

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

For NPS use only

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

received NOV 27 1984

date entered DEC 27

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

1. Name

historic Robinson-Herrling Sawmill

and/or common Robinson-Herrling Sawmill Site

2. Location

street & number Old Wade House State Park not for publication

city, town Greenbush vicinity of

state Wisconsin code 55 county Sheboygan code 117

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public	<input type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> museum
<input type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" 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 type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> N.A.	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name State Historical Society of Wisconsin

street & number 816 State Street

city, town Madison vicinity of state Wisconsin 53706

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Sheboygan County Courthouse

street & number 615 N. 6th St.

city, town Sheboygan state Wisconsin

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Wisconsin Inventory of Historic Places has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date 1972 federal state county local

depository for survey records Historic Preservation Division, State Historical Society of Wis.

city, town Madison state Wisconsin 53706

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 type="checkbox"/> good	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input 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 Robinson-Herrling Sawmill Site is located on the grounds of the Old Wade House State Park historical complex in the village of Greenbush, Wisconsin. It is surrounded by the open park land of the complex, other museum buildings, and is across the road (Hwy. 23) from a residential and commercial area of Greenbush. (See site map). The museum complex includes mid-nineteenth century museum buildings depicting the frontier Greenbush stage-coach stop, Wade House, and related structures. The Kohler Foundation donated the restored and reconstructed buildings of the complex to the State Historical Society of Wisconsin in 1953. The complex grounds included the sawmill site, already in ruins. The carpenter son-in-law of Sylvannus Wade, founder of Greenbush and the Wade House, was Charles Robinson who is responsible for the original mill and dam, constructed c. 1847.

The location of the dam may clearly be seen by the "ridge" of rubble crossing the river at the mill site. On the north side of the rubble is a small pond, formed by the river intrusion. On both sides of this "dam" ruin, as well as slightly further down the river, are rubble piles, evidence of the dam and/or mill foundation which existed there into the twentieth century.

The original dam was a rubble and wood structure with openings to control the flow of water. To the east of the Mullet, a roughly cohesive section of rubble and a small amount of concrete may be found, the only remains of the original dam. To the west of the river stood the actual sawmill, a rough wood structure with only a simple gable roof and small proportions. Little evidence of the mill structure can be seen at the site, with only small amounts of rubble near where the foundation would have been.

This ruin is all that remains of the original Robinson-Herrling Sawmill, built by Charles Robinson c. 1847. In 1856, Theodore Herrling purchased the sawmill from Robinson, and it remained in the Herrling family, in operation as a small sawmill and carpenter shop, until about 1911. While the site is in an obvious ruined condition, the rubble piles indicate where the dam and mill were located, and it is protected by the museum staff from vandalism. The museum hopes, at some point, to conduct a complete archeological excavation of the site in order to accurately reconstruct the sawmill and dam.

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION AND JUSTIFICATION

The site is enclosed in a rectangle with boundaries as follows: Beginning at the center line of the Mullet River, approximately 25 feet south of the dam remains, then northeast 100' along a line to a point intersecting with a line running northwesterly, along this line approximately 50 feet to a point intersecting with a southwesterly line, along this line approximately 200 feet to a point intersecting with a southeasterly line, along this line approximately 50 feet to a point intersecting with the northeasterly line, along this line approximately 100 feet to the point of beginning.

This boundary encompasses all visible, documented, and potential features of the Robinson-Herrling Sawmill Site.

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500–1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600–1699	<input 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 type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900–	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates c. 1847 - c. 1911¹ **Builder/Architect** Charles Robinson²

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Robinson-Herrling Sawmill Site is a significant historical archaeological site because it has the potential to yield important information about sawmilling in frontier Wisconsin. The site is also significant because the sawmill, as a producer of lumber for building, contributed to the physical development of the community.

Archeology - historic

The landscape in the Greenbush area at the time of its settlement during the mid-nineteenth century was heavily forested with hardwoods suitable particularly for furniture making. In fact, nearby Sheboygan became the center of much of the furniture industry in Wisconsin due to its proximity to raw materials and transportation facilities. As such, it is not surprising that Sylvannus Wade and Charles Robinson saw an opportunity to establish a sawmill at the Greenbush site, given its location among suitable forests, and the natural water power of the Mullet River. Only two years after Wade arrived in this wilderness, Robinson constructed (perhaps not alone) a crude sawmill and dam on the Mullet. Robinson probably used the wood from this mill to construct those buildings he designed, including the Wade House and his own home, as well as providing wood for others to do the same. In 1852, Robinson sold the mill and dam-site to an absentee owner, William Holloway, of Buffalo, New York. Holloway never moved to Greenbush, and in 1856, he sold the mill to Prussian immigrant Theodore Herrling.³

Herrling operated the mill on a very small scale, although it was a significant enterprise for tiny Greenbush. He did his own logging as well as custom work, but his mill continued to decline in production as the nineteenth century progressed and Greenbush declined. After Herrling's death in 1885, one of his sons, Rudolph, continued to operate the mill on a part-time basis, probably doing only the custom work that local people brought to him. By this time, the majority of the prime wood was gone, and the furniture industry was consolidating around Sheboygan. Around 1911, he abandoned the sawmill and his son, Otto, continued only to maintain the dam for ice harvesting in the winter. Eventually the dam washed out and the building was destroyed. Only the outline of a foundation for the sawmill still remains along with the rubble piles which once were part of the dam. However, the site has been preserved since the 1960's as part of the Wade House Historical Complex, and may at some future time be excavated as part of a plan to accurately reconstruct the sawmill on the site.⁴

The mill site is significant because it is connected with the early development of Greenbush by Wade and Robinson, and because it holds the potential for further information about sawmilling in frontier Wisconsin. The mill is also significant because

9. Major Bibliographical References

See continuation sheet

10. Geographical Data

Acree of nominated property less than one

Quadrangle name Elkhart Lake, Wis.

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

UTM References

A

1	6	4	1	2	6	4	0	4	8	4	7	6	1	1	0
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

See continuation pages--Description

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

state	code	county	code
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state	code	county	code
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11. Form Prepared By

name/title Carol Lohry Cartwright

organization Historic Preservation Division

date August 21, 1984

street & number 816 State St.

telephone 608/262-1339

city or town Madison

state Wisconsin 53706

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 National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature



Jeff Dean

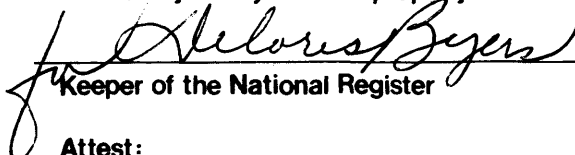
date November 12, 1984

title Director of Historic Preservation

date

For NPS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register


Keeper of the National Register

Entered in the
National Register

date

12-27-84

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

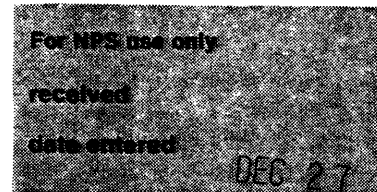
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it was one of the few industries to develop in the community, and continue operation into the twentieth century. It is also significant that the mill was developed as a sawmill, specializing in finished wood, since the important furniture making industry would develop later in nearby Sheboygan. Because the site is well protected due to its existence in a museum complex, it would be an excellent candidate for excavation, not only for the purpose of reconstructing a sawmill, but for the information on this industry that could be gained from such a resource.

¹ David P. Nord, "The Greenbush Mill Project," report prepared for the State Historical Society of Wisconsin, December 27, 1978, pp. 80-86. On file, Old Wade House State Park, Greenbush, Wisconsin.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.; David Donath, "Old Wade House Historical Synopsis: Research Narrative, Bibliography, and Recommendations," Unpublished Report, March 5, 1982, pp. 14, 32. On file, Historic Preservation Division, State Historical Society of Wisconsin, Madison, Wisconsin.

⁴ Donath, pp. 80-86.

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National Park Service**

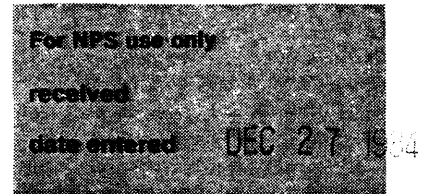
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Major Bibliographical References

Donath, David. "Old Wade House Historical Synopsis: Research Narrative, Bibliography, and Recommendations." Unpublished report, March 5, 1982. On file at the Historic Preservation Division, State Historical Society of Wisconsin, Madison, WI.

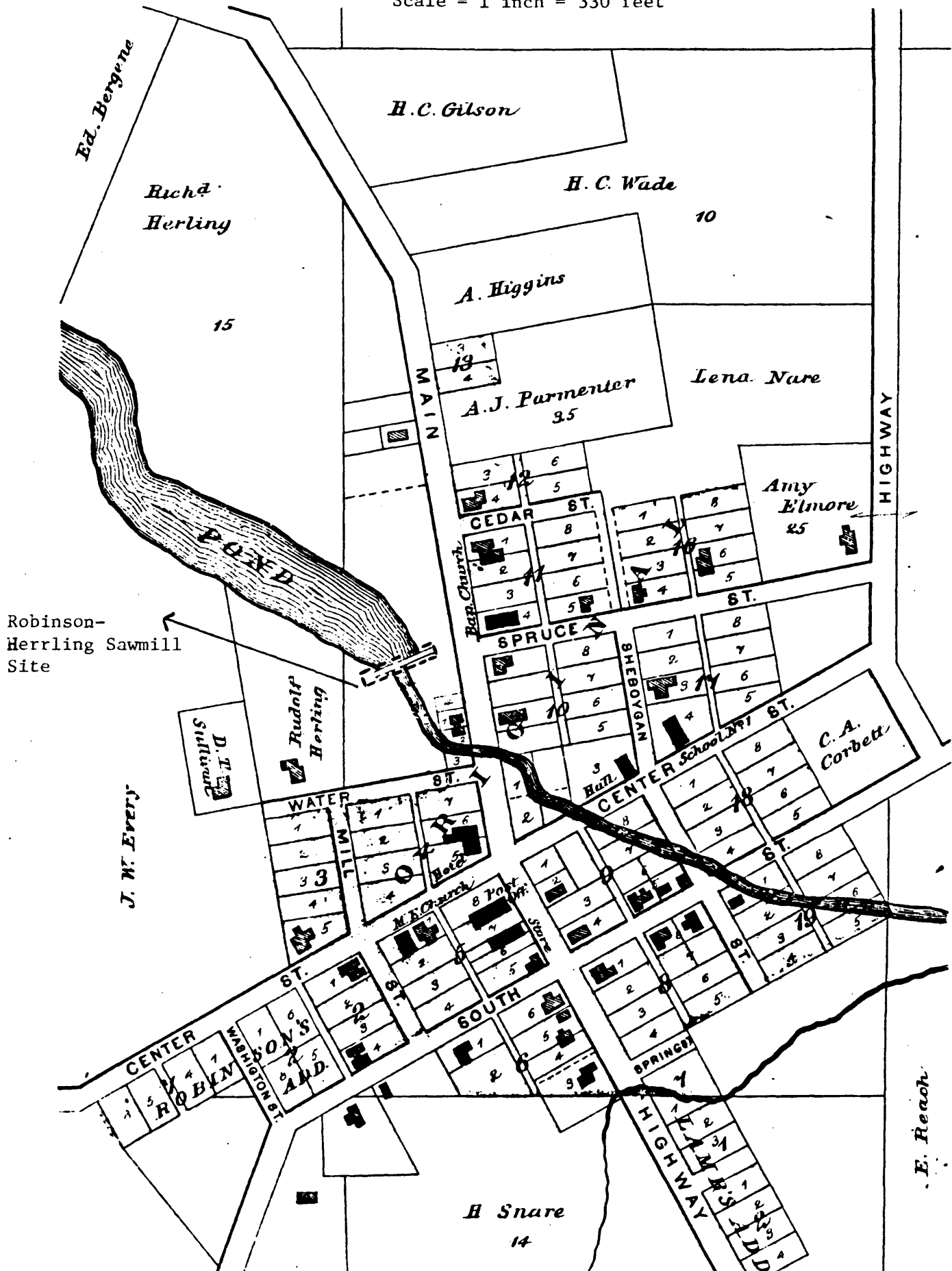
Nord, David P. "The Greenbush Mill Project." Report prepared for the State Historical Society of Wisconsin, December 27, 1978. On file, Old Wade House State Park, Greenbush, WI.

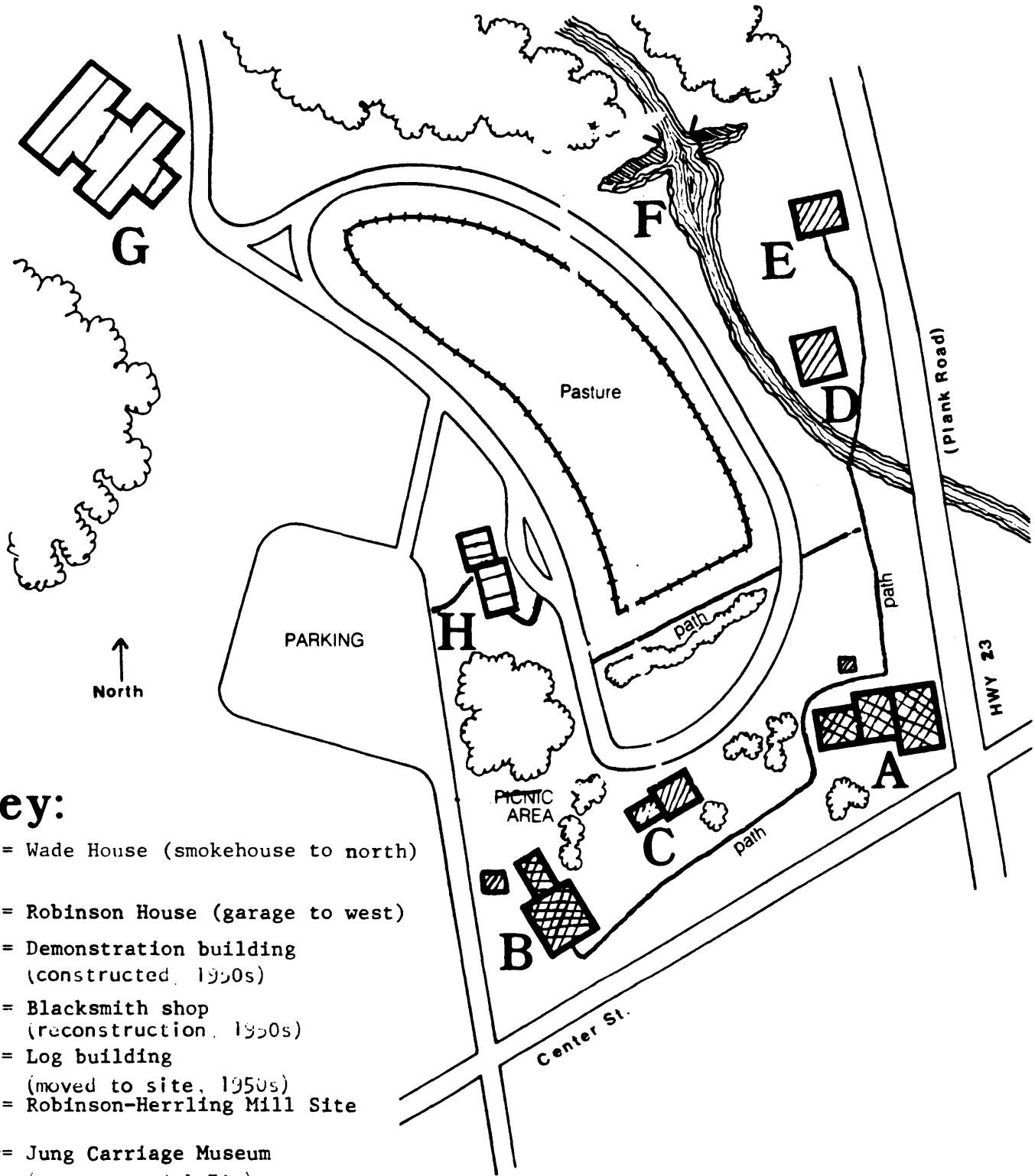
_____. A Guide to Old Wade House Historical Site. Madison: State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1978.

Whyte, Bertha K. Wisconsin Heritage. Boston: Charles T. Branford Company, 1954.

GREENBUSH

Scale = 1 inch = 330 feet





Key:

- A** = Wade House (smokehouse to north)
- B** = Robinson House (garage to west)
- C** = Demonstration building
(constructed, 1950s)
- D** = Blacksmith shop
(reconstruction, 1950s)
- E** = Log building
(moved to site, 1950s)
- F** = Robinson-Herrling Mill Site
- G** = Jung Carriage Museum
(constructed 1970s)
- H** = Visitor's Center
(constructed 1970s)

OLD WADE HOUSE STATE PARK HISTORICAL COMPLEX

Map not to scale