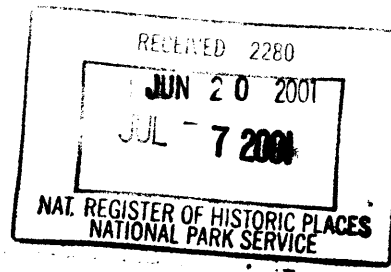


United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form



Signature

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 McGreer, John, Barn and Crib

other names/site number _____

2. Location

street & number 2056 150th Avenue N/A not for publication

city or town Donnellson vicinity

state Iowa code IA county Lee code 111 zip code 52625

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).

Rowell J. Sorke June 25, 2001
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF IOWA

State or Federal agency and bureau

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

Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

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.
- removed from the National Register.
- other, (explain:)

Edson H. Beall
Signature of the Keeper

8/8/01
Date of Action

McGreer Barn and Crib
Name of Property

Lee County, Iowa
County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply)

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

Category of Property
(Check only one box)

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

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

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1		buildings
		sites
1		structures
		objects
2		Total

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

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

N/A

N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

AGRICULTURE/Subsistence/animal facility/barn
AGRICULTURE/Subsistence/storage/corncrib

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

AGRICULTURE/Subsistence/animal facility/barn
VACANT/Not in Use

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

OTHER/Standard Pennsylvania Barn

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation STONE/Limestone
walls WOOD/Weatherboard
roof ASPHALT
other _____

Narrative Description

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

McGreer Barn and Crib
Name of Property

Lee County, Iowa
County and State

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for 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.

Narrative Statement of Significance

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

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

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

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- 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 # _____

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

ARCHITECTURE

AGRICULTURE

Period of Significance

1884-1898

Significant Dates

1884

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder

Unknown

Primary location of additional data:

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

Name of repository:

McGreer Barn and Crib
Name of Property

Lee County, Iowa
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of Property less than 1 acre

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	[1]5	[6]1[6]4[6]0	[4]5[0]1[6]9[0]	2	[1]5	[6]1[6]4[6]0	[4]5[0]1[6]5[0]
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
3	[1]5	[6]1[6]4[1]0	[4]5[0]1[6]5[0]	4	[1]5	[6]1[6]4[1]0	[4]5[0]1[6]9[0]
							<input type="checkbox"/> See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Leah D. Rogers/Consultant

organization _____ date June 9, 2001

street & number 217 NW 5th Street telephone 319-895-8330

city or town Mt. Vernon state IA zip code 52314

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the complete 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 Frank G. Conrad

street & number 2056 150th Avenue telephone 319-836-2108

city or town Donnellson state IA zip code 52625

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 ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetSection number 7 Page 1McGreer Barn and Crib
Lee County, Iowa

Narrative Description

The McGreer Barn and Crib are located in SE1/4, NE1/4, NE1/4, SE1/4 of Section 26, T68N-R7W, Harrison Township, Lee County, Iowa (Figure 1, page 10). The barn and crib are two of 13 extant buildings on the former John and Julia McGreer farmstead, which is situated on the east side of what is now known as 150th Avenue in-between the communities of Primrose to the northwest and Donnellson to the southeast (Figure 2, page 11). The farmstead is sited on a nearly level interfluvial summit approximately 1-3/4 miles northwest of the confluence of Sugar and Little Sugar creeks. Historically, this confluence area was heavily wooded and was a locus for early Euroamerican settlement. The McGreer family was among these pioneer settlers.

The entire farmstead was considered for nomination as a farmstead district; however, the property owner wanted to focus on restoration efforts for the barn and crib, both being landmark agricultural buildings in this rural neighborhood. The house is probably the oldest extant building on this farmstead and is suspected of having been constructed c.1858 when John and Julia McGreer married and likely set up housekeeping on their own property. However, the house has been modified through the years, including many additions and other exterior and interior alterations, to the point that it would not be individually eligible, although it would be potentially contributing to a farmstead district. The other extant buildings aside from the barn and crib all appear to have been built in the late nineteenth to early twentieth centuries, with the majority associated with the McGreer family ownership of this farm. However, it is the large basement barn and crib that stand as rare survivals on the landscape and that best represent the prosperous and noteworthy farming operation of John McGreer at its height. It is known that the barn was built in 1884 for John McGreer, and it is suspected that the crib was built within ten years of this date as part of the expansion of this farming operation to include extensive livestock raising of cattle, hogs, and Belgian horses (Chapman Brothers 1887:278).

The barn, soon after its construction, was noted as “a model of convenience for the purposes to which it is adapted” and that it was “designed in the latest improved style” (Chapman Brothers 1887:278). It measures 48 feet by 76 feet. It is a large and imposing barn built in a Pennsylvania-type design, specifically a variant of the posted-forebay standard barn where the end walls are closed with stone walls—a subtype designated as the “closed form” Posted-Forebay Standard Barn by Robert Ensminger (1992:75) in his typology of Pennsylvania barns. More typically, the posted-forebay type had open end walls producing an open space under the overhang, which was supported only by posts. In the closed form, the use of stone end walls to help support the forebay cross beam allowed for a deeper forebay and hence more loafing space under the overhang for livestock. As is typical of banked/basement barns, the forebay is on the south side of the barn allowing for a more sheltered, warmer space for livestock in the winter months. The basement level is banked into a slight slope but is largely exposed on all four sides. The forebay is only partially open on the south side having three sections where wood panels form walls in-between the vertical posts (see attached photographs). Fixed-pane windows in these wood panels allowed for additional light into the forebay.

The barn retains a high degree of integrity having been little modified since it was first built in 1884. There is a pole shed addition off the rear, south wall of the barn made in the mid- to late twentieth century that increased the loafing space for cattle. The major impact from this shed addition was to cover the exterior view of the rear forebay of the original barn; however, physically the shed attachment is not a substantial impact. The original core of the barn retains the original, vertical board-and-batten siding, with planks approximately one foot in width and fastened with both machine cut and wire nails. The use of wire nails indicates some repairs to the barn siding after 1890. The foundation is constructed of limestone obtained from a quarry near the town of Franklin located five to six miles due east of this farmstead. The rubble foundation is of rough-cut stones laid in fairly regular courses but being unfinished and irregular-shaped blocks and stones. The mortar joints were later repointed and scored to impart a more regular and finished look to the courses. This repointing appears to have been done with a Portland cement mixture. The foundation wall is 1 foot 6 inches thick.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service****National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet****McGreer Barn and Crib
Lee County, Iowa**Section number 7 Page 2

The basement level is entered via three Dutch doors on the west side, a larger sliding door entry on the east side, or through three Dutch doors under the forebay on the south side. The basement level can also be entered via an interior staircase from the upper floor. The interior of the basement level has two rows of stalls flanking a center aisle (Figure 3, page 12). Feed bunks line the stalls and were supplied via chutes through the upper floor.

The north-side ramp was originally a stone and earth construction with a wooden bridge between the ramp and the barn. In the 1940s, the wooden bridge was replaced with a concrete structure. The existing ramp has a concrete-paved ramp leading to the concrete bridge supported on the original stone wall. Metal railings line the concrete bridge. One of the original stone side walls of the ramp remains intact although it was reinforced with cement in later years. The other wall is a concrete construction added to the ramp structure in 1946 as inscribed in the concrete. The support walls of the ramp angle out to the north, widening the ramp in the process.

The roof of the barn is covered with asphalt shingles. The side-gabled roof also has a six-sided cupola gracing the center of the roof ridge. The cupola has round-arched windows, now covered with plywood, and has a decorative weathervane on its hipped roof apex. The same round-arched, double-hung windows are in each gable end of the barn as well as the two gable ends of the corn crib located west of the barn. Many of the windows are missing the glass panes but are slated for restoration by the current property owner. Also of note on the barn roof are two lightning rods, the same type that appear on many of the other outbuildings on this farmstead.

The upper level of the barn is reached via the main ramped entry, now covered with sliding doors on the north side of the barn or via the interior staircase from the basement level below. There are several doors and windows on the south side of the upper level of the barn but these were primarily for ventilation and light. The floor plan of the upper level shows a central, open aisle, 16 feet in width, running north-south through the barn and accessed via the ramp on the north side of the barn. On the east side of the barn, the area is currently open space where hay could have been stacked in piles and later in bales. A small segment of space along the south wall in this area has a loft floor above. The west side of the barn is subdivided into closed grain bins, and a crib, with a loft floor on top of both bins. The remainder of the space around the bins is open aisle, with loft floor only above the south part (Figure 4, page 13). There are four places cut in the floor of the upper level on both the east and west sides that are open to the basement and to the forebay. The areas cut into the basement level were chutes into the feed bunks in the basement level, while a similar use might be postulated for the openings into the forebay, although these might have simply provided additional access and/or ventilation. Finally, the interior of the cupola is reached from the interior via a wooden staircase that leads from the main floor up to the cupola where there is a small room.

The interior construction of the basement level shows the continuous stone wall of the foundation supporting the north, east and west side walls, with the south wall having only a knee-high stone foundation on which sawn posts support hewn cross-beams (Figure 3, page 12). The forebay overhang is supported by joists that tie into the cross-beam on the south wall as well as by the vertical sawn posts and closed end walls of the overhang itself. On the interior of the basement level, the horizontal cross-beams are all hand-hewn, while the large vertical support posts are sawn. The crossbeams show simple lapped joints and mortise-and-tenon joinery (see Figure 3, page 12). The vertical posts vary in measurement from 7x11 inches to 7x8½ inches, while the crossbeams are generally 7x7 inches in dimension.

The interior construction of the upper level of the barn shows both sawn and hewn vertical posts supporting horizontal, hand-hewn tie- and cross-beams. The easternmost interior bent shows five vertical posts supporting a single big beam, while the interior bent on either side of the central aisle shows four vertical posts supporting a cross-beam that has a simple lapped joint (Figure 5, page 14). The bent configuration also shows a single set of angled purlins supporting the rafter system (Glassie 1974).

The general function of a Pennsylvania-type barn has been described by Ensminger (1992:53-55); a description that also applies in large part to the McGreer Barn:

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Continuation Sheet**Section number 7 Page 3**McGreer Barn and Crib
Lee County, Iowa**

The general functional design of the Pennsylvania barn has remained fairly constant through time. It is always banked to provide access to the upper level. This level is used to process and store feed grains, hay, and straw. It contains several sections or bays. Bays entered directly from the bank have large doors and function as threshing or machinery floors; those adjacent to the threshing floors serve as mows for storage of hay and straw.

The upper-level space to the fore of the barn, extending over the stable wall below, is the forebay. Windows in the front wall of the forebay provide light for this area. An opening in this wall, at the front end of the threshing floor, formerly provided draft for hand-threshing and winnowing. Through this opening straw can be tossed to the barnyard below...

The lower level of the Pennsylvania barn has always been used to house livestock, including cows, beef cattle, and horses. Farmers learned very quickly that stabling and feeding cattle produced stock superior to cattle raised by the pioneer practice of letting them roam....Access between the stable and the barnyard is through double split doors in the front wall, below the forebay....The most frequent orientation of the barnyard, stable doors, and forebay, is to the south or southeast, which is especially advantageous during cold weather.

The McGreer corn crib is located due west of the barn and is a front-gabled structure banked into a slight slope and having a basement level like the adjacent barn. The construction of the crib has many other similarities to the large barn strongly suggesting that the two were built around the same time, c.1884, or within a few years of one another. These similarities include the use of round-arched, double-hung 4/4 windows in the gable ends of both the barn and crib, the use of the same type of shaped battens on the exterior siding, the use of similar interior construction techniques and designs, and the use of a ramp/bridge construction to access the upper level. The foundation of the crib is also of limestone rubble construction, while the siding is vertical board-and-batten fastened with wire nails. Close inspection of the siding and window/door framing revealed only wire nails and no earlier machine-cut nails. The use of wire nails became most common after 1890 suggesting that the crib was built closer to c.1890.

The roof of the crib is covered with asphalt shingles. There is no cupola on the crib. The upper level consists of a central aisle flanked by cribs, with access to the central aisle via the north gable-end ramp entry. The ramp bridge is constructed of wood planks, while the ramp has concrete end and side walls, although one of the walls is now missing revealing a gravel and earthen ramp. There is a sliding door on the west gable-end that would have been used for light, ventilation, and for throwing feed down to the barnyard below or off-loading into a wagon. The basement level was used for livestock shelter and currently has an open floor plan. The south wall opening has the same type of board-and-batten siding panel insert as seen on the rear of the barn forebay (see attached photographs).

The interior construction of the upper level show a simple bent configuration using four vertical sawn posts (two side wall and two interior) supporting a single horizontal big beam, also sawn, and a single set of angled purlins. Graffiti on the interior of the crib indicates that some carpentry work or remodeling was completed in the early 1920s by Paul and William Van Zant of Farmington. Other names inscribed included Kirk Murphy, C.F. Lowensberg, O.I. Ponte, J.S. Cox, and H.L. Norris. It appears doubtful that a crib of this type of design and construction would have been built in the 1920s, leading to the conclusion that the graffiti represented a remodeling or rehabilitation project on this structure in the early 1920s.

The interior construction of the basement level of the crib shows the same type of lapped joint along the horizontal cross-beams and the same type of shaped block in-between the cross-beam and the vertical support posts as those found in the barn construction (Figure 6, page 15). The posts and beams in the crib are all sawn, although the floor joists exposed in the basement level are logs that retain their original bark. The vertical posts are 9½ inches square. Overall, the crib measures 32 feet by 26 feet.

The survival of two such distinctive agricultural outbuildings, both of similar design and construction, is unusual in the region. While there are other Pennsylvania-type barns in the Lee County area, this particular example is well preserved and may be somewhat unique in its closed form of the posted forebay subtype. What is perhaps even more unusual is the preservation of the banked/basement corncrib. This was not the typical type of corncrib found on Iowa

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National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 4

**McGreer Barn and Crib
Lee County, Iowa**

farmsteads from this period and reflects the large livestock raising operation of John McGreer at its peak in the 1880s-1890s. While it may not have been built the exact same year as the barn, the crib was certainly built within ten years of that construction and certainly was built before John McGreer passed away in 1898. Both buildings reflect the size, prosperity and importance of McGreer's livestock raising, which included the raising of Belgian horses.

The current owner, Frank Conrad, would like to preserve these two buildings recognizing their rarity and their importance as local landmarks. Mr. Conrad still uses the loafing shed of the barn to shelter his calves. It is in the interest of preserving the McGreer barn and crib that this nomination is being set forward.

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McGreer Barn and Crib
Lee County, Iowa

Section number 8 Page 5

Statement of Significance

The McGreer Barn and Crib are considered locally significant under Criterion C for the architectural significance of the Pennsylvania-type barn and the banked/basement crib as notable and remarkable outbuilding types in late nineteenth century rural Iowa and for their representation of the large and prosperous livestock operation of John McGreer, which included the raising of Belgian horses. The period of significance is considered to extend from 1884 when the barn was built until 1898 when John McGreer passed away and when it is known that the corncrib would have been built and in use as part of his livestock operation. The significant date is 1884 when the barn was built.

Historical Background

The McGreer farmstead was first established in the spring of 1837 when Alexander and Jane McGreer and their children settled in Lee County. Alexander and Jane had been born in South and North Carolina, respectively. Alexander had moved from South Carolina to Fayette County, Indiana, when he was a young man of 18 and there he married Jane Livingston. Alexander was a farmer by occupation. After leaving Indiana, the family spent one year in Warren County, Illinois, before settling in Iowa. They entered land in Sections 25 and 26 of what would become Harrison Township in Lee County and were among the early settlers of this area. Originally, Harrison Township was part of Cedar Township, being separated from Cedar in 1841.

Upon this tract of land he established a home, which now remains in possession of his son [i.e., John McGreer]. The parental household consisted of the following children: Martha became the wife of Amos Hinkel, and departed this life in 1849; Elizabeth married John Johnson; George married Miss Louisa Wilcoxon; John, our subject, was the fourth in order of birth; Nancy H. became the wife of N. Harlan, and Jane married R. Hicks, who died in the army; she was subsequently married to Mr. McNeill; Maria was born in Iowa, and married Jabez Ruby, of Van Buren County (Chapman Brothers 1887:278).

Alexander McGreer's homestead was in the vicinity of several other early settlers including E.S. McCulloch, D.T. McCulloch, and Conrad Schweer. These early settlements were made near the confluence of two creeks and along the timbered valley margins. The first schoolhouse in the township was built in 1838 in Section 25 under the direction of Joseph Howard. It was noted in 1887, that John "McGrew" (most likely McGreer) was the "oldest settler now living who attended the first school" (Chapman Brothers 1887:638).

John McGreer had been born in Fayette County, Indiana, on February 13, 1831. He was six years old when the family moved to Iowa. On March 25, 1858, John married Julia A. Hill, who had been born in Wayne County, Indiana, and was the daughter of William and Zilpah Hill natives of Ohio and North Carolina, respectively. The Hill family had settled in Lee County, Iowa, in the fall of 1843. Mr. Hill was a farmer and merchant. John and Julia McGreer had two children—Anna J. born in 1859 and Mary L. born in 1862. Anna J. was called by her middle name "Jennie."

John's mother Jane McGreer died in 1855; however, his father Alexander lived until 1875. John inherited the family homestead upon his father's death. By the 1880s, the McGreer farmstead was described as encompassing 340 acres of valuable land, with John McGreer "engaged in the breeding of horses, cattle, and hogs" in addition to the "ordinary duties of the farm" (Chapman Brothers 1887:278).

The farm dwelling is a fine two-story structure, and the barn, erected in 1884, is a model of convenience for the purposes to which it is adapted. It occupies an area of 48x76 feet, and is designed in the latest improved style. Mr. McGreer has a valuable assortment of farm machinery and all the implements necessary for the carrying on of agriculture after the most improved methods (Chapman Brothers 1887:281).

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McGreer Barn and Crib
Lee County, Iowa

Section number 8 Page 6

Both the house and barn in this description are still standing. The extant house, noted in the above description, was probably built for John McGreer upon his marriage to Julia Hill in 1858. The 1884 barn is the large Pennsylvania-type barn that is a landmark on this farmstead. John McGreer raised purebred Belgian horses in this large barn.

The 1880 U.S. Agricultural Census listed McGreer's farming operation as consisting of 200 acres of tilled ground, 80 acres of meadow, and 130 acres of woodland. The farm then had an estimated value of \$12,000, with \$200 worth of fences, \$500 worth of machinery, \$2500 worth of livestock, and had total farm production valued at \$1500. In 1880 he had paid out \$400 in wages to farm laborers. The farm products listed included 54 acres of mown grass, 54 acres in hay, 75 acres of Indian corn (producing 3000 bushels), 25 acres of oats (700 bushels), 9 acres of wheat (200 bushels), 1/2 acre of Irish Potatoes (25 bushels), and 4 acres of apple trees (120 bearing trees producing 300 bushels of apples at a \$100 value). Other products included 200 pounds of butter. Livestock included 14 horses, 12 milk cows, 40 other cows, 7 calves, and 200 barnyard poultry producing 200 dozen eggs. By most standards of the time, John McGreer's farmstead was doing quite well.

The 1885 U.S. Population Census listed the McGreer household as including John (then aged 53), wife Julia (aged 51), and daughters "Anna Janee" (aged 26) and Mary (aged 21). Both daughters remained single and lived out their lives on the family farm. By 1895, the population census noted the same household composition, with Anna now listed simply as "Jennie," with the addition of a farmhand, Frank Winkler, aged 33.

It was noted in 1887 that Harrison Township was "well located for stock-raising or for planting; the farms are laid off nicely and are under good cultivation" (Chapman Brothers 1887:638).

The buildings are unusually good, and the people intelligent and progressive. They have good schools for education of their children, and convenient places for worship. At present there are about 900 inhabitants. The Burlington & Southwestern Railroad runs west through the lower line of the township, and the Keokuk & Northwestern touches the northwestern part, giving thereby good facilities for shipping and travel. On the former road there is a station, Warren, where there is a post-office and some traffic done. There is also another town named Primrose. Primrose is a pretty little hamlet located on section 23, and has a population of about 175 souls. It was laid off in 1844, by George Perkins, and in 1845 a post-office was established here....There are several stores and shops in the village, and a gristmill, which was started in 1870 (ibid.).

Warren Station was located one mile south of the McGreer farmstead and was well situated for shipping of goods and livestock for the McGreer operation. Likewise, Primrose was situated just one mile to the northwest and would have served as the early trading center for the farms of this area including McGreer's. The road on which the John McGreer farmstead was situated was an early stage and post road from Keokuk to Fort Des Moines with a stop in Primrose (Kirkpatrick 1975).

John McGreer died on February 25, 1898, with wife Julia passing away on January 20, 1906. Daughter Jennie survived until July 16, 1920, with daughter Mary passing away on October 31, 1949. The entire family is buried in Sharon Cemetery in Harrison Township. Upon Mary McGreer's death, the farm was acquired by Willard Schau, who retained possession until 1999 when current owner, Frank Conrad, purchased the farm at auction.

When John McGreer passed away, his obituary described him as "a prominent farmer and stock raiser" and as "a man that was widely known and will be greatly missed in the community" (*Fort Madison Democrat* 1898). He died from a "vital disease, which his strong constitution could not withstand" and had been ill for some weeks. His funeral was the largest that "had been in the community for some time, the procession being over a mile in length" (ibid.).

He was a man of clear foresight and had noted the remarkable changes that had transpired, and by his frugality had accumulated quite a fortune, having a large farm at home and several in Kansas and Nebraska. He was also interested in a bank in Fort Smith, Arkansas, and was one of the main stockholders in Farmers' Savings Bank at Farmington, Iowa, and a leading director of its board (ibid.).

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National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

McGreer Barn and Crib
Lee County, Iowa

Section number 8 Page 7

The well-improved farm operation that he provided for his two daughters certainly left them in good stead for their old age.

Examination of the historic plat maps available for Harrison Township show a house at the location of the extant McGreer house on land then owned by John McGreer in 1874 (Figure 7, page 16). Alexander McGreer, who would pass away the next year, was shown as the owner of a parcel adjacent to John's. This separate parcel was surrounded on three sides by land owned by John and showed a house due east of John's house. It is suspected that Alexander's house represents the original family homestead, with John obtaining title to a large portion of the family land upon his marriage to Julia Hill in 1858.

The house shown on John's property was nearer to the road that led into the small town of Primrose and would have been more conveniently located as time progressed and his farming operation became more involved in market production. Alexander's house, on the other hand, appeared to be closer to a large grove of trees, a location that would have been good spot for a pioneer homestead before the road system had developed. The number of small lots platted within the timber represented wood lots where the owners could come and cut wood for fuel and building materials. This was a common practice in areas where timber resources were confined to groves and creek valleys and enabled settlers to spread out onto the prairie and yet still have access to timber. Generally, early settlers in Iowa were attracted first to the timber/prairie margins near the streams and rivers. It was at the timber/prairie margins where a pioneer could have a small field at the prairie's edge for cultivation and yet be close to the much-needed timber resources of the groves. It was not until the prairie sod could be effectively broken with John Deere's steel scouring plow that the open prairie lands began to be settled. The location of Alexander's homestead fits this pattern.

It is suspected, therefore, that the standing house on the McGreer Farmstead is a house that John McGreer built upon his marriage to Julia Hill when he would likely have wanted to establish his own property. He built the large Pennsylvania-type barn in 1884 when he expanded into livestock raising including Belgian horses.

By 1897, John had inherited all of his father's land, with the McGreer farm now encompassing over 380 acres (Figure 8, page 17). The number of small woodlots had been greatly reduced in the area indicating that the groves were being reduced in size. Small lots were still shown, however, along the immediate creek valleys east and west of the McGreer farm.

The property remained basically the same size by the time of the 1916 plat map (Figure 9, page 18). Even though John McGreer had passed away in 1898, the farm was still listed in his name.

Architectural Significance

Both the McGreer Barn and Crib represent comparatively rare survivals of important agricultural outbuilding types dating from the late nineteenth century. Pennsylvania-type barns once dotted the landscape of eastern Iowa but are becoming increasingly rare because they are difficult to use in today's agriculture and difficult to preserve because of their size. These large, heavy timber-frame basement barns are considered significant reminders of Iowa's agricultural past and reflect the height of livestock raising in the late nineteenth century. Many such barns were used in Iowa's dairy industry; however, in this particular region they functioned more for horse and cattle raising. This particular example was built to house John McGreer's Belgian horses.

The banked/basement crib is perhaps an even rarer survival of an unusual outbuilding type. This particular example functioned as a corncrib on the upper level but provided additional space for livestock shelter in the basement below.

The barn and crib together represent the expansion of John McGreer's farming operation into major livestock raising including cattle, hogs, and horses in the 1880s-1890s. As such, they also represent the peak of production for this late nineteenth century farmstead.

Both buildings, in combination, are worthy of National Register status and certainly worthy of preservation for generations to come.

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Verbal Boundary Description

The boundary of the nominated property is shown as the dashed line on the accompanying map entitled "Plan Map of McGreer Farmstead Showing National Register Boundary."

Boundary Justification

The boundary encompasses the McGreer Barn and Crib and the space immediately surrounding both buildings. This area historically encompassed much of the barnyard area associated with both buildings.

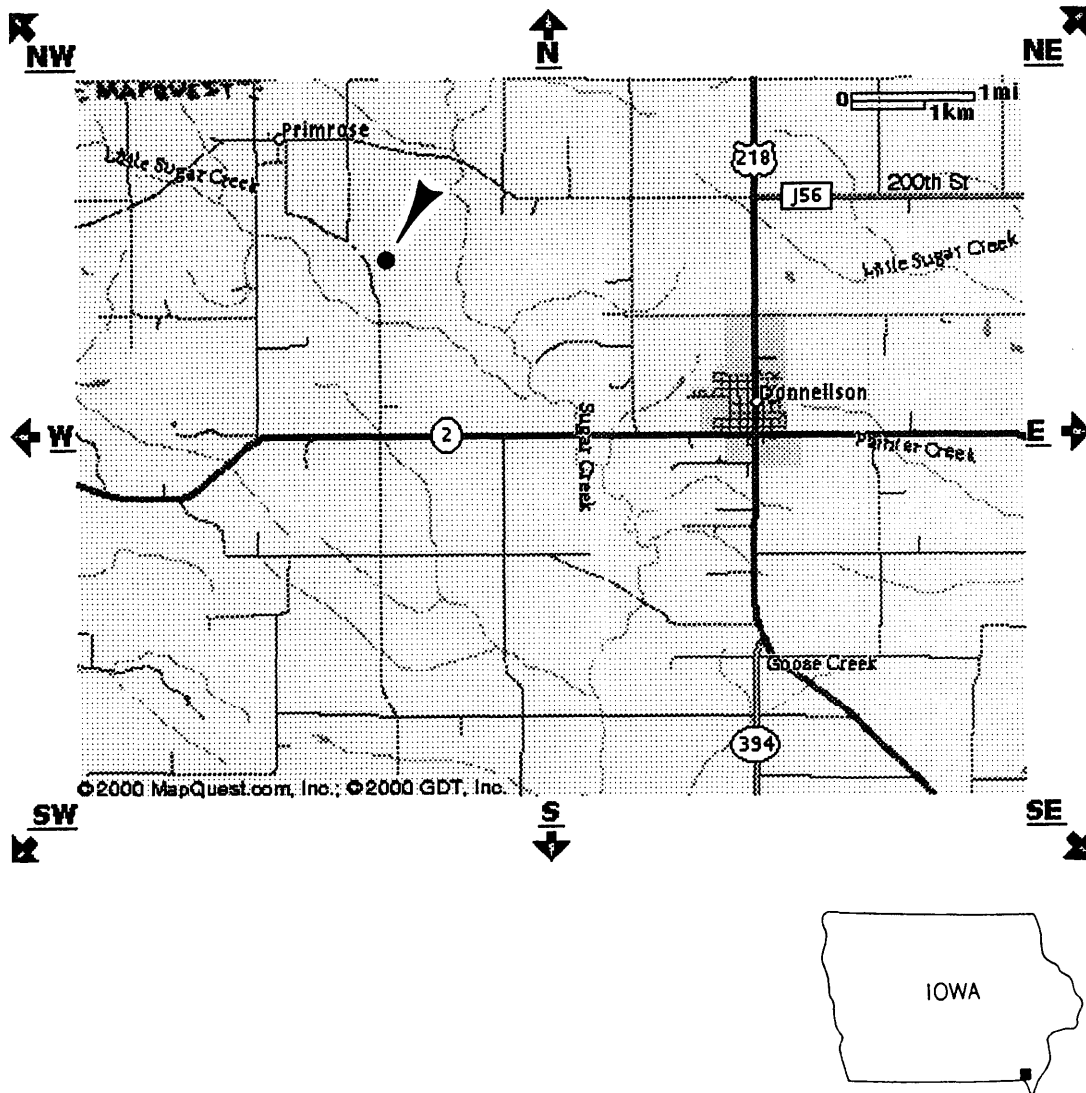
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Figure I. General Location of McGreer Barn and Crib



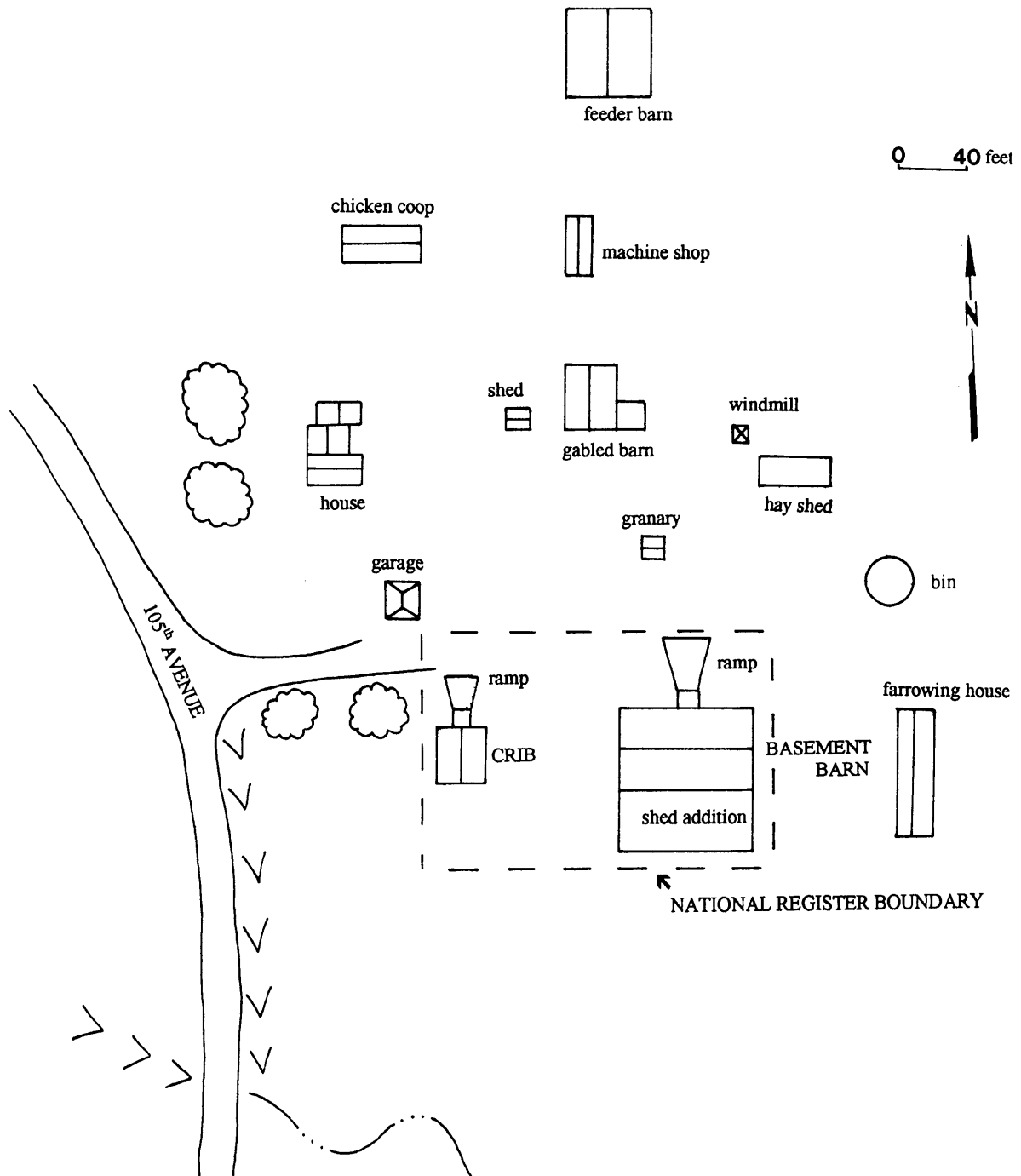
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Figure 2. Plan Map of McGreer Farmstead Showing National Register Boundary



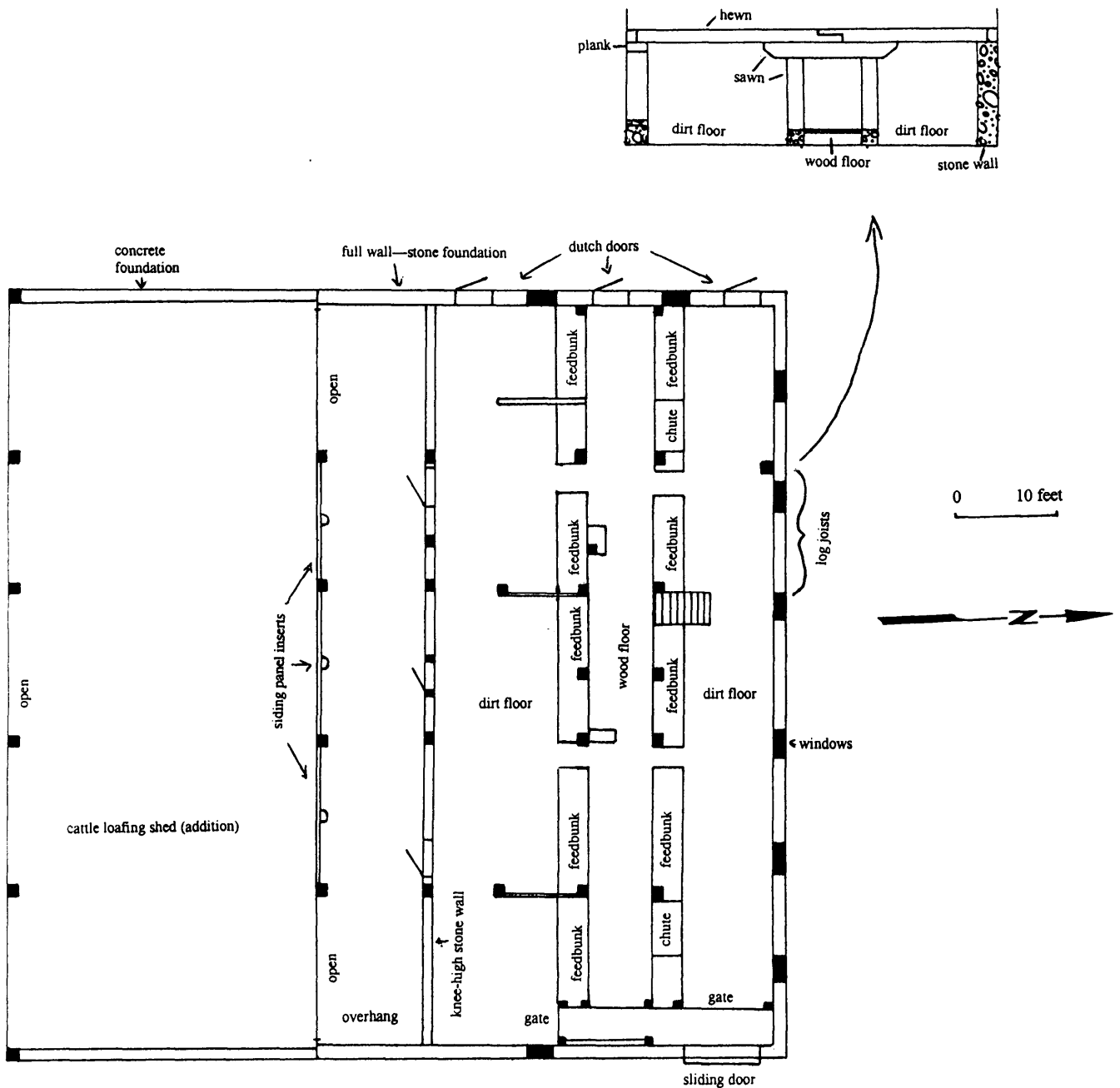
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Figure 3. Floor Plan of Basement Level of McGreer Barn



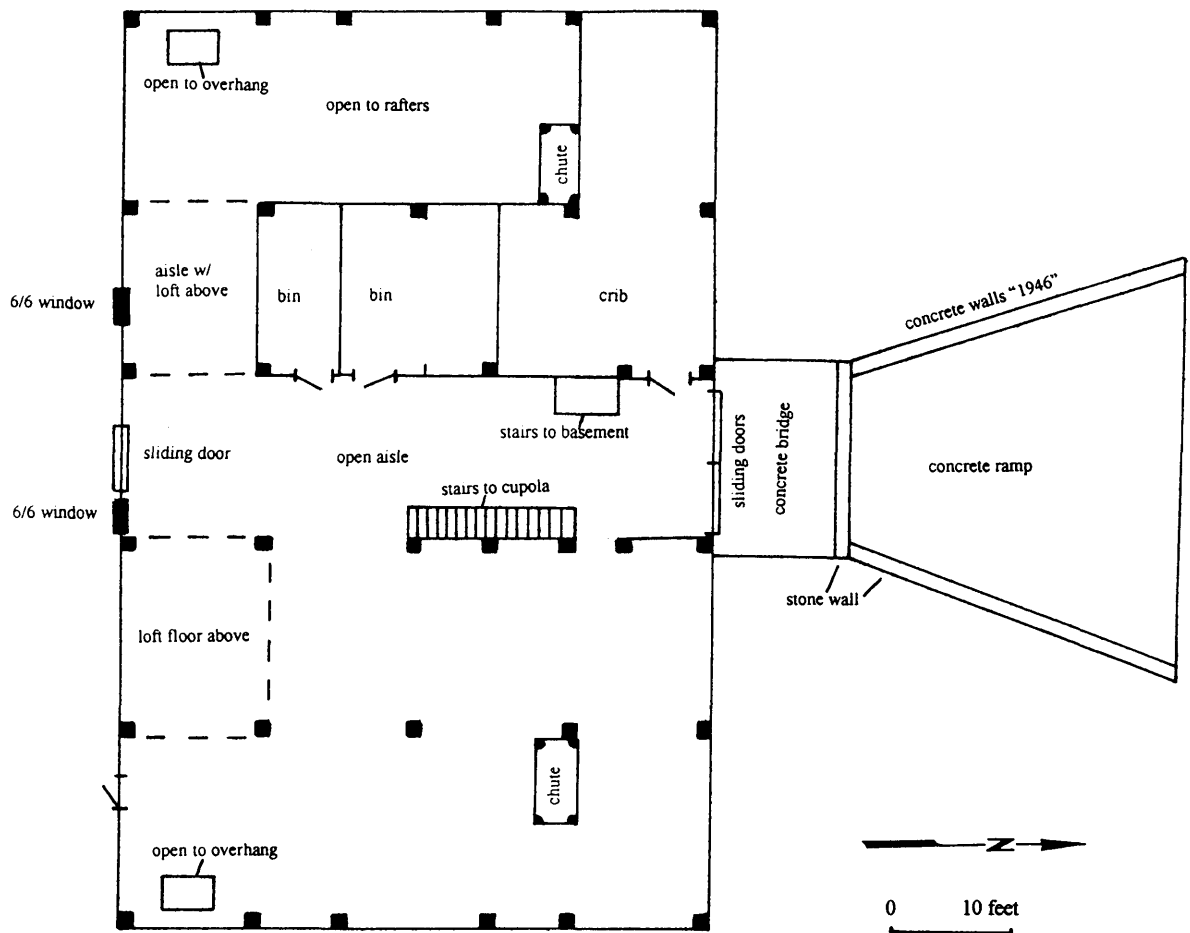
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Figure 4. Floor Plan of Upper Level of McGreer Barn



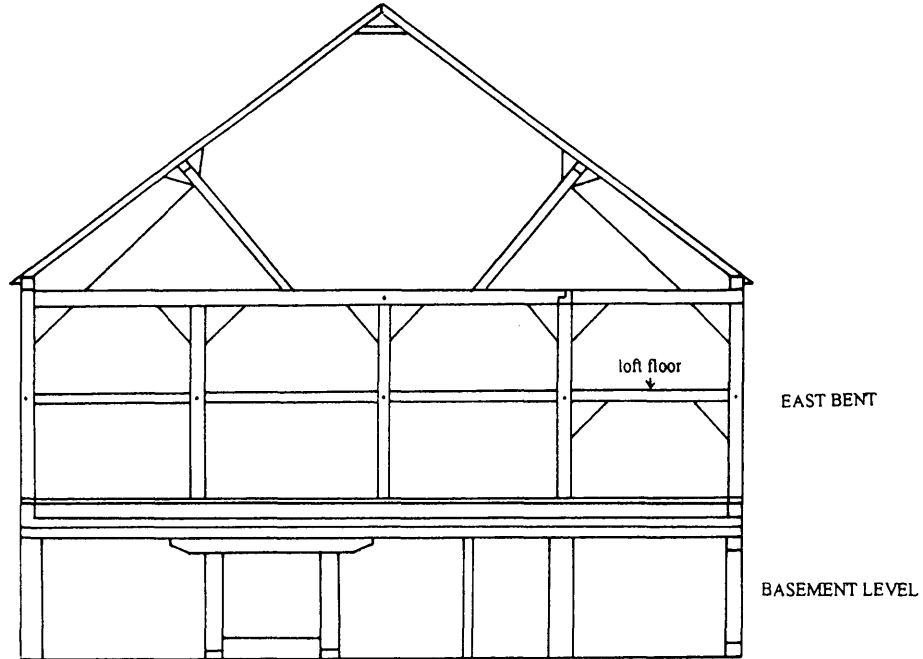
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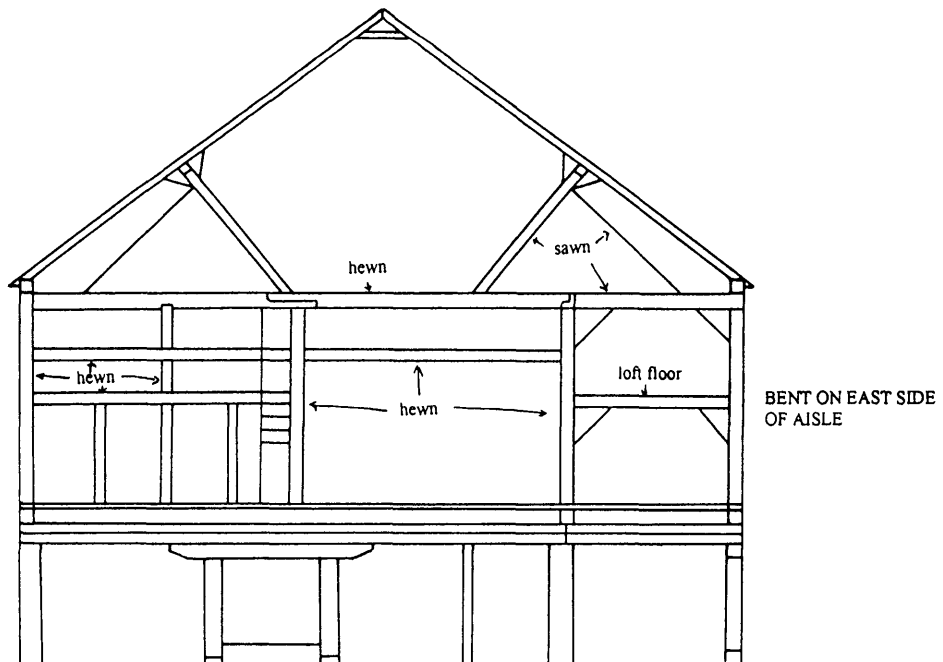
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Figure 5. Bent Configurations of McGreer Barn



0 4 feet



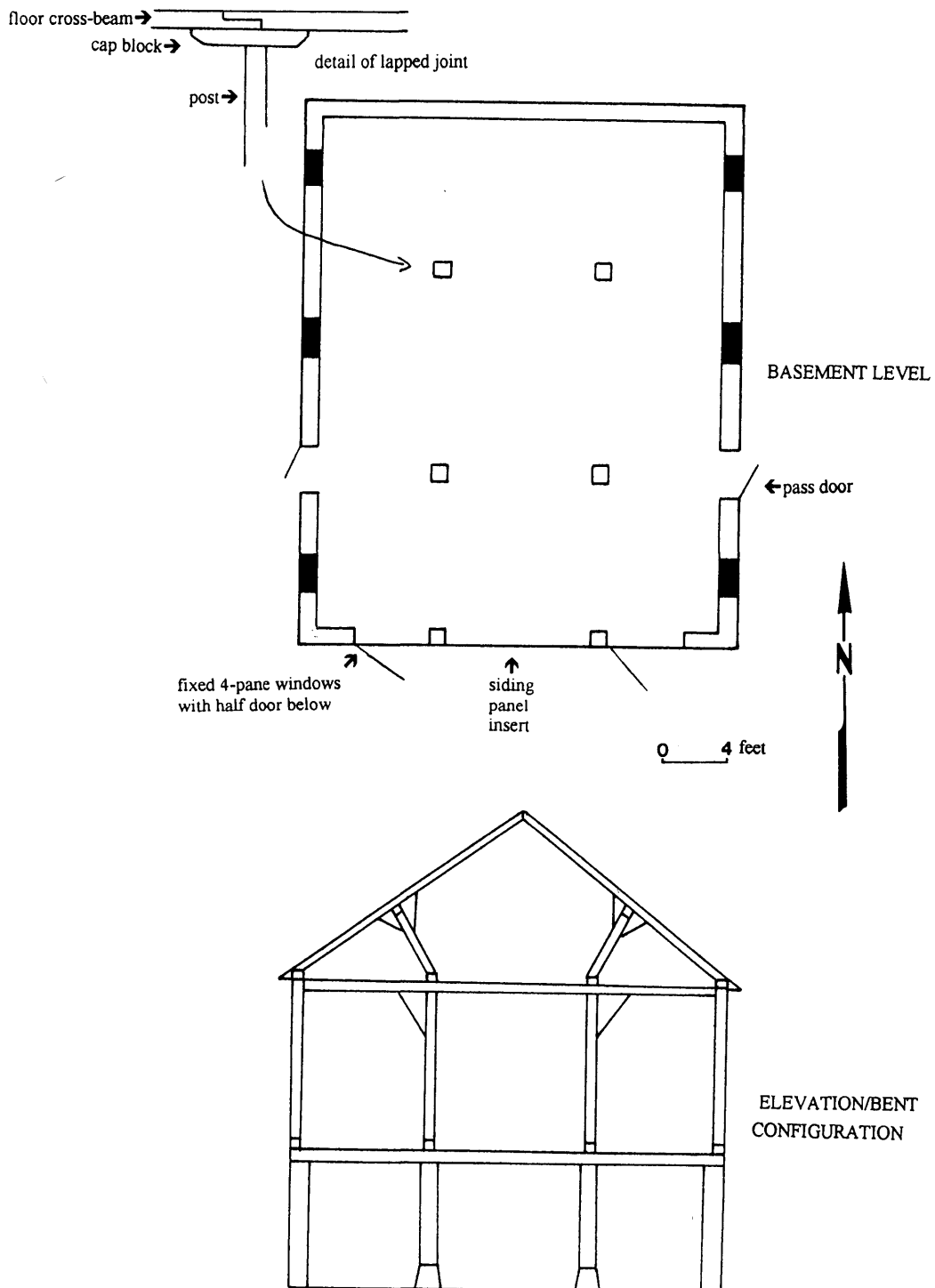
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Figure 6. Floor Plan and Bent Configuration of McGreer Crib



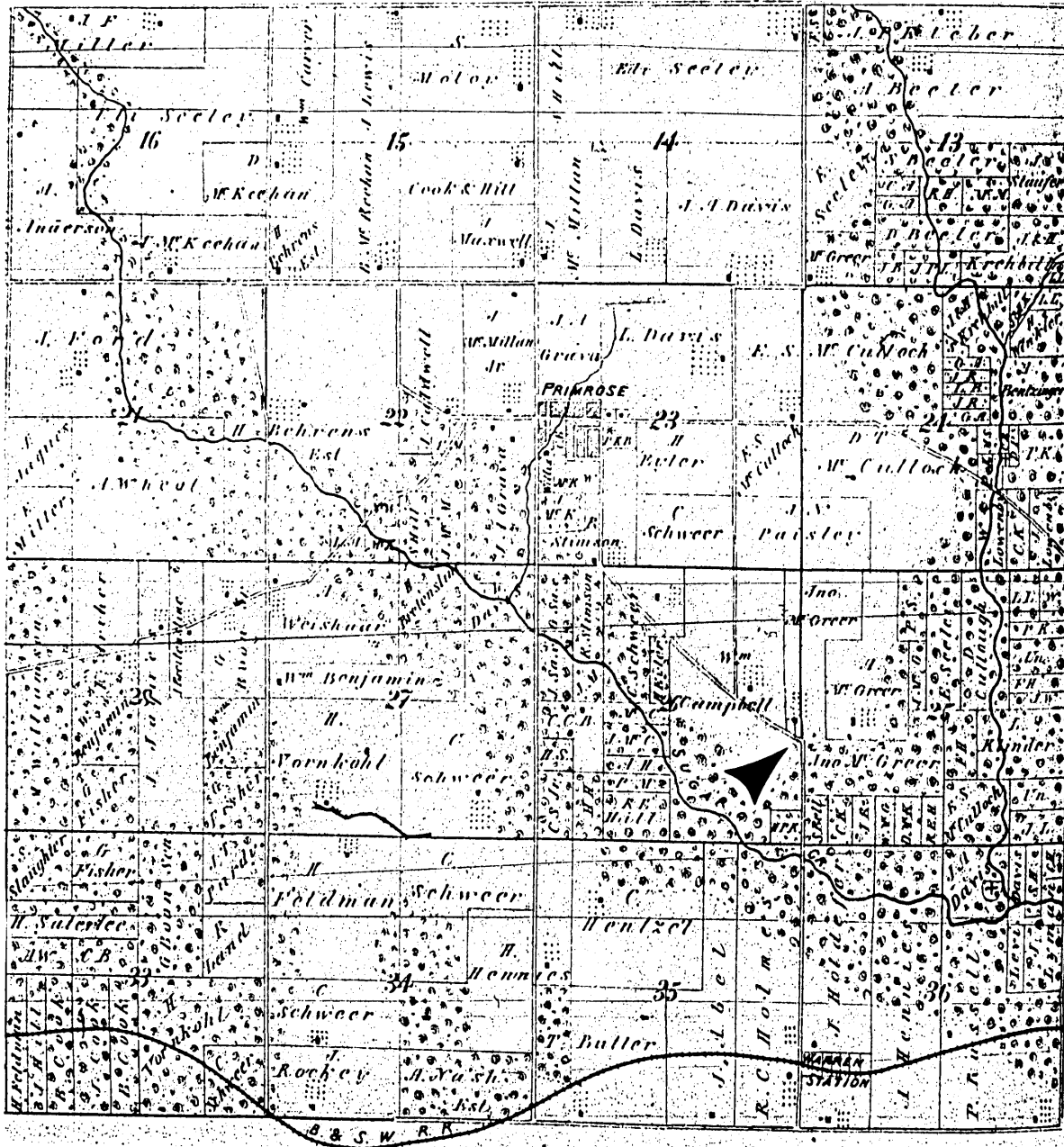
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Figure 7. 1874 Plat Map of Harrison Showing Location of McGreer Farmstead
(Source: Andreas 1874)



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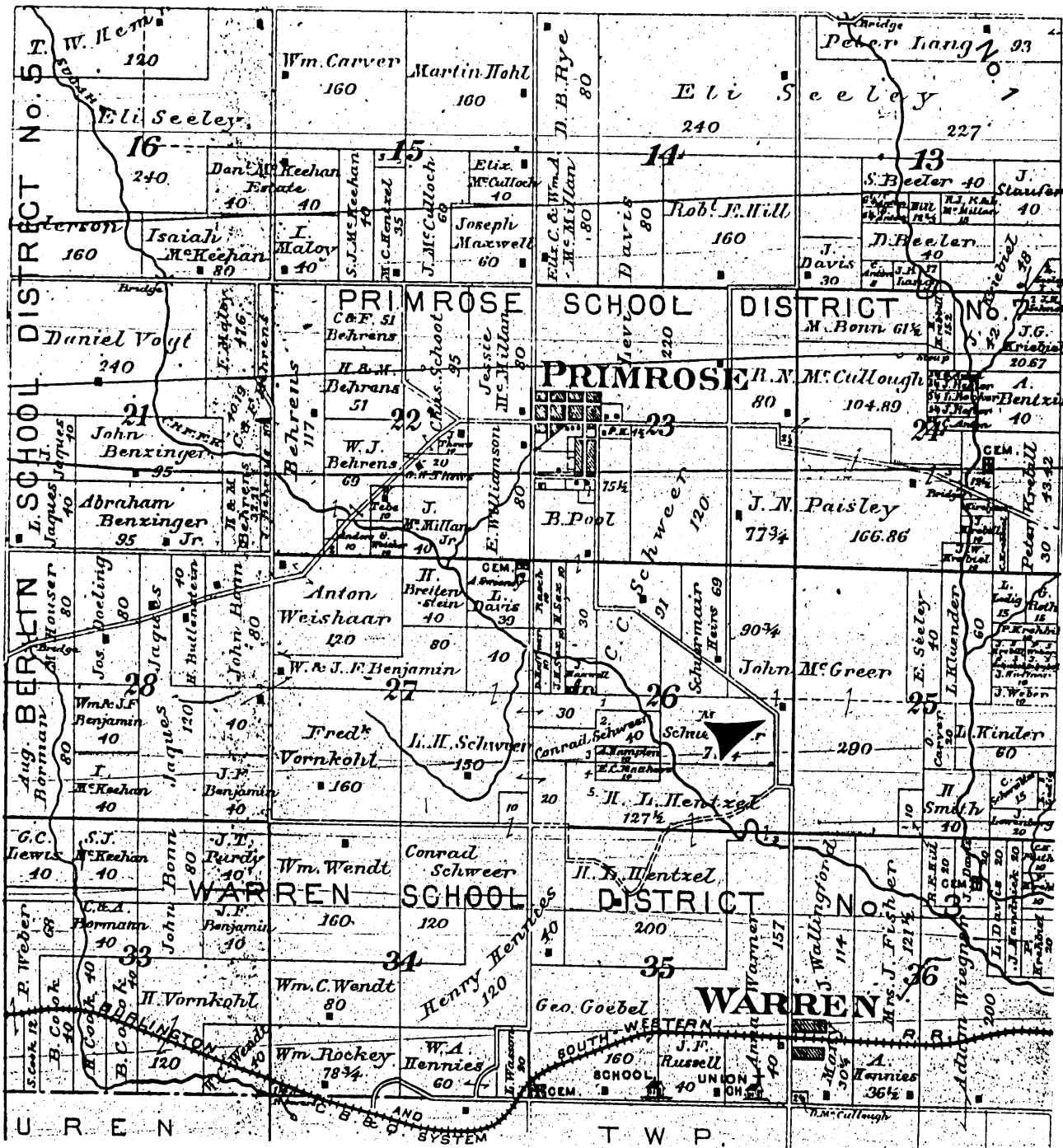
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Figure 8. 1897 Plat Map of Harrison Township Showing Location of McGreer Farmstead
(Source: North West 1897)



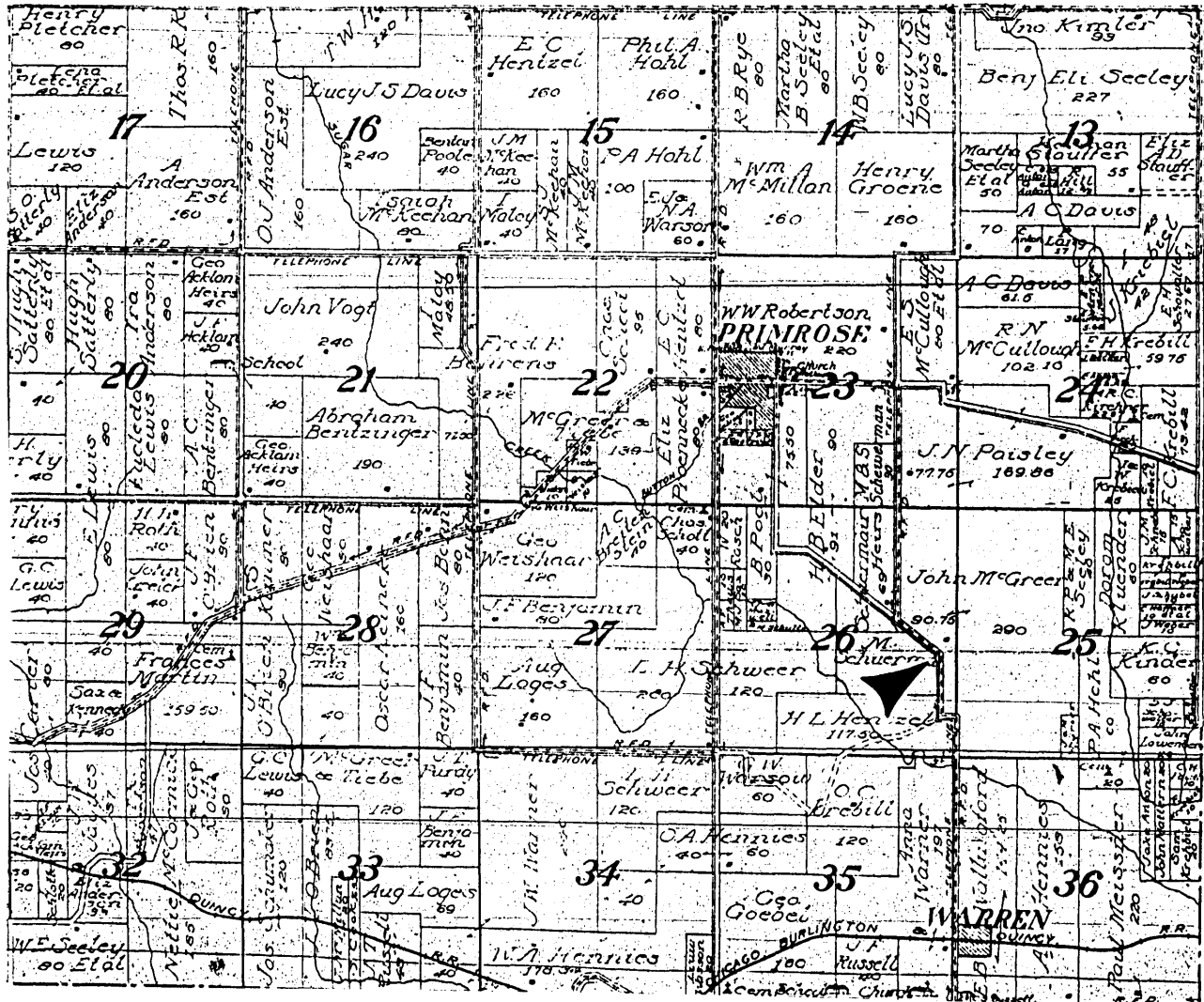
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Figure 9. 1916 Plat Map of Harrison Township Showing Location of McGreer Farmstead
(Source: Ogle and Company 1916)



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**McGreer Barn and Crib
Lee County, Iowa**

Photographs:

Name of Photographer: Leah D. Rogers
Date of Photographs: January 22, 2001 and February 2, 2001
Location of Original Negatives: Frank Conrad, Donnellson, Iowa

- #1 General view of McGreer Farmstead, view to the NNE
- #2 General view of McGreer Crib (left) and Barn (right), view to the ENE
- #3 McGreer Barn, view to the SE
- #4 McGreer Barn, view to the WSW
- #5 McGreer Barn, view to the NE
- #6 Detail of West gable end and cupola of McGreer Barn, view to the ESE
- #7 Detail of rear (South) wall of forebay of McGreer Barn, view to the ENE
- #8 Detail of rear (South) wall of forebay of McGreer Barn, view to the WNW
- #9 Detail of bird houses under floor joists over forebay of McGreer Barn, view to the NNW
- #10 Detail of interior framing of upper level of McGreer, view to the SSE
- #11 Detail of lapped joint and hewn beams of upper level of McGreer Barn, view to the ESE
- #12 Detail of interior framing of upper level of McGreer Barn, view to the East
- #13 Detail of lapped joint along side wall of upper level of McGreer Barn, view to the NNE
- #14 Detail of interior framing of basement level of McGreer Barn, view to the East
- #15 Detail of interior framing of basement level of McGreer Barn, view to the ESE
- #16 Detail of interior framing of basement level of McGreer Barn, view to the East
- #17 McGreer Crib, view to the NNE
- #18 McGreer Crib, view to the NNW
- #19 McGreer Crib, view to the SW
- #20 Detail of interior framing of upper level of McGreer Crib, view to the SSW
- #21 Detail of lapped joint and framing of basement level of McGreer Crib, view to the NNE

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McGreer Barn and Crib
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Plan Map of McGreer Property Showing Direction of Photograph Views

