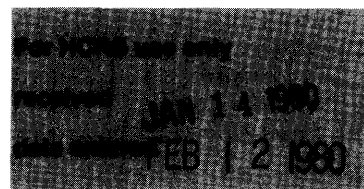


**United States Department of the Interior  
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**



**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*  
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

**1. Name**

historic Geer, (R. C.), Farmhouse

and/or common R.C. Geer Fruit Farm

**2. Location E of Salem at**

street & number 12390 Sunnyview Road \_\_\_\_\_ not for publication

city, town Salem *me* \_\_\_\_\_ vicinity of \_\_\_\_\_ congressional district 2

state Oregon code 41 county Marion code 047

**3. Classification**

<b>Category</b>	<b>Ownership</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>Present Use</b>	
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input checked="" 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 Mrs. Vesper Geer Rose

street & number 12390 Sunnyview Road

city, town Salem \_\_\_\_\_ vicinity of \_\_\_\_\_ state Oregon 97301

**5. Location of Legal Description**

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Marion County Courthouse

street & number High Street

city, town Salem \_\_\_\_\_ state Oregon 97301

**6. Representation in Existing Surveys**

title \_\_\_\_\_ has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no

date \_\_\_\_\_  federal  state  county  local

depository for survey records \_\_\_\_\_

city, town \_\_\_\_\_ state \_\_\_\_\_

## 7. Description

<b>Condition</b>		<b>Check one</b>	<b>Check one</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input 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 type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		

### Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The R. C. Geer Farmhouse, constructed during the winter of 1850-51, and the stone Fruit Cellar, constructed sometime prior to 1878, were originally part of a fruit farm founded by R.C. and Mary Geer in 1848. These buildings and 20 acres of the original 640 acre land claim has remained in the Geer family since 1848. Built as a family residence for R.C. Geer, a nurseryman, the two-story farmhouse is a provincial adaptation of a federal style. Currently it is in good condition and is still used as a residence. The stone Fruit Cellar is also in good condition and used for storage.

The property is located 12 miles east of Salem, Oregon on Sunnyview Road in Marion County: section 21, Township 7, range one-west. The farmhouse is positioned on a promontory overlooking the rolling agricultural land to the west.

### The Farmhouse

The farmhouse has two wings. The front two-story living wing is 36 feet along the west side. The one-and-one-half story back wing makes a total building length of 63 feet in the east-west direction.

The farmhouse is a hand-hewn frame structure with a rock foundation, stud frame walls and gable roofs. The floor joists in the front wing run in the east-west direction 24 inches on center, and are notched into 8 inch by 4 inch hand-hewn sills which are tenioned into morticed 8 inch L-shaped hewn posts and fastened with wood pins. The walls are 4 inch by 4 inch stud construction with rough sawn 1 inch boards attached horizontally on the interior and a shiplap siding attached horizontally on the exterior.

The farmhouse is distinguished by its large 8 foot deep embracing porch, its simple proportions, canted eave board detail and pediment board on the north front wing wall, and its stately position on the promontory overlooking the old homestead.

An 1878 drawing shows a carriage house located on the north side of the front wing. The covered porch is shown on the west side of the house. Prior to 1900, the carriage house was removed and the covered porch was apparently extended along the north side of the house. Also prior to 1900, a pantry and a bathroom were added to the north and south sides of the back wing. These additions did little to alter the back wing as they stayed within the limits of the north and south walls of the original woodshed. In 1920 and 1921, three windows were added, one on the south wall of the living room and two on the north wall of the parlor. Although the added windows are larger than the original size, they have been located in a manner consistent with the original openings. Also in 1921, an original window was replaced on the north wall of the kitchen. A sleeping porch has been added to the second floor of the front wing above the porch on the northeast corner in 1928. In 1928-1929, the attic of the back wing was converted into a bedroom and two dormers were built into the roof, which was slightly raised and changed from its original slope. The original framing still remains in the roof.

The front wing of the farmhouse contained the living spaces, including a living room and parlor of equal dimension on the lower level and three bedrooms on the upper level. The back wing originally was one-story and contained the kitchen and woodshed.

The front wing, aside from a greater living room/parlor partition opening and a relocated stair, has remained unchanged. The stair originally existed along the south wall of the living room and was moved to the west wall of the kitchen in 1965 for easier access. An original brick wood-mantled fireplace exists in the center of the south wall in the front wing, and directly opposite on the north wall exists an original hung stove chimney, also of brick. The ceiling is original in the front wing and consists of 6½ inch to 7½ inch wide boards that run north-south up to 12 feet in length. The unpainted boards in the living room ceiling show a mysterious hand-painted numbering system. The original floor boards are 6½ inches wide and also run north-south, and have been covered by 3½ inch ash flooring only on the first floor.

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

FOR HCRS USE ONLY	
RECEIVED	JAN 14 1980
DATE ENTERED	FEB 12 1980

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 7 PAGE 1

The pantry and bathroom addition in the back wing slightly reduced the original size of the kitchen. A bedroom, hallway, and utility room have been added along with two windows to the back wing in the original woodshed space. However, a portion of the woodshed still exists along the open east end. A carport roof has been added between the woodshed opening and the west wall of the fruit cellar. The alterations that have occurred to the farmhouse have remained within the limits of the original plan, and have done very little to alter the original character of the farmhouse.

The Stone Fruit Cellar

The plan of the one-and-one-half-story fruit cellar is a rectangle 17 feet 2 inches by 30 feet 6 inches. The short sides face east and west and contain centrally located doorways, two on each end and one directly above the other. The walls are of field stone set in varying sized horizontal courses; solid, windowless and 2 feet thick. The walls support a one-half story wood-framed gable roof.

The building has not been altered except for the roof shingle replacement. A workshop space and concrete floor are the only interior alterations that are non-original in this building.

Included with the nominated property is a supporting land area of slightly less than 10 acres of farmstead. This surrounding land contains historic landscape elements including several old fruit trees which are believed to be originals planted by R.C. Geer. Three original farm building sites are included in this area, and also what is believed to be a section of an old Indian trail. The few 20th Century additions to this area are not obtrusive and generally exist as subordinate elements in the farmstead landscape.

# 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 checked="" 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/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates

Builder/Architect

### Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The historic R.C. Geer Farmhouse is located in the Waldo Hills SE of Salem. The area proposed for nomination is just under 10 acres in size and includes a farmhouse of 1851, a masonry fruit cellar, a modern house of 1960, assorted sheds ranging in date from 1930-1940 and sites of 2 historic barns of 1860. The significance of property lies in its being an historic farm ensemble on land settled as early as 1847-1848. It was the farm of pioneer nurseryman and flax-grower Ralph Carey Geer, who also was a member of the Territorial Legislature. The property also is the most direct link in Oregon--other than the Burial site in Silverton--with Homer Calvin Davenport, famed political cartoonist and grandson of R.C. Geer, who immortalized his Silverton boyhood in The Country Boy - one of 5 books Davenport published between 1899 and 1910.

R.C. Geer was an ambitious and hard working nurseryman, and he achieved success very early in his fruit farm business. According to family tradition, from 1½ bushels of apple and pear seeds brought across the plains from Illinois in 1847, four years later R.C. Geer advertised 42 varieties of apples, 15 varieties of pears, 5 varieties of peaches, and 6 varieties of cherries. He had purchased grafts from Luelling, another among Oregon's early successful nurserymen. At one time the Geer Orchard and nursery stock occupied about 30 acres. The land has always been used for agricultural purposes.

According to family tradition, R.C. Geer was penniless when he arrived in Oregon and "wintered" in a relative's cabin. He traded a small amount of needles, buttons, and cloth for a steer and a wagon load of potatoes, turnips, and cabbage. He also received what is said to be the second Donation Land Claim in Oregon granted by the U.S. Government in 1850. It was chartered in 1859 when Oregon became a state.

Meetings related to Oregon statehood were held in the farmhouse prior to 1859. T.T. Geer, the first native Oregon governor, often visited the farm. R.C. Geer was active in early Oregon politics. In 1854 he was a member of the Territorial Legislature House of Representatives in Marion County. Prior to that in 1851 he served on the commission to select a site for a capitol building.

Homer Davenport, famous Oregon/American author and cartoonist, lived in the farmhouse and later wrote about his experiences on the farm. Homer Davenport's mother, daughter of R.C. Geer, died when Homer was young and he grew up under the care of his father and grandparents, R.C. and Mary Geer. Homer Davenport's experiences on the farm and in nearby Silverton contributed to his later writings and drawings. After attending art school in California he was temporarily employed as artist and cartoonist on the Portland Mercury and Oregonian in 1889. He then joined the staff of the San Francisco Examiner in 1892. Three years later he joined the Hearst newspapers in New York City, where he became a famous cartoonist. From 1899 to 1910 he published five books. The best known being The Country Boy

# 9. Major Bibliographical References

Williams, Edgar. Historical Atlas Map of Marion and Linn Counties, 1878.

Cornius, Howard McKinley, ed. Dictionary of Oregon History (Portland: Binford and Mort, 1956), 69-70.

(continued)

# 10. Geographical Data

**UTM NOT VERIFIED**

Acreege of nominated property 9.8 acres Quadd: \_\_\_\_\_

**ACREAGE NOT VERIFIED**

Quadrangle name Stayton NE, Oregon

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UMT References

A 

1	0	5	1	5	3	0	5	4	9	7	6	2	1	5
Zone		Easting				Northing								

B 

Zone		Easting				Northing								

C 

Zone		Easting				Northing								

D 

Zone		Easting				Northing								

E 

Zone		Easting				Northing								

F 

Zone		Easting				Northing								

G 

Zone		Easting				Northing								

H 

Zone		Easting				Northing								

## Verbal boundary description and justification

Proposed boundaries of the support property are established from a reference point at the northwest corner of the farmhouse porch. Distance to boundaries from that point: West - 300 ft., East - 300 ft., South 340 ft., North - 375 ft.. (continued)

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	code	county	code
-------	------	--------	------

state	code	county	code
-------	------	--------	------

# 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Charles Glab

organization Graduate Student - School of Architecture University of Oregon date August 12, 1979

street & number 2332-2 Patterson telephone 343-4150

city or town Eugene state Oregon 97401

# 12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:


national  state  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 Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature 

title SHPO Designee date \_\_\_\_\_

For HCERS use only  
I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

 date 2/12/80  
Keeper of the National Register

Attest: Kristin O'Connell date 2/11/80

Chief of Registration

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

FOR HCRS USE ONLY	
RECEIVED	JAN 14 1980
DATE ENTERED	FEB 12 1980

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 9 PAGE 1

Schmitt, Martin. Catalogue of Manuscripts in the University of Oregon Library, University of Oregon, 1971.

Oregon Territory. "Oregon's Fruit Industry - Skillful Management in What Made This Enterprise Grow", Jim Martin, Sunday Feb. 5, 1978.

Oregon Journal. "Signs of Spring Found on New Valley Loop Road", Ernest W. Peterson, Sunday Feb. 26, 1928.

The Oregon Statesman. "Geer House Holds History, Memories of Renowned Cartoonist", Josephine Sommer, Tuesday Dec. 12, 1967.

The Oregon Statesman. "Best View of Valley, Hills", Lillie L. Madsen, Sunday Sept. 3, 1972.

The Oregon Statesman. "Ralph Geer Place Still Stands Today", Lillie L. Madsen, Saturday July 3, 1976.

Marion County Courthouse - Salem, Oregon. Donation Land Claim Records. Property Records.

Aerial Photographs. Map Library, University of Oregon, Eugene, Oregon.

State Archives of Oregon - Salem, Oregon. Tax assessment records for Marion County. Assessment Role, 1852, 1856, 1857, 1858.

Geer family records and photographs held by Mrs. Vesper (Geer) Rose.

Marion County Census, 1850.

Interviews

Mrs. Vesper Geer Rose - Salem, Oregon

Mr. Philip Dole - Eugene, Oregon

FHR-8-300A  
(11/78)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
HERITAGE CONSERVATION AND RECREATION SERVICE

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

FOR HCRS USE ONLY
RECEIVED JAN 14 1980
DATE ENTERED FEB 12 1980

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 10 PAGE 1

---

The boundaries form a rectangle 715 feet North/South x 600 feet East/West.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
HERITAGE CONSERVATION AND RECREATION SERVICE

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

FOR HCRS USE ONLY	
RECEIVED	FEB 12 1980
DATE ENTERED	

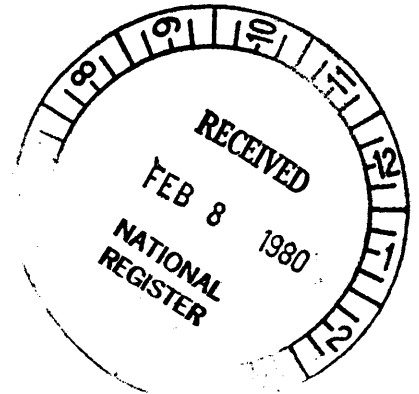
GEER (R.C.) FARMHOUSE, Salem, Marion County, Oregon

CONTINUATION SHEET

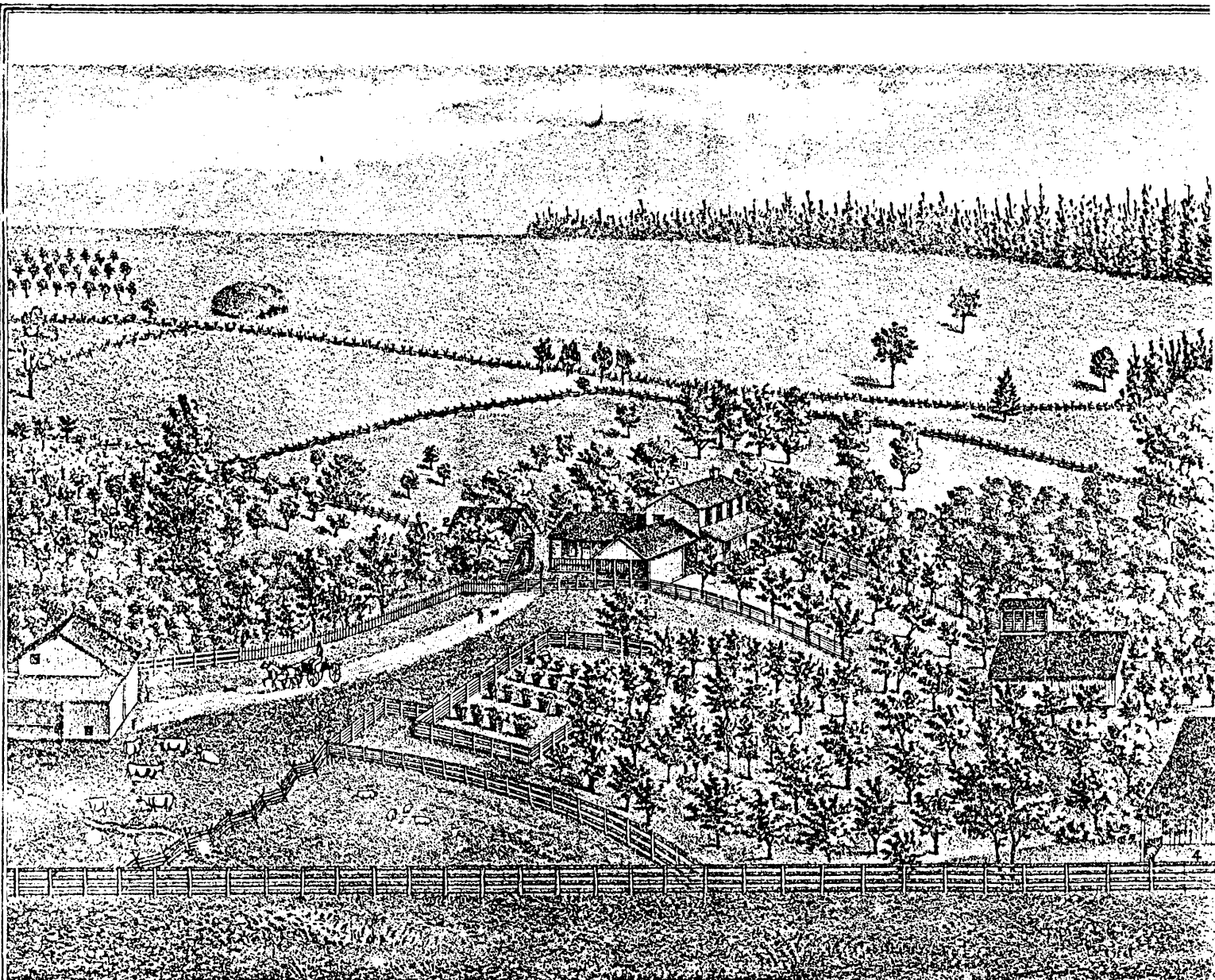
ITEM NUMBER 12 PAGE 1

The evaluated significance of this property within the state as designated by the Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer is: LOCAL.

The nomination was signed by the Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer in December 1979.







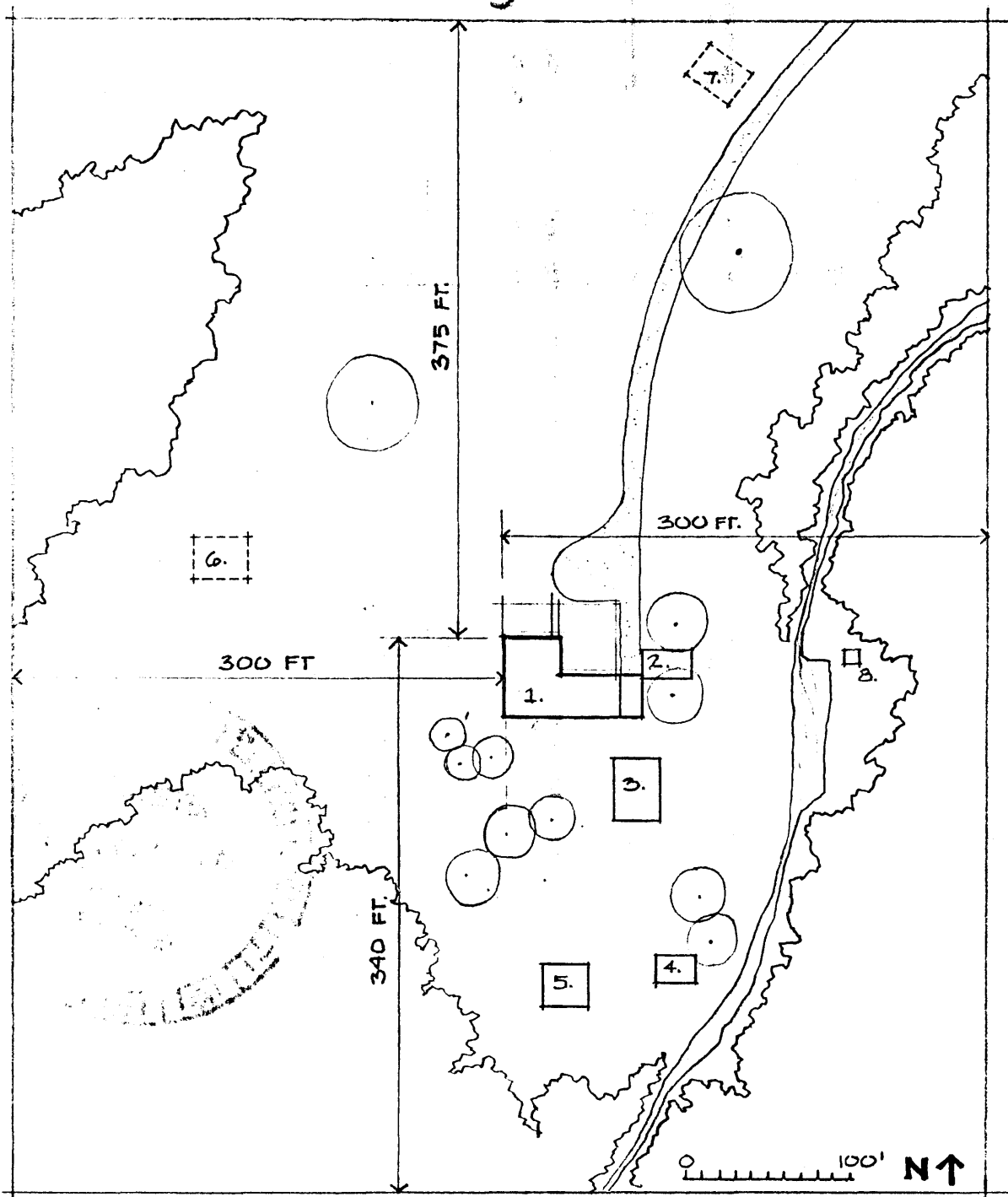
- 1 HOP HOUSE.
- 2 HORSE BARN.
- 3 STORE CELLAR.
- 4 BARN.

FRUIT FARM, PROPERTY OF COLN. RALPH C. GERR. 12 MILES EAST OF SALEM, PLACE FOUNDED BY PRESENT OWNER IN 1848



FEB 12 1980

GEER (R.C.) FARM HOUSE, SALEM VICINITY, MARION COUNTY, OREGON

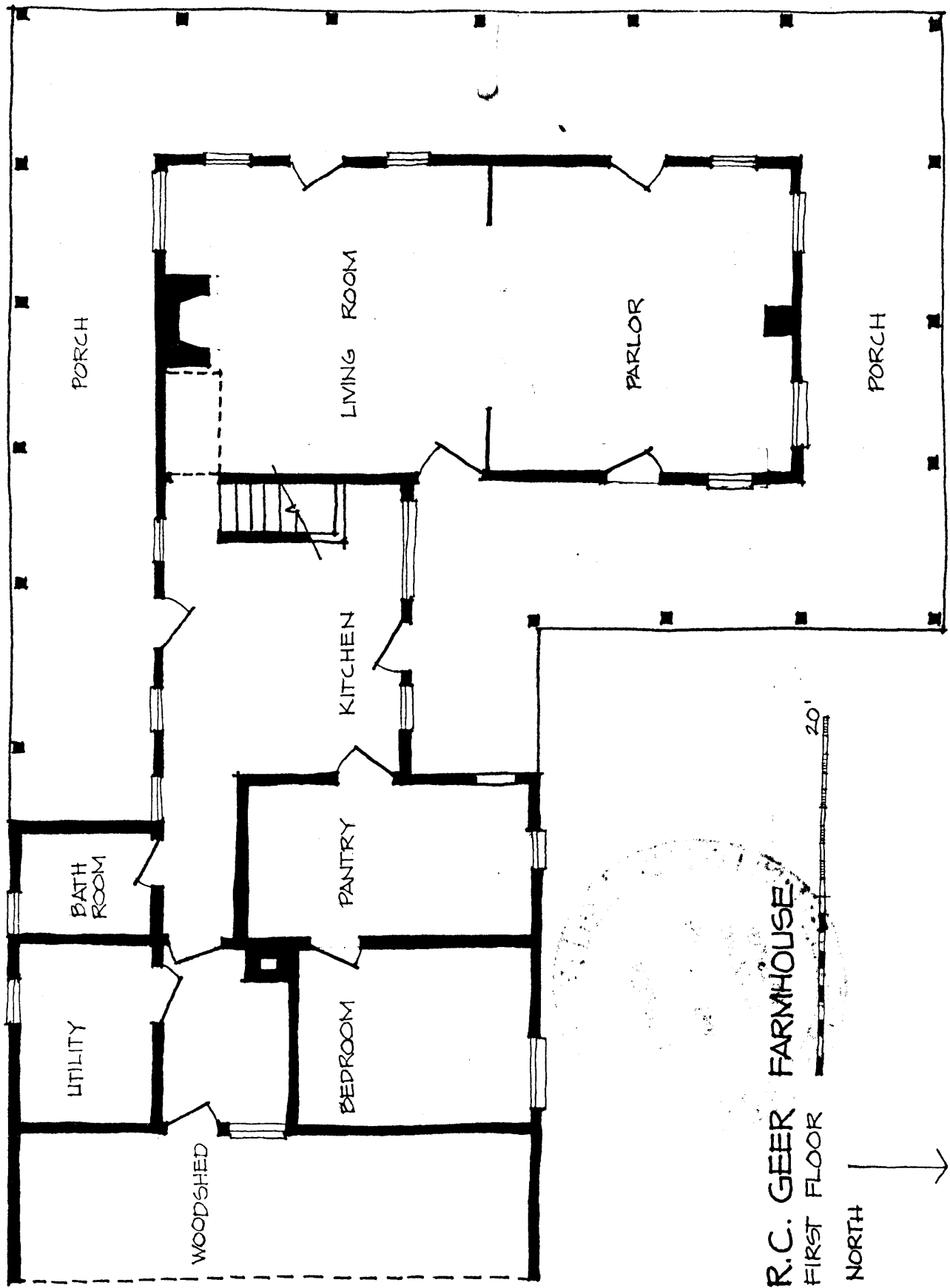


SITE PLAN SHOWING HISTORICAL PROPERTY LIMITS

RC GEER FARMHOUSE SITE  
EST. 1851

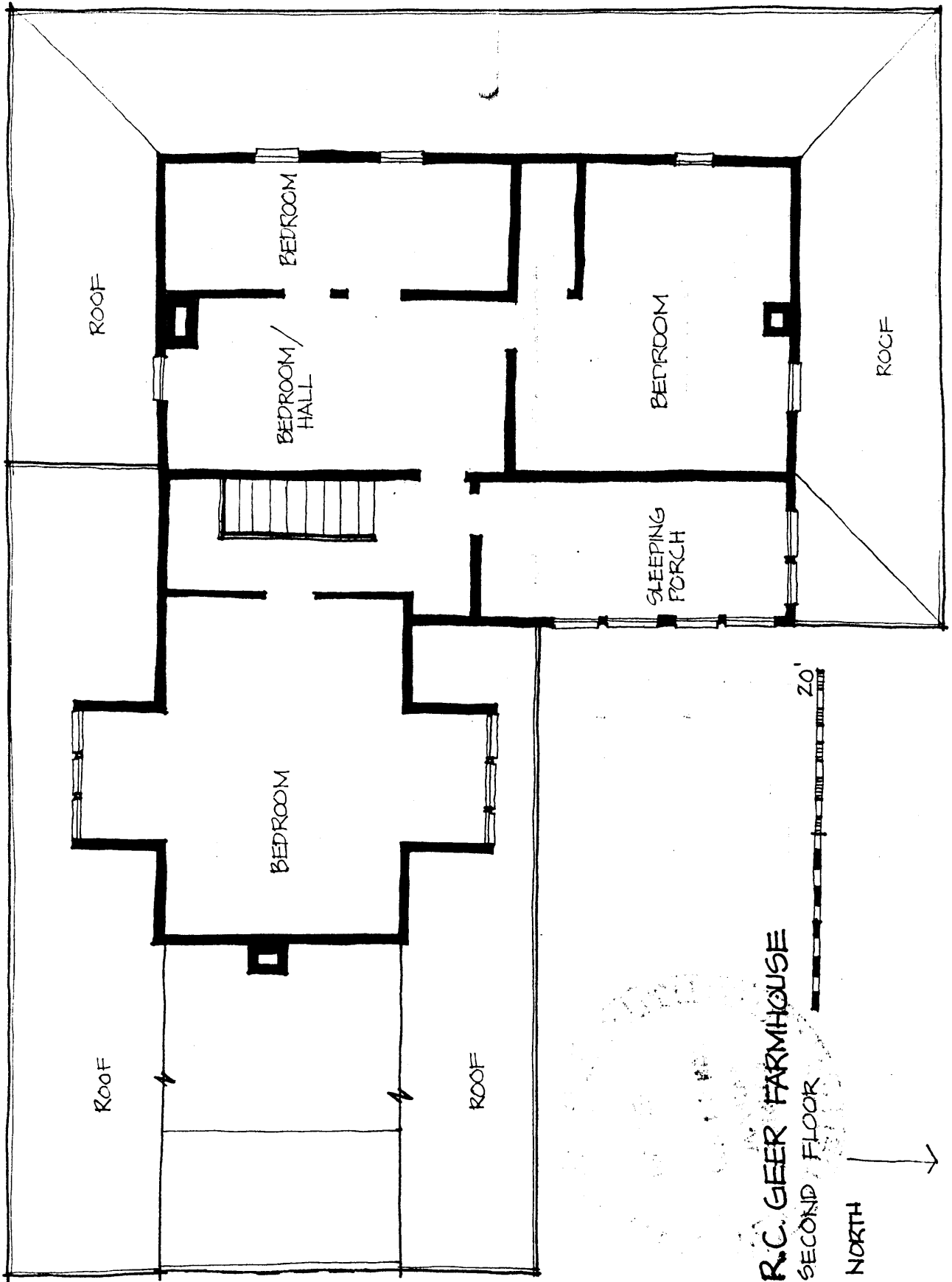
- 1. FARMHOUSE (1851)
- 2. FRUIT CELLAR (1870)
- 3. HOUSE (1960)
- 4. SHED (1930)
- 5. SHED (1930)
- 6. FRUIT BARN SITE (1860)
- 7. BARN SITE (1860)
- 8. SHED (1940)

PROPOSED  
PROPERTY INCLUDES  
9.85 ACRES OF  
20 REMAINING  
ACRES OF ORIG-  
INAL 640 ACRE  
CLAIM.



R.C. GEER FARMHOUSE.  
FIRST FLOOR

NORTH  
↓

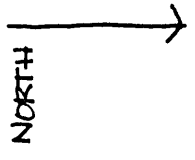
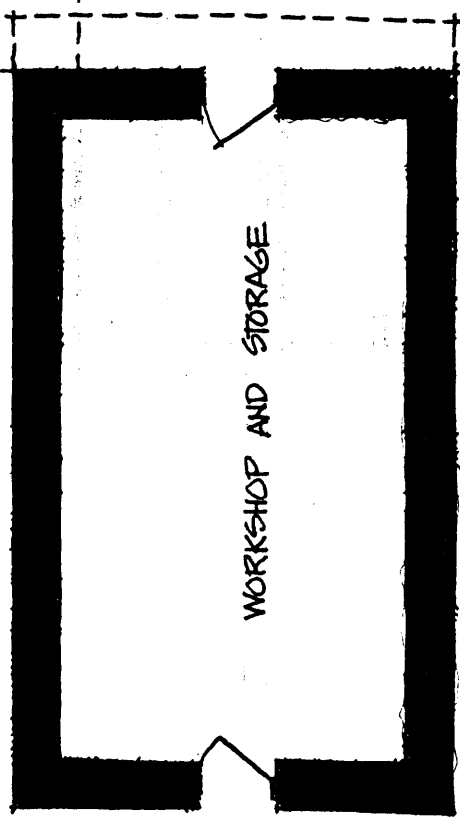
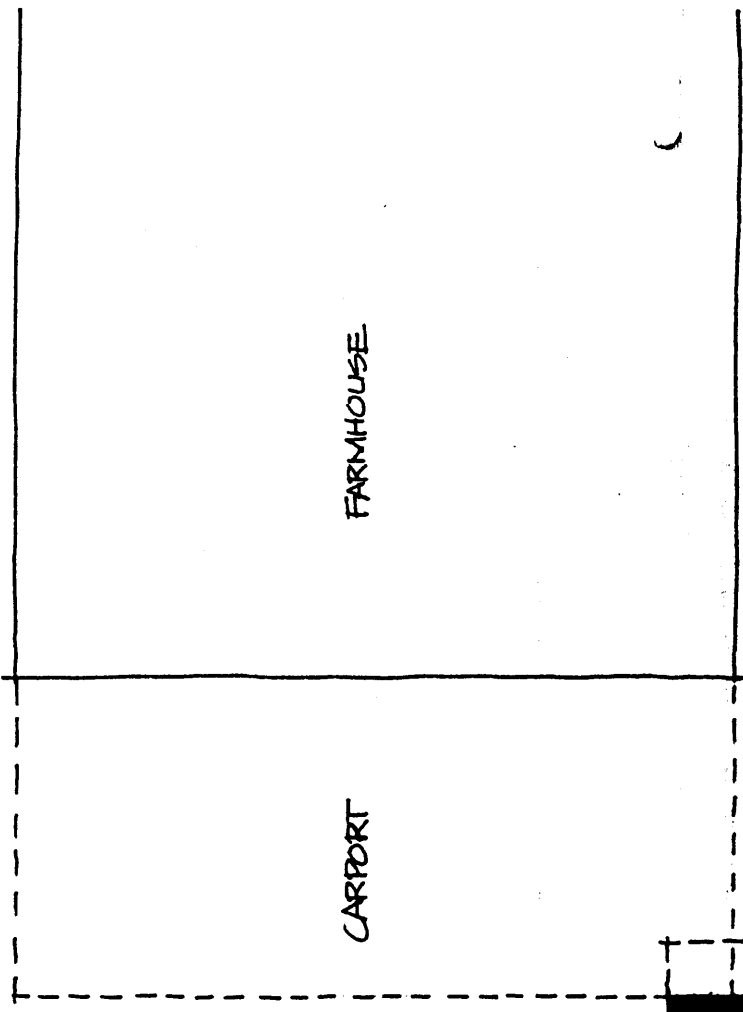
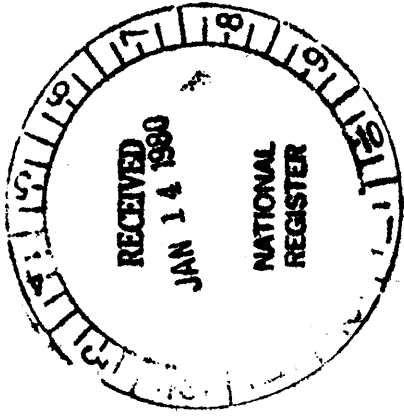


R.C. GEER FARMHOUSE

SECOND FLOOR

NORTH

20'



R.C. GEER STONE FRUIT CELLAR  
FIRST FLOOR



RC GEER  
FRUIT FARM  
FRUIT CELLAR  
RECORDED