

1221

NOV 27 2009

**United States Department of Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form**

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

1. Name of Property

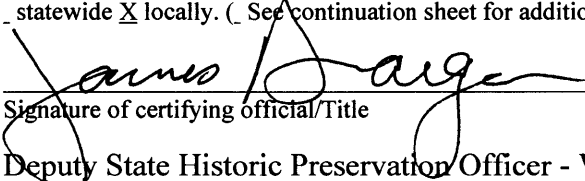
historic name Robinson, John C. and Mary, Farmstead
other names/site number The Maples

2. Location

street & number	18002 West County Trunk Highway C	N/A	not for publication
city or town	Town of Union	N/A	vicinity
state Wisconsin	Code WI	county Rock	code 105
			zip code 53536

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

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


Signature of certifying official/Title
Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer - Wisconsin

11/18/09
Date

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 commenting official/Title

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

Robinson, John C. and Mary, Farmstead

Rock

Wisconsin

Name of Property

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:)

Edson D. Beall

1-7-10

[Signature]

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(check as many boxes as
as apply)

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

Category of Property
(Check only one box)

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

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

contributing	noncontributing
10	buildings
	sites
	structures
	objects
10	0 total

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

N/A

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

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC/single dwelling

AGRICULTURE/agricultural outbuilding

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC/single dwelling

AGRICULTURE/agricultural outbuilding

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

Greek Revival

Queen Anne

Other: Wisconsin Dairy Barn

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

Foundation Sandstone

walls Weatherboard

roof Asphalt

other Wood

Narrative Description

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

Robinson, John C. and Mary, Farmstead
Name of Property

Rock
County and State

Wisconsin

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.

Criteria Considerations

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

Property is:

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

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

Agriculture

Architecture

Period of Significance

1880-1959

1900-1950

Significant Dates

N/A

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

George F. Barber & Co.

Hankinson, Robert

Narrative Statement of Significance

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

Robinson, John C. and Mary, Farmstead
Name of Property

Rock
County and State

Wisconsin

9. Major Bibliographic References

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

Previous Documentation on File (National Park Service):

- 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 #

Primary location of additional data:

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

Name of repository:

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 6.56 acres

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

1 16 307250 4739750
Zone Easting Northing

3 _____
Zone Easting Northing

2 _____
Zone Easting Northing

4 _____
Zone Easting Northing

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	Timothy F. Heggland	date	April 8, 2009
organization		telephone	608-795-2650
street & number	6391 Hillswood Rd.	zip code	53560
city or town	Mazomanie	state	WI

Robinson, John C. and Mary, Farmstead

Rock

Wisconsin

Name of Property

County and State

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
A sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs Representative black and white photographs of the property.

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

Property Owner

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

name/title	James C. and Catherine M. Bembinster	Date	April 8, 2009
organization		telephone	608-849-5900
street & number	18002 W CTH C	zip code	53536
city or town	Evansville	state	WI

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

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

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section 7 Page 1

Robinson, John C. and Mary, Farmstead
Town of Union, Rock Co., Wisconsin

Description:

The historic agricultural complex known as the John C. and Mary Robinson Farmstead consists of a 6.6 acre portion of what was originally a 200-acre former stock-raising farm that is located on County Highway C approximately two miles west of the city of Evansville in Rock County. The oldest of the ten buildings in the complex is a still largely intact, clapboard-clad, Side Gable form residence (Map No. 2).¹ The other nine buildings in the complex, however, all date from the Robinson family's period of ownership, which began in 1878, when John C. Robinson bought the farm. In 1880, Robinson and Mary Emery married and moved out to the farm, and in the years that followed they built numerous outbuildings on their farmstead, all the most important ones of which have survived and are still intact, as are still other newer outbuildings that were built by the next generation of the Robinson family. The oldest of the farmstead's outbuildings, based on its method of construction, is the sheep shed (Map No. 5). The largest and next oldest is the gambrel-roofed cattle barn (Map No. 4), which was built in 1915 to a design provided by the Agricultural Engineering Department of the University of Wisconsin's College of Agriculture. There is a second, nearly as large, gambrel-roofed cattle barn located nearby (Map No. 7) that was built in 1932 to a design that was provided by the Hunt-Helm-Ferris Co. of Harvard, Illinois.² The original farmstead's oldest dated building is the late Queen Anne style residence (Map No. 1) that was built by the Robinsons in 1900 to a design supplied by George F. Barber & Co. of Knoxville, Tennessee, which was then one of the nation's most prominent mail-order architectural firms.³ This house was considered to be one of the area's finest farmhouses when it was built. It is still highly intact today and has been impeccably restored by its current owners. John C. Robinson died in 1938, but the farmstead continued to be owned and managed by three more generations of his family until it was finally bought by the current owners. While the farmstead's outbuildings are no longer in use as such, they are still highly intact, as are both houses, which continue to be occupied and are in excellent condition. Taken as a whole, the John C. and Mary Robinson Farmstead's resources are believed to be of both architectural and historical significance because they are excellent, highly intact and well maintained examples of their respective styles and vernacular forms, and also because they represent the socioeconomic and technological evolution of the farm practices of four successive generations of the locally prominent Robinson family, members of which were nationally known for the historically significant stock-breeding activities that took place on their farm.

¹ This farmhouse was originally located on the farm on the other side of the highway from the Robinson Farmstead, but it was moved across the highway and onto the Robinson Farmstead during the Robinson family's period of ownership.

² Original blueprints for both barns are in the possession of the current owners.

³ Original blueprints for this house are also in the possession of the current owners.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section 7 Page 2

Robinson, John C. and Mary, Farmstead
Town of Union, Rock Co., Wisconsin

Cultivated fields belonging to adjacent farms surround the Robinson farmstead on all sides and the landscape itself is flat. All of the resources located within the farmstead itself are grouped on the north side of County Highway C, whose route at this point runs in an east-west direction, and access to the buildings in the farmstead is via two gravel driveways. The easternmost of the two enters the farmstead at a right-angle from the highway and it continues north for some 150-feet and passes just to the east of the 1900 house before it splits and turns both to the right and to the left to provide access to the agricultural outbuildings that are distributed to the right and to the left of the house. The second, westernmost driveway also enters the farmstead at a right angle from the highway and it continues north for some 100-feet to the left of the older house (Map No. 2) and ends at the automobile garage (Map No. 3) that is located just to the left of and behind this house. Three of the farmstead's outbuildings (Map Nos. 4-6), including the 1915 cattle barn, are located behind this garage, while four more outbuildings (Map Nos. 7-10), including the 1932 cattle barn, are located to the right of the 1900 house. Because the farmstead is no longer an operating farm, all the land that encircles these buildings is now given over to mown lawns. Flowerbeds and shrubs encircle the farmstead's two houses and the houses are also sheltered by stands of mature coniferous and deciduous shade trees, including some of the maples that give the farm its name.

The following inventory lists each resource in the farmstead by map number, 0gives a description of each, the original and current use, and an assessment of each resource's physical condition. All resources were built in the period of significance and are contributing.

Map No. 1	John C. & Mary Robinson Residence	Contributing	1900
------------------	--	---------------------	-------------

Exterior

The John C. & Mary Robinson house was built in 1900. This highly intact house is asymmetrical in appearance, irregular in plan, and is two-stories-tall. Its late Queen Anne style design was furnished by George F. Barber & Co., of Knoxville, Tennessee. The design consists of a multi-hip-roofed, 41-foot-wide by 24-foot-deep main block that has a 15-foot-wide by 14-foot-deep rectilinear plan, two-story gabled ell centered on its north-facing rear elevation. The entire house rests on a tall, cut stone foundation built of rock-faced brownstone blocks, and these foundation walls enclose a basement story that underlies the entire house. These foundation walls are crowned by a wooden water table and the first story of the exterior walls that rest on this foundation are clad in panels of narrow painted clapboards that are enframed by the water table, by corner boards, and by an encircling belt course that divides the first story from the second. The second story above is clad in wood shingles, the base of the second story is flared out over the belt course, and this story is terminated by a very wide frieze board that is decorated with a thin denticulated molding. This frieze board encircles the entire house just below the deep, overhanging boxed and flared eaves that also encircle the house. The main block

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section 7 Page 3

Robinson, John C. and Mary, Farmstead
Town of Union, Rock Co., Wisconsin

of the house is sheltered by the asphalt shingle-covered multi-hip roof that covers its attic story while the equally tall rear ell is sheltered by a gable roof whose ridgeline runs front-to-back on a north-south axis that is parallel with the side elevations of the house. The house's main roof is also crowned with two decorative wooden finials that are original to the house.

South-Facing Main Facade

The principal facade of the house faces south towards the highway and this three-part facade is asymmetrical in composition. The left-hand third of the façade consists of a broad, two-story, three-sided polygonal plan ell that projects forward three-feet from the rest of the façade. The first story of this fifteen-foot-wide ell has an eleven-foot-wide center portion that features a large flat-arched window opening and this opening contains a single-light plate glass window that is surmounted by an oblong glass transom that is filled with geometric-shaped clear lights.⁴ The ell's two angled sides each feature a smaller double hung, one-over-one-light window and all three of these windows provide light for the front parlor inside. One of these smaller double hung windows is also located on each of the three sides of the second story of this ell, and these three windows provide light for the master bedroom.

The first story of the middle portion of the main facade contains the house's main entrance door opening; the single door is flanked on either side by one-over-one-light double hung sidelights that have paneling below them. The entry is enframed with wood molding and it contains the original wood door, which features a single light that is placed above a three-panel over one-panel lower portion. In addition, a multi-light door is located in the second story above this entrance and it opens into the second story's hall. Both the first and second stories of this middle portion are sheltered by an open, two-story-tall wooden porch that spans the entire width of this portion and also a part of the first story of the right-hand third of the facade as well. The first story of this porch has a hipped roof and it is accessed by ascending a wide flight of eight steps that lead up to the porch floor, which extends across the full width of the middle portion and also across the left half of the right-hand portion of the facade. This porch also has a wide triangular gablet that is located above the entrance door and its sidelights, and this roof is supported by four Tuscan Order wood columns that rest on tall paneled plinths and these are linked by a simple wood balustrade that also flanks both sides of the front steps.⁵

The second story of the porch covers just the middle portion of the façade and it has a solid, shingle-clad balustrade, its floor forms a deck onto which the door mentioned above opens, and its roof is

⁴ For brevity's sake, please note that all the house's window openings are of rectilinear shape and contain either movable or fixed wood sash.

⁵ This porch's two end columns are doubled by half-round columns that are attached to the façade's main wall surfaces.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section 7 Page 4

Robinson, John C. and Mary, Farmstead
Town of Union, Rock Co., Wisconsin

actually part of the hipped main roof that also shelters the left-hand portion of the facade.⁶ This porch's roof is upheld by three wooden Tuscan Order columns, these columns rest on the porch's encircling balustrade, and a spindled frieze encircles the upper portion of the porch.⁷

The right-hand third of this façade is two-bays-wide and it projects out one-foot beyond the wall surface of the facade's middle portion. Each bay contains a single one-over-one-light double hung window and the two first story windows provide light for the original dining room and the two second story ones provide light to a bedroom.

East-Facing Side Elevation

The 38-foot-wide east-facing side elevation of the house consists of the east-facing side elevation of the main block and the east-facing side elevation of the kitchen wing that is attached to it. The 24-foot-wide elevation of the main block is asymmetrical in design and two-bays-wide and the left-hand bay of its first story contains a rectilinear plan bay window that is supported on four projecting, rounded beam ends.⁸ This bay features two one-over-one-light double hung windows that flank a wider one-light window that is surmounted by a transom filled with geometric-shaped clear lights, and these windows provide light to the house's original dining room. Placed to the right of this bay window is a single one-over-one-light double hung window that also provides light to original dining room, and there are two more of these windows in the story above that provide light to second story bedrooms.

The left half of the first story of the 14-foot-wide east-facing side elevation of the kitchen wing is covered over by a hip-roofed rear entrance vestibule whose east-facing side has no openings, and this vestibule opens onto a rear porch that is sheltered by the vestibule's roof. Placed to the right of this vestibule on the wing's main wall surface is a modern pair of one-light casement windows that provides light to the kitchen inside.⁹ There is also a single window opening placed to the extreme left on the second story above and this one-over-one-light double hung window provides light to what was originally the bathroom that was associated with the servant's bedroom.

⁶ There is also a large hip-roofed dormer centered on the south-facing slope of this roof and it contains a triple window group comprised of four-light square windows.

⁷ This porch's two end columns are also doubled by half-round columns attached to the façade's main wall surfaces.

⁸ Interestingly, this bay window is not shown on the original plans, which show a fireplace here instead that was not built.

⁹ This was originally a single one-over-one-light double hung window.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section 7 Page 5

Robinson, John C. and Mary, Farmstead
Town of Union, Rock Co., Wisconsin

North-Facing Rear Elevation

The 41-foot-wide north-facing rear elevation of the house is essentially symmetrical in composition and it consists of the north-facing rear elevation of the main block and the north-facing rear elevation of the kitchen wing that is attached to it. The elevation is dominated by the 15-foot-wide kitchen wing that is centered on it. The left-hand side of the first story of the north-facing elevation of this wing contains a pair of modern one-light casement windows that provide light to the kitchen inside, while two one-over-one-light double hung windows in the story above provide light to what was originally the servant's bedroom. The wing is then crowned by a pedimented wood shingle-clad gable end that contains a single small square window that provides light to the attic story.

The kitchen wing is flanked on both sides by hip-roofed one-story-tall rear entrance vestibules that are attached both to the kitchen wing and to the rear elevation of the main block of the house. Both vestibules are accessed by ascending a flight of six steps and the balustrades that flank these steps are identical to the ones found on the front porch of the house. The vestibule to the right is narrower than the one on the left, however, and the entrance to it is located at the head of its flight of steps. The vestibule on the left, on the other hand, is wider, and its enclosed portion is less deep than the one on the right, which allowed for the creation of a small open porch at the top of the steps, the roof of which is upheld by a Tuscan Order column that rests on a tall paneled wooden plinth. A single one-over-one-light double hung window is placed in the second story of the rear elevation of the main block above each of these vestibules and these windows provide light to second story bedrooms.

West-Facing Side Elevation

The 38-foot-wide west-facing side elevation of the house consists of the west-facing side elevation of the main block and the west-facing side elevation of the kitchen wing that is attached to it. There is only a single window opening in the 24-foot-wide elevation of the main block. This is positioned to the left on the first story and it consists of a single one-over-one-light double hung window that provides light to the house's original library.

The first story of the 14-foot-wide west-facing side elevation of the kitchen wing is mostly covered by a hip-roofed rear entrance vestibule whose west-facing side has no openings and there are also no openings in the second story above.

Interior

The asymmetrical design of the exterior of the Robinson house is also reflected in the plan of its excellent, extremely well-preserved interior. The front (south) of the first story of the main block

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Robinson, John C. and Mary, Farmstead
Town of Union, Rock Co., Wisconsin

Section 7 Page 6

consists of the stair hall in the center, the original dining room (now a living room) to the right (east), and the front parlor to the left. The original library is located directly behind the front parlor, a pantry is located behind the original dining room, and the rear portion of this story is occupied by the kitchen, which is located directly behind the stair hall. The second story has a central hall, off of which are located four bedrooms and a bathroom, and a fifth bedroom is located above the kitchen. The same materials are used throughout the house. For instance, all of the floors on the first and second stories are of hardwood, all of the walls and ceilings are plastered, and all exposed woodwork is varnished. Fortunately, all of the original woodwork and decorative features of the house have survived intact, and the first story is especially notable for the high quality of the varnished woodwork that is found in its principal rooms.

A full basement story underlies the entire house and it has stone perimeter walls, a poured concrete floor, and it is divided into a number of smaller rooms by partition walls.

One enters the house by passing through the main entrance door, which opens directly into the stair hall. This hall measures approximately 9.5-feet-wide by 17-feet-deep and a pair of six-panel varnished oak pocket doors on its west wall lead into the front parlor; another five-panel oak door is placed further to the right on the same wall and opens into a small hall that leads to the kitchen. Another pair of six-panel varnished oak pocket doors is located on the east wall of the room and leads into the former dining room. The staircase itself has a hollow newel plan and begins with a straight run of four steps that lead to a landing. This flight of stairs then turns 90° and ascends in an open straight run of steps that follows the north wall of the house up to a second landing. It then turns 90° once again and ascends via a second open straight run of steps up to the second story. The staircase begins with a square, paneled, varnished oak starting newel post and the hand rail assembly that connects to it is supported by thin, turned, square-top balusters, all of which are also varnished, as are the risers and the treads. Also of varnished oak are the baseboards that are used throughout the first and second stories.

To the left of the stair hall is the front parlor, which is accessed by passing through a pair of varnished oak pocket doors. The front parlor measures 15.5-feet wide by 13-feet-deep and its south end consists of a three-sided bay that has three windows placed in it, while a fourth window is placed on the room's west wall. Located on the north wall of the room and to the right is a fireplace, the only one in the house. This fireplace has a tile hearth and a varnished oak mantle that consists of a tile surround that is enframed with varnished oak, a mantle shelf that is supported by two fluted, wooden brackets shaped like an urn split in half vertically, and a paneled and mirrored overmantel that is crowned by a bric-a-brac shelf that is supported by thin turned balusters.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section 7 Page 7

Robinson, John C. and Mary, Farmstead
Town of Union, Rock Co., Wisconsin

A wide opening that is centered in the north wall of the front parlor just to the left of the fireplace opens into the 12-foot-square former library, which is now used as the dining room, and this opening can be closed off, if desired, by another pair of six-panel varnished oak pocket doors. Windows on this room's west and north walls admit light into the room.

Centered on the east wall of the entrance hall is another pair of six-panel varnished oak pocket doors and these doors lead into the former dining room, which is now used as a living room. This 13-foot-wide by 16-foot-deep room is lit by two windows on its south wall and by the three windows of the oriel bay on its east wall. A door opening on the room's north wall opens into a small hallway that serves the adjacent pantry to the right (east), the rear entrance (north), and the kitchen (west). A door in the west wall of this rear hall opens into the house's kitchen. The kitchen makes up the first story of the rear wing and it still retains some of its original counters and cabinets, although modern appliances have been added from time to time.

The main stairs lead up to the second story, which has four bedrooms and a bathroom that open off an irregular plan center hall, and the position of these rooms corresponds roughly to the position of the principal rooms of the story below. In addition, a fifth bedroom is located over the kitchen. The doors used throughout the second story are of the five-panel type and the wood casings that enframe all the doors and windows of this story are varnished as well.

The present owners are fortunate to possess a house that was so well cared for by the four generations of the Robinson family that preceded them. More than anything else this single fact explains why all the most important features of the house are still intact.

Map No. 2

House

Contributing

Ca. 1865

Exterior

The date when this Side Gable form house was constructed is not known but its design suggests a date somewhere between 1855 and 1870. The house is believed to have originally had a T-plan but it now has an irregular plan and it measures 41.5 feet-wide by 42-feet-deep. The overall design is typical of early examples of the Side Gable form house in Wisconsin in that it has a side-gabled, rectilinear plan, two-story tall main block to whose rear elevation is attached a one-and-one-half story-tall, perpendicularly placed, gable-roofed kitchen wing. The entire house sits on fieldstone foundation walls of a type that is associated with the later Craftsman Style period and these foundation walls enclose a full basement story. The exterior walls above that rest on these foundation walls are clad in wide wooden clapboards, and they are sheltered by the shallow, overhanging open eaves of the house's multi-gable asphalt shingle-clad roof. Almost all of the house's original windows have now

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section 7 Page 8

Robinson, John C. and Mary, Farmstead
Town of Union, Rock Co., Wisconsin

been replaced with modern one-over-one-light double hung aluminum sash windows and these window's openings all have heads that are ornamented with simple scroll-sawn decoration.¹⁰

South-Facing Main Facade

The south-facing elevation of the house is the building's principal façade, it faces onto County Highway C, and it is composed of two elements: the south-facing elevation of the main block, and the south-facing end of elevation of a projecting portion of the kitchen wing. This asymmetrical facade is dominated by the hip-roofed front porch that spans the full width of the façade, and this porch is divided into two unequal-width portions. The wider left-hand portion is open. Three tall, thin, turned posts support its roof, and its two sides are encircled by a modern balustrade that is composed of simple square-plan wooden spindles. This portion of the porch shelters the house's original main entrance door, which is flanked on either side by single window openings that now contain one-over-one-light double hung aluminum sash windows. The less-wide right-hand portion of the porch, however, is enclosed with clapboard and it has a single window opening on its south-facing face that is identical to the ones just described.¹¹ The half story that is visible above the porch is three-bays-wide and symmetrical in design and each of these bays contains a small, oblong, "eyebrow" type window opening that has a decorated head and each opening contains a three-light window.

In addition to the portion just described, this façade is further extended to the east by a several foot-wide projecting portion of the kitchen wing that is attached to the house's rear elevation. This south-facing portion contains a single one-over-one-light double hung aluminum sash window.

East-Facing Side Elevation

The east-facing side elevation of the house consists of the east-facing side elevation of the main block and the east-facing side elevation of the kitchen wing that is attached to it. The left-hand portion of the east-facing side elevation of the two-story-tall main block consists of the east-facing side of the enclosed portion of the front porch and it has no openings and it is placed in the same plane as the rest of the main block's elevation. The east-facing side elevation of the main block itself is asymmetrical in design and two-bays-wide and the first story's left-hand bay contains a one-over-one-light double hung aluminum sash window, while the right-hand bay contains a one-over-one-light double hung aluminum sash window that is half as tall as the one in the left-hand bay. Both of the bays in the

¹⁰ This trim appears to be original. The current owner removed this trim temporarily when the house was painted and found faint outlines of this and other trim underneath it.

¹¹ Because no historic photos of this house have been found it is not known if the enclosed part of this porch is original or if it is a later modification. Likewise, it is not known if the house's wide clapboard cladding is original or if it replaces still earlier clapboard siding.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section 7 Page 9

Robinson, John C. and Mary, Farmstead
Town of Union, Rock Co., Wisconsin

second story above also contain single one-over-one-light double hung aluminum sash windows as well, although these windows are both shorter than the larger of the two in the first story and taller than the first story's shortest one.

The east-facing side elevation of the kitchen wing is also two-bays-wide and its left-hand bay contains a single one-over-one-light double hung aluminum sash window while the right-hand bay contains a shorter window of the same type.

North-Facing Rear Elevation

The north-facing rear elevation of the house consists of the north-facing rear elevation of the main block and the north-facing rear elevation of the gable-roofed one-and-one-half-story-tall kitchen wing that is attached to it, but almost all of the rear elevation of the main block is covered by the kitchen wing. Originally, this wing was centered on the main block and while it was very nearly as wide, it did not quite cover the whole width of the main block. Since then, however, a shed-roofed extension has been built along the entire east-facing side of this wing, which has had the effect of extending the total width of the wing several feet beyond the east elevation of the main block, thereby giving the house its somewhat irregular current floor plan.¹² The north-facing rear elevation of the kitchen wing, as it is now, contains a single entrance door opening placed to the left in the shed roofed extension portion and a modern oblong window opening is placed to its right and it contains a pair of one-light windows. There is also a rectilinear window opening centered in the gable end of the wing's original portion and it contains a single light.

West-Facing Side Elevation

The west-facing side elevation of the house also consists of two elements: the west-facing side elevation of the main block and the west-facing side elevation of the kitchen wing. The west-facing side elevation of the two-story-tall main block is symmetrical in design and one-bay-wide, its first story contains a pair of modern one-over-one-light double hung aluminum sash windows, and the second story above contains an identical pair.

The west-facing side elevation of the kitchen wing is three-bays-wide and each of these bays contains a single one-over-one-light double hung aluminum sash.

¹² Again, it is not known when this extension was built and it is possible that it is original to the house.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section 7 Page 10

Robinson, John C. and Mary, Farmstead
Town of Union, Rock Co., Wisconsin

Interior

The interior of this house has undergone extensive alterations over the years and it is now used as a guest house by the current owners. Utilities and appliances have been updated, the original room layout has been altered, although to what degree is uncertain, but some of the simple original woodwork is still intact and so are portions of the original wood floorboards.

Although this building is the most altered of all the buildings in the farmstead it is, never-the-less, essentially intact and it is in excellent condition today and the changes that have been made to it have served to enhance its utility. It has, therefore, survived in a largely intact condition, unlike so many other early farmhouses that disappeared or lost their function when their owners built larger, more modern farmhouses next to them.

Map No. 3

Garage

Contributing

Ca.1920

This rectilinear plan, one-story-tall, three-car Astylistic Utilitarian style automobile garage is located just to the left (west) of the side gable house described above. The building measures 26.5-feet-wide by 20.5-feet-deep and it has a poured concrete pad foundation and exterior walls that are clad in vertical wooden boards. These walls are sheltered by the overhanging boxed eaves of the building's asphalt shingle-clad hip roof. The main elevation of the building faces south onto a gravel driveway that leads to County Highway C and this elevation was originally divided into three equal-width bays, each of which contained a sixteen-light over eight-panel wooden swing-up garage door. The right-hand bay of the three contains its original garage door, but the supporting post that originally separated the garage's left-hand bay from its center bay has now been removed and the two original garage doors in these two bays have been replaced by a single modern roll-up garage door. In addition, a six-over-six-light double hung wood sash window is located on the east-facing side elevation of the garage, as is a side entrance door.

Map No. 4

Cattle Barn No. 1

Contributing

1915

This large, highly intact, rectilinear plan, one-story-tall, 36-foot-wide by 94-foot-long by 44.5-foot-tall dairy barn was built by Robinson in 1915 to a plan for a Model Barn that was supplied to him by the Agricultural Engineering Department of the University of Wisconsin-Madison's College of Agriculture. The barn rests on a poured concrete foundation and it has a concrete floor and poured concrete side walls that extend upward several feet above ground level. The walls that rest on these foundations are clad in cedar clapboards and the entire barn is sheltered by a tall gambrel roof whose ridgeline runs north-south, whose surfaces are clad in metal sheets, and which is crowned by a small circular plan sheet metal ventilator.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section 7 Page 11

Robinson, John C. and Mary, Farmstead
Town of Union, Rock Co., Wisconsin

The main entrance to the barn is located in the center of the barn's 36-foot-wide south-facing end elevation and this opening contains a pair of side-hinged vertical wooden board doors, each of which has an X-shaped batten pattern lower half and a nine-light upper half. In addition, a single nine-light window is placed to the left and to the right of these doors and there is also a wooden door placed above the entrance that services the hay mow of the barn.

The 94-foot-wide west-facing side elevation of the barn has ten more small, square, nine-light windows arrayed along its length, six of which are placed to the left of a large barn door opening that is filled with two sliding doors made out of vertical boards, and four of which are placed to the right of it. In addition, there are also two shed-roofed dormers placed high up on the first slope of the roof above, both of which contain an eight-light oblong window.

Another entrance to the barn is located in the center of the barn's 36-foot-wide north-facing end elevation and this opening contains a pair of side-hinged vertical wooden board doors, each of which is enframed with battens, and there is also a pair of nine-light windows located near the peak of the gambrel end above.

The 94-foot-wide east-facing side elevation of the barn has ten more nine-light windows arrayed along its length, six of which are placed to the right of a short, one-story-tall gambrel-roofed ell that is placed perpendicular to the main elevation of the barn and whose east-facing end contains another large barn door opening that is filled with two sliding doors made out of vertical boards, and four more nine-light windows are placed to the left of this ell. In addition, there are two more shed-roofed dormers placed high up on the first slope of the roof above on this side, both of which contain an eight-light oblong window.

The interior of this plank-frame barn is also totally intact and its first story consists of a poured concrete center aisle that is flanked on both sides by parallel rows of metal stalls that each have side-hinged doors that allow cattle to enter. Incorporated within these stalls are rows of cast iron posts that are used to support the 2" x 10" joists that support the wooden floor of the hay mow above that constitutes the entire upper portion of the barn. The roof of this hay mow is supported by a system of purlins that are themselves supported by self-supporting trusses.

Map No. 5

Sheep Shed

Contributing

Pre-1900

Based on its method of construction, this highly intact, one-story-tall, rectilinear plan, gable-roofed Astylistic Utilitarian style sheep shed is the oldest of the farmstead's surviving outbuildings. This building is 42.5-feet-wide by 20.5-feet-deep, it rests on a fieldstone foundation, its exterior walls are

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section 7 Page 13

Robinson, John C. and Mary, Farmstead
Town of Union, Rock Co., Wisconsin

Map No. 7	Cattle Barn No. 2	Contributing	1932
------------------	--------------------------	---------------------	-------------

This large, highly intact, rectilinear plan, one-story-tall, 36-foot-wide by 98-foot-long cattle barn was built by Robinson in 1932 to a plan that was supplied to him by the Hunt-Helm-Ferris Co. of Harvard, Illinois. The barn rests on a poured concrete foundation and it has a concrete floor and poured concrete side walls that extend upward several feet above ground level. The walls that rest on these foundations are clad in vertical wood boards and the entire barn is sheltered by a tall gambrel roof whose ridgeline runs north-south, whose surfaces are clad in metal sheets, and which is crowned by two circular plan sheet metal ventilators.

The main entrance to the barn is located in the center of the barn's 36-foot-wide south-facing end elevation and this opening contains a pair of sliding doors, each of which is made of vertical wooden board, the lower half of which has an X-shaped batten pattern covering it. In addition, a single one-over-one-light double hung window is placed to the left and to the right of these doors and there is a very large door opening placed just above the first story doors that serves the hay mow floor inside, and these openings are closed by two very large sliding doors. There are also two six-light windows placed high in the gambrel end of the elevation above and these windows flank a large pointed arch opening that contains a pair of side-hinged board doors that also serve the upper portion of the hay mow.

The 94-foot-wide west-facing side elevation of the barn has seven window openings arrayed along its length, six of which are placed to the left of a small rectilinear side entrance door opening that contains a flat plywood-clad door, and one of which is placed to the right of it. All of these window openings could contain two windows, but almost all of them contain ventilators while a few are filled with plywood.

The barn's 36-foot-wide north-facing end elevation is identical to the south-facing one described above and it has the same number of door and window openings and they are located in the same places on the elevation.

The 94-foot-wide east-facing side elevation of the barn is identical to the west-facing one and it too has seven window openings arrayed along its length, six of which are placed to the right of a small side entrance opening that contains a vertical wooden board door that has an X-shaped batten pattern lower half, and one of which is placed to the left of it.

The interior of this plank-frame barn is also totally intact and its first story consists of a poured concrete center aisle that is flanked on both sides by parallel rows of metal stalls that each have side-hinged doors that allow cows to enter. Incorporated within these stalls are rows of cast iron posts that

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section 7 Page 15

Robinson, John C. and Mary, Farmstead
Town of Union, Rock Co., Wisconsin

The main 24.5-foot-wide elevation of this building faces south and it contains a very large opening that is closed by a tall sliding vertical board doors whose lower halves are covered with X pattern battens. Located above the main doors in this elevation's gable end is a window opening that once contained a pair of windows but which is now empty.

The north-facing rear elevation of this building is identical to the main elevation except for the fact that on this elevation the lower halves of the two sliding doors have no X pattern battens.

There west-facing side elevation of the building has no openings of any kind, while the east-facing side elevation has a large door opening centered on it that is filled with two sliding barn doors made of vertical boards, each of has a lower half that is covered with X pattern battens and a six-light upper half.

Map No. 10

Steer Shed

Contributing

1944-1945

This highly intact Astylistic Utilitarian style building is placed just to the south of the Garage Workshop and the Granary and it is one-story-tall, has a rectilinear plan, and it measures 60-feet-long by 14-feet-deep. The building rests on a poured concrete foundation and the date "1944-1945" is written into its concrete foundation. The building's south-facing elevation is open and faces out onto a full-width poured concrete yard. Its east, west, and north-facing exterior walls are clad in vertical wood boards and the only opening in any of these three walls is a small sliding door that is centered on the north-facing rear elevation. The building's walls and its open south-facing side are all sheltered by modified saltbox-shaped roof whose longest slope faces north, whose ridgeline runs east-west, and whose surface is clad in corrugated metal sheets.

Today, much of the acreage surrounding the farmstead is rented out to others for farming purposes and the outbuildings of the Robinson farmstead are no longer in use for agricultural purposes. Nevertheless, these buildings are still in excellent, mostly original condition today, as are the two houses, which have both now been restored and are lived in once again.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section 8 Page 1

Robinson, John C. and Mary, Farmstead
Town of Union, Rock Co., Wisconsin

Significance

The John C. and Mary Robinson Farmstead is being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) for its local significance under National Register (NR) criterion A and criterion C. Research was undertaken to assess this potential utilizing the NR significance areas of Agriculture and Architecture, both themes that are also identified in the State of Wisconsin's Cultural Resource Management Plan (CRMP). This research centered on evaluating the resources in the farmstead utilizing the Side Gable form, Queen Anne style, and Agricultural Outbuildings subsections of the Architectural Styles study unit and the Livestock and Poultry Production study unit of the Agriculture theme portion of the CRMP.¹⁵ The results of this research are detailed below and show that the excellent Queen Anne style John C. & Mary Robinson farmhouse is locally significant under criterion C for its architectural significance. In addition, the intact collection of historic period houses and outbuildings is significant as an example of a farmstead.

Research also determined that the Robinson Farmstead is locally significant under NR criterion A for its historic associations with the important role that the Robinson family and John C. Robinson in particular played in the history of agriculture in Rock County. John C. Robinson was born in Whitewater, Wisconsin in 1859. Not long thereafter, Robinson moved to Evansville with his parents and his older brothers, H. E. Robinson (1845-1907), and Theodore Robinson (1852-1896), who was destined to become one of America's first and most important Impressionist painters. John C. Robinson attended school in Evansville, but he spent his summers working on a local farm and by 1878 he had managed to persuade his father to purchase a 120-acre farm for him to run. Two years later, Robinson married Mary Emery and the two then set up housekeeping on the farm, which they called "The Maples" because of the stand of trees that surrounded their house. At first, Robinson practiced the kind of diversified farming that was then in vogue, but gradually his interest came to center on the breeding of livestock. Robinson would go on to raise and breed prize-winning purebred Shropshire sheep, Berkshire hogs, and Clydesdale horses, but it was for the breeding of Hereford beef cattle that he would achieve his greatest renown. Robinson's success at breeding purebred livestock gave him the means to build his family a new house in 1900 on what by then had become a 200-acre farm and this would be followed by the continuous upgrading of his farmstead's outbuildings, which culminated in the construction of two large new cattle barns in 1915 and 1932 that are still extant and intact today. During these years, Robinson and his son, Hugh, continued to improve the bloodlines of their cattle herd, and these cattle and their offspring were regular winners at local, state, and national stock shows and competitions. John Robinson died in 1938, but even before his death, his farm was being operated by his son, Hugh Robinson, who would be succeeded by his own sons, Phil and Harold

¹⁵ Wyatt, Barbara (Ed.). *Cultural Resource Management in Wisconsin*. Historic Preservation Division, State Historical Society of Wisconsin, Madison, Wisconsin, 1986. Vol. 2.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section 8 Page 2

Robinson, John C. and Mary, Farmstead
Town of Union, Rock Co., Wisconsin

Robinson, who continued the operation of the farm and its breeding program until 1980, when one of Harold's daughters and her husband bought the farm. Throughout this 100-year period, the Robinson family's Hereford herd was one of the premier Hereford breeding herds in the nation, the bloodlines they established are still important factors in the breed today, and the farm buildings that were most closely associated with these activities are all still extant and still intact today.

Agriculture

The John C. and Mary Robinson Farmstead is believed to be eligible for listing in the NRHP under NR criterion A, History, for its local significance to the history of agriculture, because this multi-generational family farmstead contains highly intact buildings that represent this family's important role in the selective breeding of pure bred Hereford beef cattle, for which they achieved national and even international renown. John C. Robinson was a Rock County pioneer in his use of selective breeding to produce larger and better breeding stock and his subsequent success was due in large part to his willingness to avail himself of the modern advances in farming and breeding that were developed at the University of Wisconsin's justly famed College of Agriculture, which was and is located twenty miles to the north in the capitol city of Madison.

John Cheney Robinson (1859-1938) was born on December 2, 1859 in Whitewater, Wisconsin and he was the son of the Rev. and Mrs. Elijah Robinson, who had come to Wisconsin from Vermont in the mid-1850s. Elijah Robinson (1800-1886) served as the minister of Evansville's Methodist church throughout the 1850s and 1860s and he was also elected a member of the village's first Board of Trustees when the Village's first official election was held in 1867. Besides his church-related activities in Evansville, however, Robinson was also co-owner, with William Little, of the firm of Robinson & Little, dealers in men's clothing in the village, and it was in this store that John C. worked as a clerk when he was not at school. By the time he had turned thirteen, Robinson was spending his summer vacations working on a nearby farm and it was in this direction that his sense of his future vocation began to turn.

At the age of nineteen, John wanted to purchase a farm west of Evansville, but he was too young to legally sign a mortgage. His father, Rev. Elijah Robinson, agreed to sign the papers. [Two years later] John married Mary Emery in January of 1880, and they made their home on the farm. In the 1880 census, John was listed as the "renter for a share of the crops." The 120-acre farm was valued at \$4,500, about thirty-seven dollars an acre and Robinson told the census taker he had six dairy cows, twenty-one other cattle, ten calves and thirty hogs. The crops included forty-five acres of oats, twenty acres of corn and one acre of apples. Although

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section 8 Page 3

Robinson, John C. and Mary, Farmstead
Town of Union, Rock Co., Wisconsin

Robinson was young, he was eager to learn new farming methods and he began to improve his herds with the purchase of pure bred stock.¹⁶

Robinson's new bride, Mary Frances Emery (1859-195?), was born in Clinton, WI and she had moved with her parents and a sister to a farm north of Evansville when she was five. Mary Francis married John C. on January 15, 1880 and their first child, Hugh Robinson (1880-1946), was born on December 24, of the same year. Robinson's timing in starting a career in farming was fortuitous because farming was then entering a revolutionary period. Only two decades before, farming in Wisconsin was still largely dominated by cash crop farming and it was rare for the average farmer to derive his income from his animals rather than from his crops. But that was about to change.

For over a century, livestock production has been the nucleus of Wisconsin agriculture. The products, crops, and buildings of most Wisconsin farms since the late nineteenth century have reflected this simple fact. As cash crop farming declined, animal husbandry introduced a new system of balanced cultivation, careful routine, and capital outlay for herds and buildings. The effort and expense transformed the agricultural landscape, replacing wheat fields with fields of pasture and feed, punctuated with animal barns, fences, and silos. The change was reflected in economic terms, too. By 1900, livestock production contributed almost 80 per cent of the state's farm income.

By 1870, commercial livestock production had emerged in a well-defined district centered in the south and southwestern counties, reflecting conditions favorable to the abundant harvest of feed crops (especially corn and oats) which made cattle and hog production possible and profitable. But livestock was not limited to that region. Indeed, dairying proved the most prominent and widespread of the state's livestock industries (especially after the introduction of the silo in the 1880s) resulting in large concentrations of milk cattle in north-central, east-central, and northwestern counties where silage crops and grasses flourished. The emergence of a strong statewide livestock economy took less than three decades. By 1880, more than half of Wisconsin farm income was derived from livestock and the majority of its farmland was covered with feed or pasture.

But the upsurge in feed production and the introduction of the silo were not the only impetus to livestock farmers. The development of large scale production coincided with (and was partly a response to) the rise of dairy factories and meat packing plants in the late nineteenth century. With the growth of urban centers, the expansion of rail networks, and the introduction of refrigerated rail cars in the 1870s, dairy and meat processors reached regional and even

¹⁶ Montgomery, Ruth Ann. *Evansville: Glimpses of the Grove*. Evansville: n.d. (ca.1989), p. 64.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section 8 Page 4

Robinson, John C. and Mary, Farmstead
Town of Union, Rock Co., Wisconsin

national markets. Wisconsin farmland lay at the center of that network and Wisconsin farmers provided the raw materials to meet the new demands.¹⁷

This, then, was the situation in Rock County and elsewhere in southern Wisconsin when Robinson began farming for a living and, as the 1880 census shows, livestock already formed the core around which Robinson's farming activities revolved. Robinson had the additional advantage of having been raised in a family that respected learning, and here again, his timing was excellent because his natural desire to learn more about farming and better farming practices came at a time when the nearby University of Wisconsin was becoming a national leader in agricultural education and research.

As with other advances in Wisconsin agriculture in the late nineteenth century, science and technology played a large role in increased production. Research conducted by the University of Wisconsin College of Agriculture led to improved feeds, careful monitoring of breeds, the control of animal disease, and the dissemination of farm building plans to assist the livestock farmer. William Henry's pioneer work, *Feed and Feeding* (1898) was complimented by the veterinary advances of Henry Russell, whose battle against animal tuberculosis was waged as early as the 1890s. Popular Farmer's Institutes and Experimental Station bulletins propagated a wide variety of barn plans for the proper shelter of animals, and the patenting of barbed wire in the 1870s provided a cheap, efficient fencing.¹⁸

One of the most significant of the College's innovations in teaching was the establishment of its famous short courses for farmers, which were instituted as way in which the farmer could be brought into contact with the latest ideas and the newest practices for a brief but intense period at the campus.

In 1886 it was decided ... to offer a short course at the University each winter. Here Wisconsin was truly pioneering, for this was the first course of its kind in the country. The short course was to be open to any young man who had attended the common schools and was intended to be as practical as possible.¹⁹

John C. Robinson was one of the farmers who attended the College of Agriculture's first ten-day short course in 1886 and in this and in many other ways he would prove himself to be in the forefront of those farmers who were intent on acquiring new, scientifically based information that could be used to benefit both their own farming operations and also the operations of others.

¹⁷ Wyatt, Barbara (Ed.). *Op. Cit.* Vol. 2, (Agriculture), pp. 8-1 - 8-2.

¹⁸ *Ibid*, p. 8-2 - 8-3.

¹⁹ Curti, Merle and Vernon Carstensen. *The University of Wisconsin: A History, 1848-1925*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1974, Vol. 2, p. 375.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section 8 Page 5

Robinson, John C. and Mary, Farmstead
Town of Union, Rock Co., Wisconsin

One of the most important lessons that Robinson learned was that the future of livestock raising lay in specialization and that purchasing and breeding pure bred animals was the key to success. Like many other farmers of the day, it took him a while to decide on what species and what breed of animal he wanted to work with.

In the decades before market specialization, most Wisconsin cattle were not bred exclusively for either dairy or beef production. Instead, so-called "dual purpose" animals were bred for both products. Such nondescript breeding, however, led to inferior quality and the state's cattle were distinguished neither by their meat nor their milk. Nonetheless, farmers viewed specialization with skepticism, uncertain that profits would justify the "single purpose" approach. Thus, dairy farmers, for example, happily sent many cows to the slaughter house to capitalize on the high price of beef and were reluctant to lose that income. Dual-purpose cattle (including Shorthorns, Devons, and Herefords) were favored by many farmers from the 1860s until the late nineteenth century.

But increased demand for high quality beef and dairy products after 1870 led farmers to concentrate on one type of production based on climate, region, or other factors. Although the debate regarding single and dual purpose cows was not fully resolved until the early twentieth century, the availability of excellent specialized breeds after 1880—and the inability of dual purpose animals to effectively compete against them—dictated a single purpose approach. "He who specializes, wins," predicted one insightful farmer in the 1880s. "The general purpose cow is an impossible animal. Let each farmer decide whether all circumstances point to a beef, a milk, or a butter stock and chose accordingly." By 1890, most Wisconsin cattle were distinguished according to purpose: Holsteins, Guernsey and Jersey were the leading dairy breeds; Angus, Herefords, and Shorthorns were considered to be beef animals; Devon, Brown-Swiss, and Red-Polled remained popular "Dual-purpose" breeds (although individual animals tended to favor either meat or milk production).²⁰

Robinson first kept dairy cattle, later fed steers, and still later he raised prize-winning pure bred Shropshire sheep, Berkshire hogs, and even Clydesdale horses. In 1898, however, he purchased his first pure bred Hereford cattle from the herd of John Lephram of Lake Geneva, Wisconsin and it was with this breed that he would ever afterwards be identified with. His choice was a sound one.

By the late nineteenth century, stockmen were able to identify Herefords, Angus, and Shorthorns as the best beef breeds; the cows yielded little milk other than that needed for their

²⁰ Wyatt, Barbara (Ed.). Op. Cit. Vol. 2, (Agriculture), pp. 8-4.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section 8 Page 6

Robinson, John C. and Mary, Farmstead
Town of Union, Rock Co., Wisconsin

offspring. Livestock breeders associations were organized in the late nineteenth century to support improvement campaigns. The Wisconsin Shorthorn Association, founded in 1889, was the first.²¹

Robinson's decision to breed Herefords was strengthened by the fact that by 1898 he had managed to increase his original land holdings in Union Township from 120 acres to 200 acres, thereby gaining more land on which to grow feed for cattle. By 1900, his subsequent success as a stockman also enabled him to build a new house on the farm for his wife and three children, this being the same George F. Barber & Co.-designed Queen Anne style house (Map No. 1) that is still the heart of the farmstead today.

By 1903, Robinson had also brought his son, Hugh, a graduate of the University of Wisconsin's two-year farm program, into partnership with him and from this point on their business would be known as John C. Robinson & Son. That Robinson needed a partner to help handle his various farming activities by this time is not surprising when one understands what the demands were on a farmer wishing to be successful in the livestock-breeding business. To be successful as a livestock breeder in this period meant that a breeder would, depending on his ambition and his resources, take his animals to be shown and judged at a surprisingly large number of local, state, and national stock shows, and Robinson quickly became a regular on this annual show circuit. Fortunately, his initial choice of high quality breeding stock meant that he was successful almost from the start. In 1901, one of his bulls won top honors at the Fat Stock International show in Chicago, the most prestigious stock show in the Midwest.

John Robinson's Hereford bull won championship in his class at the fat stock show in Chicago. This is a record to be proud of, as any animal on exhibition there had to be a top-notch as there was mighty fast company to keep step with, there having been entries from all over the world. It is a great credit to Mr. Robinson and to Rock county to have a first prize winner at the International.²²

Robinson also won this prestigious and commercially valuable event again in 1908 with his bull Bonnie Brae 8th. By 1908, attending stock shows such as this had become a regular part of Robinson's routine and he would continue to do so for the rest of his working life. Some idea of the amount of work that was involved in this aspect of a stockman's life can be gleaned by looking at just one three-week period during 1909. In the first week, one of Robinson's Hereford bulls took the first premium at the Minnesota State Fair in St. Paul, despite a train wreck on the way up that injured several of his

²¹ Wyatt, Barbara (Ed.). Op. Cit. Vol. 2, (Agriculture), pp. 8-7.

²² "Got First Premium on his Bull." Evansville: *The Badger*, June 22, 1901, p. 1.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section 8 Page 7

Robinson, John C. and Mary, Farmstead
Town of Union, Rock Co., Wisconsin

animals. The next week, J. C. Robinson and Son received two more first premiums at the Wisconsin State Fair in Milwaukee as twelve more premiums that were won by twelve of their other Herefords, and a week later they were successfully showing most of the same animals again at the Chippewa County Fair in Chippewa Falls, Wisconsin.²³

At every one of these shows, some of the animals that the Robinsons showed would be sold to other breeders while the rest would be retained for the future of the herd. At first, most of these buyers were fellow Wisconsinites, but by 1912, the reputation of the Robinson herd had grown to the point where a contemporary news item noted that Robinson's cattle were being sold to international breeders as well.

John Robinson sold a bull and two heifers to Anselmo Marge of Montevideo, Uruguay, South America. Marge traveled throughout the U.S. looking for the best herds of Hereford cattle and returned to Evansville to buy from Robinson.²⁴

Robinson's continued success enabled him to build a new main barn on his farm (Map No. 4) in 1915, using plans for a model barn that had been developed by the University of Wisconsin's College of Agriculture. Finally, in 1926, Robinson was honored for his work in stock breeding and for his local and statewide efforts in promoting the benefits of scientific breeding by being placed on the University of Wisconsin's College of Agriculture's Honor Roll, which was the College's way of acknowledging members of the agricultural community throughout the United States and in Canada who had made outstanding contributions to agriculture. Robinson received this honor at the Annual Wisconsin Livestock Breeders Field Day, a state-wide stock breeder's picnic and field day that in 1926 was held in Evansville for members of the Wisconsin Breeders Association and the Wisconsin Dairymen. This event attracted several thousand attendees, and not surprisingly, one of the star attractions of the day was a tour of the Robinson's farm.²⁵

In 1929, J. C. Robinson and Son once again had a grand champion Hereford bull at the International Stock Show in Chicago. This was Domino Lad, who had been named grand champion at the Wisconsin State Fair not long before.²⁶ Late in 1931, however, tragedy was narrowly averted when a \$15,000 fire on the farm that started from a corn shredder destroyed barns, a silo, a considerable amount of feed, a motorcycle, and three horses.²⁷ To replace what had been lost, Robinson

²³ *Evansville Enterprise*. September 15, 1909, p. 1; September 22, 1909, p. 1.

²⁴ *Evansville Review*, May 23, 1912.

²⁵ "Friday, June 11, the Big Day." *Evansville Review*. June 10, 1926; and also June 17, 1926.

²⁶ "International Champion." *Evansville Review*, December 12, 1929, p. 1.

²⁷ "Jug Prairie News." *Evansville Review*, October 29, 1931.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section 8 Page 8

Robinson, John C. and Mary, Farmstead
Town of Union, Rock Co., Wisconsin

immediately began the construction of a second main barn on the farmstead (Map No. 7) and its completion was celebrated at a huge party that was held at the farm.

In order to celebrate the completion of their new barn, 98 by 36 feet in size, all steel equipped, which was built to replace the one destroyed by fire last October, and to show their appreciation of the many helpful acts their neighbors had extended them, not only at the time of the fire, but during their many years of residence in the community, Mr. and Mrs. J. C. Robinson and Mr. and Mrs. Hugh Robinson entertained approximately 250 people at the Robinson farm Monday evening with an entertainment followed by refreshments.

The Evansville Fire Boys were the guests of honor of the occasion as it was through their hard work at the fire which enabled the Robinsons to save their homes and other buildings.²⁸

By 1931, Hugh Robinson, his wife, Mabel, and their two sons, Phillip and Harold, were also living on the farm in the small house that had been moved onto the farmstead from its original location nearby.²⁹ Even though Phillip and Harold were still teenagers at this time, both were already active in the Evansville 4-H Club and numerous notices in the local newspaper show that they were already beginning to win their own share of prizes at livestock shows by this time.

By 1934, John C. Robinson had retired from active participation in the cattle business and he and Mary had moved to Evansville.

Mr. and Mrs. J. C. Robinson and Miss Madge Robinson are moving from their farm west of the city to their city home on West Liberty Street. Mr. and Mrs. Hugh Robinson will occupy the house on the farm which they have vacated.³⁰

Mr. and Mrs. J. C. Robinson, daughter, Mrs. [sic] Madge Robinson, and granddaughter, Ellen, moved into town last week for their permanent home. Mr. and Mrs. Hugh Robinson and sons moved into the large house.³¹

The transfer of responsibility for the Hereford herd and the farm to Hugh Robinson, however, did nothing to diminish the quality or reputation of the herd that father and son had been so long in establishing. The following year, the local newspaper made yet another announcement of the firm's

²⁸ "New Barn Dedicated at Social Gathering." *Evansville Review*, June 30, 1932.

²⁹ This is the small house that is used as a guest house (Map No. 2) by the farmstead's current owners

³⁰ "Jug Prairie." *Evansville Review*, November 22, 1934, p. 6.

³¹ "Jug Prairie." *Evansville Review*, November 29, 1934, p. 8.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section 8 Page 9

Robinson, John C. and Mary, Farmstead
Town of Union, Rock Co., Wisconsin

success and it also signaled the beginning of the active participation of still another generation in the family business.

J. C. Robinson and son, local breeders, shipped 20 head of pure bred Hereford cattle to Jarvis, Ontario, Canada. The shipment was accompanied by Philip Robinson, son of Mr. and Mrs. Hugh Robinson.

The Robinson Herefords in past years have been consistent winners at the International Livestock exposition held annually in Chicago and the national exposition held every year in Kansas City, Mo. In addition they have won the bulk of the prize ribbons at the state and county fairs.

Although this is the first time the Robinsons have shipped cattle to Canada, they have sold their pure bred to breeders in practically every state of the union and have made shipments as far distant as South America and Hawaii.³²

John C. Robinson died in Evansville on May 7, 1938 and his lengthy obituary contained both a summary of his career and praise from notables in Wisconsin's agricultural community.

Mr. Robinson was well known because of the outstanding accomplishments he made with his Hereford cattle which have been consistent winners at fairs and expositions. And it was through these attainments that he was named to the hall of fame of the agricultural college at the University of Wisconsin.

The veteran stockman was a former member of the State Livestock Sanitary Board, president and treasurer of the Wisconsin Livestock Breeders association, organizer of the Junior Livestock association of Wisconsin, president and director of the Wisconsin Hereford association, member of the board of the Pleasant Prairie school, and a former trustee of the Rock County farm.

In his remarks [at the funeral], Prof. [Andrew W.] Hopkins read several tributes paid Mr. Robinson by prominent university agriculturists among whom were Chris L. Christensen dean of the College of Agriculture; Prof. Henry L. Russell, and Prof. George C. Humphrey.

³² "Robinson Herefords Shipped to Canada." *Evansville Review*, February 28, 1935, p. 1. The Hawaii sale was to the Parker Ranch, one of the largest in the country.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section 8 Page 10

Robinson, John C. and Mary, Farmstead
Town of Union, Rock Co., Wisconsin

In a tribute paid Mr. Robinson by Prof. George C. Humphrey of the university, the latter pointed out that the stockman [Robinson] was a student of soil fertility, and methods of farming which would improve rather than impoverish the fertility of his fields. He also became a student of livestock breeding and laid the foundation for his Hereford cattle by securing a few cows from the best blood lines of the breed.

From his small beginnings he followed plans which resulted in his fame and success as a breeder of Hereford cattle known as the Bonnie Brae 8th and Domino lines. These good blood lines accompanied by excellence of type and quality in the animals of his herd, and the exhibition of his cattle in the leading shows of the country, resulted in his becoming widely known and a real benefactor in the interest of better livestock.

It is fine to think of Mr. Robinson in his prime in all of his relationships with the College of Agriculture and the livestock organizations of the state. He was a member of the first group of farmers to attend the first ten-day Farmers course at the College of agriculture. His son, Hugh, is a graduate of the two-year short course in agriculture. His grandsons, Philip and Harold, have distinguished themselves at the Junior Livestock show, held annually at Madison, and at larger shows as true stockmen."³³

Robinson's son, Hugh, would continue to operate the family's Hereford herd until his own death in 1946.³⁴ His widow, Mabel Bernard Robinson (1887-1981), continued to live on the farm until just a few years before her death in 1981, during which time the farm was also occupied by her son, Harold Robinson, and his family.³⁵ During this period, the herd was managed by both of her sons, Philip and Harold, and their cattle continued to win awards until the two retired in the early 1970s. The two brothers followed closely in their father and grandfather's footsteps. Both of them graduated from the University of Wisconsin short course and Philip would later serve as a director and president of the Wisconsin Hereford Association, while Harold served as a member of the board and as president of the Wisconsin Livestock Breeders Association and also on the board of the Rock County Fair.³⁶

The bloodlines that John C. Robinson's prize bulls established dominated Hereford breeding stock in Wisconsin for decades and the cattle and other livestock that Robinson, his son, and grandsons bred continued to win prizes and set standards at county, state and national shows and fairs until Philip and Harold Robinson finally retired from active farming in the early 1970s. This work was of historic

³³ "Final Tribute Paid Here to John Robinson." *Evansville Review*, May 12, 1938, pp. 1, 7. Obituary of John C. Robinson.

³⁴ "Local Farmer Succumbs Here Sunday A.M." *Evansville Review*, August 1, 1946, p. 1. Obituary of Hugh Robinson.

³⁵ *The Evansville Review*, April 16, 1981, p. 2. Obituary of Mabel Robinson.

³⁶ "Robinsons Honored for Production." *Evansville Review*, March 17, 1977, p. 10.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section 8 Page 11

Robinson, John C. and Mary, Farmstead
Town of Union, Rock Co., Wisconsin

significance in the history of Wisconsin agriculture and the men who carried it out were well known and well respected figures in Wisconsin agricultural circles during their own lifetimes. Consequently, it is believed that the John C. and Mary Robinson Farmstead is eligible for listing in the NRHP because it contains all of the most important buildings that have historically been associated with the historically significant contribution to stock breeding that the three generations of Robinsons made while they lived there. With the exception of the small house, all but one of these buildings was built during the lifetime of John C. Robinson, and the one that was not was built by his son during his own period of stewardship. These buildings are still highly intact and the most important ones are still in excellent condition today.

Architecture

The John C. & Mary Robinson Farmstead is also believed to be eligible for listing in the NRHP under NR criterion C, Architecture, for its local significance as a multi-generational family farmstead that contains highly intact buildings that represent various architectural styles and building types from every period of the family's historic ownership. The oldest building in the complex is probably the nineteenth century Side Gable form house that was moved onto the site by the Robinsons early in the twentieth century, although its date of construction and the names of its original owners have not yet been discovered. Next oldest is the farmstead's post and beam sheep barn, which probably predates 1900. The farmstead's oldest dated building, and one of its most impressive, is the outstanding Queen Anne style house that was built in 1900 for John C. and Mary Robinson. Built to a plan supplied by the nationally known Knoxville, Tennessee architectural firm of George F. Barber & Co., this large, exceptionally intact clapboard and wood shingle-clad house also boasts a fine, totally intact interior and it is one of the finest farmhouses in this part of Rock County. Equally impressive, but in very different ways, are the farmstead's two 98-foot-long cattle barns, the older of the two having been built in 1915 to a design provided by the University of Wisconsin's College of Engineering, and the newest, a very similar barn, was built in 1932 to a design supplied by the Harvard, Illinois firm of Hunt, Helm, Ferris & Co.

The oldest building in the farmstead is the Side Gable vernacular form house that the current owners now use as a guest house (Map No. 2). It was probably originally built between 1855 and 1880, based on its size and design. The Side Gable form is a very common historic residential form in Wisconsin and its most important characteristic features consist of rectangular plans and, usually, gentle-pitched gable roof. The major facade is typically placed on the long wall with gable ends being placed perpendicular to the street. The form is found in one, two, and three-story versions but is most often found in half-story versions, the one-and-one-half-story version being especially common. Buildings in this style are characteristically covered with clapboard but fieldstone, cut stone, and brick examples

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section 8 Page 12

Robinson, John C. and Mary, Farmstead
Town of Union, Rock Co., Wisconsin

are also found. Very early versions may be of timber-framed, half-timbered, or even of log construction. In addition, early versions are also generally narrower and shorter than later examples and wings extending off the rear of the main block were popular, both as original features and as later additions.

The Side Gable subsection of the Architectural Styles Study Unit of the CRMP gives the temporal boundaries of the occurrence of this vernacular form in Wisconsin as being from ca. 1840-1940 and notes that:

The side gable form is as plain as the other vernacular forms in Wisconsin. The ubiquitous front porch, entirely or partially spanning the front façade, may have the only touch of embellishment, with small brackets or turned posts. Generally, the porch roof is not an extension of the main roof, but is a separate shed, flat, or slightly hipped roof. The form is generally low to the ground, particularly in early examples, with only a few steps leading to the porch. Sometimes the foundation is barely perceptible. Window openings are regularly spaced, although sometimes a stair light is offset on a side wall. Doorways are almost always centrally placed, reflecting a symmetrical floor plan.

For many years in Wisconsin, an early version of the form with the proportions, symmetry, and minimal details of the Greek Revival was associated with the style. "Eyebrow" windows have been used as primary evidence of identifying side gable building as Greek Revival. As buildings devoid of primary stylistic features are more commonly identified as vernacular forms, the broad definition of Wisconsin Greek Revival may be revised.³⁷

The Robinson Farmstead's Side Gable form house is a typical early example of this vernacular form and its modest size and its full-width partially enclosed and partially open hipped roof front porch, whose roof is supported by turned wooden columns, are all features of this form that are cited in the CRMP. In addition, the house's eyebrow windows place it within the Greek Revival style-influenced examples of the form.

Of greater individual architectural significance is the John C. and Mary Robinson house (Map No. 1), which is an excellent example of the larger Queen Anne style residences that some successful Wisconsin farmers were building on their farms between 1880 and 1910, and this significance is considerably enhanced by the house's high degree of integrity. The design of this house was furnished

³⁷ Wyatt, Barbara (ed.). Vol. 2, (Architecture), p. 3-3.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section 8 Page 13

Robinson, John C. and Mary, Farmstead
Town of Union, Rock Co., Wisconsin

by the Knoxville, Tennessee architectural firm of George F. Barber & Co., which in 1900 was one of the country's premier suppliers of mail-order house plans.³⁸

George F. Barber (1854-1915) was a native of DeKalb, Illinois, who grew up on a farm in Kansas. Barber began his career as a carpenter but he evolved into an excellent, mostly self-taught architect and building contractor. By the mid-1880s, Barber was acting as the architect for the DeKalb firm of Barber and Boardman, Contractors and Builders. In 1888, Barber moved to Knoxville, Tennessee, for health reasons. There, he affiliated with a Knoxville real estate developer, J. C. White, and by 1892 he was producing the first of the mail-order design catalog of his house plans that were to make him a national reputation.

Barber's mail-order firm was one of a number of similar firms that developed in this country in the 1880s and it was one of the most successful as well, both because of the high quality of its designs and because of the comprehensive nature of the services it provided its clients.

We have seen examples of the mail-order plan business over several decades... Barber, however, became one of the most popular and widespread of these designers; by the time he ceased the mail-order business in 1908, the firm had produced "perhaps as many as 20,000 sets" of plans, mail-order and custom designed. ... Plans could be ordered at prices ranging from \$8.50 for a three-room cottage, costing \$500-\$700, to \$45 for an impressive Queen Anne mansion of a dozen rooms, to cost \$5,250. For this fee, one received a full set of working drawings, which consisted of plans for each floor and the basement, a roof plan, and elevations of all four sides; these were blueprint copies, because the blueprints were "just as good and exact reproductions of the original drawings" as cloth tracings. Detail sheets were also provided; these, however, were "drawn by hand (not printed)" and were full size, "ready to be pricked off on the material for working out." One also received "printed blank specification filled out as far as we can understand your requirements," as were "two blank contract forms and a sheet of color samples for outside painting." Barber confidently assured the client that "everything necessary for the builder is supplied."³⁹

Barber's design for the Robinsons is an interesting later, hipped roof example of the "Free Classic subtype" of the Queen Anne style that was identified by Virginia & Lee McAlester in their important work *A Field Guide to American Houses*.⁴⁰ His design also makes good use of the "irregularity of plan

³⁸ The original signed blueprints for the house are still in the possession of the current owners.

³⁹ Reiff, Daniel D. *Houses from Books: Treatises, Pattern Books, and Catalogs in American Architecture, 1738-1950*. University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania University Press, 2000, p. 114.

⁴⁰ McAlester, Virginia & Lee. *A Field Guide to American Houses*. New York: Knopf, 1984, p. 264.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section 8 Page 14

Robinson, John C. and Mary, Farmstead
Town of Union, Rock Co., Wisconsin

and massing" and the "asymmetrical facade" composition that are hallmarks of the Queen Anne style that are specifically mentioned in the Queen Anne style subsection of the Architectural Styles study unit of the CRMP. He also makes use of the variegated exterior surface materials, wall projections, and cutaway bay windows that are all elements mentioned in the CRMP as being specific attributes of the style.⁴¹

The Robinson house is especially interesting because its very complete documentation shows how the Barber firm adapted its designs to meet the special needs of its clients when such changes were requested and it also shows how these clients sometimes adapted these plans still further during the course of construction. The Barber firm's willingness to make such changes when requested was actually one of their selling points.

Naturally, some clients would want changes from the plans depicted in his [Barber's] book. As he noted: "In ordering plans, in which you would like slight changes, it is best to take the plans as they are and affect the changes between yourself and builder, without additional cost. But if changes of importance are required it had better be left to us, for which our charges will always be moderate. Write for charges."⁴²

Comparing the plans of the Robinson house that were provided to them by Barber's firm with the plan and illustration shown in Barber's *Modern Dwellings: A Book of Practical Designs and Plans*, published in 1901, shows that the Robinsons wanted five second story bedrooms rather than the three shown on the published plans.⁴³ As a result, the Barber firm pushed the rear of the house back a number of feet to accommodate them and additional changes were made to the first story's service areas and the rear entrances to the house were also repositioned. Comparing the finished house with the plans provided by the company shows that still more changes were made during the course of construction, the most notable of which was the substitution of a bay window for the dining room's proposed fireplace.

The builder of the house was Robert Hankinson (1849-????), a carpenter who lived in the nearby Dane County community of Brooklyn, and the completion of the house was considered to be significant enough to warrant local newspaper coverage.

⁴¹ Wyatt, Barbara (Ed.). Op. Cit., Vol. 2, 2-15 (Architecture).

⁴² Reiff, Daniel D. Op. Cit, p. 115.

⁴³ *Barber's Turn-of-the-century Houses: Elevations and Floor Plans*. Mineola, NY: Dover Publications, 2008, p. 141. This is a reprint of Barber's *Modern Dwellings: A Book of Practical Designs and Plans*, published in 1901.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section 8 Page 15

Robinson, John C. and Mary, Farmstead
Town of Union, Rock Co., Wisconsin

Mr. Hankinson has just completed John Robinson's house and says it is the best farm residence he ever saw.⁴⁴

Besides its two houses, the significance of the Robinson farmstead is enhanced by the survival of its very intact mostly twentieth century agricultural outbuildings. The study of agricultural outbuildings as distinct architectural entities is still in its early stages according to the CRMP's Agricultural Outbuildings study unit and the systematic work necessary to identify such buildings and to develop a morphology that describes them has not yet been completed. In the absence of such research, "A correlation between crops, technology, ethnicity, and architecture cannot always be made."⁴⁵ What has been identified and quantified at this time are such visually distinct types as half-timber and centric barns and types related to single purpose, highly specific usages such as hop houses, corn cribs, tobacco barns and the like. For the more common multi-use types of agricultural outbuildings found on the Robinson Farmstead, however, most of the background material that will allow them to be properly evaluated has yet to be produced. Never-the-less, it is still possible to evaluate these buildings according to the standards embodied in the CRMP, which states: "Like other building forms, the most significant vernacular ... examples will be those with the highest integrity."⁴⁶ Using integrity as an indicator of significance for vernacular and astylistic buildings it appears that all the surviving outbuildings associated with the farmstead may rightly claim to be contributing resources.

The farmstead's most significant contributing outbuildings are its two main barns, both of which are excellent examples of the Wisconsin Dairy Barn type as described in the Agricultural Outbuildings subsection of the CRMP.

This barn type was developed and promoted by the University of Wisconsin in the late nineteenth century. It is a long, narrow barn with two rows of stalls in the interior, divided by a corridor running from end to end. Several windows regularly spaced generally pierce the side walls. The Wisconsin dairy barn is generally built on a concrete foundation. Its gambrel roof usually has ventilators of some sort.⁴⁷

The earliest of the Robinson's two such barns was built in 1915 (Map No. 4) and original blueprints in the possession of the Farmstead's current owners show that this barn was actually designed by the Agricultural Engineering Department of the University of Wisconsin's College of Engineering in January of 1915. The newer of the two barns (Map No. 7) is very similar but it was completed in 1932

⁴⁴ *The Tribune*. Evansville, WI. December 4, 1900.

⁴⁵ Wyatt, Barbara (Ed.). Vol. 2, (Architecture), p. 5-1.

⁴⁶ *Ibid*, p. 3-10.

⁴⁷ *Ibid*, p. 5-4.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section 8 Page 16

Robinson, John C. and Mary, Farmstead
Town of Union, Rock Co., Wisconsin

to a design supplied by the Architectural Department of the Hunt, Helm, Ferris Co., of Harvard, Illinois, which was a well known manufacturer of dairy and farm-related equipment whose "Star" line of products would become the company's new name in 1931. This 98 by 36-foot barn was built to replace one that had been destroyed in a fire in October of 1931, and both it and the 1915 barn are still totally intact today, they are in very good condition, and both date from the John C. Robinson period of ownership and display the typical characteristics of their building type.

The John C. and Mary Robinson Farmstead is therefore believed to be eligible for listing in the NRHP because of its significance as an intact multi-generational farmstead that contains both historic agricultural outbuildings and the houses that have historically been associated with them. Groupings such as this are becoming increasingly rare in every part of Wisconsin due to age, obsolescence and changes in agricultural practices. As a consequence, identifying these groupings and nominating them to the NRHP is becoming an important priority. Intact farmsteads such as the one established by John C. and Mary Robinson and continuously improved by their descendants are thus of considerable importance in providing information that can be used to establish the significance of other farmsteads in the state.

Archeological Potential

No information was found regarding any resources of pre-historic archeological significance on the farmstead and the fact that this land has been intensely cultivated since the middle of the nineteenth century makes such an occurrence somewhat unlikely. However, historic photos of the farmstead show that now non-extant outbuildings once existed and archeological evidence of these buildings may still be present today.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section 9 Page 1

Robinson, John C. and Mary, Farmstead
Town of Union, Rock Co., Wisconsin

Major Bibliographical References:

Barber's Turn-of-the-Century Houses: Elevations and Floor Plans. Mineola, NY: Dover Publications, 2008.

Curti, Merle and Vernon Carstensen. *The University of Wisconsin: A History, 1848-1925.* Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1974.

The Evansville Enterprise. Various issues.

The Evansville Review. Various issues.

The Evansville Tribune. Various issues.

McAlester, Virginia & Lee. *A Field Guide to American Houses.* New York: Knopf, 1984.

Montgomery, Ruth Ann. *Evansville: Glimpses of the Grove.* Evansville: n.d. (ca.1989).

National Register Bulletin 15, *How to Apply the National Register Criteria For Evaluation.* Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of the Interior, National Register Branch, 1991.

National Register Bulletin 16A, *How to Complete the National Register Registration Form.* Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of the Interior, National Register Branch, 1991.

Original blueprints in the possession of the current owners.

Reiff, Daniel D. *Houses from Books: Treatises, Pattern Books, and Catalogs in American Architecture, 1738-1950.* University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania University Press, 2000.

Wyatt, Barbara (Ed.). *Cultural Resource Management in Wisconsin.* Historic Preservation Division, State Historical Society of Wisconsin, Madison, Wisconsin, 1986. Vol. 2.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section 10 Page 1

Robinson, John C. and Mary, Farmstead
Town of Union, Rock Co. WI

Verbal Boundary Description:

The John C. and Mary Robinson Farmstead is located in the SW $\frac{1}{4}$ of the SE $\frac{1}{4}$ of Section 19, T4N, R10E, Town of Union, Rock County. The boundary line begins at a point on the north edge of pavement of County Highway C that is located 750-feet E of the SW corner of said SW $\frac{1}{4}$. The line then continues N 450-feet, then turns 90 degrees and continues W 750-feet, then turns 90 degrees and continues S 520-feet, then turns 90 degrees and continues E 230-feet, then turns 90 degrees and continues S 230-feet to the north edge of pavement of County Highway C. The line then turns 90 degrees and continues E along said north edge of pavement to the POB. These boundaries enclose approximately 6.56 acres.

Boundary Justification:

The current owners of the Robinson Farmstead own a total of 35 acres that comprises most of the SW $\frac{1}{4}$ of the SW $\frac{1}{4}$ of Section 19. Most of this land is cultivated for crops but the smaller portion whose boundaries are described above encloses all the built resources that have historically been associated with the Robinson Farmstead and it includes enough land to provide an appropriate setting. These boundaries, however, exclude a 230-foot by 230-foot-square parcel that is located in the SW corner of the Farmstead because this smaller parcel contains modern feedlot buildings that were not associated with the Robinson Farmstead's operations during the Robinson's period of ownership.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Robinson, John C. and Mary, Farmstead
Town of Union, Rock Co. WI

Section Photo Page 1

Items a - d are the same for photos 1 - 16.

Photo 1

- a) Robinson, John C. & Mary, Farmstead
- b) Town of Union, Rock County, WI
- c) Timothy F. Heggland, November 2008
- d) Wisconsin Historical Society
- e) Robinson House, View looking N
- f) Photo 1 of 16

Photo 2

- e) Robinson House, stair hall, View looking NW
- f) Photo 2 of 16

Photo 3

- e) Robinson House, looking W from old dining room
- f) Photo 3 of 16

Photo 4

- e) Robinson House, fireplace in front parlor, View looking NE
- f) Photo 4 of 16

Photo 5

- e) Robinson House, old library from front parlor, View looking N
- f) Photo 5 of 16

Photo 6

- e) Robinson House, second story hall, View looking SW
- f) Photo 6 of 16

Photo 7

- e) Guest House, View looking N
- f) Photo 7 of 16

Photo 8

- e) Garage, View looking N
- f) Photo 8 of 16

Photo 9

- e) Dairy Barn 1, View looking W
- f) Photo 9 of 16

Photo 10

- e) Dairy Barn 1, first story, view looking N
- f) Photo 10 of 16

Photo 11

- e) Dairy Barn 1, second story, view looking NW
- f) Photo 11 of 16

Photo 12

- e) Sheep Shed (right), Machine Shed (left), View looking NW
- f) Photo 12 of 16

Photo 13

- e) Dairy Barn 2, View looking E
- f) Photo 13 of 16

Photo 14

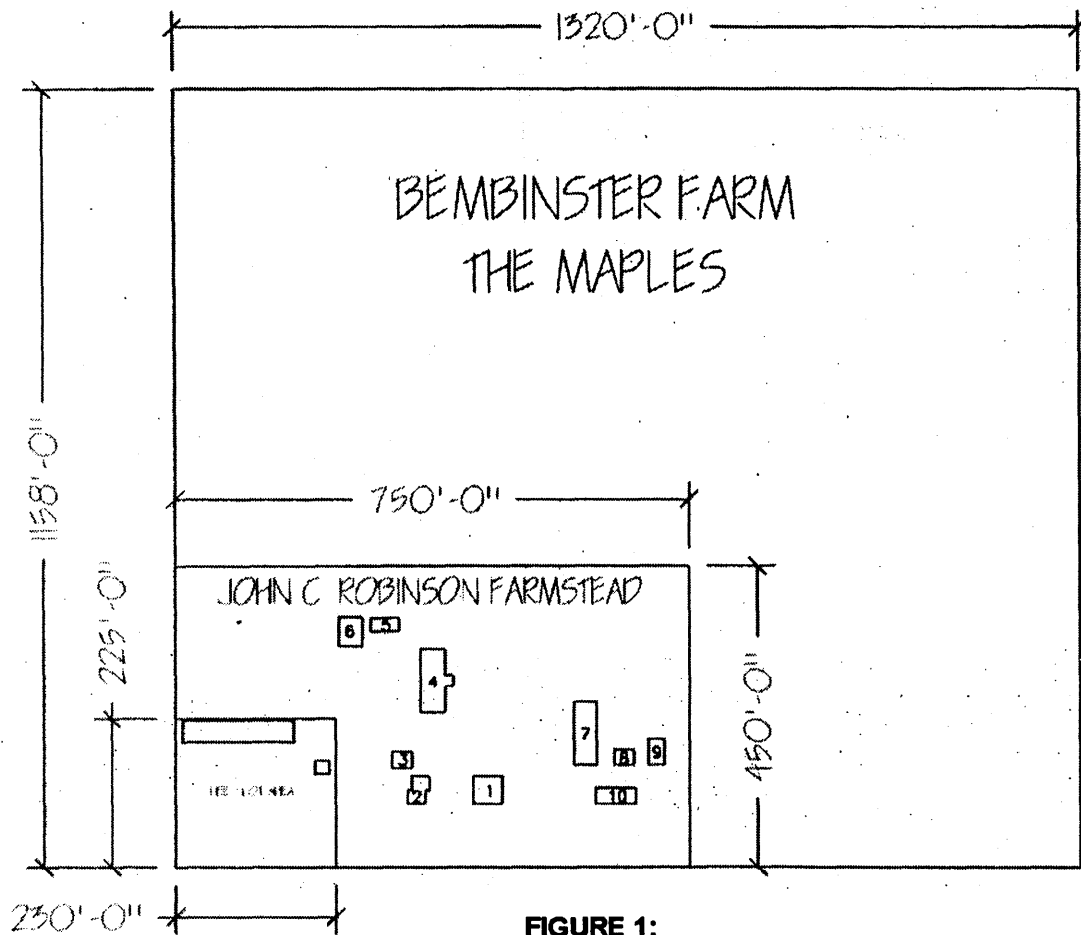
- e) Garage Workshop, w/ Dairy Barn 2 behind, View looking NW
- f) Photo 14 of 16

Photo 15

- e) Granary, View looking NE
- f) Photo 15 of 16

Photo 16

- e) Steer Shed, View looking NNW
- f) Photo 16 of 16



BUILDING LEGEND		
#	DESCRIPTION	DATE
1	ROBINSON HOME	1900
2	GUEST HOUSE	1850
3	GARAGE	ca. 1850
4	BARN	1915
5	SHEEP SHED	ca. 1850
6	MACHINE SHED	1950
7	BARN	1935
8	GARAGE WORKSHOP	ca. 1850
9	GRAINERY	ca. 1850
10	STEER SHED	1944

FIGURE 1:
ROBINSON, JOHN C. AND MARY,
FARMSTEAD
 18002 WEST COUNTY TRUCK HIGHWAY C
 TOWN OF UNION,
 ROCK COUNTY, WISCONSIN



SECOND FLOOR PLAN



FIRST FLOOR PLAN



DESIGN NO. 212

PERSPECTIVE VIEW

Des. by Barber & Co., Inc.

COST, \$1,250 TO \$1,400

This shows a rather peculiar design, but is one of the most fascinating structures when built. There is a beautiful something about it not found elsewhere. The plans are for a wide lot of not much depth and are so compact and convenient they give lots of room for the money. Simple interior finish is employed in keeping down cost. In many localities this house can be built for \$1,000. It reads color, shingled roof, brick foundation. Width of front is 48 feet. Stories, 10 feet, and 9 feet 2 inches.

FIGURE 2:
ROBINSON, JOHN C. AND MARY,
FARMSTEAD
1802 WEST COUNTY TRUCK HIGHWAY C
TOWN OF LINCOLN,
ROCK COUNTY, WISCONSIN

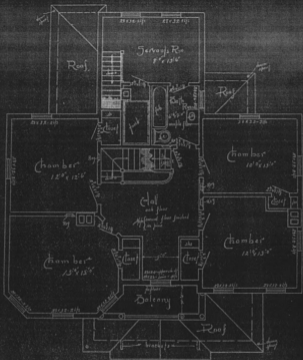
FIGURE 4:
ROBINSON, JOHN C. AND MARY,
FARMSTEAD
 18002 WEST COUNTY TRUCK HIGHWAY C
 TOWN OF UNION,
 ROCK COUNTY, WISCONSIN



Geo. F. Barber & Co.
 Architects
 Knoxville Tenn.

FIRST FLOOR PLAN
 1/4" = 1'-0" Scale

Residence for
 J.C. Robinson
 Irontonville Wis.



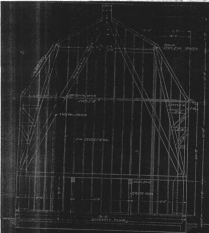
SECOND FLOOR PLAN

1/4" Scale

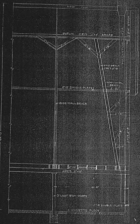
FIGURE 5:

ROBINSON, JOHN C. AND MARY,
FARMSTEAD

18002 WEST COUNTY TRUCK HIGHWAY C
TOWN OF UNION,
ROCK COUNTY, WISCONSIN



CROSS SECTION SHOWING END TRUSS AND FLOOR JOISTS



PART OF LONGITUDINAL SECTION SHOWING ROOF AND FLOOR JOISTS

**MODEL BARN
FRAMING DETAILS**

**FIGURE 6:
ROBINSON, JOHN G. AND MARY,
FARMSTEAD
1800 WEST COUNTY TRUCK HIGHWAY C
TOWN OF LINCOLN,
ROCK COUNTY, WISCONSIN**

WISCONSIN HISTORICAL ARCHIVES
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN
MADISON, WISCONSIN

