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United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

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National Register of Historic Places  
Registration Form

OCT 04 1993

NATIONAL REGISTER

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

1. Name of Property

historic name Johnson, Dan, Farmstead

other names/site number Johnson Farm

2. Location

street & number Vermont Route 2 N/A not for publication

city or town Williston N/A vicinity

state Vermont code VT county Chittenden code 007 zip code 05495

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

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

[Signature] 9/28/93  
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

Vermont State Historic Preservation Office  
State of Federal agency and bureau

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

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

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

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

- entered in the National Register.  See continuation sheet.
- determined eligible for the National Register  See continuation sheet.
- determined not eligible for the National Register.
- removed from the National Register.
- other, (explain): \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of the Keeper entered in the National Register Date of Action

[Signature] 11/4/93

Johnson, Dan, Farmstead  
Name of Property

Chittenden County, Vermont  
County and State

**5. Classification**

**Ownership of Property**  
(Check as many boxes as apply)

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

**Category of Property**  
(Check only one box)

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

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

Contributing	Noncontributing	
5	2	buildings
1		sites
		structures
		objects
6	2	Total

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

Agricultural Resources of Vermont

**Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register**

0

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

Domestic/Single Dwelling  
Agriculture/Animal Facility  
Agriculture/Agricultural Field

**Current Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

Domestic/Single Dwelling  
Agriculture/Animal Facility  
Agriculture/Agricultural Field

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

Queen Anne  
Other:  
No style

**Materials**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Stone  
walls Weatherboard  
roof Asphalt  
other Wood  
Metal

**Narrative Description**

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

See Continuation Sheet

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Continuation SheetSection number 7 Page 1 Johnson, Dan, Farmstead  
Williston, Chittenden County, VT

On a flat stretch of land in the fertile Champlain Valley in the town of Williston, Vermont, sits the Dan Johnson farmstead, now known as the Johnson Farm, belonging to John Ward Johnson and his sister Ellen J. Griffin. Approximately six-tenths of a mile east of the Williston village center, on Vermont Route 2, the two hundred ten acre farm contains five historic buildings, two non-contributing buildings, and pastures and fields. In 1787 Dan Johnson first settled on this site, and became one of the original settlers of the town of Williston. Six generations later, Ward Johnson continues the agricultural pursuits started over two hundred years ago by his relatives. The farm consists of a group of closely related buildings clustered along historic Route 2, an early road between Burlington and Montpelier, Vermont. The structures include two farmhouses, 1893 and c. 1840, a c. 1840-1930 large barn complex, a c. 1930 tool house/equipment shed, a c. 1890 tenant's house, a c. 1960 spring house, and a c. 1990 turkey pen. Taken together, these buildings and farmland illustrate Vermont's agricultural heritage from the late eighteenth century to the present. The farmstead retains its integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling and association.

**1. Farmhouse, 1893**

Exterior: The Darling farmhouse is a one and one-half story, vernacular Queen Anne style, gable roof, wood frame, three by two bay, approximately 40' (front) by 30' (side) farmhouse with clapboard siding, random ashlar and concrete foundation, and asphalt shingles covering its moderately pitched gable roof. A broad cross-gable wall dormer is centered on the front facade. Both eaves sides have a high kneewall space between the tops of the first story windows and the horizontal eaves. A recessed front porch at the northwest corner of the main block was enclosed c. 1960. A contemporaneous one and one-half story gable roof ell with similar siding and foundation, and sheet metal roofing, projects from the rear facade of the house; its north facade is flush with the north gable end of the main block. Built on a northeasterly sloping bank, the house has an exposed basement on the north and east sides. A recently rebuilt shed roof porch on the south facade (front) of the ell, formerly half the length of the ell, now spans the full front facade of the ell.

Queen Anne style trim on the Darling house includes applied woodwork and decorative shinglework in the gables. Additional

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Williston, Chittenden County, VTSection number 7 Page 2

trim includes flat water table boards, corner boards, plain board surrounds around windows and doors, and fascia boards just below the raking eaves, and a molded cornice board along the outer edge of the eaves. Metal, double hung, storm windows are non-historic additions to the windows on the first and second stories.

The front (west facade) of the house has a left bay entrance with a board surround defining the original porch opening. Centered within the opening is a metal storm door surrounded by clapboard infill. The porch features an original beaded board ceiling and a board deck. The main entrance door to the house, on the north wall within the porch, has four lights over two recessed panels with molded surrounds, and a new storm door, all topped by a molded cornice cap. A similar door, also within the porch, is located on the west wall of the house. A paired two-over-two window with a cornice cap is slightly left of center on the front facade, first story. The right bay of the front facade features a trapezoidal bay window with a hip roof, three one-over-one windows, corner boards, and connecting lintel boards above the windows which create a band around the bay window topped by clapboards and a box cornice. The bay window may be a c. 1920 addition as the windows and cornice are different than those on the main block. The wall dormer above has two regularly spaced two-over-two windows topped by a lintel board, which spans the width of the dormer. Above this board, a centrally placed vertical board separates decorative diagonal clapboards applied in an inverted "V" pattern, mirroring the direction of each gable slope of the dormer roof line. Above this, another horizontal board defines the uppermost space in the gable peak, which is covered with scalloped shingles.

The south gable end has regularly spaced two-over two windows on the first story and in the gable, small replacement drip caps over the first story windows, and second story window lintel boards continue as a full width horizontal band across the facade with an additional horizontal board above, similar to the decorative applied bands found on the front facade dormer. A louvered vent in the gable peak appears to be a recent addition.

The rear (east eaves side) has two regularly spaced two-light horizontal kneewall windows without storms, and a two-over-two window with a molded cornice cap near the south end of the first story facade. A brick chimney is offset to the north on the east roof slope.

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The north gable end has a replacement concrete block wall chimney centered on the facade. The right bay former porch opening, defined by a plain board surround, now has clapboard infill and three one-over-one double hung metal combination windows. To the left and in the gable above are two regularly spaced two-over-two windows with molded cornice caps. Two horizontal board bands span the width of the facade and gable above; one serves as a continuous lintel board above the first story windows, scalloped wood shingles fill the space between the lower board and the second board, and clapboards fill the space between the top band and the gable peak. The foundation on this side of the house reveals different periods of construction, where the rubblestone has been replaced in two sections, each section having a new interior hinged horizontal two-light cellar window and concrete block infill below.

The rear (north facade) of the ell has a molded cornice similar to that on the main block. A board pedestrian door is centered in the exposed rubblestone and concrete basement. A variety of stone patterns in the ell foundation indicate that the foundation has been repaired in sections during different time periods; the abundance of lime mortar, rather than cement mortar suggest that most repairs date from the nineteenth century. The first story has a new paired casement window on the right.

The ell gable end (east) facade, on the far right (north) end, contains a square outhouse window with a screen insert topped by a square drip molding. The basement level cellar entrance, right, has infill on the left with asbestos board covering, and a vertical board door on the right with diagonal bracing. The ell cellar reveals massive beams, up-and-down sawn dimensional lumber framing, nineteenth century machine cut nails and a new concrete floor.

The ell south eaves front, five by one bay porch, supported by lumber piers, has been enclosed with a clapboard apron and metal, one-over-one windows, which are paired on the east facade. A left bay, metal pedestrian door opens on to the porch. Inside the porch, a left bay entrance features a pedestrian door similar to the front entrance door on the main block, a center bay two-over-two window with a plain drip molding, and a right bay hinged, vertical board door opening into the woodshed. A paired two-over-two window with a molded cornice cap is centered on the east wall

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## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Johnson, Dan, Farmstead  
Williston, Chittenden County, VT

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of the main block within the ell porch.

Interior: The interior of the house is relatively intact. The first floor plan consists of two front parlors, a study in the south east corner, and in the north east part of the house a dining room (formerly the kitchen), kitchen (formerly the pantry), and small utility room. The upstairs of the main block was open except for one bedroom in the northwest corner prior to 1952, when Ward Johnson moved into the house and added three more bedrooms and a bath upstairs. The ell remains in its original open condition, with an enclosed outhouse (no longer used) in the northeast corner.

### 2. Farmhouse, c. 1840

Exterior: The Johnson farmhouse is a one and one-half story, vernacular style, eavesfront, gable roof, three by two bay, frame house with clapboard siding, asphalt shingle roofing, and a stone foundation, which has concrete infill above ground level. A contemporaneous one and one-half story, gable roof wing set back on the north east end of the main block, formerly a wood shed and summer kitchen, was converted into an apartment in 1981. The wing has a more shallow gable than the main block, a rear extension to the roof slope, a 1981 one-story shed projection along the rear facade, and a one-story, hip-roof full front two by one bay porch. Both main block and wing have a high kneewall between the tops of the first story windows and the horizontal eaves. Trim on the main block and wing includes a raking eaves with rather wide overhang and a molded cornice (except on the west gable end of the wing), a plain wood surround with square drip molding around windows, and water table, fascia and corner board details. All windows on the front and gable ends of the main block have louvered shutters; most windows throughout have new one-over-one metal storm windows. Two replacement chimneys at the location of former historic chimneys are located in the center of the east gable end wall of the main block and on the center of the roof ridge of the wing.

The front (south facade) of the house features an off-center Greek Revival style main entrance with full-length, four-light sidelights, an applied board entry pilaster surround, an address on the lintel board which reads "867", and a heavy square edge cornice cap above. The six-panel main entrance door has two elongated vertical upper panels. A six-over-six window is centered in the wall, left of the main entrance; a similar window right of the door is slightly off-center to the left.

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Both gable ends (east and west sides) have two six-over-six windows regularly spaced on the first and second story. At the south end of the east gable end, a bulkhead with hinged, board, double door cover, stone retaining walls and steps, and a four-plank door with hand wrought nails and hinges leads to the cellar. A c. 1900 Victorian style pedestrian door, sheltered by the west end of the wing porch, located on the far right of the main block east facade, features a large upper light with frosted glass and bolection molding. A triangular gable fan with simple surround and screen insert is located in the peak of the east gable.

The rear (north facade) of the farmhouse has a six-over-six window left, a central area that appears to have been the location of a former door with clapboard infill, and a recently added twenty-four light picture window, right.

The gable ends of the wing reveals what may be an original facade without a gable overhang or trim details. These features, along with the shallow roof slope and the lower ridge line of the wing, and the gable window in the peak of the west end, are typical of early nineteenth century cape houses, and give the wing an earlier appearance than the principal block. A flat roof connector, or Beverly jog, is located at the upper right corner of the wing west facade and serves to join the roof slopes of the main block and the wing. Windows on the west facade include a two-over-two with a square drip molding centered on the wall of the first story, a recent horizontal casement window on the left, and a replacement one-over-one window centered in the gable peak. A new paired casement window is located under the extended roof slope with a louvered vent above in the wall just below the diagonal eaves. The new rear, shed roof appendage, with clapboard siding, has a shed projection on the west facade which provides cover for two gas tanks.

The rear (north) facade shed roof projection, from left to right, features a bank of four new combination one-over-one metal windows, a metal pedestrian door, and a paired two-over-two window, right. The rear projection has a canted northeast corner. A recently added metal stove chimney is centered on the north roof slope.

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The wing east gable end has some replacement clapboard siding. Two replacement one-over-one windows are regularly spaced on the first story, and one is centered in the gable peak.

The wing front (south) facade porch has a beaded board ceiling, chamfered posts with simple capitals, and a board deck. The windows, regularly spaced between the slightly left of center door include a two-over-two window, left, and a two-over-one, right. The door is of a Victorian style similar to that at the west end of the porch on the main block, but with clear glass.

Interior: The interior of the farmhouse is relatively intact with a center stair and four rooms of approximate equal size, with mid-nineteenth century, recessed four-panel doors and hand planed side-beaded trim boards. The cellar, only under the main block, reveals a post and beam frame of 11" hewn beams and logs. The owner claims the main block and ell are of plank construction. The planks were removed in the ell during the 1981 renovation.

**3. Barn, c. 1840-1930**

Exterior: The Johnson barn is a large, vernacular style, agricultural structure, which consists of three one and one-half story gable roof barns (B, C, D) connected end to end, and two cross-gable one-and one-half story ells (A, E). All sections have vertical board siding, sheet metal roofing, and a concrete foundation. The west end c. 1840 Sheep Barn ell (A), now used for heifers, projects from the front (south eaves side) of the Horse Barn, and is believed by Mr. Johnson to be the oldest section of the barn complex. A one-story, gable front, c. 1930 one-bay Garage with novelty siding, rolled roofing and exposed rafter tail trim extends from the west eaves side of the Sheep barn ell (A). West to east sections connected at the gable ends include the west end c. 1920 Horse Barn (B) built by Ward Johnson's grandfather, Byron Johnson, a c. 1850 Early Bank Barn in the middle (C), and a c. 1870s Late Bank Barn (D), converted into a Ground Level Stable Barn, on the east. Mr. Johnson says he was told the east end c. 1880 cross-gable ell (E) was moved over fifty years ago from a farm south of the Darling Farmhouse and was connected to the c. 1870s Late Bank Barn section (D). The Late Bank Barn (D) section has a one-story, gable roof Milkhouse, built c. 1960, extending from the north eaves side, and a twentieth century metal crown ventilator tops its central ridge line.

Two concrete silos were added in the 1960s to store feed. One,



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located off the northeast corner of the barn complex, is attached to the barns by a short gable roof connector. The second silo is located off the northwest corner of the east end ell.

Window and door openings vary according to the function of each section. Doors are generally constructed of vertical boards; pedestrian doors and second story hay doors are hinged, and machine bays slide on interior or exterior tracks. Windows are generally fixed, multi-light types; stable windows such as those on the west end of the Horse Barn (B) are single-light square windows.

Interior: The nineteenth century sections (A, C, D, E) have post and beam framing and the later sections (B, Garage, Milkhouse) have dimension lumber framing. The Sheep Barn (A) and the Early Bank Barn (C) both have massive hewn post and beam frames with wide, thick, up-and-down sawn, vertical sheathing boards indicating that these two sections are the oldest in the barn complex. The low height of the Sheep Barn, with low ceiling on the first floor, is typical of c. 1840 Sheep Barns in Vermont. The Horse Barn (B) is distinguished by narrow beaded boards used to cover the ceiling, walls and to construct the doors; five stalls each with wooden flooring are arranged along the west wall of the main floor. The c. 1850 Early Bank Barn (C) has a tripartite interior and a metal hoist along the roof peak. The c. 1850 Early Bank Barn section (C) originally had a stone cellar in the northeast corner for summer ice storage and a milk room above on the main floor. The cellar of this barn was filled in during the 1950s and the c. 1960 Milk House appendage on the adjacent 1870s Bank Barn (D) replaced the older one over the ice storage area. In the 1950s the cellar under the 1870s Bank Barn (D) was also filled in, the milking parlor in this section was extended to the east end ell to accommodate 49 stanchions, and a concrete floor was poured throughout these two sections. An additional sixteen stanchions were installed in the Sheep Barn.

**4. Tool House/Equipment Shed, c. 1930**

The Johnson Tool House is a c. 1930, moderately large, rectangular, one-story, vernacular style, three-bay, gable roof, eavesfront main block with what appears to be a later one-story, gable roof, two-bay wing on the north end, and a two by three bay, shed roof, c. 1950 wing on the south end, which serves as a shop. The structure has exposed rafter tails and sheet metal roofing, with several long, opaque fiberglass roofing panels in the shop roof. The historic sections have metal sheets of imitation clapboard siding;

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the new shop has vertical board siding. The new shop has a concrete foundation. The framing of the main block, a mix of hand hewn, log, circular sawn dimension lumber and wire nails, suggests that the structure was built over a period of years, possibly using recycled lumber.

The three-bay front (east facade) of the main block has a vertical board double door with old hinges; the adjacent bays do not have doors. An old shop at the south end of the main block has deteriorating lath and plaster walls, an old cast iron wood stove, and is used for storage today. A brick chimney rises above the ridge line of the main block above the early shop. The north and west sides have no window or door openings; a metal hooded vent is located on the west (rear) side of the new shop.

**5. Tenant's House, c. 1890**

The Tenant's House is a c. 1890, one and one-half story, vernacular style, gable roof, two by two bay, modestly sized house with a contemporaneous one story, gable roof wing attached to the south end. Constructed of dimension lumber, the house has clapboard siding and asphalt roofing shingles. A shed roof entry porch on the west facade of the main block and the north end of the wing shelters the main entrance to the house, which enters into the wing. Trim includes corner boards, a box cornice and a raking eaves. The windows are primarily two-over-two double hung sash windows with a plain board surround. Wooden six-over-six and one-over-one, and new metal one-over-one storm windows are present. A concrete block foundation was constructed under the house c. 1975. At the same time a cellar was constructed under the wing to provide a better living area in the wing, which was formerly a woodshed and outhouse.

According to Ward Johnson, this house was moved around 1900, probably on rollers pulled by oxen, from its original site across the interstate on South Road.

**6. Spring House, c. 1960**

This Spring House, located near the center of the pasture between Williston Road (Vermont Rte. 2) and Interstate 89, is a small, gable roof, nearly square structure, with plywood siding, asphalt roofing shingles, a concrete foundation, and box cornice trim. A small door is located on the facade of the west gable end wall. The spring house is no longer used. This structure has been designated non-contributing due to its recent age.

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Williston, Chittenden County, VTSection number 7 Page 9**7. Turkey Pen, c. 1990**

The Turkey Pen is a one-story, vernacular style, c. 1990, nine-sided, hip roof, structure constructed of dimension lumber, rolled roofing, and chicken wire siding, set on a concrete base. The nine lumber framed sections are hinged together. This structure has been designated as non-contributing due to its recent age.

**8. Pastures and Fields**

The property includes two hundred and ten acres. Bisected by Interstate 89, one hundred seventy acres located south of the highway were historically used for pasture. Since the interstate was built, the land south of the interstate is not accessible to cows and most of this former flat pasture land has been converted to hayfields. The hilly section to the southeast, however, is not suitable for crops, and in this area reforestation is beginning to take over. The remaining forty acres comprising the land north of the interstate contain the pasture land, additional fields and all the farmstead structures. The maintained yard surrounding the Darling place (#1) has an orchard, started in the 1950s, with pear, apple, cherry and peach trees. The fenced land between the Darling house and the tenant house, and between Route 2 and the interstate is the only pasture land today. North of Route 2, cornfields parallel the east and west boundaries of the farm, and a maintained yard with vegetable garden to the north surrounds the Farmhouse. A wide driveway separates the Farmhouse and farm buildings. A heavy wooden corral fence fronts the south facade of the barn complex. A field to the north of the barn is used for parking large farm equipment.

Interstate 89 runs south of U.S. Route 2 and is a non-contributing resource.

Name of Property

**8. Statement of Significance**

**Applicable National Register Criteria**

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

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

**Criteria Considerations**

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

Property is:

- A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B** removed from its original location.
- C** a birthplace or 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.

**Narrative Statement of Significance**

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

**9. Major Bibliographical References**

**Bibliography**

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

**Previous documentation on file (NPS):**

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

**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions)

Agriculture

Architecture

**Period of Significance**

1787-1943

**Significant Dates**

1787

1926

**Significant Person**

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

**Cultural Affiliation**

N/A

**Architect/Builder**

Unknown

**Primary location of additional data:**

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

Name of repository:

\_\_\_\_\_

Johnson, Dan, Farmstead  
Name of Property

Chittenden County, Vermont  
County and State

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 210

### UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	18	6	54	38	0	49	22	0	40
	Zone	Easting			Northing				
2	18	6	54	70	0	49	21	9	60

3	18	65	4	68	0	4	9	21	8	00
	Zone	Easting			Northing					
4	18	65	4	93	0	4	9	21	7	80

See continuation sheet

### Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

### Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

## 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Elizabeth F. Pritchett

organization Liz Pritchett Associates date August 10, 1993

street & number 58 East State Street telephone 802-229-1035

city or town Montpelier state Vermont zip code 05602

### Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

#### Continuation Sheets

#### Maps

A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

#### Photographs

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

#### Additional items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

### Property Owner

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

name Multiple: see continuation sheet

street & number \_\_\_\_\_ telephone \_\_\_\_\_

city or town \_\_\_\_\_ state \_\_\_\_\_ zip code \_\_\_\_\_

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

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

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The Dan Johnson Farm in Williston, Vermont, is eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A for its contribution to the broad patterns of Vermont agricultural history. In 1787 Dan Johnson, one of the original proprietors of Williston, first settled on this site. Six generations later, the Johnson family continues to farm the property. The purchase of the Darling House and land in 1926 is an historic addition to the farm. Two distinctive, intact, nineteenth century dwellings, a large barn complex, and a farm tenant's house, dating from c. 1840 to the early decades of the twentieth century, tell the story of the Johnson Farmstead as it grew from a small diversified farm to a specialized agricultural operation selling butter and later milk, to markets outside Williston and Vermont. The property also qualifies for statewide significance under National Register Criterion C for being a good example of a farmstead. The farmstead is being nominated under the Multiple Property Documentation Form "Agricultural Resources of Vermont" and meets the registration requirements for the property type, farmstead. The Johnson Farm has been used for raising livestock, along with subsistence farming, diversified agriculture, and dairying. The 210 acre property, set in an intact surrounding landscape (despite the intrusion of the interstate), retains its integrity of workmanship, setting, location, feeling and association. 1787 and 1926 are the dates of significance for the property.

The town of Williston, in the center of Chittenden County, is bounded on the north by the Winooski River which separates it from the town of Essex, on the east by Jericho and Richmond, on the south by Hinesburg and St. George, and on the west by the Muddy Brook and Burlington. The town was chartered by Governor Wentworth on June 7, 1763 and it was named in honor of Samuel Willis, one of the original grantees.

As with many Vermont towns, settlement commenced prior to the Revolutionary War, only to be abandoned until after the war when the climate was again safe for settlement to begin anew. Thomas Chittenden and others, mostly from Connecticut and western Massachusetts, were the earliest settlers in Williston, arriving first in 1774, and returning after the war. By 1786 the town was organized.

From its earliest days, much of the land in Williston was considered good farm land with rich loam soil. The town is located in the Winooski Valley which forms a natural corridor between

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Burlington and Montpelier. Following this corridor, the Winooski Turnpike (Vermont Route 2) built in 1805, became important for east-west trade and towns such as Williston along this road prospered. From a population in 1791 of 471 people, the town grew to 1,246 in 1820, and by 1824 seven school districts had been established, with four saw mills, one fulling mill, three stores, four taverns, one tannery and one distillery in operation.

According to Rann's History of Chittenden County, and other Vermont histories, Dan Johnson was one of the original proprietors in Williston. A descendant of the Johnson family that came from England to Bath, Maine, Dan Johnson settled in Williston in 1787, and cleared and improved the land upon which he later died.<sup>1</sup> An 1834 map of Williston, which lists the original one-hundred acre parcels of land according to the 1798 Charter of Williston, shows the Johnson farm with one-hundred ten and one-half acres of land.<sup>2</sup> As listed on this map, the owner of the farm in 1834 was Nathan Johnson, the son of Dan, who had taken over the farm upon his fathers death.<sup>3</sup>

When Dan Johnson and his son farmed their land between 1787 to 1850 agriculturalists in Williston were expanding their home-use only farming to include raising sheep, horses and cattle. Some agricultural products such as hay, oats and potatoes were grown for sale. In 1840, Williston farmers produced 19,970 bushels of oats—more than any other town in Chittenden County, and they harvested 42,529 bushels of potatoes and 4,926 tons of hay which were among the highest production totals for these crops in the county.<sup>4</sup>

In 1850 Nathan Johnson owned and operated one-hundred acres of improved land and fifteen acres of unimproved woodland, with a cash value of \$4,000.<sup>5</sup> His livestock, valued at \$175, consisted of three horses, three milch cows, four other cattle, and one swine.

<sup>1</sup>Rann, p. 837

<sup>2</sup> Johnson map, 1834

<sup>3</sup>Rann, p. 837

<sup>4</sup> 1840 Census

<sup>5</sup> Agricultural Census for 1850

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Nathan's farm produced 190 bushels of oats, 30 tons of hay as well as wheat, Indian corn, buckwheat and 400 pounds of butter.

The Johnson farmhouse, probably built by Nathan, around 1840, with its massive hand-hewn beams in the cellar, and its plank framed walls, is unnamed, but appears to be listed on the 1857 Walling's map. The house is shown with its east end wing on the 1869 Beer's map with John Johnson as owner.

The Sheep Barn (A), believed by the Johnsons today to have originally housed sheep, appears to date from the 1840s when farmers began to move from small-scale diversified farming to specialty farming, and sheep and wool production became a profitable agricultural activity in Vermont. According to the U.S. Agricultural Census records from 1850 - 1880, however, it appears that the Johnson family owned very few sheep during these decades. Thus, it is possible that this structure was built for sheep but as farming moved from sheep production to dairying after the mid-century, the building was converted for dairy related uses.

By 1860, with the development of dairying in Vermont, Nathan Johnson increased the number of milch cows from three to nine. Like other dairy farms at the time, Johnson used his milk to produce butter. In 1859 his butter production, totalling 1,800 pounds, was among the highest in the town.<sup>6</sup> During this decade Johnson built his C. 1850 Early Bank Barn to house his growing number of livestock as well as to provide storage for more hay, of which 400 tons were harvested in 1860. Johnson, in 1860 also raised 300 bushels of Irish potatoes and 200 bushels of oats.

In the 1860s John Johnson took over the farm, and continued the production of Indian corn, oats and Irish potatoes, with some reduction in total production of each. In 1869, however, Johnson made 1,200 pounds of butter which continued to be a noteworthy amount in comparison with other Williston farms. The value of the farm products for the year was estimated at \$1,090.<sup>7</sup>

The 1870s marked a decade of increased dairy production on the Johnson farm. In 1879, the farm with six acres of tilled land and

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<sup>6</sup> U.S. Agricultural Census for 1850

<sup>7</sup> U.S. Agricultural Census for 1870



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one hundred nine acres of meadows, pastures and orchards, was valued at \$11,000. Three horses, thirty-three milch cows, thirteen sheep, and seven swine were valued at \$1,400. \$60 in wages were paid for sixteen weeks of hired labor. 43 tons of hay were harvested on thirty-five acres of mown land, and 120 pounds of fleeces were sold. 80 bushels of Indian corn, 175 bushels of oats, 100 bushels of Irish potatoes, 75 bushels of apples and 100 pounds of honey were produced for an estimated value of \$2,000 of farm products sold. A record total to date of 4,100 pounds of butter was made on the farm.<sup>8</sup> During this active decade with more dairy cows and increased crop production, the c. 1870 Late Bank Barn (D) was built to house the enlarged dairy herd and provide additional hay storage in the second story hay loft. The c. 1880 barn (E) was moved here later to house more milk cows.

The history of the Johnson barn complex roughly parallels the history of agriculture in Vermont. With sheep farming being the major agricultural pursuit from the 1820s to 50s, the Sheep Barn section (A) appears to be the earliest in the barn complex. The c. 1850 Early Bank Barn with tri-partite interior is typical of mid-nineteenth century barns used for diversified farming in Vermont. The later c. 1870 and c. 1880 eastern sections of the barn (D,E) were necessary when dairying became the major agricultural activity in Vermont and more space was needed for larger dairy herds. These two sections, on the interior, were later converted to a Ground Level Stable barn, with a concrete floor added in recent decades to allow for ease of cleaning and better sanitation.

During these years of heightened agricultural activity, the Johnson's acquired additional parcels of land. An important historic addition to the farm occurred in 1926 when Ward Johnson's parents, Lester and Marguerite Johnson, bought the Darling place and approximately seventeen acres from Goodsell and Sarah Greenough, and incorporated the property into their own.<sup>9</sup>

The Darling House, a distinctive, intact, vernacular Queen Anne

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<sup>8</sup> U.S. Agricultural Census for 1880

<sup>9</sup> Interview, Ward Johnson, Johnson family documents

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style dwelling, built in 1893 to replace one that burned,<sup>10</sup> was the residence of William Brown and Lucia and William Darling from the 1890s to the early decades of the twentieth century. William Brown was a dairy farmer with a small number of cows, Lucia was a dressmaker and her husband William was a miller, carpenter and joiner. The diary of Lucia which records most of her adult life in Williston, reveals the difficulties of many farm women during the mid-nineteenth century to early twentieth century. Lucia frequently writes of being "discouraged... alone and lonely", often in poor health, with endless farm chores, and illness and death around her. She had two unsuccessful marriages; her first husband left her for the lure of gold in California, and her second husband spent more time in town with friends than at home.

For many years, Ward's parents lived in the Darling Place in the summer, and spent their winters in the c. 1840 Farmhouse with his grandmother. The Darling property was not well insulated until recent years, and was referred to as the "migrating house" because in cold, windy weather, the inhabitants would migrate from south to north, or north to south depending on the prevailing winds to escape the chill that penetrated the house.

Both the c. 1840 Farmhouse and 1893 Darling House are significant for their intact nineteenth century interiors as well as their well-preserved exteriors. The distinctive c. 1840 Farmhouse has a massive plank and hand hewn frame; the wing has significant features of early nineteenth century housing, while the main block exterior appears to have an updated c. 1850 Greek Revival style main entrance.

In recent years the Johnson Farm has suffered the loss of several farm buildings. A corn crib on the north side of the barn was taken down, as was a large hen house, formerly north of the barn, where Ward's mother, Marguerite raised chickens and turkeys.

The construction of Interstate 89, as it cut through the Johnson farm in the 1950s to early 1960s had a major impact on the agricultural focus of the farm. Besides the noise from constant traffic, the major change occurred when the Johnson's were no longer able to get their cows to the southern pasture, as the Interstate construction provided no access to this part of the

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<sup>10</sup>Interview, W. Johnson, April, 1993

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property. With less pasture land available, increased feed needed to be purchased for the cows, and new larger silos had to be built to store the silage.

With the coming of the interstate, new industry arrived in the area with IBM and Digital. In recent decades thousands of people have come to the area, and many live in Williston on former farmland in one of a number of condominium developments.

Despite the adverse effects of the interstate and the fast paced growth of the surrounding area, the strong-willed Johnson family has held fast to its land and dairy operation. The Johnson Farm is particularly significant in Williston as it is one of only several farmsteads that has retained its historic dwellings and agricultural buildings and landscape and has continued its historic function as a farm under pressures to sell out to land developers.

The Farmstead may be the only remaining farmstead in Williston that has retained its historic landscape and agricultural function since it was established as the Dan Johnson farm in 1787. The distinctive, intact, well-preserved dwellings and agricultural buildings dating from c. 1840 - c. 1930 are an important record of domestic housing and agricultural construction in Williston. Today the active farm, still with a full-time hired hand living in the tenant's house, is testimony to the continued success of this farm which survives amidst much difficulty for small family farms in today's economy.

The Dan Johnson farmstead has grown to incorporate new agricultural trends and is a good example of Vermont's agricultural heritage. The c. 1840 farmhouse and the 1893 Darling farmhouse together with the farm buildings, a c. 1840-1930s barn complex, a c. 1930 tool house/ equipment shed, a c. 1890 tenant's house, a c. 1960 spring house and a c. 1990 turkey pen tell the story of transition from home-use only farming to diversified and specialty farming and dairying. These buildings represent the broad patterns of agriculture that have contributed significantly to Vermont's history and make the Johnson Farm eligible for listing on the National Register for Historic Places under Criterion A.

The Johnson Farm is also being nominated under Criterion C, because it is a good example of a farmstead. The farm embodies distinctive characteristics of a nineteenth and twentieth century Vermont farmstead. The large barn complex retains a Sheep Barn, two Bank

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Barns, a Horse Barn, and historic Garage. In addition, the farm retains significant landscape features in its pastures and fields, with 40 acres of active pasture and 120 acres of cropland.

Today the landscape retains components of its earlier agricultural heritage. The approximately 40 acres that are currently pastured and the 120 acres that have changed from pasture to cropland, allow the farm to appear much as it had throughout the nineteenth century, while adapting the land south of the interstate for a new, but appropriate agricultural use. Barbed wire fences separate the pastures from the barnyard and the farmhouses. The individual components that survive combine to create a relatively intact farmstead.

Compared to other Williston farms, the Dan Johnson farmstead remains relatively intact. Because the farmstead retains its workmanship, setting, locations, feeling and association, the date of significance is both 1787-1943 and 1850-1941, under the historic context, "Dairying 1851-1941."

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### Interviews:

Ward Johnson, owner, The Johnson Farm, April 19 & 29, 1993  
Ellen J. Griffin, owner, The Johnson Farm, August 11, 1993.

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Williston, Chittenden County, VT**UTM References**

5) 18/ 654860/ 4921500  
6) 18/ 655300/ 4921260  
7) 18/ 655240/ 4921120  
8) 18/ 655360/ 4921100  
9) 18/ 655180/ 4920540  
10) 18/ 655000/ 4920580  
11) 18/ 655060/ 4920800  
12) 18/ 654100/ 4921280  
13) 18/ 654120/ 4921380  
14) 18/ 654000/ 4921410  
15) 18/ 654160/ 4921820  
16) 18/ 654300/ 4921800

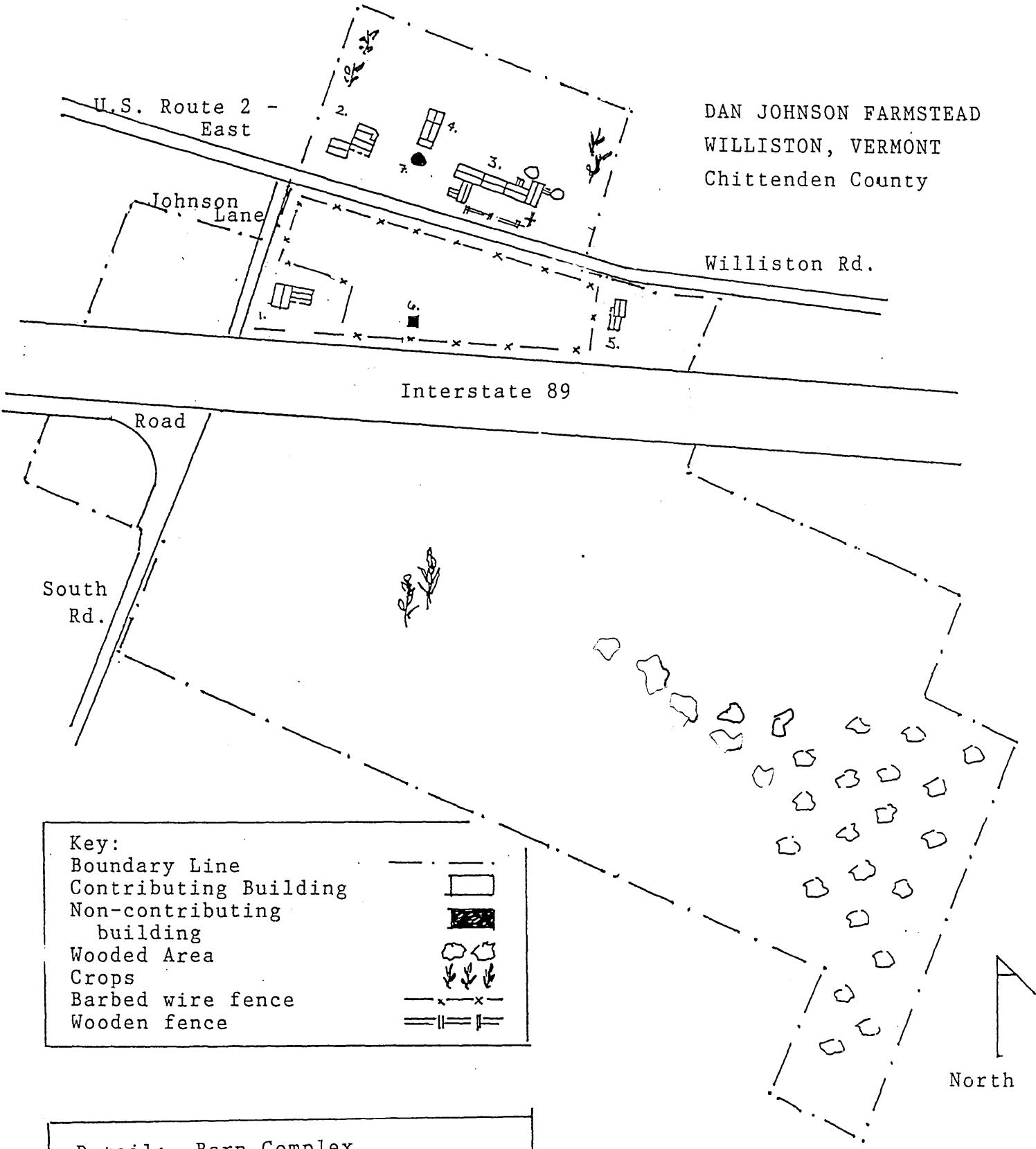
**VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION:**

The Johnson Farm is bisected by Interstate 89 which passes through the property in an east-west direction. The section of land north of the Interstate is bisected by U. S. Route 2 East (Williston Road) which passes through the property in an east-west direction. The boundaries of the Dan Johnson Farmstead are indicated as Tax Lot 32-10 on Vermont Map no. 107214 "Williston Village - East", Map No. 15 in the Williston Town Clerk's Office, Williston, Vermont. A copy of this tax lot map is included with the Johnson Farm National Register Nomination documentation.

**BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION:**

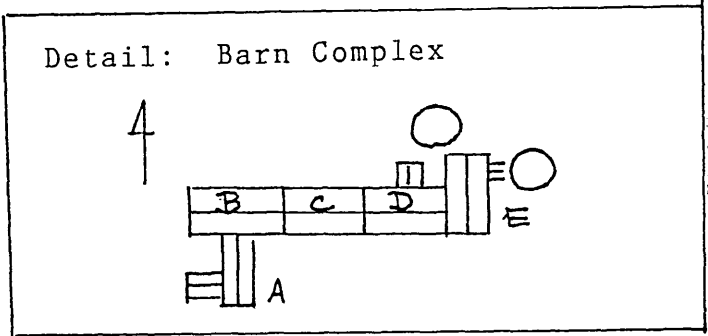
The boundary of this irregularly shaped parcel of land, bisected by Interstate 89, includes all buildings and the surrounding pasture, fields, crop land, and forested hill historically associated with the Johnson Farm and that maintain historic integrity.

DAN JOHNSON FARMSTEAD  
 WILLISTON, VERMONT  
 Chittenden County



Key:

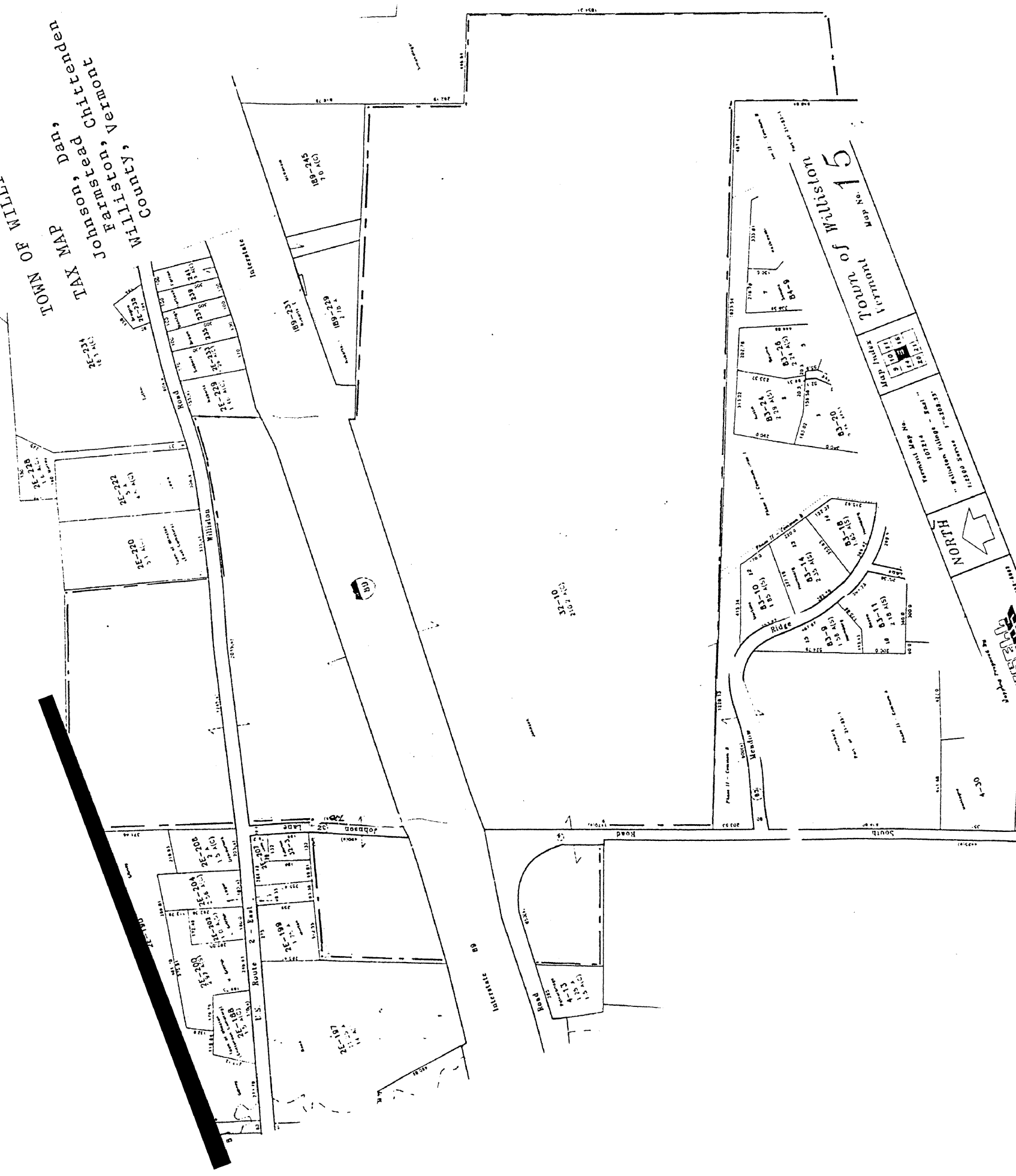
Boundary Line	- - - - -
Contributing Building	▭
Non-contributing building	▬
Wooded Area	☁ ☁
Crops	🌱 🌱 🌱
Barbed wire fence	-x-x-
Wooden fence	==



Researcher: Liz Pritchett  
 Approximate Scale: 1:2500



TOWN OF MILLIS  
TAX MAP  
1932-33  
Johnson, Dan,  
Farmsstead, Chittenden  
Williston, Vermont  
County, Vermont



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Owner's List

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John Ward Johnson  
25 Johnson Lane  
Williston, Vermont 05495

Ellen J. Griffin  
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Williston, Vermont 05495