

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

FOR NPS USE ONLY  
RECEIVED JUL 10 1979  
SEP 11 1979  
DATE ENTERED

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS  
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

**1 NAME**

HISTORIC  
Harlie Whitcomb Farm (Octagon Barn)  
AND/OR COMMON

**2 LOCATION**

STREET & NUMBER  
Town Road #24, 0.5 mile north of Orange Village. \_\_NOT FOR PUBLICATION  
CITY, TOWN  
Orange CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT  
Vermont  
STATE CODE COUNTY CODE  
Vermont 50 Orange 017

**3 CLASSIFICATION**

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE <input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL <input type="checkbox"/> PARK
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	<b>PUBLIC ACQUISITION</b>	<b>ACCESSIBLE</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT <input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT <input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL <input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:

**4 OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME  
Donald J. Hollis & Nancy M. Winkler  
STREET & NUMBER  
RFD #2  
CITY, TOWN VICINITY OF STATE  
Barre Vermont

**5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.  
Office of the Town Clerk  
STREET & NUMBER  
CITY, TOWN STATE  
Orange Vermont

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE  
Vermont Historic Sites & Structures Survey  
DATE  
1978 \_\_FEDERAL  STATE \_\_COUNTY \_\_LOCAL  
DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS  
Vermont Division for Historic Preservation  
CITY, TOWN STATE  
Montpelier Vermont

# 7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED DATE _____
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

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## DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The former Harlie Whitcomb Farm, with its distinctive octagon barn, lies next to the west side of the Orange Center Cemetery on Town Road #24, about 0.5 mile north of Orange Village. The farm buildings stand along the east edge of a minor drainage course that is flanked on the west by a relatively steep hill and on the east by a gentler rise of ground. A small pond lies immediately southwest of the octagon barn. The farm is no longer being used for commercial agriculture, and the fields and pastures are not being maintained.

The principal existing buildings of the Whitcomb Farm consist of an architecturally undistinguished frame house that fronts the town road, a small frame garage behind the house, and an octagonal frame barn a short distance to the south of the garage. These buildings are generally in fair-to-good condition although the barn now shows minor degrees both of structural and superficial deterioration.

The pre-1869, 1½-story, frame and clapboarded house is oriented with its gable roof parallel to the road. Its rectangular plan lacks wings or porches, and its design is almost devoid of ornament. On the main (north) facade, the recessed doorway is placed asymmetrically with two window bays to the east and three bays to the west. The medium-pitch gable roof has been recently covered with corrugated metal sheets; a single central chimney is presently being rebuilt. A small greenhouse is attached to the southeast corner of the house.

The frame octagonal dairy barn - the dominant building of the Whitcomb Farm - was built in 1905-06. Each wall of the barn is approximately 30 feet. Its eastern sides are against a steep bank allowing an earth ramped entrance to the 2nd floor level; from its western sides the barn rises three stories to a roof capped by an octagonal cupola. Around the eastern sides of the barn, at the base of the bank, the foundation rests partly on bedrock that outcrops above the level of the ground floor. The western sides of the barn are borne by a poured concrete foundation that encloses a concrete ground floor.

The post-and-beam frame of the barn is sheathed on the exterior with clapboards that have been painted red at various times. The internal framework is arranged in two concentric polygons whose positions are marked by two distinct breaks in the pitch of the wood-shingled roof; the three slopes become steeper and longer toward the eaves. The innermost polygon defines an open well that extends upward from the second floor to the cupola. The well serves to enable the pitching of hay from the third-story loft down to the animal stalls on the lower floors; it also provides ventilation through the cupola.

On the easternmost wall of the barn a gabled ramp, with a double-leaf entrance, provides vehicular access to the third story. This doorway enables the delivery of hay from the surrounding fields directly to the storage loft.

The main pedestrian doorway enters the second floor from the bank on the northeast side. The door and windows are asymmetrically placed around the perimeter of the barn. Windows are mostly paired; those on the ground floor around the western sides of the barn are distinguished by six lights.

FHR-8-300A  
(11/78)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
HERITAGE CONSERVATION AND RECREATION SERVICE

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CONTINUATION SHEET 1

ITEM NUMBER 7

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On the northernmost wall of the barn an exterior enclosed stairway leads from the ground floor milking parlor to a small 1-story, frame and clapboarded milkhouse that stands on top of the bank. The gable roof of the milkhouse (now covered with standing seam metal sheets) is oriented almost perpendicular to the north wall of the barn.

At the apex of the roof is an octagonal frame cupola. Each of its faces is dominated by a round-arched louvered opening above a clapboarded base. The cupola serves both to ventilate the barn and to provide light to the third floor.

At present (1979) the octagon barn is generally in fair condition. Some structural deterioration has occurred, especially on the eastern sides against the bank. More superficial deterioration is evident: many clapboards and shingles are missing with asphalt paper now applied to several parts of the roof and cupola. However, given repairs in the near future, most of the existing (and presumably original) fabric of the barn could be preserved.

# 8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES 1905-06

BUILDER/ARCHITECT Unknown

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The former Harlie Whitcomb Farm in Orange, Vermont, gains primary significance from the extraordinary architectural nature of its principal building, a three-story octagonal dairy barn. Built in 1905-06, the octagon barn retains its original design without substantial alteration. Recent lack of maintenance has allowed some elements of the design, such as the cupola, to deteriorate somewhat but most of the fabric remains restorable.

The octagon barn of the former Whitcomb Farm represents a unique form of historic resource in Vermont. Fewer than ten other octagonal barns, together with a similar number of related circular barns, are known to survive in the state. Both types are commonly called "round barns", and most of the Vermont examples were built during a period of about twenty years around the turn of the present century. The cause of this brief revival of a barn type which had originated early in the nineteenth century is not known.

Round or octagonal barns were thought to be more efficient for stabling large numbers of dairy cows. The central silo provided a single feeding location, with the cows arranged in a circle facing inward. Such barns are also reportedly easier to clean. The traditional answer to the question of "round barns" is, "So the devil can't corner you." The subject of "round barns" is one worthy of further investigation.

The continuing decline of commercial agriculture in Vermont, the perpetual hazard of fire, and the increasing costs of maintaining large frame buildings combine to threaten the survival of the "round barn" building type in the state. The number of examples continues to dwindle: in 1976, for example, a large circular barn in Hartland was destroyed by fire, and typically, was replaced by a one-story rectangular structure. "Round barns" contribute a distinctive and irreplaceable element to the agricultural and visual character of Vermont. The ultimate loss of these barns will appreciably reduce the architectural diversity of the state's historic environment.

The ten acres being nominated is land traditionally associated with the Harlie Whitcomb farm. It contains the barn and related house and other structures, and sufficiently conveys the rural environment necessary for the complex of buildings.

# 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Charles Richardson - neighbor and cousin to Harlie Whitcomb.

"Barrel Barns" in Vermont Life Magazine, III: 4:10-13 (summer 1949).

# 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 10

Quad: E. Barre, VT

UTM REFERENCES

Scale: 1:62500

707-900 4892-300  
 A | 1,8 | 7077825 | 4892250 |  
 ZONE EASTING NORTHING  
 C | 1,8 | 707750 | 4892950 |

B | 1,8 | 707840 | 4892040 |  
 ZONE EASTING NORTHING  
 D | 1,8 | 707775 | 4892350 |

## VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The nominated property, consisting of ten acres more or less, is that land and buildings now or formerly owned by Donald J. Hollis and Nancy M. Winkler, bounded on the north by Town Road #24 and on the east (in part) by the Orange Center Cemetery. The property is shown on the enclosed map based on a sketch provided by the owners. *OK (JFT)*

DEED RECORDED AT OFFICE OF TOWN CLERK, ORANGE, VT, RECORD BOOK 28, PAGE 116. (PER MS. RITA BISSON, 9-12-79).

\* this refers to land owned at time of nomination to exclude subsequent acquisitions.

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

J.F.T.

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

# 11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Hugh H. Henry

ORGANIZATION

Vermont Division for Historic Preservation

DATE

May 1979

STREET & NUMBER

Pavilion Building

TELEPHONE

802-828-3226

CITY OR TOWN

Montpelier

STATE

Vermont

# 12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL     

STATE   X  

LOCAL     

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

*William B. Conway*

TITLE State Historic Preservation Officer

DATE 7-2-79

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

*Caleb Skell*

DATE

9-11-79

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHAEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

ATTEST

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

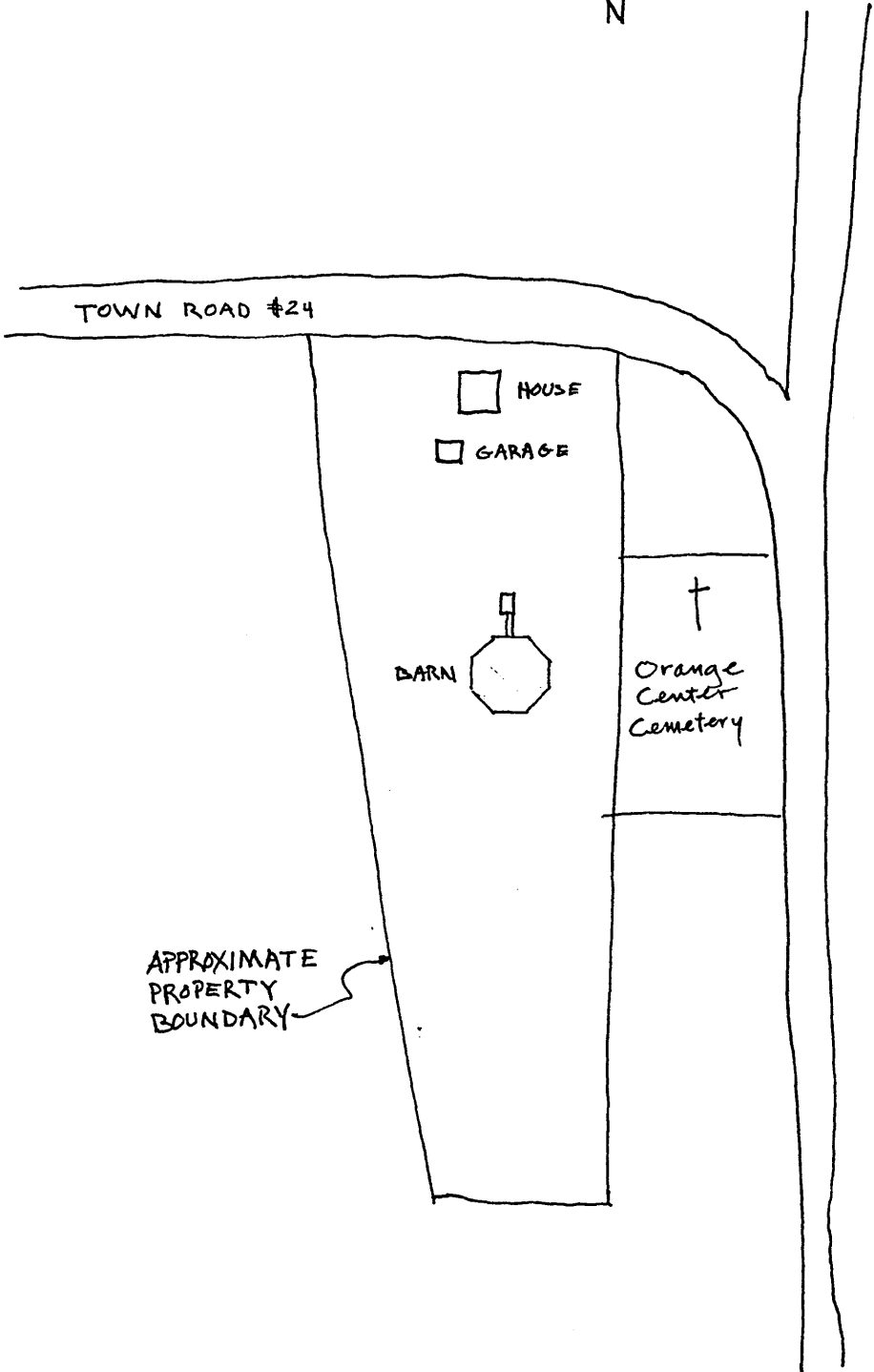
9-10-79

HARLIE WHITCOMB FARM (OCTAGON BARN)

ORANGE, VT

(NOT TO SCALE)

BASED ON SKETCH PROVIDED BY  
DONALD J. HOLLIS AND NANCY WINKLER



APPROXIMATE  
PROPERTY  
BOUNDARY