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pNPS Form 10-900
(Expires 5/31/2012)
Wisconsin Word Processing Format (Approved 1/92)



**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 Harris, George and Mable, Round Barn
other names/site number

2. Location

street & number	S1123 Harris Road			N/A	not for publication
city or town	Town of Forest			N/A	vicinity
state	Wisconsin	code	WI	county	Vernon
				code	123
				zip code	54634

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.)

Jim Danga
Signature of certifying official/Title

12/1/16
Date

State Historic Preservation Officer – Wisconsin

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

Harris, George and Mable, Round Barn

Vernon

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:)

Barbara Lopez
Signature of the Keeper

1-24-17
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
1	0 buildings
0	0 sites
0	0 structures
0	0 objects
1	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
previously listed in the National Register**

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

AGRICULTURE/SUBSISTENCE/animal facility

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

VACANT/NOT IN USE

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

OTHER: Centric Barn

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

Foundation Limestone

Walls Tin/Wood

Roof Steel/Wood

Other n/a

Narrative Description

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

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)

Architecture

Period of Significance

1906

1944 (tornado)

Significant Dates

1906

1944

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Shivers, Alga

Narrative Statement of Significance

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

Harris, George and Mable, Round Barn

Vernon

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	Marcus Kaplan	date	July 18, 2014
organization		telephone	(773) 276-2288
street & number	S1123 Harris Road	zip code	54634
city or town	Forest	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.

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Harris, George and Mable, Round Barn
Town of Forest, Vernon County, WI

Narrative Description

The distinct and largely intact round barn was built in 1906 for George and Mable Harris. The Harris family operated a 240-acre farm, inherited from George's father, in the Town of Forest in Vernon County. The two-story round barn measures fifty-six feet in diameter and has a central interior silo measuring twelve feet in diameter. It is an excellent example of prevalent vernacular round barn type relatively common in Vernon County, Wisconsin. The barn sits on a fieldstone foundation with walls of vertical board-and-batten wood siding covered with metal panels. The lower level has eleven windows and two doors, and the upper hay mow level has four clerestory openings and one large barn door. The walls are capped with a large wood framed and sheathed gambrel roof with metal roof panels. This roof is comprised of a series of long trusses terminating at a central high-point above the interior wood silo. The hay mow floor is constructed of sawn lumber in a radiating pattern from the central structural silo. There are a number of round barns in the Vernon County region that possess a similar form, scale, and construction. The George and Mable Harris Barn was constructed by local builder, Alga Shivers, and was likely the first such round barn built by him and his crew. The round barn has been maintained since its construction and has good integrity despite some alterations and repairs. The barn ceased to be used for agricultural purposes in the 1970s, and ownership transferred to the current owner in 1980, who has put effort and resources into the building.¹

The Harris Round Barn is located in the rural town of Forest along Harris Road. Other buildings on the property include an extant farmhouse and garage. The tobacco barn is non-extant. These farm resources are of more recent construction; consequently, the property is not eligible for the National Register as an historic farmstead and these resources are not included in this nomination. The parcel, as currently defined, is bounded by Harris Road to the east and south and by steep hills to the north and west. Most of the buildings, on either side of the road, are clumped together at the bend in Harris Road. The round barn, despite being obscured partially by trees, dominates the view at this section of Harris Road given its proximity to the road. The Harris farm is located in a narrow and deep valley surrounded by tree-covered hillsides and much of the farmland in the valley, no longer in agricultural use, has returned to forest.

Building Description

The George and Mable Harris Round Barn is a free-standing centric barn situated close to a bend in Harris Road. The true circle plan of the barn is 56 feet in diameter, relatively small for a true round barn, but not extremely so. The barn stands roughly 36 feet high from the low point of the foundation

¹ Conversation with the property owner, Marcus Kaplan; May 19, 2014. & Vernon County plat maps and atlases; & Vernon County directories.

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to the top of the cupola and has two floors. The lower floor serves as stalls, pens, and a feeding alley for milking cows and has a vertical clearance of roughly seven feet in height. The level is presently used for wood storage. Above is the hay mow floor that makes up most of the barn's volume. A large twelve-foot diameter silo is located directly in the center of the barn, penetrating both floors and extending as a cupola above the roof. The hay mow floor is presently empty and has been used for both general storage, as well as its intended use, storing hay and feed. The barn has a rectangular milk house addition at the southeast façade having a concrete foundation, wood siding and metal roof.

The Harris Round Barn sits on a fieldstone foundation and is built into the slope of a hillside rising to the northwest. This historic dairy barn configuration, often referred to as a "bank barn" was common at the turn of the twentieth century; it is designed to permit direct access to both floors via large doors from the exterior. The field stone for the foundation was collected on site from the Harris farm fields and set in concrete. The foundation wall is roughly two feet thick and varies considerably by location along the circumference of the barn. Most of the field stone appears to be limestone, common in the southern and western parts of the state of Wisconsin. Many round barns and other vernacular agricultural buildings of the period were constructed with fieldstone foundations. While level at the top, the foundation wall varies in height following the height of grade around the building. Three feet is exposed on the south and eastern façades while it steps up twice towards the northwestern façade. The foundation is largely intact and structurally sound with the exception of two locations. At the northeast façade the original foundation was crumbling and falling away from the wall. At this location the foundation was recently repaired and rebuilt. The area is easily identifiable by the board-and-batten wood siding above this section of the foundation. The other portion of the barn's foundation in need of repair is along the south façade near the main door to the lower level. A similar situation is occurring at this location as the foundation is crumbling and falling away from the wall.

As a truly round structure, the Harris Round Barn does not have clearly defined façades. The south side of the round barn, facing part of Harris Road and the property's garage, consists of a wall constructed of a fieldstone foundation at the base with a wood frame wall, sheathed in metal panels rising an additional seventeen feet to the eaves above. The stone foundation wall terminates with a large wood sill on which the rest of the barn exterior wall rests. The metal panels at the lower level have a stamped pattern and are arranged in horizontal stripes, cut to fit around openings. The pattern of these tin panels is vaguely imitative of masonry construction; however, it is clear, especially without paint, that they are large metal sheets. This type of metal siding, found on other round barns in the region, was introduced as a building material and became common in the 1910s and 1920s. The metal panels change type above the doorway and fenestration of the first level to a larger vertical variety, measuring at least ten feet in length by almost two feet in width. These panels overlap and alternate to avoid openings and any uneven horizontal lines on the façade of the barn. These metal panels likely date from a later period, having a corrugated and industrial appearance. The Harris Round Barn was

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repaired significantly in the wake of a tornado in 1944 and it is possible that these metal panels date from that time. Both types of metal panels appear to be fastened directly to existing wood siding. There are six windows on the lower level that can be seen along the southern façade. These windows match and are roughly two feet wide, three feet high, and equally spaced ten feet apart. The fixed, wood, single-hung windows consist of four equal square panes each and are painted red, resting on small wood sills. The window immediately to the west of the main lower entrance has been boarded up on both the exterior and interior. Besides this one, all the other windows appear to be intact from their original construction. The main entrance to the lower level faces nearly due south and holds a large wood door, approximately three and one-half feet wide and seven feet tall. The door's header aligns with those of all the windows. Directly under the shallow eaves, facing the southeast, is a large clerestory opening many feet above the finished floor of the hay mow. It is presumed that this opening, along with three other similar ones spaced equally around the round barn, was originally used similarly to a Dutch door, utilizing a pulley and crane system to load bales in and out of the barn without using the large barn doors. Such large openings would also serve ventilation purposes. The opening has two large wood shutters for inclement weather. The exterior wall terminates with a wood plate for the attachment of the roof above, with radiating rafters that extend to an open eave and narrow fascia.

The east side of the barn also has a lower level entry door, roughly facing due east, set in a façade of a low fieldstone foundation wall and two types of metal panels extending to the roof line. Immediately adjacent to the wooden entry door to the north is roughly thirty feet of board-and-batten wood siding resting on a fieldstone foundation and extending up to parallel the door's header horizontally. The board-and-batten siding and this section of the foundation have been recently repaired. On the other side of the doorway is a boarded-up window that likely matched the other single-hung windows along the lower level of the Harris Barn that can be seen on the southern façade. Above the door is a track cantilevered from the opening out into the yard for about twenty feet. Presumably for the removal of manure, the track is supported from wires hanging from the barn exterior. The metal panel siding above the lower level matches that elsewhere on the round barn. Facing approximately northeast is a pair of vertically aligned openings to the upper hay mow level. Within the lower opening is a hinged door (recently replaced), while the higher clerestory opening was likely used for loading hay into the hay mow. Unlike some of the other clerestory openings on the Harris Round Barn, this one is missing doors or shutters. Along the southeast façade of the barn is a non-contributing, attached milk house addition, built approximately 30 years after the barn was constructed. This small wood structure has a doorway leading into the barn, a window, and another door leading out into the barnyard. It has a concrete foundation, whitewashed wood siding, and a metal roof. The milk house was clearly added subsequent to the barn's construction given the differences in materials and construction as compared to the barn.

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Grade changes along the north side of the Harris Barn as the earth is bermed up at this location to access the hay mow doors on the second level. This “bank barn” design is incredibly common in round barns. As the level of the ground rises, the fieldstone foundation makes two steps of a few feet to the point where, at the northwest ramp, the grade extends all the way up to the floor of the hay mow and the threshold of the large barn doors. Resting on this higher foundation wall are three small windows. These casement windows, measuring roughly two feet wide by one foot in height and spaced about six feet apart, are smaller than the other windows along the lower level of the barn. The upper level of the barn is sided with the same vertical metal panels fastened directly to the older wood siding underneath as elsewhere. A large barn door and the sloped ground leading to it dominate the northwest side of the Harris Round Barn. The lower level in this area is largely covered by sloped earth and a cracked concrete approach to the barn doors. The pair of (replaced) wood barn doors and frame extending from grade to a few feet from the underside of the roof eave are roughly twelve feet tall and sixteen feet wide. The two new wood doors, stained and consisting of vertical dimensional lumber, are set on hinges and open to expose a large opening into the second-level hay mow.

The west side of the barn is very similar to the other façades of the barn. The lower level facing the farm house has the stepped, fieldstone foundation wall at the north end adjacent to the bermed ramp leading to the large barn doors. Along the west façade, curving to the south, are four, single-hung windows that match those found on the southern façade of the barn. The stone foundation wall extends above grade roughly three feet; and the more recent metal siding continues above, transitioning at approximately the second-level floor. A clerestory opening is located high above near the roofline.

The roof sits on a double plate that extends around the entire circumference of the round barn. Rafters, arranged in a radial pattern from the center, are simply extended and exposed in a flared angle at the end with a narrow fascia at the edge. The roof initially slopes sharply, and then adjusts in a gambrel shape to a lower pitch at two-thirds of its total sixteen-foot height. The roof is currently clad in large metal panels, laid simply in an overlapping pattern. The roof terminates in the high center point, where a cupola sits directly above the central interior silo; this cupola is sided with the same corrugated metal as the rest of the barn with the same metal panel roofing. The metal roofing is a recent repair to the barn, having been added in the last five years. The cupola, used for ventilation of the silo, is roughly three feet tall and has six louvered vents spaced equally around its circumference.

The central circular silo, completely hidden from the exterior, is constructed from similar wood lumber as the exterior walls of the round barn; however, the steamed and curved pieces are on the interior of the silo, rather than visible on the exterior. The twelve-foot diameter silo, only eleven-foot diameter on its interior, sits directly in the center of the round barn, penetrating both floors with its own fieldstone foundation. Occasional openings are punctured in the wood silo to permit access and ventilation at the top and bottom. An integrated ladder along the south side of the silo is constructed in

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a large vertical slit in the stone masonry and wood wall of the silo with metal rungs spaced equally up the middle of the opening. The silo extends vertically past thirty feet and serves as the bearing wall for beams in the interior hay mow floor and rafters in the barn roof. The roof of the silo is constructed of radial wood lumber with an opening in the central high point. The cupola sits directly above the center of the silo. In many ways the silo's form is the same as the entire round barn itself.

Cow milking stanchions and stables occupied the first level of the Harris Round Barn; however, it is currently used for storage. The floor is bare fieldstone, similar to the foundation walls, and the plan is arranged in concentric rings based on function. The silo sits in the middle, then the feeding troughs, then the stanchions, then a space for the cows to stand and be milked, then a gutter, then the mechanical equipment such as a manure carrier and track, all in concentric rings from the center to the exterior wall. Much of the original equipment, including tracks and pulleys, is still present. There are between twelve and twenty cow stanchions in the lower level. These stanchions are arranged so that cows face inwards for milking and feeding with their backs to the windows. The width of this working ring of space is twenty feet. The exterior walls are simply the exposed dimensional lumber construction and fieldstone walls, with the exception of a recent repair on the northeast façade that added a board-and-batten wood wall; this section is also exposed on the interior. The ceiling is the exposed wood structure, mostly dimensional lumber, of the hay mow floor above. This floor structure is arranged with members radiating out from the central silo. There is one circular row of columns, near the mid-point of the span, to support and transition the joists from silo to the exterior wall. These joists are roughly one foot on center bearing on the silo wall, and two feet on center bearing on the exterior wall. A few additional members and columns have been subsequently introduced to address structural issues since construction.

The hay mow second level is a large open space to store hay and feed. The walls are the exposed dimensional lumber of the exterior walls. The large barn door dominates the hay mow interior with four additional clerestory openings with shutters spaced nearly equally around the circumference of the barn. The central silo sits in the middle of the circular space and rises up to near the peak of the roof. There is an opening at the top of the silo to fill and access it, as well as to ventilate to the exterior. The silo has a number of names, initials, and dates painted and marked on it, visible from the interior, denoting previous owners and important dates in the history of the farm and barn. The roof structure is a series of trusses resting at a low point on the top of the exterior wood frame walls and at a high point on the walls of the silo. The Harris Round Barn utilizes a total truss, which spans the entire length of the roof structure. This construction detail is a relatively unique approach but one which is common in the work of builder, Alga Shivers, in the round barns of Vernon County. This shallow truss was site-built from dimensional lumber as is the rest of the wood roof structure and gives the roof the distinctive gambrel shape. The trusses rest at only six inches on center on the high silo end and two feet on center at the low exterior wall. Horizontal boards, in consistent sets around the circumference

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of the roof structure, are nailed to the top side of the structure as decking. Currently, there is a finished layer of metal panels on the roof structure. A number of pairs of columns and bracing have been recently added to the interior of the hay mow to support the roof which was in danger of collapsing. The columns run directly from the floor, supported by the column ring in the lower level, to the underside of the trusses with bracing to the central silo. Above the silo is an extension of the roof structure pitched to a central point with a cupola for ventilation capping the roof. The roof of the barn has been maintained and repaired with patches.

Integrity

Many of the repairs that have affected the George and Mable Harris Round Barn have been completed within the last five years. The current owner, in an effort to preserve the structure, worked with a local builder and craftsman to reinforce the roof with additional interior columns in the hay mow, shore up portions of the exterior stone foundation wall, and add a metal overlapping roof to protect the building into the future. There was a conscious attempt to preserve as much as possible of the original barn design and its materials and limit deterioration; repairs were made using like materials. It is believed other repairs occurred some time ago in response to weather damage. The overall integrity of the Harris Round Barn remains in its form, appearance, and materials. The milk house, while a later addition, does not detract from the integrity of the barn. The milk house is clearly discernable from the original centric form of the barn and represents the continuous use of the barn for its original purpose, reflecting changes in response to the evolving practices in dairy farming. The historic form of the round barn, location, and the distinctive mark of a local vernacular builder are still clearly in evidence. The barn demonstrates the structural qualities and agricultural uses of the round barn in Wisconsin in a largely intact form.

The exterior siding on the barn is a mixture of original wood, and metal from the repair made in 1935. Metal panel sheathing was a common material applied to barns to make repairs and is accepted as a repair treatment that does not detract from the overall integrity of the barn, especially if other aspects of its form, structure and construction are extant. The tornado that damaged the barn in 1944 was a pivotal moment in the history of this building; the owner chose to make repairs instead of demolish and by completing these repairs, preserved the round barn. Due to these repairs, the barn still stands and retains its other character-defining features: its round form, foundation, interior structural system, interior silo, and windows and doors. Of note, the total truss, a unique roof structure common in the work of master builder Alga Shivers, remains intact. For these reasons, the barn retains integrity, sufficient for individual listing in the National Register of Historic Places.

The George and Mable Harris Round Barn has been fortunate in consistently receiving maintenance and care from its owner who have taken pride in their property. In addition, local organizations such

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Harris, George and Mable, Round Barn
Town of Forest, Vernon County, WI

as Kickapoo Valley Heritage and the Vernon County Historical Society have taken an active role in promoting, protecting, and preserving Vernon County's historic resources. In listing this resource, the owner hopes to obtain tax credits and/or other incentives to maintain and restore the property.

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Harris, George and Mable, Round Barn
Town of Forest, Vernon County, WI

Narrative Statement of Significance

The George and Mable Harris Barn is nominated to the National Register of Historic Places for its local significance under Criterion C, in the area of Architecture as an example of a unique Wisconsin agricultural building, the round barn. The barn was designed by Alga Shivers, a well-known carpenter with a specialization in designing and constructing round barns. The barn has good integrity, retaining its distinctive form, structural composition and construction, and materials. Centric, or round, barns are becoming rarer and are significant to the history of agricultural architecture in Wisconsin, especially in the context of vernacular round barn traditions. The period of significance is 1906, its date of construction, and 1944, a second period of significance reflecting a pivotal architectural moment when tornado damage was repaired.

Methodology

Research was undertaken to assess the National Register of Historic Places potential of the barn utilizing a variety of primary and secondary sources.

Historic Context

Of the 112 extant centric barns identified in Wisconsin, the George and Mable Harris Round Barn is an excellent example of the type and illustrates the importance of such barns to the turn of the century period.² The Harris Round Barn sits amongst the unglaciated driftless region of Vernon County in west-central Wisconsin. Its deep valleys have served to insulate and isolate many of the settlers who arrived in the area from the mid- to late-nineteenth century. Such a pastoral setting is ideal for the development of regional vernacular round barns to compliment the growth of dairy farming in the area at the turn of the century. In the first two decades of the twentieth century, as many as twenty round barns were constructed in Vernon County. By the mid-1990s only fifteen were extant, and by the mid-2000s only twelve remained. Currently, there are ten extant true round barns in the county.³ It is estimated that Vernon County has one of the greatest number of the building type in the nation, and certainly the state.

The George and Mable Harris Barn was constructed in 1906 on land already owned by the Harris family. Thomas Harris and his family settled in Vernon County from Virginia after the end of the Civil War as tobacco farmers. By the turn of the twentieth century, the Harris brothers farmed more

² *Wisconsin Centric Barns Multiple Property Listing*. Please refer to this document for baseline contextual information.

³ Alderson, Kevin and Patsy. *Barns without Corners: Round Barns of Vernon County, Wisconsin*. Onalaska, WI: Kickapoo Valley Heritage, 2010, Page 5; & Fish, Gail, Wava G. Haney, and June Zalewski. *Round Barns of Vernon County, Wisconsin: A Circle Tour*. Viroqua, WI: Vernon County Historical Society, 1996, Page 1.

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Harris, George and Mable, Round Barn
Town of Forest, Vernon County, WI

than 720 acres in the Cheyenne Valley in the Town of Forest. George and Mable Harris began dairy farming on 240 acres along South Billings Creek and constructed the round barn in the early twentieth century. Both George Harris and Burl Harris used the barn as a dairy barn for milking Jersey Cows.⁴ Burl Harris, George and Mable's son, inherited the property and managed the farm from the 1940s to the 1970s, when it was briefly owned by Jack Reter, and then Marcus Kaplan, the current owner, who purchased the property in 1980.⁵ The property is currently used as a second home, and the round barn is used for storage.

The majority of Vernon County's centric barns, including the subject barn, were constructed under the supervision of the son of a slave, Alga Shivers, a notable local builder. Shivers' recognized barn designs are, without known exception, constructed entirely of wood. The roof construction of the Harris Barn, emphasizing the efficient pattern of roofing boards and the utilization of a full-length truss spanning from sill to the central peak creating a gambrel shaped roof, resembles that of other local round barns known to have been constructed by Shivers.

The Harris Barn can be understood in the context of later and vernacular round barn developments in Wisconsin, especially those located in Vernon County and the western portion of the state.

Agricultural literature promoted centric barn design around the turn of the nineteenth century and were built in some number from Vermont to California. Simultaneously, the Wisconsin dairy industry was growing rapidly during the late-nineteenth century. Improved herds of dairy cattle were encouraged by Hoard's Dairyman, published in Fort Atkinson, Wisconsin, by research conducted at the University of Wisconsin Agricultural Experiment Stations, and by development at the University of Wisconsin in 1890 of the Babcock test that determines the amount of butterfat in milk.

Built to utilize space efficiently, round barns allowed for new farming technologies, including the silo. In centric barns, the silo was typically located in the center with cow stanchions and other equipment radiating outward. The inclusion of as many functions possible under one roof, such as mow, stable, milking stanchions, silo and granary added many conveniences to the farmer's chores.

The newest agricultural developments, often a round silo in the center, a ventilation system, including louvers or a cupola, and other conveniences such as hay track with pulley in the mow and a manure track were incorporated into centric barn design. Cows face the center of the circular aisle, another design efficiency that makes chores easier for the dairy farmer.

⁴ Alderson, Kevin and Patsy, Page 10.

⁵ Vernon County plat maps and atlases; & Vernon County directories; & Jost, Larry T. *The Round and Five or More Equal Sided Barns of Wisconsin*. Franklin, WI: L.T. Jost, 1982, Page 43.

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Harris, George and Mable, Round Barn
Town of Forest, Vernon County, WI

The George and Mable Harris Round Barn

The 56-foot diameter barn is located near a sharp bend in Harris road running along the valley flanked by steep hills on both sides. Few of the original farm buildings remain. The original farmhouse was demolished and the current Bungalow style house and a garage were constructed. A number of other farm buildings, including a tobacco barn, have been demolished. The milk house addition, constructed sometime after the 1930s and attached to the eastern façade of the round barn, remains. The lower level of the barn was occupied by more than a dozen cow stanchions and stalls, but is now used to store wood in concentric rings. The lower level is accessed from two doors on the southern and eastern façades, one leading to the farmyard, and the other toward the road and house. The hay mow floor above is accessed from a large barn door facing the northwest. The silo sits in the center of the barn. There are also four clerestory openings in the hay mow to provide access, ventilation, and light. Such openings are relatively rare in round barns, especially those in Vernon County and attributed to Alga Shivers.

The stone foundation of the barn was constructed from fieldstones found on the site, and the hard maple lumber was harvested, cut, dried, and steamed on site at the Harris farm as well.⁶ In many ways this arrangement is similar to other true round barns from the 1900s and 1910s, and especially those nearby examples in Vernon County.

The roof structure of the Harris Round Barn is distinctive in its use of nearly total trusses to support each rafter. The rafters are arranged in a radial pattern from the lower exterior bearing wall to the central high point above the interior silo. The silo structurally behaves as a large central column for an otherwise self-supporting roof. However, the roof of the George and Mable Harris Round Barn has required significant reinforcement. Over time the roof has experienced structural strains, including surviving a tornado in 1944. The current owner, with the help of local craftsmen, constructed a number of columns in a concentric arrangement in the hay mow to support the roof at its gambrel point to prevent its collapse.⁷ The roof takes its gambrel shape, with a sharp slope transitioning to a low one, from a long, shallow truss under each rafter. Truss systems are typical in the support of wood barn roofs; however, few examples are as shallow or as long as the truss systems of Vernon County round barns. The entire roof structure is constructed with dimensional wood lumber for a stick-built frame. This structural system is found in all of the barns constructed by Alga Shivers in Vernon County. While the basic form is common to many true round barns, the pattern of roof boards and the nearly total truss are distinctive. In addition to the interior columns added to support the roof in 2010, supports were also added to the lower level. Portions of the foundation were shored up, and a section of the lower exterior wall along the northeast façade was rebuilt with board-and-batten wood siding. A

⁶ Alderson, Kevin and Patsy, Page 10.

⁷ Conversation with the property owner; and conversation with local builder, Curtis Miller; May 20, 2014.

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Town of Forest, Vernon County, WI

new metal panel roof was also added at approximately the same time.⁸ While these are substantial improvements, these changes do not affect the integrity because most of the original materials are extant, and the overall form and character of the round barn remains intact.

The George and Mable Harris Round Barn has a high degree of integrity. The barn demonstrates local architectural significance exhibiting the construction techniques, materials and original use of the round barn form. It is a fine and unique example of the true round barn type having good integrity, and stands out amongst other round barns in Vernon County.

Alga Shivers

The building methods used in the construction of round barns in Vernon County are distinctive. Most of these barns were constructed with the assistance and supervision of local carpenters and builders. Raised by local farmers, such barns would be designed and organized by figures who would proceed to work on a number of such projects, one every few years. One such builder was Alga Shivers, who led the building of as many as fifteen round barns in Vernon County, including the George and Mable Harris Round Barn.

Thomas Shivers, Alga's father, was born a slave in Tennessee in 1854 and moved with his family to Vernon County as young man in 1879. There he became one of the most successful farmers in the county and the largest African American land owner in Wisconsin for a time in the late-nineteenth century.⁹ Thomas' son, Alga Shivers, was born in 1889. Alga attended George Smith College in Sedalia, Missouri, and trained as a carpenter and studied mathematics. An avid follower of innovation and technology, Thomas Shivers built a round barn, with Alga's help, in the early 1900s. Alga Shivers likely took this experience as a model for the round barns he built during his career.¹⁰ Among the projects he worked on was the George and Mable Harris Round Barn, which he built at the age of seventeen, along with a crew, in 1906. His work gained enough promise and notoriety that it was published in Illinois farm journals as early as 1910.¹¹ Shivers also served in World War I. He married Flora Revels Waldon in 1945 at the age of 56. The Revels family, prominent in the area, occupied a large farm adjacent to the south of the Harris' property. While Alga and Flora never had children of their own, the couple raised a number of orphaned and related children in their home. Shivers and his family lived in section 35 of the Town of Forest on a 180-acre farm. Alga Shivers was an integral part of the local rural community and serves as an interesting historical figure due to the color of skin in the

⁸ Conversation with the property owner; and conversation with local builder.

⁹ Cooper, Zachery. *Black Settlers in Rural Wisconsin*. Madison, WI: The State Historical Society of Wisconsin Press, 1977, Page 7.

¹⁰ Alderson, Kevin and Patsy, Page 38.

¹¹ Fish, Gail, Wava G. Haney, and June Zalewski, Page 36.

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context of turn of the century America.¹² The fact that Alga Shivers became something of a local hero in Vernon County and a respected builder lends further proof of his importance. Alga Shivers died in 1978.

The construction of as many as fifteen round barns in Vernon and neighboring Monroe counties by Alga Shivers, with the assistance of his brother Ed and a small crew, stands out in the history of the round barn building type. His barns were almost always built of wood. The necessary logs were cut on a specific farm property a year or two in advance. Then they would be sawn and cut into dimensional lumber and boards and constructed as a balloon frame of 2x members on a concrete and rubble foundation.¹³ The roof of a round barn would always be built in the same way with a radial pattern of rafters from the central silo acting as a column for the otherwise self-supporting roof structure. These long rafters, built up of dimensional lumber, were braced as a truss, spanning the distance from the lower sill on the exterior wall to the high point above the central silo. Such trusses were utilized for every single rafter. Vertical boards sheathed the exterior walls, and shingles were overlapped and nailed to sets of boards on the roof. The central silo was typically built of the same materials and in the same manner as the rest of the barn as an integral piece of the round barn structure. Shivers kept detailed notes, calculations, and specifications to assist him in the design of these barns with every piece of lumber documented; however, no drawings of any plans exist.¹⁴ When round barns became unpopular in the 1920s, Shivers continued to build more conventional agricultural buildings and houses as a local carpenter.¹⁵ Through the entire building process, Shivers and his small crew would stay on site, and during the final month or two of construction, they would often be assisted by neighboring farmers to raise the structure of a round barn.¹⁶

Conclusion

The George and Mable Harris Round Barn is significant at the local level under National Register Criterion C in the area of Architecture as a fine example of the round barn form. The barn gains additional distinction from its association with local builder Alga Shivers. Furthermore, the barn maintains its historic integrity in the preservation of its site, context, high level of craft, original materials and form, and high quality design.

¹² Cooper, Zachery, Page 5.

¹³ "Alga Shivers and His Round Barns." *LaFarge Epitaph*, Nov. 7, 1979.

¹⁴ "Alga Shivers." (Obituary.) *Wisconsin State Journal*, Nov. 29, 1978.

¹⁵ Fish, Gail, Wava G. Haney, and June Zalewski, Page 37.

¹⁶ "Alga Shivers and His Round Barns."

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Town of Forest, Vernon County, WI

Acknowledgements

The Fuldner Heritage Fund paid for the preparation of this nomination. This endowed fund, created through a generous donation by the Jeffris Family Foundation and administered by the Wisconsin Historical Society, supports the nomination of historically and architecturally significant rural and small town properties.

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Town of Forest, Vernon County, WI

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Harris, George and Mable, Round Barn
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Verbal Boundary Description

The property that is the subject of this nomination consists of 1 contributing resource sited on parcels 010-00375-0000 and 010-00362-0000 located in Section 16, Town 14 North, Range 1 West, in the Town of Forest in Vernon County, Wisconsin. The specific boundary of the contributing resource within the property is defined by a boundary line beginning 25 feet south of the southern edge and 20 feet from the east edge of the round barn. From this point the boundary follows a path that travels 120 feet to the west, then 120 feet to the north, then 140 feet to the east, then 40 feet to the south, from this point the boundary line returns to the original location southeast of the round barn.

The boundary of the George and Mable Harris Round Barn as described above is clearly delineated on the accompanying sketch map. This boundary enclosed an area of approximately 0.50 acres.

Boundary Justification

The boundary encloses approximately 0.50 acres that immediately surrounds the nominated resource and was drawn to exclude other buildings on the property. The boundary sits within 17 acres of two parcels that were a part of the original farm containing the nominated resource; however, the other resources on the property are considered extraneous for the purpose of this nomination.

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Harris, George and Mable, Round Barn
Town of Forest, Vernon County, WI

Section photos Page 1

Name of Property: George and Mable Harris Round Barn
City or Vicinity: Town of Forest
County: Vernon County
State: Wisconsin
Name of Photographer: Rowan Davidson, Legacy Architecture, Inc.
Date of Photographs: May 20, 2014
Location of Original Digital Files: Wisconsin Historical Society, Historic Preservation Division
816 State Street, Madison, WI 53706

Photo #1 (WI_VernonCounty_George&MableHarrisRoundBarn_0001)
Exterior, hay mow door, northwest façade

Photo #2 (WI_VernonCounty_George&MableHarrisRoundBarn_0002)
Exterior, milk house and lower level entry, southeast façade

Photo #3 (WI_VernonCounty_George&MableHarrisRoundBarn_0003)
Exterior, lower level entry, south façade

Photo #4 (WI_VernonCounty_George&MableHarrisRoundBarn_0004)
Exterior, milk house and barnyard entry, north façade

Photo #5 (WI_VernonCounty_George&MableHarrisRoundBarn_0005)
Exterior, northeast façade

Photo #6 (WI_VernonCounty_George&MableHarrisRoundBarn_0006)
Exterior, siding detail, north façade

Photo #7 (WI_VernonCounty_George&MableHarrisRoundBarn_0007)
Exterior, foundation and board and batten detail, northeast façade

Photo #8 (WI_VernonCounty_George&MableHarrisRoundBarn_0008)
Interior, silo and roof reinforcements in hay mow, facing south

Photo #9 (WI_VernonCounty_George&MableHarrisRoundBarn_0009)
Interior, silo, facing up

Photo #10 (WI_VernonCounty_George&MableHarrisRoundBarn_0010)
Interior, lower level manure and milking track, facing west

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Section figures Page 1

Harris, George and Mable, Round Barn
Town of Forest, Vernon County, WI



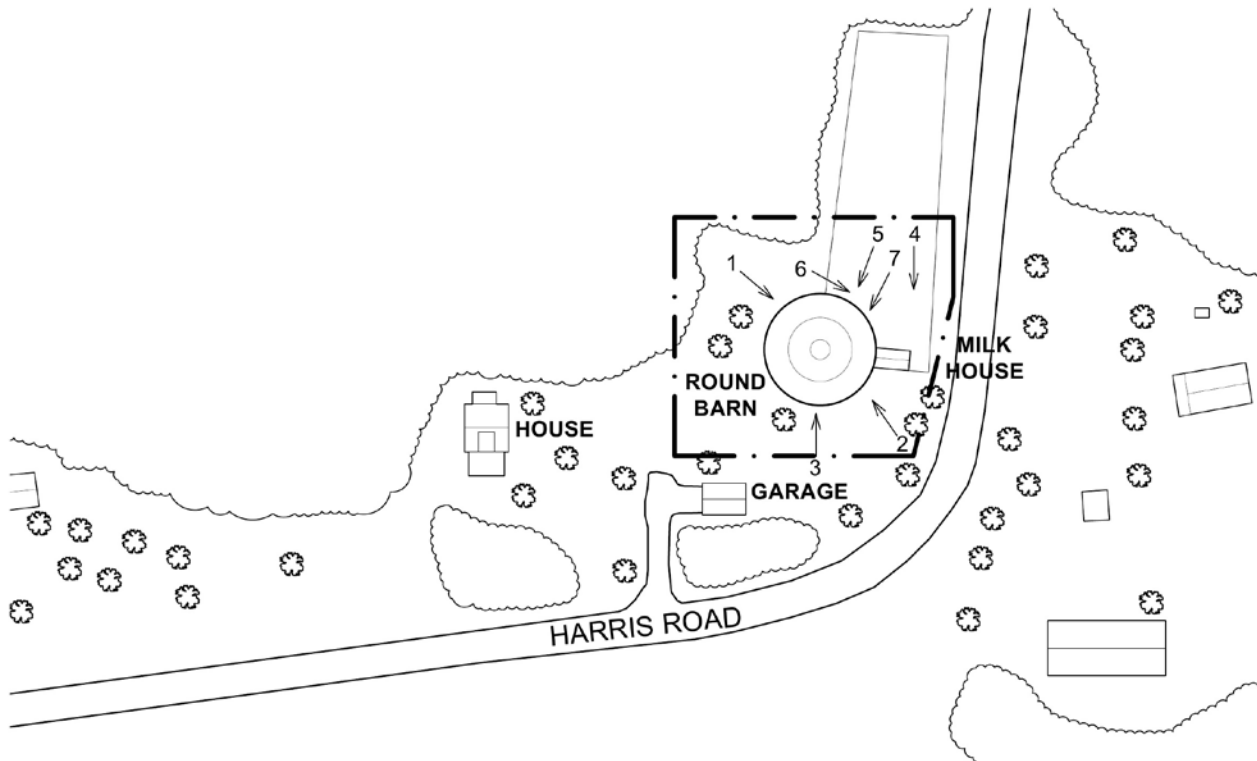
Photograph of the George Harris Round Barn from the northeast; circa 1975.
Image courtesy of the Wisconsin Historical Society.

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National Park Service

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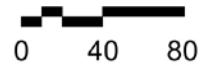
Section sketch map Page 1

Harris, George and Mable, Round Barn
Town of Forest, Vernon County, WI



LEGEND

- · — BOUNDARY LINE
- 1 → PHOTO NUMBER & VANTAGE POINT

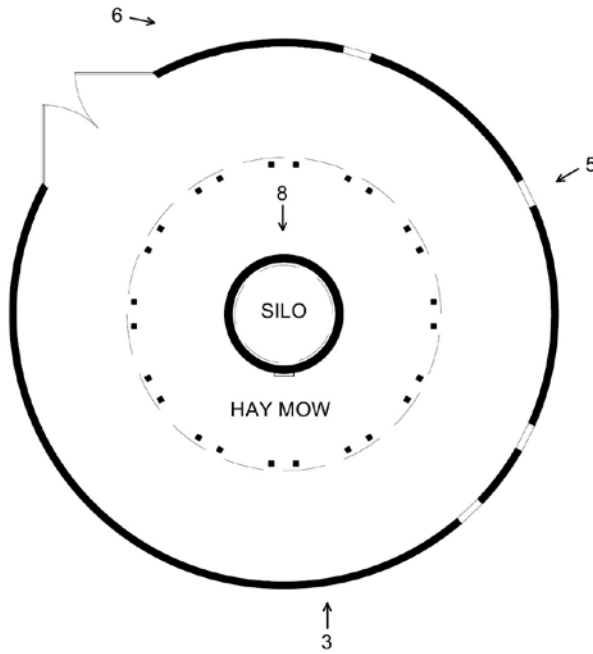


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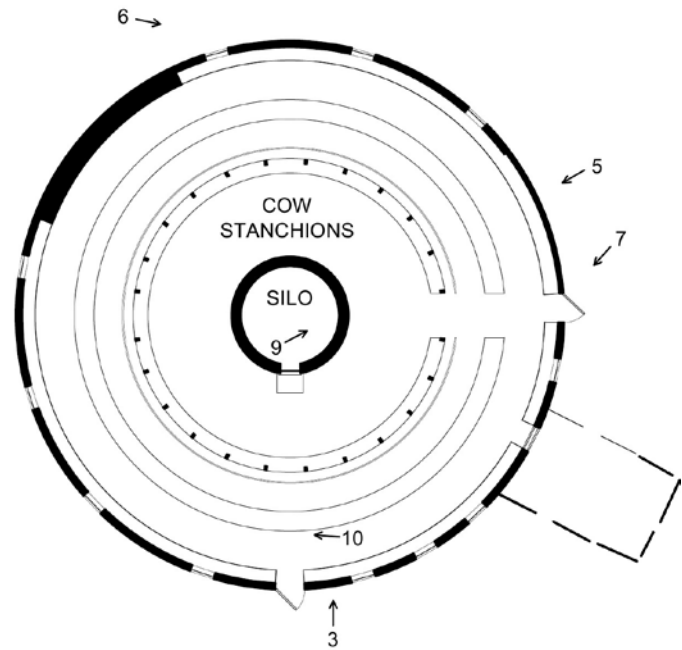
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Section sketch plan Page 1

Harris, George and Mable, Round Barn
Town of Forest, Vernon County, WI



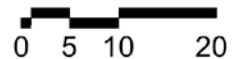
SECOND LEVEL PLAN



FIRST LEVEL PLAN

LEGEND

1 → PHOTO NUMBER & VANTAGE POINT

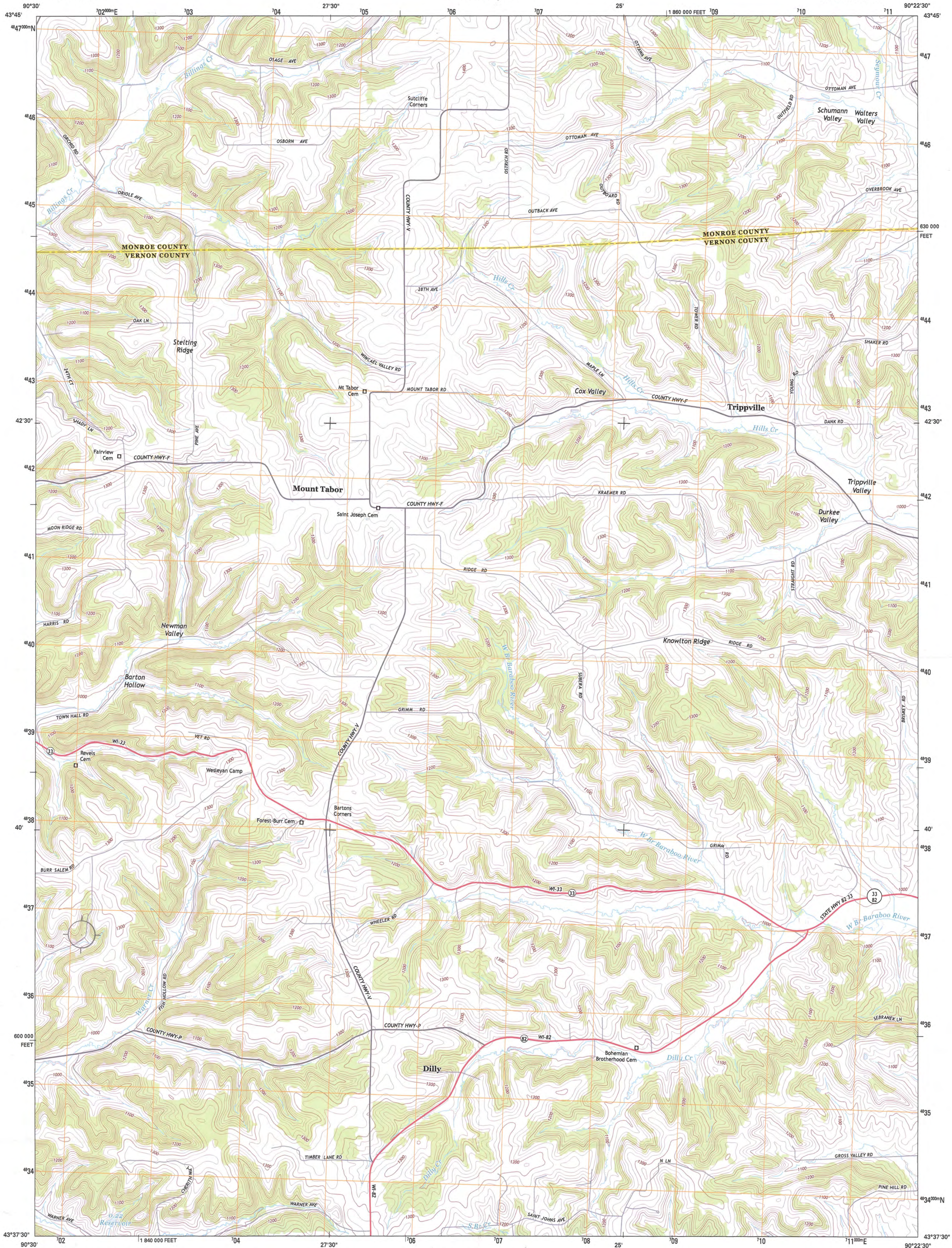




U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
U. S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY



TRIPPIVILLE QUADRANGLE
WISCONSIN
7.5-MINUTE SERIES

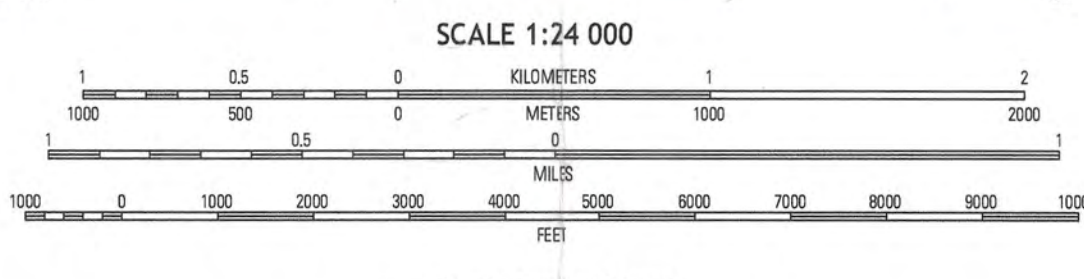
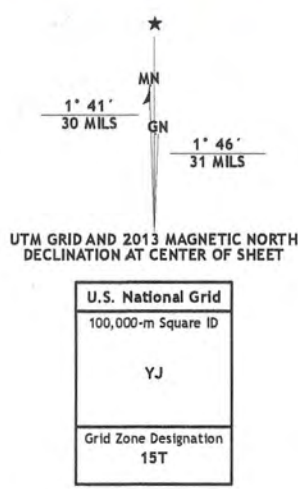


Harris, George and Mable, Round Barn
Town of Forest, Vernon County, WI
UTM Reference:
Zone Easting Northing
15N 701865.8 4840346.4

Produced by the United States Geological Survey

North American Datum of 1983 (NAD83)
World Geodetic System of 1984 (WGS84) Projection and
1 000-meter grid: Universal Transverse Mercator, Zone 15T
10 000-foot ticks: Wisconsin Coordinate System of 1983 (south zone)

Imagery.....NAP, August 2010
Roads.....©2006-2012 TomTom
Names.....GNS, 2013
Hydrography.....National Hydrography Dataset, 2010
Contours.....National Elevation Dataset, 2007
Boundaries.....Census, IBWC, IBC, USGS, 1972 - 2012



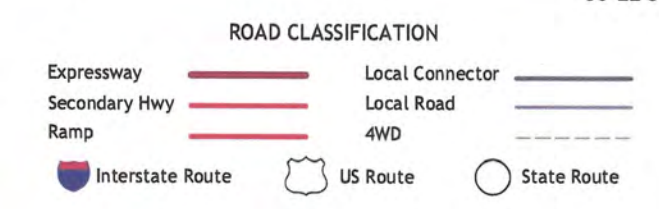
This map was produced to conform with the National Geospatial Program US Topo Product Standard, 2011. A metadata file associated with this product is draft version 0.6.12



QUADRANGLE LOCATION

Wilson	Kendall West	Kendall East
Ottawa	Trippville	Hillsboro
West Lima	Vicks	Valton

ADJOINING 7.5' QUADRANGLES



TRIPPIVILLE, WI
2013





















UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

Requested Action:

Property Name:

Multiple Name:

State & County:

Date Received: 12/9/2016 Date of Pending List: 1/11/2017 Date of 16th Day: 1/26/2017 Date of 45th Day: 1/24/2017 Date of Weekly List: 2/1/2017

Reference number:

Nominator:

Reason For Review:

Accept Return Reject 1/24/2017 Date

Abstract/Summary
Comments:

Recommendation/
Criteria

Reviewer Barbara Wyatt Discipline Historian

Telephone (202)354-2252 Date _____

DOCUMENTATION: see attached comments : No see attached SLR : No

If a nomination is returned to the nomination authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the National Park Service.



WISCONSIN
HISTORICAL
SOCIETY



TO: Keeper
National Register of Historic Places

FROM: Peggy Veregin
National Register Coordinator

SUBJECT: National Register Nomination

The following materials are submitted on this Seventh day of December 2016, for the nomination of the George and Mable Harris Round Barn to the National Register of Historic Places:

_____ 1 Original National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form
_____ 1 CD with NRHP Nomination form PDF
_____ Multiple Property Nomination form
_____ 10 Photograph(s)
_____ 1 CD with image files
_____ 1 Map(s)
_____ 3 Sketch map(s)/figures(s)/exhibit(s)
_____ Piece(s) of correspondence
_____ Other:

COMMENTS:

_____ Please ensure that this nomination is reviewed
_____ This property has been certified under 36 CFR 67
_____ The enclosed owner objection(s) do or do not constitute a majority of property
_____ owners
_____ Other: