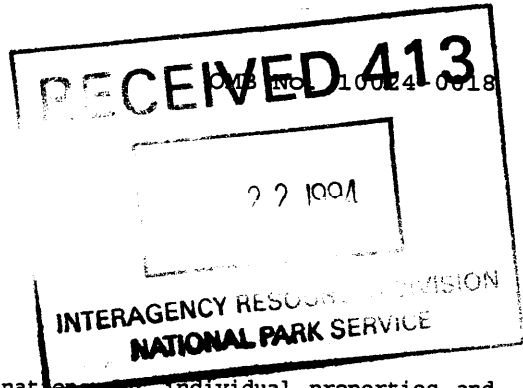


1156

NPS Form 10-900  
(January 1992)



United States Department of Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determination 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 Skindrud, Eric and Jerome, Farm

other names/site number Thompson, Thosten, Farm

2. Location

street & number 3070 Town Hall Road N/A Not for publication

city or town Town of Springdale N/A vicinity

state Wisconsin code WI county Dane code 025 zip code 53572

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

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

*Jeff M. Davis* 8/16/94  
Signature of certifying official/Title Date  
State Historic Preservation Officer-WI

State or Federal agency and bureau

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

Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State of Federal agency and bureau

Skindrud Farm  
Name of Property

Town of Springdale, Dane County, WI  
County and State

**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.  
    — See continuation sheet.
  - removed from the National Register.
  - other, (explain:)

Signature of the Keeper Edson H. Beall Date of Action 9/29/94  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Entered in the  
National Register  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**5. Classification**

Ownership of Property (check as many boxes as apply)      Category of Property (Check only one box)

- private       building(s)
- public-local       district
- public-state       site
- public-federal       structure
- object

Number of Resources within Property  
(Do not include listed resources within the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>5</u>	<u>4</u>	buildings
<u>1</u>		sites
<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	structures
		objects
<u>8</u>	<u>7</u>	Total

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

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National

0

**6. Function or Use**

Historic Functions  
(Enter categories from instructions)  
Agriculture/Agricultural Fields  
Agriculture/Agricultural Outbuildings  
Agriculture/Animal Facility  
Domestic/Single Dwelling

Current Functions  
(Enter categories from instructions)  
Agriculture/Agricultural Fields  
Agriculture/Agricultural  
Outbuildings  
Agriculture/Animal Facility  
Domestic/Single Dwelling

**7. Description**

Architectural Classification  
(Enter categories from instructions)  
Queen Anne

Materials  
(Enter categories from instructions)  
Stone foundation  
Weatherboard walls  
Asphalt roof  
Concrete other

**Narrative Description**

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

Skindrud Farm  
Name of Property

Town of Springdale, Dane County, WI  
County and State

**8. Statement of Significance**

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

Areas of Significance  
(Enter categories from  
instructions)  
Agriculture  
Architecture  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Period of Significance  
c. 1876-1943  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Significant Dates  
N/A  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Significant Person  
(Complete if Criterion B is  
marked above)

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

- A owned by a religious institution or  
used for religious purposes.
- B removed from its original location.
- C a birthplace or grave.
- D a cemetery.
- E a reconstructed building, object, or  
structure.
- F a commemorative property.
- G less than 50 years of age achieved  
significance within the past 50 years.

N/A  
\_\_\_\_\_

Cultural Affiliation  
N/A  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Architect/Builder  
unknown  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Narrative Statement of Significance**

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

**9. Major Bibliographic References**

**Bibliography**

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

Skindrud Farm Town of Springdale, Dane County, WI  
Name of Property County and State

Previous Documentation on File (NPS): Primary location of additional data:

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 #

State Historic Preservation Office  
 Other State Agency  
 Federal Agency  
 Local government  
 University  
 Other  
Name of repository: \_\_\_\_\_

### 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 235.7 Acres

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

1	<u>1/6</u>	<u>2/8/0/3/4/0</u>	<u>4/7/6/6/8/8/0</u>	3	<u>1/6</u>	<u>2/8/1/5/3/0</u>	<u>4/7/6/6/8/2/0</u>
	Zone Easting		Northing		Zone Easting		Northing
2	<u>1/6</u>	<u>2/8/0/7/4/0</u>	<u>4/7/6/7/0/2/0</u>	4	<u>1/6</u>	<u>2/8/1/4/9/0</u>	<u>4/7/6/6/1/8/0</u>
	Zone Easting		Northing		Zone Easting		Northing
					<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	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 Jane Eiseley, Historic Preservation Consultant  
organization N/A date 06/30/93  
street & number 122 E. Gilman, Apt 206 telephone \_\_\_\_\_  
city or town Madison state WI zip code 53703

### 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)

NPS Form 10-900a  
(Rev, 8-86)  
Wisconsin Word Processing Format  
(Approved 1/92)

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section 7 Page 1 Eric and Jerome Skindrud Farm  
Town of Springdale, Dane County, WI

The entire present acreage of the Eric and Jerome Skindrud farm is nominated to the National Register of Historic Places, reflecting its significance as an early and outstanding example of the erosion control measures begun by the Civilian Conservation Corps during the New Deal and continued into the 1940s and down to the present by the Soil Conservation Service. The erosion control measures present on the farm include terraced contour strips in three separate areas of work land and two stone dams in the gully that runs through the farm. Stylistically, the farmhouse is a fine example of the farmhouses built, notably in Norwegian areas of Dane County, around the turn of the century by the children of the first settlers. The dairy barn, built in c. 1876, is a particularly large and well preserved example of a building type which is the hallmark and legacy of the changeover in Wisconsin agriculture from wheat farming to dairying.<sup>1</sup> In addition to the house and barn, a granary, chicken house, and the pre-1919 machine shed are considered to contribute to the significance of the site. The farm is located on the southeast slope of Military Ridge, a geological feature of Wisconsin's "driftless area." The steep slope of the land lends importance to the erosion control measures on the farm. The farmstead is sited in a swale below the ridge and is protected by a row of large spruce trees on its west border.

Today the Eric and Jerome Skindrud Farm consists of 235.7 acres out of 242.7 acres which constituted the historic farm first acquired in 1856 by Thosten Thompson and subsequently reduced by a deed to the Chicago and Tomah Railroad Company in 1880. The original farm was a quarter section and a contiguous 80 acres, plus a triangular plot of about 10 acres lying south of the Military Road at its northwest corner (The ten acres exceeds only slightly the land lost where Town Hall Road cuts off a small triangle from the southwest corner plus the symmetrical corner the railroad took in 1880 from

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<sup>1</sup> CRMP, Vol II, "Agriculture" 2-1,3 "Wheat Cultivation"

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Section 7 Page 2 Eric and Jerome Skindrud Farm  
Town of Springdale, Dane County, WI

the southeast corner.)<sup>2</sup>

In modern times the railroad has become a bicycle path. Town Hall Road still forms the northwest boundary of the property, but at the southwest corner the woods between Town Hall Road and the work land has been sold for ex-urban housing sites, reducing the present farm to 235.7 acres. The Military Road, the first and once the only highway through Dane County, has become County Highway S.

Called Windy Corner Farm by the present occupants, the farm comprises a single valley which begins its descent in the small triangle of land at the farm's northwest corner, next to the Military Road, and ends in a marsh which is traversed by the railroad embankment and bridge at the southeast corner. The house and buildings lie below the crest of the hill, on Town Hall Road. From the rear of the farmyard a gully begins and becomes rapidly steeper as it runs first east and then southeast. The sides of the gully are wooded to the north and grassy on the south, but its center is a muddy cow lane leading to pasture along the sides of the gully and in the marshland at its foot. The gully is interrupted and the gouging action of the run-off prevented by two stone dams that lie in the cow yard some two hundred and three hundred feet below the oldest section of the barn. Above the gully to the west, north and northeast is the work land, laid out in broad strips of contrasting vegetation that follow the contours of the land, forming terraces each of which maintains an equal altitude above the gully descending below it. From the Military Road to the railroad, the contour map shows a descent of approximately 200 feet.

Aerial photographs of the farm exist for 1937, 1940, 1955, 1980 and 1990.<sup>3</sup> These photographs show the evolution of the contour strips

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<sup>2</sup> Abstract dated February 23, 1911; Dane County Title Company, Madison, WI. In the possession of David Atwell.

<sup>3</sup> Aerial photos are on file at the Map Library, Science Hall, University of Wisconsin, Madison. For 1940 and 1955 only small index photos are available.

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Section 7 Page 3 Eric and Jerome Skindrud Farm  
Town of Springdale, Dane County, WI

of today. The 1937 photo shows an alternation of crops in long narrow rectangles in the large southwestern field, and a quadrangle with a border occupying half the field to the north of the buildings. The large area of work land east of the house is divided into roughly rectangular fields without regard to the contour. By 1940 the strips south of the buildings had acquired something of the flowing curves of the land contours while the rectangular fields remained to the north and east. The 1955 photo shows strips in all three areas. Maintenance of the pattern is seen in the 1980 and 1990 photos, together with an extension of the cultivated area into what had been marsh and pasture in the southeast corner of the farm.

The stone dams are about 10' wide and 5' to 6' high, with stepped stone buttresses extending about 5' downhill at each end. The stone is laid bed-faced in rough courses. The center of the dams is about two feet lower than the end sections adjoining the buttresses. Although Jerome Skindrud believed that metal plates had been fixed to the dams, bearing the date of construction, these were not found. Nor could the Soil Conservation Service date them.<sup>4</sup> Mr. Skindrud's belief is that they were built in 1934.<sup>5</sup> The stone is rough-cut local limestone which was quarried and cut by the CCC.<sup>6</sup>

Although complex in its massing, the wood-frame farmhouse, built by Henry Thompson in 1909<sup>7</sup> in the Queen Anne style, can be classified

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<sup>4</sup> Interview, Glen Kindermann, 5/6/93

<sup>5</sup> This is borne out by the statement of Mr. Skindrud that the dams were the first constructed by the CCC in the area. Since Mr. Bartz arrived at the camp in early 1935 and dam construction was already in progress at that time and the CCC was established in 1933, the 1934 date is probable.

<sup>6</sup> Art Bartz, 6/24/93

<sup>7</sup> Information from Eric Skindrud, born 1905, recorded by David Atwell, present owner of the farm.

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Section 7 Page 4 Eric and Jerome Skindrud Farm  
Town of Springdale, Dane County, WI

as cross-gabled. The roof is asphalt shingles, which the owner intends to replace with wood shingles. The house features turned posts and ornate saw-cut and spindle decoration in its gables, friezes, brackets and entry doors, with a classical frieze and Doric columns on its front porch. (The porch railings (balustrade) have been replaced with wood panels. Mr. Skindrud reports that all the porch railings were like the ones preserved on the back porch. Based on an early photo, the porch is believed to have wrapped around the front (east) side of the house (The owner plans to restore this feature). A full two storeys plus attic, the house in its ample proportions bespeaks well-being and even luxury. The first and second storeys have been covered in vinyl siding which nonetheless preserves the appearance of narrow clapboards. The attic gables, covered in machine-cut shingles, have been preserved. A small porch at the northwest corner of the house leads to a kitchen entrance. At the southwest corner is an enclosed "mud room" which also opens to the kitchen. The front entrance to the house is in its northeast corner. Above the front porch, in a corner formed by the projecting cross-gable, is a small second-storey porch with ornamental spindle frieze, turned posts and saw-cut brackets. The balustrade has, unfortunately, been replaced with iron pipe. The facade of the north-facing wing has cutaway corners forming tri-partite bays with extra-width windows in the center section. The end wall of the south-facing gable is flush with the axial wall of the main section of the house. It has a small, rectangular bay projecting from the first floor and double windows on the second floor. The front (east) facade has a three-light attic window in its pent gable end, reminiscent of Palladian styling, (only the central window has a half-round top section). There are three windows on the second floor, and two windows, one extra wide, on the first. The sawcut and spindle decoration in the front gable is elaborate in design and particularly fine. The foundation of the house is local limestone.

Inside, the house preserves much of its original appearance, with reddish stained woodwork, a built-in buffet, oak floors and ornate brass light fixtures with glass globes. There are two parlors, a study and a dining room on the first floor, in addition to the kitchen, with its two pantries and mud room entryway. Basement stairs ascend from near the kitchen entrance in the north wall.



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Section 7 Page 5 Eric and Jerome Skindrud Farm  
Town of Springdale, Dane County, WI

The front rooms are separated by functioning, wood-panel pocket doors. An enclosed stair leads from the living room to the second floor, which has four bedrooms and a bath. The outside dimensions of the house are 35' by 44'.

To the west of the house along Town Hall Road is a row of very large spruce trees. These were probably planted when the farmstead was established in 1856, or soon after. The trees are visible from all directions and provide a local landmark as well as shelter for the farmyard. Jerome Skindrud, born in 1919, remembers them as very large, old trees when he was a small boy. To the north of the house is a grove of younger spruce and several large oak trees.

The barn constructed by Thosten Thompson and his son Henry in c. 1876 is 34' by 100'. It has a simple gable roof presently covered with asphalt shingles, vertical wood siding painted red and a stone basement. It is built into the slope along its axial wall, with wide sliding doors opening from an earthen ramp into the wooden mow. Inside the mow, against the east wall, is a grain bin built of random-width boards up to 2' in width. A poured concrete milkhouse is attached to the east basement wall in the corner formed by the ramp. (Building the milkhouse thus half below-grade was a technique for keeping the milk cool.) The stone basement of the barn contains stanchions and gutters for dairy cows. It is entered by doors in the gable ends. At the southwest corner of the barn a newer structure, approximately the same dimensions, has been attached. According to Jerome Skindrud, this building originally stood farther down the hill and was moved from a site down the hill by Jacob Stolen, who had the farm from 1914 to 1920.<sup>8</sup> It has a

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<sup>8</sup> Interview, with Jerome Skindrud 5/5/93, Mt. Horeb, WI. Martin Skindrud, father of Jerome and Eric, acquired the farm in 1920. The date of the original barn is believed to be 1876, based on Jerome Skindrud's memory of an inscription, since cemented over, on a window ledge in its north basement wall. The barn is visible in a photo by Andreas Larsen Dahl, which shows Thompson and Aslak Lie family members in front of an earlier farm house. John Holzheuter, of the State Historical Society staff, believes the photo can be dated prior to 1879. (Interview, 5/6/93) CRMP states (Vol 2, 8-6) that "modern dairy barns evolved as early as the 1880s," which makes the Skindrud barn remarkable. It is still in use for its original purpose. The same section ("Livestock") notes that the statewide boom in dairying and livestock began in the 1870s.

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Section 7 Page 6 Eric and Jerome Skindrud Farm  
Town of Springdale, Dane County, WI

slightly hipped roof. Its poured concrete basement is exposed at its east-facing gable end and there is a ramp leading to the wooden super-structure on its south axial wall. In both old and newer sections of the barn the basement windows have been replaced with glass blocks.

At the southeast corner of the original barn are two concrete-stave silos. The smaller of these is typical of silo construction in the World War II period. A second modern silo stands southeast of the newer section of the barn. Along the driveway leading from Town Hall Road past the north wall of the house to the barn are a modern, shed-roofed garage and two small wooden buildings. Closest to the house of the latter is a 5' by 5' wood frame chicken house with two small windows, resting on a rough-laid stone foundation wall. It has narrow vertical siding and a low-pitched gable roof. Next to the chicken house is a small granary of a type seen on many farms in southern Wisconsin. (Wheat was an important cash crop and a sturdy granary was understandably a necessity.) The granary is rectangular, about 10' by 6', a little over a storey high, with a gabled roof. It is covered in wooden drop siding. The single opening is a door, right of center on the east-facing axial wall. The granary is supported on stone blocks, thus allowing light and air under the floor and denying rodents a place to nest or hide. The chicken house and granary are believed to be constructed of material salvaged from the first Thosten Thompson house.<sup>9</sup> Both of these small, antique outbuildings have been well preserved. They are neatly painted barn-red with white trim and have new asphalt roofing.

On a rise east of the barn is a slatted structure constructed in the mid-1940s as a hog house and now used to store machinery. Between it and the house is a large wooden quonset-style machine

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<sup>9</sup> Both Jerome Skindrud and the present tenant on the farm, Dan Syverud, mentioned the history of the chicken house.

NPS Form 10-900a  
(Rev, 8-86)  
Wisconsin Word Processing Format  
(Approved 1/92)

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Section 7 Page 7 Eric and Jerome Skindrud Farm  
Town of Springdale, Dane County, WI

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shed dating to 1965. West of the barn are two other gabled-roof buildings of moderate size, painted red, used for storage. The easternmost of these is a machine shed dating to before 1919, which has been covered with red metal siding.

Taken as a whole the Skindrud-Thompson farmstead embodies a progression of buildings and structures typical of Wisconsin dairy farms. Seen from the road, it is relatively free of the large modern buildings and structures that often distort the appearance of historic farmsteads. Its special interest lies in the excellent state of preservation of the historic buildings, the exceptionally large and early dairy barn associated with an important founding member of the community, the fine Queen Anne farmhouse with intact interior and relatively well preserved ornamentation, and the stone dams which illustrate an historically significant and especially successful effort to preserve the soil. Together with the interesting and well documented establishment of permanent contour "strips" or terraces which survive to the present, the farmstead and the farm represent an achievement of the progressive Norwegian farming heritage in western Dane County from its settlement period through WW II.

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**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Section 7 Page 8 Eric and Jerome Skindrud Farm  
Town of Springfield, Dane County, WI

Inventory of buildings and features on site:

Map Code	Resource Type	Date or Circa Date	Classification
A.	House	1909	C
B.	Garage	post-1943	NC
C.	Chicken house	pre 1943	C
D.	Granary	pre-1943	C
E.	Machine shed	pre-1919	C
F.	Outbuilding	c. 1980	NC
G.	Barn	c. 1876	C
	Barn addition	pre-1920	C
	Milk house	pre-1943	C
H.	Silo	post-1943	NC
I.	Silo	WWII period	NC
J.	Silo	post-1943	NC
K.	Hog house	mid-1940s	NC
L.	Machine shed	1965	NC
M.	Erosion control dam	c. 1934	C
N.	Erosion control dam	c. 1934	C
O.	Site		C

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Section 8 Page 1 Eric and Jerome Skindrud Farm  
Town of Springdale, Dane County, WI

The Eric and Jerome Skindrud Farm is locally significant under Criteria A and C in the area of Agriculture for the erosion control measures constructed there during the Depression by enrollees at a local camp of the Civilian Conservation Corps. The owner was reputed to be the first in the Mt. Horeb area to install contour terraces on his work land.<sup>10</sup> The site is also significant as a fine example of the evolution of the Wisconsin farmstead in this locality between 1856 and 1943. (It includes an exceptionally large and early dairy barn, a granary, chicken house, and one pre-1919 machine shed. The 1909 farmhouse is an example of the style, scale and siting preferred by second-generation Norwegians in the area.) The farm is also of interest for being the first Norwegian farm in Dane County to be located on the Military Road between Prairie du Chien and Portage,<sup>11</sup> and for its association with Thosten Thompson, a member of the first party of Norwegians to settle near Mt. Horeb and brother of "Snowshoe" Thompson, who left Mt. Horeb to become a legendary mail carrier in the west. The level of significance is local.

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<sup>10</sup> Interview, Jerome Skindrud, 5/5/93. According to Mr. Skindrud, his neighbors said that he was "crazy" when he first divided his fields into long strips running at right angles to the slope. He had to apply to the Soil Conservation Service to have the dams built. Glen Kinderman, at the Dane County office of SCS, noted in a phone interview (5/6/93) that the contour strips are periodically re-marked by the Service to this day.

<sup>11</sup> Robinson, p.600 Richard D and Elizabeth Durbin note in "Wisconsin's Old Military Road: Its Genesis and Construction," Wisconsin Magazine of History 68,1 Autumn 1984, that the road was surveyed and built between 1832 and 1837 and played an "important role in the civil development of Wisconsin."

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Section 8 Page 2 Eric and Jerome Skindrud Farm  
Town of Springdale, Dane County, WI

#### EARLY HISTORY

The farm was acquired in 1856 by Thosten Thompson-Rue and his bride, Guri Gaarden.<sup>12</sup> Rue was the name of the farm in Norway from which a group left for America in 1837. It included the mother and brother of Thosten Thompson. This first group went to Missouri, then Iowa before coming to Blue Mounds, Wisconsin in 1846. In 1839 Thosten left Norway with a second group who traveled the Erie Canal and Great Lakes route to Wisconsin. Thosten was reunited with his mother and brother in Missouri, but when the mother joined the Mormons and left with them to go farther west, the two brothers went to Wisconsin. Not long after, Thosten's brother left for California, where he was to become famous as "Snowshoe Thompson," an intrepid mail carrier who for years braved the mountains to deliver the mail. Thosten and Guri were married by a cousin, John Berge in 1851 and it was from him that they acquired the farm on the Military Road.<sup>13</sup> The farm was famous as a stop for "hundreds" of Norwegians seeking land and even after the death of Thosten in 1880, his son Henry (1864-1942) continued the custom. It was Henry

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<sup>12</sup> CRMP Vol 3,5-2 "Settlement" notes that the first Norwegians arrived in the state in 1839. Thosten's story is told in Robinson, Alverna (Thompson) et.al., Thompson-Rue: a Norwegian Immigrant Family and Its American-born Descendants, Decorah, Iowa, Anundsen Publishing Co. 1984 p. 509-660. The story is also told in 125 Years Of Grace 1852-1977; Springdale Lutheran Church, Mt. Horeb WI np (1977) by Mrs. Dean Hefly and others, including Mrs. Eric Skindrud, and Centennial History: Township of Springdale: Dane County, Wisconsin, 1848-1948 by Rev. Amelia Irene Johson Pope, np, nd. Where there were slight differences I have preferred Robinson.

<sup>13</sup> The title abstract shows that Berge acquired the land by patent in 1851, the same year that Thosten and Guri were married. Robinson says that the Thompson brothers acquired land directly from the government soon after 1846. Berge may have been acting for others by registering land at the office in Mineral Point.

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Section 8 Page 3 Eric and Jerome Skindrud Farm  
Town of Springdale, Dane County, WI

who built the large house that stands today on the farm.<sup>14</sup> Henry's wife was Annie Skindrud. The Skindruds had arrived in Springdale in 1853.<sup>15</sup> Another early settler and member of Springdale Lutheran Church was Aslak Lie.<sup>16</sup>

Thosten and his son Henry made the transition to dairy farming, probably in 1876. (This is the date believed to have been inscribed the mortar on the north side of the barn's foundation wall.) It is an early date for large-scale dairying in Wisconsin, although the Swiss of neighboring Green County were by this date profiting handsomely from cheese production<sup>17</sup> and were beginning to build barns on a similar scale.

The lives of the Norwegian settlers revolved in large part around the Springdale Lutheran Church. In its graveyard lie Thosten (spelled "Tosten") Thompson, 1819-1880, Guri Thompson, 1824-1900, son Henry 1864-1942 and his wife Annie T. Skindrud, 1866-1955. The 1977 history of the church contains wedding pictures of Henry Thompson and Annie Skindrud (June 6, 1894) and Martin Skindrud and Annie Ruste (December 9, 1903)

When Henry Thompson moved to a farm closer to Mt. Horeb in 1914 he sold the farm on the Military Road to Jacob Stolen. His brother-in-law Martin Skindrud had wanted to buy it, but Henry doubted his

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<sup>14</sup> Pope observes (p. 84) "...1900 to 1908 were progressive years on the farm too. The last evidences of the old pioneer life gave way to pioneering of a new kind. The log buildings and rail fences were replaced by modern barns, five bedroom houses and barbed wire fences." CRMP Vol. 2 11-1 quotes Eric E. Lampard: "The difficult period...now lay behind and after 1897, the (dairy) industry went on to enjoy almost three decades of prosperity and expansion." It is this prosperity that is expressed by the house.

<sup>15</sup> Pope, p. 52

<sup>16</sup> Pope, p. 52.

<sup>17</sup> Frederick Hale, Swiss in Wisconsin Madison, State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1984. p.16

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Section 8 Page 4 Eric and Jerome Skindrud Farm  
Town of Springdale, Dane County, WI

ability to pay for it.<sup>18</sup> (According to neighbor Bob Murray (interviewed 6/24/93) the barn was expanded as part of a "trouble" that occurred between neighbors around this time, with each trying to outdo the other by building a larger house or barn than the other.)

In 1920, the Skindruds acquired the farm, although there were difficulties over the title for a time after that.<sup>19</sup> At the time Jerome Skindrud was a baby. In 1959 Jerome, his wife Alma and his unmarried brother Eric bought the farm from the other heirs of Martin Skindrud.

#### WORK BY THE CIVILIAN CONSERVATION CORPS

The Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) was begun by Franklin Delano Roosevelt as part of his New Deal economic recovery programs. Made urgent by the dustbowl years of the early thirties, the CCC was given high priority. Begun in the Dept. of the Interior, it was transferred to the Dept. of Agriculture and authorized by Congress in 1935. By then it had already become one of the most high-profile and popular of the New Deal programs.<sup>20</sup> Merrill (p.34) notes that "The better part of the work was restricted to gulley (sic) control and terrace outlet construction...The main work from these camps may be summarized as building check dams, bank sloping, planting and seeding, ditches and channel clearing, and teaching the landowners and enrollees how to do strip cropping." Carol

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<sup>18</sup> Interview, 5/5/93 with Jerome Skindrud, Mt. Horeb, WI.

<sup>19</sup> Abstract of Title, Dane county title company, 1959. In the possession of David Atwell.

<sup>20</sup> Merrill, Perry H., Roosevelt's Forest Army - the CCC 1933-1942 Montpelier, VT, Perry H. Merrill, 1981; Paige, John C., The Civilian Conservation Corps and the National Park Service 1933-1942; an Administrative History. NPS, US. Dept of the Interior, 1985; Lacy, Leslie Alexander, The Soil Soldiers: The Civilian Conservation Corps in the Great Depression Radner, PA, Chilton Book Co. 1976.



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Ahlgren notes that, "Throughout the history of the program, the Dept. of Agriculture's camps for forestry and soil erosion greatly outnumbered the CCC camps located in national or state parks." (p. 3) Lacy emphasizes the speed with which the program got underway nationally: (p. 26) by June 29, 1933 there were already 270,000 enrollees in 1330 camps. In that first year (p. 38) 420,000 erosion control dams were built. 1935 saw the transfer to the Dept. of Agriculture and the establishment of the Soil Conservation Service. In that year there were 204 camps, later the number peaked at 500. (p. 152) The work was "...formulated and developed by the Soil Conservation Service, but the actual work was done by the CCC enrollees...Each camp was a mobile unit, working in areas of approximately 25,000 acres. When a satisfactory demonstration was established, the camp moved to another locality...contour furrowing...was a factor in bringing back agricultural security...Nearly a half million enrollees served in soil conservation." (p. 153-54)

Glad <sup>21</sup> (p. 492-4) says that "Of all the federal agencies involved in conservation...the CCC had the broadest appeal. 60,000 served in Wisconsin

in the first five years, and 92,000 in the nine year history of the program. The peak came in 1938 when there were 45 camps in the state. Thirteen of these were run by the Soil Conservation Service--doing terracing, drainage control and tree planting.

These descriptions accord fairly well with that given by an enrollee at Mt. Horeb.<sup>22</sup> In Wisconsin, enrollees were not sent out

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<sup>21</sup> Glad, Paul W. The History of Wisconsin, Vol. V, War, a New Era, and Depression 1914-1940 Madison, State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1990.

<sup>22</sup> Art Bartz was interviewed by telephone on 6/24/93. He entered the CCC in 1935. The camp at Mt. Horeb was not mobile, for Mr. Bartz lived and worked there until 1943, and some of its buildings still exist on a farmstead on County Hwy. JG, south of Mt. Horeb.

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Town of Springdale, Dane County, WI

of state, although some out-of-staters came to camps in Wisconsin. When Mr. Bartz arrived in 1935 from Stratford, WI, the camp was not yet fully occupied. Eventually its 45 to 50 acres housed 200 to 250 men, enrolled for 6 months at a time. The buildings included a workshop and garage which is now a barn, and a barracks, recreation hall and school, which has become a farm house. (The camp included a school "up to 8th grade.") The soil erosion crews were usually 12 to 15 men. There was always an engineer and a field man from the Soil Conservation Service with the crews. Mr. Bartz recalled that Gerald Moen was the engineer attached to the camp the "whole time" it was open. Another Soil Conservation staffer was Donald Cardin, from Barneveld. Like all CCC camps, the one in Mt. Horeb was run by the Army. The enrollees installed erosion control dams and contour terraces in a large area around Mt. Horeb.<sup>23</sup> They also did "some tree planting, not much," and did "fencing for forestry."

The significance of these major and widespread efforts at erosion control in shaping today's landscape should be understood in the context of the soils in this part of Wisconsin. The Dane County Soil Erosion Plan <sup>24</sup> notes that the western third of the county (including the site of the Skindrud/Thompson farm) is in the driftless area, is predominantly dairying, has steep topography and relatively thin soils which "impede continuous production of row crops." The plan also notes that the first settlers often took the most suitable 40 acres they could find, and only later expanded their farms to a modern viable size by piecing together what they could buy. The result is that, "Dane County is an arbitrary patchwork of land management on top of variable soil patterns, and diverse ethnic priorities."

Jerome Skindrud tells a slightly different story of how the dams on his farm came to be built. He recalls that he and his brother

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<sup>23</sup> This can be seen in the successive aerial photos taken by the National Aerial Photo Survey

<sup>24</sup> Ventura, Steve, Dane County Soil Erosion Control Plan, Dane County (WI) Land Conservation Committee, 1988. P. 10, p. 16.

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Town of Springdale, Dane County, WI

approached the Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service and applied to have contour strips installed. Clarence Jordan was the engineer. The work, he says, was done by the CCC, but not by the younger enrollees. "Our group," he says, "were all WWI veterans, camped at Stewart Park in Mt. Horeb."<sup>25</sup> Mr. Skindrud remembers that his neighbors said "the Skindruds had gone crazy" when they first divided the fields into strips. "It sure saved our farm," he says. While most farm fields now have about a foot of soil, he says that recently when a mound septic system was installed in one of his fields the soil was found to be over 4' deep.

#### CONTEXT

The Eric and Jerome Skindrud farm is one of many in the Mt. Horeb area that were settled in the mid-19th century by Norwegian immigrants and brought to a high state of cultivation by their descendants. The beauty of the landscape derives from a combination of natural features (the hilly terrain and lush vegetation) and cultural artifacts including large squarish farmhouses, dairy barns painted red or white, numerous small outbuildings, reflecting a mix of cropping, dairying and livestock farming and the patterns of fields, pastures, woods and marshy stream beds. Similar farmsteads, listed in the Wisconsin Inventory

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<sup>25</sup> It seems there was a camp at Stewart Park. The report of the Dane County Board for 1935 (p.289) refers to possible purchase of land for a park in the Town of Blue Mounds. (Mt. Horeb is located in the Town of Blue Mounds.) The Board confirmed the renewal of a lease of the land to the United States Government, which had "buildings on the property." In 1937 (p. 153) the Board resolved to acquire lands "in the vicinity of Mt. Horeb" for park purposes, with construction of a dam and roads, "Labor will be furnished by the WPA ... thereby lightening the relief load of Dane County." \$5000 was appropriated, "contingent on WPA labor." Initially defeated, the resolution was reintroduced and passed in March, 1938. (p. 270) The Board also resolved to "find a suitable name for the park." (Frank A. Stewart was its Chairman at the time.)

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Town of Springdale, Dane County, WI

of Historic Places for the Town of Springdale, are to be found at 9356 Hwy S, 8848 Colby Road, 8640 Hwy G, and 1675 Hwy 92. Also noted were two farms whose signboards trace their history to the first group of Norwegian settlers: at 2526 Town Line Road (Spanem Pioneer Farm-1846) and the Bang-Steuseth-Gard farm "since 1875" at 2265 Springdale Center Road.

#### CONCLUSION

The Skindrud/Thompson farm is of local historical importance in that it has, from its period of significance, a well-preserved set of buildings spanning almost a century of agricultural development, culminating in its unique position as the reputed first area farm to adopt the soil conservation measures of the New Deal. The dams and contour strips have been maintained by the Skindruds, their tenants and the Soil Conservation Service to the present day, a characteristic that, unfortunately, is not always the case where family farms have been combined into more commercial enterprises.

The significance of the Eric and Jerome Skindrud/Thosten Thompson farm derives from two apparently distinct sources: the presence on the farm of erosion control measures associated with the New Deal, and the surviving evidence of the origins of the farm in Norwegian emigration and settlement. The two seemingly disparate historical facts are joined in the reality of the present-day landscape. The farm is an outstanding example of the impact of several generations of European occupancy: the slow evolution of soil, vegetation and the buildings that house people, animals and the implements and products of the farm.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> This point of view is informed by the consultant's reading of William Cronon's Changes in the Land: Indians, Colonists and the Ecology of New England, New York, Hill and Wang, 1983.

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Town of Springdale, Dane County, WI

#### BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The Southeast 1/4 of the Northwest 1/4 of Section 5, Township 6 North, Range 7 East, in the Town of Springdale, Dane County, Wisconsin, lying Southerly of C.T.H. "S."

Subject of Town Hall Road

The East 1/2 of the Southwest 1/4 of Section 5, Township 6 North, Range 7 East, in the Town of Springdale, Dane County, Wisconsin, EXCEPT that part lying Southwestly of highway, and ALSO EXCEPT that part conveyed in Warranty Deed recorded in Volume 12129 of Records, page 9, as Document No. 2111458; and ALSO EXCEPT that part conveyed in Warranty Deed recorded in Volume 12428 of Records, page 15, as Document No. 2124072.

Subject to Town Hall Road

The Southeast 1/4 of Section 5, Township 6 North, Range 7 East, in the Town of Springdale, Dane County, Wisconsin, EXCEPT part conveyed to Railroad by Warranty Deed recorded in Volume 112 of Deeds, page 449, as Document No. 143838.

#### BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

The boundary includes the entire parcel that comprises the remainder of the original Thosten Thompson farm, later acquired by Eric and Jerome Skindrud. The excluded portion is a wooded section that has, in recent times, been sold for home sites. The excluded portion does not figure in the history of soil conservation on the farm nor in the evolution of the farmstead.

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Town of Springdale, Dane County, WI

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UTM References continued:

- |    |     |             |               |
|----|-----|-------------|---------------|
| 5) | 1/6 | 2/8/0/7/1/0 | 4/7/6/6/0/4/0 |
| 6) | 1/6 | 2/8/0/3/4/0 | 4/7/6/6/5/0/0 |

Archeological Potential

No archeological survey has been conducted on the land included in this nomination and no archeological resources are known to exist within its boundaries. Two prehistoric mound groups are located nearby (DA-235 and DA-344) which indicate prehistoric activity in the area. The potential for archeologically significant deposits is unknown.



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Photo #1 of 11  
ERIC AND JEROME SKINDRUD FARM,  
Town of Springdale, Dane County, WI  
Photo by Jane Eiseley  
Neg. at State Historical Society of Wisconsin  
View from SE (1965 outbuilding, house, 1909)

Photo #2 of 11  
ERIC AND JEROME SKINDRUD FARM,  
Town of Springdale, Dane County, WI  
Photo by Jane Eiseley  
Neg. at State Historical Society of Wisconsin  
View from SE (erosion control dam (map n.))

Photo #3 of 11  
ERIC AND JEROME SKINDRUD FARM,  
Town of Springdale, Dane County, WI  
Photo by Jane Eiseley  
Neg. at State Historical Society of Wisconsin  
View from SE (Erosion control dam (map o.))

Photo #4 of 11  
ERIC AND JEROME SKINDRUD FARM,  
Town of Springdale, Dane County, WI  
Photo by Jane Eiseley  
Neg. at State Historical Society of Wisconsin  
View from SE (granary and chicken house)

Photo #5 of 11  
ERIC AND JEROME SKINDRUD FARM,  
Town of Springdale, Dane County, WI  
Photo by Jane Eiseley  
Neg. at State Historical Society of Wisconsin  
Interior (built in buffet)

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Photo #6 of 11  
ERIC AND JEROME SKINDRUD FARM,  
Town of Springdale, Dane County, WI  
Photo by Jane Eiseley  
Neg. at State Historical Society of Wisconsin  
Interior (front entrance, light fixture)

Photo #7 of 11  
ERIC AND JEROME SKINDRUD FARM,  
Town of Springdale, Dane County, WI  
Photo by Jane Eiseley  
Neg. at State Historical Society of Wisconsin  
View from SW (newer section of barn to the right)

Photo #8 of 11  
ERIC AND JEROME SKINDRUD FARM,  
Town of Springdale, Dane County, WI  
Photo by Jane Eiseley  
Neg. at State Historical Society of Wisconsin  
View from NE

Photo #9 of 11  
ERIC AND JEROME SKINDRUD FARM,  
Town of Springdale, Dane County, WI  
Photo by Jane Eiseley  
Neg. at State Historical Society of Wisconsin  
View from West (c. 1876 barn)

Photo #10 of 11  
ERIC AND JEROME SKINDRUD FARM,  
Town of Springdale, Dane County, WI  
Photo by Jane Eiseley  
Neg. at State Historical Society of Wisconsin  
View from NE (house, 1909)

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Photo #11 of 11  
ERIC AND JEROME SKINDRUD FARM,  
Town of Springdale, Dane County, WI  
Photo by Jane Eiseley  
Neg. at State Historical Society of Wisconsin  
View from West (machine shed at far left)

Exhibit A  
ERIC AND JEROME SKINDRUD FARM  
Town of Springdale, Dane County, WI  
Sketch map of farmstead and erosion control dams

Exhibit B  
ERIC AND JEROME SKINDRUD FARM  
Town of Springdale, Dane County, WI  
Photo by National Aerial Photo Survey  
Neg. at Wisconsin Dept. of Transportation, Madison WI  
Aerial photo (1990, enhanced) showing contour terraces and erosion  
control dams.

TOWN LINE RD.

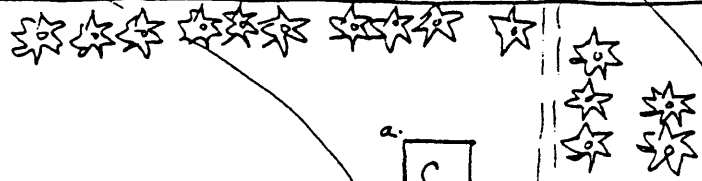
N  
NOT TO SCALE

ERIC & JEROME SKINDRUD FARM

TOWN OF SPRINGDALE, WISCONSIN

DANE COUNTY

EXHIBIT A



11 S.

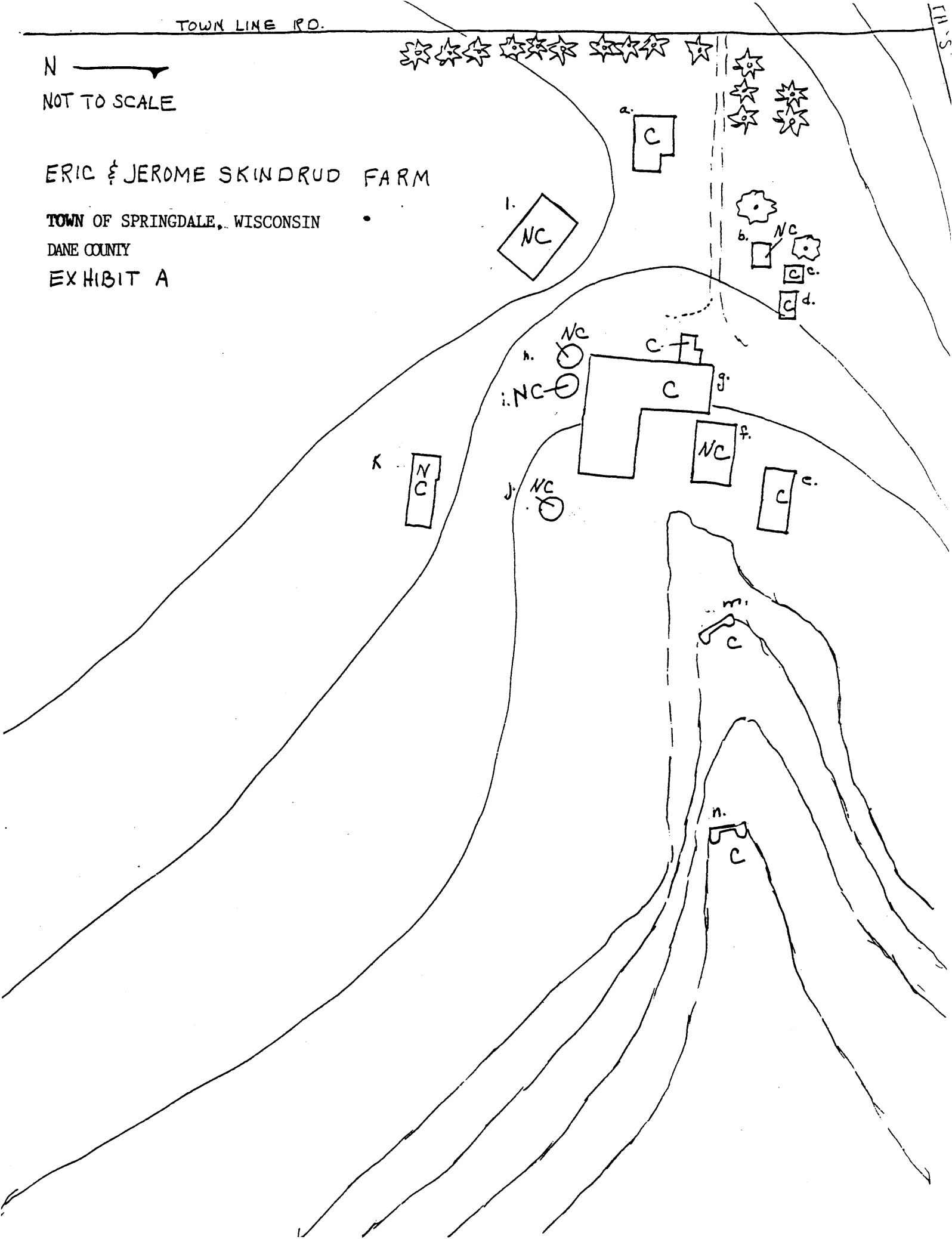
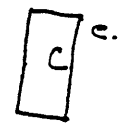
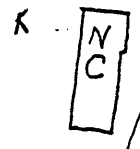
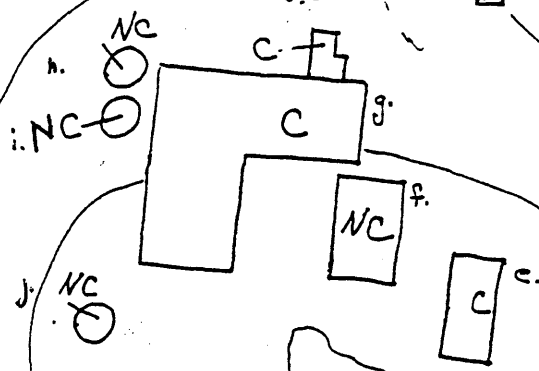
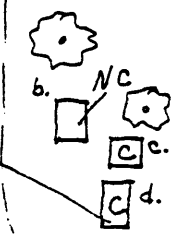
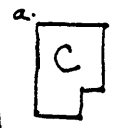




EXHIBIT B

Eric & Jerome  
Skindrud Farm

TOWN OF SPRINGDALE  
WISCONSIN  
WI - 1990

- contributing building or structure
  - boundary, 1993
  - historic boundary
- Not to scale

