3, 1925 Age 66	
Charles T. Seerley	1862 Madison Co., IA	December 31, 1936 Age 75	
Flora Seerley 3	April 2, 1864 Madison Co., IA	July 2, 1964 Age 100	
Grace Seerley 3	November 29, 1865 Madison Co., IA	May 12, 1950 Age 84	
Ida May Seerley	May 4, 1868 Madison Co., IA	March 12, 1937 Age 68	
Virginia May Seerley	May 4, 1868 Madison Co., IA	Deceased at birth	
Mary Ellen Seerley	1870 Madison Co., IA	1870 Age 1 month	
Vick A. Seerley 3	January 29, 1871 Madison Co., IA	March 23, 1950 Age 79	
Homer H. Seerley	1874 Madison Co., IA	1879 Age 5	
William V. Seerley	1877 Madison Co., IA	November 4, 1933 Age 56	

Footnote

- 1: Immigrated to IA in 1856
- 2: Born in a log cabin on the farmstead
- 3: moved to Winterset in 1947 .



United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 8 Page 11 Seerley, William and Mary (Messersmith),  
Barn and Milk house/Smokehouse  
Madison County, Iowa

---

Northwestern Madison County was sparsely populated when the Seerleys settled there. Therefore, the Seerleys needed to be self sufficient. During the first year William is reported to have cleared land for crops. They grew corn and some wheat which William took to Adel and Van Meter to be ground into meal and flour for family use. They planted sorghum and made molasses. They raised sheep for wool which Mary spun and took to a neighbor who wove it into cloth for the family use. Initially, the family got water from a spring  $\frac{1}{4}$  mile from the house and took their clothes to Tom Creek at the south border of their farm to wash them. When the Seerley family settled, there were one adult male and 2 adult females, William, Mary and William's mother Elizabeth. This may have resulted in the family focusing on milking cows and producing dairy products. The opening of several quarries in the early 1860's and the building of the first transcontinental railroad 3 miles north of their farm in 1867 brought large numbers of workers to the area where a boarding house was established. This would have created a ready market for all the food products which the Seerleys could produce. In addition to the materials and the building methods, the economic opportunities suggest that the Mary and William Seerley Milk House/Smokehouse and well were built in the early 1860's. The economic success of the Seerleys may have generated the income to finance the expensive barn built in 1876 to replace a barn which the family must have had in earlier years.

Elizabeth Brown and Joseph Seerley and their son William lived in Pennsylvania during William's school years. William was well educated for his day with studies in astronomy and "religion". When William was a teen, the family moved to Indiana. After he married Mary Ellen Messersmith in 1852 they moved to Madison County, Iowa. Perhaps William was familiar with Sweitzer Pennsylvania barns from his years living and studying in Pennsylvania. He may have carried the idea of building such a barn with him as he emigrated from Pennsylvania to Indiana and Iowa. It was forty years later that he had the economic resources to realize his dream of building the magnificent barn.

Eight children never married but remained on the farm until 1942 using horses and raising livestock in much the same as their parents had in the previous century. In 1942 the surviving children sold the farm and moved to Winterset. The Seerley farmstead is unique in having well preserved animal and agricultural production facilities.

In the summer of 2007 at the age of 90, Dale Stanley, a lifetime resident of Madison Township, Madison County, Iowa, reflected that visiting the Seerley farm every spring to purchase calves was "like walking into the State Fair". Livestock, barns and grounds were magnificently groomed and cared for. Straw bedding was neatly pushed into stalls and all manure was cleared to form clean alley walkways. The draft horses were lined up in their stalls in perfect order as were the cows. All of the buildings, grounds, and livestock were well maintained and of superior quality.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 8 Page 12 Seerley, William and Mary (Messersmith),  
Barn and Milk house/Smokehouse  
Madison County, Iowa

---

In Les Goeldner's article from the Earlham Advocate July 28, 1994, Les (who knew the Seerleys) wrote that *"The Seerleys had their own scheme for sharing the work load. In general the men attended to the barn and things about the farm; the women did the milking and cared for the milk house, cared for the poultry and housework and I suppose, other menial chores about the place, considered "women's" work"*.

In The Pennsylvania Barn, Ensigner identifies a Sweitzer barn pre 1850 as having "a forebay of medium depth, 6-9 feet, supported only by forebay beams cantilevered into the barn structure. The front roof slope is longer than the rear roof slope because the roof continues unbroken over the forebay." The result is the characteristic asymmetrical gable-end silhouette of the Switzer barn." (Ensigner 1992, 36) Although the Seerley barn was not built until 1876, it displays the characteristics of the pre-1850 Sweitzer barn. The Seerley barn has an 8 foot deep forebay supported only by cantilevered forebay beams with the south roof slope longer than the north slope because the roof continues unbroken over the forebay.

The Seerley agricultural buildings preserve details of the stone itself, the methods of cutting the stone, methods of laying the stone, the joints, as well as the design of the buildings. Within the context of the research reported in the NRHP Nomination "Legacy in Stone", these well preserved details reveal additional information about the local though intense stone building tradition in Madison County, Iowa, during the early settlement period from 1856-1885.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 9 Page 13 Seerley, William and Mary (Messersmith),  
Barn and Milk house/Smokehouse  
Madison County, Iowa

---

**Bibliography:**

- Atlas of Madison County Iowa. Philadelphia: Harrison & Warner, 1875.
- Biography and Genealogy Master Index, 1988. Winterset Public Library, Winterset, Iowa.
- Cemetery/Death Records; Madison County, IA. Available: <http://www.usgenweb.org> January 7, 2008.
- Census Federal, 1860, Madison County, Iowa. Available: <http://www.usgenweb.org> January 7, 2008
- Census Federal, 1870, Madison County, Iowa. Available: <http://www.usgenweb.org> January 7, 2008.
- Census Federal, 1880, Madison County, Iowa. Available: <http://www.usgenweb.org> January 7, 2008.
- Census Federal, 1900, Madison County, Iowa. Available: <http://www.usgenweb.org> January 7, 2008.
- Census Federal, 1910, Madison County, Iowa. Available: <http://www.usgenweb.org> January 7, 2008.
- Census Federal, 1920, Madison County, Iowa. Available: <http://www.usgenweb.org> January 7, 2008.
- Census State, 1856 Madison County, Iowa. Available: <http://www.usgenweb.org> January 7, 2008.
- Certified Copy of Patent dated June 3, 1856, Certificated #10723 Deed Rec. 88, pg. 448, Madison County Recorder's Office, Courthouse, Winterset, Iowa.
- Courthouse Records. Winterset, Iowa: Madison County Recorders' Offices.
- Davies, J. J. History and Business Directory of Madison Co., Ia. Des Moines; Mills and Co. Printers and Publishers, 1869.
- Ensminger, Robert F. The Pennsylvania Barn: Its Origin, Evolution, and Distribution in North America. Baltimore, Maryland: The John Hopkins University Press, 1992.
- Goeldner, Lester. Interview, Seerley/Tessmer, Farmstead, Earlham, Iowa, 1992.
- Goeldner, Lester. "Variety Pak by Les; Seerley Family", Earlham Advocate. Volume 5, Thursday, July 28, 1994, p. 12.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 9 Page 14 Seerley, William and Mary (Messersmith),  
Barn and Milk house/Smokehouse  
Madison County, Iowa

---

Graham, Frank D. Audel's Masons and Builders Guide #4. Indianapolis, Theodore Audel & Co., 1970.

History of Madison County, Iowa. Des Moines: Union Historical Co., 1879.

History of Madison County, Iowa. Des Moines: Union Historical Co., 1879, p. 564.

History of Madison County, Iowa, and Its People, Vo. II, Chicago: S.J. Clarke Publishing Co., 1915, pp. 356-7, 481-2, 534-7, 604-7.

Johnson, Roslea. "Legacy in Stone: The Settlement of Madison County". NRHP Nomination Part I, Unpublished research Des Moines Area Community College, 1987.

Johnson, Roslea. "Legacy in Stone: The Settlement of Madison County". NRHP Nomination Part II, Unpublished research Des Moines Area Community College, 1987.

Koch, Augustus, artist. Bird's Eye View of the City of Winterset, Madison County, Iowa. 1869. Chicago: Chicago Lithographing & Co. n.d.

Mueller, Herman. History of Madison County, Iowa. 2 vols. Chicago: S.J. Clarke Publishing Co., 1915; Madison County Historical Society and Museum.

Myers, Ronald E., (Editor), Earlham, Iowa 1970 Centennial, Centennial Historical Committee, 1968.

Noble, Allen G. and Richard K. Cleek. The Old Barn Book: A Field Guide to North American Barns and Other Farm Structures. New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1995.

Nunmaker, Sarah. "Pioneer History of Earlham; April 22, 1927." Pioneer History of Earlham, Earlham Historical Society, 2007.

Robertson, Price, Mildred. Historical Research paper, 1925; An Old Settler's Story." The Earlham Echo. Thursday, May 25, 1978, pp. 1 & 8.

Stanley, Dale. Interview. Stanley Family Farm. Earlham, Iowa, Summer, 2007.

Wagner, John D. and Clayton DeKorne, Barns Sheds and Outbuildings. 1<sup>st</sup> ed. N.J: Upper Saddle River, 2005.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 10 Page 15 Seerley, William and Mary (Messersmith),  
Barn and Milk house/Smokehouse  
Madison County, Iowa

**GEOGRAPHICAL DATA**

**VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION**

\*Beginning at the NW corner of the NE ¼ of the NW ¼ of section 28, twp. 77N, R-28W, go 15 feet south and 100 feet east of the corner post. From this point the boundary of the historic district extends 800 feet south and 225 feet east.

**BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION**

\*The boundary has been drawn to include the barn; the milkhouse/smokehouse; and the walk way from the barn to the milk house/smokehouse, the non-extant farmhouse site, and the road. Included within the boundary is a non-contributing garage. The boundary has been drawn large enough to include 5 feet on all sides of each of the buildings.

11. Form Prepared By:

2.) name/title: Roslea Johnson e-mail address rijohnson@dmacc.edu

Organization Des Moines Area Community College date February 2008

Street & number 4785 NW 50<sup>th</sup> St. telephone 515-276-7351

city or town Des Moines state IA zip code 50310

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

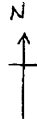
Section 11

Page 16

Seerley, William and Mary (Messersmith),

Barn and Milk house/Smokehouse

Madison County, Iowa



Atlas of Madison County, Iowa 1875  
(portion of Madison County)



★ William and Mary Seerley Farmstead

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 11 Page 17

Seerley, William and Mary (Messersmith),

Barn and Milk house/Smokehouse

Madison County, Iowa

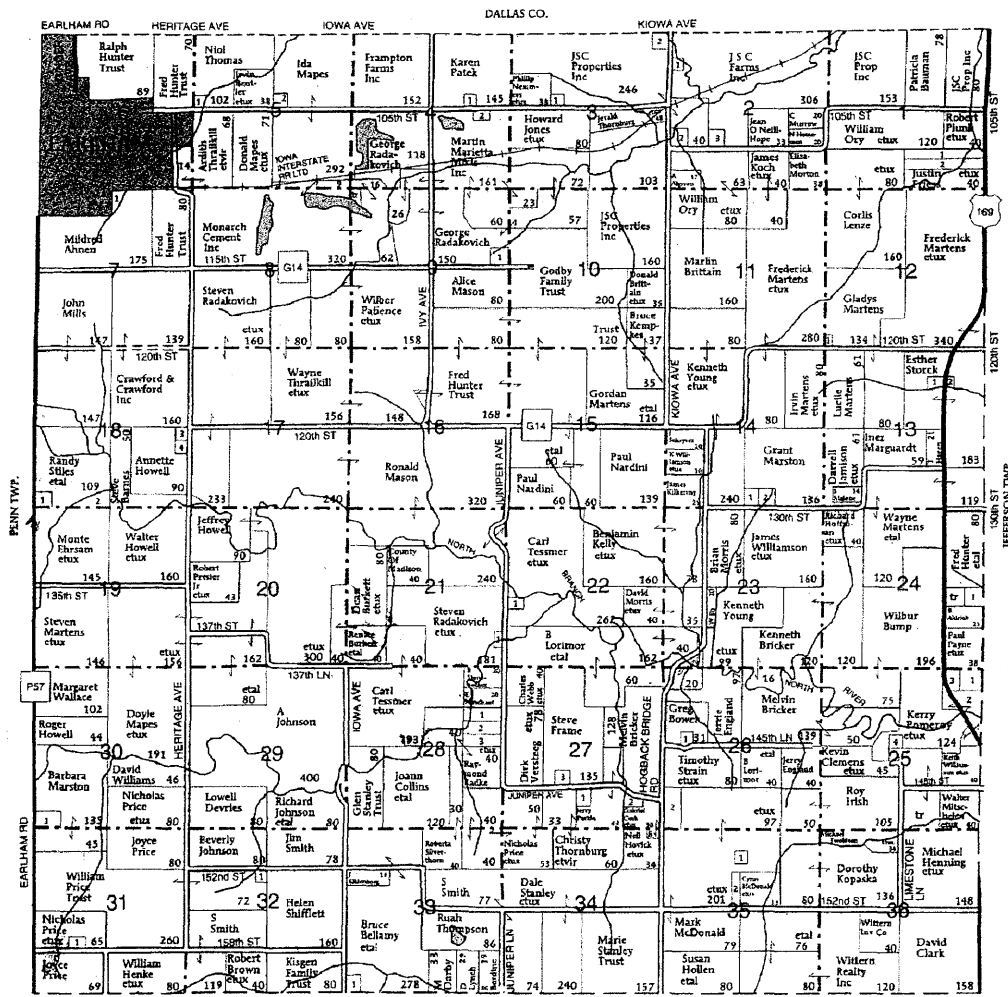
# Madison Township, Madison County, Iowa, 2007



**T-77-N**

**MADISON PLAT**  
(Landowners)

**R-28-W**



DOUGLAS TWP.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

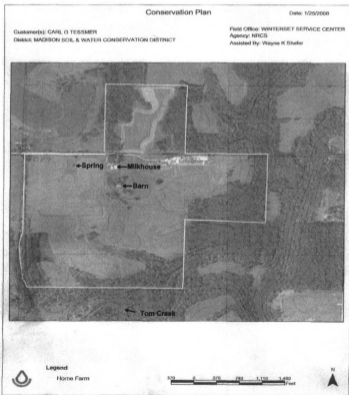
Section 11 Page 18

Seerley, William and Mary (Messersmith),

Barn and Milk house/Smokehouse

Madison County, Iowa

---





United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

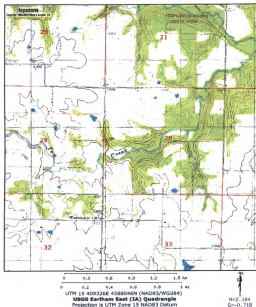
Section 11 Page 19

Seerley, William and Mary (Messersmith),

Barn and Milk house/Smokehouse

Madison County, Iowa

Copyright 2003



United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

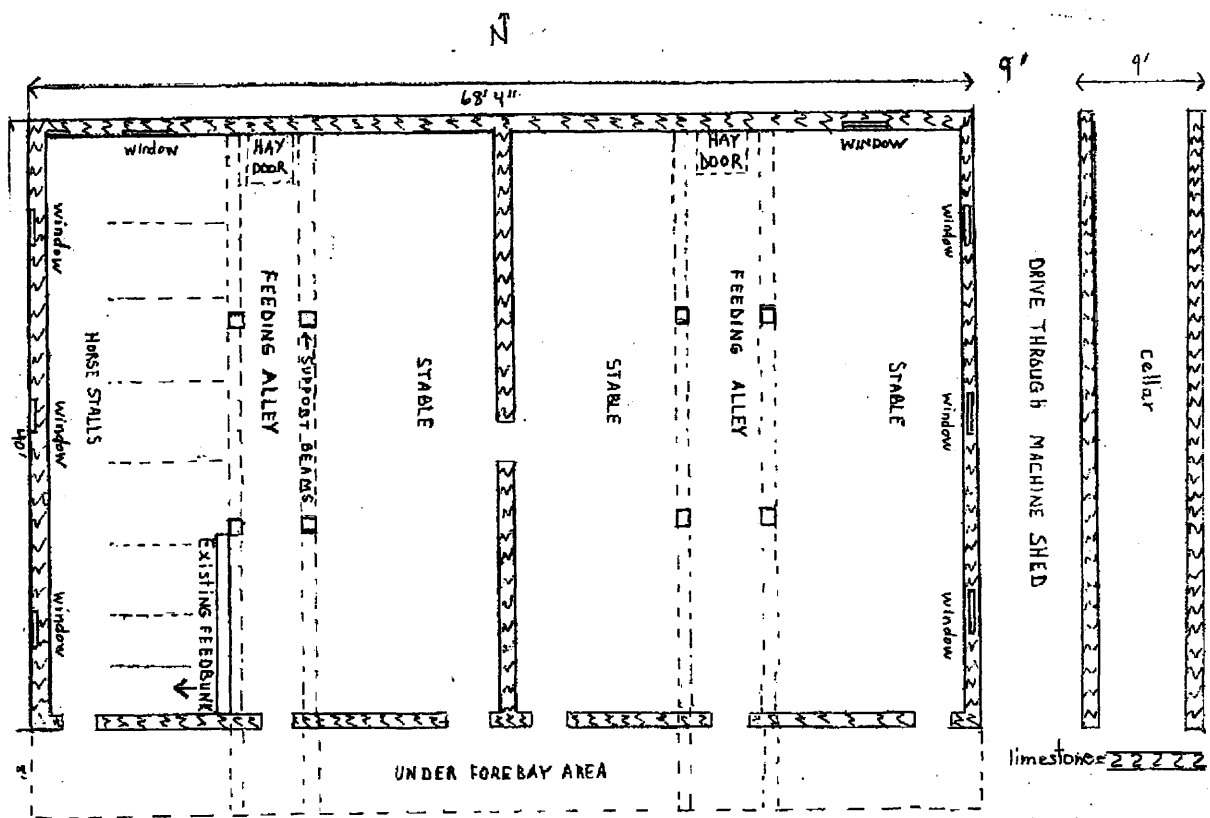
Section 11 Page 20

Seerley, William and Mary (Messersmith),

Barn and Milk house/Smokehouse

Madison County, Iowa

Barn Lower Level



United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

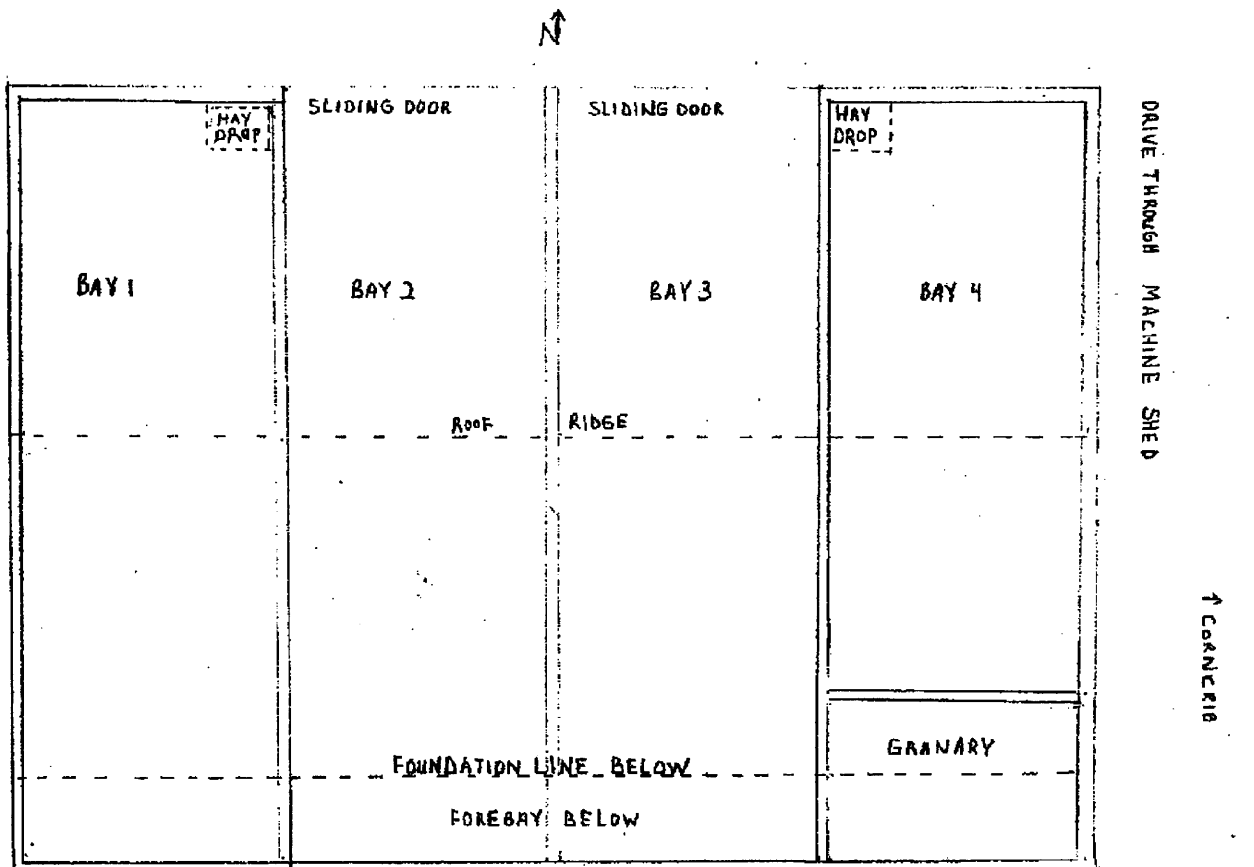
Section 11 Page 21

Seerley, William and Mary (Messersmith),

Barn and Milk house/Smokehouse

Madison County, Iowa

Barn Upper Level



United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 11

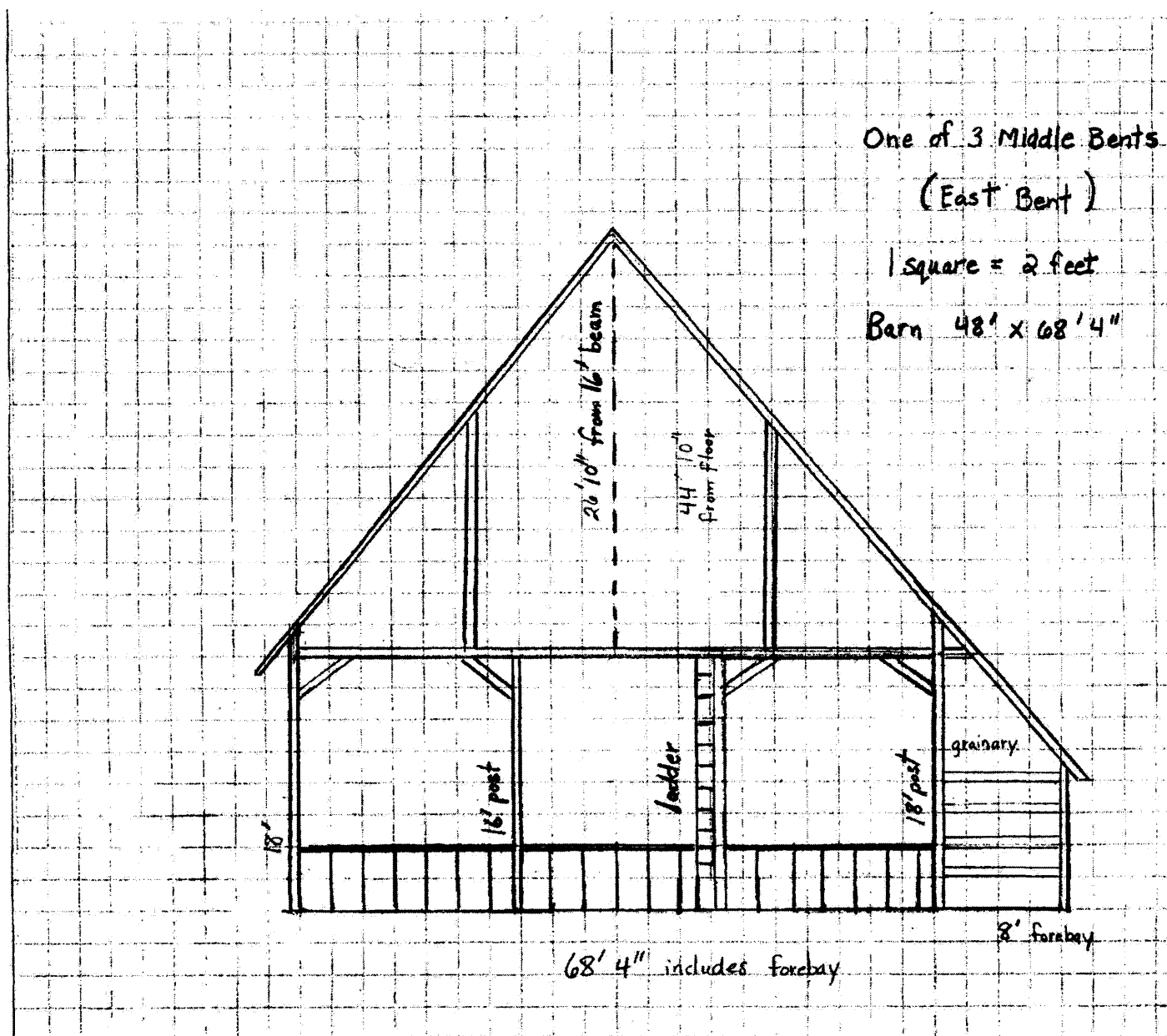
Page 22

Seerley, William and Mary (Messersmith),

Barn and Milk house/Smokehouse

Madison County, Iowa

**Barn - East Middle Bent**



United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

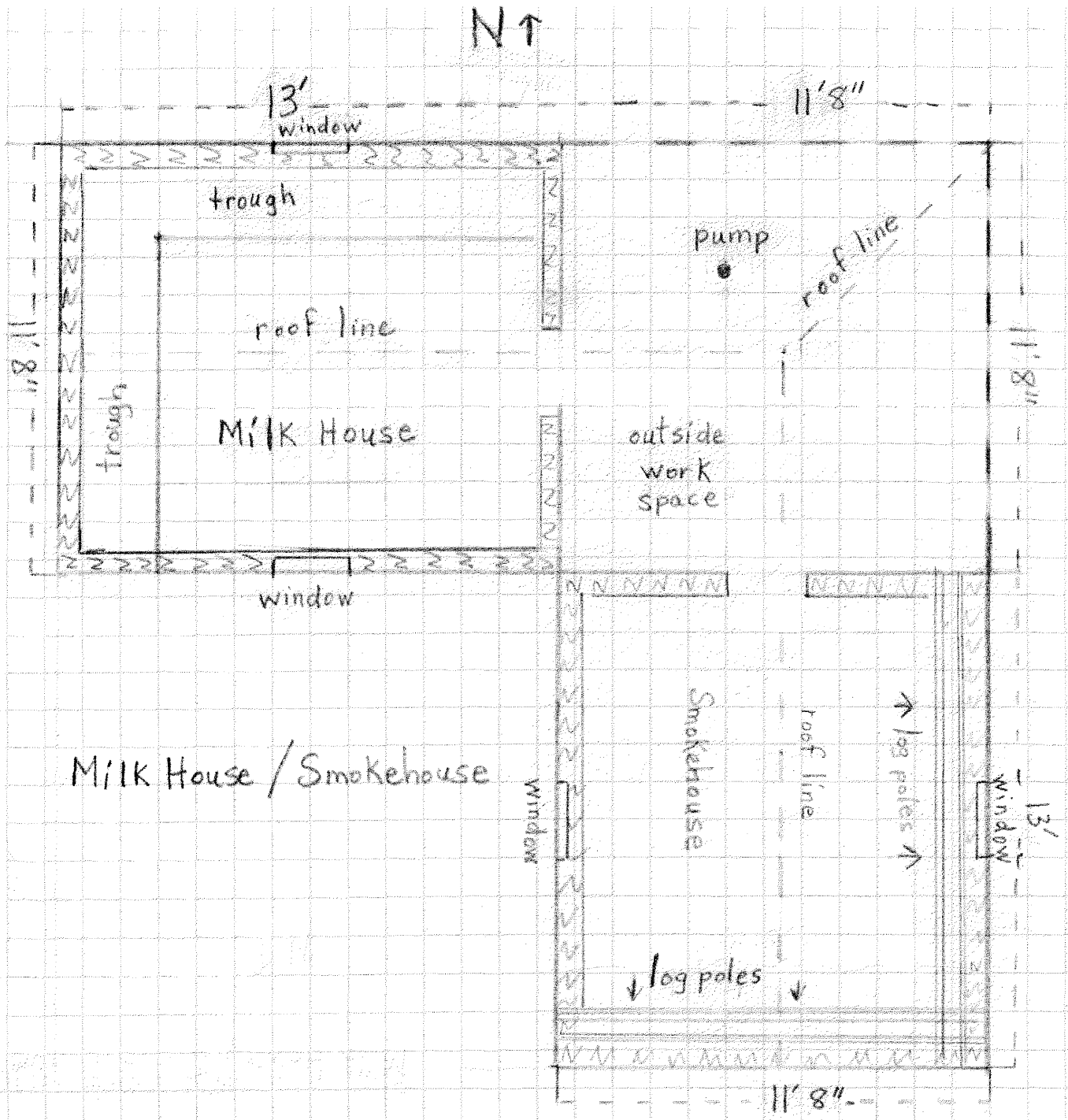
Section 11

Page 23

Seerley, William and Mary (Messersmith),

Barn and Milk house/Smokehouse

Madison County, Iowa



United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

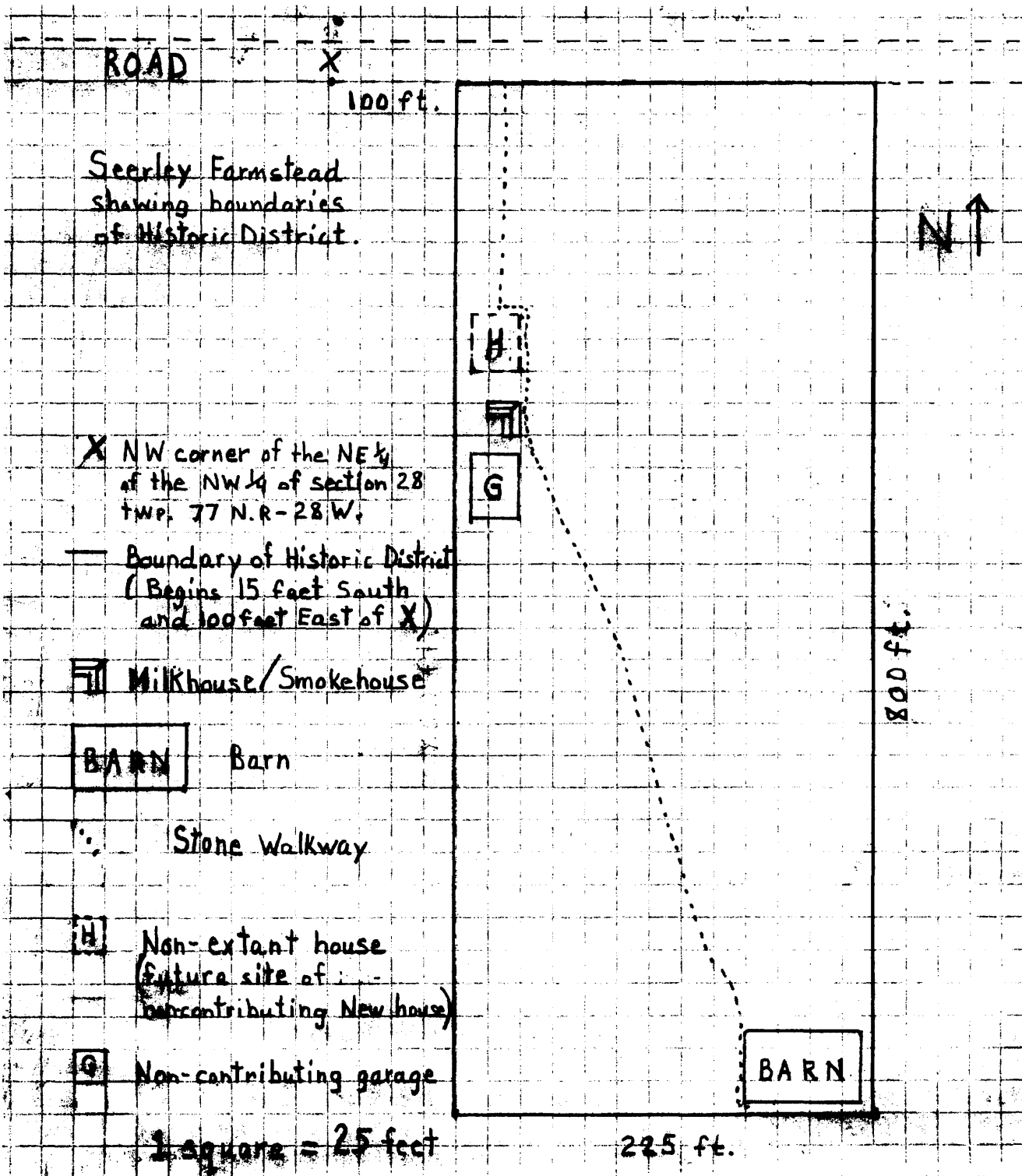
NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 11 Page 24

Seerley, William and Mary (Messersmith),

Barn and Milk house/Smokehouse

Madison County, Iowa



United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 11 Page 25 Seerley, William and Mary (Messersmith),  
Barn and Milk house/Smokehouse  
Madison County, Iowa

---

**Photo log:**

Information common to all photographs:

- Name of photographer; Sara Tessmer/Landowner
- CD-R # 116

**Barn**

1. IA\_MadisonCounty\_Seerley1.tif 12/29/07 camera facing southwest  
North and east view of barn exterior
2. IA\_MadisonCounty\_Seerley2.tif 12/29/07 camera facing southeast  
North and west view of barn exterior
3. IA\_MadisonCounty\_Seerley3.tif 12/29/07 camera facing north  
South view of barn exterior
4. IA\_MadisonCounty\_Seerley4.tif 02/02/08 camera facing north  
Dutch door under forebay
5. IA\_MadisonCounty\_Seerley5.tif 12/29/07 camera facing northwest  
Three middle bents with attached ladders, upper level
6. IA\_MadisonCounty\_Seerley6.tif 02/02/08 camera facing southwest  
Peg-propped window and toolbox below window, west wall, lower level barn

Continue for Milk House/Smokehouse

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 11 Page 26

Seerley, William and Mary (Messersmith),

Barn and Milk house/Smokehouse

Madison County, Iowa

---

**Milk House/Smokehouse**

7. IA\_MadisonCounty\_Seerley7.tif 02/02/08 camera facing southwest  
Northeast view of milk house/smokehouse exterior
8. IA\_MadisonCounty\_Seerley8.tif 12/29/07 camera facing east  
South and west view of milk house/smokehouse exterior
9. IA\_MadisonCounty\_Seerley9.tif 12/29/07 camera facing northwest  
Southeast view of smokehouse
10. IA\_MadisonCounty\_Seerley10.tif 2/02/08 camera facing southwest  
Cooling trough on west interior wall of milk house
11. IA\_MadisonCounty\_Seerley11.tif 12/29/07 camera facing south  
South interior wall of smokehouse with log poles and meat hooks