

PH 0071371

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

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE:	Iowa
COUNTY:	Johnson
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY DATE	NOV 5 1974

1. NAME

COMMON:
Round Barn

AND/OR HISTORIC:
Secret-Ryan Octagon Barn *Use this*

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER:
W of Downey
~~R. R. #1 Box 85 (SE 1/4 SE 1/4 Section 25 Township 79N Range 5W)~~

CITY OR TOWN:
~~West Liberty~~ *Downey vicinity*

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT:
First

STATE: Iowa CODE: 14 COUNTY: Johnson CODE: 103

3. CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input type="checkbox"/> District <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Structure <input type="checkbox"/> Object	<input type="checkbox"/> Public <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both	Public Acquisition: <input type="checkbox"/> In Process <input type="checkbox"/> Being Considered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress
PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)			
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Agricultural <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial <input type="checkbox"/> Educational <input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> Government <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial <input type="checkbox"/> Military <input type="checkbox"/> Museum	<input type="checkbox"/> Park <input type="checkbox"/> Private Residence <input type="checkbox"/> Religious <input type="checkbox"/> Scientific	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) _____ _____ _____
ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC (Yes): <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Restricted <input type="checkbox"/> Unrestricted <input type="checkbox"/> No			

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNER'S NAME:
Ryan Brothers

STREET AND NUMBER:
R. R. #1 Box 89

CITY OR TOWN:
West Liberty

STATE: Iowa CODE: 14

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.:
Johnson County Courthouse

STREET AND NUMBER:
South Clinton Street

CITY OR TOWN:
Iowa City

STATE: Iowa CODE: 14

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY:

DATE OF SURVEY: Federal State County Local

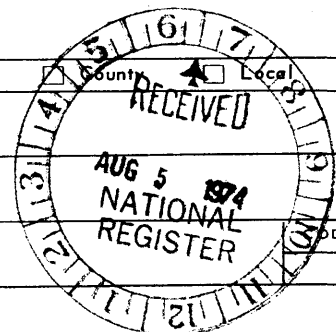
DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN: STATE: CODE:

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

STATE:	Iowa
COUNTY:	Johnson
ENTRY NUMBER	NOV 5 1974
DATE	



FOR NPS USE ONLY

7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION

(Check One)

Excellent Good Fair Deteriorated Ruins Unexposed

(Check One)

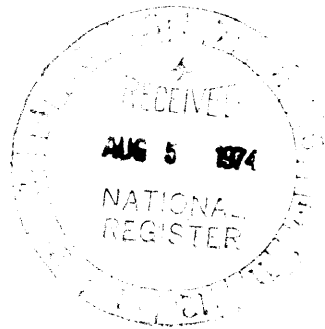
Altered Unaltered

(Check One)

Moved Original Site

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Secret Octagon Barn is an eight sided board and batten structure with native limestone foundation, a gently curving wood shingle roof and miniature octagon cupola. Each of the sides has two paned windows and one smaller window, also with glazing, at the basement level. Seventy-five feet in height, the building is approximately 80 feet wide with each of the eight sides measuring 30 feet. Its three working levels include a lower level for livestock (able to accomodate 32 horses and 16 cows), the ground level for machinery and the most spacious upper level which reportedly can hold as much as 200 tons of hay. The roof which is still in good condition as it was reroofed with wood shingles in the late 1920's, is supported by 10 to 12 finely curved, hand laminated beams composed of 18 one inch layered strips that extend a full forty feet along the sides of the roof to the center of the dome. Also stretching along the curve of the roof is an open stairway to the cupola. And, following the circumference of the roof line at the second floor level is a metal hay track used to stock the immense interior space with countless bails. Except for the large open space of the second hay storage level, all interior space of the barn is broken up by small partitions or supporting posts. At its north end, a long rectangular frame feed shed was attached in the early 1900's. A "railway" suspended from its roof line of the interior conveys feed from the large barn to the livestock stalls below. The railway extends the full length of this building to the tile and cement silo, also a product of the early 1900's and also attached to the north end of the feed shed.



SEE INSTRUCTIONS

3. SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

<input type="checkbox"/> Pre-Columbian	<input type="checkbox"/> 16th Century	<input type="checkbox"/> 18th Century	<input type="checkbox"/> 20th Century
<input type="checkbox"/> 15th Century	<input type="checkbox"/> 17th Century	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 19th Century	

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known) **1883**

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

<input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal	<input type="checkbox"/> Education	<input type="checkbox"/> Political	<input type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning
<input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> Engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> Religion/Philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Historic	<input type="checkbox"/> Industry	<input type="checkbox"/> Science	_____
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> Invention	<input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture	_____
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> Landscape Architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> Social/Humanitarian	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Art	<input type="checkbox"/> Literature	<input type="checkbox"/> Theater	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> Military	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Communications	<input type="checkbox"/> Music		
<input type="checkbox"/> Conservation			

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

The Secrest Octagon Barn is so named after its first owner. A prosperous farmer, Joshua Secrest, commissioned masterbuilder George Frank Longerbeam to design and build this large picturesque hay barn-horse stable in 1883. The barn remains for the most part in its original condition and is still used to house livestock and to store hay. Noted throughout Johnson County for its size as well as its shape, the Secrest Barn is as interesting on the interior as it is on the outside. A majestic group of hand-laminated beams supports a gently curving domed roof hovering over an immense interior space. Although this eight sided structure far outshines the structures of its immediate environment (a rectangular shed and a round silo) the three-part complex, in theory, does form an interesting group composed of first an eight, then a four and finally a one "sided" structure.

The complex also demonstrates the ingenuity of builders who saw the convenience of attaching one outbuilding to another. In this way all three buildings are valuable contributions to the understanding of the history of agricultural architecture in Iowa.

The barn is not the only octagon barn or structure in Iowa, but it is certainly one of the largest and best preserved.



9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Newspaper--Local Record, West Branch, Iowa, Thursday, May 31, 1883, volume V, Number 35, page 2

Portrait and Biographical Record of Johnson, Poweshiek and Iowa Counties, Iowa containing biographical sketches of prominent and representative citizens also biographies of the presidents of the United States. Chicago, Chapman Brothers, 1893, page 462

Leading Events in Johnson County, Iowa History, Cedar Rapids, Iowa. Western Historical Press, 1913, page 196

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY			OR	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES		
CORNER	LATITUDE	LONGITUDE		LATITUDE	LONGITUDE	
	Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds		Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds	
NW	° ' "	° ' "		41° 36' 49"	91° 22' 13"	
NE	° ' "	° ' "				
SE	° ' "	° ' "				
SW	° ' "	° ' "				

15/
63573
4607930
HF

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: Less than one acre

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

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE



SEE INSTRUCTIONS

11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE: Mrs. Edward J. Schermerhorn (319) 351-3467

ORGANIZATION: _____ DATE: November 1973

STREET AND NUMBER: R. R. #1 Box 85

CITY OR TOWN: West Liberty STATE: Iowa CODE: 14

12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

As the designated State Liaison 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. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

National State Local

Name Adrian D. Anderson

Title Historic Preservation Officer

Date 6/25/74

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

Adrian D. Anderson
Director, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date 11/5/74

ATTEST:

Charles A. Herring
Keeper of The National Register

Date 11-1-74

Iowa Site Inventory

Office of Historic Preservation
Iowa State Historical Department
East 12th & Grand Avenue
Des Moines, Iowa 50319

Site Number 83
District Name _____
Map Reference # 83

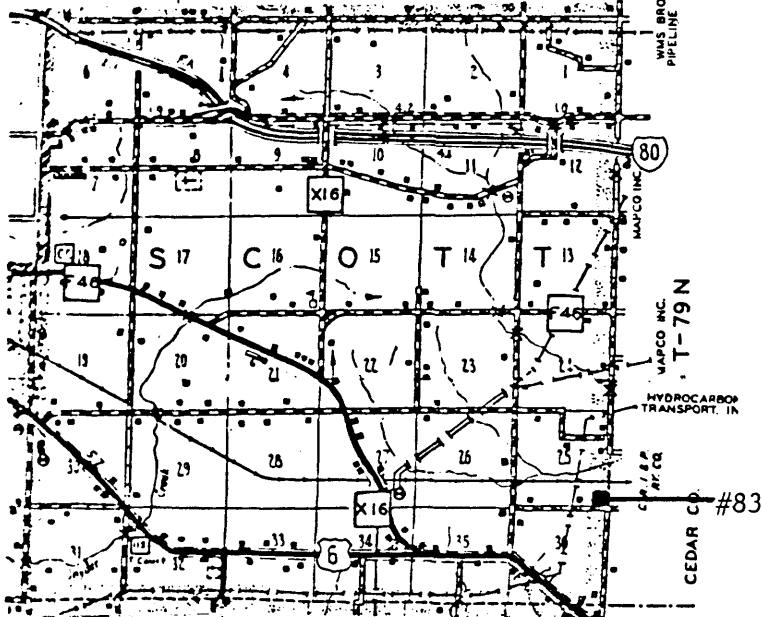
Identification

1. Site Name Secret Octagon Barn*
2. Village/Town/City Downey vic. Township Scott County Johnson
3. Street Address Off US 6
4. Legal Location 79 N 5 W 25 SE 1/4 of SE 1/4
Urban: subdivision block parcel subparcel
Rural: township range section 1/4 section of 1/4 section
5. UTM Location: zone 15 easting 636,780 northing 4,607,950; Acreage less than one acre
6. Owner(s) Name Joseph and Edward Ryan
7. Owner(s) Address R. R. #1 Box 89 West Liberty Iowa 52776
(Street address) (City) (State) (Zip)
8. Use: Present same as original (in 1973) Original hay barn-horse stables

Description

9. Date of Construction 1883 Architect/Builder George Fred Longerbean
10. Building Type:
 single-family dwelling industrial other institutional religious
 multiple-family dwelling educational public agricultural
 commercial
11. Exterior Walls: clapboard stone brick board and batten shingles stucco
 other _____
12. Structural System: wood frame with interlocking joints wood frame with light members (balloon frame)
 masonry load-bearing walls iron frame steel frame with curtain walls reinforced concrete
 other _____
13. Condition: excellent good fair deteriorated
14. Integrity: original site moved—if so, when? _____
 Notes on alterations, additions (with dates and architect, if known) and any other notable features of building and site:
See reverse side.
15. Related Outbuildings and Property: barn other farm structures carriage house garage privy
 other _____
16. Is the building endangered? no yes—if so, why? _____
17. Surroundings of the building: open land woodland scattered outbuildings densely built-up commercial
 industrial residential other _____

18. Map



19. Photo Roll 270 Frame 17 A View _____

VBD: A circle 120' diameter based upon the center point of the barn.

ENTERED ON NATIONAL REGISTER
OF HISTORIC PLACES

(Date) Nov. 5, 1974

*The individual NR listing is titled "Secret-Ryan", but is changed here so as to reflect the proper historic title.

MAY 27 1986

Significance (Indicate sources of information for all statements)

20. Architectural significance

- a. Key structure/individually may qualify for the National Register
- b. Contributing structure
- c. Not eligible/intrusion

N/A

Continuation of 14. Integrity.

Roof of hand-laminated beams, curved. Limestone foundation. Octagon cupola. 80'diameter, 75' height. 3 levels. Board & batten siding.

21. Historical Significance

Theme(s) Octagon; Stewart type; Longerbeam.

- a. Key structure/individually may qualify for the National Register
- b. Contributing structure
- c. Not eligible/intrusion

One of the largest and best preserved octagon barns on an Iowa farm. This Longerbeam sub-type of the Stewart type barn was commissioned by prominent Johnson County farmer Joshua Hunt Secrest for use as a horse stable and for hay storage. At its completion in 1883, this barn was the largest barn in the region and one of the most modern. The bell shaped roof built of curving hand-laminated beams is the main feature which identifies this barn as a Longerbeam sub-type.

22. Sources (for primary and secondary sources, give complete facts of publication: author, title, place of publication, date, etc.):

NRHP Secrest-Ryan Octagon Barn
West Branch, Iowa, Local Record 35 (May 31, 1883): 2.
Soike, Lowell J. Without Right Angles. Des Moines, Iowa: Iowa State Historical Department, Office of Historic Preservation, 1983.
Wells, Wilson L. Barns in the U.S.A. San Diego, CA: Acme Printing Co., 1976.

Prepared by _____ Date _____
Address _____ Telephone _____
Organization _____

For Office of Historic Preservation Use Only

1. Office Information Sources on this Property

- County Resource File
- Windshield Survey
- National Register
- Grants-In-Aid: _____
- Determination of Eligibility

Review and Compliance Project:

- Other _____
- Other _____
- Other _____

2. Subject Traces

- a. _____
- b. _____
- c. _____
- d. _____
- e. _____

3. Photo Images 1250/29-36
1251/2-3 1254/21
1256/10-20 1257/1-3
1258/4-6